

To: Freeman Chinese Studies Grant Committee  
From: Douglas Fix (Professor, History)  
Re: Application for funds to support a student research assistant (Dominic McDevitt-Parks, sophomore history major)  
Date: 4 March 2007  
Project title: Testing the research capabilities of "Formosa: 19th-century images," a digital library constructed by Reed students, staff and faculty since 1998.

### **Freeman Foundation Summer Research Assistant Grants Criteria**

"Alternatively, \$3,000 summer fellowships are available to students who will provide research assistance for a faculty sponsor's project. The work of the research assistant must be of an academic rather than a clerical nature in order to promote student training in the substantive study of China. Proposals also may request up to \$2,000 for specific research expenses."

"Selection will be based on the quality of the proposed project, its likelihood of providing a meaningful research experience for the student applicant, its relevance to the aim of the grant program, the perceived academic benefits to the faculty member, as well as other expected contributions of the project. Each awarded research team will be asked to produce a final written research paper or report, which is to be presented publicly to the Reed community during the following academic year. Faculty are expected to participate in the project presentation no matter whether they are collaborators or sponsors."

### **Abstract of the proposed project:**

Since 1998, I have collected some 500 19th-century EuroAmerican writings on Taiwan, written in various languages (English, French, German, Dutch, Danish, Russian). Reed students have helped create digital versions of fifty of those texts, summarize another fifty-some non-English-language texts, and translate another handful of German, Russian and French texts into English. Maps, images, and linguistic data from those texts have been digitized and/or abstracted into databases. Student researchers have prepared travel itineraries and travel maps for many of the foreign visitors; they have collected this data into a database that can be searched on-line from within the site. In addition, students have researched and written biographies for many of the travelers whose texts are part of the digital library. Taken together this digital library, "Formosa: Nineteenth-century images" (<http://academic.reed.edu/formosa/>), is now *the* source for serious examination of 19th-century Western imaginaries of Taiwan, its peoples and cultures, and its natural environment.

When I developed this site, I wanted to serve both students in my classes and researchers around the world. I know from colleagues in Taiwan and Japan that they consult the site for their own historical work; many have said that they also use it in the classroom. However, as of today, I have not tested the overall capabilities of the site to support serious undergraduate research. Though I have assigned small visual explorations or textual analyses of materials on the site in two of my classes, I have not

tested the data-mining capabilities of this digital site as a whole. The current project is an attempt to implement that type of examination.

The goal of the research assistant's work this summer would be to design and implement a research project that would use the textual, geographical and visual data in the Formosa digital library to accomplish interesting and useful research. Naturally, this would require that a student researcher become familiar with the contents of the digital library, as well as the extant research on 19th-century EuroAmerican encounters with Taiwan, as well as useful studies of a comparative nature (whether it be the research on Qing Dynasty colonialism or Euro-American treaty-port / colonialist discourse on other regions of the world in the 19th Century). I know that literature generally well (and the Taiwan scholarship intimately) and plan to have regular meetings with my research assistant to assist him in his research project.

If funding is available, I hope that Dominic McDivitt-Parks, my research assistant, will be able to travel throughout Taiwan, in order to familiarize himself with the island's topography and ethnic diversity, to visit important museums, to meet with two or three of my colleagues in Taiwan who are engaged in the same research, and to visit five or six historical sites that preserve the material culture of the foreign visitors he will be studying.

In the fall of 2007, Dominic and I will present both the Formosa digital library, and more importantly, the fruits of Dominic's project to students and faculty here at Reed.

### **Specific work tasks (in the order in which they should be done)**

1. Getting familiar with the website, and specifically with the Timeline, Texts, Maps and Images components related to explorers and their treks through Taiwan.
2. Designing a research project that will adequately test the data-mining utility of the Formosa website. Note: The first draft of this proposal is being submitted with this application.
3. Revising that proposal after getting comments from me and relevant support staff. Fred Lifton and Jason Parker come immediately to mind, and perhaps one of the librarians (e.g., Gay Walker) also has expertise in on-line data-mining of the variety that my site includes (maps, images, texts, linguistic data).
4. Conducting the research and writing a research paper (20-25 pages in length).
5. Revising that research paper after receiving my comments and suggestions.
6. Presenting that research to a group of students and faculty in the fall of 2007.

### **Project outcomes and reporting to the larger Reed community**

Three years ago, I presented the contents of the Formosa digital library at a luncheon meeting that Marty Ringle had organized. Unfortunately, the majority of

people in attendance were those who had helped me construct the site since 1998; they all knew it intimately. If we are awarded this funding, I hope to introduce Dominic's research to the Reed community in the fall (2007) by briefly describing the digital library and its contents and data-mining capabilities. Dominic's research will be the central focus. Because his project engages important topics in history, anthropology and the humanities broadly, it should appeal to a broad range of our students and colleagues.

A written report will also be submitted in conjunction with the oral presentation.

### **How the proposed research relates to my previous research activities and long-term research goals**

Since late 1998, many of my research activities have centered on nineteenth-century Taiwan and the Chinese, Japanese, and European-American visitors to that island (as well as those who merely wrote about other's visits). A considerable amount of my summer hours have been devoted to training student researchers and assistants, as well as designing ways of adding research capabilities to the Formosa digital library. Last year, Hsiao-teh Lo and I published a Chinese-language edition of 20 texts from this collection of Westerners' travel reports, supplemented by images, maps, placename glossaries and travelers' biographical information. Concurrently, John Shufelt (Tunghai University) and I are nearing completion of an annotated, critical edition of Charles Wm. Le Gendre's *Notes of travel in Formosa*, an illustrated (with photographs and paintings) intelligence report prepared in 1874-1875 but never published. Thus, the summer research project outlined by Dominic supplements nearly all of my recent research projects. Furthermore, it will enable me to discover how to revise the Formosa site to meet the teaching and research needs of its users.

## Appendix One:

### "Formosa: 19th Century Images," A Digital Library of European and North American Representations of Taiwan

Douglas Fix (Reed College)

"Formosa: 19th Century Images."

url: <http://academic.reed.edu/formosa/>

#### I. New introduction:

This spring, as students and staff were nearly finished with a year-long project to revise my digital library of primary materials concerning 19th-century Taiwan, I composed a new electronic introduction, which I reproduce here. This brief text describes the components of the digital library that my assistants and I have attempted to redesign, extend and supplement during the 2002-2003 academic year, with the generous support of a Murdock Grant.

"This digital library, "Formosa: 19th Century Images," gathers together a large body of primarily European and American images of the island of Taiwan -- called "Formosa" by foreign visitors in the 19th Century -- and its various peoples. These textual representations, prints, maps, and linguistic data were originally published in European and North American books and journals during the 19th Century, but are not easily accessible to those interested in the history of Taiwan today.

Users are encouraged to examine the engravings, woodcuts, etchings and sketches of landscapes, people, architecture, boats and implements by selecting increasing magnifications of those **Images** included in the library. Portfolios showcase the imaginaries of six major image makers, while the five categories of prints give access to the entire corpus of visual representations.

Full texts of travelogues, reports, ethnographies and general surveys can be accessed from the **Texts** component of the library or selectively analyzed with the **Search** engine. Biographies of several foreign visitors are linked to author names in bibliographic entries on the **Texts'** index page. Summaries of French- and German-language texts and an extensive bibliography of additional publications are included in the same listing.

Geographers will find the island-wide and locality **Maps** useful for exploring topographical, ethnological, geological or geographical questions. For assistance locating obscure place names (in Chinese, Japanese, or European languages), the

user is directed to the detailed Place-name maps or the Island maps on the **Maps** component of the library.

The **Timeline** database enables users to chart an explorer's itinerary, to pinpoint foreign access to specific Formosan communities, or to compare historical events occurring in the same place or year. Explorer route maps, found in the **Maps** component, supplement the timeline database.

A small sampling of primary **Linguistic Data** on the various aboriginal languages, collected by 19th-century explorers, may interest the student of Austronesian languages. The specialist may wish to download the more detailed Formosan aborigine languages database, built from similar 19th-century vocabulary lists.

We encourage users to help us improve this digital library by providing us with **Feedback.**"

## II. Site improvements, or "What's new"?

For the individual user who browsed the pilot version of our website in the fall of 1999, there should be no question about what's new in the digital library. The number of searchable electronic texts has been doubled with the addition of many important British and American travelogues; and they were doubled yet again when we added Tina Schneider's detailed English summaries of German-language texts concerning Formosa. The architecture of the Maps component was rearranged to accommodate completely new scans of island-wide maps of Taiwan, detailed grids of an 1899 Japanese placename map, and the many site-specific maps we have included in our "locality maps" section. Prints collected from the *Illustrated London News* and other publications since 1999 have probably tripled the amount of 19th-century visual images available in the library; they all come in thumbnails as well as in three larger magnifications that permit much closer examination and study. The site's Timeline is now a database of information on itineraries, explorer activities, and visitor networks. As we add each new text to the library, we update the Timeline database to enable users to "read across" the travelogues and exploration reports in order to see the intersections that might otherwise be invisible. Sammie's biographies and Arini's explorer-specific maps are both new additions to the library. They extend our understanding of the foreigners who visited Taiwan in the 19th Century, and they carefully plot the routes these visitors traveled. Finally, in a few weeks we will link Hannah's Formosan database to the Linguistic Data component of the site, and let users download her compilation of lexical entries that was derived from more than twenty primary sources. In short, we have doubled both the size and the complexity of the Formosa images digital library and will continue to do so as funding and time permits.

## III. "How can I use this digital library to full advantage?"

Did foreign travelers ever visit the eastern coast of Taiwan in the 19th Century? Which products were exported from Formosa in the 1880s? Did John Thomson, the famous British photographer, take any photos of Taiwanese aborigines? How do you count to

ten in all of the southern Formosan Austronesian dialects? Where exactly are Balangan, Pohson, and Pilam, the villages that George Taylor visited in the late 1880s? Who served as cultural and linguistic mediators for these North American and European explorers? Were all aborigine houses build of bamboo and thatch?

These and many other questions can be answered using this library of digital "images" concerning Taiwan, Taiwanese, and Taiwan-related phenomena. The travelogues of exciting young visitors to Taiwan, such as Paul Ibis, Robert Swinhoe or George Taylor, are in themselves very interesting reading. However, even the knowledgeable reader may be puzzled by the names of places and tribes they claim to have visited, measured or sketched. Some visitors provided their own route maps (e.g., M. Beazeley), and a look at those materials included in the library's Maps may solve the geographical puzzle quickly. If not, turn to the Timeline function and submit a query of "place" (or "people" or "event") to see if one or more explorers pin-pointed or described a place or people in terms that would facilitate a better understanding. Our explorer-specific maps supplement both of these references; in fact, we used the Timeline and Maps to research and draw this additional cartographic reference tools. Finally, users who know Chinese and/or Japanese can find equivalents in those languages of romanized names by carefully examining the Placename Map and comparing it with other maps in the library.

Having collected maps of Taiwan for nearly twenty years now, I'm especially excited by the 19th-century maps included in the digital library. Some plot the (estimated) distribution of coal and other natural resources in the northern reaches of the island. Missionary stations established by George Mackay, the Canadian Presbyterian, and his Protestant and Catholic colleagues in the south, are featured in other maps of Taiwan. The captains of surveying expeditions frequently left a record of water depths in the seas surrounding major Formosan ports. "Cross sections" of coastline near those trade centers comprise another genre that graces many a map or book illustration, and we have included several cross sections with our Locality Maps. A dangerous port entrance (for example, the entry into Takao in the south) or intelligence needs prior to foreign occupation (e.g., the French in 1884) stimulated the production of detailed port facilities maps. Geological mappings, such as those of George Kleinwächter in the 1880s, represent yet another attempt to understand, and perhaps exploit the island's resources. This brief survey of cartographic content might suggest the many kinds of research questions one could bring to our collection of Formosa maps.

Since the spring of 1998, when Adrian Rattner first began to help me collect visual images of Taiwan, I have examined hundreds of photographs, woodcuts, engravings and other types of prints in order to produce the Images component of our website. Since photographs were not readily mass-reproduced until late in the 19th Century, they are excluded as an image medium from this digital library. However, even the casual user will discover that several prints in our archives were made from original photographs taken by John Thomson, St. John Edwards or other less well-known photographers. How did these image makers present Taiwan and it's people? What factors helped determine their (disparate?) aesthetics and perspectives? Often a comparison of illustrations from (different) explorers' publications will enable a user to answer this type of question. Perhaps you will first open John Thomson's portfolio of images and compare his subjects and his manner of capturing "Formosan

characteristics" with those of his counterparts. Browsing a single category (e.g., Landscapes) will broaden one's range of comparisons, while searching the print archives with the website's Search function will permit you to collect images of the same place or the same people. We have provided captions with each of the images to enable the user to contextualize any print within the specific publication -- date, publisher, or readership may help you understand the image better. When authors sketched or photographed the subject(s) of the print themselves, their travelogue or travel report will extend your knowledge of the representation process. A word of caution, though: Engravers and print artisans who never visited the island sometimes satisfy their own imaginations in the print production process. Often those additions are easy to discern, provided one looks carefully.

Our archives of texts opens up vistas that are very difficult to summarize in just a few words. The ethnographies written by Ibis, Warburg and other foreigners are an amazing resource for the student of 19th-century anthropology, and they provide a basis upon which to reassess both late imperial Chinese records and Japanese colonial ethnography after 1895. The natural histories of Collingwood or Steere will excite users hoping to extend their knowledge of Taiwan's environmental history; bird watchers must explore Swinhoe's voluminous writings on Formosan fauna -- we've linked our library to Philip Hall's wonderful collection of Swinhoe's writings and illustrations. Textual landscapes, social formations and transformations, cross-cultural exchanges and mediation, diplomatic negotiation, and many more subjects are addressed in the library of Texts we have provided for users of our website. Searching for specific information is facilitated by the site's search function. On-line research will be extended by searching the Timeline, too. For example, making a people search with "Le Gendre" (or some other visitor's name) provides a quick itinerary of his visits, as well as information on his accomplishments, assistants, and major activities. You might search his (or another author's) biography -- they are linked to author names in the Texts index -- for information on his background, training, and affiliations. Finally, searching the entire library may point you to the illustrations, maps, or linguistic data that supplemented Le Gendre's (or another visitor's) original publications. Read and studied together, these disparate resources will enliven and enrich your understanding of the textual images produced by a diplomat (and amateur historian, ethnographer, geologist, explorer, etc.) such as Charles Le Gendre.

### **Conclusion:**

We believe our "Formosa: 19th Century Images" digital library provides a wealth of information on European and North American visitors to the Taiwan and their particular representations of the island's people, flora and fauna, and a range of related phenomena. Educators and individual users of the library are encouraged to send us their comments so that we can continue to provide reference tools that will enhance the capabilities of this website. We are also very interested in the ways in which educators are using the library to train their students or to stimulate a critical understanding of 19th-century Formosa and the foreigners who traveled there in the 19th Century. Please send us your feedback.

## **Euro-American/Taiwanese cultural interaction in a frontier zone: Testing the research capabilities of "Formosa: 19th-century images"**

**By Dominic McDevitt-Parks**

Over the course of the fall semester of 2006 and continuing into the Spring semester of 2007 I have worked on data collecting for the Formosa digital library, "Formosa: Nineteenth-century images" (<http://academic.reed.edu/formosa/>), compiled by Douglas Fix and his students since 1998. The texts that the Formosa digital library includes are mostly travel literature, which are authored by many different Westerners who visited the island of Formosa during the nineteenth century, and official reports. It also contains many images—sketches and woodcuts made by Western visitors to Formosa—and the images of people in particular will be of use. The project offers a large amount of information to researchers with an interest in cultural interaction in a frontier zone. Other resources the digital library contains include historical maps, including some from the same texts on the site, as well as biographies of the writers written by previous research assistants. Additionally, travel itineraries have been compiled by using the accounts to record the places and dates of the people mentioned and what activities they are engaged in, and the site houses a searchable database of all of the itinerary entries. The chronicles it encompasses provide a view of Han Chinese, Formosan aborigine, and Western contact with each other written from a Western perspective. One of the dominant threads in scholarship on zones of contact between cultures, and especially in colonial settings, is that of cultural identities, both self-identities and the perceptions of other cultures encountered. The proposed research project will use the Formosa digital library to consider Western conceptions of the



peoples—Formosan aborigines and Chinese settlers—they meet in Formosa and their variations among the accounts analyzed.

Margaret Byrne Swain suggests, in her study of the Sani Yi and the missionaries' civilizing project with respect to them, that “a typology of Orientalists can be constructed by grouping occupational motivations which then correlate with distinct research agendas and results” (Swain 143). She goes on to provide an analysis of the missionary Père Vial's perspective, explained by his “commitment to conversion” and his “dialectical role as missionary-ethnographer,” (183) and then constructs several categories of Orientalists, based on their differences in motivations, agendas, and results, along occupational lines: colonial agents, missionaries, explorers, and academic Orientalists (143-4). The proposed project will consider the ways in which Westerners describe, define, and categorize Formosan inhabitants, and it will seek (through a careful point of view) evaluation of the authors and artists, taking factors like occupation, nationality, time period, and purpose for visiting into account, to explain the reasons they conceive of the peoples they encounter in the way they do. The documents of the Formosa digital library offer a fruitful opportunity to make an in-depth analysis in the same manner, but for nineteenth century Formosa. Images, depicting physical features, dress, and even some customs, will be utilized for better understanding of authors' meanings and intentions. Documents will be analyzed for their cultural conceptions of the peoples their authors encounter, as well as the personal framework—motivations, agendas, and results—that produced them. Such investigations of the writers will allow the formulation of a theory that will attempt to order and explain their conceptions and their frameworks with an organizing principle.

Scholarship on frontier encounters emphasizes the characterization of a peoples who encounter each other, and the construction of cultural identities. Stevan Harrell posits several tropes used by civilizing centers like China and the Christian West to define perceived cultural inferiors, including “peripheral peoples as women,” “peripheral peoples as children,” and “peripheral peoples as ancient” (Harrell 9-10). For instance, Norma Diamond notes that the category “Miao” is not one that was originally self-constructed, but was a category envisioned by Han observers from outside the cultures it defines. In attempting to classify the peoples characterized as barbarians in the southwest, Chinese developed several cultural distinguishing features. The distinction between the “Raw (Sheng) and Cooked (Shu) Miao” represented a broader set of attributes; whereas the Shu Miao “lived near to Han centers of settlement or military outposts, came under control of the state or appointed local *tusi*, and had taken some Han customs or at least had relinquished some of their own customs that were offensive to Han sensibilities,” Sheng Miao “resisted assimilation, pacification, and state control” (Diamond 100). Diamond notes that it was not typically ethnicity that Han used to define the Miao, but that they were classified together because of a sense of shared properties of “barbarianness” that necessitated their grouping. Such properties included lacking Chinese surname or foot-binding practices, and burial, funeral, and ancestor worship rituals, marriage customs, gender roles, and sexual mores that differed from Han ways. Diamond notes that of those features that define Miao in Han literature, “particularly those that stand in contrast to the Han culture of the times” are emphasized (Diamond 101). An integral part of such scholarship has been to identify the forms of cultural identification and classification projected onto one people by outsiders. These understandings allow scholars to approach the question of the origin and ideological basis for cultural conceptions.

Both the Chinese colonizers and Westerners, particularly missionaries, attempted “civilizing” projects on the Taiwanese aborigines. Scholars of the field are particularly concerned with foreign conceptions of peripheral peoples because of the extent to which it reveals the projects and theories of cultural identity into which the conceivers fit the people they conceive. Harrell and Diamond both agree that the cultural conceptions of a peripheral people by Chinese were due more to their own cultural proclivities and identity than any other factor. As Diamond notes, the salient organizing principle for the Chinese definition of the Miao people was a set of shared non-Han attributes that correlated them in the minds of the Chinese observers.

The proposed project will be concerned solely with the Westerners' civilizing project, which also approaches the problem of ethnographic writing from its own historically-situated perspective. In his book *Orientalism*, Edward Said argues that “an Orientalist is but the particular specialist in the knowledge for which Europe at large is responsible, in the way that an audience is historically and culturally responsible for (and responsive to) dramas technically put together by the dramatist” (Said 63). Harrell identifies the Western civilizing project as having “sought to bring not only the Gospel, but the modern life of Christian nations—with all its advantages of health technology, and science—to the peoples of China” (Harrell 20). In his study of characterizations of the Yi people, Harrell argues “I think that in each case, the historians have known what they were going to write before they even did the research for their history. Westerners were interested in races; Chinese before 1949 in correlating the Yi History with the Capital H—History” (Harrell 90). Harrell and Diamond provide a historicization of the ethnographic or culturally-descriptive writing that constitutes an outsider's conception of another culture by, as Said would have them, fitting it into the

framework of the author's, and the author's native culture's, circumstances and agenda which produce their characterizations of the other.

Whereas Swain and Harrell both narrow their studies to missionary encounters with cultural others, the Formosa digital library offers the chance to survey a wider range of Western visitors to Formosa, including missionaries, adventurers, consuls, soldiers, reporters, and traders, with work from across much of the nineteenth century, as well as writers in contact with many of the different peoples and locations of Taiwan. My research project will work towards not only identifying the theories of cultural conception by authors and artists, but by using the knowledge gained to understand a scheme by which such theories can be classified and understood. If, as Swain suggests, a major factor is occupational, we might expect missionaries and explorers, for example, to approach the problem of cultural identification differently, and to use different classification schemes. The project, then, will seek to answer the question of how nineteenth century Westerners in Formosa conceived of the peoples they encountered, and how such conceptions may be ordered and understood as part of a broader historical framework, both in the analyses of individual texts' and images' points of view and in the the construction of an argument to explain the those points of view.

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