



Peer-Reviewed Journal

Modernity in Contemporary Indigenous Labor Songs of Taiwan: A Study Centered on Amis Singer Xia Guoxing's *The Voice of a Formwork Worker*

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Article Info

Received: 18 Apr 2026,

Received in revised form: 14 May 2026,

Accepted: 17 May 2026,

Available online: 21 May 2026

Keywords— labor songs, modernity, mountain love songs, multiple modernities, textual analysis, Xia Guoxing.

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Abstract

In postwar Taiwan, many indigenous people migrated to cities for physically demanding wage labor. Their labor songs, born from this diaspora, blend tradition and modernity, distinct from traditional work songs. The late Amis singer Xia Guoxing (1953–2009, Onor) debuted in the 1980s, releasing over 30 albums and composing around 500 Amis-language songs. Categorized as "mountain love songs," his music spread via grocery truck cassettes, earning him the nickname "king of the vegetable-truck cassette songs." This paper focuses on his labor song "The Voice of a Formwork Worker." His simple, lively, and playful style resonated with workers. Fusing traditional Amis rhythms with modern beats, his lyrics mixed Amis, Mandarin, Japanese, and Hokkien in a karaoke format, leading researchers to note his modern creativity gave Amis songs a popular flavor. Often performed at harvest festivals, his work is examined here within postwar Taiwan's socioeconomic history to explore modernity and multiple modernities, including the individualization and contractualization of labor, the commodification of time, workers' strategies, and an aesthetic combining traditional and modern songs.

I. RAISING THE QUESTION

Among contemporary Taiwan's Austronesian peoples, from the 1970s onward in the postwar period, a large proportion of the working population moved from their native places to the cities, joining the capitalist labor market, exerting physical labor and earning wages to survive. Transnational or rural-to-urban labor migration and ethnic diaspora became key

facets of their urban life experience. Starting in the 1960s, these indigenous laborers of different ethnicities and genders walked into the ranks of heavy, physically demanding industries in the great metropolises of western Taiwan and their outlying areas. In forestland work, coal mines, deep-sea fishing, factories, and construction sites, we can see the working silhouettes of indigenous people and also hear the labor songs they create. These songs manifest a fusion of

tradition and modernity, and thus differ from the forms of traditional work songs. The author argues that the characteristics of modernity in contemporary industrial society are primarily expressed in workers' individualism (the emphasis on individual skill and performance), the discipline and regulation of time (punctuality and the commodification of time), the strict separation of labor and leisure, the inculcation of a work ethic, and the divided order of the factory assembly line, among others. In other words, the labor modernity encountered by contemporary indigenous peoples is markedly different from their traditional orders of labor value. Faced with this capitalist arrangement of labor modernity, how do indigenous people manage? How do they confront the issues of alienation and commodification within the labor process? In fact, songs, workplace jokes, and playful banter make work more interesting and humane, serving as one of the strategies that indigenous working-class people employ to cope with alienation under the capitalist labor process.

In recent years, the author has focused research on the changing labor situation of urban indigenous peoples. During fieldwork and interviews, it has become evident that labor songs are a very significant part of the urban indigenous labor lifeworld. In 2009, by collecting and studying the songs of urban indigenous peoples, I attempted to examine the relationship between music and ethnic consciousness—for instance, through the song “We Are One Family” composed by Gao Ziyang—to rethink the mechanisms by which an urban indigenous imagined community forms. Several years ago, while writing my doctoral dissertation, I chose the labor process of urban Amis construction formwork workers as my research topic. Therefore, during the fieldwork period, I also came into contact with various materials and information concerning Amis workers, including the collection of a number of labor songs, whether created collectively or by individual singers. Examples include “The Carpenter’s Song” and “The Voice of a Formwork Worker” (a composition by the late singer Xia Guoxing). What deserves further exploration is this: What meaning do such contemporary indigenous labor songs actually

hold? And what is the relationship between these songs and class?

Clearly, work songs are also a distinctive feature of traditional Taiwanese indigenous music. However, between the collective, mutually supportive labor of early societies and the individualizing characteristics of labor under postwar capitalism, the meaning of labor expressed in song has long since diverged substantially. This paper will attempt to investigate the significance of modernity in contemporary indigenous labor songs. For example, in the lyrics of “The Carpenter’s Song” or “The Voice of a Formwork Worker,” one can clearly discern conceptions of clock-regulated starting and finishing times, the commodification of time, and labor-management relations—all hallmarks of modernity. Among the countless contemporary labor songs, the vernacular labor songs of grassroots workers composed by Amis singer Xia Guoxing are among those most capable of evoking resonance among indigenous audiences. Works such as his 1980s song “The Voice of a Formwork Worker” early on spread via cassette tapes or CDs into the fabric of major and minor activities in indigenous communities (such as the Amis Harvest Festival or folk-dance gatherings of women). The author believes that by taking Xia Guoxing’s labor song compositions as a core case, we can probe deeply into the meanings of modernity and tradition within contemporary indigenous labor songs, as well as the implications of multiple modernities arising from the fusion of old and new in songwriting—especially the former. We can also further explore the dialectical relationship between indigenous music and working-class consciousness. In addition, we can reflect on the importance of the everyday songs and playful banter that workers use to combat labor alienation and estrangement during the labor process. These are the main research aims of this paper.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND PROSPECTS

There have been numerous studies on contemporary indigenous music, including works by Jiang Guanming, Lin Daosheng, Chen Shiyi, Huang Guichao (Lifok Oteng), Lin

Zhixing, Zhang Zhaowei, He Yingyi, Chen Junbin, Sun Junyan, Huang Guochao, and others. In addition, there is a substantial number of master's theses and doctoral dissertations [1–6].

Overall, research achievements in the past decade have been remarkable and show a trend of steady accumulation. This is especially true of the series of studies by the ethnomusicologists Chen Junbin, Sun Junyan, and Huang Guochao. All three have addressed issues of postwar indigenous music and media (the recording industry), yet each has adopted a distinctive approach. Chen Junbin [7–10] considers the hybridity of contemporary indigenous music and its changing structures of feeling from a postmodern perspective [11], suggesting three points of entry: the postmodern invitation, the dialectic between tradition and modernity, and the articulation of musicology and cultural studies. Sun Junyan [12–14] adopts an in-depth fieldwork approach in the Amis Falangaw (Malan) tribe, accumulating rich musical ethnographic data. His research also possesses historical depth, touching on the transformation of ethnic music in the Malan tribe during the Japanese colonial period and thus making a significant contribution. Huang Guochao [15–17] examines the dialectical relationship between contemporary indigenous songs and politics from the perspective of the politics of music. He also excavates a wealth of historical materials related to indigenous folk songs by adopting a temporal dimension, which is particularly valuable.

Although the aforementioned works indicate considerable progress in the study of contemporary indigenous music in recent years, some areas still need strengthening. For example, contemporary indigenous music studies have seldom engaged with issues of ethnic consciousness, gender, and class [11]. The author believes that by studying the music of contemporary indigenous working-class labor, we can perceive the face of indigenous social change and the transformation of structures of feeling under modernity, such as individualization under capitalism and changes in the ownership of the means of production and the production process. We can also

observe the lifeworlds and action strategies of indigenous workers (actors), especially the face of a large migrant labor population in metropolitan areas. These work songs, whether collectively or individually composed, are well worth collecting, interpreting, and analyzing within the socioeconomic and historical context of postwar Taiwan in order to explore their implications of modernity and multiple modernities.

In retrospect, many songs depicting the sentiments of labor under industrial capitalism were born in postwar indigenous society. The author has preliminarily compiled a number of these postwar indigenous labor songs, as shown in Table 1. These songs reflect the major industries in which indigenous people have been predominantly employed since the 1960s: coal mining, deep-sea fishing, and construction. They are mostly collectively composed, with individual compositions coming second. The collectively created songs were primarily sung among indigenous diaspora communities and were later collected, transcribed into notation, and fixed in writing. Individually composed works were disseminated through cassette tapes and CDs released by record companies, becoming either niche or mainstream popular songs [18].

These songs were originally categorized as “mountain love songs” (or “mountain ballads”). These albums were sold at large or small indigenous community events (such as the Amis Harvest Festival), via “vegetable trucks” that toured remote villages, at markets bordering indigenous and Han Chinese areas, door-to-door by indigenous vendors in tribal villages, or on consignment at village grocery stores (placed prominently at the entrance), thereby disseminating the creative music of indigenous singers [18]. These ethnic-language albums belonged to a niche market. Although sound preservation and reproduction technologies (such as vinyl records, cassette tapes, CDs, VCDs, or DVDs) enabled a number of small record companies to release indigenous-language albums (such as Lingling Records, Xinxin Records, or Xinsen Records), leading to the capitalization of indigenous singers’ voices [19], such compositions, limited by ethnic language (a niche market), meant that albums

like Xia Guoxing’s Amis-language creations generally circulated only within the ethnic community. Only when they contained an Amis flavor (traditional Amis melody) would the Amis community be interested in purchasing them, while other indigenous groups would rarely buy them [20].

Labor sentiment songs related to the coal mining industry include “Why,” performed by Hu Defu (Kimbo) and set to a poem by the indigenous poet Monane, which commemorates the Amis victims of the 1986 Haishan coal mine disaster. As for songs about the labor and diaspora sentiments of indigenous deep-sea fishers, quite a few have emerged. They include the many collectively composed songs of unknown authorship listed in Table 1: “Longing for the Fisherman’s Return,” “Sentiments at Sea,” “Blessings to the Seafarer,” “The Reluctant Parting at the Harbor,” “Fisherman,” “Fishing Song,” “The Seafarer’s Sorrow,” and “Voice of the Deep Sea.” For the lyrics and repertoire of these songs, one can refer to Lin Xinlai’s *A Study of the Lyrics of Taiwan Amis Folk Songs* [21], Lin Daosheng’s “The Evolution of Taiwan Amis Folk Songs over the Past Century—From the Treaty of Shimonoseki to the Present (1895–1995): The Example of Ten Amis Folk Songs” [22], and Wu Mingyi’s *The Song of Naluwan: A Selection of 120 Amis Folk Songs* [23]. Individually composed songs on indigenous deep-sea fishery labor include “Love for Singapore,” written and composed in 1971 by the Amis folk scholar Huang Guichao (Lifok Oteng), which conveys the labor and diaspora sentiments of the increasing number of Amis people who had engaged in deep-sea fishing since the 1960s (a single voyage could take two to three years before returning home). For this song’s lyrics and music, see the collection in the National Museum of Taiwan History’s “National Cultural Memory Bank” [24] (see Fig.1: Huang Guichao Lifok Oteng’s musical composition — manuscript of “Love for Singapore”), and also Lin Xinlai, *A Study of the Lyrics of Taiwan Amis Folk Songs* (1983), page 248 [21]. Another contemporary Amis singer, Suming, composed the song “Deep Sea” in the Amis language to commemorate his father who had worked in deep-sea fishing. This song is included on Suming’s second album *Amis* (2012).

6 6 6 6 | 3 6 6 1 2 |
 1. lo-mo-wa-day ci Ka-ka ha-ya
 2. Pa-lo-wa-day i Ta-kaw ha-ya
 3. i-ra-ay ko Ti-ka-mi ha-ya
 4. mi-na-to no Sing-ka-pol ha-ya
 i 6 3 5 3 2 | 1 6 6 - |
 1. lo-mo-wa-d a mi-fo-ting
 2. lo-mo-wa-d ko Ta-mi-na
 3. Ti-ka-mi- - sa ni Ka-ka
 4. a-lo-ma- - nay ko siaw-ce
 3 6 6 1 6 5 | 3 2 1 6 1 |
 1. to-sa-ay ko-mi-he ca-an ning-ra
 2. ico-wa-ho ma-a-raw ko-ti-reng i-so
 3. i-ma-la-si-a-ay ko ta-yal ni-yam
 4. ca-ay to ko-ma-mi-no-kay cing-ra
 3 2 1 2 1 6 | 6 6 - 0 1 |
 1. ra-rom sa-nay ka-ko
 2. ta-ngic sa-nay ka-ko
 3. sa-nay ko-so-wal ni-ra
 4. mi-ka-da-fo i-sing-ka-pol

Fig.1: Manuscript of Huang Guichao’s (Lifok Oteng) Amis-language musical composition : *Love for Singapore*

As for indigenous labor songs about formwork in the construction industry, there are several collectively composed songs of unknown authorship, including “Scaffolding Scenes” and “The Carpenter’s Song.” Individually composed songs about formwork labor include “The Nailer from the Mountains” (2016) by Paiwan singer Kasiwa of the band BOXING, “Formwork Worker” (2014) by Amis singer Chalaw Pasiwali, and the song to be examined and discussed in this paper, Xia Guoxing’s “The Voice of a Formwork Worker.”

The singer at the center of this paper, Xia Guoxing (1953–2009), became a singer in the 1980s (joining Xinxin Records in 1987) and released his first album at the age of 34. Over a career spanning more than two decades, he issued over thirty albums and wrote around five hundred songs in the Amis language. Among these, he composed many labor songs about the work of indigenous laborers, such as “The Voice of a Formwork Worker,” “Truck Driver,” “The Man Working in the Pit,” and “The Voice of the Unemployed.”

Table 1: A List of Selected Labor Songs of Contemporary Urban Indigenous Peoples

Song Title	Composer / Creator	Year or Period
“Longing for the Fisherman’s Return”	Collective	c. 1970s
“Sentiments at Sea”	Collective	c. 1970s

"Blessings to the Seafarer"	Collective	c. 1970s
"The Reluctant Parting at the Harbor"	Collective	c. 1970s
"Fisherman"	Collective	c. 1970s
"Fishing Song"	Collective	c. 1970s
"The Seafarer's Sorrow"	Collective	c. 1970s
"Leaving Home"	Collective	c. 1970s
"A Man Must Be Strong"	Collective	c. 1970s
"Work Song"	Collective	c. 1970s
"Scaffolding Scenes"	Collective	c. 1980s
"The Hardships of Starting a Business"	Collective	c. 1970s
"Voice of the Deep Sea"	Collective	c. 1970s
"The Carpenter's Song"	Collective	c. 1980s
"Love for Singapore"	Huang Guichao (Lifok Oteng)	1971
"Why"	Hu Defu (Kimbo)	1987
"The Voice of a Formwork Worker"	Xia Guoxing	1987
"Truck Driver"	Xia Guoxing	1990s
"The Man Working in the Pit"	Xia Guoxing	1990s
"The Voice of the Unemployed"	Xia Guoxing	1990s
"Speaking Honestly"	Gao Ziyang	1998
"Panay at Nineteen"	Suming	2012
"Deep Sea"	Suming	2012
"Formwork Worker"	Chalaw Pasiwali	2014
"The Nailer from the Mountains"	Kasiwa	2016

Source: Lin Xinlai [21]; Lin Daosheng [22]; Wu Mingyi [23]; Yang Shifan [25].

III. THE POSTWAR TAIWANESE SOCIOECONOMIC HISTORY BEHIND THE SONGS

...only through change can we easily discover the larger structure, and only by broadening our perspective to encompass an adequate span of history can we hope to understand these changes. Therefore, if we wish to understand how small situations interact with large structures, and the major forces operating within these small situations, we must engage with historical materials. Historical study not only enhances our understanding of structure—without the use of historical materials, we cannot understand any society, even one in a static condition. The image of any society is a specific historical image. What Marx called the "principle of historical specificity" refers first and foremost to a guiding rule: to understand any society, one must ground it in the specific period to which it belongs[26].

The emergence of contemporary Taiwanese indigenous songs—including the social content of "migration and diaspora sentiments" and "capitalist labor experiences" they convey, as well as their melodic styles—is in fact intimately connected to the course of Taiwan's postwar economic and social development. In brief, on the one hand, there was the overarching structural transformation toward industrialization and urbanization in postwar Taiwan; on the other, there was the impact of the Nationalist government's postwar policy of "mountain areas to plains assimilation" directed at Taiwan's indigenous peoples. The passage by sociologist C. Wright Mills quoted above reminds us that the image of any music is a specific historical image, and that only by broadening our perspective to encompass an adequate span of history (grounding it in the specific period to which it belongs) can we hope to understand what modernity (or modernization) Taiwanese indigenous music has undergone and its social significance.

The transformation of Taiwan's postwar economic environment brought considerable shock and change in the form of agricultural decline and the outflow of rural labor [27–29].

Specifically, in the 1950s, the government successively promoted the "Land Reform" (such as the rent reduction to 37.5% policy) and the policy of "nurturing industry with agriculture" (cultivating industry through agriculture, developing agriculture through industry), which led to widespread usury among rural farmers and a severe outflow of agricultural labor [29], thereby accelerating Taiwan's industrialization and urbanization. Furthermore, in the 1960s, the government's export-oriented policy of encouraging investment and developing export industries (1966–1973) [30, 31] created an urgent need for more labor in production lines, prompting rural Han and indigenous populations alike to work in factories or export processing zones, becoming assembly line workers (especially low-cost female labor). By this time, the community life and labor force of Taiwan's indigenous peoples had already been absorbed into Taiwan's larger industrializing economic system. A high proportion of the indigenous working population migrating to Taiwan's western cities to make a living thus became a major trend.

Additionally, the Nationalist government's postwar policy of "mountain areas to plains assimilation" tied indigenous communities ever more closely to Taiwan's economic development. In detail, the postwar government essentially adopted this assimilation policy as its overall direction. For the economic development of Taiwan's indigenous peoples, this phase carried the characteristics and significance of "controlled capitalization." In January 1951, the provincial government promulgated the "Key Points of Mountain Administration" and actively promoted the "Three Major Mountain Movements" (1951), which sought to advance through three campaigns: "improvement of mountain people's daily life," "settled agriculture," and "afforestation through seedling cultivation." In December 1953, the provincial government issued the "Outline for the Promotion of Mountain Administrative Construction Plans," proposing the "mountain areas to plains assimilation" policy in an attempt to modernize and "plains-ify" indigenous mountain society [32, 33]. Among these, the "Mountain Life Improvement Movement" policy promoted by the government

in indigenous areas in the mid-1960s was originally a movement for assimilation and modernization, but it caused indigenous peoples to become increasingly dependent on a monetary economy. The "Mountain People's Daily Life Improvement" movement not only influenced the increasingly rapid penetration of the monetary economy into everyday life in indigenous villages, but also indirectly triggered an outward flow of indigenous labor to metropolitan areas or their peripheries, where wages could be earned to improve the daily lives of village families, bringing in many modern appliances and commodities—such as refrigerators, televisions, or stereo equipment [34, 35]. Liao Wensheng's research (1984) points out the significant impact brought about by the Mountain People's Daily Life Improvement policy:

The guidance on daily life and customs directly transmitted plains lifestyles and economic behavior attitudes into the mountains. Administrative measures concerning clothing, diet, and housing were particularly concrete, and the utensils, equipment, and supplies required for this concrete assimilation were not inherent to the mountains, nor did they fall within the scope of original production and consumption activities... Simply put, it gradually broke down the self-sufficient economy, and the modes of production and consumption in the mountains progressively came to revolve around the system of market exchange... It can be understood that through such a process, the mountains were incorporated as a link in the operation of the overall economic system, forming a direct economic dependence on the plains.

According to official statistics, "from 1950 to 1965, an average of 60,000 rural laborers migrated annually in Taiwan... In the seven years from 1969 to 1976, at least 1,524,000 people migrated from the agricultural sector, averaging 218,000 people per year" [28]. The outflow of indigenous labor to Taiwan's western metropolises was also closely linked to the industrialization and urbanization of Taiwan's postwar economic development. Statistics show that the registered indigenous urban population

was only around 200 in 1961; by 1983, it had reached 83,000 (approximately 26.4% of the total indigenous population); by 1994, it reached 113,619 (32.39%); by 2002, 147,365 (approximately 33.98%); by 2007, it exceeded 40%, reaching 195,464 (approximately 40.37%); and by 2023, more than half of the population was registered in metropolitan areas, reaching 291,391 (approximately 51.11% of the total indigenous population). That is to say, according to official statistics, as of 2023, over half of the indigenous population was registered in urban areas. Of course, official statistics do not include the unregistered indigenous people who live and work long-term in cities, which easily leads to the problem of a hidden population.

From the 1970s onward in the postwar period, the indigenous working population moved from their native places to the cities, joining the capitalist labor market, exerting physical labor and earning wages to survive—an experience that became a key part of their urban existence. "However, compared to the Han Chinese migration from central and southern Taiwan to the big cities, the indigenous migration came a little later. Within the indigenous ethnic groups themselves, there were also differences in migration timing and population scale, among which the Amis migrated the earliest and in the greatest numbers" [33]. The late Amis scholar Lin Jinpao [36] once described the occupational changes in indigenous urban life from the 1960s onward as follows:

The first thing that changed the indigenous agricultural lifestyle was the fishing industry, because the Amis people are the most skilled at fishing. Therefore, many Amis compatriots went to the ports of Keelung and Kaohsiung to engage in fishing work. Next was work in coal mining companies. Many indigenous families gathered in the Ruifang and Tucheng areas of Taipei County and the Qidu area of Keelung back then, precisely because the local area provided coal mining work. Later, as the coal mining industry declined, large numbers of indigenous people once again had to seek other employment.

Around the 1970s, Taipei City was experiencing a construction boom, providing many job opportunities in the building trades. Indigenous people participated in the construction of the Grand Hotel and the Hilton Hotel built during that period...

During that time, most indigenous people were doing formwork and ironwork in the construction industry. In the Neihu and Nangang areas, there were more job opportunities for ironworkers and drivers; iron factories also provided accommodation, and local rents were relatively cheap—this is why a particularly large number of indigenous people settled in the Nangang and Neihu areas of Taipei City. Additionally, quite a few indigenous families lived in Linkou, because there were many brick kilns there that required indigenous labor.

Mines, oceans, and scaffolding were synonymous with indigenous labor in distant lands in the postwar period. Coal miners, deep-sea fishers, and construction formwork workers were the three manual labor occupations that a high proportion of the indigenous working population successively entered in the cities. Looking back, "several sharp surges in housing prices in postwar Taiwan led to a proliferation of construction projects, and construction sites urgently needed young and able-bodied labor. As the coal mining industry in the 1980s and the deep-sea fishing industry in the 1990s gradually declined, their large labor forces were subsequently absorbed by the construction industry. Indigenous miners and deep-sea fishers who changed professions later became one of the main sources of manpower in construction" [37]. The indigenous labor folk songs under contemporary capitalism also reflect this era's changes in labor and the face of diaspora. The research on Amis songs over nearly a century by Lin Daosheng and Wu Mingyi also allows us to glimpse precisely how songs serve as a mirror of historical change and the diasporic experiences of transnational or rural-to-urban migrant laborers.

In his article "The Evolution of Taiwan Amis Folk Songs over the Past Century—From the Treaty of Shimonoseki to the Present (1895–

1995): The Example of Ten Amis Folk Songs" [22], Professor Lin Daosheng, using the characteristics of Amis songs, divided this hundred-year span into nine periods, with representative folk songs born in each period: (1) The early period of Japanese rule (1895–1920s): representative song "Dancing and Singing Under the Moon"; (2) The middle period of Japanese rule (1920–1940s): representative songs "Malan Girl," "Shishan Girl," "Moonlit Sentiments"; (3) The late period of Japanese rule (1940–1945): representative song "Sorrow of War"; (4) The early period of Nationalist government retrocession (1945): representative song "Joyful Dance"; (5) The Kinmen-Matsu artillery war period (1950s): representative song "Brave Advance to the Kinmen Frontline"; (6) The period of calm in the Taiwan Strait (1960s): representative song "Good Days"; (7) The deep-sea fishing period (1970s): representative song "Longing for the Fisherman's Return"; (8) The urban work period (1980s): representative song "Taipei, This Place" (also known as "The Carpenter's Song"); and (9) The period of entrepreneurial hardship (1990s): representative song "The Hardships of Starting a Business."

Professor Wu Mingyi, in his study of modern Amis songs, *The Song of Naluwan: A Selection of 120 Amis Folk Songs* (1993), collected an even richer body of Amis folk songs. In addition to traditional songs and songs about family relationships, Wu also listed numerous modern Amis songs concerning the turmoil of war into which they were drawn, songs related to joining deep-sea fishing work, and songs about entering urban employment. In the late period of Japanese rule, Amis people joined the Takasago Volunteer Army to fight in Southeast Asia; after the war, during the 823 Artillery Battle at Kinmen, tribal members participated in the conflict. Amis folk songs about the sorrow and tragedy of war include "Sending You Off to the Army," "Sending You Off to Battle," "Longing for My Love," "Sorrow of War," "Sending You Off to the Frontline," "Brave Advance to the Kinmen Frontline," and "Leaving Home to Join the Army." Songs of transnational and rural-to-urban migration and diaspora after Amis people joined deep-sea fishing work in the postwar period include "Sentiments at Sea," "Longing for

the Fisherman's Return," "Blessings to the Seafarer," "The Reluctant Parting at the Harbor," "Fisherman," and "The Seafarer's Sorrow." Songs related to Amis people coming to the cities to make a living in the postwar period include "Leaving Home," "A Man Must Be Strong," "Scaffolding Scenes," "The Workers' Hardships," "The Sorrow of the Marginalized," and "The Hardships of Starting a Business."

For the non-literate Amis people, songs indeed served as one of the important methods for creating history and social memory. "Song lyrics can create a kind of community continuity" [38]. Such everyday collectively created songs of ordinary indigenous people are often "overlooked by national discourse" [38]. Yet, as the ethnomusicologist Anthony Seeger has illustrated: "Performance arts—including narrative and music—can hold a place in small, non-literate communities because, in these communities, the creation and interpretation of history can only be realized through repeated performance... Singing is merely a means by which people create and recreate time, space, and the course of community development. However, since the small communities of the Amazon basin have no written records and no professional specialists in any field, the significance of such repetitive performance for the continuity of social life is all the greater" [39].

IV. XIA GUOXING AND HIS AMIS-LANGUAGE FOLK SONG COMPOSITIONS

Social science deals with problems of biography, of history, and of their intersections within social structures. These three—biography, history, society—are the coordinate points of the proper study of man... All social science—or better, all well-considered social study—requires a historical scope of conception and a full use of historical materials[26].

Traditional Amis songs are collectively composed. Their defining characteristics are primarily the preponderance of vocables over lexical words, the integration of song and dance, and the fact that romantic love falls into the unspeakable category of love songs. Traditional Amis songs feature more vocables than

substantive words, with song and dance forming an indivisible unity. Moreover, the Amis people are quite reserved; romantic love is an unspeakable domain in their love songs. Regarding this characteristic, Professor DJ Hatfield, in his article “What Is Being Sung About? Speakable and Unspeakable Topics in Amis Popular Songs,” explicates the socio-anthropological significance of the over one hundred Amis-language songs he has collected. Hatfield’s research points out a distinctive feature of contemporary Amis songs: “In Amis-language songs from the 1920s to the 1990s, songs about romantic relationships were actually quite rare. In traditional Amis conceptions, the expression of romantic love was an unspeakable domain (2016). The same held true for song content. However, since the 1990s, ‘lyrics about love and romance’ in Amis songs have become widespread and are now commonplace” [40].

In addition to the prevalence of lyrics about love and romance in contemporary Amis songs, the phenomenon of fixed lyrics has also emerged. That is, a characteristic of modern Amis songs is that each song comes with ready-made (fixed) lyrics [41]. Furthermore, the capitalization of the sound of Amis songs has been inseparable from the production and publishing activities of record companies. Huang Guichao’s research indicates: “Around the 1960s, the popularity and prevalence of modern songs in Amis society drew the attention and interest of domestic music circles and people from various sectors. Lingling Records in Taipei and Xinxin Records (心心) in Taitung successively produced and published the first records under the title of ‘mountain folk songs,’ and thus the first Amis song album in history was born” [41].

According to Huang Guichao’s observations, the number of mountain folk song records successively produced and published by postwar record companies was actually quite substantial. In his article “Modern Songs of the Amis,” he states: “Looking back at my materials and estimates, the number of records released during the vinyl era was no fewer than approximately eighty volumes, each containing ten to twelve songs. Calculated this way, there were around eight hundred songs in total.

Adding the songs produced over the years through cassette tapes, I believe the total number to date is as many as fifteen hundred—a truly astonishing and admirable figure” [41].

As for the composition of modern Amis songs, they all preserve traditional Amis melodies (what some call songs with an Amis flavor), a feature that was often emphasized during the production of Amis records released by record companies. Basically, the mode of composing modern Amis songs mainly involves fitting modern lyrics to traditional melodies, with the lyrics describing modern social life in the Amis language. Jiang Guanming once interviewed the Amis music scholar Professor Lin Xinlai and subsequently pointed out: “According to Mr. Lin Xinlai’s research thesis *A Study of the Lyrics of Taiwan Amis Folk Songs...*, he discovered that among the more than eight hundred songs collected for his research, about four hundred were newly composed. The method of composition was to set modern lyrics to traditional melodies, with the lyrics describing modern social life and experience in Amis, or to adapt traditional melodies, partially preserving tradition and partially innovating or slightly revising. This mode of composition was nearly universal from 1900 to the 1960s. By the 1960s, Lu Jingzi’s songs also followed this epochal compositional approach in creating lyrics” [42].

The driving force behind the transmission and dissemination mechanisms of modern indigenous folk songs primarily came from the operational logic of a niche market characterized by small capital and low-cost production. The companies that recorded indigenous records differed in their publishing and marketing from the large-capital, major-label mainstream popular music mass market [18]. According to Huang Guochao’s research, the first to produce and publish indigenous folk song vinyl records in the postwar period were Lingling Records (1961–1984), Qunxing Records (1967–1968), Xinxin Records (心心) (1968–1969), and Chaoyang Records (1974–1978). This was followed by the era of cassette recordings that popularized modern indigenous songs, involving companies such as Zhensheng, Xinxin (欣欣), Shengjia, East Coast, Meimei, Dongbao, and Jinma. Independent labels that

emerged in the 1990s included Gaofeng, Halei, Jinzhu, and Xindai [43]. Popular postwar Amis singers (or composers of modern Amis songs) include Lu Jingzi, Huang Guichao, Lin Xiuying, Lin Yuying, Shao Duoyi, Chen Yongming, Bao Qingtian, Zheng Minglong, Wu Yaofu, and Xia Guoxing, among others [17].

Compared to the immensely popular first-generation postwar creator of modern Amis songs, Lu Jingzi (in the 1960s), Xia Guoxing emerged nearly thirty years later. Xia Guoxing debuted in 1987 (with Xinxin Records, 欣欣), and over a career of more than two decades, he released over thirty albums and wrote around five hundred songs in the Amis language. His Amis song compositions were categorized as “mountain love songs” (or “mountain ballads”), a niche-market cultural product. Xia Guoxing’s songs are highly life-oriented and colloquial, and are often performed with lively dance. His representative work, “The Little Shepherd,” is widely circulated in Amis communities in eastern Taiwan and is known as “the great wedding banquet song.” Xia once partnered in duets with Amis female singers Lin Yuying and Chunmei. His cassette tapes or CD albums were carried by vegetable trucks, spreading and becoming popular in large and small Amis villages in eastern Taiwan as well as in western metropolitan areas, earning him the reputation of “the king of the vegetable-truck cassette songs.” He “created a series of ‘work and life songs of urban Amis’ (such as the aforementioned ‘The Voice of a Formwork Worker,’ ‘Truck Driver,’ ‘The Man Working in the Pit,’ and ‘The Voice of the Unemployed’), which, via cassettes and CDs, circulated among tribal villages and construction sites” [44].

Xia Guoxing’s everyday songs, simple, light, lively, and playful, easily evoke resonance, especially among working-class audiences. His lyrics mix the Amis mother tongue, Mandarin, Japanese, or Taiwanese Hokkien; their musical form is that of popular karaoke. In addition to singing, he was a professional barber. He became a barber’s apprentice at the age of fifteen and later ran his own barbershop for many years in the Beitou District of Taipei. He said his creative inspiration came from daily life and experience. Part of it derived from his childhood experiences in his native village (he

was from Pasewaleng, Chenggong Township, Taitung); another part came from his everyday observations in the city. His songs depict native village life, such as “The Little Shepherd” and “Harvest Festival”; novel experiences in life, such as “Motorcycle,” with lyrics mentioning modern objects like jeans and miniskirts; some came from the experience of leaving home to work in the north, such as “Leaving My Hometown”; and urban life experiences also entered his songs, as in the aforementioned labor songs. When browsing a karaoke song request catalogue, one can find Xia Guoxing’s mother-tongue compositions under the category of mountain ballads.

The creative inspiration for Xia Guoxing’s songs mainly came from his rural experiences and his daily work life in the city. In a 1999 interview with Jiang Guanming, Xia spoke of the background to his entry into the barbering trade: “I was born in 1953. I was from a farming family. As a child, I had no way to study and could only tend cattle; it was very hard even to graduate from elementary school back then. Working in the countryside every day felt meaningless, so I secretly ran away to learn the trade of barbering. I learned until I was fifteen or sixteen and then came out to Taipei, where I’ve worked ever since without changing. Most of those who learn this trade of barbering are kids from less well-off living environments....”

As for why he entered the recording industry and became a singer, he said: “Around 1987... Xinxin Records was looking for a male singer because their male stars were all getting old. In the end, they found me and wanted me to sing indigenous songs. At first I didn’t dare; I wasn’t sure I could sing indigenous songs well. In terms of pronunciation and interpretation, indigenous songs aren’t that easy to sing. In the past, most of us sang Taiwanese Hokkien songs, and suddenly being asked to switch wasn’t so simple” [42].

The process of composing Amis-language songs occupied a very important part of Xia Guoxing’s daily urban life (aside from his professional time as a barber). Xia said he understood neither staff notation nor music theory; his creative inspiration mainly came from everyday humming and recording these

improvisations. He recounted: “Today’s mother-tongue songs aren’t that easy to sing either. I heard everyone covering either Japanese songs or Taiwanese Hokkien songs, and I thought, why not create our own songs? So I started composing. Besides, I don’t really know musical notation, I’m completely unclear about it. I hum and record, singing and splicing, singing and splicing, then I organize it and shape the song. That’s how I piece it together. I can’t read numbered musical notation at all, and I can’t read staff notation either—it’s still the same now” [42].

Fundamentally, traditional indigenous songs are embedded in the indigenous cultural characteristic of collective composition (such as music and dance usually being bound together, and songs having more vocables than substantive words) and in the performers’ spirit of improvisational and playful cultural performance. Modern indigenous song compositions, including their melodies, the creative intentions of the composers (such as choices made between tradition and modern style), the interpretations and cultural performances of the singers, and the channels of dissemination, have formed an alternative cultural hybrid style of multiple modernities, fusing tradition and modernity.

Xia Guoxing’s modern Amis-language song compositions also adopted a strategy of fusing the new and the old and singing old songs anew: they had to retain the rhythmic patterns of Amis music while also possessing the rhythmic sensibilities of modern music. In other words, his compositions preserved Amis song elements while also satisfying young people’s greater acceptance of modern, rhythmically-driven songs, and they also met the record company’s requirements for publishing indigenous songs (the songs could not be entirely pop songs, nor could they completely detach from an indigenous flavor). Thus, the main reason he adopted a strategy of blending the new and the old was:

The sources of my songs are all my own writing; I seldom do covers. Mother-tongue songs are no problem for me... With today’s lifestyle, I want the next generation of young people to find them pleasant to

listen to. If the melody is somewhat similar to our pop songs, they’ll like it. It has to have a sense of rhythm. With the old traditional sense of rhythm, eight out of ten young people wouldn’t want to listen. Only those old folks over fifty or so would want to hear that kind of song! Young people absolutely won’t listen. Wouldn’t our indigenous songs then be cut off? In order to preserve them and let the next generation sing, listen, and also understand the meaning of the lyrics, we must change the way we make songs a little.

We indigenous people can’t stay stuck in the past forever; ordinary young people won’t accept it. We have to innovate a little so that the next generation accepts the mother tongue. We must also use the traditional songs of the older generation; we can’t completely detach from the original flavor. The company won’t record completely pop-style songs either. They don’t want indigenous songs that copy pop songs or have a Japanese-song flavor. At the very least, they have to have our indigenous flavor... It has to be old songs sung anew; the sense of rhythm should be changed to be a bit modern—like disco, cha-cha, or a bit of a rock-style way of singing, like A-mei’s style. That would be better.... [42]

Fundamentally, Xia Guoxing was adept at expressing himself through rhythm-driven karaoke forms, which later researchers considered to have “given the Amis songs, full of modern creativity, a decidedly popular flavor” [44]. That is, as mentioned above: Xia Guoxing’s Amis song compositions possess both the rhythmic cadence of Amis music and the rhythmic sensibility of modern music, and the songs and lyrics could also be sung and spread colloquially in large and small Amis villages and communities, both in the native lands and in metropolitan areas. His Amis-language compositions were also included in Taiwanese karaoke songbooks, categorized under “mountain ballads” (see Table 2, song request catalogue). A series of “work and life songs of urban Amis” that he created circulated via cassettes and CDs among tribal villages and

construction sites. Among his compositions, "The Voice of a Formwork Worker" depicts a day in the life of an Amis formwork worker, from clocking in to clocking out, with considerable humor, liveliness, and vivid realism. Its lyrics and music are as follows:

The Voice of a Formwork Worker
(Lyrics/Music: Xia Guoxing)

Malingad to papacem misa-mokong kona tiring.
(Early this morning, I'm heading off to do carpentry work.)

Malacafay kita idang a misa-katawako.
(My friend, let's go do carpentry work together.)

Hay-nalouwan, saicelen no miso,
(Hey-naluwan, give it your best,)

akapi ida Totatayalen no misa idang.
(let's not look down on this job, my friend!)

saicelen no mita idang a mapolong minokay mahemek ko fafahi.
(Let's work hard together, my friend, and when we get home, our wives will praise us!)

Malaod ko cikang no pi-siyapan-an no mita idang,
(My friend, the clock has struck quitting time for us,)

Malacinowas kita idang a no minokay,
(My friend, we part ways now and head home,)

Hay-nalowan, talacowa to kiso,
(Hey-naluwan, where are you off to?)

Tayra kako toya sofaya o kananaman kan pay no mita malasang,
(I'm heading to that familiar little eatery — let's have a toast and drink till we're drunk!)

Minokay mapoi ko fafahi.
(Arriving home, I find my wife is furious!)

Table 2: The "Mountain Ballads" song request catalogue within the Taiwanese karaoke music system.

No.	Song Title
55151	The Down-and-Out Lovesick Wanderer
55174	The Determined Carpenter
55111	The Unforgettable Sweetheart
55265	Youmugulila Doll

55184	His Tears and Beautiful Hair
55287	Wukabano Amis
55336	We Are All One Family
76694	That Day Walking Under the Moon
55164	The Day I First Met You
55243	Na'ai Ka Gu Ti Wa Nan
55207	Come to Taitung to See the Scenery

The Aspirations of a Mold Maker

4/4 Allegro Lyrics & Music by:
Xia Guoxing

3 3 3 6 6 6 6 | 6 3 3 5 6 6 5 | 5 3 3 5 5 3 3 |
 ma li gad to pa pa cem mi sa mo kog ko ni na ti reg
 ma la od ko ci kag to pi sya pan an no mi ta i dag
 | --- | --- | 6 6 1 | 1 2 3 3 2 1 | 1 6 2 2 2 1 6 |
 ma la ca fay ca fay ki ta i dag a mi sa ka ta
 ma la ci no was ki ta i dag a no mi
 6 6 - - | --- | - 3 3 2 3 | 3 6 6 6 1 2 3 |
 wa ko hay na lo wan sa i ce len
 no kay hay na lo wan ta la co wa
 | 2 1 6 - - | --- | 3 1 6 | 6 - - 5 3 | 3 5 5 5 6 6 5 |
 ko mi so a ka pi 'i da to ta ta yal
 ko mi so ta y la ka ko to ya so fa
 | 3 3 3 5 6 6 5 | 3 5 3 - | --- | - 6 5 | 3 3 2 1 1 3 |
 en komi so i day sa i ce len no mi
 ya o ka na na man i day kan pay han no mi
 | 2 3 2 1 6 6 6 | 1 - 1 1 1 3 | 2 1 1 6 1 6 | 1 1 6 - |
 ta i dag ma po log mi no kay ma h mek ko fa fa hi
 ta i dag ma la sag mi no kay ma po' i ko fa fa hi
 | --- | --- | ||

Fig.2: Xia Guoxing's song "The Voice of a Formwork Worker" (composed in the Amis language)

Taiwan's construction industry operates on a subcontracting system, with contractors and foremen serving as the subcontractors. Construction formwork workers are commonly referred to as carpenters. Taiwan's indigenous people jokingly call their own work "male models" (a shorthand for male formwork workers), or "outdoor decorators," or "home-makers" (a homophone for "writers"), or "wood masters" (a homophone for "pastors").

"The Voice of a Formwork Worker" is an Amis-language song composed by Xia Guoxing in 1987 (see the italicized lyrics above). The lyrics recount how a formwork master works hard for his family and, after clocking out, goes to a small eatery with coworkers for a drink to

unwind from the day's toil—only to arrive home and find his wife very angry. In the lyrics, *misa-mokong* and *pi-siyapan* are loanwords from Mandarin. *Misa-mokong* means to do carpentry work: *mokong* is a phonetic borrowing of the Mandarin word for "carpenter/woodwork," and *misa-* is an Amis verbal prefix meaning "to do, to become." *Pi-siyapan* means quitting time: *siyapan* is a phonetic borrowing of the Mandarin word for "off work," and "pi-" is an Amis verbal prefix [45]. These lexical items did not originally exist in Amis; prolonged social contact with the outside world led the songs to borrow languages from other ethnic groups in order to refer to foreign objects or new things [25].

Compared to "The Voice of a Formwork Worker," the collectively composed Amis-language "The Carpenter's Song" (see the italicized lyrics below) incorporates even more loanwords. Many places in "The Carpenter's Song" feature loanwords from Japanese and Mandarin, such as *mokong* (carpenter, from Mandarin), *katawaku* (formwork, from Japanese), *shakai* (society, from Japanese), *loti* (staircase, from Mandarin), *siyapan* (off work, from Mandarin), *koci-hang* (five-thirty, from Japanese), *saku* (to leave, from Japanese), *toki* (time, from Japanese), *lawmiciw* (old rice wine, from Mandarin), *Wisep* (*Whisbih*, a brand name from Mandarin), and *sasimi* (sashimi, from Japanese).

The Carpenter's Song (composed in the Amis language)

Niyaro no Taypak o pi-mokong-an
Niyaro no Taypak o pi-mokong-an
shakai toktok katawaku ko 'orip ni na-tireng
Ma-cokako , ma-lokelon , 'say to loti
Mi-siyapan to dadaya kocihang saku toki
Ma-herek a ma-lafi si'ayaw sato lawmiciw Wisep sasimi

(Taipei is the headquarters for carpentry work.

Taipei is the headquarters for carpentry work.

Every day, all you hear is the clanging and pounding of the construction site, going up and down the stairways.

Only when the clock strikes five-thirty in the afternoon do we knock off work.

After supper, all that can be seen are utterly exhausted bodies, facing old rice wine, *Whisbih*, and sashimi for a bit of cheer.)

The use of loanwords in the lyrics of modern Amis song compositions is quite common. In the modern Amis songs collected by Lin Xinlai, Lin Daosheng, and Wu Mingyi, we find a considerable number of loanwords. In his book *A Study of the Lyrics of Taiwan Amis Folk Songs* [21], Lin Xinlai classifies the loanwords in these modern Amis songs into the following categories: Japanese, Taiwanese Hokkien, Puyuma, Mandarin, and English. Among these, Japanese loanwords constitute the largest group, followed by Taiwanese Hokkien and Mandarin; loanwords from Puyuma and English are relatively rare.

In his article "The Evolution of Taiwan Amis Folk Songs over the Past Century—From the Treaty of Shimonoseki to the Present (1895–1995): The Example of Ten Amis Folk Songs" [22], Lin Daosheng also identifies a number of loanwords. For example, in the middle period of Japanese rule, the song "Malan Girl" was born, and its lyrics contain the Japanese loanword *kasoling* (train). The historical background for this is the opening of the Taitung Line railway (from Hualien to Taitung) in 1926 [22]. The Amis song "Sorrow of War" from the late period of Japanese rule features such Japanese loanwords as *hikoki* (airplane), *pulopila* (propeller), *ikocio* (airfield), *kitatamasi* (urgent), *sayling* (siren), *has esio* (police substation), *tiyki* (enemy aircraft), *laysiu* (attack), and *silasiyo* (notification) [22]. The postwar 1950s Amis song "Brave Advance to the Kinmen Frontline" contains loanwords such as *kilung* (Keelung), *minato* (port), *kingmong* (Kinmen), and *tokising* (barbed wire) [22]. The postwar 1990s contemporary Amis song "The Hardships of Starting a Business" includes

loanwords from Japanese, English, and Taiwanese Hokkien, such as *tosiya* (car), *handle* (steering wheel), *waysiacu* (white shirt), *sifilo* (suit), *hotilu* (hotel), and *tawkiay* (boss, from Taiwanese Hokkien) [22].

It is undeniable that in the non-literate Amis community, song lyrics serve as one of the important methods of social memory. In addition to the naming system of Amis age-sets and the naming of Amis individuals, the incorporation of numerous loanwords into the lyrics of modern Amis songs also fulfills an important function of social memory and history-making.

As Taiwan's indigenous peoples shifted from traditional swidden agriculture (supplemented by hunting and gathering) to becoming waged laborers under capitalism, their daily rhythms came to directly confront the discipline and regulation of time. E. P. Thompson [46] termed this a change in time-consciousness from task-orientation to timed labor. The quantification of time and the commodification of labor mark the core of the laborer's daily life under capitalism. When the postwar Amis indigenous people entered industrialized society, their earlier labor-time conception also faced this transformation, especially from the 1970s onward. In the lyrics of Xia Guoxing's "The Voice of a Formwork Worker," the word *pi-siyapan* (off work) inadvertently reveals this message; perhaps we can interpret it in this way.

Looking back, work songs are also a distinctive feature of traditional Taiwanese indigenous music. However, between the collective, mutually supportive labor of early societies and the individualizing characteristics of labor under postwar capitalism, the meaning of labor expressed in song has long since diverged substantially. For instance, in the Amis-language lyrics of Xia Guoxing's "The Voice of a Formwork Worker" or the collectively composed "The Carpenter's Song," we can clearly discern conceptions of clock-regulated starting and finishing times, the commodification of time, and labor-

management relations—all meanings of modernity.

The characteristics of modernity in the labor process of contemporary industrial society are primarily expressed in workers' individualization (the emphasis on individual skill and performance), the discipline and regulation of time (punctuality and the commodification of time), the strict separation of labor and leisure, the inculcation of a work ethic, and the divided order of the factory assembly line, among others. In other words, the labor modernity encountered by contemporary indigenous peoples is markedly different from their traditional orders of labor value, and this is fully reflected in song lyrics. However, this characteristic is at the same time embedded in the distinctively indigenous cultural features of indigenous singer-composers like Xia Guoxing, as well as in the performers' improvisational and playful cultural performances, forming an alternative multiple modernities style. This includes the aforementioned melodies of the songs, the creative intentions of the composer (the trade-off between tradition and modern style)—possessing both tradition (the rhythmic patterns of traditional Amis songs) and modernity (the rhythmic sensibilities of modern music), the interpretations and cultural performances of the singers, and the channels of song dissemination.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that Amis marital relations were undergoing a significant transformation in the 1980s. In other words, traditionally, Amis society was matrilineal, and the Amis marriage system was predominantly uxorilocal (*mikatavo*), with the husband residing with the wife's family. Anthropological research shows that after 1965, this shifted almost entirely to virilocal residence. From the mid-1960s onward, Amis men went out to work (engaging in such occupations as coastal or deep-sea fishing, or construction formwork). Their income from the non-agricultural sector exceeded that of women, and they became the breadwinners responsible for the household economy. When men became the main producers, the marriage system shifted to a principle of patrilineal residence [47]. Research by Lin Jinpao [36] shows that in the 1980s,

among urban Amis marriage forms, uxori-local marriage accounted for less than 20%, while viri-local marriage had become the dominant form (over 80%). This is precisely the sociocultural background of the era of Amis social change against which Xia Guoxing's song "The Voice of a Formwork Worker" was created.

V. IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION: EVERYDAY SONGS, THE LABOR PROCESS, AND STRATEGIES OF DE-ALIENATION

The great questions "Who am I? Where do I come from?" often appear in human myths, legends, and songs, readily connecting to one's sense of community, ethnic consciousness, and identity. Yet under capitalism, working-class consciousness does not form so easily. As the historian E. P. Thompson [48] stated: "The working class did not rise like the sun at an appointed time. It was present at its own making. ... I am insisting that class is a historical phenomenon. I do not see class as a 'structure', nor even as a 'category', but as something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships. ... For I am convinced that we cannot understand class unless we see it as a social and cultural formation, arising from processes which can only be studied as they work themselves out over a considerable historical period." The mobilizing effect of songs on the working class is more akin to what Marx called the objective state of a class-in-itself, rather than the self-made state of a class-for-itself. Nevertheless, lively and rhythmic songs, such as "The Voice of a Formwork Worker" analyzed in this paper, can indeed help the working class dissolve work stress, the sense of estrangement, and alienation within the labor process.

Many indigenous working-class friends like to express their feelings through singing and use singing to dispel the exhausting pressures of work. As the formwork worker Mu-zhu, quoted earlier, put it: "Singing and laughing makes you feel quite cheerful. Keeping your mouth shut all day at work feels pretty stifling. If you sing a bit like this, you can catch your breath at the same time—it's quite comfortable." They also engage in playful, nonsensical antics

(a happy everyday structure of feeling) to break free from the constraints of time. For example, indigenous construction workers use smartphones to film funny videos of themselves at the worksite. These videos are also commonly seen circulating on indigenous community Facebook pages. Such actors are simultaneously passively subjected to the arrangements of the time regime and actively adopting a cheerful approach to break through the framework of present time and the state of alienation in the labor process. In addition to singing and playful antics, indigenous people also joke with one another during the labor process to get through the boring and exhausting work environment. They transform pain into jokes to vent their suppressed emotions. As the Puyuma scholar Lin Zhixing [49] stated:

... Every indigenous compatriot in Taiwan, due to the drastic changes brought about by cultural contact, often faces environments of linguistic dissonance, cultural habit dissonance, ethical value dissonance, and even experiential dissonance, from which pain arises. However, the lovely indigenous people, after a glass of ice-cold beer or warm liquor, tend to be more inclined to recount painful experiences as jokes, giving vent to their melancholy. ... To enjoy indigenous jokes, the most sublime way is to find a place where indigenous people gather to drink, join them—there is the real stage, the immediate theater—where all kinds of sounds arise unexpectedly: imitations of natural sounds, the displacement of languages from various ethnic groups, strange intonations and more; the delight is beyond words.

The profound relationship between the lower working class, everyday songs, and structures of feeling is vividly expressed in the following dialogue:

A: *Sometimes when work gets really tedious, someone will start singing "Nalu Love Song," and everyone joins in singing that one (a forest work song).*

B: *What a joyful atmosphere—*

A: *Lots of jokes too. Even though the work*

is very tiring, when you think about it—the joy outweighs the bitterness just a little.

A: The only thing I dread is working into the night—because late at night the site has no lights, you can only use sound to figure out where people are, otherwise you'll bump into each other! (It's too dark, we) can't see—where people are.

B: Indigenous jokes may be exaggerated, but they're really funny too...

(Quoted from a Paiwan ironworker's Facebook comment)

"Singing and laughing makes you feel quite cheerful. Keeping your mouth shut all day at work feels pretty stifling. If you sing a bit like this, you can catch your breath at the same time—it's quite comfortable." [50]

As historical beings and creators, the working class has everyday songs, humor, jesting, drinking and merrymaking, and the other (women) as co-constituents of the many essential elements of their lifeworld. The life biography of the working class is composed of everyday songs, strong liquor, humor, jesting, and women. Xia Guoxing's modern song composition "The Voice of a Formwork Worker"—with its simple, light, lively, and playful musical style, its highly grassroots and colloquial character—easily evokes resonance, especially among the working class. This autobiographical song, "The Voice of a Formwork Worker," is like a highly colloquial and life-oriented autobiographical writing of a working-class individual's single day of labor. This is close to what the ethnomusicologist David B. Coplan has illustrated: "To some extent, roughness and irascibility are undeniably useful character traits for black South African miners, and no one would blame miners on home leave for not enjoying their brief respite, often accompanied by beer, women, and of course songs. These songs are long improvisatory poems—a kind of imagistic poetic autobiography known as 'travelers' songs.' Through the explicit articulation of cultural knowledge in performance, miners and their women re-enact their shared experiences in these autobiographical songs" [51].

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