I. Offering Ourselves to Beautify Taitung

As Stanley Yen said in his book, *To Spread the Seeds for Hopes—The Story on Stanley Yen & the Alliance Cultural Foundation*, “We all care about Taitung because Taitung’s future is closely connected with Taiwan’s future. That is why we built the Alliance Cultural Foundation. Many of our friends, whether we are familiar or unfamiliar with, were influenced by us. We have the same ambition and passion to use our accumulated energy from our past experiences and will contribute the rest of our lives to the society. The Foundation was just a platform that connects the donations (money, efforts, and social capital) from our friends, which at the same time presents them the best way to measure their meanings of life.”

In April 2007, when there was a strong debate on the Suhua Highway project within Taiwan, Mr. Yen (Yen Chang-Shou/Stanly Yen), who is nicknamed the “Godfather of Tourism” and is the CEO of the Landis Group, offered a different idea. Mr. Yen has been, for a long time, involved in development in Hualien and Taitung. He mentioned that in this area, an overall plan for sustainable development is in desperate need, rather than any large-scale exploring plan on constructions. This is especially true of the Suhua Highway project, which, if it had been executed, would have done some serious damage to the area’s environment. Later, on January 17, 2007, Mr. Yen invited a number of well-known people who also care about this issue—from the intellectual circles and businesses—such as Hou Hsiao-Hsien (movie director), Hu De-Fu (aboriginal singer), Huang Chuen-Ming and Meng Dong-Li (authors), Hsu Lu (senior media professional), Ke Wen-Chang and Tung Tzu-Hsien (entrepreneurs), and Liao Hui-Ching, Tsai Zhong-Yue, Li Mei-Yi, Zheng Ming-Gang (local representatives) to sit in on a press conference. They appealed to the government to build the Suhua Highway in a sustainable manner, starting with the
very concept and evaluation. During the press conference, Mr. Yen and the
director Hou Hsiao-Hsien stated that:

The time of ‘constructions equal to developments’ had passed. It’s like to open
the Pandora’s box in Greek mythology to build the Suhua Highway; as the
box opened, there will be disasters. As in this case, touring resource in East-
Taiwan will be destroyed and won’t be recovered forever. (As said by Mr. Yen)
Though the government is promoting tourism, but there is no appearance
on highlighting local features in every area. If we bring the west-Taiwan
experience to develop the east, every corner in Taiwan would probably looks
the same, no differences at all. (As said by Director Hou Hsiao-Hsien)

Due to the debate on the Suhua Highway, many people from different
kinds of fields had reached a consensus to replace industrial development
with sustainable development. And based on this fact, Mr. Yen felt that the
bulk of the efforts should be devoted to enabling more people to experi-
ence the beauty of east-Taiwan and planning the development of the area
in a sustainable manner. In December 2009, Mr. Yen donated his passion
and gathered together a group of friends that had similar ideologies, such
as Tao Chuan-Zheng, Ke Wen-Chang, and Zhou Yong-Yu, to set up the
Foundation. Other friends from business circles, such as Shi Zhen-Rong,
Hong Min-Hong, Su Yi-Zhong, Gu Huai-Ru, Zhuang Yong-Shun, Zhao
Tian-Xing; and friends from intellectual circles like Lin Cheng-Zhi, Long
Ying-Tai, Zhan Hong-Zhi, Zhu Zong-Qing, Zheng Han-Wen, Xu Lu, and
Su Guo-Yao, all joined it; thus, creating a platform to promote humanities
and culture in Taitung.

On the other hand, Professor Samuel Hou at Feng Chia University in
Taichung has been focusing on research about the practices of the taxi
industry for a long time. He was moved by Mr. Yen’s passion to help the
rural area, and decided to devote himself to the development of the touring
taxi business in east-Taiwan. At the end of the year 2010, Professor Hou was
invited by Mr. Yen to a three-day humanity and culture-experiencing excur-
sion in east-Taiwan. During that trip, Mr. Yen shared his thoughts and ideas
with Professor Hou— the fact that tourism had been hard to promote in the
inconvenient-to-access rural areas without a public transportation system.
Mr. Yen also pointed out the outcomes and results after the Foundation
held a “Taxi Ambassador” activity. After a thorough investigation, Professor
Hou made up his mind to transfer resources from his ongoing three-year
project granted by Ministry of Science and Technology into the Taitung
area. He also hoped to form an unconventional service innovation for the
traffic pattern, specifically for east-Taiwan. Professor Hou also had a dream
of initiating a cross-sector innovation that combined taxis and tourism,