

**Crossing the Asian-Indigenous Impasse:
(Im)possibilities of Taiwanese (Im)migrant Diasporic
Settlerhood**

**by
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Abstract

In this thesis, I position the life histories and narratives of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora in relationship to K'emk'emeláy, on unceded x^wməθk^wəyəm, Skwxwú7mesh and səliwətaʔ Lands. I draw on critical inter-disciplinary literature to position Taiwanese-ness as a diasporic settler subjectivity which is produced and enacted upon as the urgent need to root oneself. Such urgency animates and upholds the Asian-Indigenous impasse (Jafri, 2025), where relationships to Land remain incommensurable and Taiwanese-ness remains cathected to the settler state. Through an Indigenized arts-based experimental ethnographic approach, I identify and conceptualize the (im)possibilities of Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic settlerhood as relational dialectics. Relationships to Indigenous Lands and life, while identified as imperative, become re-weighted differently when narrated alongside the need to square Taiwanese identity. Nonetheless, these Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic narratives are rehearsals of ways of knowing Taiwanese-ness otherwise which bring the very forms of settler colonial belonging and relationality that define it into question.

Keywords: Asian-Indigenous relations; Taiwanese diaspora; settler colonialism; settlerhood; Indigenous-settler relations; collective liberation

Dedication

Even though we've been through same
Doesn't always mean we feel the same
Doesn't always mean we heal the same
You're not me and that's okay

Seasons come, seasons cry
Seasons grow and seasons die
How high can a bird ever fly-ever fly?

—Sampha, “Jonathan Y. Seagull,” *Lahai*

To Alyssa, hope is a weapon I am oh so grateful to wield together. It's easy to love you.
You don't need to say anything. Just stay here with me.

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Gilakas'la, All My Relations.

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Preface: The Great Flood

The first man came down at Țəka, Topaz Harbor in the mainland. His name was Weqaʔyi.

Lakatəsən is the name of the great mountain there.

After a long time, Weqaʔyi was told by someone that a great flood was to come.

Weqaʔyi told his people to make a long cedar rope that went from the top of the mountains down to the salt water at the ocean.

Many people laughed at Weqaʔyi and made fun of him saying he believed everything that he heard.

Weqaʔyi told his people to tie four canoes together and soon many came.

With the long rope, the people made an anchor and tied its end to a mountain to secure their canoes during the great flood.

The flood lasted for a very long time, and it is said that the tides were really strong and the weather was very bad.

Because of the rough weather the canoes began banging together and Weqaʔyi feared that the canoes would split and they would all be drowned.

Finally, the great flood went down and Weqaʔyi looked around and realized that he was in a different place.

He had drifted up into Dzawadi “Knight Inlet.”

There was a woman living there named Țisdaq, who had wings on her back.

Weqaʔyi began to put stakes in the river to build a salmon trap and when the woman saw him, she asked him what he was doing.

She told him that this was her river. Weqaʔyi argued and said that it was his river and he had been there first.

To test Weqaʔyi, the woman asked him, “If this is truly your river, then what type of fish return here?”

Weqaʔyi replied saying, “Sockeye salmon, Coho salmon, Pink salmon, Spring salmon, Chum salmon and Steelhead salmon.”

The woman told Weqaʔyi that if he really owned the river, that he would have known about the valuable eulachon that returns there in the springtime.

The woman and Weqaʔyi continued to argue over the ownership of the river for a long time.

The woman told Weqaʔyi that the valuable little fish was called Dʔaxwən, the “Candle Fish” or Eulachon.

The woman eventually allowed Weqaʔyi to build a house along the side of the river so that he could make ʔiʔna or “eulachon grease” every spring.

Weqaʔyi put the grease into containers made from dried kelp. He traded his grease for slaves.

After a while, people everywhere began to increase in numbers, they were also survivors of the great flood.

So Weqaʔyi went to invite the different tribes and called them for a feast.

Many times Weqaʔyi hosted feasts and gave away his grease and slaves to his guests and he became a great Chief.

Weqaʔyi also lived at Xʷəlkw at the mouth of the Nimpkish River where there were logs piled up for foundations for dwellings there.

Weqaʔyi’s wife was a woman from Gilford Island named Qiḡʷqənakʷ. He married her and got a copper named ʔaqʷola.

There were many tribes and clans that came from Weqaʔyi and his family, they are known as the Liḡwildaḡʷ.

There are mainly two tribes today, sharing common ancestry, beginning with Weqaʔyi and his family, survivors of the great flood.

Wiweqe' – the descendants of Weqaʔyi who now live at Čəqʷalutən Cape Mudge.

Wiweqəm – are the descendants of Weqaʔyi's sister who now live at Campbell River.¹

We are Ligwilda'xw², and no matter how far we drift from where we first braided, we remain an unkillable thing, forever braiding in motion as we proudly declare ourselves and all our relations across time and space.

Tuánjié Lìliàng Dà. Together we are powerful.³

Dała x̱an's laxwa'yasaṇ's Ḵwals̱kw̱al'yakw. Carry on with the spirit of our ancestors.⁴

¹ Adapted from “The Great Flood Story of Weqaʔyi: Origin of the Liḡwildaḡw Nation.” As told by Chief Billy Assu.

² Being a member of We Wai Kai Nation makes me Liḡwildaḡw, the three southernmost Kwakwaka'wakw Nations.

³ A long-time rallying cry for community members in Chinatown and the Downtown Eastside neighbourhoods of “Vancouver,” who continue to braid Asian-Indigenous struggles and affirm life amidst the social, political, and biological death drives of settler colonialism as it manifests on all our relations. The people, united, will never be defeated. For more visit briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/together-we-are-powerful.

⁴ Translated from Lik'wala, the language of my peoples.

Chapter 1. Taiwanese-ness, or the Urgent Need to Root Oneself

This literature review first surveys Critical Taiwan Studies, Critical Indigenous Studies, and the Anthropology of Taiwan to ground us in the historical material and intellectual conditions of the island, reckoning with the ongoing “impossibility” of studying Taiwan (Shih, 2003). I show that Taiwanese-ness is both produced and enacted upon as an urgent need to root oneself, which unfolds and illuminates the history of Taiwanese diasporic (im)migration⁵ on x^wməθk^wə’yəm, Sk^wxwú7mesh, and səliwəta⁶ Lands.⁷ I then draw on polyphonic scholar-activist voices in Asian diasporic literature to reveal the ways in which Asian diasporic subjectivity is mediated and understood through an Indigenous Other, who is typically relegated to the realm of the unthought (Thobani, 2007; Day, 2015; 2016; Fei, 2022). I round out the chapter by illustrating teachings from literature on Asian-Indigenous relationalities on what is made possible when Asian diasporic life is re-animated in relationship to Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood, an act of alternative contact (Lai & Smith, 2010). I then detail the initial (and revised) research questions that ground how myself and members of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora are reckoning with the need to “be recognized in any way,” the urgent need to root oneself, that animates the (im)possibilities of Taiwanese settlerhood and well as the high-stakes

⁵ I purposefully connect the terms “diasporic” and “(im)migrant” in this thesis, in following Cho (2007) and Jafri (2025) to situate the formations of Asian and Taiwanese diasporic life in relation to multiple, overlapping historical processes of settler colonialism, slavery, imperialism, globalization, and racial capitalism which continue to shape relationalities to Indigeneity and settler states (Mawani, 2010; Lowe, 2015). Furthermore, I deploy both terms in tandem in reckoning with the differential positions maintained *within* the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora given that community members I am in relation with are at varying stages of “settlement” within the “Canadian” nation-state: some are on the permanent residency (PR) track, some have their PR status, and some were born and raised as “Canadian” citizens. To this end I also avoid using “Asian Canadian,” “Asian American,” and “Asian North American” as descriptors of people (only to canons of text), given that “these fraught and messy landscapes of relationalities” create diasporic conditions and subjectivities that “do not always evenly map onto status and belonging within nation-states” (Jafri, 2025, pp. 12-13).

⁶ Referring to the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-Waututh Nations, the three host-nations, as it is their unceded lands that the “City of Vancouver” and numerous other colonial municipalities (amalgamated as the “Metro Vancouver Regional District”) continue to violently occupy and subsequently naturalize settler colonial governance.

⁷ All mentions and instances of Land written by me remain capitalized throughout this thesis to continue to center and honour All Our Relations by and through the many Lands we dwell upon and belong to so long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the river flows.

anticolonial, liberatory prospects of further Asian-Indigenous coalition building across Turtle Island.⁸

1.1. “What Are Taiwanese People?”

What draws me to Taiwan is that, just like myself, it has only ever understood itself through its dislocation(s). Sunflower⁹, a 30-year-old Taiwanese woman who in 2017 made the 9,600 KM journey across the Pacific Ocean to arrive in K'emk'emeláy¹⁰ for graduate school, tells me what she has come to learn about the history of Taiwan during our first interview:

“it’s basically a socio-political construction [laughing]. It’s an identity that didn’t exist before. But like nowadays, I feel that the broad understanding of being Taiwanese is just people who live on the island...but the history of Taiwan is just so interesting. The Indigenous people already were there. Then Dutch came, Spanish came, Qing Dynasty came, Japanese came, and then Han people came, then the Nationalist party came, and when you add in the United States influence, yeah. It’s just like layers of colonization...”

Sunflower and I wrapped our hands around our heads in dismay and tried to shock ourselves back to reality with sour candy. We were stuck on the question that Sunflower has attempted to make sense of her entire life, further exacerbated following her arrival on x^wməθk^wəyəm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliłwətał Lands. Sunflower wonders out loud: what are Taiwanese people?

After brief silence and contemplation, she continues:

⁸ A pan-Indigenous term for settler colonial “North America,” deriving from the Lands and knowledges of the Algonquian and Iroquoian speaking peoples. While our Lands and lives are often bracketed into such pan-Indigenous expression, it is crucial to note that not all Nations utilize this term. Nonetheless, many Nations continue to tell creation stories wherein the Lands known as “North America” are formed atop the back of a turtle. For more please visit www.manoominlearning.ca/blog-1-1/the-land-we-call-home.

⁹ All names in this thesis are pseudonyms selected by research community members, to protect their identities and ensure privacy in all forms that project data has taken.

¹⁰ The term that will be used in place of colonially called “Vancouver” for the rest of this thesis, with its origin tied to the Squamish Nation and its language: Skwxwú7mesh sníchim. K'emk'emeláy means “place of the maple trees,” and was the name for a seasonal Indigenous village located near what is known today as the Downtown Eastside and Chinatown neighbourhoods of the city.

“Like, it’s very sad to say this, but I feel like, maybe selfishly speaking, there’s a priority for us to exist first.”

Sunflower gestures towards the need to examine the historical material conditions of Taiwan (its layers of colonization) in order to make sense of how Taiwanese-ness is always in becoming (as a fluid socio-political construction). This section does just that by consolidating literature across Critical Taiwan Studies, Critical Indigenous Studies, and the Anthropology of Taiwan to argue that Taiwanese-ness is both *produced* and *enacted* upon as an urgent need to root oneself as a response to a world that deems Taiwan insignificant. To this day, Taiwan is considered a small island without nation-state status, a liminal (non)sovereign entity continuing to aspire to liberal independence within the global Westphalian system (Chang 2022; Alsford, 2024; Clements, 2024). Taiwan remains a democratic and functionally independent “polity,” yet continues to be folded into the People’s Republic of China (labelled as the Republic of China), given that the “One China” narrative “depends on the erasure of a (proto-) national Taiwanese identity ... “seek[ing] to naturalize Taiwan’s absorption into the [Republic of China] in the 1940s” (Chou, 2024, p. 161) and making Taiwan intrinsically Chinese Land, disavowing that Taiwan is not a settler colony numerous times over.

Taiwan’s successive waves of colonization are what contests the “One China” narrative, a singular unified history that continues to bind Taiwan to China. Taiwan faced numerous dislocations resulting in fluid shifts in its socio-political construction, with the first occurring in the 17th century when Dutch and Spanish colonists established outposts on the island to bolster economic trade and establish a transnational network of occupation and exploitation. A double incorporation occurred, not only in the sense of Dutch and Spanish outposts becoming materialized, actualizing colonial order, but also as the means in which Taiwan initially “incorporated into the racialized world system [which] functioned to sever and destroy Indigenous connections with traditional lands, and to subjugate Indigenous peoples in exploitative economics of labour” (Simon & Mona, 2023, p. 194). At the same time, larger waves of Han Chinese immigration to the island occurred for the first time, given that the outposts required significant imported labour to operate and further actualize material gains for colonists.¹¹

¹¹ Andrade (2008) conceptualizes the messy overlaps between Chinese colonists and Dutch and Spanish occupying forces as “co-colonization,” evoking the ways in which the Dutch and Spanish had to rely upon Han Chinese settlers (as a labour force) to actualize subsistence, translation,

Closer to the end of the 17th century, the Dutch East India Company (who defeated the Spanish in 1642's "Battle of San Salvador") was defeated by Emperor Koxinga (Zheng Chenggong) as Taiwan became a prefecture under the occupying force of the Fujian Province. Once again Taiwan experienced another layer of colonization upon its transition to Japanese imperial rule in 1895 to the Qing dynasty, upon losing the first Sino-Japanese war. Within two centuries Taiwan had already undergone immense socio-political change, with three different occupying colonial forces, all *producing* hegemonic power (and Taiwanese-ness) through their statecraft to meet their agenda of manifest destiny. In continuing to challenge the notion that Taiwan is historically and contemporarily bound to China, scholars such as Allen (2011), Brown (2004), Hirano et al. (2021) and Simon (2023) all speak to the ways in which Taiwanese identity has undergone fluid, non-linear shifts since first contact with colonists – Taiwanese-ness is rendered unable to be located within or attached to one entity's claim to fix Taiwan in time and place. Brown (2004, p. 132) emphasizes this by noting that in Taiwan, "identities are not inevitable, because they are so closely tied to sociopolitical circumstances."

Despite all the work done to combat the "One China" narrative, such efforts have not halted the momentum (geopolitical currency) of Taiwan as Chinese, what scholars connect to broader processes of Sinicization (making something Chinese). The subsumption of Taiwan under Chinese rule, its Sinicization, is frequently traced back to the end of Japanese imperial rule in 1945 upon surrendering to the WW2 Allies – Taiwan then came under the rule of Chiang Kai-Shek and the Nationalist party effective post-Cairo Conference in 1943. Scholars demarcate this period of Nationalist rule as "Mainlander rule," a specific type of settler colonial rule wherein Han Chinese settlers quickly materialized socio-political dominance over the descendants of previous settlers and Indigenous peoples, which includes Japanese hegemonic power becoming quickly undone and Japanese language and identity along with it. Liu (2013) and Hirano et al., (2021) both speak to how Mainlander rule collapsed, and continues to collapse, the

and shielding from Indigenous resistance and pirates who sailed the China Seas. Already evident at this stage of Taiwan's history are the complexities that stem from numerous colonizing forces and *types* of colonization occurring in tandem on a singular island. For a further Indigenized approach to these complexities and the resultant effects co-colonization has had on the "greater entangled memory of Taiwan," refer to Shu-mei Huang, "*Here we are together:*" unpacking Indigenous Historical Justice and heritage as essentially embedded in colonial institutions in Taiwan," *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 5 (2025): pp. 611-631.

distinction between “old” and “new” settlers under the umbrella of a unified Han Chinese identity – through these proto-nationalist logics, anything and everything becomes declarable as Chinese. “The Kuomintang’s (KMT’s) determination to impose a unified Han Chinese identity on every individual on the island resulted in the 1947 “February 28 Incident,”¹² (Hirano et al., 2021) marking the beginning of the White Terror – a four decade long period of martial law wherein tens of thousands of Taiwanese people¹³, many of whom Indigenous, were executed, banished, imprisoned, and silenced.

Yet again, Taiwan did not gain independence but rather was perceived as an initial “temporary base” for the KMT (Chinese nationalist party), led by Chiang Kai-shek, who lost the Chinese Civil War to Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party in 1949 – The People’s Republic of China (PRC) was thus born. Taiwan, as a pawn, ascended the ranks of the global political order with larger currency than ever – only because its liminality allowed the Chinese nationalists, with the initial support of United States of America and the allies of WW2, to produce a government-in-exile to continue to fight communism.¹⁴ As Allen (2011) astutely points out, nobody at the time really believed that the Kuomintang would re-take the Chinese mainland, and the United States slowly shifted the intensity and confidence it had amidst corruption and widespread failure of the Nationalists to re-take China. The 1970s became a defining era of change for Taiwan for two core reasons: the United Nations and the death of a dictator. Martial law

¹² The 228 Incident began on the night of February 27, 1947, when agents from the Tobacco Monopoly Bureau (TMB) tried to take contraband cigarettes away from a Taiwanese widow, who was then struck in the head with a pistol upon asking for the cigarettes and money to be returned. A crowd became enraged and sought immediate justice for the widow, with an agent later firing live ammunition into the crowd. What followed were waves of mass demonstrations, wherein guards opened fire on a large crowd of protestors outside the Governor-General’s office. This would institute relentless genocidal campaigns actualized against anyone who sought to speak out against the Nationalists, and specifically anyone who sought reform to eliminate censorship, corruption, and Kuomintang being the only political party allowed on the island.

¹³ As with any genocide, this number is severely undercounted and does not reflect countless other forms of Kuomintang state violence and its concomitant effects on Indigenous lands and life, women, queer folks, and children.

¹⁴ Simply put, the United States were heavily invested in the initial Nationalist takeover of the island because it would help fortify an international defense strategy aimed at defeating communism, as well as substantiating allyship with other entities against imperial Japan. While not an official occupying colony, due to the substantial geopolitical hold and influence it maintained over Taiwan during this period, as well as the contemporary neo-Cold War between it and China – the United States could be considered another occupying force in the grander layers of colonization that continues to shape Taiwan and Taiwanese. Shih (2024) takes it further to argue that Taiwan remains “enlisted” by the United States at the forefront of its attempts to reconfigure the global order amidst its Cold Wars.

and its concomitant disempowering effects eroded after the death of Chiang Kai-Shek in 1975, becoming fully lifted in 1987. Right before and after Chiang Kai-Shek's death, the United Nations recognized the People's Republic of China, with the United States eventually following suit. Allen (2011, p. 12) situates the 1970s and 80s as another lynchpin for Taiwan's identity crises, given that the government was forced to evaluate the last four decades of martial law along with its loss of international status, "contemplat[ing] new strategies for bringing stability to the island, moving toward policies of 'cultural reconstruction'" which sought to bolster the island's reputation in the world. Meanwhile, as the country began its quest to liberalize and democratize, to finally find and enact its roots, anthropologists finally noticed how everyday people understood and enacted Taiwanese-ness – and how closely these personal accounts of identity commensurate with the need for Taiwan to express its national sovereignty (and own identity) on a world stage.¹⁵ That is, "the rhetoric of multicultural, multiethnic 'new' Taiwan, then, [was] circulating precisely at the moment when Taiwan most want[ed] to pursue globalisation" (Shih, 2003, p. 146).

Yet what did pursuing globalisation mean "for a small island without nation-state status, with a history of multiple colonialisms, and living in the threatening shadow of a rising super power?" (Shih, 2003, p. 144). In reckoning with the ongoing intellectual and material insignificance of Taiwan, Shih went as far as to say that studying the island is an impossible task:

"I say 'impossible' because Taiwan is always already written out of mainstream Western discourse due to its insignificance. Taiwan, when any attention is given to it at all, is most often reduced to an object of empirical political analysis, and has been systematically dismissed as a worthwhile object of critical analysis in cultural and other humanistic studies with theoretical import. Taiwan is too small, too marginal, too ambiguous, and thus too insignificant. Taiwan does not enjoy the historical accident of having been colonised by a Western power in the nineteenth or twentieth

¹⁵ While largely outside the purview of this thesis, it is crucial to add here that Taiwan, especially in the history of "North American" anthropology, was typically relegated to a "looking glass" in anthropologists (and other scholars) attempts to look through Taiwan to see China. Taiwan was thus a liminal location to conduct fieldwork until "North American" fieldworkers became welcome to China right around this time period. As Hong & Murray (1990, p. vii) concur, "the history of American anthropological fieldwork on Taiwan almost entirely ceased when it became possible to undertake fieldwork in China." Even when conducting fieldwork in Taiwan, researchers, with the exception of some who fought these totalizing logics and complicity with settler colonialism, largely relegated Taiwan and Taiwanese-ness to being unthinkable. Historically speaking, even in an anthropological sense, studying Taiwan without China was *an impossible task*.

century; instead it was colonised by other Asian powers" (Shih, 2003, p. 144).

Shih (2003, p. 146) forecasted globalisation as Taiwan's survival strategy as "a form of transaction that enables intelligibility while simultaneously delimiting the scope of that intelligibility" ... "made at the expense of undermining the complexity of Taiwan history."

If Sinicization was the quest to flatten Taiwanese-ness into Chinese-ness, then a new Taiwan entailed the recognition of a new Taiwanese, the *xin Taiwanren*, which simultaneously bridged the old divisions of Han Chinese Mainlander and Taiwanese, while also *enabling* Taiwanese-ness as the most intelligible identity marker on the island – "being" new Taiwanese, *xin Taiwanren*, became a globalized, universalized, signifier for liberal settler multiculturalism. Globalization enabled the ability for the narrative to become inverted from One China to One Taiwan.

"[F]or Taiwan, globalisation has to be, period" (Shih, 2003, p. 146).

A burgeoning Taiwanese national consciousness took hold as post-colonial, producing Taiwan as a victim-state recovering from the wounds of a settler colonial past to find itself permanently on the map of the global order as a sovereign, economic, and culturally coherent nation-state. Building upon the momentum of the victory of the Democratic Progressive Party in 2000, and the rise of globalization, Taiwan's core national objective became moving "beyond its own tragically imperial and colonial history to be something else, still albeit colonial, but not quite entirely colonial" (Barker, 2011, n.p.). Penderrey (2022) and Nesterova (2024) locate Indigeneity within Taiwan's campaign to enact peaceful multicultural co-existence and nation-building – as both a means for Taiwanese-ness to nativize (we aren't Chinese, we're Indigenous), as well as a way to enhance reconciliatory efforts to improve international reputation as a progressive nation-in-becoming (the creation of the Council of Indigenous Peoples in 1996, which cemented Taiwan as one of the "best nations" in the world regarding "reconciliation" with Indigenous peoples).¹⁶

¹⁶ For more on the relationship between Indigeneity and the Taiwanese liberal settler multicultural context, refer to Simon, Scott. "Multiculturalism and Indigenism: Contrasting the Experiences of Canada and Taiwan." In *Politics of Difference in Taiwan*, edited by T.W. Ngo and Hong-zen Wang. Routledge, 2011.

Ho (2023, p. 52) further challenges the invocation of a universal Taiwanese identity, which continues to occur to this day: “the danger of the Taiwanese nationalism project is that by neglecting the settler colonial reality while building a national identity, seemingly progressive policies that center on individual human rights can be used as tools of assimilation and contribute to the erasure of cultures that do not fall within the homogenizing narrative.” Liang Yu (2025) brings the history of Taiwan to the present by emphasizing that the island has renewed its globalisation “lifeline” to overcome its insignificance, a “creolized sovereignty” where *anyone can be Taiwanese*, continuing the dispossession of Indigenous Nations and political formations, as well as a collective amnesia regarding its colonial history and manufactured innocence.

What unifies disparate narratives on the historical material conditions of Taiwan as well as critical inter-disciplinary scholarship on the island is that Taiwaneseness, up until the present, continues to be both *produced* and *enacted* upon as the urgent need to be rooted – the need to overcome insignificance, “a priority for us to exist first.”

Fei (2022) analyzes the cost of rootedness, referring to the effects that Taiwanese, positioned as settlers of colour¹⁷ in and outside of their homelands, have on Indigenous

¹⁷ There remains copious debate as to whether Asian diasporic subjects *can* be considered as settlers of colour. The debate has most recently taken the shape of contestation over the forms that grammars of settlerhood take, with new alternatives to the term “settler,” taking shape as refugee settler, alien, colonizer, arrivant, Asian settler ally, undesired immigrant, minor settler, and co-colonizer, among many others. This overarching project of refusing the reduction of Asianness to “settler” status heavily borrows (and falsely equates itself) to theorizations of anti-blackness in relation to the settler state, which goes to show how Blackness cannot be reduced to settlerhood and anti-Blackness cannot be conceptualized as a unique function of settler colonialism, given that it works in tandem with settler colonialism to dispossess *both* Black and Indigenous peoples. In following these lines of argumentation, I argue along with Upadhyay (2024) that deploying the term “settler of colour” need not homogenize all people of colour as settlers. Instead, I argue that re-mapping and positioning Asian diasporic subjects, Taiwanese peoples included, as settlers, is a sufficient *tool* in a wider toolkit, which allows us to explore “varying uneven positionalities and complicities to foster relational solidarity praxis” (Upadhyay, 2024, p. 10). Thus, as I will continue to detail later on in this thesis, I refuse to enmesh myself in and center the trajectory of Asian-Indigenous scholarship that concerns itself most with the grammars of (im)migrant diasporic presence, electing to utilize settlerhood in the context of this project as the best *diagnostic* to allow us to further re-align Asian diasporic subjectivity with Indigenous Lands and life. I confront this narcissistic attachment to grammars of settlerhood as an Indigenous scholar, who in line with Lawrence & Dua (2005) and Tuck & Yang (2012) is most concerned with implicating racialized presence, despite its differential nature and proximities to marginalization, as settlers of colour, who by virtue of their arrival and presence on Indigenous Lands, enter colonial relations of production with Indigenous peoples. Thus, in my instance, “settlerhood” is not an identity marker or totalizing feature of Western epistemology, but rather a means to an end – to enact an Asian-Indigenous epistemological shift which centers Indigenous sovereignty and resistance. For more on this trajectory of scholarship and the concomitant

Lands and life. In reflecting on the history of Taiwan, Fei (2022, p. 1) argues that Taiwanese citizens and its diaspora must reflect on “how the settler colonial past and present in Taiwan undergirds Taiwanese politics and citizenship-making” ... and “grapple with the complexities of living on occupied Indigenous land.” Yet in order to proceed with a decolonial reckoning of such a magnitude, we must validate and locate the Taiwanese diaspora on the map of Turtle Island, as “determined by when in the colonization process, they immigrated to these lands and when they started to consciously engage in decolonizing their relationships with the original peoples of the lands they occupy” (Christian, 2025, p. 118). I maintain the argument that Taiwaneseeness, in travelling across the Pacific Ocean from the 1970s onwards, continues to be *produced* and *enacted* as the urgent need to root oneself on x^wməθk^{wə}ýəm, Sk^wxwú7mesh, and səliwətaʔ Lands. Therefore, the next section shows how reading and understanding Taiwanese diasporic histories in such a way opens possibilities to unfold, illuminate, and re-map Taiwaneseeness in relation to K’emk’emeláy.

1.2. Unfolding and Illuminating Taiwaneseeness in K’emk’emeláy

“Ultimately, Charles’s sense of belonging was derived from the Vancouver Taiwanese-Canadian community. He was firmly rooted here. His children and grandchildren were thoroughly westernized though they tried to preserve some parts of their Taiwanese identity through cultural activities. Future generations of Yangs would be Canadians. By then, maybe more of the world would be in a state where national borders did not define identity, where race and countries were irrelevant, and “foreigner” was an idea of the past. But for now, he was a proud first generation Taiwanese Canadian” (Lin, 2017, p. 126).

While Shih (2003) was reckoning with the (in)significance of Taiwan on a global scale, Chu (2002, p. 209) attempted, for the first time in Taiwanese diasporic scholarship, to map Taiwanese diasporic (im)migration in so-called K’emk’emeláy by attempting “to understand what factors prevent [Taiwanese] from finding a niche in Vancouver.” While the article heavily draws on, and assumes, an economized logic that stratifies the

necessity to situate racialized presence within the historical and political material conditions of occupying settler states, refer to Fujikane, Candace. 2025. “Afterword: Asian Settler Ally Being and Becoming in Abolitionist and Deoccupation/Decolonial Movements.” *Amerasia Journal* 51 (1–2): 278–90.

Taiwanese diaspora according to their economic success (“Entrepreneurs” and “Investors”), Chu is speaking to a larger sensibility he shared at the time with fellow Taiwanese scholars across the Pacific: the need to reckon with the (in)significance of Taiwaneseeness, or in his words, paying attention to the Taiwanese in “Vancouver” “who failed to adjust themselves...” (Chu, 2002, p. 209). As for the Taiwanese who “have prospered in the new land,” a larger existential question lingered over their presence on xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliłwətaʔ Lands:

“With the Vancouver case of Taiwanese immigrants, one might wonder whether the association of multiculturalism with a robust ethnic economy has created a shortcut to immigrant adaptation, or on the contrary has provided a route to a new pattern of colonialism” (Chu, 2002, p. 232).

I contend that Chu is speaking to eerily similar anxieties regarding Taiwanese diasporic settler complicity that Shih (2003) did regarding what becomes foreclosed upon Taiwaneseeness finding and leaning into survival strategies to overcome its (in)significance. While not outright forecasting Taiwanese investments in settler colonialism and “cashing in on” economic-oriented strategies of recognition (as detailed below in a case study), I argue that Chu (2002) recognizes and expresses the need to confront how Taiwanese diasporic presence is not only entangled with, but aids in actualizing, the dispossession and elimination of Indigenous Lands and life across Turtle Island, “a new pattern of colonialism.” Over 20 years later, scholars of Taiwanese diasporic (im)migration across Turtle Island are only now beginning to reckon with what decolonial Asian diasporic scholar Chris Lee (2007) would call a “problem of lateness,” brought upon by Indigeneity and Land historically rendering Taiwanese diasporic (im)migration “messier and more complex than either the proponents or detractors of [Taiwanese diasporic settler complicity] care to articulate” (Shih, 2003, p. 144). Queer Han Chinese and Taiwanese settler Szu Shen (2011) wrestled with the invisibility of Taiwaneseeness from both the literary canon of “Asian Canadian” studies and history, as well as from the literal cartography of “Canada,” emphasizing that “while the presence of Taiwanese immigrants in Canada is indisputable, the “legible” Taiwanese Canadian subject I was so keenly looking for appeared nowhere to be found” (Shen, 2011, p. 113).

Tracing the historical material conditions of the Taiwanese diaspora and subsequent narrations and theorizations of such reveals how scholarship continues to be primarily concerned with the unfolding of Taiwanese diasporic subjects, which have been

historically folded via Chinese hegemony and settler colonial logics into institutional, discursive, and material Landscapes of so-called “Canada” and its literary canons such as Asian Canadian Studies (Shen, 2011). Additional scholarship by Taiwanese diasporic scholars that undertakes such a complex task focuses on how “Canadian” immigration pathway constructs liminality and Taiwanese as Chinese (Blundell, 2003) and experiences of such in-betweenness from the perspectives of 1.5 generation Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic youth (Chiang, 2011; 2012; Chung, 2003). Despite its ongoing scarcity, there is a significant shift that can be read in (im)migrant diasporic scholarship that attempts to reckon with, rather than disavow, Taiwanese diasporic presence across Turtle Island.

Due to processes of Sinicization that took on hyper-local meaning and relevance, Taiwanese people have always been located within the label of “Chinese Canadian” in popular historiography. Along with Hong Konger diasporic (im)migrants, the Taiwanese diaspora became pigeonholed into a pan-Chinese racial-diasporic formation by authors such as Ng (1996) and Yee (2006) – who each folded Taiwanese peoples into narratives of the maturation of a broader collective of successful Chinese immigration and homemaking. Even in popular media such as the landmark book *A Brief History of Asian North America*, published by the Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society in 2001, Taiwaneseeness is nowhere to be found. In this instance, Taiwan is not just considered as Chinese (Brown, 2004), but rather is made to disappear through the reification of an pan-Asian North America telling of history – Taiwaneseeness plays no role in “broaden[ing] our understanding of Asian presence in North America...” nor in “learn[ing] how Asians have long been an integral part of the settlement and development of North America” (Wong-Chu & Tzang, 2001, n.p.). This is further illustrated by British Columbia premier Gordon Campbell, who in 2006, congratulated long-time Taiwanese Canadian activist Charlie Wu for his placement within a list of the top 100 influential Chinese Canadians – Campbell did not care to make the distinction between Chinese and Taiwanese (Wu, 2020).

A British Columbia premier who finally sought to make the distinction between Taiwanese and Chinese was John Horgan, who in 2020 provided a foreword to the e-book *Metro Vancouver Overseas Taiwanese Voice and Power*, not only affirming the presence of Taiwaneseeness within the province of British Columbia but *locating* Taiwaneseeness within the nation-building rhetoric of “Canadian” liberal settler

multiculturalism¹⁸ – the Taiwanese diaspora became legible only via their supposed enormous contributions “to our social, economic, political and cultural prosperity...” and because “more Taiwanese newcomers choose our beautiful province than live anywhere else in Canada, exemplifying a vital part of what makes BC such a unique and culturally vibrant place...” (Chiu, 2020, n.p.).

In closing out the book Chiu focuses on the ways in which all of the Taiwanese citizens in the book have become respected Canadian citizens, arguing that the exercising of overseas Taiwanese privilege and responsibility (voices and power), has led to the diaspora becoming defined through having made “significant contributions to their host country in a variety of fields, including medical research, science, sports, music and the arts, world mental health, traditional medicine, environmental protection, education, medical donations, community, and political involvement” (Chiu, 2020, p. 40). *Metro Vancouver Overseas Taiwanese Voice and Power* is an attempt to provide definitive answers to the questions of *who Taiwanese* people are and *where* Taiwanese people can be found in the socio-political boundaries of “Metro Vancouver.” In this instance, Chiu in concert with the newfound voice and advocacy of settler colonial authority (premier Horgan) *makes* Taiwanese presence indisputable by *locating* Taiwaneseeness as historically and contemporarily productive because Taiwanese diasporic subjects have sufficiently given back to “Canada” through their *enormous* contributions that have ultimately “set aside differences and prejudice, and work[ed] together to create a better life in Vancouver” (Chiu, 2020, p. 44).

Following from what is disavowed from such claims, I extend Byrd’s (2011) notion of the “historical aphasia of the conquest” to encompass the ways in which Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic subjectivities have always relied upon mediating and understanding the self through a racialized Indigenous Other – the forgetting of how one came to be “Taiwanese” through processes of racialization, and the acceleration of belonging and attachments to a settler colonial property regime that is inextricably tied to

¹⁸ “Canadian” liberal settler multiculturalism took hold in the 1970s, primarily as a project of settler state reform, which instituted a new policy and nation-building agenda centered around the *inclusion* of previously *excluded* racialized bodies from the social and material bounds of the settler state. Difference in this mode of racial governance seeks to newly define and actualize a national body that is somehow diverse, yet homogenous, in its “Canadianness” – producing a fantasy of inclusion tethered to state-imposed multiculturalism to mask racial hierarchy and elevate national unity. Indigenous dispossession continued to be naturalized, albeit through an increasingly liberal progressive façade.

the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and Lands. We then see how this Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic aphasia of settler colonialism is linked to a culturally produced “collective consciousness of Asian American and Asian Canadians who have grown up with settler narratives of national identity and belonging [multiculturalism] that have relegated [Indigeneity] as Other (Day, 2016, p. 35). Here we are directly attending and problematizing “the deep-seated [Taiwanese] longings and investments for the settler colonial, signaled through desires for “New World” promises of wealth, freedom, and independence” (Jafri, 2025, p. 16). Chiu’s e-book provides a window into such longings and investments, undergirding the re-constitution and recognition of Taiwaneseeness within the settler state, further incorporating Taiwaneseeness, messily and complexly, within a “longer trajectory of racialized property practices and policies that [ultimately facilitate] white settler possession” (Yakashiro, 2021a, p. 50). Therefore, the urgent need for Taiwaneseeness to root itself is bonded to the urgent need for the settler state to incorporate racialized (im)migrant peoples into a settler colonial property regime, as defined through their labour (contributions) and celebrated for their differences (cultural prosperity). Taiwaneseeness then is built upon and configured through a widespread desire to overcome its own insignificance only within the ideological and territorial bounds of the “Canadian” settler state and the hegemonic ideology of liberal settler multiculturalism.

I argue that Taiwaneseeness remains insufficiently unfolded and illuminated in K’emk’emeláy because any and all attempts to do so, thus far, refuse to contend with Indigenous Lands and life that make Taiwaneseeness presence and subjectivity possible to locate and theorize in the first place. In mirroring the urgent lifeline Taiwan clings to on an international stage, the Taiwanese diaspora in a Turtle Island context *requires* Indigeneity becoming banished to the realm of the unthought (Thobani, 2007; Day, 2015; 2016; Fei, 2022). In order for Taiwaneseeness to root itself in place, to overcome its (in)significance in K’emk’emeláy.

My project longs and desires for a Taiwaneseeness that can be imagined and re-constituted otherwise and is uniquely situated as a form of both Indigenized and settler colonial critique, conducted against the grain of predominant understandings of Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic presence across Turtle Island. I refuse to foreclose understandings and enactments of Taiwaneseeness that are in relation to Indigeneity. I join a brigade of contemporary Taiwanese scholar-activists such as Yi Chien Jade Ho

(2023) in asserting that Taiwanese-ness did not merely “come” to the city I call home – rather, Taiwanese-ness as early as the 1960s, “arrived on Coast Salish lands that hold histories of flourishing, survival, displacement, violence, and struggle that concern each [Taiwanese] who comes to this land and implicates all of us in [host Nations] ongoing story” (Ho, 2023, p. 4). I argue that placing Indigenous Lands and life at the *center* of Taiwanese diasporic material and intellectual history allows us to question Taiwanese-ness and its roots, to imagine new forms of Taiwanese belonging on xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliwətaʔ Lands. Doing so allows for primarily locating Taiwanese-ness within an ongoing relational project that refuses settler colonial governance and logic in order to produce “a Taiwanese-ness that is active, dynamic, and in constant negotiation with place and community” ... “facilitated by a decolonial sense of belonging that no longer depends on settler colonial capitalist relation-making through the border apparatus” (Ho, 2023, p. 104). I propose that doing so rectifies the “impossibility” to make sense of, locate, and reckon with Taiwanese diasporic presence in K’emk’emeláy (Chu, 2002; Shih, 2003; Shen, 2011), opening up the question of what it means to center Indigeneity as foundational to and constitutive of not only Taiwanese-ness, but also of the grander Asian diaspora and its subjectivities (Tiongson Jr., 2019).

The following section zooms out to convene with polyphonic scholar-activist voices across Asian diasporic literature that speak to the various ways in which Asian diasporic subjectivity is historically dispossessive of Indigenous Lands and life, as it is mediated and understood through an Indigenous Other. Yet as an Indigenous scholar-activist making sense of how Taiwanese-ness is discursively navigated and institutionally materialized via settler colonialism, I can conceptualize and bridge critiques of “Canadian” liberal settler multiculturalism with polyphonic scholar-activist voices across Asian diasporic literature. Together, these unique convergences speak to the various ways in which Asian diasporic subjectivity is more broadly historically mediated and understood through an Indigenous Other, and gestures towards how accounting for and centering Indigenous Lands and life is the necessary starting point to unfold and illuminate Asian diasporic subjectivities (for our purposes, Taiwanese diasporic settler subjectivities) across Turtle Island, and continue to effectively decolonize and further braid Asian-Indigenous relationality beyond the settler state.

1.3. Denaturalizing Kinship: The Limits of “Canadian” Liberal Settler Multiculturalism

Braiding Asian-Indigenous relationality beyond the “Canadian” settler state has always been difficult as since first contact, “colonial epistemologies gained traction not always (if at all) from a unified set of social relations but from a cracked, conflictual, and contingent constellation. It was precisely because of racial ambiguity and unknowability that the juridical constitution of racial truths and the governance of colonial populations, including their encounters and proximities, were thought to be so *politically urgent*” (Mawani, 2010, p. 27, emphasis my own). To actualize the *certainty* of a white settler futurity – the overarching political aim of the project of settler colonialism – overtly racialized technologies of rule were deployed to entrench notions of “legitimate” and “illegitimate” occupants of settler Lands as well as “desirable” and “undesirable” migrants to further displace Indigeneity through the guises of labour and capital to expedite settler nation-building infrastructure and mega-projects (Perry, 2001). Therefore, the ongoing political death of Indigeneity must come in tandem with the social death of the Asian diaspora as a laboring social formation within the settler state, what Day (2016) calls an “impossible” working class whose alien, transitory labor is necessary for aiding and abetting the settler state in rationalizing and forgetting settler colonial elimination.

Taken together these insights produce a cohesive understanding as to how settler colonialism “produces biopolitical difference as a technology of management to defamiliarize Asian and Indigenous relationalities” (Yao, 2021, p. 471). Seen together, this literature also briefly (though crucially) helps us “understand the logics of myriad racial, gendered, capitalist, and colonial processes in the making of white settler states and economies” (Upadhyay, 2024, p. 84) – which reinforced the position of the Asian diasporic subject into what Byrd (2011) calls a vertical ontology of colonizer and colonized.¹⁹ For our purposes, an excluded Other does not just refer to the differential

¹⁹ Once again, it is important to note that anti-Blackness, while not within the scope of this project, nonetheless informs the construction, maintenance, and logics that inform Western ontologies which are rooted in racialized logics and all the settler colonial/anti-Black violence that has stemmed from such. A Native/settler binary is co-constituted with a black/white racialized binary, one cannot exist without the other, and Black liberation will forever be tethered to Land Back and Indigenous sovereignty. For more on the relationships between Blackness and Indigeneity, please refer to Lawrence, Bonita, and Zainab Amadahy. “Indigenous Peoples and Black People in Canada: Settlers or Allies?” In *Breaching the Colonial Contract: Anti-Colonialism in the US and Canada*, edited by Arlo Kempf. Springer Netherlands, 2009; Sexton, Jared. “The Vel of Slavery:

positions of racialized Asian and Indigenous peoples, but *Land*, as the national narrative of “Canada” is built upon the settler colonial mythos of terra nullius, that Europeans peacefully settled an empty, uninhabited Land. We can understand Byrd’s (2011) invocation of a Native/settler binary as but one of many settler colonial ontologies which “have long been based in binary constructions with the [colonial] self being constituted in relation to its excluded Other...” (Thobani, 2007, p. 5). “Canadian” liberal settler multiculturalism is often touted as a celebratory aspect of contemporary national identity and society which has reckoned with the prior exclusion of the Other – in our case, Asian “Canadian” subjectivities. In parallel with the United States, the late 1960s gave birth to the federally implemented Official Languages Act (1969) and Multiculturalism Policy (1971) which “gave a nod” towards cultural diversity and engendered official bilingualism and biculturalism. Such a reinvention of “Canadian” national identity through the two policies continued to cement settler colonial ontologies, maintaining “racist, settler-colonial qualifications for Canadian national belonging ... [cementing] into law the explicit separation of “us” (settler-colonial “solitudes”) and “them” (“Other” ethnic groups) and smoothly sidelines the third “solitude” by lumping the Indigenous peoples in with the “multi-cultures” (Thomas-McNeill, 2024, p. 23).

“Canadian” liberal settler multiculturalism renewed a national consciousness fostering “responsible citizens, compassionate, caring, and committed to the values of diversity and multiculturalism” (Thobani, 2007, p. 4). I seek to problematize such forms of statist knowledge and popular representations of “Canada” (and by virtue, Asian identity formation and association with the state). “Canadian” liberal settler multiculturalism is, above all else, a racial technology of governance which only serves to “pain[t] Indigenous difference as paralyzing and dangerous, as an obstacle to alliance building and tantamount to expulsion [from the state] (Saranillio, 2013, p. 284). For example, the label “Asian Canadian” only remains a viable socio-political identity marker so long as “their distinctive racialized experiences are denied and the political claims rising from such experiences are cheerfully relinquished in their bid to claim a new

Tracking the Figure of the Unsovereign.” *Critical Sociology* 42, nos. 4-5 (2016): 583-97; Byrd, Jodi. “Weather with You: Settler Colonialism, Antiracism, and the Grounded Relationalities of Resistance.” *Critical Ethnic Studies* 5, nos. 1-2 (2019): 207; King, Tiffany Lethabo, Navarro, Jennell, and Smith, Andrea. “Beyond Incommensurability: Toward an Otherwise Stance on Black and Indigenous Relationality.” In *Otherwise Worlds: Against Settler Colonialism and Anti-Blackness*. Duke University Press, 2020; Sugai, Sean. (Stories of (S)Kin: Afro-Asian-Indigenous Relationalities and Anti-Blackness in Diasporic Filipinx Hawai’i.” *Aleph, UCLA Undergraduate Research Journal for the Humanities and Social Sciences* 20 (2023): 151-78.

hyphenated identity” (Thobani, 2007, p. 4). Concerns surrounding race and equity were inscribed into the “Canadian” liberal settler multiculturalism agenda so long as they reified the primary goals of national identity consolidation, occluding Indigenous sovereignty, rendering Indigenous peoples as ethnic minorities rather than Nations and complex political formations, masking of the oppression of racialized communities (such as Asian diasporic peoples) to cultural differences (Jafri, 2010; Ma, 2023).

Asian (im)migrant diasporic liberationist Tian An Wong speaks to the totalizing and violent effects of “Canadian” liberal settler colonialism and the subsequent claiming and ascendancy of Asian diasporic hyphenated identities (i.e. Asian-Canadian) there within:

“The rhetoric of multiculturalism and immigrant rights weaponizes notions of equality, eliding this crucial difference that sets apart Natives from settlers. For settlers of color, the routine disavowal of White supremacy, including its settler coloniality, is a convenient one: relegating Native populations to the past, casting them as an essentially extinct or mythical people, allows for the settler-colonial society to legitimate itself as the natural heir to the land while settlers of color are allowed to inherit a selective amnesia as they seek legitimacy from the settler-colonial power, the right to reside within the settler colony and to be productive citizens thereof. Under this erasure, the oppression experienced by exogenous non-White persons come to the fore, drowning out Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty” (Wong, 2023, p. 101).

Rather than drowning out Indigenous struggles for Land and sovereignty, the decolonizASIAN movement aligns Asian (im)migrant diasporic life with Indigenous desires for futures rooted in their sovereignty and nationhood. It is to these generations of Asian diasporic scholar-activists we now turn, who destabilize and defamiliarize Asian diasporic subjectivity and identity markers through analyzing the limits of “Canadian” liberal settler multiculturalism, situating themselves and the past, present, and future of Asian-Indigenous relationalities beyond the settler state.

1.4. DecolonizASIAN & Alternative Contact

Lily Cho (2007) stared down the contradictions and possibilities inherent in the instability of Asian diasporic subjectivity and “Canadian” citizenship, responding to Sto:lo matriarch Lee Maracle’s call to “situate [Asian diasporas] inextricably within long histories of dislocation including that of the dislocation of First Nations peoples of

Canada” (Cho, 2007, p. 28). In moving beyond treating “diaspora” as merely an object of analysis, Cho argued that if “diaspora” is to be situated on Indigenous Lands and in relation to Indigenous presence, it must be a *condition of subjectivity* “marked by the contingencies of long histories of displacements and genealogies of dispossession. In focusing on the problem of subjectivity and subject formation, I am suggesting that diasporas are not just there” (Cho, 2007, p. 11). I suggest along with Cho that the Asian diasporic subject *emerges* from turning back upon the markers of self that make one legible in the first place – in this instance, letting one’s identity *speak for itself* which neglects to confront one’s entanglements with not only settler colonialism but its logics that put Indigeneity at the expense of attempting to find one’s roots both intellectually and materially.

Scholar-activist Rita Wong (2008) articulates the consequences of letting Asian diasporic identity speak for itself, such as declaring “I am Canadian,” rooted in normalizing settler colonial whiteness as the reference point for understanding oneself and Asian diasporic life histories – read another way, the *conditions* of Asian diasporic subjectivity are contingent on Asian diasporic subjects “becoming” “Canadian” through their relationship to settler colonialism, co-opting a white settler futurity that eliminates Indigenous sovereignty. Wong (2008) also calls into question Asian anti-racism activism and logics that continue to, rather than eliminate, the need to unpack multi-dimensional histories of displacement and genealogies of dispossession that animate Asian diasporic life across Turtle Island.²⁰ I view Cho (2007) and Wong (2008) as stewards of the decolonizASIAN movement, which at its core examines “the challenging relationships between subjects positioned as “Asian Canadian” and “[I]ndigenous” [raising] questions regarding immigrant complicity in the colonization of land as well as the possibility of making alliances towards decolonization” (Wong, 2008, p. 158). The decolonizASIAN movement is inter-disciplinary in its construction, and continues until the present, consisting of differential yet overlapping strategy, theories, and tactics that serve as

²⁰ For more on the slippery, incommensurable relationship between anti-racism and decolonization, refer to Lawrence, Bonita, and Dua, Enakshi. “Decolonizing Antiracism.” *Social Justice* 32, no. 4 (102) (2005): 120-43; Jafri, Beenash. “Indigenous Solidarity in an Anti-Racism Framework? A Case Study of the National Secretariat Against Hate and Racism in Canada (NSAHRC).” In *Alliances: Re/Envisioning Indigenous-Non-Indigenous Relationships*, edited by Lynne Davis. University of Toronto Press, 2010; Dhamoon, Rita Kaur. “A Feminist Approach to Decolonizing Anti-Racism: Rethinking Transnationalism, Intersectionality, and Settler Colonialism.” *Feral Feminisms* 4 (2015): 20-37.

renewed points of entry into sustaining good relations with Indigenous Lands and life (Lee, 2016; Lai, 2020). Strategy, theories, and tactics that “expose manufactured belonging and dependency on settler colonial logic that aims to perpetuate colonial control and capitalist exploitation” (Ho, 2023, p. 90). The decolonizASIAN movement theorizes moving beyond the “Canadian” liberal settler multicultural state and its logics of settler multiculturalism, immigrant rights that come at the expense of Indigenous sovereignty, and race relations frameworks that together produce “the colonizing processes and effects of Indigenous difference” (Dhamoon, 2015, p. 22). We then see how producing future-oriented kinship with Indigenous others (a refusal to Other Indigeneity) unlocks ways “to understand the nuances of settler colonialism, migration, and complicity, and to forge new and critical paths of kinship informed by shared and interwoven colonial histories of oppression and power” (Ranuata, 2021, p. 353). In turning in on itself, the Asian diasporic subject is pushed to its settler colonial limits in seeing how Asian diasporic subjectivity and belonging continues to remain cathected to the settler state and is antithetical to Indigeneity in its predominant configuration (Cho, 2007; Rifkin, 2014; Jafri, 2025).

I contend that the decolonizASIAN movement anchors us in three crucial lessons, with the first being that Asian diasporic subjectivity remains contingent on claims of belonging (“Canadianness”) which are tied to a sustained investment of a white settler futurity, which is always and forever “dependent on the foreclosure of an Indigenous futurity” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 14). The next lesson following from such investments are that by unknowingly or knowingly staking claims (rootedness) to stolen Indigenous Lands and actualizing “Canadian” liberal democratic citizenship, Asian diasporic subjects maintain the settler state’s legitimacy by naturalizing an identification with “Canada” as the only logical culmination of Asian diasporic life and rootedness – relationships to Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood become impossible. This ascendancy within the settler state, often serving as a signifier of equity, diversity and inclusion (Asianness becoming further “respected” and “validated” through settler colonial logics) ultimately materializes Asian diasporic subjectivities that are contingent on the elimination of Indigenous Lands and life across Turtle Island. Therefore, the settler colonial capitalist state of “Canada” cannot become transformed without Asian diasporic subjects and communities first recognizing and making “undeniably visible” (possible) the status of Asians as settlers in a settler state, and the ongoing Othering of

Indigeneity that animates and makes possible Asian diasporic subjectivities across Turtle Island (Fujikane & Okamura, 2008).

Asian-Indigenous relationality remains not so easy, or straightforward, despite the decolonizASIAN movement locating the possibilities that can theoretically exist through the unfolding, illuminating, and re-mapping Asian diasporic subjectivities to Indigenous Lands and kin. While Asian diasporic literature no longer struggles in the same ways it used to with the need to account for its complicity in Indigenous dispossession and attachments in settler colonialism, the literature still suffers from “often talk[ing] about decentering the nation-state...” when in reality “this goal is not so easily achieved – at least not in abstract terms” (Huang, 2014, p. 9). The literature frequently presumes that relationalities between Asian and Indigenous communities have always been foreclosed and must be activated rather than renewed. It then becomes necessary to put the lessons learned from decolonizASIAN in conversation with literature emanating from historiography and literary studies that emphasizes Asian-Indigenous alternative contact. Alternative contact, what Lai & Smith (2010) refer to as a long, rich history of material and imagined relations that have existed between Asian and Indigenous communities beyond the narratives and logics of European-Indigenous first contact, becomes a vital lens to further deconstruct not only Asian diasporic subjectivities (both as settlers and colonial subjects), but in learning about the ways in which Asian and Indigenous peoples have always already created their own forms of identity, affinities, and coalitions in excess of settler colonial governance and logics (Barman, 2013; Carpenter & Yoon, 2014; Coulthard, 2020; Geiger, 2014 & 2022; Karuka, 2019; Komori, 2023; Liestman, 1999; Mawani, 2010; Phung, 2015; Yakashiro, 2021b; Yu et al., 2011).²¹ If the decolonizASIAN movement signals to and reminds us of the necessity of Asian-Indigenous relationality beyond the settler state, then literature on alternative contact affirms the possibilities that stem from that necessity based on historical and contemporary Asian diasporic “engagement with the literal and stolen

²¹ There are immense difficulties inherent in historically positioning Taiwanese-ness, previously rendered invisible, into conversation with settler colonialism and Indigenous sovereignty. Prominent Asian-Indigenous literature allows for the capability of thinking through major historical events, pillars of anti-Asian “Canada,” such as the Chinese Head Tax, Japanese Internment, and the Komagata Maru, in relation to settler colonialism. Given the relatively late influx of Taiwanese (im)migration to “Canada,” largely beginning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the conflation with Taiwanese-ness and “Chinese Canadian-ness,” it remains difficult to both position and narrate the Taiwanese diaspora within the long grounded histories of Asian-Indigenous relation-making.

ground on which people stand and come together upon” ... because “settler colonialism will not be undone by analysis alone” (Snelgrove et al., 2014, p. 27).

On August 28, 2004, Secwepemc and Sylix elder Dorothy Christian invoked alternative contact at a workshop entitled *Walk with Women Warriors*, to show how despite there being tremendous amounts of theory and stories regarding shared oppression, we must turn to some of the earliest oral stories that exist regarding Asian-Indigenous relationality to understand, with greater breadth, how since first contact “different Native people in B.C. took in [Asian] people and taught them how to live on the land, how to hunt, which plants to eat, which berries to pick” ... “[d]o we ever hear about those stories?” (Christian & Huang, 2008, p. 18).

Christian goes on to share an oral story that embodies and validates forms of Asian-Indigenous alternative contact beyond the “Canadian” settler state:

“There is a Chinese man who helped to set up a Chinese restaurant in the Okanagan on the Vernon Reserve who told me about his grandfather sponsoring him when he first came to this country. He has been here since 1969. His grandfather told him, “When you come to this country, no matter where you choose to live you make sure you treat Native people good.” His grandfather went on to tell him about the time he worked on the railroad, he got sick and he was left to die. A Native community took him in, healed him, fed him, clothed him, and nursed him back to health. He lived with that Native community for three years. He was able to go back to his world, to his family” (Christian & Huang, 2008, p. 18).

Asian-Indigenous alternative contact as narrated by Elder Dorothy helps make sense of the decolonizASIAN movement, prompting Asian diasporic subjects and communities to not become good guests on Indigenous Lands, but rather to “[remain] good guests in relation with the descendants of ancestors who made space and place to care for the earliest Asian arrivants when the state refused to” (Wong, 2023, p. 119). By re-centering relational and oral histories, we draw upon instances wherein early waves of the Asian diaspora turned back on itself to pursue alternative forms of belonging and relation-making that exceeded settler colonial logics, tethered to Indigenous Land and sovereignty rather than the settler colonial capitalist state and the fortification of a white futurity. Komori (2025) further illustrates how there is a wealth of material amongst oral histories, communal archives, and family knowledges to support rich, long-standing relations between Asian (im)migrants and Indigenous peoples in the Pacific Northwest. These insights do not just strengthen Cho’s (2007) insights of the Asian diaspora being a

cite of creative production and world-making – it helps spur Indigenous oral traditions and Asian diasporic theory into action, as it is already an act of Asian-Indigenous relational praxis to acknowledge and connect oneself to legacies of Asian diasporic subjects being “active agents in choosing, exploring, and even creating alterative [contact] far away from the [homes] they were born into” (Izumi, 2015, n.p.).

Therefore alternative contact is the means through which we can locate, build upon, and further enact pre-existing Asian-Indigenous relational praxis that have, and will continue, to move Asian-Indigenous alliance against settler colonialism into a generative space that is not implicated in hegemonic European whiteness and the logics of the settler state (Izumi, 2015; Lee, 2016; Arvin, 2019). Therefore, this project was initially conceived as one of many ways to make the leap “from analyzing Asian Canadian settler-colonialism” ... to further “illuminate practices of and directions for Asian Canadian unsettling and solidarity” (Lew, 2018, p. 2). In parallel to Upadhyay (2024), I began my research journey in drawing on the lessons learned from literature to inform my investments in further “proving” Taiwanese settlerhood, seeking “to theorize how complicity looks within settler colonialism by asking direct questions [about settlerhood]...” (Upadhyay, 2024, p. 11) such as:

How and to what degree are first-, 1.5-, and second-generation members of the Taiwanese diaspora in K’emk’emeláy reckoning with their settlerhood and settler colonialism in their life histories, homemaking practices, and senses of belonging? How are relationalities to Indigenous peoples, Lands, and Nations in K’emk’emeláy differently or similarly expressed, narrated, and felt across generations?

I also rooted these questions in a grander purpose to examine what was known about Indigeneity and, particularly of interest, the politics of whether one considers themselves to be a settler. However, by seeking to ask such direct questions to Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic community members, I failed to reckon with how Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic subjectivities are “premised on a simultaneous identification with and disavowal of settler colonial erasures of Indigenous presence” (Wang, 2023, p. 87). Most importantly, I was not accounting, or preparing for, the specific, unique ways in which the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora would soon make visible the “multitudinous ways [they] align, and possibly un-align, themselves with the settler project” (Upadhyay, 2024, p. 12). This next chapter details how the Asian-Indigenous impasse became materialized within, and dislocated this project and its initial framework, leading to the

aims, scope, and questions of this project changing in responding to the ways in which “these messy and fluid relationalities [are] lived, negotiated, and reproduced” (Upadhyay, 2024, p. 13).

Chapter 2. This Land is (Not) Your Land, This Land is (Not) My Land

How can we begin to cross the Asian-Indigenous impasse when Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic settlers believe that their lives have “*nothing to do*” with myself and my kin, my Coast Salish cousins? It was this jarring instance of alternative contact (Lai & Smith, 2010) near the beginning of my research journey that led me to animate an Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing. This chapter encompasses the ways in which I continue to navigate multiple, overlapping sites of accountability, and how my embodied experience of dislocation(s) as an off-reserve Indigiqueer scholar-activist are generative wells of knowledge and liberatory praxis that have informed the creation and application of an Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing, an Indigiqueer standpoint theory (Nakata, 2007). I show through decolonial feminist autoethnography how this research journey has pulled me in, as a steward of Asian-Indigenous relationality, to confront, challenge, and work through the inescapable material conditions (Chrystos, 1988) and the felt knowledges (Million, 2009) that shape how I steward, and am moved by, my chain of relations (Maracle, 2003) on xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səlilwətał territories.

2.1. “Our Life Paths Just Don’t Cross”

“This land is [not] your land,
This land is [not my land],
From [Taipei],
To [K’emk’emeláy],
From [the Taiwan Strait],
To [the Salish Sea]
This land was [not] made for you and me”

—Woody Guthrie “This Land is Your Land,” adapted for the settler colonial “Canadian” context by “Canadian” folk singers The Travellers, then further adapted by the author.²²

²² Tracing back my relationship to the fraudulent nation-state of “Canada,” I arrive at one of my earliest memories in elementary school, learning this “Canadiana” anthem in grade 1. This song

Through discursively and materially crossing into every nook and cranny of “Canada,” “This Land is Your Land” is quintessential settler colonial mythos, a call-to-arms for those of all ages – as proclaimed near the end of the song, “Nobody can ever stop me / As I go walking / That freedom highway.” This song, to me, is the heartbeat of “Canadian” settler colonialism, setting the terms and conditions of what is made to seem uniformly (im)possible. As the Land becomes sterilized as free and clear, it serves as the backdrop (not the root) for endless possibilities (for white settlers) and punctuating a national “we” (a white settler futurity): “This land was made for you and me.” “This Land is Your Land” as the anthem of “Canadian” liberal settler multiculturalism, incorporating Asian (im)migrant diasporic strangers into the “we” of the nation while eliminating Indigenous peoples, Nations, Lands, and life from the past, present, and future of the settler-scape. If as Ahmed (2000) suggests, the racialized (im)migrant comes to know the Indigenous Other through the mediations of the settler state, it then follows that one could, just like the settler state, simultaneously champion the acceptance of difference while also believing that Indigenous peoples have nothing to do with their lives. This is exactly what occurred in one of my first interviews with Bo, a 1.5 generation Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic queer settler who arrived on xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliwətaʔ Lands via Tkaronto²³ in the mid 2000s:

“But I just think most people, my friends, to begin, like my circle, they feel like their life has nothing to do with Indigenous people. They don't...they, they just think it wouldn't affect them. That's why, like, none of us hold any, uh, uh, negative views towards any Indigenous people...our life paths just don't cross ... that's why I think it's difficult. It's hard to elicit people's compassion.”

was sung louder than the rest, even the national anthem at assemblies. Belting out these lyrics in unison with my classmates created a form of collective effervescence that can only be described as settler colonial nightmare fuel for the naturalization of my own dislocation(s) and dispossession(s). With my head held up high, making my teachers proud, I sang into existence the root of a “Canadian” nationalist identity that would take two decades to begin to overcome. And just like that, a karaoke machine became the core weapon in psychological warfare. I became gutless through song. It does not help that music has always been my primary muse.

²³ Mohawk name for settler colonial “Toronto, Ontario, Canada,” meaning where there are trees standing in the water. These are the traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples. Indigenous peoples of various Nations in Tkaronto uphold ‘the dish with One Spoon’ wampum, an Indigenous legal order and peace agreement between the Anishinaabek and Haudensaunee, rooted in reciprocal responsibilities for all relations – Land as a dish to be shared and cared for by all. For more please visit talkingtreaties.ca/treaties-for-torontonians/dish-with-one-spoon/.

THE Journey

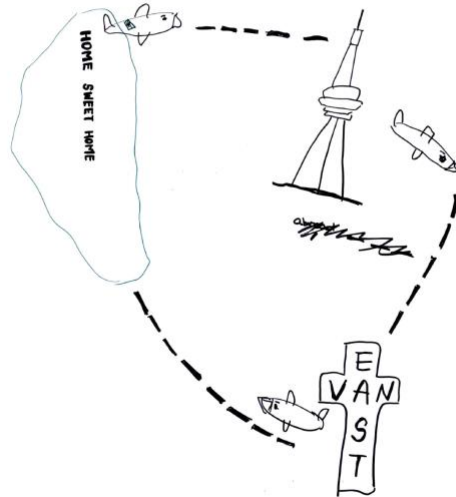


Figure 2.1 Bo's (Im)migration Journey to "Canada"

Source: Map created by Bo, 2025.

Settler multicultural logics are enacted at an intimate scale for Bo, placing Indigenous peoples into an equivocated "stranger slot" alongside other racialized/minority groups within the larger social worlds of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora. Not only is Indigenous presence simultaneously called upon and excavated, but the lack of engagement between Taiwanese and Indigeneity is flattened and othered through the guise of politeness and a multicultural apolitical script: there is seemingly no reason as for why our lives just don't cross. Yet still, Bo's claim rings out in my mind the same way that other totalizing settler colonial narratives have my entire life. This project suddenly seemed impossible, given that Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic relationships to Indigenous peoples are supposedly foreclosed, *made to seem impossible* despite there being tolerance and acceptance of an Indigenous Other – me included. My research felt dislocated. Taking it even further, Bo cautiously defends themselves and

their friends by asserting that they hold no ill-will towards Indigenous peoples, it is simply a matter of them remaining strangers, peoples to never seemingly be known.²⁴

I am right in front of them.

It is compassion that must be elicited for the Indigenous Other, rather than acknowledging the attachments and investments in settler colonialism's totalizing logics that make Asian-Indigenous relationality seem impossible to actualize. I felt like I was the loser of a zero-sum game and that my entire research would collapse in upon itself. I felt the terror of what Jafri (2025) calls the Asian-Indigenous impasse as it manifested itself in all my senses – totalizing, abject, inescapable fear: what settler colonialism continues to produce within me in all its shape-shifting modes and forms. It was already uncomfortable to navigate the complexities of the literature covered in Chapter 1, in preparing to undertake on-the-ground research that attempts to actualize new forms of Asian-Indigenous relationality. It is stomach churning, world-ending, body-quivering, skin-crawling fear to realize in this moment that I was now responsible for interrogating how Bo, others, and myself have begun to confront and know one another as mediated through the Asian-Indigenous impasse. To realize that I have been dwelling in the impasse my entire life, it is what has defined my own subjectivity, relationalities, and illuminated my path towards overcoming gutlessness and activating an Indigenous critical consciousness that is in alignment with collective liberation and Land Back for all my relations (Bryant, 2024). I always and forever remain energized by the synergistic potentials, experiences, and histories of the Asian diaspora, its politics, and its varying investments in “the longstanding [Asian-Indigenous] tradition of working, living, and loving together *despite* the impasse...” (Jafri, 2025, p. 134).²⁵

²⁴ What at first infuriated me about this interaction was that I had to endure these words, validating and prying at the ways in which Bo believes that there is no commensurability between Taiwanese (im)migrant settlers and Indigenous peoples – despite these comments occurring during an active dialogue between us. An active dialogue where there was an immense amount of time spent on understanding what Bo had to say about their experiences learning about and getting to know Indigeneity through the guises of the settler states of Taiwan and “Canada.” I asked myself, should I be doing this? Can I even handle this?

²⁵ “We [Asian and Indigenous peoples] had crossed a millennium of bridges the rivers of which were swollen with the flood-waters of dark humanity’s tenacious struggle to extricate themselves from oppression and we knew it.” From Maracle, Lee. “Yin Chin.” *Canadian Literature: A Quarterly of Criticism and Review* 124–125 (1990): 158.

Living and exemplifying Asian-Indigenous relationalities has taught me that new forms of solidarity are not only possible but achievable, and that modes of belonging not contingent on settler states are necessary to enact collective liberation and Land Back.²⁶ So, it follows that the worst part, the part of this journey that brought upon so much pain, suffering, and discomfort, was to know that at the core of the Asian-Indigenous impasse is Land, as the most common thread I share with Bo and others being our dwelling on xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliłwətał Lands that are not our own:

“The [Asian-Indigenous] impasse is structurally produced; it emerges not from mere ignorance or moral failing, but from relationships to land that are incommensurable with one another. Acknowledging the impasse – acknowledging, in other words, the structural circumstances framing diasporic-Indigenous relationality – does not render connection and relation impossible. However, it contextualizes some of the tensions and challenges that might make them different or contentious” (Jafri, 2025, p. 100).

This land is not your land, this land is not my land. By positioning Land as the centralized reference point through which Asian and Indigenous peoples come to understand ourselves and each other, we can then upend normalized whiteness in favour of Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty. Doing so allows me and Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic settlers to confront our differential active participation in settler colonialism together – we both dwell on xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliłwətał territories that have been stewarded since time before memory by their sovereign political orders (Wang, 2024). Not only must the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora “always already be a collision with Indigenous presence [and legal orders]” (Byrd et al., 2018, p. 5), but Taiwaneseness itself is “yet not apart from Indigenous land and sovereignty” on xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliłwətał Lands – *our lives are*

²⁶ I attribute much of these lessons to simultaneously developing Asian-Indigenous relational praxis through stewarding the Asian-Indigenous Relations Collective (AIR) of which I am a co-founder – AIR is an anti-colonial political education and relation-making group who ended up holding the largest Asian-Indigenous solidarity gathering in the history of “Canada” from September 19-21, 2025 – “The Past, Present, and Futures of Braided Solidarities: Asian-Indigenous Relations Symposium.” While I had to neglect what could be a thesis full of embodied experiences and lessons driving from my community organizing, I at least would like to acknowledge how these sources of community care and knowledges informed (and were informed by) this project as it continued to take shape, in different forms and at a different pace, than the AIR Collective. Gilakas’la to all of my inter-generational comrades who have all in their own ways contributed to the ways I understand and enact Asian-Indigenous relation-making as an exercise rooted in collective liberation and Land Back. For more please refer to asianindigenousrelations.ca.

inherently crossed. By virtue of their presence on these Lands to begin with, Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic lives, just like myself and my Coast Salish kin, remain interwoven and complicit within the nexus of Indigenous self-determination, Land Back from the settler state, and the quest for collective Asian-Indigenous liberation. From this point on in my research journey, my task became clear: to aid as a steward in actualizing the ability for Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora (and hence Taiwaneseeness) to be imagined otherwise: to allow (im)migrant diasporic settlers to question their allegiances and attachments to settler colonialism, throwing notions of colonial nation-based citizenship and their limiting forms of belonging into turmoil (Farrales, 2025).

This project then had to take new forms and priorities given that I hoped to enact Asian-Indigenous relation-making that centers the (im)possibilities that are weighed out, considered and sat with from all of us on this journey in attempting to find new ways of presence and relationality on xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliwətaʔ Lands (Kim, 2019). From this point on in my research journey, I knew I would be tasked with getting Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic settlers to not only know, but act upon, the fact that *our lives have always been crossed*. This entails collectively diagnosing, deconstructing, and dismantling how the path to citizenship and rootedness in the “Canadian” liberal multicultural settler state creates an “easy landing of settler colonialism and its set of disavowals” (King, 2019, p. 45) at the core of Taiwaneseeness as it is negotiated, enacted, and narrated in the city I have always called “home.”

At the beginning of my project, I took it upon myself to consider Chu (2002)’s call to figure out if the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora, as settlers, have perpetuated settler colonialism and Indigenous dispossession. Yet it was in leaving the interview with Bo that I knew this was not quite the right question to ask and work through in the context of our research and relations. I had to swallow and digest my activism and scholarship becoming a response to not just one singular call, but decades of calls amongst Asian-Indigenous coalitions to begin to confront the impasse (before it was even named as such) and the violence of abstraction, requiring radical experimentation and the following revised research questions that together are inherently imperfect, incomplete, and profoundly necessary.

The emergent strategies of answering new research questions, revolving around settler colonial (im)possibilities, would invoke ourselves in an ongoing project of Asian-

Indigenous relationality that refuses settler colonialism and the fraudulent settler colonial state of “Canada” as totalizing and fixed (Olwan, 2015; brown, 2017; Lawson & Elwood, 2023). I had to swallow the notion that “our lives do not cross” and take it as a collective entry point into intimately knowing one another within and through the Asian-Indigenous impasse. I did not need to “figure out” whether the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora perpetuated settler colonialism and Indigenous dispossession – they continue to so as long as they remain unevenly, contradictorily, and messily enmeshed within the settler state of “Canada” as settlers. After this interview with Bo, I knew deep down that it was no longer sufficient to expect the Asian-Indigenous impasse, or the determinacy of whether Taiwanese peoples are settlers or not, to do anything generative – I owed it to myself, my ancestors, communities, and kin to push further and dream bigger. The real questions then became:

How does the Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic imaginary (and enactment of Taiwaneseeness, defined as the urgent need to root in place) become undone and remade when interpreted and conceived in relation to x^wməθk^{wə}yəm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səlliwətaʔ Lands?

How can tending to the (im)possibilities of Taiwanese settlerhood that are formulated, enacted, and shaped at the scale of the everyday and intimate aid us in searching for the potentialities and limits of our collective capacity to imagine within and beyond the “Canadian” settler colonial capitalist state?

What does this research journey, in moving beyond Asian-Indigenous theoretical abstraction, reveal regarding broader Asian-Indigenous coalition-building efforts and the ongoing work to enact Asian-Indigenous decolonial, liberatory futures across Turtle Island? To braid Asian-Indigenous relations beyond the settler state?

These questions invoke decolonization as a verb, an active process that has no endpoint, but in this case a starting-point in collectively identifying the prior limits of Asian-Indigenous relation determined by settler colonialism and its structurally generated impasse, to imagine beyond settler colonialism and begin to cross the impasse together. In order to do so, we must locate and act upon Asian-Indigenous collective possibilities, what I call (and have referred to earlier as) Asian-Indigenous relational praxis.

In this sense, Bo’s notion that “our lives do not cross” becomes generative, emblematic of how the Asian-Indigenous impasse necessarily remains, so long as “Canada” exists, the generative starting-point for connecting, relating, and invoking new forms of solidarity

and belonging based upon assessing what is made to be (im)possible. Sure, the Asian-Indigenous impasse demarcates the terms and conditions of impossibility for me and Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic settlers (and Asian-Indigenous coalition at large), but it also allows us to generate an ethical impulse to root ourselves on Indigenous Lands and attune ourselves and our subjectivities to Indigenous sovereignty and the flourishing of us all. Relief is an emotion that rarely surfaces in liberatory work, but relief came flooding in when I centred the potential the Asian-Indigenous impasse provides for the terms and conditions of movement and possibility for us all. My project from this point on, as well as my work with the Asian-Indigenous Relations Collective, became defined as a collective divestment from settler colonialism and its ignorant ability to dictate the terms and conditions of dreaming, what I define as the ability to imagine otherwise that is historically curtailed by braided Asian-Indigenous histories of (dis)location, (im)migration, and co-resistance (read: our ungovernability) despite being partially tethered to, and defined by the totalizing settler state.²⁷ Remaining ungovernable, refusing settler imaginaries, and thus refusing settler colonialism and its promise of a white settler futurity is contingent upon breaking Asian (im)migrant diasporic attachments from settler coloniality, necessitating a crossing of the Asian-Indigenous impasse, which in our collective movement begins to “[open] onto a portal of alternate possibilities of living and loving on occupied Indigenous land” (Jafri, 2025, p. 132). Alternate possibilities, which are first, dreamt from our sites of dislocation(s).

2.2. Dislocation(s) as Sites of Knowledge and Liberation

“Much of this 400-year-old pain has been expressed *in the war of words* against us. And to that, we are pressed to explain, to debunk, and to dismantle. To the war of ways against us, *we are moved to retrieve, redefine, and reconcile our scattered pieces*. To the voices of despair among us and in us, *we are challenged to dream new visions to bring hope for the future*” (LaRocque as cited in Million, 2009, p. 63).

As soon as the BC Ferry I took on the afternoon of July 31, 2024 exited its Tsawwassen dock, I became momentarily giddy – for a fleeting moment that made time stood still, I dreamed as if I was embarking for the reserve. It felt as if my entire life built up to this

²⁷ As was discussed in Chapter 1, the settler state of “Canada” is always and forever anxiously attached to its unproblematic totalizing claim to its own territory and has thus produced settler colonial technologies of governance with varying success, which all have in common a failure to entirely keep Asian and Indigenous populations separate since first contact.

moment. I was finally going home. As soon as the PA safety announcement blasted over the intercom, I was snapped back into reality, opening my laptop to a pen-pal letter from my friend Rebecca Wong, making my way towards her final words:

“The last thing I’ll mention is your discussion of never having visited your homelands. According to Google Maps, you live 230 km from your Nation. I live 12,433 km from mine. Funny how distance doesn’t seem to matter with this kind of heartache” (Wong & Bryant, 2024, n.p.).

I battled seasickness to write my letter back to Rebecca in one sitting, further braiding our Asian-Indigenous diasporic struggles with time and space:

“A reorganizing of things may feel impossible if there is no stable foundation, a concrete feeling of home, to support you” (Wong & Bryant, 2024, n.p.).

I did not know it at the time, but looking back, I see this as a turning point where I finally found the courage *to explain, to debunk and to dismantle* my own struggles with Indigeneity not through intellectualization and approximation (my settler colonial voices of despair), but through my embodied experience of dislocation(s). Settler colonialism has not only forcibly dislocated myself and my Liḡwɪldaŋ^w kin away from our culture, homelands, and language, it has created the illusion *that Indigeneity is something I am dislocated from*. Settler colonial dislocation(s) limits your dreams (and ability to dream) in such a way that makes you yearn for an Indigenous identity you do not think you authentically have. The only thing possible is Indigeneity seeming impossible. To think of crossing the water on a BC Ferry as returning “home.” What happens then, when you live out your life, on your own terms, on the unceded territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm, Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh, and səliłwətał Nations? When you continue to choose (and call) “Vancouver” as “home” despite your First Nation being only 230 km away? When all your dreams of collective liberation do not lead you closer to the reserve, but to further envelop you in a settler colonial city and its Asian-Indigenous relation-making projects that you wish to have a secure attachment to?

For the rest of the ferry ride, I felt the terror not of the Asian-Indigenous impasse, but the structurally generated impasse I have with my own Indigeneity as it manifested itself in all of my senses – totalizing, abject, inescapable fear: what settler colonialism continues to produce within me in all of its shape-shifting modes and forms. It was time to take crossing my impasse seriously as I crossed the water – a breaking point where the

“chronological order [of dislocation(s)] seems less important than the way in which they weave together and bring to bear questions, concerns, and a basic unsettledness” (Million, 2009, p. 5). If affirming my Indigeneity is the cost of my avoidance to my own settler colonial dislocation(s), then seeing my life as radically Indigenous is the outcome of allowing the felt knowledge derived from my settler colonial dislocation(s) to speak for itself (Million, 2009). The words flowed out of me as I affirmed my own Indigeneity alongside Rebecca’s:

“A reframing of our lives as radically Indigenous means that there is no pre-set program to follow in “becoming” more Indigenous. We already are!” (Wong & Bryant, 2024, n.p.).

I anchored this point in what Leanne Betasamosake Simpson calls “radical Indigenous resurgence”: “an extensive, rigorous, and profound reorganizing of things ... resurgence has always been about this. It has always been a rebellion and a revolution from within. It has always been about bringing forth a new reality” (Simpson, 2018, n.p.). I refused to need to imagine my Indigeneity otherwise, but to know it by feeling it as always and forever there. I affirmed life – my own Liḡwildaŋ^w life. Only then could I finally begin to dream new visions to bring hope to my future.²⁸

Therefore, the seeds of new dreams were planted in me, “[starting] to grow with a strong *feeling*, more than thinking” ... feeling and dreaming became “my flight path out of settler colonialism” (Simpson, 2017, pp. 16-17).

A flight path out of settler colonialism does not come without turbulence. Bump after bump, I was reminded that “the materiality of [my] experiences has ensured that ... I have never been [and felt] “at home” in [my body], the nation or the academy” (Razack et al., 2010, p. 27). In order to sustain feeling and dreaming, to sustain the development

²⁸ It is necessary here to place Audre Lorde in conversation with Simpson’s “radical Indigenous resurgence”: “As they become known to and accepted by us, our feelings and the honest exploration of them become sanctuaries and spawning grounds for the most radical and daring of ideas. They become a safe-house for that difference so necessary to change and the conceptualization of any meaningful action. Right now, I could name at least ten ideas I would have found intolerable and incomprehensible and frightening, except as they came after dreams and poems. This is not idle fantasy, but a disciplined attention to the true meaning of “it feels right to me”. We can train ourselves to respect our feelings and to transpose them into a language so they can be shared” (Lorde, 1984, p. 37). For Lorde, without dreaming, we have effectively ceded the future of our worlds. And for Simpson, being further pulled into a Nishnaabeg world became the garden for “dreaming, visioning, thinking, and remembering the affirmative Indigenous worlds that continue to exist right alongside the colonial worlds” (Simpson, 2017, pp. 16-17).

of an Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing, I had to ground my test flights – to directly face individual and collective grief. I had to grieve through the unfairness of having to re-construct, re-locate, and re-animate ourselves, our identities, and communities within and against settler colonialism. I had to grieve the fact that this project must exist, and that this is the work necessary to act to actively challenge and dismantle the Asian-Indigenous impasse. When you are in the clouds for the very first time, learning what you can imagine otherwise, you realize that we should have never had to differentially suffer to experience kinship, reciprocity, and collective liberation. I did not want to wait to live in the potentialities of unpromised futures that will never arrive under settler colonialism – yet this required me to grieve the Asian-Indigenous worlds that have already ended (Law, 2024).

Grief was a call “to call up and stir up” parts of myself I had still been ignoring (hooks, 2009, p. 69). It was grief and the constellation of bad feelings that orbits the embodiment of such (Diabo, 2019) that further allowed me *to retrieve, redefine, and reconcile my scattered pieces*. Grieving through the newfound plural dislocation(s) that have emerged during this research journey have been necessary processes in intimating my own intellectual and political history as well as my convergences with the cross-currents of different feminisms, Indigeneities, and in navigating multiple sites of accountability via my co-labours as an Indigiqueer scholar-activist on x^wməθk^wəy̓əm, Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh, and səliłwətał territories (Alexander, 2005). I further argue that accounting for grief, central to dreaming and feeling liberatory Asian-Indigenous futurities beyond settler colonialism, helps generate an Indigiqueer standpoint theory which must “be produced ... it does not pre-exist in the everyday waiting to be brought to light. It is not any sort of hidden wisdom that Indigenous people possess. It is a distinct form of analysis, and is itself both a discursive construction and intellectual device to persuade others and elevate what might not have been a focus of attention of others” (Nakata, 2007, p. 214).

Asian (im)migrant diasporas, histories, and experiences are typically not a focus of attention of fellow Indigenous scholar-activists. The inclusion of Asians within Indigenous coalition building efforts is at best implied (Diabo, 2019) and if so, is under the guise of a homogenous pan-Asian identity marker (Wang, 2024). This always confused me as Asian (im)migrant diasporas are necessary in understanding how my Indigeneity has travelled given how they are braided in my prior and emerging settler colonial dislocation(s), and my decision to continue to dwell on x^wməθk^wəy̓əm, Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh,

and səliwətał territories, where my body and I feel most “at home” (Ahmed, 2006; Brizuela et al, 2024). Just because you feel most yourself in a city does not mean you feel equally at home within your house. My family would often peddle conspiratory theories over “Vancouver” becoming “too Chinese” as well as a medley of micro-aggressions that only further substantiated the distance between my younger self and those family members that actualized settler colonial foreclosures across the dinner table from me. It was over butter chicken, in a house located on the outskirts of Punjabi Market, that my Indigenous kin attempted to school me in ignorance (Maracle, 1990).²⁹

Sarah de Leeuw and Sarah Hunt (2018) provides a stark reminder to settler scholars who ignorantly engage with Indigeneity as abstraction rather than the dense, lived experiences and knowledges of Indigenous peoples themselves. They suggest that scholars must defer to Indigenous scholars who produce research and stories regarding subjects, histories, and geographies comprising settler colonial scholarship because their work fundamentally articulates “the everyday, ongoing, relational nature of Indigeneity ... [decentering] colonial frames of knowledge” (Leeuw & Hunt, 2018, p. 9). They provide an incisive critique as to how scholarship not only produces cumulative violence(s) of settler colonial abstraction but further dislocates Indigenous scholars and their sovereignties away from the knowledges and disciplines they uphold. Yet I find that this critique and framework do not adequately address or assist me in working through my partially self-imposed dislocation within my primary discipline of Asian Studies. During the toughest times of this project, I often dreamt of an alternative timeline where I was conducting research on Quinsam Reserve,³⁰ and during the first leg of my time in grad school I exclusively produced research on the more-than-human. In-between I was

²⁹ These are the words that close out Stó:lō matriarch Lee Maracle's famous 1990 short story “Yin Chin,” which is one of the first pieces of literature that directly addresses Indigenous complicity in anti-Asian racism, and takes place on xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliwətał territories. My entire ability to do this work and persist is owed to Lee, even though I never had the chance to meet her. I always think of myself and my work in conversation with her, and also spent much time researching and learning about her early activism and decolonial, intersectional feminist, internationalist labours with movements such as the Native Alliance for Red Power and the American Indian Movement. Most crucial to note was Maracle's involvement in transnational diplomacy, having been part of the first all-Indigenous delegation to China in 1975. For more, see one of the most influential works I have ever read, and continue to read and draw from to this day: Maracle, Lee. 2017. *Bobbi Lee Indian Rebel*. Women's Press.

³⁰ The official “Government of Canada” for this Land is “Quinsam 12, Indian reserve.” The Elders from our nation say that this name originated as a rest hub for peoples who journeyed from sea to inland places.

already immersing myself in the scholarly environments of Asian Studies and in local workshops, events, and talks regarding Asian (im)migrant diasporic scholarship.³¹

Through this all, I had to begin to confront what it meant to be an Indigiqueer scholar from Turtle Island writing, working, and relating to others in a canon of Asian Studies that is continually in crisis as a discipline, given its diasporic attachments to settler colonialism which upholds the Asian-Indigenous impasse. Given that I have traced and teased out such intricacies within the Asian diasporic literary canon in Chapter 1, I intend here to draw attention to what is not the subject of attention within Asian Studies: to have a non-Indigenous Asian scholar take up space, and produce scholarship, within a discipline that has still not sufficiently engaged with Critical Indigenous Studies and settler colonial studies as a critical problematic (Kim & Lee, 2019). I am not just joining fellow Native scholars in upending the current state of the discipline of Asian Studies by questioning its investments in and proximities to a critical Indigenous standpoint, but I am doing so through an Indigiqueer standpoint partially rooted in my own navigation of and investments in the decolonization of the discipline itself. Therefore, my very presence in Asian Studies and braiding myself within its knowledge production and infrastructures “challenge[s] the idea that Indigenous peoples’ openness to engaging outside theoretical traditions [*read: researching with my nation*] somehow equates to assimilation and therefore represents and/or serves in the discursive erasure of Indigenous thought and intellectual traditions” (Coulthard, 2020, p. 388).

Finding my footedness on the uneven, messy terrain of Asian Studies is inherently dislocating: I am implicating myself within a disciplinary field that has fundamentally different orientations of bodies and knowledges being “at home” (Ahmed, 2006) further perpetuating tensions between Indigenous rootedness and diasporic placelessness (Chaterjee, 2019). Asian Studies is a discipline that, at times, is still not ready to imagine how it can be transformed by Indigenous scholars existing within (and pushing against)

³¹ This included co-hosting an Indigenous Asia dinner with Rebecca Wong, Pooja Parmar, and Michael Hathaway at the 2024 Association for Asian Studies conference on the Lands of the Duwamish Peoples (“Seattle, Washington, USA”). It was the first time I had ever been in the same room with so many Native folks from across Turtle Island and Asia. As we began to eat, we opened the floor to anyone who wanted to introduce themselves, who they are, and where they know from. After letting the room embrace silence for a good while, and seeing nobody eat yet, I stopped holding my breath and went first. I knew it was safe to go. I had no regrets after introducing myself and had numerous run-ins and messages afterwards thanking me for my words. I did not realize how valuable it would be to go first for once.

its epistemic boundaries – that is, it tends to maintain an avoidance of being schooled in its own ignorance (Maracle, 1990). This project necessarily becomes high stakes because it is conducted, as argued in Chapter 1, in a discipline and canon that often contributes, unknowingly or knowingly, to the ongoing attempted elimination of Indigenous Lands and life not just across Turtle Island, but across the Pacific and the continent known as “Asia”. The lessons Kuan-Hsing Chen teaches the discipline of Asian Studies in *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* apply just as much to the discipline’s attachments to settler colonialism as it does to Chen’s call to “de-cold war” via an imaginary Asia:

“It would be wrong to consider these interwoven problems as theoretical abstractions. On the contrary, they exist in our bodies and minds, and the related desires of psychic pain that must be overcome are palpable parts of our everyday lives. In short, they are matters of subjectivity, and it is on the plane of subjectivity that we must reopen the past for reflection in order to make moments of liberation possible in the future” (Chen, 2010, p. x).

Chen’s words continue to be called upon and invoked in the fight for a liberation of Asia, and of Asian Studies as an alternative horizon. I would instead like to consider how Chen’s words can be invoked and braided with my own experience and aims as an Indigiqueer scholar-activist interfacing with Asian Studies as my primary discipline. I do so through noting how my ongoing embodied material and felt dislocation within Asian Studies itself is a generative source of both knowledge and Asian-Indigenous relational praxis. Implicated in my project and work is an urgent calling to remind the discipline of Asian Studies of what it makes seem (im)possible under its varying attachments to settler colonialism: the need for the discipline to not just reflection on its past assumptions and investments, but on its continued reliance on intellectualizing and approximating Indigeneity rather than placing the everyday, ongoing, relational nature of Indigeneity as its anchor. I believe my project has a lot to add to the Asian Studies canon, and specifically in aiding Asian diasporic studies on its path towards decolonizASIAN. Yet more importantly I would like the discipline to continue to sit with how it can still, despite the best of intentions, produce in uneven (and ugly sounding) concert with settler colonialism³² forms of systematic exclusion and violence despite the

³² There’s another music reference. I tend to think of these tensions as manifesting in voices coming alive (through text, conferences, and everyday conversations and sounds) with and against one another. Often times, it is difficult to focus in on voices within the white noise that the Asian-Indigenous impasse creates, and which permeates the possibility for clearer, equitable

appearance of an Asian Studies that is embracing de-imperialization (and presumably decolonization) with open arms.

This is why I would like to continue to return to feelings, dreams, and affirming life in the socio-political context of a discipline that continues to dislocate Native scholars (even from Indigenous Asia), who despite it all feel most “at home” here. I believe that even more so than this project, my “affective terrain of cultural protocol, protest, complaint, rest, and other everyday geographies” (Hunt & Farrales, 2024, p. 435) sheds light as to how Asian Studies can further divest from its attachments to settler colonialism to settler colonialism that upholds the Asian-Indigenous impasse. To chart out and actualize its disciplinary flight path out of settler colonialism. I will now turn my full attention to the product of such dislocation(s), relations, materially felt knowledges, and geographies, an Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing – an Indigiqueer standpoint theory, and the framework I further develop and draw upon for this research journey.

2.3. Asian-Indigenous Pedagogy of Crossing as Theoretical Framework

“Pedagogy is not limited to an approach to teaching in the traditional schooling sense. Instead, we should recognize that pedagogy is present and a necessary component in the practice of liberation ... pedagogy is always present in our struggles and relationships in and with place” (Ho, 2023, p. 6).

In 2005, Black queer decolonial feminist scholar M. Jacqui Alexander published *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* “out of the recognition that many of the methodological tools at our disposal were not getting us closer to revolution” (Alexander, 2025, n.p.). Alexander considers “The Crossing” as a signifier, with water as a metaphor deriving from the tidal currents of The Middle Passage³³, and the embodied power and stories that emanate from the

dialogues. I still find myself screaming to be heard because I am unsure if much of this discipline even wants to listen. It does not help that I continue to witness the erasure of Indigeneity at conferences, at events, and in becoming further attuned to what is most frequently cited and discussed in the Asian Studies canon at large.

³³ As Gerald D. Jaynes (2005, p. 536) illustrates, The Middle Passage is “the series of forced voyages made by enslaved Africans from Africa to the Americas over an approximately 350-year period ... “the second part of the three-part journey of merchant ships in the transatlantic slave trade, when Africans were enslaved, shackled below the decks of slave ships, and then transported as human cargo across the Atlantic Ocean to the Western Hemisphere.” Omise’eke

emergence of those who forcibly crossed – their “emergence is pedagogy in its own right...” (Alexander, 2005, p. 21). The text consistently calls for a re-ordering of our relations by charting a variety of pathways through water in moving away from “living alterity premised in difference to living intersubjectivity premised in relationality and solidarity” (Alexander, 2005, p. 22) ... “The water metaphor here is intentional since we will always be dealing with change” (Alexander, 2015, n.p). Alexander (2005) just as Ho (2023) does above, illustrates that pedagogy as an indispensable pillar of collective liberation, consisting of “the imperative of making the world in which we live intelligible to ourselves and to each other – in other words, teaching ourselves” (p. 21). Alexander (2025, p. 22) “came to understand pedagogies in multiple ways: as something given, as in handed, revealed; as in breaking through, transgressing, disrupting, displacing, inverting inherited concepts and practices, those psychic, analytic and organizational methodologies we deploy to know what we believe to know so as to make different conversations and solidarities possible...” In our instance, making different conversations and solidarities possible regarding Asian-Indigenous relationality.

In drawing upon Alexander’s pedagogies of crossing, this section now introduces an Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing, the charting of one of many pathways through water – considering how we may confront and move beyond the Asian-Indigenous impasse to configure new ways of being and knowing together. An Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing, just like any other pedagogy, is “productively unfinished ... positioned as an opening *questioning*, method and methodology are unhinged from the status of noun, and thrown into the less predictable work of verb” (McKittrick, 2021, p. 44, emphasis the authors’). An Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing is productively open-ended, opening rather than foreclosing the myriads of ways in which we can dismantle the settler state and all forms of belonging contingent on the ongoing elimination of Indigenous Lands and life. We do not need to wait for decolonization, when that future can be materialized right now in the Asian-Indigenous decolonial present. The Asian-Indigenous impasse for our purposes then becomes primarily a generative space of convergence and endless (im)possibility from which we dream the

Natasha Tinsley (2008, p. 191) continues: “And water, ocean water is the first thing in the unstable confluence of race, nationality, sexuality, and gender I want to imagine here. This wateriness is metaphor, and history too. The brown-skinned, fluid-bodied experiences now called *blackness* and *queerness* surfaced in intercontinental, maritime contacts hundreds of years ago: in the seventeenth century, in the Atlantic Ocean.”

craft of a new compass to cross it (Jackson, 2005), anchored in the flourishing of Indigenous Lands and lives which stand to nourish and benefit us all. By “slowly mapping out the alternatives that we are imagining [beyond settler colonialism] – we are ensuring our own [braided] futurities” (Ho, 2023, p. 20). And as we collectively “engage critically and intimately with place history, knowledge, and the collective imagination of what a just and flourishing [Asian-Indigenous] future looks like, a pedagogy emerges...” (Ho, 2023).

An Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing is firstly a defiant act of ethnographic refusal (Simpson, 2014) – a sovereign political order to refuse to take the settler colonial status quo and its structurally generated Asian-Indigenous impasse as is. An Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing allows for myself, participants, and my communities to perform conjure work (Simpson & Maynard, 2022), collectively examining what is made to seem (im)possible under settler colonialism, and beginning to orient towards alternative braided futurities that have always been disavowed under “Canadian” liberal settler multiculturalism and Asian (im)migrant diasporic subjectivities and experiences therein (Ho, 2023; Jafri, 2025). In other words, futurities not seen as braided, but as isolated and impossible under the pretense of Asian-Indigenous lives not crossing (*our lives just don’t cross*) – a settler colonial falsehood and internalized foreclosure of relationality, which upholds the Asian-Indigenous impasse. If Asian-Indigenous relationality is the cost of Asian diasporic attachments to settler colonialism, then Asian-Indigenous liberation is the outcome of imagining and acting upon oneself and all their relations existing beyond the limits of relation imposed on us by settler colonialism and its structurally generated Asian-Indigenous impasse.

Therefore, I ask, echoing Black, Indigenous queer and feminist scholars: what if settler colonialism was not simply an “event” or “structure,” but a living, quotidian, ever-present moment in which we can collectively push on, move around in, and redo from moment to moment (King 2019)? I contend alongside Cherokee scholar Jeff Ganohalidoh Cornassel that settler colonialism is a constellation of shape-shifting entities, actualizing settler state coercion and concealment via overlapping structures of domination which are “intrinsically shaped by [and through] interactive relations of colonality, racism, gender, class, sexuality and desire, capitalism, and ableism” (Cornassel, 2021, p. 80). Settler colonialism then, by its nature, is an incomplete project that has time and time again failed to eliminate Indigenous peoples, with its legitimacy always put into question

by enduring³⁴ Indigenous presences and sovereignties, thus illuminating “Canadian” settler colonialism as fraudulent.

At the *core of “Canadian” settler colonialism is fraudulence* (Simpson, 2014), an ever-evolving façade of bullshit, what Secwepemc and Sylix elder Dorothy Christian (2025) refers to as settler colonial political skulduggery: a state-mobilized toolkit of resources, discourses, and moves to innocence³⁵ that seeks to manage settler colonial anxiety seeping out of itself – settler colonial “Canada” “must, always, suppress the obvious fact that Indigenous Peoples do not consent to the theft of their lands, that Canada does not, fundamentally belong to Canada...” (Weiss, 2024, p. 90). To recap Chapter 1, “Canadian” settler colonialism has to be continually re-made through attempted legitimization of settler authority and the determination of what is made to seem (im)possible via “knowing” Indigenous peoples as racialized subjects, stabilizing settler colonialism as the always and forever normative pursuit (including reconciliation and liberal settler multiculturalism) of peace, order, and good government (Midzain-Gobin, 2020).

I take it even further in this section to argue that settler colonialism is a never-ending project of depoliticization and crisis management, always attempting to re-position the settler colonial capitalist state of “Canada” as a successful multicultural democratic society. “Canada” has not produced settler colonialism. Settler colonialism has produced “Canada,” an always incomplete project that tethers to, and refracts all Indigenous Nations it seeks to eliminate – yet Indigenous Nations are required to be at least partially

³⁴ Here I am drawing on the brilliant J. Kēhaulani Kauanui and their work of unpacking “enduring Indigeneity” in relation to Patrick Wolfe’s theory of settler colonialism as a structure, not an event. I share similar frustrations with Kauanui wherein Wolfe’s theory becomes co-opted by scholars who utilize his theory in the same way one might use a Land acknowledgement – as a tokenizing gesture and referent to stand-in for specific Indigenous ways of living and knowing. This is work that does something generative with Wolfe, seriously engaging with his theory in teasing out and further substantiating the ways in which Indigeneity exists, resists, and persists despite settler colonialism continuing to attempt to hold out against it. For more see Kauanui, J. Kēhaulani. 2016. “‘A Structure, Not an Event’: Settler Colonialism and Enduring Indigeneity.” *Lateral* 5 (1): 1–8.

³⁵ Occasionally discussed throughout this thesis, settler moves to innocence “are those strategies or positionings that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up Land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 10). They are rooted in the desire to achieve an easier route to reconciliation, as well as an overall desire to no longer contend or renew one’s relations with enduring Indigenous presence, sovereignty, and nationhood.

recognized in order to uphold the legitimacy of the settler-state itself. Indigeneity in all its density must be pushed upon, moved around in, and redone from moment to moment in order for settler colonial dispossession to be considered just.

“All these Western states are now forever impaled on the double horns of a philosophical conundrum embedded in their founding” (Million, 2009, p. 70).

So long as “Canada” is always and forever needing to maintain its recognition as legitimate, Asian (im)migrant diasporic settlers are required to produce “recognition-based strategies ... founded on and materially reproduc[ing] colonial imaginaries of territory that continue to inflict violence on Indigenous legal and governance orders while facilitating the economic and political sovereignty of Canada” (Daigle, 2016, n.p.). While such intricacies have already been discussed and traced in Chapter 1, there is a need to re-invoke the stakes at play here: Asian (im)migrant diasporas *must* at least partially embrace “Canadian” liberal multiculturalism and its settler colonial structures of violence in order to become legible, to be recognized as legitimate in relation to an Indigenous Other (Weiss, 2024). Despite how much one’s Asian (im)migrant diasporic subjectivity is animated by this liberal settler multicultural embrace, we must also return to the settler colonial elephant in the room that makes an Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing possible to begin with: the Asian-Indigenous impasse continues to be upheld by virtue of Asian (im)migrant diasporic attachments to settler colonialism. Any attempt made to isolate Asian (im)migrant diasporas from the settler colonial state of “Canada” and its systematic exclusion and violence is fraught.

Returning to Corntassel (2021), he contends that actively remaining in contention with settler colonialism entails disrupting the intersecting forces of power such as capitalism, colonialism, and heteropatriarchy. What is surprisingly missing here, despite being present in other areas of his work, is an insistence that settler colonialism and all its forces of power become actualized through Land, not on it. While not the intention nor takeaway of Corntassel’s work, it is an instructive opportunity to consider Maracle’s (cited in Lee & Wong, 2008, pp. 5-6) teaching that naming and challenging settler colonial modes of power are not enough, anti-racism must “be aligned with decolonization and rooted in ... analysis of human relations with land or [it] can fall into the trap of fighting for a piece of pie without considering where the pie comes from...”

Land is the means through which anti-Asian racism, Asian (im)migrant diasporic subjectivities, and settler colonialism become intricately and intimately connected across time and space (Wang, 2024). This begs another question on top of what Tiffany Lethabo King helps us propose at the start of this section: what if we could generate Land-based knowledges, practices and processes that allow us not just to understand settler colonialism intimately, but to cut and rupture settler colonialism – to get to the root of both colonization *and* decolonization: Land. The development of a pedagogy that addresses settler colonialism must then be a “pedagogy of how people are taught to live sustainably on the Land to perpetuate the existence of life” (Christian, 2025, p. 100) given that Land is at the root of all issues, conflicts, and (im)possibilities, in this instance, incommensurabilities that uphold the Asian-Indigenous impasse. Decolonization is, and always will be, a verb:

“[placing] an ethical demand on us, to respond to and be transformed by the intimate ways place knows us, enabling us to co-create decolonial knowledge and practices that are deeply grounded in who and where we are” (Ho, 2023, p. 23).

We must be reminded here that decolonization is not something to wait for on the distant horizon of the mutating settler-scape. Decolonization is something that can be materialized via giving weight and power to the now as moveable and moving, shapeable and shaping – decolonization comes with the belief, the possibility, that we can materialize a collective Asian-Indigenous liberatory future beyond the limits of relation settler colonialism imposes on us (Fujikane, 2021, Carley et al., 2025). The first task of an Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing is making it known that living a decolonial present is not impossible, and always already possible because of enduring Indigeneity and in (re)activating our relationalities by and through Land, on a continuum of disruptive relationality. This is what Dietrich (2016) positions as a primary means to invoke politics as strategy to disrupt biopolitical logics and denaturalize settler colonial rule. I re-purpose the term to deploy an Asian-Indigenous disruptive relationality that occurs when we live out a decolonial present, opening up possibilities to disavow and unknow the ongoing violence of settler colonialism rather than one another – to refuse to define ourselves and our differential terrains of struggle by the neoliberal scale of white settler colonialism (Hunt & Farrales, 2024, p. 439). Thus we have arrived at the first pillar of an Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing: Asian-Indigenous disruptive relationality, wherein relations themselves (as mediated by and through Land) becomes a site of the

potential destabilization and reorganization of Taiwaneseeness in relation to Indigenous Lands and life rather than centering the settler colonial capitalist state of “Canada” and its centering in the making of Asian diasporic life, where one must fight for a piece of pie without considering where the pie comes from. Disruptive relationality is a decolonial front line “where we can practice justice, liberation, and alignment with each other and [the land]” (brown, 2017, p. 42).

Disruptive relationality is built upon the joyful potentiality of co-constructing “forms of liberation that do not require us to weave ourselves into the fabric of Canadian multiculturalism policy, and de-centre the perspective of the white Canadian settler” (Vigneswaramoorthy, 2024, p. 35). The forms that these emergent Asian-Indigenous relationalities take also fundamentally disrupt settler colonial norms (and nodes) of normative relations primarily consisting of reproduction, property, and family (Upadhyay, 2024). Asian-Indigenous disruptive relationality then flips the script on settler colonialism itself, denaturalizing the very settler colonial forms of racialized governance that are required to stabilize the settler state of “Canada,” and rejects the commodification and co-opting of Indigeneity, arguing for Indigenous radical resurgence that finds its strength and efficacy in grounded normativity (Coulthard & Simpson, 2016).

Land is not abstracted here but rather seen as integral towards developing an Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing that is reflective of the particularities of Asian-Indigenous relations, effectively grappling “with intersectional histories of resistance, and that capture the complexities of the urban, unceded, ancestral Coast Salish territories like those in Vancouver” (McCall, 2023, p. 285). It is in “our relationship to the land itself [which] generates the processes, practices, and knowledges that inform our political systems, and through which we practice solidarity” (Coulthard & Simpson, 2016, p. 254). The most effective antidote to settler colonial enclosure and foreclosure becomes decolonial relations of place-based solidarity (Day et al., 2019, p. 4) which also allow for myself as an Indigiqueer scholar-activist to honour my kinship relations and reciprocal duties to the Asian (im)migrant diaspora across space and time (Todd, 2015). Land does not create double binds nor philosophical conundrums, it allows for Taiwaneseeness to be re-made and re-animated whilst also supporting radical Indigenous resurgence as a pluralized, dense, Land-centred life project that is enmeshed with Asian (im)migrant diasporas. It is Land and Land only that can aid us in articulating and animating a renewed set of parameters through which “to imaginatively construct new ways of

entering into relations with others...” (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2012, p. 41). Locating and activating grounded normativity in the context of an Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing is not a monolithic practice, it is dynamic and active, ushered in through Indigiqueer relationships to Lands that are not my own, as a lifelong dweller on xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliwətaʔ Lands.

Grounded normativity is fundamentally a practice of liberation and an acknowledgement that Land is always present in our struggles and relationships in and with place – something made impossible under settler colonialism given that entering relationality with Land as the sacred life-giving home is foreclosed (Em He, 2025, personal communication).³⁶ My personal relationship to grounded normativity is also my entry-point into the rich continuum of Indigenous anti-colonial work, consisting of a wide-ranging, shape-shifting set of sovereign political orders and knowledges which together make up “modalities of Indigenous land-connected practices and longstanding experiential knowledge that inform and structure ethical engagement with the world and relationships with human and nonhuman others over time” (Coulthard, 2014, p. 14). Illuminating our ability to cross the Asian-Indigenous impasse is our collective ability to “make it as clear and as inescapable as possible, what the actual, material conditions of our lives are” (Chrystos, 1988, n.p.). Knowledge derived from the Land is not made for understanding, it is made for cutting (Foucault, 2001), instructing us of the ongoing labour and experimentation required in place-based decolonization – pushing on, moving around in, and redoing from moment to moment not just settler colonialism but its structurally generated Asian-Indigenous impasse.

Thus, an Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing is not a decolonial roadmap, it is a continual ontological imperative to be continually transformed via place and all the active

³⁶ When I think of grounded normativity, I think of Em He (1999-2025), who passed away during the writing of this thesis. Em was a radiant light illuminating my path towards understanding collective liberation, joy, and what it means to remain silly despite it all. No matter what Lands Em was on, they managed to build long-lasting inter-generational relationships with others, always centering and honouring Land. They bought me a “geese not police” abolish the VPD sticker that remains on the laptop this thesis is partially constructed on. For some reason, that sticker has allowed me to not just further signify and embody my values but live them out and be prouder of the work I do. I said the following in writing to honour Em’s life at their celebration, referring to the first Asian-Indigenous Relations Collective DTES/Chinatown community dialogue in May 2025: “...where Elders, Seniors, youth, and community came together to dream over a meal. This would have been impossible without Em. I am glad we made that initial organizing phone call work out. Our laughs and aspirations were so much larger than the grocery store noises and the ambience of downtown I was apologizing on behalf of.”

and dynamic relations mediated through it – continually “interrupt[ing] inherited boundaries of [settler colonial] geography, nation, episteme, and identity” (Alexander, 2005, p. 6). It is from this vantage point that I consider “crossing” not to mean literally crossing the Asian-Indigenous impasse from point A-Z, but crossing as braiding our relationalities, rooted in “the reciprocal investments we must make to cross over into a metaphysics of interdependence” (Alexander, 2005, p. 6). What follows is a divestment from the limiting forms of relations settler colonialism imposes on Asian (im)migrant diasporic settlers, in this case Taiwaneseness, and an investment in sustaining all one’s relations as mediated through the Land as a sacred giving life force. All our relations have no end point nor are something to arrive at, they are what guide our daily embodied practice of decolonial work. This is the difference between merely making settler colonialism intelligible to ourselves, and invoking ourselves in a life-long project of relationality that is anchored to the flourishing of Indigenous Lands and lives – the flourishing of all our relations.

It makes sense as to why settler colonialism makes decolonization legible in such a way that it becomes something to overcome as a fixed obstacle, because it operates in absolutes. Decolonization remains a zero-sum game that is won by the settler state unless the settler state ceases to exist, yet it will never be in the interest of the settler state to cease to exist. This is why reconciliation has become palatable and re-figured to meet the aims of these objectives, with keywords such as “recognition,” “renewal,” “addressing,” “meaningful,” and most importantly “achieving” utilized in the “Government of Canada’s” attempt to cross from point A-Z. Taking Alexander (2005) further, I assert if a pedagogy of crossing revolves around an imperative of making our world intelligible to ourselves, this means necessarily calling bullshit on settler colonial statecraft, and to open ourselves up to reorganizing our identities and ways of being by destabilizing and denaturalizing settler colonial logics of space and time. Knowledge is not just meant for cutting, it is meant for crossing.

“...Since there is no crossing that is ever undertaken once and for all, this ontological imperative of making the world intelligible to ourselves is, of necessity, and enterprise that is ongoing” (Alexander, 2005, p. 21).

Asian-Indigenous solidarity and liberation are never foreclosed when you are crossing.

Chapter 3. Wrestling With Asian-Indigenous Methodologies

How do you wrestle with methodologies whilst braiding Asian-Indigenous relationality beyond the settler state? After all, there is no “single, easy-to-follow method through which to definitively generate just and equal relation between a social body constructed as “Asian” and a social body constructed as “Indigenous” in a Canadian national context” (Lai, 2013, p. 12). This chapter illustrates my struggles in attempting to locate appropriate Asian-Indigenous relational methodologies, especially when they have been most often speculated upon and earmarked for on-the-ground “future studies.” As one of those future studies, I channel all of these complications and dilemmas through an Indigenous relational methodological approach called Indigenous Metissage, coined by Beaver Hills Cree scholar Dwayne Donald (2012) – allowing me to utilize the uncertainty of Asian-Indigenous methodologies to create new knowledges and approaches which best respond to the opportunities and constraints surrounding our community-based participatory research. I detail and outline both the timeline of this research journey, as well as how its methodological foundation, arts-based experimental ethnography (ABEE), is woven into how I facilitate Asian-Indigenous relation-making by and through our research community.

3.1. Dude, Where’s My Asian-Indigenous Methodology?

Further discussing and locating “methodology,” in relation to this project, and where it lands on what Lai (2013) calls the Asian-Indigenous wheel of contradiction, has always been tricky, given that:

- I have no roadmap or precedent to follow, given that most of the research done on Asian-Indigenous relationalities are heavily abstracted, with crucial, theoretical interventions remaining focused on discourse, media, and close reading of historical events. There is a lot of talk on the methods of Asian-Indigenous relation-making themselves, but not on the methodologies considered most appropriate in conducting research on Asian-Indigenous relations. It is too often the case in Asian-Indigenous literature that discussions and questions regarding complexities of on the ground dynamics are left for “future studies.” This is one of those future studies, inheriting decades of cumulative speculation and uncertainty regarding what it means to “do” Asian-Indigenous relations, not just “why” they are important or “how” they should be newly contextualized within and against settler colonialism.

- In the case of existing literature, sympathetic, redemptive and positive close readings of Asian-Indigenous relationalities are easily drawn through historiography and literary methodologies and scholarship (Izumi, 2015). While these works aid in the building of a toolkit to help unravel our current colonial present (Coulthard, 2020), they did not allow me to locate methods, case studies, and relational practices to draw upon in further developing Asian-Indigenous relational praxis. Thus, I did not initially know how to value (and thus build into this iterative research design) the felt dimensions of our lives and relationalities as sites and methods of analysis (Hunt & Farrales, 2024) until I finished conducting my first round of interviews and built further rapport with Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic kin.
- Given that decolonization is a verb, and with Asian-Indigenous disruptive relationality and grounded normativity as cornerstones of the Asian-Indigenous relational praxis activated through this project, decolonial work and solidarity building with participants are necessarily practice-based. As a researcher, collective responsibility and accountability are intersubjective regards for what has been experientially gathered along the way. This makes much of this project iterative and open to change, not as a nod to doing research “right” in community but more as a necessity given this is a project that is first of its kind. I say first of its kind not to position myself of this project as innovative or even necessarily “new,”³⁷ but to locate Taiwanese within longstanding Asian-Indigenous coalition-building and its slippages within the Asian-Indigenous impasse. This project becomes another instance of collective moulding, a co-constitutive rather than juxtapositional process that allows for this research community³⁸ to collectively pursue new meanings, methods, and themes over the course of the research project (Lai et al., 2015; Zuroski, 2020). “In any given [project] a number of Souls are entrusted into our care, and they come as openly and as transparently as they can for this appointment. To be sure, resistances develop as serious engagement morphs into confrontation with inherited nationalisms and their conceptual and identity structures” (Jackson, 2005, pp. 22-23).
- In initial conversations with participants, I did not expect to narrate, in so much detail and from my point of view, a general history of Indigeneity on Turtle Island. I effectively braided an Indigenous Studies 101 course into a lot of my

³⁷ As illustrated in Chapter 1, by leaning too much into existing (or non-existent) scholarship on Asian-Indigenous relationalities, we forget what oral histories and decades of activism and braided solidarities teach us: that Asian-Indigenous relation-making has always been possible beyond the settler state. I locate myself and this project on a continuum of relationality, not within a paradigm shift to *enter and enact* Asian-Indigenous relationality.

³⁸ I prefer the usage of the term “research community” over “participants,” or “interlocutors” in this thesis as it most accurately describes both the processes and outcomes of this project. While all community-based participatory research is subject to inherent power differentials between researcher and participants, I believe this project nonetheless speaks to the ways that Indigenized research often shifts away from definitions and understandings in relation to the neoliberal settler colonial scale, aka “the personal,” in relation “to the community.” For more please refer to Hunt/Tlaliila’ogwa, Sarah, and Farrales, May. “Against Abstraction: Reclaiming and Reorienting to Embodied Collective Knowledges of Solidarity.” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 42, no. 3 (2024): 422-41.

interviews, not in preparation for them, but in response to many of the questions participants had for me. There were times that I questioned my own role and responsibility in the journeys of research community members because I was many times the first or second Indigenous person, they have ever talked to from Turtle Island. Was it right to “teach” so much history and set the terms and conditions of how my relations would come to understand Indigeneity, Indigenous presence, and their own positionalities? I overcame this anxiety by reminding myself of the various ways in which my participants sought to learn from me and were drawing on their own agency and curiosities as equitable members of this project to help determine new conversations and methods of inquiry most relevant for us to begin to cross the Asian-Indigenous impasse. Taking it further, I argue that the difficult, at first awkward and uncertain conversations and disclosures that occurred, were central in building mutual trust in order to proceed with reckoning with Asian (im)migrant diasporic complicity, settlerhood and settler colonialism, as well as many other difficult subjects and realizations of the research community therein.

Therefore, when discussing methodologies, it is essential to underpin aspects of the relational and emotional labour I performed as an Indigiqueer scholar-activist, including unexpectedly revealing my status card in interviews (Figure 2), by what Adese & Phung (2021, p. 120) call relational genealogical discourse: “narrating who we are and where we come from at a deep level ... functioning as a strategy of decolonial and anti-colonial resistance [to ethically begin] situating knowledge production and political commitments as scholars, teachers, and community allies. Genealogical discourse, in short, is telling our stories in a manner that tells one another not just who we are but how we come to be who we are as people.” I revealed my status card during my first interview with Amy, a 30-year-old first generation Taiwanese (im)migrant and former social worker turned travel agent who moved to xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliwətaʔ Lands in 2021.



Figure 3.1 My Status Card as Alternative Contact³⁹

Source: Photograph taken by author, 2025.

All of these complications, dilemmas, and productive uncertainties (especially bad feelings throughout the whole research journey) constitute what Donald (2012, pp. 545-546) imagines as Indigenous Metissage, an approach and sensibility concerning methodologies, which welcomes “the messiness and difficulties of a given situation that creates opportunities for new knowledge and understanding to arise .. rather than working to remove ambiguity ... [one] works to interpret and give voice to the difficulty and ambiguousness of life.” My relationship to methodologies in the context of my relations and this project then consists of an iterative process of collectively determining new Asian-Indigenous grammars, conceptual tools, and collaborative inquiry which “exist at the margins of reason and require methods found in artistic and creative production” (King, 2019, p. 49). Rather than consider such a process emblematic of an “issue” or

³⁹ For a long time, I was not entirely sure if pulling out my status card was the right move. It also set a precedent, as this was my first interview, that I should do so when discussing my life history and Indigeneity going forward with all the other interviews. A text message I sent to a fellow Native friend at the time provides more insight regarding the felt knowledges and uncertainties that were present immediately following the interview: “ended up pulling out my status card and doing a deep dive on elements of history and family history near the end. i am SUPER intrigued at a lot of what was talked about and some canada taiwan comparisons. but emotionally destroyed at having to explain a lot (viewing this as generative not something hampering our dynamic), and processing all the contradictions that came about when talking about settlerhood” (iMessage at 9:26 PM, November 21, 2024).

“error” in research design, Indigenous Metissage, the practice of research with this Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic research community, becomes the reference point to develop an iterative arts-based engagement ethnographic approach – the methodological toolkit deployed in this project that consists of semi-structured individual interviews, focus groups, and cultural probes. Cultural probes are what I define as interactive and creative modes of inquiry that aid our research community in responding to and reflecting upon our everyday practices and experiences (eliciting their subjectivities). Things such as meals, songs, bingo prompts, photographs, and particularly timelines and maps gives our research community “the space, the permission, and the opportunity to reflect on and verbalize their experiences, feelings, and attitudes as well as to locate and contextualize their experiences” (Goopy & Kassan, 2019, p. 5).

As Lai (2013) exclaims, Asian-Indigenous methods are never fixed at all, but rather dependent on the contexts in which they are enacted, aka the vantage points of both researcher and a research community.⁴⁰ ABEE is an appropriate method to locate and deploy within Asian-Indigenous relation-making as “through its multiple layers and imaginative, playful, and knowledge-seeking approach, ABEE elicits multiple insights into complex questions. Moreover, ABEE’s capacity to capture narrative, experience, and insight through visual, written, and spoken mediums means that researchers are left with rich and multilayered findings. Such richness in data opens new possibilities for knowledge translation, exchange, [and action]” (Goopy & Kassan, 2019, p. 8). As such, ABEE also “creates a research environment that encourages multiple opportunities for the elicitation of rich, multilayered data in relatively short time” (Goopy & Kassan, 2019, p. 5). ABEE affords me the ability to best cope with the spatial and temporal limitations of this project as a master’s project, while serving as a methodological foundation for developing long-lasting Asian-Indigenous relationalities that transcends the timeline of a research journey. Drawing on ABEE to facilitate Asian-Indigenous relation-making

⁴⁰ Lai (2013) also grounds methods of Asian-Indigenous relation in the sedimentation of both monolithic categories, which must be understood and negotiated vis-à-vis complex socio-political-legal interactions and practices. Rather than fixed or natural, “Asian” and “Indigenous” continue to be fluid and shifting identity markers which contribute to the difficulties of articulating such “easy-to-follow” methods and pathways to just relationalities. Taking it further, given the invisibility of “Taiwaneseness” within Asian North American studies and Asian-Indigenous relations themselves, questions of relationality become even more difficult and muddy.

implicates the methodology⁴¹ in terms of where knowledge(s) and relations generated through its methodological approach goes in the future. In our case, that means asking: what does it mean to mobilize Asian (in this instance, Taiwanese) (im)migrant diasporic community members by and through the knowledge generated through this project? I made sure this question was at the top of the mind of our research community as we wove our way through this project and continued to braid our solidarities within the environments and collective inquiries that ABEE aided in affording us.

3.2. How This Research is Woven

Upon receiving approval from Simon Fraser University's research ethics board in August 2024, I consulted with Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic community members and scholar-activists for how to best approach sampling for the study, and to receive feedback on my first draft of preliminary semi-structured and focus group interview guides. After multiple rounds of feedback and discussion, participant recruitment began in September 2024. Sampling criteria required participants to be at least 18-years-old, living in "Metro Vancouver" for at least six months out of the year, and to identify as a first, 1.5, or second-generation Taiwanese person. I avoid treating the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora in K'emk'emeláy as a monolithic analytical category, instead opting to take Taiwanese in-group heterogeneity seriously (Cheng, 2021) by purposively sampling people from three generations of the (im)migrant diaspora: first, 1.5, and second generation. Rigger (2011) argues that identity formation and proximities to Chinese hegemony differ substantially between four successive generations in Taiwan: colonial, authoritarian, transitional, and democratic. There is then a strong possibility that such a generationally specific gulf is maintained, even loosely, within the (im)migrant diaspora in K'emk'emeláy concerning the ways in which each generation is reckoning

⁴¹ ABEE is considered a methodology that allows for a "paradigm shift within a paradigm shift" as it allows for the validation and understanding of participant experiences that would otherwise remain hidden and problematized by traditional research. Ironically ABEE falls short in its current assumptions and applications because it champions itself as a reformed epistemological stance that allows researchers to move beyond the faults of traditional research, and "reach and engage" communities that have not been part of "dominant research discourse." Yet practitioners of ABEE have yet to confront the limits of knowledge, no matter how equitably or innovatively produced, regarding where it goes in the service of the marginalized communities and Land Back. Thus, while ABEE is the ideal fit for this specific project, it necessarily had to be reformed and reimagined in conversation with decolonial feminism, its research sensibilities, and the overarching project of Asian-Indigenous liberation across Turtle Island.

with their settlerhood via their life histories, homemaking practices, and senses of belonging.

First generation Taiwanese (im)migrants were born in Taiwan and arrived in K'emk'emeláy during their adulthood (after 18-years-old). 1.5 generation Taiwanese (im)migrants came to K'emk'emeláy in their adolescence (up until 18 years old), spending their childhood in Taiwan. Lastly, second-generation Taiwanese are local-born children of either first- or 1.5-generation immigrants – they are the only generation in my sample that have lived in K'emk'emeláy their entire lives. I began participant recruitment in September 2024 via convenience sampling, drawing on my network of relations with Taiwanese community members, students, activists, professors, and cultural festival organizers. Through October 2024 I continued to recruit participants using snowball sampling methods, via introductions to other Taiwanese community members as well as having my research recruitment flier posted in “Taiwanese in Vancouver” Facebook groups, which are crucial, multilingual social networking hubs that bring together first, 1.5, and second-generation Taiwanese community members to discuss events, news, buy and sell goods, and make new connections.

The response within these Facebook groups was so large and rapid that I initially had difficulties responding to all inquiries regarding this research. I also encountered my first dilemma with the ethics of participant selection, given that over 30 people requested to join our research community. I not only had room for just 10 people but given my interest in accounting for multiple generations of the (im)migrant diaspora and aiming for a mix of gender and sexual identities, it became difficult to know where and how to draw the line with potential participants. I ended up selecting participants based on the timeliness and consistency of their communication with me – gauging the comfortability and intentions of participants with research themes and their participation in this project.⁴² Seven Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic community members of varying

⁴² This became a necessary cornerstone of my initial relation-making and sampling because there was an instance where a right-wing Taiwanese nationalist mobilized the opportunity to participate in this research for their own ends and attempted to convert me to a “pro-China” political stance. While I intended to respect in-group differences regarding identity formation and political stances and affiliations, it became too dangerous to other participants to let somebody who was staunchly Chinese nationalist to be a part of this project – especially given how relational this research journey was. Many potential members of the research community took pride in my own political commitment to ensuring Taiwanese independence was achieved in relation to, and not in spite of, Indigenous sovereignty in Taiwan and “Canada.” This research project has never aspired to be

generational affiliations, ages, gender/sexual identities, and locations of residences were selected to participate in this research. Two rounds of honorariums were offered at \$100 each, the first payment for participation in semi-structured interviews (stage one) and the second payment for participation in focus group activities and discussions (stage two). Due to the travel schedules and general availabilities of participants, only five community members participated in the second stage of the study. Preliminary interview guides were shared with participants ahead of our semi-structured interviews from November-December 2024, which all occurred in-person at public third spaces such as bubble tea shops and university meeting rooms, as well as homes of participants, including a home of a Taiwanese organizer, which often serves as a much needed local third space for community activities and dialogue.⁴³

Stage one semi-structured interviews were recorded with the consent of participants, and occurred for anywhere between 60 and 120 minutes, and were typically followed up with more conversation that was not recorded, and activities such as eating together, walking to public transit, or further socializing with other Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic community members and mutual friends of different identities. Throughout all stages of the project, participants had the agency to decide what language to speak and when. While I do not speak Mandarin or Taiwanese Mandarin, I asked community members to translate when they did. However, most of the individual and group discussion remained in English, which I ensured remained okay with research community members. Alongside pre-planned interactions, there were also numerous chance encounters that occurred, where I was privileged enough to be able to use to spend more time with research community members, who were open to catching up

neutral, apolitical, or “representative” of the entire Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora, but rather in alignment with needs and wants of community members who hoped to enter this project in good faith and to engage in explicitly political dialogue and action in alignment with the flourishing of Indigenous Lands and life. This also includes the liberation and validation of Taiwaneseeness, which must be affirmed and uplifted as a socio-political identity marker and social formation for this research to be conducted in the first place. Participants who did not take these commitments seriously or sought to use this research as a means to their own ends, were ultimately not included. My relationship to the right-wing nationalist individual was terminated upon one meeting and was expressed to other participants to re-affirm my political commitments and positionality in relation to research community members with whom entrusted me with their stories and identities.

⁴³ While meeting locations differed and undoubtedly affected the ways in which our initial conversations and relation-making took shape, I believe this was for the best given that participants were able to select not just the location that we met in, but what was present when we did meet (aka food and drink, volume and ambience in our environment, as well as preferred time of day, and even how we sat together).

about our lives, expanding on their thoughts from our interviews that occurred weeks earlier. This even included unexpectedly making a commute with the entire family of a research community member, having bumped into them near my house on a Sunday morning.

Stage two consisted of a focus group occurring in April 2025, planned and facilitated in collaboration with the research community and our shared takeaways and emerging interests following stage one interviews. The focus group occurred in-person at a common room in a City of Burnaby community centre, where we first sat down for a meal provided from a local Taiwanese restaurant. Ahead of our day together, we created a fluid community agreement that allowed us to come to a consensus on how we could best protect each other's anonymity, safety, and ensure we were committed to the practices of care that were already established during our stage one interviews. The research community put relational genealogical discourse (Adese & Phung, 2021) back into practice by first situating ourselves on x^wməθk^wəyəm, Sk_wxwú7mesh, and səliłwətał Lands as well as animating our journeys and family histories through the lenses of Land dispossession, identity formation, and relationality. The main cultural probes that guided our shared time and space were Indigenized icebreaker bingo, sharing of photographs, timelines of (im)migrations, and community relational mapping. I facilitated a 90 minute focus group interview, guided by our arts-based cultural probes, which gives “participants scope beyond the direction of the researcher, yet the researcher can still give guidance and request the recording of particular activities ... encouraging individuals [and the group] to capture any and all the elements that impact on, direct, or determine their experience of a given phenomenon” (Goopy & Kassan, 2019, p. 4). The majority of what was recorded, with the consent of the group, were the processes and outcomes of our communal relational mapping activity, including community members' presentations on their map-timelines – which unexpectedly brought upon individual and collective reflections on the research journey itself.

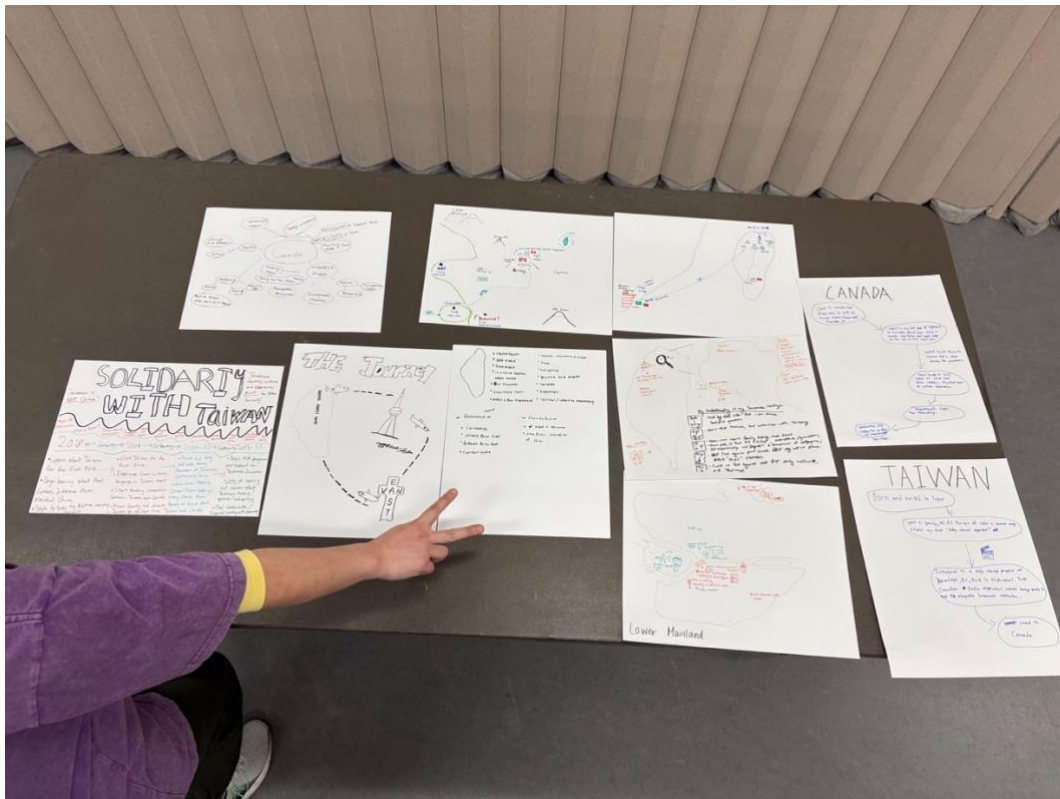


Figure 3.2 Community Relational Mapping Activity

Source: Photograph taken by author, 2025.

Our community relational mapping activity (Figure 3.2) consisted of us drawing maps and diagrams based on the following guiding questions from Adese & Phung (2021): Who/where do you come from? Who/where are you accountable to? The process of co-creating map-timelines also brought upon an opportunity for the group to decide to make a collective list entitled “Things We Want To Know About / Things To Do Together in the Future,” signalling that the group privileged invoking a holistic form of solidarity rooted in relation-making, reciprocity, and responsibility, entailing “the ability to respond to and account for the place and land we are in and the community that we are building together...” (Ho, 2023, p. 102). My anxiety began to be quelled regarding where the knowledge(s) and relations generated through this project goes in the future. The list was broken into quadrants that concerned “Community Places/Events,” “Indigenous Places/Events,” “Questions We Have” and “Resources.” At the end of our day together, community members received a feedback form to fill out, which also served as a means for individuals to provide anonymized comments, identify gaps in what was discussed, or elect to redact something they said from the recordings that we produced. After both

stages of interviews culminated, throughout December 2024 and January 2025, I used Otter.ai⁴⁴ to produce raw transcripts of our conversations, which I then manually checked and edited twice before sending them to participants to review – participants were encouraged to make any edits or revisions to their comments, and all participants elected to choose a pseudonym to anonymize themselves in all data and this thesis. The same process occurred throughout April and May 2025, after the culmination of our focus group.

Given the differential schedules and workload of our research community, I offered participants the opportunity to provide feedback in ways they saw fit: including voice memos, phone calls, text messages, and annotating the PDF version of our transcripts. This also afforded the opportunity for participants to provide further reflections on themes that emerged from our initial interviews and provide resources for me to consult in coming to understand their life histories and socio-political context of Taiwanese identity formation and its intersections with Indigeneity and settler colonialism. I was also able to affirm for participants the fact that it was okay to make “mistakes” during this process, alleviating mutual fear, anxiety, and uncertainty regarding who had the authority to speak on what topics, and the content of such discussions becoming fluid and porous rather than entrenched and codified in a data set (Kohl & McCutcheon, 2014). Together as a research community, we treated uncertainty regarding our research process itself as generative and indicative of a decolonial feminism that allows us to make mistakes along the way (Farrales, 2025, personal communication).⁴⁵ Nowhere is this ethos more indicative than in an exchange with Bo:

Bo: Martial law got cancelled a year after I was born. Yeah, yeah...I’m still learning, like you do, yeah, you know...like a lot of

⁴⁴ I continue to be extremely wary and anxious about the utilization of artificial intelligence (AI), in any form, in this project. After careful deliberation I decided to choose Otter.ai to process transcripts, with participant consent. Otter.ai claims that all data processed through its service remains private and will never be used to train external AI models such as ChatGPT. All user data is de-identified when processed through its backend. I deleted all data from Otter.ai after finalizing the quality and text of all transcripts. otter.ai/privacy-policy

⁴⁵ In a research memo dated February 3, 2025, I emphasized that community members continue to value me chiming in with my own experiences, stories, perspectives, and fears – with a frequent comment from participants revolving around something akin to “what you said makes me want to jump back...” reflecting our ability to produce knowledge and renew our relations in non-linear, cyclical, and respectful and reciprocal ways. Nothing in our research community was left invalidated.

Taiwanaese history are being digged out recently, I'm learning.
I'm learning like you!

Ty: That makes me feel better [mutual laughter].

Transcripts for all stages of the project were finalized with the consent of participants at the end of April 2025. Coding and analysis lasted from May to July 2025, which consisted of manual coding, as no qualitative data software such as NVivo was used. I coded as ceremony, returning to all transcripts frequently and made connections across stanzas, activities, and different research memo and voice-note vignettes I had made along the research journey. I consider this approach to analysis as “ceremonial coding,” a term I conceptualize to encompass the ways in which I sat with the data in various ways and mediums, checking my biases and contrasting, collapsing, and vetting codes into a refined codebook. I contend that giving the data room to breathe and taking much of Summer 2025 to sit with not just the data but the entire research journey to this point, are generative practices which allowed me to begin my next round of coding when it felt right. In the final round of coding, I found that values and versus coding were the most appropriate ways to understand and structure the connections and subsequent themes across the dataset.

Values coding is a necessary coding scheme for this project, given that in line with ABEE, it “identifies the values, attitudes, and beliefs of a participant ... [inferring] the “heart and mind” of an individual or group’s worldview as to what is important, perceived as true, maintained as opinion, and felt strongly...” (Saldaña, 2014, p. 594). In addition, versus coding “identifies the conflicts, struggles and power issues observed in social action, reaction, and interaction [typically] as an X VS. Y code...” (Saldaña, 2014, p. 595). ABEE and values and versus coding schemes were invaluable in making sense of the life-worlds of research community members as they narrated and further braided their lives in relation to Indigenous Lands and life. The following sections, Chapters 4 and 5, consider the (im)possibilities of Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic settlerhood through how community members have come to enact and embody their Taiwanese-ness as they reckon with settler colonialism and its structurally generated Asian-Indigenous impasse.

Chapter 4. Taiwaneseness Otherwise: Stumbling Towards Solidarity, Working Through Incommensurability

This chapter attends to how the spatial and temporal proximities to the “Canadian” liberal multicultural settler state are differentially experienced and narrated by Taiwanese diasporic (im)migrants in reckoning with their (in)abilities to root in place. Through identifying and digesting the (im)possibilities of their settlerhood, I argue that members of our research community are simultaneously expressing and critiquing the “Canadian” liberal multicultural settler state and its limiting forms of belonging and relationality. These Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic narratives, conceptualized as relational dialectics, animate the ways in which certain ongoing Indigenous political projects, and by extension solidarity with Indigenous Lands and life, are made to seem an ongoing imperative while at the same time becoming deprioritized and re-weighed when narrated alongside the need to square Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic identity. Nonetheless, I emphasize how these narratives and life histories are rehearsals of *ways of being, doing, and knowing* Taiwaneseness otherwise. These rehearsals illustrate potential ways of further navigating the Asian-Indigenous impasse, which remains defined by relationships to Land that continue to be incommensurable so long as Taiwaneseness remains cathected to the settler state, and thus, the very forms of belonging and relationality that are called into question through Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic life in K’emk’emeláy. Lastly, I honour this research journey and All My Relations through a dispatch from the Asian-Indigenous impasse, addressed to my Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic kin.

4.1. What is Taiwaneseness Squared?

“I am really unhappy and struggle here because I just came here, like three years ago, and the entire PR system is so fucked up. So right now I’m really struggling, and also, like, I’m really missing home. If I didn’t come here, I might be something already in Taiwan, but because I came here, I needed to start everything all over again ... I kind of am being hated in this society. They don’t want newcomers anymore, right?”

As much as I wanted to re-orient our conversation towards Indigenous Lands and life, I couldn’t help but remain quiet and listen to the life history of 30-year-old social worker

Blossom, a Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic settler from Taipei, who arrived in K'emk'emeláy via Cah-mah-sing⁴⁶ in 2022 aspiring to permanent residency in “Canada.”



Figure 4.1 Blossom’s (Im)migration Journey to “Canada”

Source: Map created by Blossom, 2025.

Blossom’s (im)migration journey (Figure 4.1), and all of the compounding anxieties and frustrations that came with it (shame, confusion, doubt, unhappiness, struggle) resonated so much with the majority of the research community to the point where others felt as if it spoke to their own (im)migration journeys. In fact, an unexpected joy of this project was being able to bear witness to a specific form of in-group solidarity – where members of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora could build communal knowledge regarding specific aspects of the violent “Canadian” settler citizenship pathway and how to best navigate the perpetual uncertainties that emanate from dwelling within it. One member of the research community did not experience this type of

⁴⁶ ləkʷəŋən name for settler colonial “Victoria, BC, Canada.” Located on the unceded territories of the Esquimalt and Songees Nations, who have stewarded these Lands since time immemorial. “Lekwungen” means a place to smoke herring, and centers Lekwungen Nations’ identities around rich and enduring relations with their Lands and Waterways and seasonal cycles of salmon and herring helper beings. For more please visit lekwungencharitableociety.ca.

uncertainty as a second-generation settler citizen of “Canada,” yet knew what it took for her parents to become citizens decades earlier. Capy, a 22-year-old university student born and raised in “Vancouver” to Taiwanese (im)migrant parents, led our group dialogue by emphasizing that

“it’s easy for [Taiwanese] people to detach from the fact that [we’re] still profiting off of Indigenous struggles in Canada ... just because you’re not part of the original group of people who came and colonized Canada doesn’t mean you’re not part of the aggressor.”

While Capy thoughtfully positions herself and the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora within the larger trajectories and movements of racialized settler subjects, she nonetheless is grounding the conversation in the perceived sameness of herself, vis-à-vis, the rest of the research community (and Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora at large). I noticed throughout our conversations that not only is Capy extremely well versed in an Indigenized history of Turtle Island, but has such strong relational knowledges because she is able to invest significantly more time and energy than the rest of the research community *into* decolonizing her life history, and further, the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora at large. As often is the case, these calls to action from within the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora regarding reckoning with settler complicity are coming from those whose futurities have been entangled with the “Canadian” settler state since birth:

“I think for myself, I have to continue learning more, but I recognize [that] my role as a settler is like, I continue to profit off of, let’s say even just the land and the resources, whether that be money or otherwise...these are all on stolen land, right? And I’m...us...I feel like people forget that. Let’s, you know, fight for Indigenous rights.”

By virtue of her citizenship (and over two decades of life having been lived) within and against the “Canadian” liberal multicultural settler state, Capy is most preoccupied with re-orienting her Taiwaneseness to Indigenous Lands and life by working through what it means to have *rooted in place* since birth. For her family, since the 1980s, to have materially benefitted from attempting to overcome their (in)significance as racialized subjects, as “part of the aggressor” in settler colonial “Canada.” Capy continues by asking the question which is been at the top of her mind for years regarding decolonization:

“And then I think, for me, [it comes down to], how do I involve myself?”

Navigating this question becomes doubly complicated when considering that the rest of the research community, despite largely wishing to remain in K'emk'emeláy, feels that their disappearance is not only looming but inevitable – given that the threshold for “Canadian” settler citizenship criteria has gone up so high that it is seemingly impossible to successfully navigate employment, the gamification of the settler colonial “Canadian” (im)migration system, and the perpetual anxiety that not only stems from insecurity, but the culturally mediated anxiety of not feeling like you exist as a Taiwanese person in a world, a country, a city, where violent and limiting forms of settler colonial belonging remind you that you belong to everybody but yourself. Taiwaneseeness is not just about interrogating the need to root oneself in place, as I have demonstrated to be the case for those in the (im)migrant diaspora who have the relative privilege of calling “Canada” home such as Cappy. Taiwaneseeness in the instances of those without “Canadian” settler citizenship is firstly about questioning if rooting yourself in place will *ever even be possible*, given that the majority of Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic kin I worked with were already grieving their time in K'emk'emeláy.

To sufficiently unfold, illuminate, and re-map Taiwaneseeness in relation to K'emk'emeláy, we must first confront the assumptions often laden in attempting to do so – that Asian-Indigenous relationality often presumes there already is a *possible* future for oneself and their relations on these Lands. What about those in Asian diasporas, such as the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora, whose lives have yet been affirmed through settler state channels – and most importantly to remember, whose futures as potential “Canadian” settler citizens are often foreclosed through the same settler colonial capitalist border regimes that simultaneously disempower Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood? Contending with inter-generational, rather than singular generational (i.e. second-generational) experiences of the “Canadian” settler colonial (im)migration pathway, allows us to understand the specific possibilities and limitations (what I refer to as (im)possibilities) of *nationally scaled* frameworks of Taiwaneseeness for comprehending Taiwanese (im)migrant settlerhood and relations to Indigenous Lands and life.

These very (im)possibilities have only recently, in the past two decades, been sat with, identified, and contextualized by and through the settler complicity of Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic peoples who largely consider themselves “Taiwanese Canadian” as a marker of citizenship and official “inclusion” within the settler state. The variety of

life histories and experiences of navigating (and feeling failed by) the “Canadian” settler citizenship pathway speak to the ways in which a “Taiwanese Canadian” understanding of oneself and the wider diaspora inherently forecloses the myriads of experiences of the (im)migrant diaspora. Implicating oneself as a settler on Indigenous Lands is much easier when you have absolute certainty that you will remain entangled with settler colonial “Canada” via passport privilege and the *ability* to be most preoccupied, as Cappy is, with her complicity within settler colonial structures and systems that her family has materially benefitted from for *multiple* generations. Similarly to Adese & Phung (2021), “Canadian” settler citizenship continues to be an elephant in the room regarding the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora, and especially this research community, because many of my kin did not consider themselves “Taiwanese Canadian.” *They do not know if they will ever even be considered “Canadian.”* And even for those, such as Sunflower, that are close to receiving “Canadian” settler citizenship, there is far more ambivalence than certainty regarding “Canadian” identity derived from settler citizenry:

“But honestly for me, it’s just a passport. A thing to stay in Canada, to be able to vote. If I get my passport, do I feel like a Canadian? Not really [laughter].”

According to those in our research community, there is as much ambivalence and uncertainty *produced* by the “Canadian” settler citizenship pathway, as there are safety and security. Therefore “Canadian” settler citizenship is not just an elephant in the room for the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora because it *divides* those with the relative safety and security of settler colonial “inclusion” from those with far more uncertainty about the *ability* to root in place, but also because it does not hold equal material and symbolic weight regarding Taiwaneseeness as it is imagined and enacted in relation to K’emk’emeláy. The “Canadian” citizenship pathway remains central for the *ability* for the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora to attempt to survive (and contend with rooting) in place across Turtle Island. However, I suggest that electing to solely focus on “Taiwanese Canadian” life histories and narratives overly emphasizes the centrality of the “Canadian” settler state and citizenship in directly *determining* Taiwanese relationships to place.

A consequence of failing to attend to the myriad of life histories and experiences of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora which are *mainly* (yet not entirely) defined and contained by the perceived safety and security “Canadian” settler state and its

citizenship pathway is the reinforcement of the “assumption that the settler state has the right to control [and wholly affirm] who enters its territory and who can become a member of its territorial polity” (Bauder & Breen, 2023, p. 369). Another consequence in the flattening of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora is the homogenization of, what in actuality, are wide ranging affective and material relationships regarding how one continues to attempt to “[earn] one’s place through state-mediated channels and playing one’s part in the reinforcement of the nation-state and hierarchized social relations” (Ho, 2023, p. 39).

It is more necessary than ever to attend to such inter-diasporic variability and volatility regarding “Canadian” settler citizenry, because it has never been harder to attempt to “earn” one’s place in the settler polity of “Canada.” During the time of our interviews and focus group in 2025, the Government of “Canada” estimated that there were 3.02 million temporary residents, yet only 395,000 permanent residency (PR) spots available for the year (Dayal, 2025). Not only are the chances of potentially receiving PR low, but as of 2025 the backlog for certain immigration and visa categories were in the hundreds of thousands, paired with a drastic reduction in federal immigration levels in the years to come (Gomez, 2025). Jee, a 22-year-old film student who (im)migrated to “Canada” when he was 17 through a private school in ki?lawnna?⁴⁷ (Figure 4.2), directly spoke to these harsh realities. For him, the seemingly impossible ability to remain in the pathway to “Canadian” settler citizenship is abundantly clear:

“I thought [the pathway] was clear before I graduated. It’s not until after I graduated, and starting to branch out looking for jobs, knowing that it’s actually really hard to secure a job in Canada right now. The unemployment rate is so high, and it’s hard to find, an actual like, qualified job for indication. The threshold has gone up so high, you have to even know French right now and pass the language examination to help you get your permanent residency. So when I first learned that, I felt really disappointed. And it’s also really shocking, and something I cannot accept, and I still worry about it. My goal after I came to Canada was to immigrate, and I feel as if I adapt well, and I want this to be the

⁴⁷ sylix name for settler colonial “Kelowna, BC, Canada,” meaning grizzly bear. Located on the unceded Lands of the sylix/Okanagan peoples who were wished her by k’wlencuten, Creator of oneself, Creator and arranger of the world. Eight distinct communities comprise the Okanagan Nation since time before memory. For more please refer to Derickson, Delphine. *We Get Our Living Like Milk from the Land: History of Okanagan Nation*. Edited by Lee Maracle, Jeanette Armstrong, Greg Young-Ing, and Delphine Derickson. Theytus Books, 1994.

rest of my life. But it's just getting tougher, tougher. I'm trying to tell myself, "go step by step. Don't worry about it."

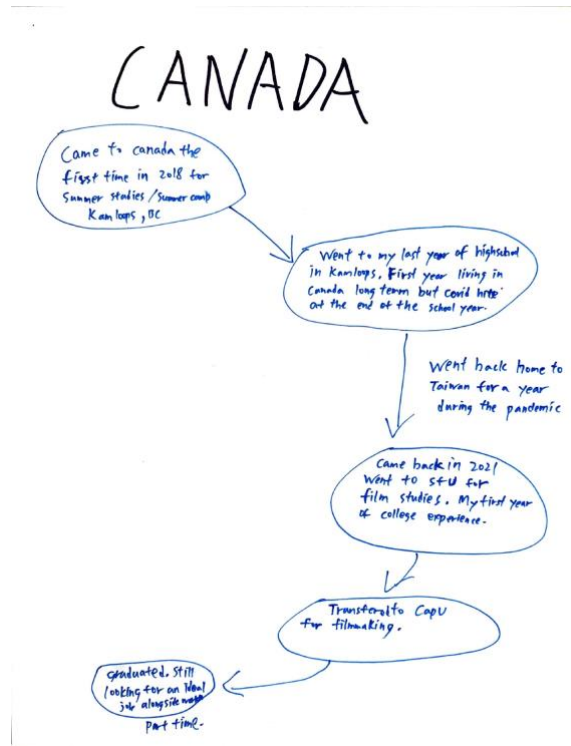


Figure 4.2 Jee's (Im)migration Journey to "Canada"

Source: Map created by Jee, 2025.

Sunflower also speaks to the cumulative and wide-ranging effects that rapid shifts in "Canada's" (im)migration policies have on the abilities for Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic community members to achieve PR, noticing how lucky she has been relative to those, such as Jee or Blossom, who are still attempting to fight for PR status, let alone eventual settler citizenship:

"I would say I am very lucky, because they changed all that policy recently, I honestly came at the right time. I feel very bad for international students [such as Jee] recently, because I have friends that are working so hard here just trying to get into the PR pool. They've already been in [the pathway] for 2 years. It is very difficult. They raised the bar [so high] and they cancelled the point system ... All my family are on the way to citizenship now..."

While there is clearly a form of ambivalence regarding the officiality of a passport, and the formalized inclusion of herself within the territorial and ideological bounds of the "Canadian" settler state, Sunflower emphasized throughout this discussion that it is the

ability to *stay* in “Canada” that places the largest strain on her family, but more intensely, the next generation and waves of Taiwanese diasporic (im)migration who have to contend with the bar being set so high in order to become a legible contender for PR status, and ideally, “Canadian” settler citizenship. It is the next generation of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora in K’emk’emeláy that Lisa, an ophthalmologist from Taipei has in mind when discussing her (im)migration journey (Figure 4.3) because she hopes her 5-year-old son can live a future without worrying about his (im)migration status or Chinese hegemony and for her, the inevitable feeling of a China-Taiwan war:

“The political issue in Taiwan is quite tense, and is only getting tenser [nervous laughter]. With China and Taiwan, the relationship is very intense. And I have a kid, so for the next generation, I really want him to have [another] place to be. If there is anything happening in Taiwan, then he can live in Canada. He can grow up here. He can work here and stay here forever. I think it is a good place for my son to grow in Canada, but for me and my husband...because of our occupation, it is very hard for me to think “oh, okay, we will just stay here forever.” It’s very hard. It’s very difficult for us.”

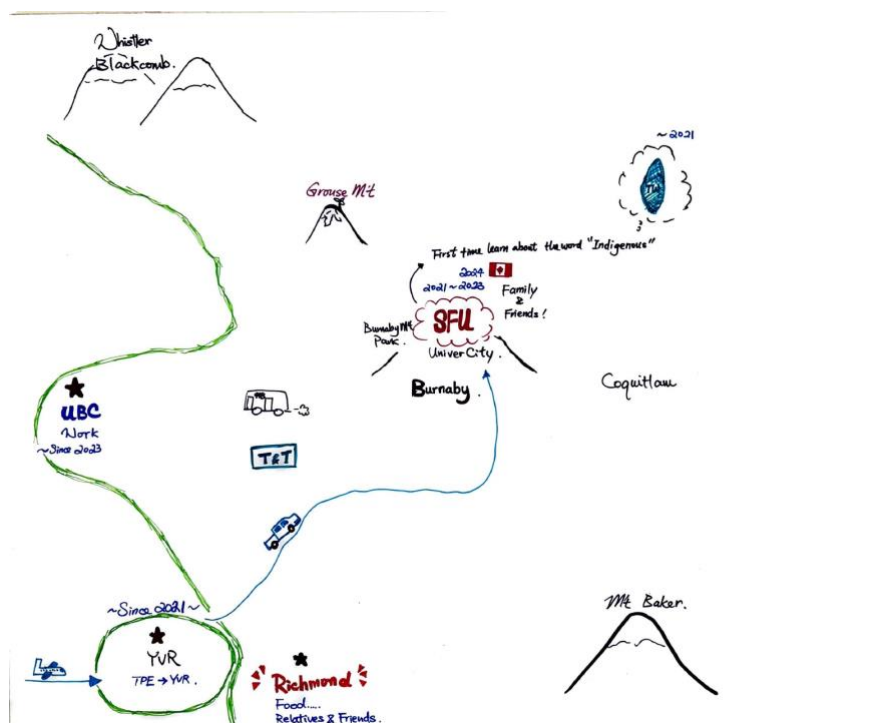


Figure 4.3 Lisa’s (Im)migration Journey to “Canada”⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Note how at the center of Lisa’s map is SFU, where she first learned about the word “Indigenous.” This not only speaks to the different knowledges and proximities research

Source: Map created by Lisa, 2025.

Arun, a 27-year-old with an undergraduate degree in sociology from a Taiwanese university, who (im)migrated to K'emk'emeláy in 2022 with a student visa to pursue a marketing degree, agrees with Lisa and further explains why he wishes to be able to root in place:

"Taiwan has [constant pressure] from China. The military threat is huge, and it has to become more and more intense since [PRC president] Xi Jinping has the power. So people don't want to leave [Vancouver]. I want to make the most of my three years of work permit. I will see...if I get a PR...but I just don't want to sacrifice too much, because I know [other Taiwanese] are learning French for one and a half years [for] full time PR. Or working horticulture in Saskatchewan or somewhere ... if I have a chance to get PR or citizenship, I will consider Vancouver as my home, and Canada as my country. So just not yet [chuckling], I'm just a temporary resident for now.

It is not just that people in the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora wish to remain in K'emk'emeláy, it is that, as Arun emphasizes, they do not want to leave in the first place. Yet as often is the case in 2026, if one is to have a better shot at achieving PR, let alone settler citizenship, they must forcibly displace themselves and their families in order to "achieve" greater proximity to the shifting needs and desires of the "Canadian" settler state – including working in professions that do not match one's background and skillset, as well as attempting to become fluent (enough) in French, an official language of the "Canadian" liberal multicultural settler state. Adding more layers onto one's forced displacement(s), anxiety regarding the indeterminacy of Taiwanese sovereignty and Chinese hegemony often complicates or even eliminates one's wish to return home in the event of failing to "achieve" settler citizenship. What makes matters feel more high stakes than they already do, is that according to our collective conversations and reflections on emergent feelings related to the future of Taiwan, kin such as Lisa project

community members have to Indigenous Lands and life, but also to how Indigeneity in the context of our work together often derives from particular Western, Eurocentric histories and constructions of Land and life. While not the focus on this thesis, more work needs to be done to problematize the notion that (im)migrants come to these Lands tabula rasa, void of an understanding of or connection to Indigeneity. The majority of the time, it is relationships to Indigeneity globally and in other contexts that first inform how one understands and enacts their journey of unsettling themselves across Turtle Island. In these cases, it has been discussions of Indigeneity in Taiwan, largely omitted from this thesis, which drives home the need to take a global/transnational purview on the intersections of (im)migration, settlerhood, and political education. While there is significant incommensurability across settler colonial contexts, this should not presume that there is no solidarity or relationality enacted to Indigenous Lands and life elsewhere – which has a large impact on how one does or could approach their (im)migrant settlerhood and deconstruct their (im)migrant diasporic subjectivity throughout Turtle Island.

and re-define future generations of the (im)migrant diaspora as potential refugees in need of a safe haven country ("Canada").

I could not help but feel the overwhelming collective anxieties regarding these (im)possible and often contradictory circumstances that members of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora found themselves in. Yet intriguingly, the way in which anxiety takes hold within the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora is not just narrated regarding how Taiwan, or any sense of national identity could disappear – but rather narrated in a sense where anxiety is identified as constitutive of Taiwaneseeness itself. In connecting personal stories with larger systemic patterns of collective Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic anxiety, our group discussion located anxiety at the heart of how Taiwaneseeness *feels* at odds with the very forms of belonging and relationality that define it:

Arun: One worry is the anxiety will disappear. Because I think the anxiety is essential for Taiwan to be aware...

Arun: I think being recognized in any way, is a...is a big win. Taiwanese people have the anxiety of not being recognized, but we are like, so excited about being known in the world. I'm not sure if that happens to others...

Sunflower: We're not even dealing with Indigenous issue[s] that much because, to the broader Taiwanese people, we're not...we don't even exist in the international world...

Bo: So that's what...that...I think it is what makes our people a little less confident about saying where [and who] we are, because all the people are saying that you belong to someone except yourself ... So very, feeling very powerless sometimes, yeah...

Arun not only considers anxiety as essential for Taiwaneseeness to be understood and enacted in the first place, but surprisingly challenges the rest of the group to consider how Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic peoples may be most preoccupied about *anxiety itself* disappearing – because according to him, Taiwan and Taiwaneseeness cannot be narrated or conceptualized without accounting for its ongoing insignificance. Remaining on the topic of insignificance, Arun eloquently narrates the high-stakes political project, both personally and collectively, as being recognized as Taiwanese while also positioning Taiwan as a *different* subjectivity to that of other Asian (im)migrant diasporic settlers. While the major implications of such diasporic difference are not mentioned in the conversation, it can be inferred that Arun is gesturing towards a unique positioning of

Taiwaneseness within the world. Sunflower continues to reckon with the necessity of both anxiety and needing to sufficiently perform and achieve Taiwaneseness by revealing how doing so, within the “Canadian” liberal multicultural settler state, often comes at the expense of Indigeneity itself. Bo chimes in to braid these insights into a general feeling of powerlessness that stems from feeling like you do not exist, and trying to become recognized, within the very structures and systems that are predicated on the invisibility and dislocation of Taiwaneseness. While this moment in our group conversation was a significant turning point in further connecting Taiwaneseness with settler complicity and the erasure of Indigenous Lands and life, a pattern became recognized by Sunflower – Indigeneity continued to be erased not just through the urgent need for oneself and their (im)migrant diaspora to root in place, but by virtue of these very anxieties and dilemmas in the first place:

“Yeah, I know. And it’s just such a long way to go...[painful laughter]. And then with that, I feel constantly complicated in this conversation, because I know [we] want to center the conversation about Indigenous and [we] keep bringing it back to the, you know, Taiwanese and Chinese thing. And I was like...it really shows how much that weighs in my heart [painful laughter]. Oh...sorry.”

Of note is how Sunflower continued to face despair when talking with the group and guiding us towards interrogating what it means to differently *weigh* these anxieties and the need for Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic recognition and security. This form of vulnerable in-group critique was not just a kind way to call out the group for having flattened and de-prioritized Indigenous solidarity and relationality when speaking on the most pressing anxieties and dilemmas related to Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic identity, belonging, and futurities. It was also a means through which Sunflower problematizes how attempting to *square* one’s Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic identity has thus far expressed and conformed to “Canadian” settler colonial forms of recognition and belonging. Squaring refers to processes of individual and collective meaning-making where the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora attempts to reckon with, and overcome, perceived limitations to their incomplete notions of identity and belonging – squaring Taiwaneseness is an attempt to imagine a future for oneself and their relations which feels as if it *belongs* to oneself (and thus *produces* a clear sense of belonging). A future where one is inherently significant as a Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic person and where anxiety regarding Taiwaneseness finally disappears.

Even in trying to imagine a future where anxiety does not define Taiwanese-ness, anxiety prevailed. As these collective forms of anxiety began to be further sat with, the more time that the group spent dwelling in, and further unpacking Sunflower's intervention regarding the erasure of Indigeneity from our work. I partially stewarded this erasure myself, because it felt impossible as a facilitator of our group activities to not first attend to the ways in which Taiwanese-ness and Chineseness *weighed differently* in the hearts of everyone in the room. I attempted to, yet repeatedly failed, in my own means of squaring – trying to reckon with, and overcome, limitations to centering Indigenous Lands and life in these activities. What gave me hope in these moments was the collective awareness that Indigeneity *should* be centered but was not-yet-fully because of the need to prioritize and emphasize how squaring Taiwanese-ness makes centering Indigeneity difficult and strenuous.

In echoing Jafri (2025), the Asian-Indigenous impasse felt most present in these moments as Indigenous solidarity was not treated as impossible or non-existent, but rather something that was repeatedly strained as people in the room tried to come to terms with their life histories and *how* they narrate them in such a way to as de-prioritize and flatten such relations to Indigenous Lands and life. To treat Indigenous presence and the need to square Taiwanese-ness as producing irresolvable differences and tensions. Rather than square (resolve) these incommensurabilities, the next sections further outline how members of our research community continue to simultaneously express and critique themselves alongside the “Canadian” liberal multicultural settler state and its limiting forms of belonging and relationality. I continue to draw upon in-group dialogue and tension to illustrate how these Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic narratives, conceptualized and grounded as relational dialectics, further animate the ways in which my kin *desire* to center Indigenous resurgence, particularly Land Back, in their life histories and narratives yet continue to deprioritize and re-weight Indigeneity when also confronting the need to square themselves. I then consider how these forms of knowledge sharing and relationship building are ultimately rehearsals that reveal, in all their messiness and contractions, *ways of being, doing, and knowing* Taiwanese-ness otherwise.

4.2. Land Back is Fair, But Not Possible

Bo: [I was initially uncomfortable] with the question you asked me about being a settler. I keep putting more thought to that...

Ty: It's hard, I don't blame you, especially in a Taiwanese context where I don't feel like these conversations don't [frequently] happen yet. I appreciate you being brave enough to just listen, and engage, and I care about how you're relating to the term and how you feel about it. It's a journey.

Capy: I never initially questioned it [being a settler].

Jee: Yeah.

Lisa: Actually being here [on Land] has allowed us to realize things about Taiwan without being in Taiwan, which is challenging some people's arguments or viewpoints on [being a settler]. It's not separate issues. It's connected. I'm thinking about that a lot ... the feeling is very interesting for me.

...

Lisa: It's really interesting. I really like the learning and unlearning work. Before I hadn't heard the word "unlearning."

We spent a fair amount of time as a group dwelling in the discomfort of trying to navigate our differential relationships to the word "settler." For many in the group, it was not difficult to position oneself as a settler (and simultaneously as a racialized (im)migrant) on unceded lands. What was difficult were the unexpected ways in which the group felt like they were unlearning as much as they were learning – in this instance, unlearning and deconstructing aspects of settler colonialism in Taiwan. As Lisa remarks, x^wməθk^{wə}yəm, Sk^wxwú7mesh, and səliłwətaʔ Lands have given her the opportunity to realize things about Taiwan, which aids her in combatting misinformation or settler moves to innocence within the broader Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora. While many of us have a lot of experience encountering the word "settler," members of the research community did not often implicate themselves as settlers *both* in Taiwan and in "Canada." Doing so further propelled a critical consciousness which laid more groundwork to not separate Taiwanese from Indigenous Land and sovereignty. While much of the time, as discussed, Indigeneity had to be re-weighed differently when factored *in* to squaring Taiwanese, we began shifting towards confronting what it means when Indigeneity is, and always will be, at the center of our presence(s) on x^wməθk^{wə}yəm, Sk^wxwú7mesh, and səliłwətaʔ Lands. This includes reckoning with

Indigeneity in a Taiwanese context, and as a rich, diverse category of peoples which transcends borders and undergirds any relationships we have had to all the Lands in which we have dwelled upon and called home.

Thus, through the rest of our work together, my kin were not merely digesting their Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic settlerhood in the context of their dwelling across Turtle Island but stretching as far back as multiple generations preceding their (im)migration to unsettle their family histories. Such explicit and active re-mapping and re-orienting to Indigeneity packed a critical punch for the group as we continued with decolonial momentum to begin to discuss why the group had not yet done more to animate their relationships with Indigenous Lands and life. As we further complicated and digested the (im)possibilities of Taiwanese (im)migrant settlerhood, we had to collectively reckon with significant feelings of guilt, shame, and frustration regarding a perceived individual and collective failure to uphold relationships to Indigenous peoples, and crucially for the group, “Indigenous issues.” Land remained actively threaded throughout much of our conversations, especially through the guise of Indigenous political theory and ongoing political imperatives such as Land Back. At the same time, allegiances to the “Canadian” settler colonial state were called into question and critically interrogated such as in the following statement from Sunflower:

I feel like, um, how, how do we find that motivation for people to learn more about Indigenous people issue and your relationship with Land...is a...starting point, because when we [talk about my shame] it's like, yes, why didn't I do more? It is because, the way I see myself as a newcomer to Canada, so I don't think I need to know enough about this land. I think this conversation is important, because shame can be a [motivating factor] too. I do want to be, you know, connected to the place I live in, though sometimes I really want to spend more time in Taiwan. I'm here, right? What does it mean when you call yourself Canadian? Having a passport? You're not just only calling yourself a taxpayer, you know, as a process of becoming Canadian ... you should commit to [entering relationships] with Indigenous peoples and issues too, right?"

Sunflower grounds her narration of her Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic belonging in relationship to Land, given that “becoming” “Canadian” does not presume or produce a connection to place but is rather a means through which one *neglects* the Land – and if one “becomes” “Canadian,” their knowledge and identity are mediated through institutionalized logics and signifiers of the settler state such as a passport, or “being” a taxpayer. She calls attention to *presence* itself necessitating relationship building to

Indigenous Lands and life (I'm here, right?), an ongoing commitment, rather than a presence that is earned and kept by virtue of proximities to the "Canadian" settler state and its limiting forms (and proofs) of identity and belonging.

Yet at the start of the very same statement, Sunflower seemingly contradicts her call to action and re-orienting of oneself and the grander Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora to Indigenous Lands and life. By fixating on *motivation* and the lack thereof to "learn more" about Indigenous issues and relationships to Land, she presumes that such things are optional and constitutes voluntary self-selection and involvement. Whole communities, let alone (im)migrant diasporic individuals, may never be fully "motivated" to unsettle so long as they stand to materially benefit (and achieve relative safety and security) from the ongoing attempted erasure of Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood.

Further, presuming that motivation is a core problem runs the risk of placing further onus to unsettle oneself *onto* Indigenous peoples, Elders, knowledge keepers, and Nations to *facilitate* overall engagement with Land – rather than address the lack of motivation stemming from the very structural elements of settlerhood that are well articulated in deconstructing "Canadian" identity. With that said, there is a strong argument to be had for anchoring such an ongoing reckoning in the shame of inaction and Taiwanese settler colonial complicity. Bo recognized aspects of the conversation (and especially Sunflower's statement) which could be interpreted as defensive, or, downright moves to innocence which seek to conceal and naturalize the Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic "lack" of motivation that the group is attempting to contend with:

"Yeah, I hate [settler defensiveness] like "but we brought technology, we brought, you know, modern life." I hate that. I'm like...let's see how you can flourish without [Indigenous peoples] having been here, right."

Bo effectively interpolates Sunflower's statement "I'm here, right?" to contend with x^wməθk^{wə}yəm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliwətał presence, Land stewardship, and legal orders which have been in place since time immemorial. Bo argues that regardless of one's *motivation* "to learn" about Indigeneity and the Land, that any lives that dwell on unceded Lands are braided with the much longer histories of Indigenous sovereignty, resistance, and the overall flourishing of all beings. Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic presence (and *ability to even try* to root in place) is only possible because of the ongoing stewardship of x^wməθk^{wə}yəm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliwətał Nations. Bo even goes as far to identify with hatred of such settler narratives and arguments which flatten the

stewardship and thriving governance of the host Nations to whom she positions herself (and all other forms of life) as responsible to, and in relation with. I was especially ecstatic to witness such a transformation in Asian-Indigenous relational praxis as Bo, half a year earlier, told me that our lives presumably don't cross.

It was more evident than ever that we were at least trying to continue to disarm and denaturalize any instance of believing that our lives don't cross. I was most shocked when members of the research community became as explicitly as one could possibly be about their own (and all other settlers') complicity in settler colonialism. However, these statements are not without their contradictions and weight, given that they presumably contradict themselves and the very newfound, direct intentions of the research community in continuing to digest their Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic settlerhood. The conversation took a final turn towards Indigenous resurgence and what it means to implicate oneself and the grander Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora in the ongoing quest for Land Back, despite permanent Taiwanese relationships to these Lands remaining questionable and often impossible. Arun outright proclaims about settler colonialism that

it's illegal ... we are living on Indigenous Land. But it's also very challenging to actually create a system that is fair to Indigenous [peoples], because what is really fair is to return the Land and everything. I think that's fair, but it's also not possible. The system has been there for like, hundreds of years, 1-2-300 years. I cannot think of the approach that is the most ideal from my end...I think for now, I just support all, all the initiatives towards supporting Indigenous groups.

In the very same breath, Arun provides a direct and incisive critique of settler colonialism while also reifying its core objective of making any other future (than a White settler one) seem impossible, or in his own words, ultimately "not possible." He knows that "fairness" in a "Canadian" settler colonial sense is not actually fair but premised on the ongoing occupation of unceded Indigenous Lands, and expresses what seems to be unconditional support for "all the initiatives" towards supporting Indigenous groups. While Land Back is considered the fair and just way to renew All Our Relations and begin to re-map and re-orient oneself to Indigeneity, it is seemingly impossible. How is it possible to believe that fairness is impossible? Only the settler colonial superstructure can aid in the manufacturing and production of such complications, where we can go as far as directly implicating ourselves, and align with the needs and wants of Indigenous Nations yet also render such needs and wants as impossible.

Despite having grounded this discussion in members of this very group emphasizing the unbroken continuity of Indigenous stewardship and flourishing of these Lands, such an understanding becomes dispelled by virtue of accepting the manufactured inevitability of a white settler colonial futurity. The very futurity which demands Taiwanese-ness to become squared on its terms, and for potential belonging and settler citizenship to continue to perpetuate the attempted erasure of Indigeneity – an erasure which is identified as not only problematic but at the core of Taiwanese-ness as it is constituted as one of many (im)migrant diasporic settler groups within the “Canadian” settler state. Bo agrees, yet also grounds her commitments to decolonization in terms of realism and uncertainty rather than fairness:

Yeah, my view of course is, I don't know if it's realistic, but my view is we should deal with Indigenous people doing whatever, with the composition [of society]. Give them what they want. Give them whatever to...raise their status...until everyone has the same start. Then we can think about how to get rid of the knot. I don't know how...how...for example, the issue of Land Back. I don't know how we're gonna do it.

In this instance, Bo calls for a whole re-composition of society as led by Indigenous Nations, who have inherent right and title over their unceded Lands. Bo stands ten toes down to, like Arun, unconditionally support “Indigenous people doing whatever.” In following the same logics as Arun, there is at first a radical decolonial imagination deployed where anything is seemingly possible and that aligning oneself to Indigeneity is more of a renewal of relationality than working through impossibility to get there. For Bo, settler colonial society *should* be wholly re-composed, and Land should be given back, but the metaphorical knot is too twisted making Land Back an issue to potentially never be resolved rather than an absolute imperative to uphold in relationship to Indigenous sovereignty and legal orders which are *known* to have existed since time immemorial.

No other statement is as indicative of the Asian-Indigenous impasse, and the (im)possibilities of Taiwanese (im)migrant settlerhood, as this: Land Back is fair, but not possible.

4.3. We're Talking About Practice: Rehearsing Taiwanese-ness Otherwise

“The essence of dialectical thinking is the ability to be self-critical. Being able to see that an idea you had or an activity you had engaged in which was correct at one stage can turn into its opposite at another stage; that whenever a person or an organization or a country is in crisis, it is necessary to look at your own concepts and be critical of them because they may have turned into traps” (Grace Lee Boggs, as cited in maree brown, 2017, p. 212).

I gain the most joy from remembering that incompleteness is the most radical concept of all: this is the first thing I would have told Grace Lee Boggs had I been able to meet her before she passed to the spirit realm in 2015. Boggs was an Asian (im)migrant diasporic revolutionary theorist, organizer, and intellectual powerhouse whose work regarding (r)evolution not only grounded liberation work from “the national” to “the local,” but allowed for decades of relational work and activism to question if full, critical mass need be the outcome of our decolonial work. In beginning to “focus on the neighbourhood,” Boggs grappled alongside neighbours, activists, and All Her Relations with the following three questions:

Who are we?

Where did we come from?

Where are we going?

In doing so, Boggs’ notion of dialectical humanism calls “for the evolution of the self in simultaneity with efforts to change the world, to be accountable for ourselves and others as we interrogate barriers to equality, and face our complacency in how they are maintained” (Baker, 2018, p. 441). Black decolonial liberationist adrienne maree brown, having entered deep relationality with Boggs as a comrade, explains how she came to learn dialectical humanism as “the cycle of collective transformation of beliefs that occurs as we gather new information and experiences, meaning that, over time, we can understand and hold a position we previously believed to be wrong ... [centering the] idea that critical connections are more important in long-term transformation process than critical mass” (maree brown, 2017, p. 26). As an extension of dialectical humanism,

maree brown considers the role that practice plays in *being* in relationship with the changing conditions of settler colonialism:

“[E]verything we do, every single thought and action and relationship and institution, everything is practice ground. So practice emergent strategy, yes, but only as much as you understand that it is a way to practice love, For this, for all of this” (brown, 2017, p. 220).

For Boggs and brown, practicing relationality *is* enacting relationality, opening ourselves up to gradual transformation and (r)evolution which braids the individual with the collective. Practice is what weaves us further into complexity, becoming more radical in our clarity regarding that which may have trapped and limited our solidarity and relationality. In drawing upon dialectical humanism and the role of practice in establishing Asian-Indigenous relationality, I argue that Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic narratives can be conceptualized as relational dialectics. Relational dialectics animate the ways in which solidarity with Indigenous Lands and life, and relationships to them, are made to seem an ongoing imperative while at the very same time becoming deprioritized – and eventually re-weighted – when narrated alongside the need to square Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic identity. Squaring Taiwaneseeness necessitates further proximity with the very settler colonial logics that not only structurally produce the Asian-Indigenous impasse, but manufacture and produce a monolithic need for the (im)migrant diaspora to continue to *attempt* to root itself and overcome its insignificance despite this seeming increasingly impossible. I consider squaring Taiwaneseeness as a settler colonial impulse, which is evidently tempered through ongoing engagements with decolonization as a political imperative and anchoring device for meaning-making, yet not taken far enough as the settler state remains reified through such impulses. Squaring Taiwaneseeness only further upholds the Asian-Indigenous impasse, foreclosing the very possibilities and re-constitutions of settler societies and identities which are initially uttered through the lens of Taiwanese decolonial possibility.

From a relational dialectical standpoint, we can begin to understand with clarity, how these seemingly unclear and contradictory narratives show “how misrecognition shapes our bodies, families, and political possibilities and how [squaring Taiwaneseeness] repeats these omissions until we disrupt it” (Johnson-Brown, 2025, p. 25). While I have come down extremely harsh on the specific content and complicity of these statements and narratives in perpetuating the very settler colonial forms of knowledge, belonging,

and identity that they initially hoped to extinguish through their utterance – I now pivot towards emphasizing these relational dialectics as *rehearsals* of ways of being, doing and knowing Taiwaneseeness otherwise.⁴⁹ These rehearsals, at least momentarily, disrupt the impulse to square Taiwaneseeness in imagining a future where Indigenous Lands and life constitute what it means to be Taiwanese.

“What emerges is not a closed theory but a rehearsal: an experiment in mixed relationality, in tending to grief and future making simultaneously to imagine life beyond the narrow demands of the settler state. This work should be understood as unfinished, contested, and shaped by tension toward the worlds that begin when we stop waiting to be properly named” (Johnson-Brown, 2025, p. 25).

The life histories and narratives of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora, though briefly and messily, gesture to, experiment with, and ultimately are rehearsals of an otherwise Taiwaneseeness – an Asian (im)migrant diasporic subjectivity which no longer waits to be properly named or limited by the settler state. As Taiwanese scholar-activist Yi-Chien Jade Ho explains, an otherwise Taiwaneseeness “is active, dynamic, and in constant negotiation with place and community. It is facilitated by a decolonial sense of belonging that no longer depends on settler colonial capitalist relation-making through the border apparatus. [Taiwanese] lived place-based experiences constantly confront such division and demarcation. It is a rejection of the identity imposed from above and an embracing of a sense of self based on collective place-based practices and relationships” (Ho, 2023, p. 104).

Taiwaneseeness in our case, rather than a fixed and static identity limited by settler colonialism and its settler forms of validation, *becomes* a dynamic subjectivity which does not seek to overcome its own insignificance, nor focus on needing to root in place. It is rather a Taiwaneseeness which speculates on ways to relate to, and center, Indigenous Lands and life beyond the “Canadian” liberal settler multicultural state.

⁴⁹ For Ruth Wilson Gilmore, abolition is life in rehearsal because freedom is a place. In “making abolition geographies as we go,” Gilmore (along with Robyn Maynard and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, whose book *Rehearsals for Living* is largely inspired by her work) situates the documentation of practice as “to offer thickly analytical, detailed descriptions of many different ways people arrive at arranging themselves...” (2022, p. 1). Locating and working with rehearsals makes it possible to sketch out the shape and vitality of what movements *could be*, as they are in a process of becoming. I consider Taiwaneseeness as but one mode of becoming in how members of the research community narrate their struggles in re-constituting themselves. Ultimately, *practice makes different*.

Through rehearsals, Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic kin “use elements and provocations from many aspects of life – material and symbolic – to make sense of specific challenges, and to assemble impulses into patterns that help, short term or longer, to bend our course through constellations of forces...” (Maynard & Simpson, 2022, p. 1). *To bend our course through the Asian-Indigenous impasse*. Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic *rehearsals* nonetheless speak and act through the (im)possibility of their settlerhood to consider futures where the flourishing of Taiwaneseeness is tied to the flourishing of the Land. They explicitly name and make clear the material conditions of settler colonialism and how its structurally generated Asian-Indigenous impasse continues to animate and limit Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic settler life.

“Ultimately, at stake here is not the possibility to settle this mode of being-at-an-impasse, but to find ways of presence in the land ... that fracture and then undo it. I am not interested, in other words, in lamenting the tragedy of this subject position, but in offering a critique of this form of subjectivity. And yet to understand the mechanisms by which the colonizing self can be decolonized and a territory – a home – can be inhabited in noncolonial ways despite a history of colonization...” (Kotef, 2020, p. XII).

In following political theorist Hagar Kotef (2020), I posit that these rehearsals do not erase the Asian-Indigenous impasse, nor any sense of incommensurability, but are ways of beginning to take responsibility “for what we have done, or for what was and is done in our name, or for all the destruction and violence whose fruits we still enjoy” (Kotef, 2020, p. XI). Put another way, these Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic rehearsals do not conclude anything about Taiwaneseeness nor the settler state of “Canada,” but rather are a form of refusal (and self-critique) which disrupts the inheritance of Taiwanese settler complicity, and contends with what might solidarities and relationalities emerge from positioning Taiwaneseeness as firstly responsive and responsible to Land. In doing so, the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora is doing what Afro-Mi’kmaw theorist Raymond Johnson-Brown (2025) calls rehearsing otherwise – a concrete step towards materially, and not just theoretically, unfolding, illuminating, and re-mapping Taiwaneseeness in relation to K’emk’emeláy.⁵⁰ In rehearsing Taiwaneseeness otherwise, we can further

⁵⁰ These disclosures are politically productive insofar as we meet them where they are at, rather than solely speak on what we hoped them to be. It would be grossly unjust to expect not only subjective perfection, but a clear and uniform articulation of Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic settlerhood which does not attend to the complexities and dilemmas inherent in attempting to navigate settler colonialism, the “Canadian” settler state, and its violent settler citizenship pathway. To present these life histories and narratives as smoothed out and perfect redemptive examples of Indigenous relationality is to sterilize and dishonour decolonization as what it is:

locate Taiwaneseeness in the larger constellation of Asian settler allyship as coined by Japanese settler scholar-activist Candace Fujikane:

“The term “Asian settler” refers to a dynamic positionality that can help us to imagine and grow worlds beyond the settler racial capitalist state. Asian settler ally “being” and “becoming” enacts simultaneously the work of bringing solidarity into being even as we can locate relationships of solidarity in the past and transformative relationalities in the here and now. As Asian settlers, we are constantly learning how to be our best and highest selves, pressing against the limits of our imaginations as we deepen our capacities to stand with Indigenous peoples, land-based communities, and the earth to flourish in abundant futures” (Fujikane, 2025, p. 278).

I consider this research journey having deepened our collective capacities to stand with Indigenous peoples and enact/renew Asian-Indigenous relationality despite all the (im)possibility that emerges from such entanglements. This was merely a continuation, a form of practice, to draw upon the collective knowledges and experiences of seven members of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora to help aid us in thinking and moving beyond the “Canadian” liberal multicultural settler state. In creating movement and space for Taiwaneseeness to be imagined otherwise, these rehearsals led us to, even momentarily and sparsely, believe that there are other ways to find presence on xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliwətał Lands. Through attending to the life histories and narratives of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora as rehearsals of a Taiwaneseeness otherwise, a braided decolonial future is not wholly foreclosed, and a decolonial present is not only enacted but embraced in all its Asian-Indigenous messiness.

“Because to be attuned to the wrongness, too, is to hold within ourselves the multiplicity of different possible futures, of worlds that are not yet born, of forms of governance based not in violence, but abundance. It is insisting on the possibility of a new timeline, and suggests too, that they may already be on the horizon. If we care to look” (Maynard & Simpson, 2022, p. 157).

As our time came to an end together, I was unsure if I would ever talk to or see members of our research community again. We made a priority list regarding what we were going to do next, who we were going to meet next, and most importantly – how we

messy, imperfect, and continuously called into being in an enduring Indigenous present. This was intended to be, and can be summarized as, an imperfect experiment of Asian-Indigenous relation-making. Practice: it cannot be anything but that.

were going to renew our relationships to Land together. Much of these plans have not come to fruition, yet our futures remain braided across time and space.

As we packed our bags and scooped enormous amounts of Taiwanese leftovers into our Tupperware's, the laughter and screams of the children playing next door rippled through our hearts and minds. A reminder to center and honour the seven generations to come. They will be inheriting the decolonial futures we dream of. As I left the room, we decided to end the recording, as much as we did not want our gathering to end. It was like the end of a ceremony.

Jee, talking in what can only be described as a manic fever pitch, exclaimed about our braided future:

"I'll be excited!"

Who would have thought that the end of (this) world, and the death of Taiwaneseeness as we knew it, would be so exciting?

"I know that we are not yet there, and that so much can still happen to undo this moment of possibility. But I am savouring, still. Because I don't know what lies ahead, I want to commit to memory what it feels like to be sitting so close to the possibility, at least, of such large-scale transformation."
(Maynard & Simpson, 2022, p. 124).

I slowly broke off, one by one, from my kin as I made my way home. It was as if we were drunk, continuing to stumble towards solidarity.

There was no way I was going to listen to music on the commute home. I stopped in my tracks, listened to the Land, and inched as close to possibility as I ever could be.

After all, it is dwelling in possibility that has made this research, and these relationships, come into being.

I thought to myself: I didn't know how we were going to do it, yet we still did.

We are each other's liberation. We keep possibility alive.

Chapter 5. We Belong to the Land, and So Do Our Futures

This chapter considers the takeaways and implications of this research journey and is also a critical appraisal of the state of Asian-Indigenous relations – through contemplating what Taiwaneseeness can teach us regarding Asian-Indigenous relation-making and, ultimately, ongoing decolonial world-making. By dwelling in how Taiwaneseeness has been unsettled and imagined otherwise through this thesis, I point to the need to further subvert the predominant urgent need to root oneself in place. I continue attending to the immanent possibilities and worlds where Taiwaneseeness, alongside other Asian (im)migrant diasporic subjectivities, are produced and enacted upon otherwise. In bracing for us to continue to navigate the Asian-Indigenous impasse and continuing to move from Asian-Indigenous theory to Asian-Indigenous relational praxis, I further ground this thesis and future Asian-Indigenous scholar-activism in relation to Land. Lastly, through a letter to my research community, I express my gratitude and honour All My Relations which makes such a transformative and challenging research journey possible despite such work often feeling impossible.

5.1. Our Futures Are Unsettled

“Futurity ... is not something we are waiting for but an active endeavor pursued not through abstract theories but through the material present. It is in our refusals, our practices of caring for loved ones, and how we write, remember, and remain in relation. The path traced here moves from the present violence of recognition, through the historical containers in the archive, and into the living speculative terrain of what might come next. These are not stagnant; they are live. Black and Indigenous epistemologies remind us that time is not linear; it spirals, it returns, and despite the violence done, it thrives.

What remains is not a conclusion but an ongoing rehearsal – a choreography of refusal attentive to what has been inherited and what might still become. What becomes possible when we stop waiting to be properly named? (Raymond-Johnson, 2025, pp. 30-31).

I close out this thesis by providing an extended meditation on what gifts of knowledge I have received in relation to the three major research questions which have guided the positioning of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora in relationship to K'emk'emeláy, on unceded x^wməθk^wəyəm, Skwxwú7mesh and səliwətał Lands:

How does the Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic imaginary (and enactment of Taiwaneseeness, defined as the urgent need to root in place) become undone and remade when interpreted and conceived in relation to x^wməθk^{wə}ʔəm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliwətaʔ Lands?

How can tending to the (im)possibilities of Taiwanese settlerhood that are formulated, enacted, and shaped at the scale of the everyday and intimate aid us in searching for the potentialities and limits of our collective capacity to imagine within and beyond the “Canadian” settler colonial capitalist state?

What does this research journey, in moving beyond Asian-Indigenous theoretical abstraction, reveal regarding broader Asian-Indigenous coalition-building efforts and the ongoing work to enact Asian-Indigenous decolonial, liberatory futures across Turtle Island? To braid Asian-Indigenous relations beyond the settler state?

In tending to the emergent and unfinished answers to these three questions, I also attend to the not-yet-known of this work in further dwelling in the possibilities that an otherwise Taiwaneseeness affords Asian-Indigenous relations and decolonial world-making. I believe that contemplating what an otherwise Taiwaneseeness affords us creates a bundle of medicine, which not only aids us in further bracing to navigate the Asian-Indigenous impasse, but to further enact Asian-Indigenous relational praxis in relation to Land and life. It is to such gifts, and the newfound complications that emerge from receiving them for the first time, that I now turn.

I have argued that Taiwaneseeness is produced and enacted upon as an urgent need to root oneself, because of the way in which invisibility, misrecognition, and impossibility define (im)migrant diasporic relationships to settler colonial “Canada.” The implications of understanding Taiwaneseeness in such a way are significant regarding the *ability* to imagine, locate, and even consider Taiwanese relationships to Indigenous Lands and life in the same way one might for well-rooted Asian (im)migrant diasporas. For instance, Chinese (im)migrant diasporic relations with Indigeneity dominate the archives and structure not just an understanding of what Asian-Indigenous relationality *is*, but how Chinese hegemony reproduces itself beyond the borders of the island of Taiwan. Taiwaneseeness, historically *folded* into the material and discursive histories of “Asian Canadian” identity and belonging, is particularly difficult to re-map and re-imagine because it has not yet sufficiently been in the first place. It then begins to make sense as to how the cumulative life histories and narratives of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora assume that their lives do not cross with Indigenous peoples and Nations – and how if

there is possibility of entanglement – it is through the guise of a contemporaneous racialized other within the ideological and territorial bounds of “Canada.” This occurred with me directly in early instances of alternative contact with research community members – which I draw upon – alongside my embodied experiences of dislocation(s) as an off-reserve Indigiqueer scholar-activist to generate an Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing, an Indigiqueer standpoint theory. I mobilized an Asian-Indigenous pedagogy of crossing to work through the Asian-Indigenous impasse which is shaped and molded through the inescapable material conditions and felt knowledges that inform how we strengthen our Taiwanese-Indigenous relations on x^wməθk^{wə}’əm, Skwxwú7mesh, and səliwətał Lands.

What was so far avoided in this work, primarily shaped by second-generation members of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora, was an additional reckoning with what it means to understand the *differential* (e.g. multi-generational) life histories and narratives of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora as it pertains to attempting to root in place by and through the “Canadian” liberal multicultural settler state. I thus paid close attention to and entered relations with most of my Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic kin who had to question if rooting themselves in place would *ever even be possible* – and how such differential spatial and temporal relationships to the “Canadian” settler state further complicate and animate relationships to Indigenous Lands and life.

I found that though the “Canadian” citizenship pathway remains central for the *ability* for the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora to remain in place and contend with rooting itself, that electing to homogenize and flatten Taiwaneseeness into “Taiwanese Canadian” identity overly emphasizes the centrality and coherence of the “Canadian” settler state and citizenship in *determining* Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic relationships to place. Such homogenization and flattening fail to contend with widespread notions of ambivalence and uncertainty regarding “Canadian” identity, and relationships to place, which stem from settler citizenry. I consider how an expansive understanding of Taiwaneseeness gives us the opportunity and leverage to make clear the limitations of *nationally scaled* frameworks of Taiwaneseeness for comprehending Taiwanese (im)migrant settlerhood and renewing/enacting relations to Indigenous lands and life.

Nationally scaled frameworks of Taiwaneseeness only further uphold the Asian-Indigenous impasse, which consists of relationships to Land which remain

incommensurable with one another. Yet the enduring anxious attachments to both Taiwanese-ness and the need to actualize identity by and through the settler state which propels incommensurability and the de-prioritization of Indigenous relations. Our research community collectively problematized such impulses, conceptualized as *squaring Taiwanese-ness* – processes of individual and collective meaning-making wherein the (im)migrant diaspora attempts to come to terms with itself via settler colonial forms of recognition and belonging. Squaring Taiwanese-ness then, is an attempt to imagine a future for oneself and the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora where anxiety disappears and one's settler subjectivity is *overcome*. In beginning to question and confront the need to square Taiwanese-ness, members of the (im)migrant diaspora directly named the material conditions underlying and maintaining their settlerhood, "understanding the places in so-called North America we live in as Indigenous spaces [opening] ways of orienting ourselves to the possibility of other-than-colonial and other-than-capitalist futurities, ones that exceed and refuse the settler colonial futurities being safeguarded by the nation-state" (Catungal & Farrales, 2025, p. 145).

I note how the life histories and narratives of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora do not conform to notions of settler moves to innocence or further Indigenous erasure and othering because of the ways in which Indigenous sovereignty and nationhood are *centered* in conceptions of abundant decolonial futures and just pathways to get there. Nonetheless, in confronting and unpacking the need to square Taiwanese-ness *alongside* Indigenous resurgence and political imperatives such as Land Back, they painstakingly and reluctantly deprioritize and re-weigh Indigeneity. I conceptualize these narratives as relational dialectics which further animate the messiness and contradictions evident in the (im)possibilities of Taiwanese (im)migrant settlerhood in how they become narrated and understood. Taking a dialectical humanist approach to Taiwanese-Indigenous relationality, and the relational dialectics which compose them, I consider how an *otherwise* Taiwanese-ness is rehearsed through them. Rather than trapping the analysis and positioning of these relations as vexed and in need of immediate repair, I situate them as breaking free of a fixed and static Taiwanese-ness. Taiwanese-ness, in the case of these narratives, becomes a dynamic Asian settler subjectivity which no longer predicates its understanding upon the need to root in place. Rather, Taiwanese-ness as rehearsed through these narratives *becomes* a form of

refusal and critique that disrupt the inheritance of Taiwanese settler complicity and contends with a Taiwaneseeness that is first and foremost responsible to Land.

The power of this kind of work, which is sparse in further developing an understanding of Asian-Indigenous relationality, is that it directly creates movement and space for Taiwaneseeness *to be imagined otherwise*, calling into question the very forms of settler “Canadian” identity and belonging which continue to largely define it. The life histories and narratives of the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora speculate upon relationships to Land which are commensurable and in-alignment with Indigenous sovereignty, nationhood, and resurgence. While the Asian-Indigenous impasse is now well documented and theorized, rehearsals of an otherwise Taiwaneseeness allows us to imagine a future where the Asian-Indigenous impasse is *moved through rather than merely theorized*. Most importantly, these rehearsals, despite running up against the (im)possibilities they attempt to contend with and overcome, are forms of *practicing* future presence on unceded Lands that fractures and undoes not only Taiwaneseeness itself, but the way in which it is conventionally understood to be distant and unmoored when Indigeneity is placed at its center. This project lays the groundwork to further question the *roots* of Taiwaneseeness and contend with how the *need* to root within an (im)migrant diasporic context often dispels and vexes relationships to Indigeneity within and beyond the “Canadian” liberal multicultural settler state.

This project ultimately points towards Taiwaneseeness, not as fatally cathected to the “Canadian” liberal multicultural settler state, but as an Asian settler subjectivity which can be undone and remade as a “way of feeling [which] commits to an attachment to place that is relationally cultivated rather than achieved or claimed; it is a feeling of safety that grows from the seedbed of relationship with other humans, with ancestors ... [and] a sacred obligation to plant and animal life, to land, to water. It is a political project that registers the beckoning of the white-supremacist settler state, reorients, and attunes, instead, to the land” (Kurogano, 2025, p. 72). In attending to the decolonial possibilities of further unfolding, illuminating, and re-mapping Taiwaneseeness in relation to K’emk’emeláy, we reckon with what it means to arrive, dwell, and remain on unceded Lands as “rather than bowing to assimilative modes of being an (im)migrant, we can find new ways to express our beingness that are both locally specific and connected to struggle[e]...” (Ho, 2023, p. 106). I challenge future scholar-activism on Asian-Indigenous relationality to further contend with what it means to make sense of

(im)migrant diasporic life as being primarily responsible, and in relation to, place itself rather than the settler state.

With that said, there are numerous ways that Taiwanese-Indigenous, and by extension, Asian-Indigenous relations remain strained and (im)possible. For one, Upadhyay (2025) reminds us that even as members and groups of Asian (im)migrant diasporas work to re-align themselves with Indigenous Lands and life, such efforts are limited and constrained by virtue of the grander aspirations and priorities of the majority of such communities. After all, my work is centered around the small and intimate – and while it is necessary to further contend with what it means to reject notions of critical mass as being indicative of decolonization – this work remains located within larger messy and fraught campaigns to overhaul our relationalities to one another. By not attending to, or locating, our liberatory work within a grander socio-political arena filled with organizations and actors who continue to reproduce the settler colonial logics of “Canada,” we fail to consider how complete divestment from these very structures and systems are what decolonization asks of us. While I partially attend to and problematize the grander narratives of Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic presence in “Vancouver,” and how they are implicated in the ongoing elimination of Indigenous Lands and life, it is necessary to further explore far-less desirable elements which constitute a broader understanding of Taiwaneseness. This includes examining intersections of right-wing politics, anti-Indigenous racism, and racial capitalism in how Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora is co-constituted by and through “Canadian” settler colonialism.

While my work has expanded upon notions of Asian-Indigenous solidarity which are not contained in distinctive, singular, or large-scale acts, I am sitting with what it means to perform what Rahman & Fu (2025, p. 96) consider “the ongoing work of regenerating ethical connections with Indigenous peoples, with our own Asian or Indigenous values, and of extending care and love to those around us in the face of everyday, colonial, white supremacist violence.” Most crucially, “solidarity must extend to the land and waters, and all life ... in this sense, solidarity is an already existing practice of normative interdependent Indigenous relations with land, waters, humans and non-human life” (Rahman & Fu, 2025, p. 97).

“Settlers, too, have responsibilities, obligations to the land and water. Not on the basis of a genealogical and ancestral relationship to that land, to be sure, but we are obliged to caretake (and care, in general) even though the

land and the water doesn't belong to us and, yes, even if we don't "belong" at all" (Kuragano, 2025, p. 71).

The biggest question looming over my head as I reflect upon the outcomes of this relation-making is that of further attunement to the x^wməθk^wəyəm, Sk_wxwú7mesh, and səliwətaʔ Nations whose legal orders, stewardship of, and kinship with these Lands must be centered to in establishing transformative relationships to place (and one another). That is, there is a relational frame of learning missing here, in learning about x^wməθk^wəyəm, Sk_wxwú7mesh, and səliwətaʔ Nations "through direct relationships ... [as such relations] encourag[e] intimacy, vulnerability, reflexivity, curiosity, and appreciate immersion into knowledge that would otherwise have been concealed from their view or experience through colonial institutions" (Rahman & Fu, 2025, p. 96). I have exhausted the possibilities which a research program such as this can provide to enact and renew Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic relationships to Indigenous Lands and life. I continue to acknowledge, and ground any discussion of these takeaways, in the reality that I remain constrained by the academy and the ways in which it privileges specific forms of relationships and knowledges at the expense of what could be more liberatory and novel modes of relation-making and decolonial practice. I encourage future scholar-activism to rectify the material and discursive distance that remains between the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora, Asian (im)migrant diasporas more broadly, and x^wməθk^wəyəm, Sk_wxwú7mesh, and səliwətaʔ Nations who have stewarded these unceded Lands since time immemorial.

Finally, future scholar-activism on Asian-Indigenous relations needs to question the how and why of the terminology we deploy far more. Those in the field of Asian-Indigenous relations have become too comfortable calling our work just that – I am guilty of such branding and flattening. Though this is a rather rudimentary question on the surface, I believe asking *what Asian-Indigenous relations are* is a valuable question in and of itself. Particularly, this thesis challenges Asian-Indigenous relationality in what is omitted and misrecognized through such categorization of relationality. The Asian-Indigenous canon of work and ongoing scholar-activism frequently makes Taiwanese-ness invisible and thus casts Taiwanese (im)migrant diasporic life out of Asian-Indigenous relationality. Furthermore, this thesis contends with the overreliance of scholars and activists to presume that Asian-Indigenous relationality is largely uniform and understandable through a pan-Asian umbrella. Not only does scholarship and activism on Asian-

Indigenous relation-making continue to erase Asian Indigeneity, its own form of settler colonial complicity, but also erases the very complexity and muddiness that this thesis begins to work through. Far more inter and intra-diasporic, multi-generational, and queer approaches to, and understandings of, Asian-Indigenous relation-making are necessary to strengthen our braided pasts, presents, and futures.

I now move towards providing my own bundle of medicine for the Taiwanese (im)migrant diaspora, and more broadly, all my Asian-Indigenous relations. My letter brings this thesis to a close and remains, for now, my final dispatch from within the Asian-Indigenous impasse. I continue to find joy, comradeship, and my own forms of clarity and validation from all other dispatches that exemplify what it means to love and care for All Our Relations at the end of (this) world. I wrote this dispatch on the eve of the 10th anniversary of having dropped out of high school, which saw me navigate the worst days of my life. Yet 10 years later, amidst the inferno of late-stage settler colonial racial capitalism, and the meteoric rise of fascism, I remain Liğwildaŋw, forever braiding in motion as I proudly declare myself unkillable. So are the Asian-Indigenous relations which continue to define and bring clarity to my radically Indigenous life.

We do not need to become ungovernable. We already are.

“Well, you promised us the stars,” and now we’re tired and bored!

(We’re tired, we’re bored, we’re tired, we’re bored)

(We’re tired, we’re bored, we’re tired, we’re bored)

“Well, you promised us the stars,” and now we’re tired and bored!

(We’re tired, we’re bored, we’re tired, we’re bored)

(We’re tired, we’re bored, we’re tired, we’re bored)

“Well, you promised us the stars,” and now we’re tired and bored!

(We’re tired, we’re bored, we’re tired, we’re-) (Aay!)

(We’re tired, we’re bored, we’re tired, we’re bored)

“Well, you promised us the stars,” and now we’re tired!

(We’re tired, we’re bored, we’re tired, we’re bored)

(We’re tired, we’re bored, we’re tired, we’re bored)

We're tired!, we're bored!, we're tired!, we're bored!

(et tu, [Canada!]

Et tu, et tu, [Canada!])

We're tired!, we're bored!, we're tired!, we're bored!

(et tu, [Canada!]

Et tu, et tu, [Canada!])

We're tired!, we're bored!, we're tired!, we're bored!

(et tu, [Canada!]

Et tu, et tu, [Canada!])

We're tired!, we're bored!, we're tired!, we're bored!

(et tu, [Canada!]

Et tu, et tu, [Canada!])

Woo!

Was that ya?

Was that ya?

Was that ya?

Was that ya?

—Jeff Rosenstock, "USA," POST-, adapted for the settler colonial

"Canadian" context by the author.

5.2. A Dispatch to My Taiwanese (Im)migrant Diasporic Kin

Dear Kin,

Aided by the words of our dear comrade, Taiwanese scholar-activist Yi-Chien Jade Ho, you have rejected a weaponized sense of “Canadian” settler colonial belonging by merely questioning it and dwelling in its assumptions, limitations, and forms of violence. You continue to experience the pressure to conform and to prove yourself and to please and to buy-in to settler colonial “Canada” so that you may rest. But relationality, reciprocity, and responsibility cannot be put to rest. Building solidarity takes a lifetime, and well beyond that. It takes seven generations. And as unrealistic or impossible as it may seem, you have shown me that at least your ideal present is a decolonial one: where we are not merely surviving but affirming our lives and collectively thriving as the settler state fails to materialize. In our own way, we have collectively dreamed new visions to bring hope to the future. Nowhere was it assumed that this would not bring about bad feelings, or even the need to sit with us believing that these dreams and futures cannot be materialized. Hope remains as much as our inconsistencies and contradictory desires do. That’s life as we know it for now, but the life that we know is not the only one that is possible and livable.

On December 4, 2024, I wrote in a memo “Currently feels like I am at an impasse.” Before I even knew that would define and frame our time together, my ancestors and spirit had the words and feelings for what was to come. Am I ever glad I got to experience the Asian-Indigenous impasse with you, and I wish you and all your relations the best as we continue to cross the impasse together – braided through time and space.

All My Relations.

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