

Museums, Anthropology, and Exhibitions on Taiwan Indigenous Peoples — The Historical Transformation on Settings of Cultural Representation

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to explore the historical transformation on exhibiting Taiwan indigenous peoples. The complicate entangled processes between collecting ethnographic specimens, producing anthropological knowledge, and making representations of others are examined based on museum anthropological perspectives. Five major exhibitionary periods are analyzed according to differences of representational settings and driving forces: (1) the period of showing indigenous peoples as vague others and spectaculars; (2) the period of presenting indigenous peoples as systematically classified groups; (3) the period of exhibiting indigenous peoples as metaphors of the colonized savages in contrast to the civilized colonizers; (4) the period of displaying indigenous peoples as preserved cultural units for academic research; (5) the period of developing divergent representational venues and fields for presenting and showing self. Through comparative analysis of the material images, social-political interactions and cultural premises on exhibiting indigenous peoples in Taiwan, the meaning of objectification, cultural representation and power relation behind the exhibitions could be understood more

thoroughly in context.

Key words: representational settings, cultural representation, museum anthropology, quasi-museum institutes, exhibitionary complex, objectification, cultural empowerment

