

From Sino-Japan to Taiwan-Japan Exchange on Co-  
production between Public Broadcasters-

An advancing on current democratic media alliance or contesting the  
history of colonialism

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# From Sino-Japan to Taiwan-Japan Exchange on Co-production between Public Broadcasters-

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## Abstract

For enriching the 8K Ultrahigh Definition TV production, NHK signed the co-production contract with Taiwan PTS in one travel documentary “Alishan Forest Railway Journey” in 2023. The joint-team make this work ready to debut now is timing to research by its potential effects on colonialism, geopolitics, common memory, and indigenous people. An investigation conducted for the topic through internal document analysis and historical archive collection with cross-check. This research temporally found that the upskilling of broadcast production is realized in exchange for any transitional justice of colonialism being proceeded under an ambiguous climate of geopolitics observed by the third party. Alishan railway and cypress mining is built by Imperial Japan regime. To review the history, PTS is straightly tackled the criticism on colonized oppression locally. The nature of Alishan is long-lived with Tsou people but who underdeveloped with modernity brought by Railway. Although the documentary is left those issues open to debate and deliberation, the episodes after broadcast to Taiwan public are not easily predicted their interpretations as usual. In foresee future, the political establishment among Japan, Taiwan and Nationalist party will acquire each best interest from the viewership it delivered through domestic broadcast and overseas marketing.

**Keywords:** Colonialism, Co-production, Digital TV, Documentary, NHK, Public Broadcasting, Taiwan

## Introduction

A new co-production between NHK (Nippon Hoso Kyokai) and PTS (Public Television Service) is embarking in 2023. That project reaches a new horizon between Taiwan public service broadcasting and Japan's one in cooperation on programming. Thanks to 8K production entering into a new audiovisual era, a full adopted production chains is implemented by NHK guiding a local transition in Taiwan.

According to TV history, the news co-production is the first example to build the one between Taiwan incumbent PSB (TTV) and NHK in 1990. And the first quality documentary shot for Sino-Japan relation is also produced by TTV in 1992. "Under the Hinomaru", narrated the hidden Taiwanese story during Japan Occupation Period, this documentary was broadcast without fully supports by original commissioner for a political concern. Overshadowed by these two events, it made the co-production between NHK and Taiwan broadcasters a highly controversy move regarding the sovereignty, culture consciousness, and nationalism of the two island-nations.

Found in 1997, Taiwan Public Television Service (PTS) is state-of-the-art public broadcasting system. The exchange between NHK and PTS gradually expanded from know-how, personnel, training, program, to co-production. In 2023, PTS signed the co-production deal with 8K TV production team of NHK reached a new horizon on Taiwan-Japan cooperation on public service broadcasting.

This research is striking this entangle topic by adopting the view on neo-technological determinism follows by state enhancing its industrial and cultural strategies for effecting on the national social policy objectives (Ferguson, 1986). The focus topic is the co-production 8K TV travel documentary for the tale of Ali Mountain Forestry and Railway in Taiwan. By using the groundbreaking technology provided by NHK, a sharp image will be created for this railway route developed during colonial period of Japan Occupation.

Referring to the historical monument made by co-production between NHK and U.S. ABC, the "Pearl Harbor: Two Hours that Changes the World" is the tremendous project for airing the program followed by a "town meeting" to debate the current Japanese-American relationships. (Johnston, 1992) This typical co-production one is best described its goad by Dr. Leonid A. Zolotarevsky (Director of Department for International Programming, Russian National State Broadcasting Company) in 1991

said, "Television is the most efficient media for establishing direct contacts between people of different countries.....It's not purely political; it's of a humanitarian nature. The PTS is fulfilling this mission now on hand.

This research is trying to locate the project within the historical renewal movement of the colonial past. The Alishan Forest Railway is built by Japanese regime along the route to change the aboriginal people living. The 8K is producing the sharp storytelling of this critical years resulting in two effects on cultural and industrial strategies. This travel, nature and cultural TV programming will benchmark one special module for encouraging the production studios generate more input into this new venture. Furthermore, Taiwan public funded broadcasters will build its own new image of Taiwan-Japan co-production work by rediscovering the people memory on colonial past and strengthening the alliance with democratic media bloc interlocking with new geopolitics of East Asia.

## **Colonialism Conceptual Debate**

The post-colonial state thesis is developed along the path to creating newly independent countries after the end of Second World War. (Barnett, 1997) In Asia, the liberation movement is spread within Southeast and South Asia. Beneath the surface of autonomy enjoyed by Southeast-Asian, the U.S. hegemony worked with European allied with colonial heritage in here to support this new bloc (Ngoei, 2019).

Those movements above are heavily overshadowed by the Japan Imperial invasion to Southeast Asia during WWII. Anglo-American interests were greatly considered for the war against Japan troop in Indochina, Malaysia and Singapore. Those setbacks in war caused by Japan colonized force will number the days of occupation in Southeast Asia by British, French, and Dutch forces as well. The rise of newly independent states of Southeast Asia criticized the colonialism promoted by North and Western World. After 1945, American forces is also manoeuvring into the Asia-Pacific region to withhold the potential threat from Communist China Party. Once American foreign policy successfully built the "Arc of Containment" from Indonesia to Japan, Japan is again being treated as the ally of Anglo-American bloc existed at here.

This complex of colonialization criticism in the last century could be tabling into a dialectical picture from the Eastward angle to Westward one.

**Table 1. The Dynamics of Colonial Powers within Asia-Pacific Region (1940-1960)**

Period	Criticism Actors	Colonizer (or Potential threat)	Colonial Region (or Threat Impending Area)	Decolonization Players
Before 1945		Imperial Japan (Taiwan being part of it)	Southeast Asia Taiwan Korea	Anglo-American Alliance Anti-Japanese Resistance
1949-1951		Communist China	Southeast Asia Taiwan, South Korea	U.S., British Forces
1945-1957		Britain, France, Dutch	Southeast Asia	Newly Independent States (liberation Movement)
1960		Communist China Nationalist Party	Vietnam Taiwan (under Martial Law)	U.S. Japan Anti-communist policy

(Source: Collected by Author)

Developed by critical historical study, Taiwan located at an ambivalent position within one-hundred-year journey. Taiwan was colonized by Japan after Sino-Japan War in 1895. Japan is the engine who brought the modernity into Taiwan. Including many facilities with the radio, the Nippon Hoso Kyokai was found in 1926 and Taiwan received this communication trial beforehand. Taipei delegates surprisingly heard the voice broadcast from Osaka. In 1928, the first radio station JFAK was formally established in Taipei (Wang, 2018). Following this media intervention (Frederick, 1993: 89-90), a powerful radio transmitter 100K made by NEC is erected in 1937 for radio warfare and propaganda. The purpose of this establishment is the assistance to Imperial Army invasion into Southern Asia and Mainland China. Taiwan colonized by Imperial Japan in the first place and turned to the part of Japanese military base to attack the Allies troops of Southeast Asia. This awkward positioning of Taiwan spelt the contradictory tune of its historical role during the first-Two World War.

After the end of WWII, Taiwan was handover to Nationalist China who defeated Japan in Mainland. The autonomy of Taiwan sovereignty is restored theoretically. However, the 228 Massacre 1947 was incited by the conflicts between Formosan and

Mainlander for a domestic riot. Aftermath, Nationalist troop suppressed the unrest by prosecuted and executed many Taiwanese politicians and educated people. This created the resentment toward Mainlander regime since the Chiang Kai-Shek fled to Taipei defeated by Communist China in 1949.

Nationalist Party government decreed the Martial Law and turned out to be the ruler again in Taiwan once the Japan Colonialization is passed away. However, for encircling the Communist China threat in Southeast Asia, U.S. decided to support Chiang Kai-Shek regime in Taiwan being a bridgehead on Western Pacific Rim. This move legitimated his authoritarian state ruling over Taiwan as an internal colonialization.

For completing the circle around Communist China, Japan was counted an ally of U.S. containment policy. This geostrategic move brought Japan back to tie with Taiwan economically and politically. The hinterland policy is recommended by American policy maker as follows,

Therefore, "Our first concern must be the liberation of Manchuria and North China from communist domination." This rollback option, however, was delayed; the victory of Mao's forces throughout China and the possibility in 1949 that Washington might be able to split Moscow and Peking (Acheson's policy) combined to suggest a hinterland for Japan in Southeast Asia. In July 1949, the CIA asserted that the United States had "an important interest" in "retaining access to Southeast Asia, for its own convenience and because of the great economic importance of that area to Western Europe and Japan." (Cumings, 1987: 61-62)

This hinterland of Japan policy marketed the textile and light industrial goods export in exchange for raw materials. With the nationalist movement in Southeast Asia, U.S. was playing Japanese interest at the expense of British and French post-colonial one in there and was substituted by Japan earning dollars in the sterling bloc. Start from the light industrial one, Taiwan and ROK obtained more from financing and technology resources of Japanese in next decade for their enterprises. Until 1970s, both countries were in transition from peripheral to semi-peripheral status to overcome their structural position of the last years of the Japanese empire.

However, long before 1960, Nationalist Party, took over Taiwan bureaucracy trained by colonial Japan, successfully accomplished land reform by separating landed gentry from native oppositional forces. In terms of Taiwanese well educated in Imperial Japan era, the Chiang Kai-Shek regime is another new colonial state. (Chen, 1998; Lee, 1998)

From the perspective of dependent development, Chen (1981: 71) argued the beneficiaries from land reform is the bridgehead of new imperialist to exert “collaborative mechanisms” through an internalization process. The particularity of Taiwan case is witnessed by its “self-transformation” evolved around the idea of colonial dependency. The marked the making of Taiwan postwar development is different than the one of the rest of Third World countries.

That historical process made the Taiwan case one of complex modernization tracks when reviewed the celebration of 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the End of WWII from Allied Forces (China, U.S. and United Kingdom) to the Republic of Korea, and Taiwan. (Matsumoto, Yamada, Tanaka, Shibata and Tanaka, 2016). Adopted the survey by Japanese public broadcasting research institute (BCRI/NHK), the broadcast media (including public and private) of Taiwan achieved a diverse or divergent picture of interpreting the sovereignty issues before and after War. The journalistic and media professionals in Taiwan struggled instantly within different ideological positioning for the relations between Taiwan, Japan and Mainlander Chinese.

### **The Political Significance of TV Industry in Taiwan**

The celebration of 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Taiwan television broadcast is enjoyed by the public in Oct. 2022. The first TV broadcasting station TTV, is almost half-funded by four Japanese Consumer Electronics Companies. This broadcast franchise is authorized by Chiang Kai-Shek regime for welcoming an important Sino-Japan Cooperation.

Long before the inception, Taiwan is well-informed the progress of Japan television industry rising through U.S. Aid program. For example, the film production training is regularly funded by ICA Technical Aid Program. Those trainees and their enterprise finally were the host to run the preparation committee to establish the first TV station in 60s. (Chen, 1958) It made the equipment of Taiwan movie industry being directly supplied by Japan light industries goods as the hinterland policy proposed (Kung, 1964).

In 1953, the Chief of Central News Agency is invited to pay an official U.S. tour to study TV industry in there arrange by the Secretary of State. After the tour, he reported to Nationalist Party and publish report in 1955. Inside the document, he frankly suggested to introduce the UNITEL plan for a Global Microwave TV Relayed Network into here. This plan originally proposed by State Department to form a strategic link from Japan through Taiwan to Philippines. (Schwoch, 2009: 87-89) This is the part of the geopolitics of 1950’s television network.

It is a practical thinking on Sino-Japan relation for being fostered the industrial and production chains between them. But not without the cultural insulation concern, Nationalist Party must resist Japanese language and custom revived again driven by previous exchange programs. For example, the first TV station (TTV) is strictly prohibited to broadcast any Japanese program or using Japanese off-screen sound. The news and documentary should not mention any “relatively modernized infrastructure” and “strong, productive agricultural base” left from the colonial dependency before War. (Chen, 1981:74) The historical lesson taught in school and mass media is the victory of war against Imperial Japan and celebrating Taiwan Liberation Day annually.

However, the Chief of Central News Agency and Director of Journalism Research of Chengchi University, he supported 12 graduate students visit Japan for a summer interim study on media in 1955. Acclaimed the postwar NHK with many print and audio media, they concluded the scale and scope of Japan TV should be a pioneer study for Taiwan colleague to associate and respect. (Journalism School of Chengchi University, 1956) It is not until the lift of Martial Law in 1987, the TV industry is gained a momentum to bridge exchange program between news and entertainment.

In the end of 1989, CTS (Chinese Television System) applied for an exchange program with NHK to relay the songs of Japan in celebrating New Year Eve. However, Government Information Office rejected this application by stipulating the current law prohibiting Japanese language without renewal (China Times, 1989). In Oct. 1991, TTV finally reach a deal with NHK for news exchange to broadcast Taiwan news in the NHK satellite channel “WorldNews” (UDN, 1991). In July 1993, the parliament approved the amendment to Radio and TV Act by abolishing the language barrier and quotas clause.

Before that, around the July of 1992, TTV censored internally on its commission documentary “Under the Flag of Empire of Sun”. The Chairperson of Board rejected scheduling to broadcast this commission work. For interviewing with many leftwing warriors to share their resistance to Imperial Japan, TTV withdrew its commission for the language they use and the event they criticized. This controversy issue demonstrated the sensitive regarding Sino-Japan relation criticism during this transitional period. Finally, CTS (China Television System) with support by Political Warfare Bureau, Ministry of National Defense, purchased this documentary and broadcast nationwide through its terrestrial channel. (Chiu, 1992)

In the Ninety, the major breakthrough of Taiwan broadcasting industry is the fast



growth of TV channel operators through cable and satellite down-link service working together. And two domestic TV channels are political franchised by Nationalist government respectively in 1997 (Formosa TV) and 1998 (Public TV Service, PTS). The anti-colonialism of Imperial Japan is lessened in the hands of new media regulatory body. Taiwan Public Television Service is operated by a group of technical and production trainees studied shortly in NHK and BBC.



Figure 1. The pioneers of Engineer Department PTS trained in Japan  
(Source: CPTV, 1992)

The equivalent of public service broadcasting on both sides now is fine-tuning to each other. After 1997, the paradigm of broadcasters is shift gradually from the U.S. terrestrial broadcasting model to the European continental one (including Japan). The dawn of analogue switchover to digital television is one further step to push Taiwan public broadcasting into surfing a new universe. The biggest pull of transition is driven by a sounding business plan and finance. In 1998 onward, Taiwan is debating itself 's future of industry by pitching the three different world standards of digital TV from U.S., Europe to Japan. (Ko, H.-T., Chang, C. and Chu, N.-S.,2011).

From 1998 to 2001, The industry association led by PTS, stroke back the incumbent policy of digital switchover made by U.S. lobby and Nationalist government. The

collective effort and common sharing of European standard with mobile industry is rendering more attractive package by introducing mobile TV reception in digital age. The strong coalition between industry and technocrat successfully revoke the existing U.S. standard and re-selected the European one (DVB-T). The move is a public-interest oriented policy choice. Paid highly interest in mobile TV, the Japan one is also the potential incentive model for learning.

The technological driven way future dramatically changed the makeup of new industrial and academic collaboration. The rising of digital TV working group of public television service is a public-interest oriented trial for harnessing a new digital content service, according to Ferguson (1986: 59),

Should the individual, the market, or the nation-state be the ultimate arbiter of cultural production and consumption? Or should the cultural flame be guided and guarded by publicly-subsidized broadcasting in the public interest?

However, the technological advance is usually contained the two contradictory forces accompanied together (Ferguson, 1986: 59). On the one hand, the technological transfer initiated by state for national development and racing for economic competitiveness rated by credit organization. The digital TV enhanced the interactive service for audience controlling their choices on the other hand. Those service enlarged the scope of foreign culture in the sense of a competing view with nationalism one. In Europe, the digital satellite service operators deregulated in 80s onward is encroaching the cultural sovereignty authorized originally to the franchise of terrestrial TV market. This wave is called "Electronic Colonialism".

Marching into the gate of Millennium, Taiwan public television service increased the opportunities of exchange with Japan colleague, NHK for news, technology, production, and emergency response etc. The border line of prohibiting colonialism heritage stipulated by Nationalist government is almost disappear in those years. Beyond the programming, PTS started the talks with media professionals who know better in re-engineering and policy making for digitalization of TV. These knowledge and experience sharing from Japan belong to the much contemporary achievements after the end of Second World War. Without the nostalgic to Imperial Japan, the exchange of professional experience is gone smoothly without any disturbance. However, for adopting the TV standardization nationwide, this critical policy is avoided completely the option for ISDB (Integrated Standard Digital Broadcasting) developed by Japan and NHK again due to the colonialism concern (Bian, 2003).

It was not until the internationalization move ignited by PSB associating worldwide, the Japan local program was put on shelf for exchange and exhibition. Organized by International Public Television Screening Conference, Taipei launched the Mini-Input 2005 & Docu Forum with a masterpiece program "HD-the New Frontier: NHK's Experience. Long before 2000, Japan is early adopting nation for High Definition TV. (Hart, 1999). It is naturally to have a HD curation for Taiwan audience by showing the documentary "Satoyama-Japan's Secret Watergarden" (directed by Ms. Masumi Mizunuma). This film for documenting traditional rural lives demonstrated human and wild animals together in a symbiotic relationship with the original sound. It is not too nostalgic to re-colonized local Taiwanese mindset by this high-tech approach.

According to Ferguson (1986: 52), for one nation technical policy adopted, it was decided more than the means with its concerns on technical, market or organizational arrangement but extended into the political concerns for the ends associated with social, industrial, cultural objectives. This implicated the Taiwan TV industry could be levelling on the digitalization with a new taste or beyond the traditional control on the audience choice.

Figure 2. HDTV is NHK organized by Taiwan Mini-Input (2005)

Furthermore, PTS followed suit for the technology transfer, invited Motoi Miura, Executive Researcher of NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute conduct the seminar on HDTV for digital broadcasting in 2004. This HD review is become routine within regular period of training session.

The neo-technological determinism wave in this tide is overshadowed by a new regime climate (handover regime by Nationalist Party to Democratic Progressive Party in 2000) and led by new-formed public subsidized broadcasting. Whether this technology adoption is effected from the industrial consideration into a political goal of nationalism (re-colonialism or new anti-communism critique see Table 1.) or new colonialism? By fostering the new transmission of TV standard as well as culture and programming, what is the Taiwan industrial strategies of TV and audiovisual platform positioning through serving “with whose interest to what effect”? In here, Ferguson’s research (1986) shed the great light on this topic follow-up.

### **The Current and Redefined Co-production with NHK**

Taiwan Public Television Service strengthened further its relationship with NHK around 2013. According to the internal documents, the exchange and acquisition between two entities are mainly focuses on programming. These items included children program, local film, co-production on edutainment, documentary and research for new program, joint-creativity in new form of short story, finally a first drama “Journey-Taiwan Express” in 2020.

The co-production between two sides followed a trend from the non-fiction category to the semi-fiction one. Without touching any experience happened circus 1895-1945, the drama backgrounded by a modernization of construction project and the human civilization of “Out of Cradle” documented the early B.C. exploration are two major co-productions. Before 2007, Taiwan PTS has produced two prime-time drama series originated from the stories within Imperial Japan occupation period. The first one is “Dana Sakura” described the aboriginal people resisted Japan colonialism with force. The second one is “The War of Betrayal 1985” rightly cries out for a war against Japanese military invasion.

The exchange journey between Taiwan and Japan PSB spans into two decade of 21 Century left with one common memory of Sino-Japan relation with solely an anti-colonialism war focus by PTS programming. This is a highly interesting enquiry when one asked for the other side of story whether is developed or argued by current regime and public subsidized broadcasting after a quarter of century.



Figure 3. The first-ten year of PTS programming positioning its ideological standing to Sino-Japan Relationship (Source: PTS, 2008: 14-15)

“The journey from White Terror to gay pride parade”, Shelly Rigger (2011: 38) pictured the aftershock of the first handover of regime by DPP. The identity of Taiwanese is naturally born with younger generation during the new regime rule. The political vision as “Free China” is gradually transformed into “Democratic Taiwan”. This backdrop is not dissipated when the regime is again set to handover to Nationalist Party in 2008. Even the trend is reinforced by DDP won the Presidential Election in 2016.

NHK officially announced the 8K TV broadcast launch at 2020 Tokyo Olympic. A progressive approach to the maturity of 8K TV is adopted by Japan colleague. From a global value chain (GVC) framework (Chalaby, 2016), the case of co-production 8K TV between Taiwan and Japan is illustrated by following scenario before its implementation.

1. A producer-driven network: for showing the reality of 8K TV, the TV set market is necessary for put on the retailer shelf let people can watch. The long journey for NHK promoting it through multi-year roadmap is finalized by the record of TV set penetration in 2020. The huge investment for innovation and research in producing new set is achieved by three global electronics brands: Samsung, Sony and Panasonic.
2. A content producers-driven network: as a content production house, it contained the equipment for shooting 8K TV, and a postproduction house to process the

material to the end-product available for content aggregators (Matsubara, 2017; Konda, 2016). Moreover, the medias asset management and archive systems specialists are ready in house for leveraging on the product for multiplatform delivery request. This complex to production TV content is left the competence power to large institute of broadcasting like NHK. With the large commissioning budgets and workforce, broadcasters can control the skillful independent content suppliers even the number is far few than those of who being controlled in marketplace.

3. The distribution: once the satellite communication of 8K TV is practiced in a period of time (2014-2018), a viable international copyright business was created. A program internationally produced required the IP issues to be solved between content production and aggregation. Moreover, the program acquisition of the target topic is including program funding. Usually the large amount of investment is not commensurable to one's capacities of broadcasters. So there is deal for acquiring the IP right of program through purchase agreement. NHK's Copyright and Contract Division is currently provided the legal assistance to the 8K TV Co-production project on both sides.
4. TV industries go internationally in the last twenty-year. To exchange commercially between allies or rivalry, the TV format business is a routine of trade and learn to survive. The majority of top-rating programs attracted the industrial players to settle a format marketplace whom benefited from their success. Started from the game show and reality TV, now each genre of TV program has its own formatted product within the respectively ecosystem (Chalaby, 2016: 48-50). NHK is seeking the partner of Co-production worldwide based on the format trading experience of international marketplace.

Those trends above are paving the new backdrop of Taiwan PTS and NHK talking into the deal of 8K TV co-production. In March 2023, Mr. Shibasaki Sasaki, Leader of NHK 8K Channel & Content Production Center visited Taiwan PTS for 8K TV workshop. During the session and before & after, NHK articulated with the international or satellite TV broadcasting business oversea in Southeast Asia to ponder a new project locally produced in Taiwan. According to GVC framework, a pan-continental TV structure is gradually decomposed into transnational networks for connecting local made production. (Chalaby, 2016: 47) This aim is researching on the join-interest of both sides gained from the experience of international TV program consumption between Japanese and Taiwanese audiences. Finally, travel documentary series as the genre of co-production is the answer.

According to initiative group of Japan-Taiwan project, there are two decisive factors for this choice. Personally, the leading figure of NHK aspired to have one this kind project in Taiwan and choose the “‘Alishan” (Mountain) Forest Railway’. The local side of production team upheld this idea by treating Alishan Railway as the historical heritage since it has been developed in 1912. Ministry of Agriculture, ROC has established Alishan Forest Railway and Cultural Heritage Office in 2018. One year after, Ministry of Culture has accredited Alishan as the first National Cultural Landscape in Taiwan. There is a strong political implication of choosing the site of Alishan and its railway network for 8K TV co-production topic. Witnessing its re-opening of Forest Railway in July 2024, the Taiwan regime intended renewal of the 100 history of stories and memories under the current new geopolitics after War in Ukraine.

In December 1991, NHK together with its American co-producer ABC (ABC Television Network) aired “Pearl Harbor: Two Hours That Changes The World”. This documentary was broadcast in the year of 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pearl Harbor event. Inside the episode, a heavenly interviewed both Japanese and American survivors was conducted and accompanied a “town meeting” held by famous Anchor for a debate on the attitudes and relationships of both sides. This landmark work is not underestimate the importance of politics within co-production if there is always focused on technology, programming, marketing, and exchange in the first place. (Johnston, 1992: 30-36) Where this case is replicated in Taiwan when the anniversary of Hundred-Year around for Alishan Forest Railway to re-opening its tour package, PTS independently chose NHK as the partner of co-production documentary is un-avoided the political and ideological hurdle before its end-product debut to public.

## **The Politics of Co-production in Travel Documentary “Alishan Forest Railway”**

Scheduling to broadcast on July 4, 2024, the travel documentary “Giant Tree—Taiwan Alishan Forest Railway Journey”, co-produced with NHK, is the central discussing topic of this article. PTS worked with Sino-Japan team into a seven-episode parts of documenting story. (excluding Prologue and Epilogue, there are Flatland Area, Spiral Loop, Fenqihu-Alishan Tea, The Story of Railways and People, Steam Locomotive, Giant Tree and Sunrise)

The description of the whole story is done by a linear progressive step by step with Railway marching into the tip. It adopted a non-fiction approach with featuring the

local reporting on people, nature, historic sites and railway construction. Whether the person or historic fact whom is selected by joint production team is the attention should be paid by a revision of Alishan Forest Railway history. Is a rediscovery or ideological propagation striking back to the Taiwan history of Imperial Japan is a main argument for this genre of topic and co-production. This research now is temporally drawn a critical look at the following plots easily being focused on the scene.

According to the Forest Railway and Cultural Heritage Office (AFRCHO, 2021), a five-topical theme including nature, forestry, railway, community, and culture is put into the structure of “Alishan-In Our Memories, Alishan Forest Railway Exhibition”. These themes are naturally turned into analytic approaches again at the criticism of the incoming travel document “Giant Tree”. The article singled out the sensitive issues through this five-topical theme as follows.

**Table 2. A Criticism of “The Forest of Ancient Cypress” into Five Notes**

<b>Topical Theme</b>	<b>Issue to be tasked</b>	<b>Critical Notes</b>
Nature	Cypress and Taiwan Cedar	Steam Locomotive revived or Diesel one with air-condition for tourism, a friendly eco-tourism?
Forestry	The credit of Government-General of Taiwan, Imperial Japan initiated scientific investigation on the mystery of forest	Nature Meets Modernization? The original forest was almost completely cut down for whose interest? For construction of Shrine, one notable example is the Kashiharajingu shrine in Nara Prefecture
Railways	Since 1906, Japan Government built 20 branch lines of railways to move wood out But the Zhushan station and railroad to sunrise tourism is credit to Nationalist Government	Forest trains, is it a collective memory on Alishan and its residents? Who overcome the precipitous slopes of Dulishan (Mt.) by using spiral loop, Japan Technician or Indigenous



	after WWII	Tsou People?
Community	Settlements are built up alongside railroad and stations. People build their livelihood over 100 years. Now, what is local identity belong to?	Local Taiwanese, settler hired by Japanese with lives in there, Japan resident (Tomiko) wished for return home, and the collective memory of his grandfather (Lin Yi-fang) in rare old footage shows the storekeeper holding some bento boxes in Fenqihu
Culture	Nature enriches the people and tourist's creativities, and many fascinating works published	Where is the positioning of Indigenous Tsou People ? For Modernization or Multiculturalism? (Wang Qiao-Si)

(Source: author comparing screenplay and internal research documents)

The nature of Alishan is one of treasures demonstrated by AFRCHO. In side this section of exhibition, the heritage of Cypress left from last Ice Age is highly acclaimed and this due to the abundant moisture from monsoons offering. With Tsou people phrased “so-sio-nag-na” (a place with many Cypresses), this nature contributes to the great habitat of biodiversity.

The reopening of Railway due to nature disaster for 15-year till now is celebrating with new designed Vivid Express brought with a VIP Lounge on the train. The immersive environment of Hi-Fi audio is also equipped with each of its coach. Then, SHAY 31 steam locomotive will regularly transport between Chiayi and Shizilu. Should the zero-emission policy work with the sustainability of Alishan Forest Railway and its surroundings must be left not without doubt. The documentary will bring this issue unintentionally to the public.

The Forestry and its timber harvested by Imperial Japan is a political common memory of Taiwan people. The origin of Alishan Forest Railway is served this purpose without doubt. To produce any documentary for construction work left from Japan Occupation Era of Taiwan is questioned by the theme of legitimacy for Taiwan media

in the first place. NHK and Taiwan PTS are quite well-known on keeping the arm's length from the political forces but the former now is quite restrained from the credit past (Dragomir & Söderström, 2022). However, the fact of beneficiary from the cut down Cypress must be mentioned for documenting the history from NHK perspective. In the sixth episode "Giant Tree", the value of Cypress is proved by the Hall of Kashiharajingu shrine in Nara Prefecture whom made by Alishan giant ones. NHK noted that "The giant cypress trees have watched over the historical ties between the two neighboring countries".

The historical ties in here should be looking forward discussing fiercely within different political forces in Taiwan when the film will be debut on June 29. Long-term criticism regarding the logging and forest railway building 100-year ago is divided between Nationalist and Democratic Progressive parties. This co-production should not avoid being checked by the bi-partisan system even barely the historical fact being documented.

Regarding the construction of railway, the documentary is done by a scientific journal format for detailing the makeup of spiral loop design for overcoming deep slope. Who design the solution in the first place? By Japanese technician in the field or working with Tsoo People on the scene? The documentary is confirmed the former. However, the Taiwanese old local tale is affirmed with indigenous people. This episode adopted the light-touch approach to praise the majestic creation. Be ready for the debate after the episode open to public is a reasonable forecast.

Taiwan PTS is working on the episode of Sunrise by showing the achievement of Zhushan Station and branch line of sunrise by Nationalist Government in 1986 after the end of Japan Occupation Period. It is a fair picture of historicizing Alishan Railway in current political consensus.

For current local people livelihood, the episode of Fenqihu is easily transmitted the picture of selling "Bento" (lunch box) business to tourists. To do rediscovery of this common memory of Taiwanese, NHK retrieved the archive in result of finding the video image of grandfather of Lin Yi-fang, currently was the recipient of local family shop selling the boxes. To reach a breakthrough of incumbent documentaries making by official or local producers, NHK successfully champions its data analysis and archiving metadata into a wonderful reunion of people and their memories. However, what a picture being reinforced into local mind and consciousness of nationality is again pretty sensitive.

Finally, the whole film of people and railway must be retuning to the first inhabitant-the Tsoo People in Alishan. The episode 4 “The Railway and People” is the first stop witnessing aboriginal people tribes encounter with railway pathway. The effect is positioned at “channeling other community and object” rather than “cultural clash or spiritual reshuffle”. The Epilogue is again confirmed this message by a true Tsoo figure, Ms. Wang Qiao-Si, thanks to forest railway, who trained by this profession and earned a living with family back to Alishan.

This research, based on the subtitles and narration of the documentary, interviewed with producer to discuss the sounding of planned critical notes. With this analysis in minds, the effect of co-production between Japan and Taiwan is estimated to be almost revolutionized the one between Sino-Japan in the past.

Beyond the upskilling exchange and technology transfer, this documentary is paved the road to celebrate the eve of 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Taiwan PTS. On June 29, a last weekend of outdoors activity is planned for displaying this show to the registered public. This outdoors activity located at Square of National Theatre where celebrated the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Republic of China was held for a Taiwanese Opera live rebroadcast in 1991. The height of the PTS birthday night with NHK co-production work is enhancing in the end of first half-year of 2024 overfilled by a new geopolitical speculation.

Moreover, the next celebration should be arranged in Tokyo, Japan when the documentary scheduled to broadcast in General Channel of NHK in next half of 2024. There are many forces who supporting public diplomatic relationship of Taiwan-Japan should leverage on this opportunity into a concerted action under the climate of new geopolitics.

## Conclusion

The long journey of colonial, liberation, democratizing process in Taiwan is an interesting topic to background a co-production of historical documentary project in 2023. Taiwan and Japan public broadcasting systems join-together into this educational, informative and leisure programming and production by their recognized freedom of press and public interested-oriented actions. However, this coalition is not gone into safe and calm voyage without turbulence beneath the ocean-wide post-colonialism critique. The article is not found the legitimacy crisis of co-operation on the programming of Taiwan issues in Japan Colonialism Era. But rather the timing of

documentary debut to public is thoughtful and allowed open-minded audience to re-think the nationality of islanders and interpretation of history occupied by Imperial Japan.

Taiwan did not follow the liberation movement into a new independent country by shouldering off the Imperial Japan force. Under the U.S. hinterland policy deployed into West-Pacific Frontline, the nation occupied by colonizer for 50-year is ambiguously tied with postwar Japan again diplomatically or loyally. The successive Taiwan regime is crashed with local gentry by massacre tragedy and claimed its sovereignty over island by the victory of allied force in WWII. The tangle complexity among Taiwan, China, Japan and U.S. paint a difficult picture of identity with whom for Taiwanese born after 1945. To tackle this core without siding political camp, PTS is deepening this co-production with NHK and unintentionally contributed into forming an international public sphere to open dialogue between diverse opinions regarding nationalism or multiculturalism.

“神木の森 Giant Tree—Taiwan Alishan Forest Railway Journey”, a travel documentary will be structurally into a public debate revolved Taiwan-Japan core linkage within multi-year interval of repeating talks. There are few cores of contestation addressing as follows,

1. To preserve nature of Alishan, should re-open forest railway is better for sustainability or worse into degradation?
2. Where is the positioning and identity for the first inhabitant of Tsou people in this Alishan forest mining economy? Channeling to modernity, or losing its affinity to the livelihood of homeland?
3. The praise of Forest Railway and its treasure is tenable to the nation and people currently resided here only sandwiched by China and Japan diplomat confrontation?
4. Whom is beneficiary from the lucrative resource of forest economy by cutting and transport Cypresses historically?
5. Is the forum or town meeting of core issues above should be mediated and reconciliated by public service broadcaster’s programming policy?

It is not imperative to find the answers to the arguments above by PTS and NHK. This research positively confirmed the documentary is revamping the Taiwanese memory of Alishan and its railway by an open dialogue approach with scientific presentation of how it achieved the historical record.

Last not the least, this documentary is unintentionally embarked in the heats of re-visioning the colonialism and re-forming geopolitics. In March 2023, PTS is already presented its debut of historical war drama “Three Tears in Borneo” in International Panorama Competition of Series Mania, the Europe’s largest festival for series and scripted TV in Lille, France.

This drama is arranged from a story based on a war prisoner camp in Borneo during WWII. Three young Taiwanese enlisted as Imperial Japan Army is dispatched into being guards of Allied troop prisoners (POW) in Malaysia (Symchuk, 2024). The scenario ambiguously represented the colonialize status of Taiwanese in serving Japan invasion to Southeast Asia. This show rightly criticized the identified memory of Imperial Japan occupation for whose interest to keep. The drama is set to be a touchstone case for embarking a first voice in the biggest fair by showing Taiwan talent and content-making (TAICCA, 2024). The Director-General of PTS also attended this activity by endorsing the importance of this move internationally opening the new window. This overseas presentation of five-episode series is also promoted by Taiwan Creative Content Agency (TAICCA), funded by Ministry of Culture.

In Feb. 24, Ministry of Culture sponsored another Taiwanese Opera “1624” for celebrating the quadruple centennial anniversary of Tainan City's founding. The city is the historical site encountered with Netherlands in 1624. Holland established the bridgehead “Port of Zeelandia” in here. This opera is screened into an adventure scenario by pitching the indigenous Siraya people against the commercial interests of Han Chinese, Dutch, and Japanese. The epic opera tries to tell the different aspect of history and turn the colonialism into a pride. For spread the rediscovery of colonial Dutch-Formosan, the Taigi (Amoy) TV channel of PTS is simultaneously broadcast it through terrestrial channel and social media platform (Ministry of Culture, 2024). However, the angle of this rediscovery is enormously criticized by Nationalist party and indigenous PM in aftermath.

“神木の森 Giant Tree” broadcast into the sequence of historical TV program should be recognized as another hard talks with colonialism and identity of Taiwanese in current new geopolitics. With NHK took part into this co-production, the history of JFAK Taiwan as war machine in WWII is revealed as the cause of nationalist’s criticism. The opposite side of supporters must cite both broadcasters with better rating in the annual indexing of World Press Freedom by RSF. The dynamic picture of broadcasting the above three TV genre (war drama, live-event performance arts, and travel documentary) is an eclectic gesture toward the insolvable issues among Taiwan, China

and Japan.

Finally, Taiwan public media is highly comparatively studied by international communication or Asian communication schools for its contribution to national development or Asia perspective on communication theory (Lent, 1995). Inside the historical review, there are several conundrums being predicted to capture the complexity of this area study. Taiwan public media was born after 1997 and resided in the period of conundrum no.4. Lent suggested this encounter happened in late 90s is free from imperialistic motives and methodological inadequacy of U.S. administrative research due to the thriving local research.

This research on Taiwan PTS born within post-democratization of media movement, with an alternative route to response to never-ending quarrelsome talks on nation building and colonialism heritage. Referring to Ferguson's thesis (1986) on neo-technological determinism acts upon broadcasting media and public policy, PTS utilized the same track (8K TV) to do thing differently. The chosen travel documentary is overshadowed by historical contextual meaning and humanity rediscovery without neutralizing its topic into a sight-seeing favor. It is not "overshadowed by the hucksters of high technology" as Lent's warning.

Secondly, the colonialism critique is not fixed by an iron-cage dilemma into one or the other discourse. Although the themes of documentary are not siding with environmentalism or essentialism, but the producers focused on the construction and operation of Forest Railway scientifically left the facts open to critical watch. The heritage of Imperial Japan is witnessed, the contribution of Postwar Nationalist government is praised, and the Tsou People identity is revealed. The production team is candidly facing the future criticism on colonialism. And the management and policy sections of PTS are benefited by the debut into a further networking with Japan establishment and broadcasting right marketplace. However, the upskilling of broadcast production is realized in exchange for any transitional justice of colonialism being proceeded under an ambiguous climate of geopolitics observed by the third party.

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