Chapter 14
Living Tradition: Educational Issues and Practices of Indigenous Art in Taiwan

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14.1   An Island with Cultural Tradition

Throughout the last four centuries, the island of Taiwan (Formosa in Portuguese) has been colonized by the Dutch, the Spanish, the Chinese, and the Japanese. Now, Taiwan is a sovereign state, officially known as the Republic of China. As the island's early inhabitants, the aboriginal groups in this island have survived, and some have even preserved their cultural beliefs. The aboriginal peoples feel a strong attachment to places, and they honor their land in sacred and cultural ways. They tell stories, myths, or legends about the land. One story of the Paiwan tribe tells of mud on top of Dawu Mountain. After exposure to sunlight, the mud was divided, turning into two men, who would later become the ancestors of the Paiwan tribe. The two men traveled to two different directions, the east and the west, to search for new land. The man who headed west eventually returned to Dawu Mountain, settling in the area where the town of Kulalao is located today. Stories like this one are revered because the Paiwan people honor the Dawu Mountain.

Each aboriginal tribe honors a particular place, from which peoples believe their ancestors originated. For example, according to a legend of the Saisiat tribe, a long time ago, a huge flood destroyed the whole village and killed all the villagers, except for one couple that hid on a mountain. The couple became the ancestors of the Saisiat tribe. The mountain is presently called Ta-pa-chien-shan. The Ataya tribe similarly regards this mountain as sacred. In the Ataya native language, the mountain is called "Babo Papak," which means "two-eared mountain." Traditionally, most aboriginal peoples in Taiwan hunt animals for food and clothing. A successful hunter gained great respect from the villagers and was accorded higher status

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as well as a wider hunting territory. The aboriginal peoples consider their traditional land as a sacred entity worthy of respect. To this end, the peoples emphasize the importance of land, or particular places within the environment. To show their respect, the peoples hold tribal ceremonies of worship for their sacred place. As for the Paiwan people, the Dawu Mountain is so sacred to them that they believe their souls will return there once they die.

The aboriginal peoples revere their ancestral land; thus, a strong sense of personal and cultural identity is manifested. In the Paiwan village, the eldest child of the chief family inherits the land and the ritual house, which are passed on from generation to generation regardless of the gender of the heir. Through land inheritance, the Paiwan culture is sustained, ritualized, and honored. The Paiwan village chief, who is in charge of the land, builds a house for rituals, a symbol of chieftain status and power. The younger sons and daughters of the Paiwan chief family either gain permission to use the land or marry into a landed chief family from a neighboring village. Commoners do not inherit land, but they are given permission by the chief to use his land.

The personal and cultural identities of the aboriginal peoples are connected to the land. This connection is so readily apparent that local craftsmen and artists today still use local materials, such as Chinese cypress, fir, or pine, in carving tourist trade items, such as wooden dolls, canoes, containers, wooden utensils, and knife sheaths. Some contemporary artists criticize the dominant culture by painting images that challenge the stereotypical views of the Aboriginal peoples and depict the degradation of sacred land. In each community, the peoples talk openly about their cultural beliefs. Evident in these discussions are the people's reverence for the past, the importance of place, their origin and place of belonging, and for their responsibility to the sacred land. Their sense of identity is grounded in the land and the environment. Their artistic identities as aboriginal peoples are also deeply grounded in their relationship to the land. Thus, the depth of these relationships with the land should be examined to understand the art created within these societal groups.

According to Firth (1992, 25), the study of symbolic patterns "involves recognition of the appearance of the same theme in different symbolic form, as by inversion, or of the same symbol in contrasted context." For example, based on the four levels of Paiwan society, most Paiwan carvers compose using specific types of patterns that they are entitled to use, which are considered as family inheritances. Strict regulations on pattern design and usage have been imposed from generation to generation. In doing so, every Paiwan villager is entitled to his own practices and presentation of beauty. Accordingly, the nature of sociality in Paiwan artworks is fully displayed on pattern usages and interpretations. According to Shepherd (1991), traditional carving patterns, such as heads, human figures, and snakes, function as "social text," revealing the social status and cultural identification of Paiwan members. Similarly, according to Firth (1992, 24), the appreciation of indigenous or so-called primitive art practices, in terms of the anthropology of art, involves not only aesthetic elements but also features of the socio-cultural context. Nowadays, the anthropology of art has mostly been concerned not only with explicit meanings but also with implicit meanings, which include the study of symbols as well as relations to art and

the general iconography of indigenous society (Firth 1992, 25). In the case of the Paiwan culture, traditional carvings are strictly tied to the daily social, cultural, and ritual practices of the Paiwan, that is, to their traditional context. Therefore, a contextual perspective on viewing and interpreting indigenous art is necessary.

The concept of field (champ) marks the development of artistic practices that takes analysis beyond other references, such as context, art world, or institution (Danto 1999, 216). According to Prior (2000, 142), the concept of field provide "the most wide-ranging, analytically sophisticated and empirically productive set of concepts available, to represent the intricate mediations between artistic practices and social space." The traditional field of indigenous art practices mainly comprises sets of cultural values, such as sociability levels, land ownership, and ancestral belief. Reflected in cultural traditions and art crafts, art practices are a combination of daily life and ritual experiences, philosophy of identity, transmission of cultural values, and aesthetic connections among all social levels (Wan 2001). The presentations of art practices, such as weavings, tattoos, and carving, have revealed the traditional type and aesthetics of each indigenous society, including the nature of symmetry and balance. According to Wan's (2005) study of Paiwan carving, the symbolic patterns of human figures, zoomorphism, and even the anthropomorphized snake images in carvings elucidate not only the aesthetic and cultural intentions of the indigenous carvers but also the structure of a visual communication system within the culture. Such representation is meant to claim, strengthen, and to commute the group members' social power, identity, and relations.

14.2　Indigenous Art on the Borders: Contemporary Trends and Issues

Taiwanese indigenous products, especially handmade artifacts, as collections or exotic trophies, have attracted the interest of outsiders, such as curious tourists, anthropologists, and museum researchers. Nowadays, Taiwanese indigenous artists intend to reclaim their cultural roots through art and to rediscover the values and meanings between creating and displaying art within traditional cultural practices. Many indigenous artists promote a movement for exhibiting at local galleries or even overseas, which not only influences the cultural field but also dramatically engages new roles and values with living indigenous art. As a form of visual presentation, indigenous art gradually becomes a recognized category of art practice and part of the cluster of contemporary art society.

Indigenous artists are eager to engage themselves in dialogues about personal and cultural identity through art practices and displays. With regard to the essence and dynamic phases of art, artists still debate on whether to further explore and distinguish between the past and the recent condition. The new forms and presentations of art in contemporary society are different from conventional crafts and artworks in village cultures. More modern tools, techniques, and materials employed in indigenous art practices blur the differences between the old and the new traditions.

The distinction between individuality and social group, between creation and cultural paradigm, and between innovation and continuity are important issues for indigenous artists.

14.3 Impact of Visualization

The recent notion of visualization and its impact on cultural learning, particularly its reflection of art contexts, have enriched interdisciplinary studies. However, with the implications of new technology and disciplines, contemporary Taiwanese indigenous art is challenging the definitions of traditional cultural practice and creating new values and relevance for craft knowledge. The trend of visualization on the Internet has made an impact on the traditional contexts in which indigenous art is produced, disseminated, and interpreted.

Barnard (1998, 10) defines visual broadly as "everything that can be seen" and narrowly as "fine art, or paintings." "Everything produced or created by humans that can be seen" is another interpretation (Barnard 1998, 12), which is proposed by art historians such as Pointon (1994, 28–29), who strongly believes in the man-made basis of artifacts in human history. With awareness of the visual's effect on human sociability, Mirzoeff (1999, 13) defines the constituent parts of visual culture as the interaction of "the visual event," which involves the viewer and the viewed.

In the computer era, the proliferation and dissemination of information in Taiwan has led to the transition of new literary, visual, and communicative vehicles for cultures. Modern technological media, such as the television, computer, and the Internet, offer new ways of interaction, information exchange, and visualization of cultural messages. The recent developments in art practices and resources on the Internet in Taiwan include the establishment of online museums and galleries, professional art resource as well as intermediate media sites sponsored by the government or private agencies, and personal art websites. Moreover, new technology has not only diversified the means by which artworks are circulated and performed but also created a new aesthetic dimension for art expression arising from the manipulation of online techniques, such as animation, multimedia, hyperlink, and interactive writing.

The visualization of culture and art based on computer-generated media is characterized by its immediacy, as well as by its expansion across social, racial, sexual, and other hierarchical boundaries, which is significant to cultural transmission, learning, and appreciation. Moreover, the Internet medium is, by its very nature, instantly international, which is significant to the interaction and communication of cultures and to the identification of cultural members. For example, Mi (2005, 327) uses the popular television documentary film Heshang (River Elegy) as an example of "televisual hypertext" to illustrate the significance of visual/media culture in kindling the popular desire and imagination of a new national identity.

With different views on its definition and implication, visual culture is conceptualized as a "spectacle pedagogy" by Garoian and Gaudelius (2004, 298–312). According to Debord (1967/1994, 12), a cultural critic, a spectacle is a "social relationship

between people that is mediated by images," not a collection of images. Crimp (Takemoto 2003, 85) recognizes the social factors for spectacle: "An image isn't simple negative or positive but rather is the product of social relations and produces contradictory social effects." Following these notions, images as visual pronouncements direct viewers to what to see and how to think, influencing their interaction. Therefore, from the perspective of art education, the significance of visual culture rests not so much in the object or image but in the learning and teaching processes or practices used to expose the culturally learned meanings and power relations surrounding the creation, consumption, valuation, and dissemination of images.

On the contrary, different concerns have been expressed. Bauerlein discusses the concept of visual culture and its burdens, even pointing out that currently, "the arts education field has been invaded by visual culture studies" (2004, 5–13). Kamhi (2004, 25–31) expresses dismay over visual culture studies that ignore the importance of art education and rejects the idea of artistic value and the appreciation of artworks. Efland (2004) and Smith (2005) disagree with visual cultural researchers, or "visual culturalists" in Efland's words, who are silent about the capacity of artworks to energize experience and express humanistic truths. Moreover, both researchers are against the fact that art education is construed primarily in terms of "sites" in which various ideological struggles are fought out.

Based on these notions, Sullivan (2003, 195–196) suggests that the prospect of a new orthodoxy deserves critical scrutiny. Regarding such a prospect, Van Camp (2004) proposes the term "interdisciplinarity" for the concept of visual culture and the implication of art education. According to Camp (2004, 33–37), interdisciplinarity can imply the injection of political ideologies into scholarship, such as the promotion of equal opportunity and dialogue for all races, genders, and competing viewpoints from various backgrounds, which is most helpful and productive for indigenous cultures and education in art. In addition to the interdisciplinary prospect, other concerns should be focused on the transgressive and transformative power of art making. In a society dominated by the production and consumption of images, Lasch (1991, 122) believes that no part of contemporary cultural life can remain immune from the invasion of spectacle, which is true in terms of indigenous art and tradition. Similarly, Garoian and Gaudelius (2004, 298–312) affirm the necessity for a broad and inclusive understanding of visual cultural studies through a "plurality of scopic regimes," which includes the transgressive and transformative power of art making. Indeed, for the purposes of art education curriculum and pedagogy for indigenous cultural presentation and learning, this inclusive understanding is imperative.

14.4   Art on the Internet

The phenomenon of indigenous art on the Internet becomes popular under the trend of the visualization of cultures. First, organizational and personal art Internet sites function as rich digital archives in the case of Taiwan. These online indigenous art

resources make indisputable contributions, as the availability of and easy access to art materials will surely aid in the research and appreciation of indigenous art and culture. One such effort from the private organizations of Taiwan is the Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines, founded in 1994 (with its website up since 1999) and mainly intended for the collection and reservation of Taiwanese indigenous artifacts. Another example is the website of the National Museum of Prehistory, which is centered on the research, preservation, exhibition, and recreation of Taiwanese prehistoric documents and indigenous cultures through the Internet. The Indigenous Digital Photo Museum is an online image indexing system of pictures of traditional architecture, clothing and costumes, as well as handmade objects of Taiwanese indigenous peoples, established by the Public Television Service Foundation in 2003. The Taiwan Aborigines Digital Archive established a project funded by the National Science Council called the National Digital Archive Program, creating a text and an image indexing system for aboriginal cultures and artifacts. The program provides links to many digital databases of art research agencies as well. The Database of Taiwan Indigenous Artists was established by the Bu-nun Cultural and Educational Foundation, providing the first sorting and indexing database exclusively on indigenous artists and their modern artworks.

Other governmental websites, such as the Council of the Indigenous Peoples of the Executive Yuan and other divisions in local county offices, are for e-governmental online services and administration for indigenous peoples in general as well as for broadcast indigenous arts and cultural occasions. The Bureau of Cultural Park in Pintong County provides a professional art website, the Taiwan Aboriginal Culture Park. With major tasks of administration, visitor services, promotion of education, and public awareness, this website functions as a median base for advertisement, commercial interaction, and e-learning of indigenous culture and artifacts, providing an indigenous artist database for searching and archiving. Similar websites include the government site Aboriginal Tourism and Production Information and the Formosa Aboriginal Cultural Village, a multifaceted indigenous theme park established by a commercial company in 1986 mainly for tourist services. Some websites are run by local indigenous communities, such as the Dolan Village of the Pangcah (Ya-Mei), the Chih-ben Village of the Katatipul (Bai-nan), and the Wu-sheh Village of the Seediq (the Seediq Bale website).

Some indigenous artists establish their own personal websites, which contain personal information, brief biographies, artworks, chronicles, and depictions of works. For instance, a female Ya-Mei indigenous artist named Mei-Niang Chang (Lahouk) created a personal website introducing her natural material installations. Mayaw A-ki is an indigenous Amis (Ya-Mei) artist, with a personal showroom on the Internet that introduces his rock artworks. Similarly, other efforts to promote indigenous art include a private online gallery called Timeless Taiwan Aboriginal Art, which sells internationally handmade artworks on the Internet. Thus far, this online gallery has collected from nine indigenous artists from different tribe villages, and most sale lists include carved ornament pieces of leather, rock, and wood.

14.5   Issues About Cultural Education and Learning

New media, such as the Internet, has created new paths and social relations of cultural learning and presentation. In terms of the presentation of artworks, the free flow of and easy access to online art resources and spaces provide more options for indigenous artists, vigorously challenging the hegemony of the conventional systems of museums and galleries. For today's new generations of indigenous artists who are familiar with and willing to access new technology, they can bypass curators, critics, and sponsors to reach online readers/learners and appreciators directly through the Internet. For artists, the Internet represents an ideally indiscriminate art world on cyberspace, without joining in the conventional art agencies or marketing system. The art relations among artists, artworks, and curators/viewers thus become dynamic.

On the one hand, some controversies apparently exist about the overflow of online works, the infringement of copyrights, and the intervention of commercialism. Nevertheless, in a new era of visual culture, the Internet reshapes the horizon of a social-cultural imaginary, which becomes dominated by media/visual images. On the other hand, the question of whether new online mechanism has challenged or even changed the indigenous traditions should be illuminated. For young indigenous artists, the utilization and acculturation of Internet media seem to have changed their reliance on traditional indigenous fields such as village social-cultural environment and infrastructure and have therefore brought impact and change to the scene of indigenous art formerly practiced in the traditional village environment. Accordingly, questions are raised concerning the identity of indigenous art practices and issues about cultural diversity and globalization with the impact of visual culture emerge.

Wang (2005) selects and examines a carefully restricted set of "visual materials" roughly related to or drawn from the themes and precepts of the Lotus Sutra, as they help determine a culture of visualization from which they are ultimately issued. Barnard (1998, 122) argues that "the idea of a culture that does not manifest or represent itself physically in some way is nonsensical and that every culture must use something to represent itself." In the case of Taiwan indigenous peoples, visual patterns are conventionally utilized in art, such as patterns of snakes and human heads, for the Paiwan people (Wan 2005). In the words of Maquet (1988, 2003), it is referred as "the cultural locus" of Paiwan, which is acculturated, circulated, reproduced, and transmitted in the traditional field of Paiwan society.

In the past, the Taiwanese indigenous peoples were marginalized in the expression of the "Culture of Taiwan." However, since 1980, indigenous intellectuals have tried to proclaim their cultural status by re-expressing the creation myths and oral traditions to strengthen the continuity of indigenous culture. Through transcription and circulation, some oral narratives about indigenous cultures have been transformed to literary writings and poetry in the form of parallel texts in Romanized aboriginal dialects accompanied by Chinese translation. Aside from the new formation of indigenous literature, the efforts of cultural transmission and learning have been focused on visual communication on the Internet. In addition to active art practice

in modern exhibition fields in Taiwan, many indigenous artists have started promoting culture visualization through the Internet as well. Most of these indigenous art practices on the Internet preserve the conventional forms of visual arts, such as carvings, ceramics, and weavings. Some artworks have been created via new techniques and formations, such as installations of metal, wood, and rock. Although these modern art presentations generally vary with personal tastes, the ideas and values of the creations of indigenous artists are still based on the conventional visualization of styling and patterning. For example, the Paiwan artists still prefer to use snake patterns, triangles, and human figures as the subjects of their carvings, ceramics, and installations. To show their works on the Web, the most important thing for these indigenous artists is to present their "self," their originalities and cultures, through the modern media of visualization and let others know, appreciate, and learn from these visual and cultural messages instantly and internationally.

Aside from providing paths for the presentation and learning of indigenous art and culture, the applications of new technology also enrich the capacity to preserve indigenous material cultures visually, virtually, and permanently. Alexander (2001, 277–296) points to the existence of diverse collections of aboriginal records, art and sacred objects, as well as information collected over the centuries by missionaries, explorers, and bureaucrats. Similarly, early Taiwanese indigenous artifacts were mostly scattered around the island, and some in Japan and other countries. These collections by museums, agencies, or individual collectors have not been readily available to the indigenous peoples themselves. May (1998, 227) identifies the opportunity that technology confers through the vast files of valuable native language materials and information relevant to tribes housed in museums, such as the Smithsonian Institution, the Newberry Library, the National Archives, indigenous museums, anthropology departments, and private collections, waiting to be made accessible to these populations and the outside world. With new media, as Alexander (2001) points out, indigenous peoples can preserve not only their visual art and material culture but also their oral legends accompanied by visual images about originality, which used to represent the essence and value of indigenous traditions. With the capacity of new media, indigenous oral histories can virtually be maintained eternally, with less interference, such as prejudice or other personal factors. Indigenous people can tell their own stories to their children and other tribe members through the links to Internet resources. The new computer media also provide cultural networks and free access to non-indigenous people, supporting new social coalitions among diverse indigenous communities and other cultures.

14.6   Educational Practice: A Partnership Model

The Graduate Institute of Indigenous Art (IART) of the National Dong Hwa University in Hualien is a unique academic organization in this country, dedicated to Taiwanese indigenous art education. The concept of this master's degree program in indigenous art is based on the underlying belief that professionals of artistic practices, research,

Fig. 14.1 Learning Partnership Model (Referred and revised from Baxter M., Learning Partnerships Model, Figure 2.1, p. 41, 2004)

and management in a multicultural society must be familiar with the social, cultural, and ethnic contexts of indigenous art in general.

On self-authorship, which is defined as "the developmental maturity that undergirds lifelong learning and responsible citizenship," Baxter and King (2004, xvii) state that conditions are identified from an analysis of learners' contexts and influence three key assumptions as well as three key principles. With internal and external factors, such as values, beliefs, and interpersonal relations, the learning partnership model is set up as a means of providing empowerment, guidance, and connection for autonomy, in which challenge and support are essential (Baxter 2004, 41).

As shown in Fig. 14.1, a model of partnership for learning functions as a guide for the Institute of IART to formulate several cooperative projects for graduate students, faculty members, and most importantly, indigenous artists concerned about cultural learning.

Accordingly, to provide a set of systems with support as well as a challenge to the learning and critical thinking of cultural learners, the IART program's objectives are as follows:

1. To facilitate the development of individual learning with fieldwork training that contributes to the body of knowledge on the theory and practice of art appreciation, art policy, administration, and management in an era of the art of indigenous peoples
2. To provide opportunities for professionals to enhance students' knowledge and skills or to develop new careers in the creation of visual art
3. To focus on individual studio practice, cultivation of visual language, material process, and conceptual approaches relevant to the traditions and innovations of indigenous cultures
4. To prepare students for professional learning experiences of indigenous culture and art based on indigenous context sectors

With students from different ethnic backgrounds, creating a context to promote the mutual understanding of diversity and self-authorship among college students and local indigenous communities is essential. Accordingly, this graduate-level

program of indigenous art requires cross-cultural learning expectations for students on several aspects: (*a*) making connections among ideas, experiences, contexts, and self and others; (*b*) actively searching for meaning and taking responsibility for learning; (*c*) developing an integrated sense of identity that extends to the larger world; and (*d*) engaging with others in critiquing ideas and sharing diverse experiences. Since 2007, a series of academic activities and projects has been planned and conducted to implement the objective of IART, including two partnership projects, the Village Classroom Project, and the Digital Opportunity Project.

14.7 Partnership Project I: Village Classroom

The Village Classroom Project, conducted in 2007 and sponsored by the Ministry of Education, is centered on the collaborative partnership between IART and the local indigenous community of Hsin-Sher Village.[1] As school partnership is also the objective of this project, collaboration was initiated with another school partner, the Art Creative Resource Center, a university organization of the Taipei National University of the Arts, which provided research resource support. Figure 14.2 shows a sketch of this partnership.

The Gamalan indigenous people are the major inhabitants of Hsin-Sher Village, a coastal village in the southern region of Hualien. The Gamalan are characterized by an artistic tradition of banana fiber weaving for daily use, such as for baskets, blankets, and handbags. In this project, eight Gamalan indigenous elders and artists participated as collaborating partners, providing insider perspectives on context and traditional cultural knowledge as well as professional support for craft techniques. The Village Classroom Project includes a series of fieldwork, studio classes, and seminars focusing on the Gamalan indigenous environment and cultural context, such as its material culture, natural environment, artistic values, and traditional weaving. Moreover, a field workshop at the local Hsin-Sher Village is included in the program as a specific field learning site.

In 2007, about 50 graduate students from the two universities attended a 3-day field workshop on traditional banana fiber weaving in this little coastal village. Class objectives, teaching materials, and content were planned, prepared, and instructed by all partner university professors and villagers. The whole process of material preparation followed the conventional way of Gamalan craftsmanship, from the initial step to the collection of banana leaves, cutting and preparation of fiber into lines and bundles, and weaving of a piece of cloth (Fig. 14.3). Attitudes of teamwork and sharing were highly required for every student.

According to the statements of the Canadian Archaeological Association (CAA) (1997) and the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS) (2003), it is essential to consider ethic principles of any research or

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[1] It is acknowledge in the conduct of the project and publication of the research results the various viewpoints and collaboration of the Indigenous community of Hsin-Sher Village in Hualien.
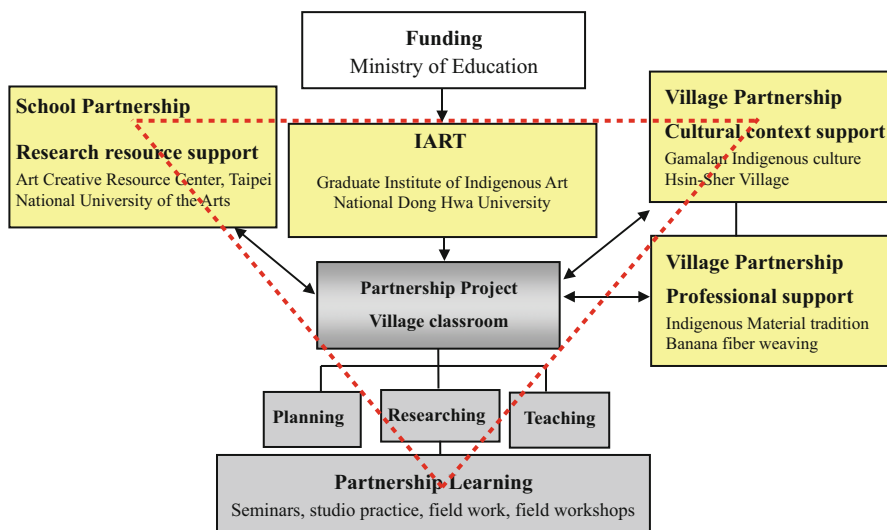
Fig. 14.2 Sketch of the project partnership

Fig. 14.3 Process of Gamalan banana weaving (Images taken in 2007 and provided by IART

project involved with indigenous communities or individuals. In the words of Castellano (2004, 103):

> Ethics, the rules of right behavior, are intimately related to who you are, the deep values you subscribe to, and your understanding of your place in the spiritual order of reality. Ethics are integral to the way if life of a people. The fullest expression of a people's ethics is represented in the lives of the most knowledgeable and honorable members of the community.

In the Village Classroom Project, the ethic principles are practiced as the central issue:

1. To respect the cultural tradition of the indigenous community, asking approval and permit access to the community's property;
2. To conduct the project with the indigenous community as a partnership;

3. To involve leaders and members of the community workshop in the design of project;
4. To cooperate with the indigenous elders with relevant expertise as collaborative instructors in the field classes;
5. To consult the indigenous members with the implication of the project;
6. To share research findings of related art materials and other resources with the community.

In doing so, the key strategy for the "Classroom" covers three parts: (*a*) *partnership preparation*, focusing on cooperation in pre-class peer discussion, course preparation, teaching, and reflection; (*b*) *special seminars with elders*, focusing on storytelling and discussion with Gamalan elders on indigenous value, cultural belief, and weaving art from a new scope; and (*c*) *partnership learning and respect*, focusing on triangle-strength group cooperation, profession orientation, resource sharing, and most important, mutual communication and cultural respect.

Through learning in the indigenous field bases, the "Classroom" implements and reinforces the students' cross-cultural learning of indigenous art by traditional concept mapping, natural observation, and cultural experiences. For students, learning values from different cultural contexts inspire the concept and awareness of self and others in the larger world. Moreover, the indigenous village artists and college faculty members are empowered by the collaborative partnership, not only in terms of class planning and instructing but also in terms of linking professional research and art resources.

14.8   Partnership Project II: Digital Opportunity Partnership

Aside from providing sources for seminars, workshops, and other learning events, the Institute of IART extended the Village Classroom Project and created the Digital Opportunity Partnership (DOP). The DOP is a cooperative project offering an even wider variety of training and continuing education options based on technological resources and Internet communication. An area of heightened need and interest for many indigenous communities, artists, and commercial craft vendors is digitization. Issues pertaining to collection management, preservation, and archiving of traditional artifacts are highly important. Therefore, the local indigenous villages with such inquiries are invited to join and become the digital opportunity center (DOC) in the project.

From 2008 to 2009, two distinctive Truku villages in Shiou-Lin County of Hualien were selected as the Shiou-Lin DOC and Chin-Mei DOC of the project. Three hundred years ago, the ancient Truku moved to the northern mountain region of Hualien. As a small ethnic group, the Truku share ancient traditions, such as fiber weaving, crafts, and face tattooing. Facing a threat of decline under the context change, many Truku artists still practice traditional forms, preserving and transmitting them through digital technology and other sources. Sponsored by the Ministry of Education, the DOP project aggregates different resources from the Institute of IART,
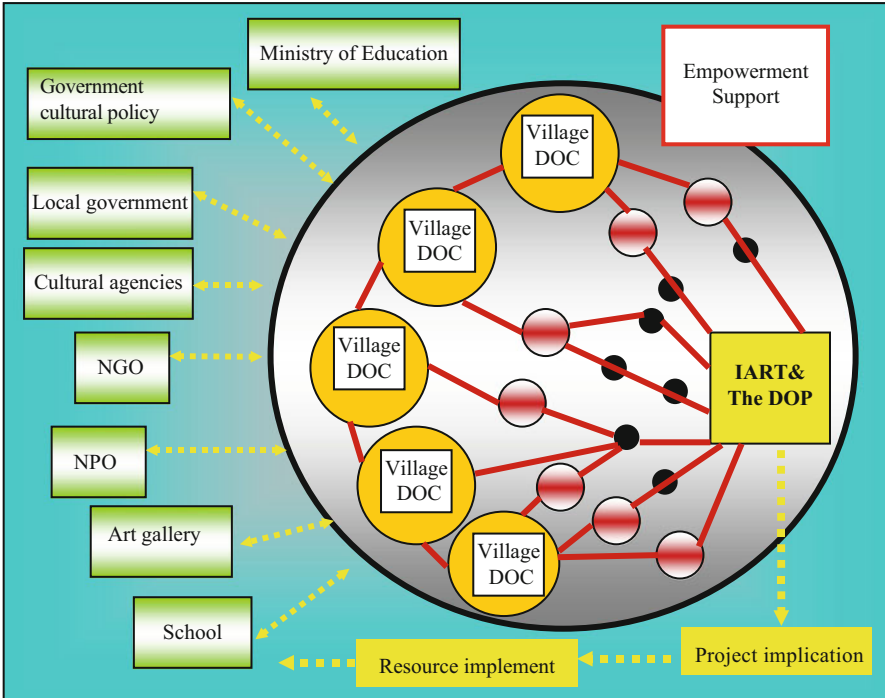
Fig. 14.4 Sketch of the DOP (● art individual, ○ art social group)

the village DOC, and regional service providers, nonprofit organizations, commercial vendors, and local schools. By setting up a social connection, the goal of the DOP is to make the variety of resources easier to be located, developed, and utilized for local artists and villagers with the assistance of digital technology, website connection, and transmission. These continuing education and on-the-job training opportunities will sharpen creative skills and expand horizons for the local indigenous people. Moreover, in-person training from the DOP, such as art studio practices and education on creative concepts and new techniques, is a way of sharing feedback and experience, learning how to maximize DOP services, and exchanging expertise and profession.

The DOP project focuses on two aspects: (*a*) support and empowerment of artists and (*b*) professional development. Gathering support from the government or public providers, such as university resources and faculty, government funding, nonprofit organizations (NPOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and local resources, the DOP project is dedicated to empowering local indigenous artists and art social groups to implement the learning process of identity and profession based on various resources with technological assistance. Figure 14.4 shows a sketch of the DOP project.

Together with the village DOC, the DOP project provides support for implementing local art learners' needs and encouraging individuals to evolve into social groups of art learning. Accordingly, art individuals and social groups from local indigenous villages are connected with the village DOC, with rich resource providers and support, such as the local government, cultural centers, schools, NPOs, and NGOs, with which the IART functions as a matchmaker for future opportunities.

As partners in the DOP project, learners are expected to implement three perspectives, as Baxter and King suggest (2004, 6): (*a*) cognitive maturity, with a reflective value to problem solving in a multicultural context; (*b*) an integrated identity, with an autonomic capacity for connecting and integrating differences; and (*c*) mature relationships, with mutual respect for other cultures based on multiple perspectives. Currently, over ten indigenous communities participate in the DOP project, functioning as village DOCs.

14.9   Discussion

According to Hornak and Ortiz (2004, 118–119), a self-authored multicultural perspective requires a learner's reconstruction of knowledge, beliefs, and values to "introspectively develop personal identity based on perspective of multiculturalism." Through the Classroom Village Project and the DOP project, the implementation and educational outcomes are essential to understanding and reinforcing learners' capacity that evolves with the new changes in this society. Moreover, on-site learning experiences and cooperation enrich learners' flexibility toward reflective or even critical thinking on conventional or preset values and beliefs and strengthen their interpersonal relationships and opportunities, which are essential in a multicultural society such as Taiwan.

As mentioned above, with its multi-ethnic cultural background, Taiwan underwent an interpretive turn in terms of national identity and critical multiculturalism in the 1990s. Taiwan indigenous art and literature of the 1990s tends to use mixed genres and multiple devices, from the traditional to the contemporary, drawing on a wide range of both global and local cultural codes and symbols. Similar to a poem of Paiwan poet Monaneng,[2] the work itself expresses the fluid structure of feelings, experiences, and expressions of the cultural identity of the "self" and the originality. In analyzing the symbols in a work, whether classical or contemporary, and in understanding the cultural context of its production, Camp (2004) argues that we should not overlook the range of other questions that we can ask, questions about a work's emotional expression, representational content, formal properties, and overall aesthetic value. These multiple perspectives enrich our dialogue and understanding as well as the education of our students.

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[2] Data were retrieved from http://www.sinica.edu.tw/tit/culture/0795_TribesOfTaiwan.html, 11/29/05.

With the global notion of the visualization of cultures, new media may foster the local traditions undergoing rapid change. Nevertheless, with an aim to eternalize the truths of art between the viewers and the viewed, the indigenous values between people and the earth would be recalled from generation to generation through the support of new technology.

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