

“Guam Is Our Home:” Taiwanese-Chinese “Old Timers” Perceptions of Guam

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Abstract

This research utilizes the island of Guam as a case study to demonstrate ways in which Taiwanese-Chinese have successfully established themselves in businesses and applied their entrepreneurship within the last three decades of their settlement on Guam. Apart from being astute business people, their attachment to the island of Guam is asserted in various ways, and their sense of home grows stronger, with reference to the time they live in Guam, the locale where their children attend elementary and secondary schools and sometimes post-secondary. For many of the second generation of Taiwanese on Guam, having pursued tertiary education in the USA, and finding their marriage partner in the U.S. Mainland, their sense of home with reference to Guam nonetheless remains vibrant. This research is based on participant observation and in-depth interviews undertaken at various periods in 2008-2009 with twenty-five “old timers” among the Taiwanese-Chinese residents of Guam. The Taiwanese-Chinese “old-timers” on Guam are people in between – neither have they totally abandoned their Taiwanese homeland or roots as a result of their long stay abroad, nor have they become transnationals who live in two entirely different social fields, like the new Asian immigrants. The estimated 2,000 or so Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam have become “permanent settlers” in Guam. Well-adapted to the *Hafa Adai* lifestyle, they enjoy Guam’s multi-cultural, non-racialized environment. The Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam seem to encompass a separate identity from 19th century Chinese sojourners on one hand, and New Asian transnational migrants on the other.

Keywords: Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam, lived experiences, sense of belonging, place, identity, qualitative study.

Extant literature concerning the diaspora of Taiwanese-Chinese¹ to overseas locations often highlights their high unemployment rates in countries such as Canada and Australia which attracts recent Taiwanese-Chinese immigrants who have gone abroad with financial assets, under business migration programs (Chiang and Kuo, 2000; Ip, 2001; Chiang, 2004; Chiang and Hsu, 2006). In spite of the entrepreneurial skills acquired in their home countries, however, overseas Taiwanese-Chinese often have not applied these skills well in the welcoming host countries. Because their children’s education formulates an important reason for them to immigrate overseas, “astronaut families” (Chiang, 2008), split households (Waters, 2002; Chee, 2005), and *dan chi ma ma*² (Chiang, 2008; Chiang and Hsu, 2006) are common outcomes.

This research endeavor utilizes the island of Guam as a case study to demonstrate ways in which overseas Taiwanese-Chinese have successfully established themselves in businesses and utilized entrepreneurship skills within the last three decades. Apart from being astute business people on Guam, their attachment to the island of Guam is asserted in various ways. Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam indicate their sense of home grows stronger with reference to the length of time they have lived on Guam, and whether their children have attended elementary and secondary schools on Guam. For many of the second generation of Taiwanese residents on Guam, having pursued tertiary education in the USA, and/or having married there, most of them are unlikely to return to Guam for employment, since gainful employment opportunities are likely to be better within the U.S. Mainland. Nonetheless, their sense of home with reference to Guam remains strong. They readily return to their family members who are resident on Guam for weddings, funerals, and holiday celebrations, to name a few.

Background of the Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam

“There are significant differences among the Chinese communities in the Pacific Islands that we must not ignore if we are to adequately comprehend current events in the region...we need to recognize that there are many varieties of Chinese experiences in the Pacific today.” (Willmott, 2007)

Guam, the site of our study, is an Unincorporated Territory of the U.S.A., located in the western Pacific region. Guam is the largest and southernmost island of the Mariana Archipelago, having a land area of some 545 square kilometers. (<http://www.graphicmaps.com/webimage/countrys/oceania/gu.htm> Date accessed: 072509). Guam represents the largest land mass in Micronesia. Geographically, Guam is situated 1,474 miles southeast of Taiwan. Currently, the population of Guam is estimated to be approximately 175,000 (<http://www.internetworldstats.com/pacific.htm> Date accessed: 072509). The indigenous people of Guam are identified as the Chamorro, who comprise approximately 50% of the current population (http://www.spc.int/prism/country/gu/stats/Census/chamorros_in_us.htm Date accessed: 072509). Guam is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural community that encompasses residents from other Pacific islands, Asia, the U.S. Mainland, and elsewhere. The stereotyped “outside view” of Guam is that of an island with a number of American military bases, an economy heavily supported by the U.S. Military and tourists from Japan (cf. Kurashina et al. 1999), and a place of grass huts, barefoot happy islanders, and palm trees swaying in the tropical breezes (cf. Stephenson et al., 1999). These stereotypes belie a complex, cosmopolitan island community, with roots in the “islander” past, but with a dynamic contemporary life very much situated in the present and in the future.

Of relevance to this study is our awareness that the surnames of certain Chamorro families on Guam indicate Chinese ancestry of considerable time depth. Longstanding Chamorro family surnames include Won Pat and Quan, as well as surnames on Guam that have been localized, assimilated or made transitive over time so that their Chinese origins have become less apparent or more obscure. The most representative examples include Taitingfong, Tydingco, Limtiaco, Unpingco, and perhaps Angoco. Many Chamorro people today, not aware of their Chinese ancestry of the past, would regard these particular names as entirely Chamorro family surnames.

Approximately ten years ago, the late Speaker of the Guam Legislature, Mr. Antonio Unpingco, a well respected Chamorro political leader, conducted research in the Chamorro Genealogy Database at the Richard Flores Taitano Micronesian Area Research Center on the University of Guam campus. He discovered that the ancestral name of his family was actually Wong Ping Ko. Eventually, he was able to trace his Chinese ancestry back to a specific geographic location in China. It may be noteworthy that one commonality of the Chamorro surnames Unpingco, Tydingco, Limtiaco, and Angoco is the suffix “-co”. Although it is now spelled “-co”, it possibly may be linked to the traditional Chinese honorific suffix of “-ko”. In an online article dated July 22, 2008 (www.tsihoy.com), Leah L. De Alday indicates that “-ko” is a polite word in Hokkien, meaning “elder brother,” and the word is utilized to express respect.

During the time of the venerable Father San Vitores, who introduced Christianity to the indigenous Chamorro people of the Mariana Islands in the 1600s during the Spanish Era, a Chinese man called Choco appears in historical writings. Choco’s name is recorded in Guam history books in print with the suffix “-co”. According to Garcia (2004), Choco was a *Sangley* [archaic term for a person of pure Chinese ancestry] who arrived in the Mariana Islands when his *sampan* was shipwrecked during a storm. This event occurred when Choco was traveling from Manila in the Philippines to Ternate in the Molluca islands of Indonesia, some 20 years before the arrival on Guam of Catholic priests. In his writings, Garcia portrayed Choco as an elder brother figure for the Chamorro people. Clearly, Guam was home to at least one man of Chinese heritage who was prominent in the local community at the time of missionization (cf. Driver, 1993a and 1993b, and others, for further compelling historical information concerning Guam in the early post-contact years).

In prehistoric times, Taiwan could have been a place of origin for the dispersal of Austronesian-speaking people into insular Southeast Asia and the islands in the Pacific (Bellwood and Dizon 2005). Citing the works of S. Starosta (1995) and L. A. Reid (1999), Kirch (2000) noted the close linguistic affinities of the Chamorro language as spoken in the Marianas with Formosan languages of Taiwan. Genetic studies advise caution, however, to the extent that biological patterns do not necessarily agree with archaeo-linguistic data (Lum et. al., 2002). Further research is needed with regard to the origin(s) of the Chamorro people of Guam.

On July 5, 1912, the Census Report of the Civil Registrar of Guam indicated the total population of Guam to be 12,517, of whom 12,139 were identified as Chamorro. Foreign-born permanent residents included four Chinese (Palomo, 2009: 15). In 2009, most of the Taiwanese on Guam interviewed for this study were familiar with a Chinese gentleman known as Charlie Corn, who was a prominent businessman on Guam just after World War II when the reconstruction of Guam was taking place. Some of them had known him personally; others knew him in

legendary fashion. All seemed to agree that he was the *Pater Familias* who opened the door for what in fairly short order became the Chinese Community of Guam.³ Of great interest to our study, but difficult to assess, is the current total number of Taiwanese-Chinese residents on Guam who were born in Taiwan.

Theoretical Framework and Research Questions

Various works in print describe the Chinese residents of the Pacific region (cf. Crocombe, 2007; Tung, 2004, 2005; Skeldon, 1997; and Willmott, 2007, to name a few). There appears to be no comprehensive research study to date focusing on the Chinese residents of Guam. Crocombe (2007) considered briefly Chinese entrepreneurs on Guam, while acknowledging other Chinese residents of Guam who derive from a variety of countries of origin.

Theoretical concepts explored in this study include Taiwanese-Chinese diaspora (e.g., Tung, 2004; Chiang, 2005, 2008; Chiang and Hsu, 2006), migration (e.g., Portes, 2008), globalization (e.g., Chiang *et al.*, 2004), transnationalism (e.g., Margolis, 2008), cosmopolitanism (e.g., Leonard, 2007), the meaning of place (e.g., Carr, 2008), and the meaning of home (e.g., Stephenson, 1999; Blunt and Dowling (2006). In our field study, we posed research inquiries such as the following: Who were the earliest Taiwanese-Chinese who came to Guam to stay? For what reason(s) did they come to Guam? Was it difficult to gain entry into Guam for them at that time? Why did they continue to reside in Guam? What did they do, especially in terms of gainful employment, at the outset? What do they do now, especially in terms of gainful employment? Has living on Guam been a positive, negative, or mixed experience for them? If so, how and why? Where do they define "home" to be? Do they expect to return to Taiwan in the future to reside there? Why or why not? We have attempted to find answers to these questions by conducting intensive fieldwork on Guam in 2008-2009. In the following sections of this paper, we will explain our research methodology, present our research findings, and set forth our conclusions.

Research Methodology

The methodology for this field project on Guam included classic field methods within the humanistic and social sciences. Qualitative research methods (Hay 2005; Limb and Dwyer 2001) were utilized, including semi-structured questionnaires. Face-to-face interviews were carried out in the interviewees' homes, places of work, restaurants, at the Chinese School on Guam, and at the office of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Guam (CCCG). Twenty-five self-identified Taiwanese-Chinese of Guam who are, for the most part, "old-timers"⁴ were formally interviewed in the course of this research study, with the time spent to conduct each interview varying in length from one to three hours. The interviews were conducted in 2008-09⁵ Most of the interviews were undertaken with the interviewees speaking in their mother tongues in either Mandarin or Hoklo, which are the major dialects spoken in Taiwan, to researchers L-H N. C., Y. L. and F. C. The first and third researchers for this study, R. S. and H. K., are long-term residents of Guam, and are members of several organizations where they often interact with Taiwanese-Chinese residents on Guam. Accordingly, the fieldwork proceeded smoothly, with the respondents' trust and their consent to be interviewed gained in a timely manner. Participant-observation was also a field method utilized extensively by R.S. and H.K. However, all researchers are aware of the limitations of such sampling procedures, which may have left out Taiwanese-Chinese residents of Guam who were not available, for various reasons, to be interviewed at the time that the fieldwork for this study was conducted.

Research Findings

Among the twenty-five Taiwanese people interviewed for this study, the longest term resident among them had lived on Guam since 1967. The most recent Taiwanese resident interviewed arrived in Guam in 1997. A socio-economic profile of the interviewees is shown in Table 1. Among the interviewees, fourteen were males, and eleven were females. With regard to age, among the 14 males, four males were in their 40's, five were in their 50's, and five were in their 60's. Concerning the 11 female interviewees, two women were in their 40's, four women were in their 50's, and five women were in their 60's. With reference to place of birth, among the 14 males, 11 were Taiwan-born, and three were born in China. For the 11 women interviewed, nine were Taiwan-born and two were born in China. Those born in China stated that they had resided in Taiwan for a considerable length of time before moving to Guam. This fact was of considerable interest to us in the context of our research study.

With regard to formal educational experiences among the 14 males, two are high school graduates, two are graduates of vocational-technical colleges, seven had begun or have completed University B.A. Degrees, and three have in hand Advanced Degrees (one with an M.A. Degree, and two with Ph.D. Degrees). For the 11 women interviewed, three have completed high school, four have earned vocational-technical college degrees, two have

begun or graduated with University B.A. Degrees, and two have completed M.A. Degrees. Concerning occupation, among the 14 males interviewed, three are involved in real estate on Guam, three are employed in the auto industry, one is a retired accountant, one works in construction, one works in investments, one is a college professor, two are shop owners, one is in business management, and one is a retired shop owner. For the 11 Taiwanese-Chinese women interviewed, three are shop owners, one is a secretary, one is in the insurance business, one is in real estate, one is a school principal, one is a librarian, one is in sales, one is a tour operator, and one is a teacher. Again, the variety of responses with regard to occupation gleaned from the availability sample of interviewees is of considerable value to this study.

Reasons for migration

With regard to year of migration to Guam, for the 14 Taiwanese males, ten of them came to Guam in the 1970s, three of them arrived on Guam in the 1980s, and one of them came in the 1990s. Among the 11 women interviewed, one came to Guam in the 1960s, four came in the 1970s, two came to Guam in the 1980s, and four arrived on Guam in the 1990s. Why did they come to Guam? According to our interviewees, in the 1970s, two groups of Taiwanese-Chinese came to Guam. Members of the Ret-Ser Engineering Agency (RESA) which consist of veterans who were construction professionals formed a significant group.⁶ The First Commercial Bank was established on Guam then, and China Airlines began to fly between Taiwan and Guam. The second group of Taiwanese-Chinese who came in the early years had E-2 Investor Visas. 1979 was a turning point in the influx of Taiwanese-Chinese coming to Guam, especially with the goal of seeking a politically stable environment. Many interviewees stated that they chose to come to Guam because it is close to Taiwan.

Considering the migration category, among the 14 males who took part in this study, five indicated the category of Family, four stated Employment, two said Investment, and one stated Professional. There were two non-responses in this category. For the 11 women in our sample, six indicated the category of Family, two explained that they came to Guam as Students, one stated Employment, one indicated Investment, and one said Professional. Some of the migrants had specific skills, e.g., jade carving, accounting, shop-keeping. A wide range of reasons were cited as to why these Taiwanese-Chinese came to Guam. One 64 year old male investor said: "An invitation from a good friend often triggers the move and even decides on the destination." Several respondents mentioned that in those days, it was easy to get a Green Card, and it was relatively easier to move to Guam than the U.S. Mainland. Some were influenced by their parents: "My family came to pursue the "American Dream." Another interviewee stated: "My father thought his children should see the world." Some Taiwanese-Chinese actually moved from the U.S. Mainland to Guam. Some of the women interviewed explained that they came to Guam following their husbands. A woman mentioned the feeling of being discriminated against in the U.S. Mainland by the way that people spoke to her and their body language. A man said that many of his family friends were already on Guam, working in the construction business. Others mentioned that they wanted their children to receive a good education.

Self-identity

A very important aspect of this study concerns how the Taiwanese-Chinese who were interviewed view themselves. We asked them specifically how they self-identify. Among the 14 males, considerable diversity with regard to self-identity is indicated. Two males described themselves as Taiwanese and Taiwanese American. Two males indicated that they are Taiwanese, Chinese, and American. One male said he is a Global citizen. Two males stated they are Taiwanese. One male identified himself as Chinese. Another male indicated he is Taiwanese, Chinese, and Taiwanese American. One male said he is Chinese and Chinese American. Two males said they are Taiwanese American. Two males stated they are Chinese American. With regard to the 11 females, four women indicated they are Taiwanese American. Two women said they are Chinese and Chinese American. One woman was undecided and did not provide a response. One woman indicated she is Taiwanese and Chinese American. Two women stated that they are Taiwanese. One woman indicated that she is American. One of the interviewees explained: "We have been in Guam for over 30 years, and 20 years in Taiwan. We have no other home to go to, and will stay in Guam." Another interviewee shared her thoughts as follows: "Guam is my home, but Taiwan is where my roots are." A man interviewed reflected: "Regarding self-identity, I am an American and Taiwanese and Chinese. It is sometimes confusing to say who I am." A woman shared the following: "My boys think they are mixed. They are happy to grow up in Guam which does not have any racial prejudice." Another woman synthesized: "I am Chinese, Taiwanese, and Chinese American all at the same time." A woman interviewee responded: "I am Taiwanese, since I have a great affinity towards Taiwan. I consider both Guam and Taiwan as my homes." Another man described himself to be "Taiwanese American" and "Taiwanese" at the same time.

Returning to Taiwan?

In the final category of the survey instrument, interviewees were asked whether they expect to return to Taiwan to reside in the future. Among the 14 males, eight of them indicated that they would return to Taiwan. Four males said they would not return to Taiwan. Two males indicated they were undecided. For the 11 women surveyed, six women said they would not return to Taiwan. Three women said yes, they would return to Taiwan. Two women indicated that they were undecided. A woman interviewee shared her point of view: "There are too many people [in Taiwan]. Guam is more layback (sic). It is a friendly place, and I am used to living here." Another woman offered the following reason for returning to Taiwan in the future: "We are like leaves returning to the roots." A male interviewee stated that he plans to retire in Taiwan due to insufficient medical facilities in Guam. A man who is an educator by profession responded: "I would like to contribute my knowledge of Human Resources and Higher Education to Taiwan's Higher Education. If I have a good offer, I will return to live there."

In reviewing the responses from the twenty-five interviewees in this study, life appears to be lived rather differently for Taiwanese-Chinese residing on Guam, when compared with Taiwanese-Chinese residing in Australia, in New Zealand, in the USA, and in Canada (cf. Chiang, 2008; Chiang and Hsu, 2006; Ip et al., 1999; Yu and Chiang 2009; and others). To be sure, "place matters" (cf. Carr, 2008; Entrikin 1976; Relph 1976; Tuan 1975; and others). Leonard (2007; reviewed by Peterson, 2008) studied Hyderabadis of India in eight countries around the world over a span of ten years. She examined the theoretical narratives of diaspora, transnationalism, globalization, and cosmopolitanism as attempts at explanation for ways in which Hyderabadis continue to "locate home" and locate themselves. In our Guam research endeavor, the above four theoretical concepts explored by Leonard likewise appear to be insufficient to attempt to understand what "home" means to Taiwanese-Chinese residents of Guam.

In the context of the continuing phenomenon of globalization in the Pacific-Asia region (cf. Bauman 2005; Chiang et al. 2004; and others), the pattern of the movement of people out of Taiwan to Guam may well be changing. Second generation Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam at one time may have lived more classic transnational lives (cf. Levitt and Waters 2002). Transnationalism, i.e., moving quite freely between at least two locales, both of which are claimed to be significant markers of identity (cf. Basch et al., 1994; Schiller et al., 1992, 1994; Gmelch, 1980; Ong, 1999; Yeoh and Willis 2004; and others), may have become too burdensome for Taiwanese-Chinese who are residents of Guam. Second-generation Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam go back to Taiwan from time to time, but seem to be less likely to maintain a permanent residence in Taiwan. The concepts of flexible families, "astronaut" households (Chiang, 2005; Chiang 2008), and experiences of lone mothers (cf., Waters 2002; Chiang and Hsu, 2006; Chiang, 2008) seem less apparent for the Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam. It is more likely that the Taiwanese-Chinese "education mamas" of Guam are living overseas with their children, e.g., in Taiwan, or in the USA, while "Papa" stays behind on Guam to manage his business ventures. A small number of third generation Guam Taiwanese-Chinese students in recent years, unlike their classmates, have chosen to pursue post-secondary education at the University of Guam. Although less prestigious than universities located in California or on the eastern seaboard of the USA, nevertheless, UOG offers a wide variety of major courses of study, a small student-faculty ratio, and many hands-on opportunities for students to conduct field research paired with faculty. Some programs of special merit at the undergraduate and M.A. Degree level include the Bali [Indonesia] Study Project (cf. Johnson et al., 2006). Field research opportunities are available in academic disciplines such as biology, marine science, water resources, sociology, anthropology, history, nutrition, and para-medical studies. Field sites include Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, and Costa Rica (*University Magazine, 2009*).

Making Guam "Home"

Certain patterns began to emerge in our Guam field data. Almost all interviewees identified the extended family as the most meaningful socio-cultural unit in which they readily engage. Requirements with regard to social capital seem to ensure that all public events involving the Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam will be well attended, especially by other Taiwanese-Chinese. Almost all of the interviewees indicated that, in order to be successful, Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam need to own land or property. They must live in a "good" house, and drive a "good" car. Their children must be well educated. Virtually all of the interviewees made the point that all family members must work industriously for financial gain. A 60-plus year old Taiwanese-Chinese woman summarized the feelings of many: "For us Taiwanese-Chinese, there are no Sundays. No holidays. We don't go to the beach on Guam to swim, bar-b-q, and relax. That doesn't accomplish anything. We Taiwanese-Chinese work all the time."

The following remarks are examples of some of the challenges encountered by Taiwanese-Chinese immigrants residing on Guam: “Weather is too hot.” “High cost of food; not getting used to frozen food; not much vegetables, seafood nor fruits.” “Language problems; cultural differences.” “Stores close at 6 o’clock.” “Cannot find housekeeper or any type of helper.” “Learning to speak English.” “Feeling very homesick.” “Recovery from devastating typhoons...” “Expensive cost of living in Guam.” “Have to drive the car myself.”

On the other hand, some of the “old-timers” who have decided to make Guam their home were happy to point out that, in spite of Guam’s relatively small population, they can conduct their businesses profitably in real estate, sales, insurance, travel, trade, and so forth. The advantages of staying on Guam expressed by some of the Taiwanese-Chinese interviewed included: “We have so many friends here; people here on Guam are so nice.” “We are involved in so many charity activities.” “The air is so clean on Guam.” “There are no mobs or gangsters here, no movie businesses here, no gambling, nor public transportation, so that children could not wander around after school.” A businessman explained: “I can fly to Taiwan easily, leaving Guam in the morning, and returning to Guam the next day, after finishing my business in Taiwan. I can sleep well on the plane. Sometimes I ask the airline-hostess not to wake me up for meals.” Another recalled helping his father with the garment industry in the mid-1970s, importing garments from Taiwan, where the garments were 49% finished: “My father had to convince Washington that these were imported fabrics, which would be used to make clothes in the USA.” One of the interviewees was honored as the first Taiwanese immigrant to win an award from the United States Small Business Administration (US-SBA), in 2003. His first sales product was sunglasses, followed by car radios, and now luxury cars.

Attachment to Guam of Taiwanese-Chinese

“Sense of home” has been explored extensively, particularly within the academic disciplines of Anthropology and Geography (cf. Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Chiang et al., 2008; Leonard, 2007; Relph, 1976; Margolis 2008; and Tuan 1971; to name a few). Rensel and Rodman, Eds., (reviewed by Stephenson, 1999) explain that “home” is much more than a physical structure where people reside, and where their most basic needs, i.e., food, shelter and clothing are met (see also Stephenson, Ed., 1994). “Home,” more significantly, is the sociological setting in which people build and maintain social relationships, and affirm their identity and connectedness.

Third generation Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam may have developed a sense of home that can be fluid and negotiable. A member of the Taiwanese-Chinese community of Guam expressed dismay when he learned that his two daughters, now University students residing in Oregon, have declared themselves to be “Pacific Islanders.” “They are not Pacific Islanders,” he declared emphatically. “They are Chinese!” He continued, “They say they were born in Guam. They say there is less competition for scholarships, educational opportunities, and such, when they self-identify with an ethnically under-represented category of students, namely, Pacific Islanders, rather than with the Chinese, who are very well-represented among university students in Oregon. But, my daughters are not Pacific Islanders, even though they were born on Guam. They have to understand that they are Chinese. You cannot declare yourself to be somebody that you are not.” Other third generation Taiwanese-Chinese born on Guam, like the two young women mentioned above, may be choosing to refresh their identity for particular purposes when expedient. However, a young Taiwanese-Chinese university student who is receiving her post-secondary education in the USA pointed out, “My parents always told me, come back to the place where you were raised.”

Leonard (2007) does not find satisfaction with the theoretical concepts of diaspora, transnationalism, globalization, or cosmopolitanism in attempting to explain the articulated connectedness of the Hyderabadis that she has studied in eight countries over a span of ten years. Rather, Leonard has chosen to describe what she calls (2007: 279) “an emergent structure of feeling” which has been experienced by the Hyderabadis as they move across a global landscape structured by “the specificity of place giving way to a larger and more homogenous international public space” (in Peterson, 2008: 527). With regard to the Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam, many of those interviewed spoke of Guam as a place that provides a valued way of life. Interviewees described Guam as both a place and a collectivity of people they could readily identify with. Both Taiwan and Guam are insular communities located in the western Pacific-Asia Region. A commonality of thought among our interviewees perhaps may be considered with reference to the two islands’ similarities, as well as differences, when compared with larger continental frames of reference.

Integration of Taiwanese-Chinese into the Guam Community

Regular endeavors for members of the Chinese community of Guam include extensive business organizational structures, associations for volunteer work, charitable endeavors where fund raising is highlighted, social activities,

and the like. The 2008 Directory of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Guam (CCCG) has as its pledge (page 2): “The Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Guam (CCCG) strives to promote general welfare for its members by uniting all Chinese and other businesses and contributing to the harmony of other cultures.” The 2008 CCCG Directory showcases many activities on Guam that members of the Guam Chinese community participate in, highlighted by color photographs; to name a few, Make-A-Wish Foundation Fund-raising Gala, the CCCG Board Members Mixer, CCCG Moon Festival, Chinese New Year, Annual Food Drive of the Salvation Army, Gala Dinner Fundraiser for the Chinese School of Guam, Guam Chamber of Commerce, Pre-Industry Forum Dinner, Quality Cup Tennis Tournament, and the Iron Chef Contest.

A considerable number of ads in the 2008 Directory demonstrate financial and social support for the CCCG, such as: First Hawaiian Bank; Ambyth Shipping and Trading, Inc.; United Tire Auto Service Center; Far Eastern Furnishings (Guam) Ltd.; Bank of Guam; Quality Distributors; Pacific Sunny Group of Company; Benson Guam Enterprises, Inc.; Matson; Shirley’s Coffee Shop; JJQ International; Tan Holdings; Prestige Automobiles; Security Title, Inc.; Merrill Lynch; South Pacific Petroleum; DGX [Dependable Global Express] and DAX [Dependable AirCargo Express]; Guam Hardwood; Lin’s Jewelry; Guam Home Reality; Bank Pacific; American Printing; and the like. Some, but not all, of these businesses are Chinese owned and operated.

In October 2008, one of the 15 contestants in the Miss Guam Beauty Pageant was Miss Elizabeth Randall, who is half Taiwanese-Chinese. Members of the Chinese community of Guam enthusiastically endorsed Lizzie, and hosted special fundraisers to help her defray the cost of taking part in the pageant, e.g., pageant wardrobe, hairstyling, makeup, manicure, and the like. Her sponsors stated: “Lizzie was born on Guam! She is entirely eligible to become Miss Guam.” Lizzie did not win the pageant, but she placed well among the top finalists.

During the Guam Chinese New Year Celebration 2009, to welcome in the Year of the Ox, students of the Chinese School on Guam performed the Lion Dance at numerous venues around the island. The general public on Guam was invited to attend. The Chinese School students were paid for their performances by the various business enterprises. Funds generated were contributed to the Chinese School’s development fund. In the course of the dance, the Lion is rewarded with a bundle of fresh lettuce. The onlookers were rewarded with portions of the lettuce that the Lion spat out for good luck—if onlookers were fortunate enough to catch a piece.

The Chinese Ladies Association of Guam (CLAG) is very active in fundraising and community service endeavors on Guam. In February 2009, they presented a check for US \$800.00 to Erica’s House in support of its operation as a support service for parents and children in need of visitation and exchange services, and also a check in the amount of US \$800.00 to the Guam Memorial Hospital Volunteers Association with regard to its mission to support the only civilian hospital on Guam (*Pacific Daily News, Guam*, Feb. 12: 30, Feb. 13: 44, 2009). CLAG also donated US \$800.00 to Alee Shelter on Guam, in support of its mission to assist women and children who have been victims of domestic violence and spouse abuse or neglect (*Pacific Daily News, Guam*, Feb. 19: 28, 2009). In March 2009, CLAG contributed a check in the amount of US \$800.00 to the Chinese School of Guam for its mission to educate and preserve Chinese language, literature, culture, and tradition, and they donated 50 care packages to the St. Dominic Senior Care Home to assist its needy residents (*Pacific Daily News, Guam*, March 5: 30, 2009).

On March 22, 2009, more than 700 people on Guam attended the Chinese Gourmet Festival, held at the Sheraton Laguna Guam Resort and Spa (Sualog, 2009: 3). The festival, hosted by the Chinese School Foundation of Guam, featured more than 100 Chinese special foods to sample including honey walnut shrimp, drunken chicken wings, steamed buns, and vegetarian dishes. The proceeds were earmarked to renovate the Chinese School, with an anticipated cost of approximately US \$70,000. Previewed in Guam’s *Pacific Daily News* on March 19 (Pieper, 2009: 22), Pelin Randall, a Taiwanese-Chinese contributor to the event explained: “We are doing this for two reasons. One is fundraising for the Chinese school and the second is to let everybody [on Guam] recognize the Chinese culture via this festival.”

Community service on Guam can be voluntary, but also can occur via the process of election. To date, as far as the researchers are aware, no person of full Chinese ancestry has been elected to serve in the Guam Legislature. The Taiwanese-Chinese of Guam remain optimistic. Several interviewees stated, “One of these days, we will elect a Chinese Senator on Guam.” Some years ago, Guam’s Non-Voting Delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., was of Chamorro-Chinese extraction, namely, the late Honorable Antonio B. Won Pat. In the January 2009 election for the 15 Members of the Board of the CCCG Chamber of Commerce of Guam, Taiwanese-Chinese were well represented. These newly elected members are very much admired for their extensive community service work on Guam, much of which is voluntary, as well as their conscientious and personable style and manners.

In summary, most of the “old timers” among the Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam came to the island for gainful employment when they were young adults. In spite of the small market, there were development opportunities for them on Guam. Diligence, ingenuity and perseverance served them well as important achievement factors. Skills in

entrepreneurship and social capital were brought with them from Taiwan to Guam. Their children, the second generation, have been well-educated on Guam, and many have received their tertiary education in the U.S. Mainland. Many of the second generation Taiwanese-Chinese of Guam come back to Guam to live out their adult lives. Our data at present suggests that their children, the third generation, may not return to settle on Guam permanently as adults, but may likely maintain a distinct “sense of home” with reference to Guam, the place where they grew up. In short, many Taiwanese-Chinese are choosing to make Guam their home, and they are becoming an integral part of the Guam community.

Conclusions

In the course of this research study of the Taiwanese-Chinese ‘old-timers’ on Guam, it seems clear that Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam have a different sort of relationship with their country of origin, namely Taiwan, than do Taiwanese-Chinese living in Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. Perhaps the matter of propinquity provides the answer. Taiwan is situated three hours distant from Guam, by air. From Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, Taiwan is located much further away. This factor merits careful consideration. However, other factors may be more significant. The Taiwanese-Chinese people on Guam we interviewed stated that they feel well integrated into the Guam community. Something about the cosmopolitan and welcoming atmosphere of Guam as place and people resonates well with Taiwanese-Chinese who have chosen to reside on Guam. The new Taiwanese-Chinese immigrants in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, on the other hand, appear to live as transnationals, i.e., the bread-earners, usually the husbands, continue to make their living in Taiwan, and the mothers and children stay in the overseas destination of migration. With regard to the Taiwanese-Chinese of Guam, many of our interviewees spoke of Guam as a place that provides a valued way of living for them. Our interviewees typically highlighted Guam both as a location and a collectivity of people with which they could readily identify. Both Taiwan and Guam are insular communities located in the western Pacific-Asia Region. Indeed, the two islands share some similarities, when compared with larger continental frames of reference.

At present, the Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam may be best identified as people who are “in between.” They have not totally abandoned their Taiwanese homeland as a result of their long stay abroad. But, neither have they become transnationals, living in two entirely different social fields at the same time. The Taiwanese-Chinese of Guam have become ‘permanent settlers’ in Guam. Well-adapted to the *Hafa Adai* lifestyle, they appreciate and enjoy Guam’s multi-cultural non-racialized social environment. The Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam seem to have acquired a separate and unique identity. They appear to differ significantly from 19th Century Chinese sojourners on the one hand, and from New Asian transnational migrants on the other.

It is clear that the worldwide Taiwanese-Chinese diaspora includes Guam in the western Pacific region as a selected overseas homeland. Migrating to Guam, but not becoming transnationals, the Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam have made and are continuing to make meaningful contributions to Guam’s cosmopolitan character, and community development. Taiwanese-Chinese on Guam interviewed for this research endeavor have been very successful in the course of choosing to make Guam their home. They contribute significantly to the cultural and ethnic diversity of Guam, especially in the era of globalization. People matter: Taiwanese-Chinese identify the people of Guam as friendly and accommodating. Place matters: Taiwanese-Chinese interviewed for this study feel that making Guam their home serves them well. Through ethnographic research, we have been fortunate to be exposed to a variety of reflections that enlighten us with regard to the diversity of experiences of the Taiwanese-Chinese residents of Guam. Crocombe (2007: 381) offers the following thoughtful synthesis: “Chinese are relatively few and recent on Guam, but their focus on saving, investment, learning and achievement has given them a rapidly increasing share of Guam’s economy. Some observers there believe they will be the dominant force in [Guam’s] economy within ten years.”

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Notes

¹ Specifically, this refers to Han Chinese who emigrated from Taiwan to overseas countries.

² Mothers who live on their own with children overseas, while the husband has gone back to Taiwan (Chiang 2006, 2008).

³ The Corn family still has roots in Guam. Josephine Corn Lee passed away in San Francisco on May 1, 2009 at the age of 77. Her obituary that appeared in the *Pacific Daily News, Guam*, on May 21: 12 noted she was a “loving daughter of the late Charles L. Corn and the late Esperanza E. Corn,” as well as the mother of six children, grandmother of eight grandchildren, and sister of three siblings, and that she also had many nieces and nephews.

⁴ We define “old-timers” as those who immigrated to Guam prior to 1980, to differentiate them from the New Asian immigrants who came to Guam in large numbers in late 1980’s (Chiang and Hsu 2006).

⁵ Ten interviews were carried out in the period between June 14-22 and twelve interviews took place between August 30 to September 7, 2008. Three additional interviews were completed in January 2009.

⁶ This was a government organization consisting of veterans who were construction professionals.

Appendix
Table 1. Profile of the Taiwanese-Chinese Immigrants on Guam

No.	Age/ Sex	Place of Birth	Education	Occupation	Year of Migration to Guam	Self- Identity *	Return to Taiwan or Not
#1	48/F	Taiwan	Vocational School (Taiwan)	Secretary	1984	3	No
#2	49/M	Taiwan	BA (US)	Real Estate	1972	1, 3	Yes
#3	62/F	Taiwan	College (Taiwan)	Furniture Store Owner	Early 1970's	-	Undecided
#4	52/M	Taiwan	UOG (unfinished)	Car Dealer	1980	6	No
#5	48/M	Taiwan	BA (US)	Real Estate	1970	1, 2, 5	No
#6	65/M	Taiwan	BA (Taiwan)	Accountant/ Enroll Agent (retired)	1971	-	Undecided
#7	65/M	Taipei	Vocational School (Taiwan)	Construction	1978	1	Undecided
#8	64/M	Szechwan, China	PhD (US)	Investment	1972 (Re-migrant, from US)	1, 2, 5	Yes
#9	65/F	Chungking, China	MA (US)	Insurance	1971 (Re-migrant, from US)	3	No
#10	50/M	Taiwan	Vocational School (Taiwan)	Auto Company Owner	1979	2	Yes
#11	60/F	Taiwan	High School (Taiwan)	Bakery Owner	1967	1	No
#12	48/F	Taiwan	Vocational School (Taiwan)	School Principal	1997	3	No
#13	47/M	Taiwan	MA (US)	Auto Parts Manager	1973	1, 2, 3	Yes
#14	56/M	Taiwan	High School (Taiwan)	Furniture Store Owner	1976	2, 4	No
#15	58/F	Taiwan	UOG (unfinished)	Real Estate	1975	2, 4	Yes
#16	67/M	Shanghai, China	University (unfinished)	Real Estate	1975	3	Yes
#17	62/F	Chungking, China	MA (US)	Librarian	1991 (Re-migrant, from US)	2, 4	No
#18	55/F	Taiwan	High School (Taiwan)	Sales Person	1992	1, 4	Undecided
#19	61/M	Xian, China	PhD (US)	University Professor	1985	4	Yes
#20	53/F	Taiwan	Home Econ College (Taiwan)	Tour Company President	1985	3	Yes
#21	56/F	Taiwan	Home Econ College (Taiwan)	Guam Chinese School Teacher	1991	1	Yes
#22	57/M	Taiwan	High School (Taiwan)	Shop Owner (Retired)	1991	1, 3	Yes
#23	53/M	Taiwan	College (Taiwan)	Shop Owner	1982 (Re-migrant, from US)	4	No
#24	63/F	Taiwan	High School	Shop Owner	1978	5	No
#25	45/M	Taiwan	College (US)	Business	1972	3	Yes

*1. Taiwanese; 2. Chinese; 3. Taiwanese; 4. Chinese American; 5. American; 6. Global