

## 6) Identity Formation in Taiwan

### 6.1) Before 1895

The question of to what extent the Taiwanese had an identity before 1895 is bound up with the question of what that identity could have been. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, Taiwan had had both Spanish and Dutch colonial presences. While mass immigration from China to Taiwan began under the Dutch, it seems fair to say that the Zheng Cheng-gong takeover in 1661 eradicated Dutch cultural influence—although the economic changes brought about by the Dutch, the introduction of jackfruit, parsley, tomatoes, watermelon, mangoes, tobacco peppers, lemons as well as Indian oxen for ploughing—remained<sup>70</sup>. At the time of the Dutch arrival there were about 10,000 Han Chinese in Taiwan.

By the time of Zheng's ouster this had grown to 34,000.<sup>71</sup> Zheng's army numbered some 25,000 so this meant an increase in the Han population of some 74 percent. By the time of the Qing takeover, the Han population stood at 200,000. Qing policy was not to integrate Taiwan fully into the empire but rather to keep it at arm's length. After its conquest in 1683 there had been considerable debate as to whether Taiwan should be integrated into the empire or abandoned as being too hard to defend and too far from the center of administration. Prior to the 1683 conquest, the Dutch had even been promised that Taiwan would be restored to them. Only because of the powerful arguments of Shi Lang, the military commander who had destroyed the Zheng regime, did the Kang Xi emperor finally decide to take Taiwan into the empire.<sup>72</sup>

Even so, the Qing position on Taiwan remained ambiguous. In 1683 activities in Taiwan were strictly regulated and movement to Taiwan was restricted to seasonal visits by single males, with long-term immigration banned. Given the availability of land in Taiwan, its proximity to Fujian which had one of the most unfavorable land/person ratios

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<sup>70</sup> Hung Chien-chao (2000) *A History Of Taiwan*, Rimini: Il Cherchio Iniziative Editoriali: p31

<sup>71</sup> Figures quoted from Fujii Shozo (2006) "The Formation of Taiwanese Identity and the Cultural Policy of Various Outside Regimes," in Ping-hui Liao & David Deh-wei Wang (Eds.) *Taiwan Under Japanese Colonial Rule 1895-1945*, (pp. 62-77). New York: Columbia University Press: p64,

<sup>72</sup> Hung Chien-chao, *op. cit.* p126.

in the empire and the high cost of rice, it was inevitable that enterprising—or desperate—Fujianese would break the ban. It was relaxed in 1732 then reapplied and eventually scrapped altogether in 1780. The following 40 years saw Taiwan's Han population increase dramatically, to 2 million by 1811. But Taiwan was still peripheral to the empire. Wu Rwei-ren describes Qing policy thus: "By and large, however, the state ruled the island frontier *preventively*, in order not to turn it into a base for rebellion. As a result, Taiwan was for nearly 190 years heavily segregated from the mainland."<sup>73</sup>

To what extent Taiwan differed markedly from China is open to debate. After all, mainland China itself contained considerable variation over its vast size. Certainly, some aspects of life on the Taiwan frontier were different from those in Fujian or Gaungdong, where the immigrants came from. For example, the landholding system used by the Qing was in large part inherited from the Dutch. It involved three levels, this most basic fact of which was that all land belonged in principle to the emperor. Title could be obtained to land from the provincial authorities in Fujian, in return for a commitment to pay land tax. In practice, titles for very large areas were granted, often to mainland-based commercial concerns. These in their turn rented out cultivation rights to the land to smaller Taiwan-based landlords, who in their turn would rent out their holding in parcels to subtenants whose status was not dissimilar to American sharecroppers—often paying up to 60 percent of their crop as rent. Sub-tenants were usually single males and this kind of landholding system produced dispersed dwellings, isolated farmsteads rather than a nucleated settlement, itself a problem to social and community cohesion.<sup>74</sup>

Other factors showed some degree of localization of the Han settlers. Fujii Shozo points out that during the 19th century:

Han immigrants began to worship, in their ancestral temples, not the clan founders from mainland China, but rather those who had first established their consanguineous lineages in Taiwan. The "armed fights among various regional groups" of the early period gradually developed into conflicts

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<sup>73</sup> Wu Rwei-ren (2004) "Fragment of/f Empires: The Peripheral Formation of Taiwanese Nationalism," *Social Science Japan*(30): p16.

<sup>74</sup> Knapp, Ronald (1980) "Settlement and Frontier Land Tenure," in Ronald Knapp (Ed.), *China's Island Frontier: The Historical Geography of Taiwan*, (pp. 55-68): University Press of Hawaii: p63

between clan groups, and indication that groups from the mainland had reconstituted themselves and matured as a local Han society settled in Taiwan.<sup>75</sup>

But Fujii points out that, while Han settlers in Taiwan became increasingly localized, at the same time their society was increasingly drawn into the Qing mainstream. Central to this was the examination system, which was manipulated to strengthen the relationship between Taiwan and the center. In Taiwan, the opening of opportunities within the imperial regime allowed for the formation of a scholar gentry class, and the Confucianization of Taiwan. Fujii cites the work of Yin Zhangyi as showing how the political, social, cultural and economic conditions that facilitated the examination system explain how Taiwan developed differently from other areas to which Chinese were emigrating, such as Indonesia, the Philippines or Malaya/Singapore. Wu Rwei-wen however, maintains that Taiwan's gentry:

...while serving the traditional function of linking state and locality politically and ideologically, had a rather strong localistic outlook compared to their counterparts on the mainland. Coming from different origins yet united by common Confucian education, this group of local literati was among the first to rise above ethnic division and articulated the earliest idea of island-wide Taiwanese identity. In a sense they were the pre-national archetype of the Andersonian nationalist bilingual intelligentsia that appeared later in many colonies, only what they helped to forge was more a region than a nation.<sup>76</sup>

There are more senses of place than just that of national consciousness and what Wu describes here appears to be not the birth of a national consciousness but the rather different transformation of mindset that separates a frontier society from a settled one, where the rule of strongmen is replaced by the rule of institutions. And these institutions became stronger toward the end of Qing rule after threats to Taiwan both from Japan and France had led to the Island's elevation in status to a full province of the empire and some effort to modernize it.

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<sup>75</sup> Fujii Shozo, *op. cit.*, p65.

<sup>76</sup> Wu Rwei-ren (2004), *op. cit.*, p16.

But was there a nascent Taiwanese consciousness? There seems little reason to think so. Chang Mau-kuei argues that before 1895, the first settlers and their descendents all looked to China as their place of origin, as the political center and as their source of cultural practices; “they were *Hanren*, descendents of the Han, who practiced Han ancestor worship and other folk practices.”<sup>77</sup>

Chang points out that social communications were limited by the barely existent transport system—until Japanese development of a railway system, around island transportation was mainly by sea—and the agrarian nature of the economy, meant that settlers had limited horizons “bonded to the here and now, to their land and villages in Taiwan.” The better off were bound into the administrative culture of the mainland by the examination system and the seeking of honors, and the Confucian culture in general by the subject matter of the examinations. Chang contends that: “The settlers as a whole could not perceive themselves as one larger imagined community or one larger group called Taiwanese that could be conceived of as substantially different from the Han-Chinese.”

While it is true that Taiwan was a notoriously restless place during the Qing era, famously having “every three years an uprising, every five years a rebellion,” it also seems wrong to characterize these as attempts to throw off Chinese influence. For a start Taiwan, with its residual history of Ming loyalists from the Zheng regime, did not necessarily see rebellion against the Qing as in any way rebellion against China, in fact like Sun Yat-sen and many Chinese nationalist patriots, quite the reverse.

It was the Taiwanese who opened up the island with no help from the alien Manchu rulers of China. They were the descendents of earlier emigrants who had fled the mainland as the Ming dynasty fell. Later on, they were joined by others who rejected Manchu rule and yet others who simply sought a new life in place of the poverty they had known across the water. The China of the Manchus was not their motherland. They did not recognize Manchu authority and rose up against them in endless rebellions ... Their motherland was the China of the Ming—a country of

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<sup>77</sup> Chang Mau-kuei (2003) “On the Origins and Transformation of National Identity,” in Paul R. Katz & Murray A. Rubinstein (Eds.) *Religion and the Formation of Taiwan Identities*, (pp. 23-58). New York: Palgrave: p27

Chinese like themselves.<sup>78</sup>

While Wu Zhuo-liu, author of the comments above was a fiction writer, rather than a historian, the received wisdom he voices here certainly has the feeling of truth.

But many of the troubles were squabbles about landholdings and water rights that got out of hand; they no more represented an incipient national consciousness than Ireland's faction fights. Much of the unrest came from the encroachment on Aboriginal lands that imperial bans on clearance failed to stem (for example the uprising of 1731-2). Elsewhere civil unrest was the concomitant of disputes about land and water owners hip in this land-grab society.

Because of the weakness of the Qing administration, in many parts of Chinese settler Taiwan, rival landlords were often left to fight out for themselves competing claims over land and water usage, For these reasons of individual security and interest the most powerful landlords raised private militias ... to keep the peace competing communities had to work out and respect territorial boundaries. Violation of these agreements resulted in inter-clan feuds that might last for generations.<sup>79</sup>

Two other factors were significant for unrest. First the gender imbalance—Qing policy for a long time restricted entrance to Taiwan to itinerant single males, which led to the growth of a volatile bachelor dominated society prone to brawling and rebellion.

A second factor, important as a counter to the idea of the emergence of a Taiwanese identity at this time was the prevalence of quarrels between the Fujianese immigrants and Hakka immigrants from Guangdong, as well as fighting between Fujianese from Zhangzhou and Quanzhou—indeed such was the animosity between these two factions that after the Lin Shuang-wen rebellion in 1786, the Qing government ordered Chinese natives in central Taiwan to be resettled into distinct Zhangzhou and Quanzhou communities.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Wu Zhuo-Liu (2002) *The Fig Tree: Memoirs of a Taiwanese Patriot* (Duncan Hunter, Trans.), Bloomington, Indiana: 1st Books Library: p3.

<sup>79</sup> Roy, Denny (2003) *Taiwan: A Political History*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press: p24-5.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, p22.

Given the importance that Anderson puts on the development of print capitalism in the development of national consciousness, the process of “imagining” a community, it is interesting that throughout the entire Qing era, movable type printing of Chinese was never introduced into Taiwan.<sup>81</sup> Even had it been, only 10 percent of the population were literate, literacy itself being handicapped by the lack of written forms for the Hakka and Fujianese dialects spoken on the island.

And given the importance of a single economic area to the development of a national consciousness<sup>82</sup>, at the time of the Japanese takeover, rice in Taipei cost 67 percent more than rice in southern Taiwan, while coal in Chiayi cost almost three times the price it fetched in Taipei.

A final reason why it is unlikely that the Taiwan settlers would develop a national “Taiwanese” consciousness, namely that China itself at that time was lacking a national consciousness. Nationalism, as understood in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe was simply not part of the intellectual repertoire of 19<sup>th</sup> century China. China was an empire and it was a culture. It was not a nation state. Taiwan was separated from China before a notion of China as a state became current, allowing Taiwan to develop a nation of its nationhood independent of China.

It should be noted that Taiwan was broken off China *before* the latter began its transformation from empire into nation, and from this point on the historical trajectory of the two bifurcated sharply: while the nationalism in China rose after the moribund empire’s 1895 defeat to imagine a Chinese nation *without* Taiwan, the nationalism in Taiwan emerged as a reaction to Japan’s colonial nation-building to imagine a Taiwan that belonged *only* to the Taiwanese.<sup>83</sup>

Scholars largely agree that a Taiwanese consciousness only emerged during the Japanese colonial period. Interestingly most dismiss the 1895 Republic of Taiwan, formed in reaction to the announcement of Taiwan’s cession to Japan under the Treaty of Shimonoseki, as not a reflection of Taiwanese national consciousness but simply a

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<sup>81</sup> Fujii Shozo, *op. cit.* p67.

<sup>82</sup> See Anthony D. Smith’s comments above, p16.

<sup>83</sup> Wu Rwei-ren, *op. cit.* p17

stalking horse for continued Qing rule. James W. Davidson, admittedly not the most unbiased of sources on the events of 1895, asserts that:

Just previous to the declaration of independence by the literati of Taiwan [as a response to the Shimonoseki treaty], a memorial consisting of sixteen characters was telegraphed to the emperor at Peking by the provincial government of the island. It ran as follows: “The literati and people of Formosa are determined to resist subjection to Japan Hence they have declared themselves an independent Island Republic, at the same time recognizing the suzerainty of the Sacred Tsing [Qing] dynasty.”<sup>84</sup>

Davidson goes to say that while it by no means certain whether officials in the capital or in Taiwan were responsible for the idea of the republic, what organization there was directed from Beijing. “That it was not a movement of the people as the above telegram would imply there is not a doubt. They know nothing of it and the republic as organized was the work of the officials from first to last.”

The Japanese campaign to subdue Taiwan officially lasted five months, ending with the taking of Tainan in October 1895. While the Republic collapsed within days of its being declared, Taiwanese fought and even after October 1895 continued to fight. What were they fighting for? Not, it seems, a “nation” of Taiwan or a Republic of Taiwan. Fujii quotes Huang Zhaotang as saying:

Resistance rose spontaneously in response to the Japanese invasion but in organizational terms it was mostly immature groups. Their reasons for joining the Taiwan democratic government in opposing them were primarily their traditional contempt toward Japan and their disgust at the behavior of the Japanese soldiers; they were not necessarily fighting under the command of the Democratic Nation.<sup>85</sup>

The Taiwanese Hakka writer Wu Zhuo-liu said:

[The Taiwanese] could not accept that what they had created should be handed over to the Japanese. In anger and disbelief they opposed them by

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<sup>84</sup> Davidson, James W. (1992) *The Island of Formosa Past and Present*, Taipei: SMC Publishing: p278.

<sup>85</sup> Fujii Shozo, *op. cit.*, p69

force in every corner of the island ... resistance against the Japanese was spontaneous unorganized and unsystematic. There was no liaison amongst the various groups and no hierarchical chain of command. Neither was there any propaganda to fan the flames of resistance, nothing but an unarticulated awareness that as the descendents of those who had first settled the land, we Taiwanese had a duty to protect what they had created.<sup>86</sup>

Wu uses the phrase “we Taiwanese,” but then he was writing in 1967.

It appears that, at the time of the Japanese takeover, there was no Taiwanese national consciousness. Whether there was a Chinese national consciousness is open to argument. Imperial China saw itself as a culture, or a way of life according to certain moral principles, more than a state. In fact, it was its own lack of national consciousness that put it at a disadvantage when engaged with belligerent Western powers, something late 19<sup>th</sup> century reformers and revolutionaries such as Sun Yat-sen sought to address. Taiwan lacked too many of those elements needed for the development of a national consciousness—newspapers, communications, a unified economy. The most that can be said of the Taiwanese in 1895 is that they had an ethnic consciousness would could, given the right stimuli, evolve into a form of ethno-nationalism.

## 6.2) Taiwan under Japanese Rule

Wu Rwei-ren begins his massive study of identity formation in colonial Taiwan by asking:

... how a nationalist ideology, which re-imagined a colony and former province as a nation, came into being in the process of anti-colonial struggles. Under the Japanese colonial rule (1895-1945), an anti-colonial movement emerged among the predominantly Han Chinese population of Taiwan which, in articulating an ideology of “Taiwan for Taiwanese” and “Taiwanese uniqueness” based on a strong Han ethnic consciousness, advocated the right of Taiwanese as a “weak and small nation” to self-determination ... Why should Taiwan, a colony of Chinese settlers since

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<sup>86</sup> Wu Zhuo-Liu, *op. cit.*, p3-7.

the seventeenth century and briefly a province under the Ch'ing Empire between 1885 and 1895, have witnessed the growth of a distinct Taiwanese nationalism of “Taiwan for Taiwanese” and “Taiwanese Uniqueness,” instead of a Chinese nationalism of “Taiwan for Chinese” and “Chinese Uniqueness” under the Japanese colonial rule? Why was there no strong Chinese irredentism among the Taiwanese anti-colonial activists? Why and how did this, so to speak, “Formosan Ideology”—if we follow Louis Dumont’s (1994) descriptive usage of modern ideology in its national variations as expressive of collective identities—come into being? How did it conceive ideas of Taiwanese-ness that were essentially Han but not Chinese?<sup>87</sup>

This is nailing one’s colors to the mast in fine style. For Wu intends to examine not whether a coherent Taiwanese national identity emerged during the Japanese years—that he takes as given—but how it emerged. It is of course question-begging, and the question that is begged is the one I am more interested in. Wu is certain, but should he be?

For the Taiwanese the trauma of the Japanese takeover was twofold. First, it cut them off from their cultural roots and turned them into second-class citizens on their own island. But the energy and efficiency of the Japanese colonial project was also a bitter lesson in how backward Taiwan was under the Qing. But if a Taiwanese ethno-nationalism was ready to hatch, the Japanese provided an excellent incubator.

### **6.2.1) A Choice of Systems**

Japan’s initial decisions on how Taiwan was to be run were to have a significant effect on Taiwanese identity formation.

The Japanese were, of course, aware of the two main schools of thought on colonial government and indeed consulted two advisors to the Ministry of Justice from the principle powers representing these contending approaches for advice about which system might best suit them.

French advisor Michel Lubon recommended that Japan follow the example of

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<sup>87</sup> Wu Rwei-ren (2003), *The Formosan Ideology: Oriental Colonialism and the Rise of Taiwanese Nationalism 1894-1945*. PhD Thesis, Department of Department of Political Science, University of Chicago, Chicago: p1-3

France in Algeria, that Taiwan should be incorporated as a prefecture of Japan and that those parts of the Meiji Constitution which applied to people's rights and liberties and the criminal law be applied in Taiwan immediately.

The British advisor, Montague Kirkwood, predictably spoke up for the British colonial system whereby the metropolitan Constitution would not be extended to the colony, leaving the colonial government free from constitutional limitations and able to make its own decisions and develop its own legal system in accordance with the special circumstances of the colony. Kirkwood stressed the importance of having a legislative council on which as many Taiwanese as possible should sit, and the usefulness, as the British had found, of maintaining local systems of law and government where practicable.

The advantage of the British system was its huge degree of flexibility and its ability to co-opt existing power structures more acceptable to local elites.

The disadvantage was that it was clearly incompatible with Japan's idea of itself as "one nation under one emperor;" it ran contrary to the spirit of the Confucian tradition that formed the ethical foundation of the Japanese political class, the idea of *isshi dojin* or "impartiality and equal favor," and last but not least the British system had an unpleasant odor of racial superiority — that of white men bossing about other colors but reluctant to grant them access to metropolitan culture and society.<sup>88</sup>

This ran contrary to the belief in "same script, same race," which molded Japanese ideas about Taiwan. Japan had only recently been on the other end of this kind of colonial experience, having been forced earlier in the century into concluding its own "unequal" treaties with colonial powers—indeed it did not recover legal sovereignty until 1899 when the British relinquished extraterritoriality and it didn't recover fiscal sovereignty, that is, control over its own tariffs, until 1909.

Hara Takashi, representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Taiwan Affairs Bureau, urged the government to follow the French pattern, and Premier Ito Hirobumi concurred.

This assimilationism, in various forms, over the next 50 years served not so much as a course to follow as a beacon to steer by, an end goal to which governments might aim, whilst actually sailing sometimes confusing, often meandering courses. The problem was

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<sup>88</sup> See Peattie, Mark R. "Japanese Attitudes Towards Colonialism" in Myers and Peattie *op. cit.*, p97-99.

that it was a goal rarely shared by the government-general in Taiwan.

The powerful members of the Taiwan Affairs Bureau might have had assimilationist goals but they also had to cope with an insurrection. This rather cut short debate about constitutional niceties. But it also led to the setting up of a structure that would lead to frequent tensions between Tokyo and Taipei, and the emergence of a Taiwanese national consciousness capable of making political demands.

The situation in Taiwan in late 1895 was so anarchic that it was felt that the governor-general had to have special powers to make law on the spot. The problem was that, under the constitution, the Diet was the only body allowed to legislate for Japanese subjects (technically “give its consent to the Emperor when he legislated”). So in theory only the Diet could make laws for the colony. Of course this would not matter if the colony did not fall under the Constitution. Some jurists of the colonial government argued exactly that, saying that the Constitution applied only to those areas deemed part of Japan when it was promulgated in 1889. But the Constitution also bound the emperor’s authority within the limits of its writ, so if the Constitution didn’t apply to Taiwan then the emperor was not the emperor of Taiwan. This was clearly unacceptable.

The result of this was the notorious Law 63 in which the Diet delegated legislative power to the government-general for a limited time under certain conditions. But the long-term result was that the colonial setup in Taiwan actually tended more toward the British model, only without the legislative council with which it might have won some legitimacy among the governed.

The Taiwanese, however, got the worst of both worlds. Despite, after May 1897, being Japanese subjects, they did not enjoy the rights that the Constitution should have allowed them. And yet finding themselves in what was a *de facto* British-style colony, nevertheless, since the legislative powers delegated in Law 63 were time-limited, it was not deemed worth establishing the colonial institutions of autonomy that were an essential part of the British system.

This is important in terms of national consciousness development. Had French-style integrationism really been adopted, it is possible that Taiwanese would, within a couple of generations, have forgotten their Chinese roots and genuinely assimilated. But the difference between the assimilationist French system and the separatist British one was that for France imperialism was a case of making France bigger, France itself being seen in a way almost similar to that of imperial China, as a culture, rather than just a

country.

The British system, on the other hand, was eminently adapted to the creation of national identities, where these had been lacking before. Central to the idea was that of an “empire of nations” under British tutelage, the members of which were given some rights of self government. Inhabitants of geographical areas, sometimes with little similarity other than proximity would be bundled into a state, with a quasi-dependent, quasi-autonomous relationship with the metropolis. Anthony D. Smith said that nations were a subset of ethnic communities which had the extra features of a defined territory, a common economy with territorial mobility, a common legal system, and a shared education. British colonialism aimed at establishing these elements, and then, through the manipulation of invented tradition, seeing the inhabitants of the state become an ethnic community, gel as a nation.<sup>89</sup>

Taiwan was to follow the second path, and it for this reason that Wu Rwei-ren says the “emergence of the political form of [the]Taiwanese nation preceded that of its cultural content.”<sup>90</sup>

But Taiwan’s its experience differed from that of British colonies in two main ways. First, it was never given the tools of self-government which ameliorated the sting of subservience in a colonial hierarchy. Secondly, the Japanese were considerably more ruthless than the British in dealing with dissent. The result is that while Japanese occupation certainly helped create a genuinely Taiwanese national consciousness, the ruthlessness of the Japanese administration meant that there were tight limits to the degree to which this might be expressed, while the obvious developmental superiority of the Japanese, which quickly showed itself, gave Taiwanese a weighty reason to want to integrate.

Basically Taiwanese lived under a despotism—the only limit on the governor-general’s actions being pressure that might be brought to bear on him through the Diet or the Cabinet back in Tokyo. As the colonial administration took root and as this despotism became more entrenched, tensions developed between the colonists who wanted to maintain their ascendancy and devolve as little power as possible to the Taiwanese, and

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<sup>89</sup> See Ranger, Terence, (1983), *The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa*, in Hobsbawm and Ranger, *op. cit.*, pp 211-262.

<sup>90</sup> Wu Rwei-ren, (2003), *op. cit.*, p267.

Tokyo, where in the relatively liberal atmosphere of the late Meiji and Taisho (1912-1926) eras the denial of constitutional rights to the Taiwanese was looked on with disfavor.<sup>91</sup>

Lin Xientang, who played a major role in the development of Taiwanese national consciousness, was born into the extremely powerful Lin family of Wufeng in central Taiwan. He had the customary education in the Chinese classics of a gentry scion, his father had played an important role in late-Qing Taiwan, raising a militia to fight the French in the invasion of 1884 which effectively kept them out of Taipei. Lin was asked by the Japanese to take on the position of regional chief (*qu jiang*) in 1902. Lin became an enthusiast of the nationalistic concepts of the Chinese revolutionary Liang Qiqiao.<sup>92</sup> But if Lin had ever thought that a reformed and revitalized China might come to the aid of the Taiwanese, he was quickly disabused of this when, in 1907, a year after the start of the extraordinarily rapacious governor-generalship of Sakuma Samata (1905-15) he met Liang himself in an inn in Nara, Japan.

Liang was one of the foremost Chinese Intellectuals of his age; he had been instrumental in the Hundred Days reform movement in China in 1898 and fled to exile in Japan when the Empress Dowager halted the reform movement. He remained in Japan until 1912 where he worked a journalist of great power and reputation, popularizing the corruption of the Qing court and the need for reform. Liang had immense stature and corresponding influence over Lin. Taiwan, he told Lin, could not look to China for help. China would have no such power for at least 30 years. Instead Liang advised Lin to ally himself with Japanese liberals in the hope that restraint could be put on the government-general from Tokyo.

Liang subsequently visited Lin in Taiwan in April 1911 at which time Lin told him he wanted to form a political movement. Liang told him that if he did so, his main priority should be to seek his aims through peaceful means. Lin became committed to non-violent political change.

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<sup>91</sup> Chen, Edward I-teh (1984) "The attempt to integrate the Empire: Legal Perspectives," in Myers Peattie, op. cit., p240-274.

<sup>92</sup> Tai Pao-tsun (2001, 10/22) "Lin Xientang and the Contemporary Taiwan Democracy Movement," *Taiwan News*.

In 1913 he went to Beijing to see Liang again. On the way back he visited Tokyo where he met Dai Jitao, an associate of Sun Yat-sen, who reinforced Liang's remarks about expecting no help from China, telling him that the Kuomintang (KMT)—the Chinese Nationalist Party—was fully occupied in China and would not be able to provide assistance. Dai's advice was similar to Liang's: find Japanese liberals who could bring power to bear on the government-general from home.

### 6.2.2) The Assimilation Society <sup>93</sup>

The particular Japanese liberal Lin found to help his cause was Itagaki Taisuke. Itagaki had been retired since 1900 but prior to this had played a major role in Japanese politics as a staunch advocate of, and campaigner for, parliamentary government and the founder of the Liberal Party. He had both impeccable credentials and contacts.

In February 1914 Itagaki visited Taipei where he, Lin and two Japanese resident in Taiwan, Nakanishi Ushiro, and Sato Gempei, agreed to organize a political organization. It was to be called the Assimilation Society, to be comprised of both Japanese and Taiwanese and its platform would be the advocacy of racial equality. An application to form the society was submitted under Itagaki's name and permission given. In December 1914 Itagaki traveled to Taiwan again for the inaugural meeting of the society at the Taipei Railway Hotel on the 20th which was attended by some 600 people. Two days later he spoke at the creation of a Taichung branch of the society and two days later again at the establishment of a Tainan branch after which he returned to Japan.

Exactly a month after Itagaki's Tainan speech Governor-General Sakuma had the movement suppressed on the flimsiest of pretexts.

The centerpiece of Itagaki's visit was the speech he gave in Taipei and its main interest, for a movement so short-lived, lies in the revelation that a man might be a liberal, but could also be to quote George Kerr "a fervent nationalist who believed that all Asians should unite under Japan's leadership to resist Western encroachment."<sup>94</sup>

In his speech Itagaki saw Taiwan as important in what he saw as a white racial

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<sup>93</sup> Much of what follows is derived from Chen, Edward I-teh (1972) "Formosan Political Movements Under Japanese Colonial Rule: 1914-1937," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 31, (3): pp 477-497, hereafter referred to as FPM.

<sup>94</sup> Kerr, George H. (1974) *Formosa: Licensed revolution and the Home Rule Movement, 1895-1945*, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press: p109

conspiracy to dominate Asia. Taiwanese could be a vital link between Japan and China, but to carry out this role the Japanese had to assimilate the Taiwanese as equals, which would be impossible without granting racial equality. And as a basis of this he proposed a platform of:

- Equal economic opportunity;
- The legalization of mixed marriage;
- The propagation of the Japanese language;
- Emigration from Japan;
- The publication of a newspaper by the society.

In talking about national consciousness development the Assimilation Society might seem to represent a nadir. How could there be a sense of being “Taiwanese” among those who wanted to be accepted as fully Japanese?

But the reality is by no means so certain. It might be that Taiwanese were simply trying to remove the burden of their second class status and, given the hopelessness of armed revolt and the inadequacy of China, they were taking the advice of Liang Qiqiao and Dai Jitao, looking to Japanese liberals to help better their status. For example, while it seems basic to the aims of the Assimilation Society that a Chinese cultural heritage had to be replaced by Japanese cultural education, there is no evidence that Lin Xientang privately embraced such a goal. In fact, quite the reverse. For example Lin refused to speak Japanese to Japanese officials, despite serving as a district chief from the age of 20 and having regular contacts with Japanese officials. He refused to wear Japanese clothes, his lifestyle was kept free of Japanese cultural influences and when public schools were ordered by the government-general to stop teaching Chinese language, history and culture, he petitioned the government to have such courses restored.<sup>95</sup>

Lin’s interest in Itagaki’s program would therefore seem to be pragmatic, an opportunistic use of liberal metropolitan sentiments to gain immediate relief from some of the more onerous impositions resulting from colonial status. Lin protégé Cai Peihuo, for example, who acted as Itagaki’s translator while he was in Taiwan, confirms that Lin really was against assimilation, and cited his lifestyle as an example. In fact, says Cai, Lin

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<sup>95</sup> Tai Pao-tsun, *op. cit.*

tried his utmost to preserve traditional Chinese culture.

Lin was, in fact, criticized by some Taiwanese medical students for supporting assimilation, to whom he explained that if supporting this kind of movement could ease the burdens on the Taiwanese then why not? Nobody really liked the word “assimilation” but, says Tsai, it was the only name that was practicable.<sup>96</sup>

Such an interpretation of the aims of the “assimilationists” would suggest that Taiwan were sure of their identity, at least culturally, but were prepared to make pragmatic political compromise to improve their lot. But this is open to question. Chang Mau-kuei notes that “contemporaries tended to interpret the Taiwanese élites’ short-lived fantasy for assimilation into Japan and the desire to become equal citizens of the Japanese empire as these élites’ first strategy of resistance.” But, he says: “It could better be understood as a sign of a collective identity crisis.”<sup>97</sup> He explains:

Of course the assimilation argument the Japanese presented could not offer the Taiwanese real respect. It was rather the equivalent of asking the Taiwanese to admit their deficiencies and accept their backward status ... it presupposed a long-term hierarchical relationship under the pretense of achieving equality. The desire for assimilation actually reflected the humiliation of the first generation Taiwanese élites under the japons. It was the consequence of their self denial and fear of condemnation from their conqueror. Segregated from their cultural and political roots—China, their traditional Han civilization as it existed n Taiwan and their larger worldview—their sense of being Chinese—were smashed and could not be rejuvenated in the face of such a total defeat.

The Assimilation Society was short-lived, being closed down in January 1915 on a trumped up charge of “fraudulent solicitation of funds” against its backers. The speed with which this happened is a testament to the govern-generals opposition to even the limited reforms championed by the society.

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<sup>96</sup> Cai Peihuo et al. (1987) *Taiwan Minzu Yundong Shi* (5th ed.), Taipei: United Evening News Publishing: p21-22

<sup>97</sup> Chang Mau-Kuei *op. cit.* p30

### 6.2.3) Taiwanese Consciousness in the Early Years of Japanese Occupation

Our interpretation of how developed this was depends on which view of the Assimilation Society sounds more plausible, Cai's or Chang's. Chang paints a picture of an elite that were traumatized by their loss of status and looked to rebuild it inside the Japanese system—hardly expressive of a developed national consciousness. Cai, on the other hand, suggests a national consciousness capable of creating both a subtle political strategy and modern political organization. The problem is one familiar to literature scholars of the reliability of the narrator. Should we take Cai's analysis at face value? Only more research among the diaries and letters of the assimilationists is likely to throw light on this. Wu Rwei-ren sees it as ironic that the "Taiwanese attempt at decolonizing themselves should have aimed at assimilation into rather than differentiation."<sup>98</sup> He points out that, at this juncture, Taiwanese simply were not sure what they were.

Twenty years of assimilation without integration under the Law No.63 did produce an ambiguous effect upon the identity of many Taiwanese. On the one hand, they were excluded politically and thus experienced a typical colonial cramped pilgrimage in administrative mobility described by Anderson in chapter 7 of *Imagined Communities*. On the other hand, they were slowly but steadily and systematically included into the metropolitan Japanese culture through the assimilation education in Taiwan and higher education in the metropole that was largely open to them. As a result of this confusing political exclusion and cultural inclusion at the same time, Taiwanese were put in an ambiguous state of liminality: they were no longer Chinese politically and probably would be less and less so culturally, but they were not yet authentic Japanese either, politically or culturally. In other words, they were neither Chinese nor Japanese and yet they were both. This was a state in which the Taiwanese identity was fluid and thus could move toward many possible directions—Japanese, Chinese, Taiwanese, or even something else.

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<sup>98</sup> Wu Rwei-ren, (2003), *op. cit.*, p174.

thinks the real significance of the assimilation movement for Taiwanese identity is the ironic fact that

What is worthy of note the degree to which the Japanese brought about the circumstances in which a national consciousness could develop. In particular, their development of a north south railway system, completed in 1907, unified the island both economically and politically in a way that had never been done before. Given that previously transportation from one part of Taiwan to another usually involved a sea journey, it is quite reasonable to argue that there was no single “Taiwanese” political entity—the island was a not a cohesive single political unit. And we have already seen that it was far from being a single economic unit. Both of these are elements that theorists such as Anthony D. Smith posit as being essential for the definition of a nation<sup>99</sup>.

Chang contends that “Without any doubt the Taiwanese still considered themselves as basically *Hanren*, but the Han Chinese tradition they used to cherish was no longer useful to them in the new colonial context they found themselves in.

#### **6.2.4) New Impetus**

There were two catalysts to the revival of a campaign for Taiwanese political rights. The first was US President Woodrow Wilson’s doctrine of self-determination most notably expressed as Point Five of the Fourteen Points:

A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.<sup>100</sup>

The tremendous effect this had on students in China (the May 4<sup>th</sup> movement) and Korea (the March 1<sup>st</sup> Movement where 2 million people took to the streets demanding independence) was not lost on Taiwanese then studying in Japan.

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<sup>99</sup> See above, p 22

<sup>100</sup> “Fourteen Points” Encyclopædia Britannica <<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?tocId=9035049>>

At this time, says Edward Chen, “the notion of ‘Formosa for Formosans,’ which had never previously entered their minds, was an attractive solution for the future of their homeland.”<sup>101</sup>

Coinciding with this was a new liberalism emanating from Japan. Hara Takashi became premier in Tokyo. Hara established the first political-party based Cabinet and was responsible for the evolution of political party-based government depending on competitive elections. His premiership was cut short in November 1921 when he was assassinated, but the beginning of his premiership ushered in a decade of relative liberalism in Japanese politics.<sup>102</sup> As part of Hara’s reforms he introduced civilian rule to Taiwan and Korea, all previous seven governors-general being military men. The first civilian governor general was Den Kenjiro (1919-23). Den, in his inaugural speech said he intended to run a conciliatory policy and hoped to introduce a measure of local autonomy.

The new direction both in Tokyo and Taiwan started a new bout of political activism among the Taiwanese. The old goal of equality seemed perhaps within their reach once again if only because of Japan’s attitude toward racial equality, Tokyo, having demanded a declaration of racial equality as part of the Treaty of Versailles. The fact that it failed to get it was a sore point in Tokyo. The Taiwanese reasoned that, since the Japanese cared so deeply on the racial equality issue, they might be gently called on to practice what they preached.

Indeed the Japanese were beginning to take assimilation seriously. But there was still a vagueness about their aims. Both Den and his predecessor as governor-general, Akashi Motojiro, (June 1918-October 1919) were fervent believers in assimilation but their interpretation of what that mean was very different. Akashi wanted a limited form of assimilation, which would not challenge the colonial ascendancy and would retain the dominant/subordinate relationship between Japanese and Taiwanese, but, nevertheless, by impressing on Taiwanese a sense of Japan’s superiority and allowing them to improve their position in the colonial system, would encourage them to identify with Japanese national interests. Akashi’s education reform in 1919 is typical of this approach in that he

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<sup>101</sup> Chen, FPM p481.

<sup>102</sup> “Hara Takashi.” Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service  
<<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?tocId=9039197>>

maintained the segregation between Japanese and Taiwanese students, while making sincere efforts to improve the quality of Taiwanese education especially in providing vocational training.

Den however was far more of a real integrationist, in the sense of accomplishing the Japanization of the Taiwanese. As a result he tried to get rid of certain discriminatory practices against the Taiwanese which, he felt, eroded sympathy for assimilation as a goal. Believing that education was the key to assimilation, he integrated the school system, in that he made access to all government schools dependent on students' ability in spoken Japanese, not their racial or ethnic background. But he wanted the assimilation process to go beyond Taiwanese who were being educated in government schools to embrace the society as a whole and believed that the colonial government should pursue political and cultural indoctrination aimed at remolding Taiwanese cultural and lifestyle patterns and behavior along Japanese lines.<sup>103</sup>

### **6.2.5) The New People's Society**

March 1920 saw the formation in Tokyo of the New People's Society, organized by Taiwanese students in Japan and backed by Taiwanese gentry including Lin Xientang. The society had three goals:

1. A political movement aimed at reforming the government-general;
2. To publish a magazine for the purpose of enlightening Taiwanese and informing Japanese about the true conditions prevailing on Taiwan;
3. To solicit the support of the Chinese people.<sup>104</sup>

Most historians I have consulted deem the society's having significant aid from China unlikely since the KMT was barely hanging on to its Guangzhou enclave at the time.

The goal of launching a newspaper was more successful. In July 1920 was published the first copy of *Taiwan Youth*, the purpose of which was to urge the Japanese government to give Taiwanese greater democratic representation. The magazine

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<sup>103</sup> Lamley, Harry J. (1999) "Taiwan Under Japanese Rule 1895-1945: The Vicissitudes of Colonialism," in Murray A. Rubinstein (Ed.), *Taiwan: A New History*, (pp. 201-260). New York: M.E. Sharpe: p220-221.

<sup>104</sup> Chen (1972), FPM, p481.

eventually became a weekly named the *Taiwan People's Journal* (*Taiwan Minpao*), then a daily newspaper and its publication was transferred to Taiwan. It was eventually suppressed in 1937.

But the major task of the New People's Society was to campaign for reform of Law 63.

The New People's Society believed that repeal of Law 63 would bring about the full extension of the Japanese Constitution and Japanese law to Taiwan. This would result in the abolition of a number of discriminatory measures that applied only to Taiwanese in Taiwan such as the tyrannical Bandit Law and the *hoko* system of house registration and collective responsibility. It would also mean that the Diet would become the legislative body for Taiwan, which, rooted in party politics as it was, would mean the government-general would have to justify its wishes to the Diet and could be held more accountable through the Japanese democratic process. Some members of the society even thought that the abolition of Law 63 would lead to the election of Taiwanese members to the diet.

While the foundation of the New People's Society is regarded among Taiwan nationalists as a landmark of national self-consciousness it is perhaps important to note, that, whatever the subsequent aims of the society, at its founding it was essentially integrationist. Once again we are met with the question to what extent integrationism was a ploy and to what extent it was truly sought. More perhaps, than nationalists are prepared to admit. After all, there was nothing to suggest that Japanese rule was not "in perpetuity" as granted by the Shimonoseki treaty—Wilsonian self-determination might be applied to collapsed empires defeated in war, but Japan was not defeated nor did that seem even a remote possibility.

Indeed the integrationist approach of the New People's Society is apparent, from the criticism of its more radical members. Lin Cheng-lu was critical of the society's failure to take note of the difference between Taiwanese and Japanese. Taiwanese were a different people and should, he believed, have their own laws made by their own regional assembly which could act as a check on the powers of the Japanese executive—the government-general.<sup>105</sup>

Edward Chen points out two points of significance about Lin Cheng-lu's position.

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<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.* p483, also see Kerr (1974) *op. cit.*, p123.

First his position was not based on the simple xenophobia that had been a characteristic of many of the early anti-Japanese uprisings. Rather it was based on an idea of cultural distinction. This was the first notable expression of a Taiwanese national consciousness.

Secondly, while Lin agreed that what made the Taiwanese different was their Chinese heritage, he did not advocate restoration of the island to China just as he did not want integration with Japan. What he wanted was home rule.

Lin's position was, however, a minority one in the society until November 1920 when the Diet opted to retain Law 63 albeit with two important revisions

The first was that, in principle, Japanese law was to apply in Taiwan as widely as possible but the governor-general still had discretion to make law for the special circumstances of Taiwan and to suspend the application of a law where its enforcement was too difficult. While this brought Taiwan's legal system more into line with Japan's, it obviously left the government-general a lot of discretion.

The second notable revision, hugely significant for the Taiwanese themselves, was that the law was made permanent, rather than being subject to periodic renewal. For the Taiwanese political activists, assimilationism had been based on the idea that the full extension of the Constitution to Taiwan would remove the Taiwanese' inferior status. The temporary nature of Laws 63 and 31, and the periodic need for their renewal, gave hope that that removal of inferior status might not be too long delayed. But the lifting of the time limit on Law 3 dashed such hopes. The Taiwanese felt they would never be given their constitutional rights as Japanese in a greater Japan. As a result they had to seek civil and political rights as Taiwanese in Taiwan. Japan had closed the legal door on the possibility of assimilation. The result, therefore, of Law 3 was for the native Taiwanese political movement to pivot on its axis, going within a matter of weeks from advocacy of equality with Japanese in an assimilationist or integrationist approach to following the Lin Cheng-lu line of seeking Taiwanese self-determination. As Wu Rwei-ren says: "As a result, they came to realize that the feasible set of identity choice left for them that was non-submissive was now drastically narrowed: if we can become neither Chinese nor Japanese, let us then become Taiwanese. ... With all other paths toward liberation closed to them, Taiwanese who rejected submission had no choice but to go national."<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Wu Rwei-ren, (2003), *op. cit.*, p181.

The government-general, to head off discontent, and to fulfill Den's pledge of introducing a measure of local autonomy, in June 1921 set up an advisory council to the government-general consisting of 25 people appointed for a two-year term. The governor general made the appointments and could dismiss any or all the appointees any time he wished. Only nine Taiwanese sat on the council, which in any case had no power to enforce its decisions. It was not in any way what the Taiwanese wanted.

### **6.2.6) The League for the Establishment of a Formosan Parliament**

Between 1921 and 1934 Taiwanese submitted to the Imperial Diet 15 petitions asking for the creation of a parliament in Taiwan. Some members of the New People's Society were reluctant to let the society be implicated in overt political activity so for the first three petitions, use of the organizations' name was avoided. In 1923 some more activist society members established the League for the Establishment of a Formosan Parliament.

While the New People's Society was not dissolved, it was pretty much replaced by the League.

Basically, the Leaguers sought a parliament in Taiwan elected by all residents functioning as a mini-Diet with the power to make laws and approve the budget of the government-general. As might be expected it was virulently opposed by the Japanese on Taiwan, who saw majority representation as disastrous to their privileged status.

Each petition revolved around three basic concepts:

1. The Japanese government recognized separation of power between the executive and the legislature, but in Taiwan the government-general exercised both powers contrary to basic principles of government;
2. Many laws enacted in the Diet were not adequate to deal with the conditions in Taiwan, therefore a special legislature was needed to enact laws tailored to Taiwan's conditions;
3. Taiwan was a net contributor to the Japanese exchequer; Taiwanese were being taxed without having any representation.

The Leaguers were careful to point out that the Taiwan would remain under the authority of the Diet in matters of common concern and were scrupulous about adding an oath of loyalty to Japan.

The League had to convince the Diet that it had support from Taiwanese and this it did by organizing a petition drive. Numbers who signed appear small—in six of the years they failed to muster 1,000 signatures, in another six the number never topped 2,000. All in all, according to Edward Chen, they collected some 18,912 signatures over the 15 years the petitions were presented.

Chen points out however that the vast majority of those who signed were intellectuals, bourgeoisie or community leaders of some sort. The League had, he claims, a much larger support base than the numbers alone suggest. Signing the petition could mean instant dismissal for government employees, the cutting off of credit for merchants and gentry, and general harassment under the *hoko* system. It took courage to sign.

The League also needed the support of Japanese, at least in Japan, since all petitions to the Diet had to be introduced by Diet members. A number of members of both houses were supporters as well as a number of distinguished Japanese jurists.

Lin Cheng-lu was the most active ideologist/propagandist for the movement at the time of its formation and in the period 1920-22 wrote a number of important documents laying down the reason for the league's existence.

Wu Rwei-ren summarizes these documents thus:

We are already able to see the general outline of the METP's autonomism: based on the need to preserve Taiwan's particularity—that is, the undesirability to assimilate Taiwanese into Japanese—which accorded well with the post- WWI liberal spirit of respecting the will of colonial peoples of the League of Nations, and the objective fact that it was impossible to assimilate a “people with history” such as Taiwanese, the Taiwanese autonomists demanded to be granted at least the legislative part of colonial self-government. In other words, the form of the Taiwanese demand for their right to political participation was a moderate national autonomy. It should be noted that the aboriginal people of Taiwan were not included in the category of Taiwanese here by the [League] activists.<sup>107</sup>

The documents provide the first clearly articulation of a Taiwanese national consciousness, at it clearly emerges as a result of three constituents:

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<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p189

1. Frustration and humiliation at the second-rate status of Taiwanese;
2. Frustration with the idea of assimilation and a loss of faith in Japanese intentions;
3. An awareness of the Chinese, or Han roots of the Taiwanese, “Han Taiwanese people who have an ancient history, particular social conditions, manners and customs, and their own thoughts and culture” as Lin put it.<sup>108</sup>

This third element could be understood as a rejection of the idea of assimilation. It suggests that Taiwanese are different and therefore need their own space. But at the same time, it does not noticeably distance Taiwanese from Chinese.

The government-general was confronted with a dilemma: Taiwanese demands had a legitimate goal and used lawful tactics and as a civilian supposed to uphold the rule of law the governor-general could hardly suppress the movement. But, as the protector of the Japanese ascendancy, he could hardly encourage it either.

The strategy adopted was therefore simply to make sure the Diet did not approve the petition. Den Kenjiro, for example, said in 1921, that the petition was a way to gain independence or British-style dominion status by the back door, which was the opposite of the integrationist idea that still governed Japanese thinking. All 15 petitions died in the petition committees of the Diet, never getting a chance of being debated on the floor of either the upper or lower house.

### **6.2.7) Japanese Tactics**

Japanese countermeasures to the movement were of three kinds. The first was simply to lure away movement leaders with promises of advancement. The governor-general's advisory council was an example of this as were the local councils set up as part of a new autonomy system in October 1920 in which all members were appointed by the Japanese authorities and the councils had advisory functions only. Such measures managed to persuade many Taiwanese that the Japanese were incapable of making good on their promises.

The government-general also tried to use its influence to coerce Taiwanese into abandoning the movement, in the ways described above, sackings, credit squeeze, etc. Lin Xientang himself was so intimidated by such tactics he had to temporarily withdraw from

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p188

politics.

And finally, it used the police to harass and break up public meetings and arrested petition movement advocates in Taiwan. Interestingly this was instrumental in actually creating the League. Until 1923, New People's Society members participating in the petition movement did so as individuals. It was felt however that an organization for the purpose should be established in Taiwan.

Refused a police permit in Taipei, the New People's Society members got a permit to found the League in Tokyo. When they returned to Taiwan they were arrested in December 1923. They were tried in the summer of 1924 and defended by some of the most prominent liberal legal talent in Japan. Their acquittal was hugely embarrassing to the government-general which appealed the case to the High Court.

The High Court overturned the innocent verdicts and sentenced the Leaguers to between three and five months in prison. The lightness of the sentences suggests that the High Court knew the sentences would not be upheld in an appeal to the Supreme Court, and awarded short sentences in the knowledge that the sentences would have been served before another appeal could get under way. It was a way of bringing the Leaguers into disrepute.

The result of the Japanese actions was that Taiwanese just increased their efforts in the petition drives. It is no accident that the number of signatures in 1925 at 1,990 is an increase of 150 percent over the 782 signatures of the year before.

### **6.2.8) The Cultural Association**

The League was never able to establish itself in Taiwan. To a large degree it had to depend on another organization, the Taiwan Cultural Association, for circulating the petitions and collecting signatures. The Cultural Association was founded by the physician Jiang Weishui in 1921. It has been called the single most important organization responsible for the development of Taiwanese nationalism, yet Jiang, of all the home-ruler leaders was the most Sinophile and the most influenced both by the KMT and by some vague hope of eventual reunification with China.

To operate in Taiwan at all the Cultural Association had to disavow a political role and ostensibly preach an Itagaki-style ideology about being a bridge between China and Japan. Actually the Association did not embrace integrationism, but that was the only pretext under which it could work on consciousness-raising among Taiwanese.

Edward Chen describes its goals as: “The awakening of Formosan national consciousness and the development of a political atmosphere favorable to the principle of self-determination.”

The Association sponsored summer schools and evening lectures on a vast number of topics, including Chinese history and culture, Taiwanese history, law, sanitation, hygiene, public health, journalism, sociology, marriage problems and much else. The lecture format was deemed essential to overcome both widespread illiteracy and Japanese restriction on publishing. The Association also sponsored Taiwanese opera performances.

Behind all this cultural activity, however, was a political goal, namely to establish a broadly based movement based on awareness of Taiwan’s separate culture and the discriminatory and unjust nature of Japanese rule to back demands for some form of self-government. Perhaps not surprisingly, there was a great crossover between leaders of the Association and the League, people like Lin Xientang, Chiang Wei-shui and Cai Peihuo taking important positions in both organizations.

The Tamsui-based British consul in his Consular Report for 1925 describes Cultural Association meetings thus:

The educated classes in Taiwan are permeated with a sense of grievance and it is through the Bunka Kyokai [Cultural Association] that it is manifested. It would seem that the rigorous repression of the public utterances of its leaders has been relaxed. This may be due to the singularly astute, not to say typically oriental methods adopted by its leaders. Their plan is to hold widely advertised and widely attended lecture meetings at which addresses are delivered on subjects which, while their outward treatment is doctrinaire, are easily translated into terms of Formosan domestic politics. Such a theme as “The Organization of Modern Society” is extended so as to include such topics as “The perfect Government Official and the Ideal Public Attitude Towards Him,” in the course of his remarks on which, the lecturer can make many pointed if indirect references to things as they might be without alluding too openly to things as they are. A lecture on “Conditions in India” gives the lecturer scope for dwelling on the political wrongs of Formosa, the translation of

“India” to “Formosa” being left to the minds of the audience.<sup>109</sup>

To the Japanese colonial authorities the Association was simply a local front organization for the Japan-bound League. Japanese efforts to counter the League included the creation of a pro-Japan organization led by the historically controversial collaborationist figure of Ku Hsien-yung.<sup>110</sup> Ku was ostensibly an advocate of assimilation; in reality he was an opportunist more interested in exploiting his close connections with the government-general to his own advantage. In November 1923 Ku formed the Public Interest Society through which he criticized the Cultural Association saying that in an attempt to preserve Taiwanese values it retarded Japanization and prolonged the evils of colonial administration. China had turned its back on Taiwan in 1895, Ku argued, Taiwanese owed allegiance to Japan which had actually significantly improved their material conditions.

But it was internal dissent, rather than outside pressure, which was to be the Cultural Association’s downfall. This was partly due to Japanese action and partly due to the necessity for a grassroots movement to pay attention to grassroots concerns. But the split that was to develop was also about Taiwanese national consciousness, and brought China back into the identity equation. .

Taiwan’s home rule movement quickly became a pawn in Japanese political games and a huge increase in Japanese political repression in Taiwan.<sup>111</sup> This was mainly for reasons to do with Japanese domestic politics and rivalry between the two main parties of the day, the Kensei-kai which held power and the Seiyu-kai, in opposition. The Seiyu-kai had championed Taiwanese home rule not because it cared but more to embarrass the party in office. In mid-1924 it aimed to use a scandal over the Taiwan Monopoly Bureau to discredit the ruling party. The ruling party in its turn responded by trying to prove the League was subversive, so that the Seiyu-kai would be tainted by association. To this end it sent a new governor-general, Izawa Takio, to Taipei to prove the seditiousness of the League. When Izawa got to Taipei he reshuffled the police and the

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<sup>109</sup> Tamsui, British Consulate at, (1925), Annual Report for Formosa, in Jarman, Robert L. (Ed.). (1997). *Taiwan: Political and Economic Reports 1861-1960* (Vol. 7). Slough, UK: Archive Editions (hereafter referred to as TPER): p55.

<sup>110</sup> For details on Ku see Gold, Thomas B. (1988) “Colonial Origins of Taiwanese Capitalism,” in Edwin A. Winkler & Susan Greenhough (Eds.) *Contending Approaches to the Political Economy of Taiwan*, (pp. 101-120). New York: M.E. Sharpe: p109.

<sup>111</sup> Most of the detail in this section is from Kerr (1974), *op. cit.*, p133-8

judiciary putting in place a selected hit squad to get the results he sought.

First he directed the public prosecutor to open old cases on the basis of trumped up “new evidence.” On this basis 10 student Leaguers were tried in October 1924 and five of them jailed. This caused a scandal in Japan as liberal constitutionalists and lawyers said that Izawa, by suborning the courts, had violated basic constitutional principles.

Given the effort to make the League look subversive, Lin Xientang, in November 1924, responded by submitting a 12-point memorandum to Izawa, which he simultaneously had published in Tokyo, spelling out just what the Leaguers wanted. The points were:

- Greater participation by Taiwanese in local administration;
- Less discrimination in schools and more primary education;
- Reform of the police system;
- Economic and social discrimination should end;
- Use of opium should be forbidden, illegal smoking suppressed, and the licensing system ended;
- A guarantee of freedom of speech for people and the press;
- Abolition of the Hoko system
- Industrial development policies should be revised to admit a greater degree of Taiwanese participation
- Passports no longer required for travel to Japan;
- The formation of irrigation improvement associations;
- Agricultural association regulations must be changed to allow greater consideration of Taiwanese interests;
- The modification of the Bandit Law to prevent its use to restrain criticism of the administration.<sup>112</sup>

The demands show a greater concern with ameliorating local injustices than assertions of Taiwanese identity.

Meanwhile in Tokyo a group of jurists appealed to the Supreme Court on behalf of

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.* p136

those sentenced in Izawa's kangaroo courts. The Supreme Court however decided in January 1925 that it had no authority to review the judicial actions of the government-general.

The result of Izawa's action was that the government-general had even more of a free hand. And many supporters of the League concluded that the Japanese could not be persuaded to give way without massive pressure from a political movement that brought the working class into the arena.

This kind of thinking drove the Cultural Association toward involvement in labor union issues and farmers' politics. In particular, sugar cane growers suffered from a particularly unfair system where they were compelled to sell their crop to a particular mill at a price fixed by the mill. The Cultural Association in June 1925 was instrumental in getting growers in Er-lin to form a union. In October the growers refused to harvest and supply cane at the mill's price; the mill sent in blackleg labor to harvest the cane itself. Violence erupted followed by mass arrests. The Association subsequently became very active in the formation of farmers' unions.<sup>113</sup>

In early 1926 Izawa reacted with extraordinary brutality to the petition movement that year. On February 5th a meeting to send off the petition was broken up violently. Later in the month homes were raided and scores of people arrested. The arrests went on for weeks and it appeared as if it was Izawa's aim to drive Taiwan into open rebellion. Eventually a concerned Tokyo recalled Izawa in July replacing him with Kamiyama Mannoshin, a jurist and an expert on the Courts of Administrative Litigation—which heard complaints from people against government offices. He was supposed to be a conciliator but huge damage had been done both to the reputation of the government-general. But a catastrophe was about happen to the Cultural Association itself.

The young students and activists who had been working in the organization of farmers' unions and a national farmers' union set up in 1926, many of whom were influenced by Marxist ideas, criticized the leadership of the Cultural Association for being ineffectual. The leadership was accused of simply wanting a share of political power for

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<sup>113</sup> A lengthy treatment of rural discontent, farmers' unions and the role of the Cultural Association can be found in Wickberg, Edgar (1975) "The Taiwan Peasant movement, 1923-1932: Chinese Rural Radicalism Under Japanese Development Programs," *Pacific Affairs*, 48, (4): pp 558-552.

the gentry while ignoring the difficult economic plight of the majority of the people of Taiwan. Lin Xientang and the leadership wanted to achieve modest political goals through tame constitutional means which the Japanese had shown they would simply ignore or crush as they felt. The radicals wanted organization of a mass workers' and peasants' movement. Eventually in early 1927 the radicals seized control of the Cultural Association and the old guard immediately decamped to form the Popular Party.

The Cultural Association was almost immediately afterwards riven with dispute over which faction of a split in the Japanese Communist Party it should support<sup>114</sup> and eventually was smothered by means of the sweeping arrests of suspected communists carried out in April 1929 and February 1930.

### **6.2.9) The Evolving Identity Debate**

There are two possible interpretations of the split in the Cultural Association. One is to see the difference in the factions as class-based. This is E. Patricia Tsurumi's interpretation. The leaders of the home-rule movement, of which the Cultural Association was the Taiwan based-arm, wanted Taiwan to remain in the Japanese Empire and sought full acceptance as Japanese. Their embrace of Japanese education and business interests with the Japanese, tied them into the status quo, and the reforms they asked for were limited. Eventually, the complacency of the intelligentsia that dominated the Association was challenged by more radical, Marxist-influenced activists, and the defense of class interest led to the leadership's abandoning the idea of broad-based Taiwanese movement.

It is hard to measure the truth of this. Wu Rwei-ren sees the Cultural Association as a proselytizer for Taiwanese national consciousness. Cai Peihuo, on the other hand, himself a major player in the organization, claims that the Cultural Association was not Taiwanese Nationalist in outlook at all. "To escape the yoke of the Japanese and return to the embrace of the motherland [China] had remained the consistent aim of the movement."<sup>115</sup> At the time, 1971, and the place Taiwan that Cai's work was published it might well be that this remark is a sop to the repressive political climate of the time.

A-chin Hsiau has a more interesting and nuanced view of the anti-colonial

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<sup>114</sup> Tsurumi, E. Patricia (1980) "Mental Captivity and Resistance Lessons from Taiwanese Anti-Colonialism," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 12: p4

<sup>115</sup> Cai, *op. cit.*, p1

movement of the 1920s. He defines two strands of thinking, what he calls “reformist” and “radical” anti-colonialism.<sup>116</sup>

Hsiao thinks the reformists were influenced by contemporary political ideas such as Wilsonian self determination and also scientific ideas such as eugenics and social Darwinism. Holding such ideas they believed that Taiwanese were easily conquered because they were simply “unfit” in a Darwinian sense. Taiwanese were, in fact, “backward.” While we in retrospect compare colonial Taiwan’s growing prosperity with the anarchy that was China quite favorably, that was not the comparison the reformists made. China had been able to confront its backwardness in the revolution of 1912 and its aftermath, and the May Fourth Movement in 1919. China, the Han homeland was a place of remarkable cultural development with which Taiwan compared unfavorably. “From the viewpoint of the reformists, the particularity of Taiwanese culture consisted of its backwardness especially when compared with cultural development in China.”<sup>117</sup> Hsiao sees the reformists as being concerned with home rule because they did not in fact think Taiwanese were advanced enough for independent government.

The radicals on the other had were influenced by Lenin’s concept of imperialism and anti-imperialist struggles around the world. They were also far more aware of the radical politics in China, and Leninist ideas about the nature of imperialism and the way to fight it were powerful even for non-communists. From 1922 on, Anti-Japanese Taiwanese student organizations were formed in Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai, Xiamen, and Guangzhou. Their aim was to enlist the support of the KMT government in Gaungzhou. They opposed the home-rule movement, maintaining that Taiwanese self government might mitigate the harshness of colonial rule temporarily, but would not end it and may only entrench it. Their appeal to the KMT was based on Han ethno-nationalism and “traditional” hostility to the Japanese. Yet at the same time they made a distinction between the “Chinese nation” and the “Taiwanese nation.” Hsiao ascribes this distinction to the need to fit Taiwan’s situation into a Leninist morphology of national liberation struggles. At the time this was congruent with both KMT and Chinese Communist Party ideas. Not until the 1940s did either make a serious claim to Taiwan. The most vigorous

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<sup>116</sup> Hsiao, A-Chin (2000) *Contemporary Taiwanese Cultural Nationalism*, London: Routledge.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.* p32

advocate of Taiwan's political autonomy was the Taiwanese Communist Party, founded in Shanghai in 1928. The party's 1928 "political thesis" gives a view of Taiwan's development, historically inaccurate but interesting for the insight it gives into the thinking of the time.

The thesis starts right off with a statement on the "development of the Taiwanese nationality" (Taiwan minzu): "During the 1660s, Koxinga ... came to Taiwan with his army ... and what we call the Taiwanese nationality consists of those Han people who came to Taiwan from the Southern part [of China]." This Taiwanese nationality was then "nourished in a special process of economic development" that occurred as the "feudal system established by the Zheng family" and reinforced "by the feudal lords sent by the Qing dynasty" started to collapse "from the mid-nineteenth century when the commercial relations of Taiwan with China, England, and Holland prospered." As the forces of capitalism penetrated Taiwan society, in other words, a distinct national identity emerged, so that when the "Qing (in 1895) ceded Taiwan to Japan as part of the reparations following the Sino- Japanese War," the response on the island was the establishment of the Republic of Taiwan, characterized by the TCP as a part of Taiwan's "national revolution."<sup>118</sup>

Hsiao concludes:

As far as national identity is concerned, the reformists viewed the taiwanese as part of the Han nation. For them Taiwanese culture differed from Han/Chinese culture mainly in its "backwardness" ... Most radical activists saw the Taiwanese as a weak and small nation separate from the Chinese nation. Despite the differences neither the reformists nor the radical activists addressed the issue of the uniqueness of Taiwanese culture nor did they use cultural particularity as a justification for political action.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Hsiao, Frank S. T., & Sullivan, Lawrence R. (1983) "A Political History of the Taiwanese Communist Party, 1928-1931," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 42, (2): p277

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p34

If Hsiau's interpretation is correct then the question of identity formation becomes far more complex than linear narratives make it appear. Such narratives take the form Japanese colonialism knits Taiwan physically as a proto-state, allowing the Taiwanese to see themselves a single community for the first time, and this consciousness grows steadily as their second-class status becomes increasingly onerous.

But Hsiau presents a far more complicated picture. For reformers, Taiwanese were second-class because they were backward. But schooled in Wilsonian theories as they were, they could not but help be aware that self-determination was something to which culturally mature nations were entitled. Much of what the reformers knew of Woodrow-Wilson's theories had come to them from Japanese liberals. Yet one such, Kagawa Toyohiko, a famous Christian social activist of the Taisho Democracy period, told Taiwanese students of the Taihoku [Taipei] Medical College during a visit 1921:

You are not qualified to talk about independence now, for an independent country must have its own independent culture such as literature, fine art, music, drama, popular songs, and so on. If you cannot develop your own culture, you will still be colonized culturally even if one day you should attain the form of independence. ... The problem of independence [will] be solved naturally once you have your own culture. Prattling about independence at this moment will only hurt you in every possible way without bringing you a single benefit.<sup>120</sup>

It would have been hard, in the face of such talk from a mentor to have adopted a vigorous nationalism.

The home-rule movement was an attempt to curb the arbitrariness of the government-general, and give Taiwanese some measure of control and redress over their own affairs. But its nationalism was compromised by a sense of inferiority, a sense of cultural and technical backwardness—not for nothing were the home rulers once assimilations. Meanwhile the radicals had a stronger idea of national consciousness, but it was primarily a political idea, not, like most national consciousness, rooted in a conception of cultural singularity, but formed from the adoption of an overarching political theory—Leninist anti-colonialism—to which Taiwan's situation was retro-fitted.

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<sup>120</sup> Cai, *op. cit.* p285, quoted in Wu Rwei-ren (2003), *op. cit.*, p282.

It is also interesting to note that the Cultural Association was as interested in promoting modern idea of drama and opera, as it was in reinforcing Traditional styles to harden Taiwan cultural identity. The Association seemed unsure whether its mission was to bring Taiwanese “up to date” or to reinforce or reintroduce traditional cultural elements as a basis for cultural nationalism. In this sense it seems far more conflicted than its consciousness raising counterparts elsewhere—the Celtic Revival movement in Ireland in the 1890s-1900s, for example. One of the differences between European and Taiwanese cultural nationalists is that the Europeans seem possessed of an idea of the quality of their culture which the Taiwanese seemed to lack.

### **6.2.10) The Situation in 1927**

In April 1927, the British consul at Tamsui, P.D. Butler, sent a scathing report on the government-general to his superior in Tokyo which provides an illuminating look at the Taiwanese colony, by a representative of a power well versed in colonial rule and its problems. As an indication of conditions in Taiwan at the time it is worth quoting at length:

I do not feel the Formosans ... have very much to complain of in the way of deliberate oppression, but I cannot but feel that the Japanese authorities are very unwise in persisting ... in adhering to an illiberal education system, in excluding the Formosans from prospects of advancement and from a share in the governance of their island, and in the entire suppression of the rights of freedom of speech and the press. The people are not, like the Koreans, a race of political malcontents, and it would have required only a little foresight to secure their genuine loyalty. ... The civilian (governors) of the last seven years ... have too often shown themselves more interested in party politics in Japan than in the colony and have permitted corruption to step into every branch of the administration. ... The island should be administered no longer with the interests of the Japanese Empire and Japanese capitalists first and those of the native inhabitants a very bad second .... The Japanese authorities evince no consciousness of the fact that their Formosan subjects are no longer content to remain a race of coolies, provided they are prosperous coolies. The island is governed in imperial and capitalist interests .... Incidentally

the Formosans benefit and with this it is considered that they should be satisfied. They pay taxes but are accorded no share whatever in the government of their island or the Empire to which their loyalty is exacted. They are compelled to worship periodically at the national shrine, to wear mourning after the death of the Emperor, to hang out flags on days of festival, to salute a police officer or official, and the omission of any of these observances may entail a reprimand if not worse. ... The result of this is that the Formosans were infinitely more contented and loyal subjects of Japan seven years ago than they are today. They now have a political organization [the Cultural Association] the control of which largely as a result of the attitude adopted toward it by the authorities has passed from the hands of men whose views were moderately progressive and whose object is a limited degree of self-government, to a group who are known to be Communists and to aim at the independence of the island. I doubt if even the police themselves ... know how large has become the membership of the ... Taiwan Cultural Association... A recent meeting in Tainan was attended by 2,000 persons, notwithstanding that to do so is to risk inclusion on the official "black list."<sup>121</sup>

### 6.2.11) Political Factionism

The radical takeover of the Cultural Association led to the formation by moderates of Taiwan's first political party, the People's Party. When the party was launched on July 10, 1927, its (government-approved) platform was<sup>122</sup>:

- Political
  - To secure local self-government and the right of election of members of provincial and other assemblies by popular suffrage.
  - To secure immediate permission for Formosans to publish newspapers and eventually the freedoms of speech, meeting and association.
  - To secure the reform of the educational system by:
  - the adoption of compulsory education,

<sup>121</sup> Tamsui Consular Dispatch No 15, April 13, 1927, TPER p115-6.

<sup>122</sup> Details from Tamsui Consular Dispatch No 44, Oct. 3, 1927, TPER p119.

- by making instruction in public schools bilingual,
- by introducing Chinese writing as a compulsory subject in public schools.
- To secure the reform of the *hoko* system.
- To secure the reform of the judicial system and the introduction of trial by jury.
- Economic
  - To secure the reform of the taxation system.
  - To secure the reform of the banking system and the establishment of agricultural and industrial banks.
  - To protect the right of producers.
  - To secure the reform of the monopoly system.
- Social
  - To assist the progress of the agrarian and labor movements and of social organization.
  - To promote equality between the sexes and the rights of woman and to oppose traffic in human beings.

Of all these planks, only perhaps the right for Taiwanese to publish newspapers could be seen to have national consciousness-raising overtones. But given that the program had to be watered down considerably before the party could get the necessary permit from the government-general to set up, perhaps one should not expect to see more. In response to the parties formation the government-general the removal of the ban on the publication and sale of the *Taiwan Minpao* in Taiwan.

Japanese colonials in Taiwan were nevertheless alarmed that concessions to the Taiwanese would undermine their ascendancy such that so much they in their turn started a movement in the early 1930s for the return of a military governor-general.

Almost no sooner was the People's Party formed than the tensions which had resulted in the split of the Cultural Association resurfaced. Jiang Weishui argued that it was economic issues which were important to the grassroots and involvement with these was necessary to show the party was meaningful and to counter the effect of the Cultural Association.

Cai Peihuo on the other hand maintained that labor involvement would invite repression from the government-general and was a diversion from the party's real

objectives, to have political powers devolved on Taiwanese.

By 1930 the Popular Party was facing a split similar to that of the Cultural Association in 1927. In August that year Tsai and other moderates left to form yet another organization, the Federation for the Attainment of Local Autonomy.

This they insisted had no nationalistic purpose but was solely to stay within legal limits and campaign for equitable Taiwanese representation within the island's political system.

Meanwhile the People's Party became even more radical until in February 1931 it amended its platform to call itself a "party of workers and peasants" and proposed the formation of a united front with all parties anywhere representing the interests of the propertyless. It was suppressed by the police the same day.

The Federation became the only Taiwanese political organization on the island, but the very conservatism of its goals and methods meant that it had little popular support. Rather than representing hope for equal treatment of the Taiwanese it seemed rather to seek a place in the island's political structure for members of the Taiwan elite. While those elite members might have claimed that their aim was political power to force through change, their apparent abandonment of any organization as soon as it threatened their interests as landlords—first the Cultural Association, then the Popular Party—quickly eroded their status as popular leaders. Defending themselves as judiciously refusing to step outside the ever-tightening limits of legality, but this does not seem to have won them a great deal of support.

The problem was that, beyond the rather elite group of the Local Autonomists, other people were concerned about other things. As British Consul A.R. Ovens wrote after the failure of the 1933 petition:

This may be regarded seriously by a few intellectuals but the grievances that are most widespread and which have the most justification behind them concern educational rather than political disabilities. So far as the latter are concerned, it may confidently be affirmed that few Formosans still cherish real hope of achieving independence on Japanese rule and though far from submitting gladly to their lot are not blind to the many material advantages they enjoy in consequence while painfully conscious

of the futility of agitation or resistance under present circumstances.<sup>123</sup>

As Edward Chen puts it: “To many Formosans, however, the [Federation] was at best an organization of landlords and wealthy merchants and at worst a Japanese puppet willing to compromise principles for personal gain.”<sup>124</sup> While the Federation did make attempts between 1932 and 1934 to expand its membership and its appeal, these were unsuccessful.

### **6.2.12) Education, Assimilation and Political Rights**

As to the main grievance about the education system, Ovens says that, while Japanese remained essential for all aspirants to higher education, only 20 percent of the Taiwanese were familiar with the spoken and written language—and this after nearly 40 years of Japanese rule.

Ovens is more forthcoming about this in his report the following year. Educational facilities for Japanese were very adequate, he says, but the supply of schools for Taiwanese, especially middle schools was far from meeting the demand. The Taiwanese grievance was that “the island maintains an expensive educational establishment from which few Taiwanese derive any benefit”<sup>125</sup> The number of Taiwanese at Taihoku Imperial University had actually declined and it was, in fact easier, for Taiwanese to study in Japan than in Taipei. In 1936, after 41 years of Japanese rule, Ovens’ successor, C.H. Archer, reported that only 39 percent of Taiwanese attended received primary education.<sup>126</sup>

There is a bitter irony in this. After all, as Ovens wrote at the beginning of 1935:

With regard to immediate measures called for to meet the [demand for local autonomy], two bodies of opinion appear to exist. The first of these ... considers it expedient to go some way towards meeting Formosan wishes by conferring on them a limited measure of local self-government. The second, and larger, body of opinion, however, comprising nearly all the military in the island and a definite majority of the Japanese official and merchant classes regards any such concession as untimely and even

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<sup>123</sup> Annual Report on Formosa for 1933, TPER p284-5.

<sup>124</sup> Chen (1972), FPM p493

<sup>125</sup> Annual Report on Formosa for 1934, TPER p317.

<sup>126</sup> Annual Report on Formosa for 1936, TPER p467.

dangerous. A Formosan population which after 40 years has not even learned to speak or write the Japanese language ... should be kept strictly in their proper state of subjection, it is held—at any rate until they have bestirred themselves to earn some of the privileges of Japanese citizenship.<sup>127</sup>

Basically the Japanese had long had an assimilationist policy but had been extremely lackadaisical about pursuing it. This put the Taiwanese in a Catch 22 situation that they tried quite vociferously to get out of. Basically, that the Taiwanese obviously were not assimilated was deemed sufficient reason to deny them political rights. But they could hardly assimilate when the education provision was so poor. It might have been that the Japanese colonists were paying lip service only to the idea of Taiwanese assimilation but had no intention of undermining their own position by bringing it about. Or it might be that, since the colonial education system was financed entirely by the colony itself, there was a reluctance, and possibly resistance, to the idea of raising taxes sufficiently to pay for compulsory universal education (according to Ovens, 12.9 percent of all public expenditure in 1935 was on education).

From the point of view of Taiwanese identity, the very fact that education in Japanese was such a bone of contention, shows no unwillingness to assimilate and points to the weakness of Taiwanese national consciousness.

### **6.2.13) New Autonomy Measures**

Until 1934 the League struggled on, presenting its petitions in Tokyo but the political climate was no longer the liberalism of the 1920s. The growing power of ultra-nationalists and the military made it almost impossible for an apparently separatist organization to function. Both the League and the Federation had to cope with the problem that, as Consul Ovens pointed out, in June 1933, “the creation of a situation rendering even remotely possible the display of an antagonistic attitude on the part of Formosa (so vital to Japan of today for offence and defense alike) towards the policy of the mother country finds no favor whatsoever with any section of Japanese opinion.”<sup>128</sup>

In early 1933 the usual petition was presented to the relevant committee of the

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<sup>127</sup> Annual Report on Formosa for 1934, TPER p316.

<sup>128</sup> Notes on General Events During the June Quarter, 1933, TPER p278.

Diet. While previous petitions had just been quietly ignored, this one was debated in the committee at some length and was sternly rejected as unconstitutional, dangerous and possibly seditious. This uncompromising view was seen the death knell of the petition movement, and all but criminalized the work of the Federation.

The petition the next year was the last, the League leaders in Taiwan—who were, remember, much the same people as the Federation leaders agreed to abandon the petition movement in return for the government-general forcing the reforms in local autonomy promised since 1927 through the Diet. In October 1934, the government-general finally revealed local autonomy reform plans, which established councils at various levels from the province to the rural village. At the lower levels, the councils were appointed and their powers were to be advisory only. At the higher levels half the seats were to be elected, and the councils would have control over local bylaws and a local budget..

This was unsatisfactory to the autonomists in many ways, in particular because the governor-general could appoint and dismiss councils at will, below the city level the councils were appointed—therefore articles of patronage—and because of the limitations of the franchise—limited to men paying more than 5¥ a year in taxes to males over 25 who had an independent means of livelihood (which in effect meant not living with their family), at a time when Chen thinks the average tax paid by Taiwanese might have been less than ¥4 a year.<sup>129</sup> Provincial councils where Taiwanese were most likely have a larger say, were also only to convene 10 days a year. .

When elections for city assemblies and township and village advisory councils took place in December 1935, the total electorate was 229,000 of which 41,000 were Japanese and 188,000 Taiwanese (out of a total Taiwanese population of about 5 million).

As C.R. Archer reported:

The intrinsic nature of the reforms is trifling. They would assume an importance if they could be regarded as the thin end of the wedge; but it is certain that any further concessions would arouse the strongest opposition from the army and therefore no further advance seems at all likely until the whole balance of political forces in Japan has undergone some radical

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<sup>129</sup> Chen, FPM p494 (footnote 45)

change.<sup>130</sup>

While the effects might have had no political significance in 1936, I would contend that from the point of view of the following 8 years of Japanese policy, they contributed to a significant diminution of Taiwanese consciousness. By the end of the Japanese colonial era, assimilation had begun to make headway.

In September 1936 a military governor-general was reinstated, Admiral Kobayashi Seizo. Kobayashi told the Federation that since it had got what it wanted it should disband. After the Marco Polo bridge incident in July 1937 and the start of the war with China it simply became unfeasible for the Federation to continue and it disbanded in August of that year.

Edward Chen wryfully admits that the home rule movement achieved little politically. This was he thinks because to remain legal it had to be innocuous, but this was hardly the way to appeal to build a mass movement that could have brought about real change. Had the Cultural Association been able to find a balance between labor activism and its moderate political goals, something more might have been achieved.

One of the problems the Taiwanese political activists faced is expressed so elegantly by Chu Yan-han and Lee Jih-wen that I will quote it at length:

Although none of the powers that checked the colonial government rested on native Taiwanese, the anti-government elite did find a greater leverage to affect policy-making. As long as public opinion in the Japanese homeland was divided, the Taiwanese elite, now fluent in Japanese, could find their sympathizers. It turned out that the real challenge for the Taiwanese leaders was how to balance between two strategies that were contradictory though both justifiable. By playing down their own identity and stressing they were also Japanese citizens, the Taiwan could ask for equal rights. Alternatively they could emphasize their distinctiveness but with the risk of losing the support of the Japanese assimilationist. Self-determination and equal citizenship were both desirable goals, but not

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<sup>130</sup> *Ibid*, p381

obtainable at the same time.<sup>131</sup>

### 6.2.14) The Problem of Language

In the introduction to this said I said that national consciousness “recognizes ‘ourselves,’ as sharers of a language, a culture, perhaps a religion, a historical past a sense of uniqueness and a sense of our right to manage our own affairs.” And whatever kind of nationalist theorist one might be, language plays a hugely important role in consciousness development, be it for the purposes of Anderson’s print capitalism, or the ethno nationalist’s marker of cultural separateness.

The Han community on Taiwan had long been split between two different language groups, the Hakka and the Fujianese, speaking non-mutually intelligible languages. During the Qing dynasty there were 51 significant conflicts between Hakka and Fujianese immigrants—on average, nearly one every four years. Since the Fujianese outnumber the Hakka four to one, one of the problems of creating a “Taiwanese” nationality has been allaying Hakka fears of Fujianese supremacism.

While some Hakka have worked manfully in the Taiwan nationalist cause, many felt they had little to gain from majority rule and were deeply distrustful of a Taiwan consciousness movement dominated by Fujianese, the language of which was almost exclusively the Holo Taiwanese spoken by those of Fujianese ancestry and which often lapsed into Holo Taiwanese chauvinism.<sup>132</sup>

Creating a Taiwanese consciousness that could bridge the gap between the two language groups was to prove hard. But another problem presented itself in that neither Hakka nor Holo Taiwanese had any accepted written form. Literati educated in classical Chinese could write in such, but this could not be medium for the broad dissemination of ideas to a population 80 percent of whom were poorly educated farmers. The younger intelligentsia spoke and wrote in Japanese—which did something to bridge the Hakka-Holo gap—but it was also beyond the ken of the overwhelming majority of the population. Yet the languages that population spoke in its daily life had no written forms. How was a

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<sup>131</sup> Chu Yun-han, & Lin Chih-wen (2001) “Political development in 20th-Century Taiwan: State-building, Regime Transformation and the Construction of National Identity,” in Richard Louis Edmonds & Steven M. Goldstein (Eds.) *Taiwan in the Twentieth Century: A Retrospective View*, (pp. 102-129). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: p108.

<sup>132</sup> I will get back to this topic in a modern context later in this dissertation.

population to be aroused, consciousness to be raised, in a situation where to be literate was to be fluent in a foreign language? As Chang Mau-kuei puts it:

How did or could the more enlightened class spread their interpretation of the meaning of being Taiwanese and their ideas about home rule to the majority of Taiwanese. ... Only one newspaper published by activists in Taipei and with the largest daily circulation being around 2000 copies could be thought of as a major forum for public discourses. And after 1937, the Taiwanese were completely forbidden to use Chinese characters. Before 1937, the major hurdle of the diffusion of ideas was the problem of finding an adequate writing system that could be easily comprehended by the less educated.<sup>133</sup>

If we remember the central place of language in so many cases of national consciousness formation—above we saw Hroch’s first step in any nationalist consciousness raising program as “the development of a national culture based on the local language, and its normal use in education, administration and economic life”<sup>134</sup> then Taiwanese were singularly ill-equipped to bring this about. In the 1920s, some Taiwanese writers experimented writing in vernacular Chinese—itsself not standardized at that early date, but this was still a foreign tongue to Taiwanese, while in the 1930s considerable effort was made to develop a written version of Taiwanese. Neither experimentation with Romanization systems, as championed by Cai Peihuo, nor Chinese characters was to produce a standardized system, and the banning of the use of Chinese character publications in 1937 effectively shut such efforts down (indeed it was not until the 1990s that an authoritative Hoklo Taiwanese dictionary was published.)

The significance of the language hurdle is that while some among the educated classes has developed a high level of Taiwanese national consciousness, the fact is that they were severely handicapped in proselytizing to a wider audience. If print capitalism and vernacular language is essential to the imagining of a community, as Benedict Anderson claims, then the Taiwanese imagination was painfully handicapped.

### **6.2.15) Becoming Japanese**

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<sup>133</sup> Chang Mau-kuei, *op. cit.*, p35.

<sup>134</sup> See above, p6

In 1937, with the start of the war against China, the Japanese government finally started to put effort into assimilation. Partly this was because of Taiwan strategic position—it was an essential staging post in Japanese attacks on and occupation of southern China, and later the Philippines and Indonesia. Japanese policy is usually described as the *Kominka* or imperialization movement. Rather than a single movement, however, it was three individual campaigns launched at different times with significantly different objectives. These were:

- A movement to make the Japanese language the everyday means of communication amongst Taiwanese, which had really begun in the early 1930s. Language competence, perhaps because it was so easy to measure, became a sign of assimilation;
- The “voluntary” military service movement: There was not, until very late in the war, military conscription in Taiwan—although there was conscription for non-combatant roles—and Japanese officers were wary of Taiwanese troops. Volunteering for the military was however, pressed upon all Japanese subjects as a show of loyalty to the emperor and an ethical duty. What happened in Taiwan was that, from 1942, men were encouraged to declare themselves ready to fight, while this declaration did not, for Han Chinese, at least until late in the war, result in many actually being inducted. It was therefore more a civil display of patriotism, a tool of assimilationist policy rather than military utility. By the end of the war, the number of inhabitants recruited for military duty was around 200,000.
- The third element was the campaign to get Taiwanese to adopt Japanese names, which began in 1940. Name-changing depended on being acculturated in other ways, including being fluent in Japanese. Its incentive was higher social standing including, as rationing began to bite, better food. By 1945, however only about 7 percent of Taiwanese had changed their names.<sup>135</sup>

There were, however, a number of other campaigns pursued with less or more vigor, depending on the administration of the day. These included a campaign to promote Shintoism, both by building more Shinto shrines and encouraging household to adopt them in place of their traditional ancestral tablets and deities. Associated with this was a

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<sup>135</sup> Lamley, *op. cit.*, p241.

campaign involving the demolition of traditional Taiwanese temples, which was quickly stopped by Tokyo as being deemed too inflammatory. There were also campaigns to change Taiwanese customs regarding major life events such as weddings and funerals. Taiwanese operas and puppet plays were banned, as was the burning of ghost money at temples. Basically, the idea was to chip away at outward communal expressions of Taiwanese culture, with the aim of promoting a greater identification with Japan (rather similar to the British policy in Scotland in the wake of the 1745 Jacobite rebellion).

Obviously the Imperialization movement could only achieve limited success in the time available to it, especially given the growing adversity of wartime conditions. How successful was it? This is difficult to assess. Evidence of Taiwanese behavior during the war would suggest it was not ineffective. Certainly the popularity of such customs as blood pledges, requests to perform military or military related services part of which would be written in the applicant's own blood, suggests an identification with Japan, almost certainly aided by the greatly improved literacy.

Once again, the language problems worked to defeat the spreading of any alternative consciousness. The use of Chinese characters had been banned in 1937, making headway on producing and disseminating a written Holo Taiwanese impossible. Works in Chinese from mainland China were strictly controlled, and vernacular Mandarin was anyway, a foreign language. This left Japanese as the only medium through which Taiwanese consciousness could be spread. The apparent contradiction in this was not lost on intellectuals, but their opportunity to do such work was virtually curtailed after 1937 anyway. Linguistic and educational hegemony ensured some degree of support from impressionable Taiwanese.<sup>136</sup>

Perhaps the greatest show of, if not enthusiasm, then, at least, acceptance, of acquiescence in the Japanese imperial project was the surprising lack of sabotage to Japanese war facilities on Taiwan. It is interesting to compare Taiwan 1937-45 with Ireland 1914-18, both were islands occupied by militarily powerful neighbors whose strength was being drained in a large regional war. Irish republicans, even though they had been guaranteed home rule once the war was concluded, nevertheless opportunistically struck at Britain in 1916 in the Easter Rising, from which a direct line

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<sup>136</sup> See Lamley, *op. cit.*, p243.

leads to the War of Independence, and the Anglo-Irish treaty establishing the Irish Free State in 1921, as well as a powerful republican mythology that resonates to this day. Taiwanese nationalists on the other hand, did nothing, largely sitting the war out, doing perhaps the minimum possible to further Kominka (the grudging yet equivocal positions of Lin Xientang and Lin Zhenglun are models in this respect<sup>137</sup>), but certainly not seizing the opportunity to make a war effort handicapped by American bombing any more difficult.

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<sup>137</sup> And treated at length in Fix, Douglas L. (1993), *Taiwanese Nationalism and Its Late Colonial Context*. PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley: p187-262

## 6.2.16) Contradictions and Confusions

And yet take these two remarks:

As if a majority of his Formosan associates, [my father] was glad, Japanese rule had come to an end. The great economic benefits of Japanese administration had never been enough for self-respecting Formosans who bitterly resented social and political discrimination.<sup>138</sup>

When [following the Japanese surrender] the municipal transport services started operating again, the streets returned to their hustle and bustle ... and Taipei was transformed into a whirlpool of color and noise. ... Freed from their shackles after 50 years of colonialism the Taiwanese were in state of high excitement in which nothing seemed impossible. Their self-respect regained, they felt that enthusiasm alone could turn the province of Taiwan into a showpiece for the Three Principles of the People. ... For the islanders each day of waiting for the arrival of the motherlands troops was like a thousand years. They were like abandoned children waiting for the warm embrace of a mother.<sup>139</sup>

The first quotation is from Peng Ming-min, the second from Wu Zhuo-liu. I believe this is worth mentioning because neither writer could, in later years, be called a supporter of the incoming Kuomintang regime.

Wu's attitude is particularly interesting in that at the time of which he was speaking he had just finished writing his novel *The Orphan of Asia*. The subject of the novel is, in fact, the entire Taiwanese identity conundrum as posed at the end of the Japanese occupation. Based very much on Wu's personal experience, the protagonist travels between Taiwan, Japan, and China, always in search of not only a better livelihood, but some sense of certainty and belonging. Eventually the contradictions inherent in juggling three different personalities and falling between the interstices of three rival

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<sup>138</sup> Peng, Ming-min (1994) *A Taste of Freedom* (2nd Edition ed.), Irvine, California: Taiwan Publishing Co. Ltd : p50-51.

<sup>139</sup> Wu Zhuo-liu, *op. cit.*, p167-8.

nationalisms drives him mad. Wu, therefore, can be taken to have thought longer and harder about Taiwan and its identity problems than most of his compatriots. Having spent the early 1940s in China, Wu also had a good working knowledge of the Kuomintang regime.

Of course it might be that Wu, like the protagonist of his novel, felt especially “orphaned” and looked to Chinese nationalism to give his life a substance, a purpose that under the Japanese regime he thought it lacked, thereby firing his enthusiasm for “retrocession” more than most. But the fact is that I have encountered few sources, which express anything other than Taiwanese enthusiasm for retrocession. Not perhaps such enthusiasm once the soldiers and administrators from China started to arrive. But I have not found in any reading for this dissertation any record of Taiwanese showing skepticism about the incoming Chinese administration, or for that matter, balking at the way their fate—eventual retrocession—was decided without their consultation at the Cairo conference in 1942. Even George Kerr, as hostile a witness to the Kuomintang as one might wish to find, grudgingly admits that the Taiwanese were not unhappy with the prospect of the Chinese takeover. He speaks of:

... the general elation with which everyone welcomed the war’s end and greeted the beginning of a new era. The day of Home Rule was at hand. Things would be put right on the mainland soon enough, with American help. Vast Japanese properties would now be confiscated, to be redistributed amongst Formosans. Tens of thousands of acres of good land expropriated by the Japanese since 1896, factories which had been built and operated by grudging Formosan labor, and mercantile enterprises which had supplied Formosan needs through Japanese-held monopoly organizations -all these and much more would now revert to the Formosan government and people. Or so they thought. It is difficult to convey in print the atmosphere of great expectation which enveloped the island. This was much more than the end of four years of global war, or of eight years of war in China; it was the end of fifty years of humiliation.<sup>140</sup>

From the point of view of this study, this reaction among Taiwanese appears strange. It is

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<sup>140</sup> Kerr, (1965), *op. cit.*, p73.

quite possible to see how KMT propaganda might insist that Taiwanese were enthusiastic for the return of Chinese government. But Taiwanese nationalist sources seem to agree, the consensus is that initially Taiwanese were enthusiastic about the idea of retrocession, only to be disappointed by the reality. Only the independence activist Ong Joktik, writing in 1963, provides a dissenting voice:

The Formosans received the news of Japan's defeat and the return of the island to Chinese rule with mixed feelings. While Japan's defeat may have been welcomed, how far the Chinese "fatherland" could be relied upon to satisfy Formosa's aspirations was open to question. Almost immediately after the war a group of pro-Japanese Formosan politicians<sup>141</sup> began planning for Formosa's independence. However, in the immediate post-war confusion, American policy was by no means clear cut and there was no hope of support from defeated Japan. Without mass support, they soon fell easy prey to the Nationalists who came to occupy Formosa.<sup>142</sup>

Steven Phillips suggest that Taiwanese enthusiasm was more "over the end of U.S. bombing and the return of sons serving in the military," and accumulated resentment against the Japanese than enthusiasm for China. He also says, interestingly, that:

"The Taiwanese realized that their collaboration with the Japanese colonial empire would be an extraordinarily sensitive issue in their relationship with the mainland dominated Nationalist state. As they turned their attention to building ties with the new regime, The Taiwanese almost uniformly offered public professions of loyalty to the ideal of a reuniting with China under Chiang Kai-shek's regime."<sup>143</sup>

So Taiwanese were being pragmatic, anticipating possible problems and trying to deflect

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<sup>141</sup> Ku Chen-fu, son of Ku Hsien-yong, who had played a role in the original Japanese takeover of Taiwan, attempted to work with Japanese officers to keep Taiwan independent after the war, for which "treason" he was jailed by the KMT for "treason" for 19 months. He died a much respected member of the Kuomintang Central Committee and was eulogized on both sides of the Taiwan Strait as a Chinese patriot.

<sup>142</sup> Ong Joktik (1963) "A Formosan's View of the Formosan Independence Movement," *The China Quarterly*, (15): p108.

<sup>143</sup> Phillips, Steven (1999) "Between Assimilation and Independence: Taiwanese Political Aspirations under Nationalist Chinese Rule 1945-48," in Murray A. Rubinstein (Ed.), *Taiwan: A New History*, (pp. 275-319). New York: M.E. Sharpe: p281-2

them. But this tells us very little about Taiwanese national consciousness. It has been suggested that Taiwanese misconstrued the nature of the Chinese takeover; that they thought that Taiwan, with its separate history and cultural differences, might have been left with political autonomy inside China, something rather like the home rule planned for Ireland after World War I. If so, this was not to be. As for what Taiwanese considered themselves to be, what identity they embraced, this seems to be a topic that needs much closer study to resolve the discrepancy between the relative success of some of the Japanese assimilation programs and general acquiescence with the war effort compared with the many reports, not all of them from KMT-sympathetic sources, of a favorable view of the return of Chinese rule.

### **6.3) Postwar Taiwan**

The KMT took over Taiwan in October 1945 without any pre-prepared plan. Taiwan was only a sideshow compared with the ongoing conflict with the communists on the mainland. The new administration paid little attention to the political aspirations of the Taiwanese, who having by the end of the Japanese colonial period participated increasingly in running Taiwan's affairs expected their aspirations to self-government to be respected. As the Japanese left Taiwan Mainlanders were favored in filling up administrative posts, much of the industrial infrastructure was dismantled and shipped to the mainland causing an economic crisis and mass unemployment.

It is tempting to say that the KMT administration showed the same propensity to the corruption and violence that was to get it kicked out of China altogether in 1949, and these unwelcome characteristics were all the more directed at the Taiwanese because they were basically despised by the Chinese for the "collaboration" with Japan. Ong Jitkik describes the situation from the point of view of a Taiwanese nationalist:

The Chinese Nationalist officials and troops who arrived in Formosa behaved arrogantly and oppressively, as though they were victors dealing with a defeated nation. The Chinese took over all administrative organs and industrial equipment, which were distributed among the members of the Central Government, the provincial government, the Nationalist Party and the various financial interests which had accompanied the Nationalists to Formosa. The corruption and immorality which characterized the Nationalists on the mainland was brought to Formosa. The Formosans saw

their island ruled by avarice and violence. The Chinese soon proved that they had neither the efficiency nor the honesty which had been the mark of Japanese rule on Formosa. The Formosans began to say that, “the dogs have gone but the pigs have come to replace them. Dogs are to be feared, but at least they protect you from thieves. Pigs can only eat.” Within less than eighteen months after the return of Formosa to Chinese rule the Formosans rose in revolt under the slogans “Chinese go home,” and “Formosa for the Formosans.”<sup>144</sup>

While Nationalist behavior might not be excused, certainly the Taiwanese failed to understand both the mainland mindset and the exigencies besetting the KMT regime in China. Part of the problem was that Japanese colonialism might have been hierarchical and exploitative, but it had created a population far more sophisticated than that of China. Taiwanese might not have achieved much with their endless petitions for home rule and other campaigns, but they had at least become versed in a sophisticated civil politics which flourished even during the war years, even under military governors-general. China had not had such a luxury. The country whose cultural transformation projects had fascinated educated Taiwanese in the 1920s had spent decades in war and chaos. The war against Japan was intensely brutalizing as well as immensely destructive, and the war against the communists resumed only nine months after retrocession. While the Taiwanese had been playing increasingly sophisticated games of political cat and mouse with the Japanese, the KMT had been fighting bitterly for survival. The gulf between the two sides was almost unbridgeable.

When the KMT assumed control of Taiwan, it found a population that had been part of the Japanese empire for 50 years and subject to a vigorous acculturation program. As former Japanese subjects, the Taiwanese were seen by the KMT as suspect, their Chineseness was questioned, as was their allegiance to their new government. Such was the KMT’s suspicions on the matter that in 1947 Taiwanese were specifically denied the protections of the new constitution—scheduled to go into effect later that year—because, Taiwan Provincial Governor Chen Yi explained it after “long years of despotic Japanese rule, the Formosans were politically retarded and were not capable of carrying on self-

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<sup>144</sup> Ong, *op. cit.*, p108.

government in an intelligent manner.”<sup>145</sup>

As well as dubious loyalties, the Taiwanese also suffered, in the eyes of the KMT, from linguistic inadequacy, many of them being unable to speak the designated “national language” of Mandarin Chinese. When in 1946, as part of Taiwan Provincial Governor Chen Yi’s campaign to re-Sinicize Taiwan, speaking Mandarin became a sine qua non for obtaining a government job<sup>146</sup>, many of the Taiwanese elite found themselves classed as only semi-literate and denied a role in the administration of their homeland, which was filled immigrants from the mainland, a source of great ethnic resentment.

### 6.3.1) The 228 Incident

Since this tragic incident and one’s opinion on it has become almost a shorthand for one’s view of identity among inhabitants of Taiwan today, some details of it are essential.

On the evening of Feb. 27, 1947, Chinese agents from the government’s Tobacco Monopoly Bureau confiscated cigarettes from Lin Jiang-mai, a 40-year-old widow, in Taipei’s Nanjing West Road. When Lin begged for the return of those cigarettes that were not smuggled along with some money that was also taken, she was pistol-whipped by one of the agents, angering the surrounding Taiwanese crowd, which chased the agents. As they fled, the agents fired into the crowd, killing a bystander. The crowd protested to the police but received no response. A crowd of 600-700 people then converged on the Taipei Police Bureau demanding the monopoly bureau agents be executed the next day, refusing to disperse when told that the case had to be dealt with by judicial process. The following day large crowds began to assemble all over Taipei and started to attack government buildings, and beating up any Mainlanders they could find. The violence spread over much of Taiwan, with Taiwanese seizing control of local administrations and upholding public order with the help of high school students.

Local leaders soon formed a Settlement Committee, which presented the government with a list of 32 demands for reform of the provincial administration, including, greater autonomy, free elections, that the Chinese forces on the island should put themselves under the control of the committee, and an end to governmental corruption.

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<sup>145</sup> Kerr, (1965), *op.cit.*, p240.

<sup>146</sup> Government Information Office. *A Brief History of Taiwan* Chapter 7, which can be viewed at <http://www.gio.gov.tw/taiwan-website/5-gp/history/tw08.html>

Motivations among the various Taiwanese groups in the revolt varied, some demanded greater autonomy within the Republic of China, while others wanted UN trusteeship for Taiwan—since the Chinese government was, in international law, only an occupying power pending a final treaty between Japan and the Allies settling the claims of the war—or full independence, under the U.N.’s decolonization drive. The Taiwanese also demanded representation in the forthcoming peace treaty negotiations with Japan, hoping to secure a plebiscite to determine the island’s political future. A smaller subgroup, including those that later formed the militia known as the “27 Brigade” with their weapons looted from military bases in Taichung, were motivated by communist ideology. The Settlement Committee eventually settled upon the path of requesting greater autonomy, while stopping short of independence.

Feigning negotiation, the ROC authorities under Chen Yi stalled for time while assembling a large military force in China in Fujian province. Upon arrival on March 8, the Chinese troops launched a crackdown. By the end of March, Chen had jailed or killed all the leading Taiwanese organizers he could identify and catch. His troops reportedly executed (according to a Taiwanese delegation in Nanjing) between 3,000 and 4,000 people throughout the island. Some of the killings were random, while others were systematic. Taiwanese elites were among those targeted, and many of the Taiwanese who had formed home rule groups during the reign of the Japanese were also victims of the 228 Incident. A disproportionate number of the victims were also Taiwanese middle- and high-school-age youths, as many of them had volunteered to serve in the temporary police forces that were organized by the Committee and the local town councils to maintain public order following the initial rebellion. On the other hand, Chinese were targeted by the native Taiwanese and many were killed.

The initial purge was followed by repression under one-party rule, in what was termed “white terror,” which lasted until the end of martial law in 1987. Thousands of people, including both Chinese and Taiwanese, were imprisoned or executed for their real or perceived dissent, leaving the Taiwanese victims among them with a deep-seated bitterness towards what they term the Chinese Nationalist regime, and by extension, all Chinese.

The medium-term result of the 228 Incident—it would be more accurate to call it

a revolt—was that “it drove a generation of politically conscious [Taiwanese] social elites into self-imposed political passiveness.”<sup>147</sup> The long-term result was that:

It transfigured a latent Taiwanese nationalism into a burgeoning independence movement launched first by the native elites who went to Japan after the incident. This lasting scar also complicated the efforts by the Nationalists to reconstruct a cultural and ethnic unity between the Mainlanders and ethnic Taiwanese through state-sponsored resinicization programs in later years.<sup>148</sup>

### **6.3.2) Building a Chinese Taiwan**

IN 1949, the Chinese Nationalists lost the Chinese Civil War and relocated its government to Taiwan. Taiwan, which might have remained peripheral to KMT concerns had Chiang Kai-shek retained the mainland, now became central to the aspiration to retake the mainland. But for this, the KMT needed a new Taiwan and a new kind of Taiwanese. Once again an outside force was to launch an acculturation project and to seek a hegemony over Taiwanese ideas of identity.

Central to the Chinese Nationalist project on Taiwan was the promotion of ethnonationalism, the idea that ethnic and cultural homogeneity is the criteria for a nation state. In the Chinese Nationalist version this idea has proved rather flexible. At base it is the notion that everyone of “Chinese blood” i.e. having an ancestral lineage originating in China, was a part of the Chinese nation and a subject of the Chinese state. But since China itself has numerous non-Han minority groups, not to mention Taiwan’s aborigines, it is extended to mean that all those of Chinese *culture* are Chinese. In this way the Taiwanese aborigines are regarded as non-Han but Chinese through acculturation. The Chinese Nationalist project centered on the idea that Taiwanese were Chinese and any cultural or linguistic difference was simply a local variation.

### **6.3.3) Establishment of Hegemony**

We have seen that in 1945 the incoming KMT saw the Taiwanese as collaborators with the hated Japanese regime and as a result untrustworthy and unfit for the full panoply of

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<sup>147</sup> Chu Yun-han and Lin Chih-wen, *op. cit.*, p113

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

constitutional rights accorded to Chinese. In fact, for the Taiwanese it is not unreasonable to think of the martial law era (1949-87) as yet another period of colonial tutelage, containing another aggressive attack on Taiwanese traditional culture.

During this period:

Not only were the legacies of Japanese culture such as language and popular music rapidly disappearing but also the Taiwanese dialects, traditional customs, folk religious practices, opera and music were soon systematically defined as local backward and either harmful to national unification an/or national modernization. The traditions of Chinese officialdom were upheld as the high culture of Taiwan.<sup>149</sup>

Until the 1990s the KMT regime used to claim to its credit that traditional Chinese culture had been preserved on Taiwan where it had been destroyed by the political upheavals on the mainland. And yet it is interesting to note that this “traditional Chinese culture” was only something which had begun to flourish on Taiwan at the end of the Qing, and 50 years of Japanese rule had weakened what little there was. The image of Taiwan as a repository of traditional Chinese culture was manufactured as a part of a massive acculturation program in which:

Speaking Mandarin and the re-invoking of traditional values and Confucianism became the dominant civic virtues. New citizen etiquette from proper manners to lifestyles was prescribed by Chiang Kai-shek personally in his Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement.<sup>150</sup>

Tensions between “native Taiwanese” and the incoming Mainlanders were not just, therefore, a result of the locals’ exclusion from national politics, but also a result of a national project which was an assault on their traditions, values, lifestyles, entertainments and even modes of speech. The KMT government acted in the manner of a colonial regime seeking to supplant “barbarism” with the virtues of its own mainland culture, and of course creating a cultural elite of those familiar with mainland cultural mores in which Taiwanese were heavily disadvantaged. This Mainlander ascendancy was not, therefore, just political in nature but cultural as well. That Taiwanese were regarded as cultural

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<sup>149</sup> Chang Mau-kuei, *op. cit.*, p47.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

inferiors became a source of resentment that has yet to be eradicated.

For 40 years the KMT cultural project was essentially ethno-nationalist. Since all Han on Taiwan originated from China, they were to be raised as patriotic Chinese citizens living in a province of China. But the non-Han Aborigines were also subject to heavily acculturating projects designed to make them integrate into Han society. They were, for example, forbidden to use their traditional names on official documents and arbitrarily assigned Chinese names, children were forbidden to use Aboriginal languages in the school system, the material taught in schools made little reference to Taiwan and virtually no reference to Taiwan's aborigines. For the KMT, the only thing to do with the aborigines was to Sinicize them as quickly as possible. As one group of activists put it:

The basic policy of the KMT government towards the Indigenous Peoples is one of artificial assimilation, aiming at the complete effacement from the Indigenous Peoples' consciousness of their own history, culture and language.<sup>151</sup>

For many years the aborigines were officially known as Mountain People (山地人), a term they found deeply offensive, because the KMT did not want to call them the preferred "original inhabitants" (原住民) because it seemed to give too much importance to their non-Han origins, thereby weakening its ethno-nationalist project.<sup>152</sup>

One of the more interesting aspects of "Chinese Nationalist" Taiwan is the degree to which the "traditional Chinese culture" which was used as an anchor of regime legitimacy and authenticity (as seen in frequent pronouncements from Taipei that "We are the real China") involved a high degree of "invented tradition." Whilst the cultural forms were rooted in the northern Chinese gentry culture, there was a great degree of innovation to make that culture more congruent with the needs of a modernizing highly ideologically motivated state. This should hardly be surprising since the gentry culture taken as a model barely had a conception of the "state" as understood in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century terms. As a result a whole new value apparatus had to be grafted onto it, much of it subverting or

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<sup>151</sup> Report of the Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines presented to the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Population, July 1993, available at <http://www.cwis.org/fwdp/Eurasia/taiwan.txt>.

<sup>152</sup> Cohen, Marc J. (1988) *Taiwan at the Crossroads: Human Rights, Political Development and Social Change in the Beautiful island*, Washington D.C.: Asian Resource Center: p121.

contradicting the authentic values of that culture. The gentry culture was not a culture of militancy; Chinese Nationalist Taiwan with its “holy national task” of “recovering the mainland and liberating fellow countrymen” had to be. In an extremely perceptive essay Allen Chun writes:

It is important to point out that culture here not only involved a multiplicity of things (markers of national identity, habits of custom, icons of patriotic fervor and national treasures), it also involved the authority of different kinds of rhetorical statements (through the codification of discursive knowledge as shared myths, beliefs and values, common language, ethnicity and history) whose systematicity and coherence ultimately reflected the utopian vision of a Nationalist state.<sup>153</sup>

The use of ‘traditional Chinese culture’ in Chinese Nationalist Taiwan was important in three different ways. First it suppressed local Taiwanese cultures to subordinate them. This it did by means by using the apparatus of state repression and that of cultural stigmatism. Repressive means included, as I have already mentioned, the Mandarin-only policy and the suppression of local languages. In fact there were no “local languages”—this is term that came into being in the post-martial law era—there were only dialects (方言), a designation conveying an impression of not just being non-standard but sub-standard and backward. Mandarin-only teaching was introduced in 1952 and from 1956 pupils were strictly forbidden to speak anything other than mandarin on campus. Other repressive measures included a 1965 requirement by the (now defunct) Taiwan Provincial Government requiring all civil servants speak mandarin during office hours and making Mandarin the only recognized language of the court system, even if the parties involved in a lawsuit did not speak it. In 1962 when television broadcasting started in Taiwan, the authorities limited non-Mandarin broadcasting to only 16 percent of broadcast time. When local language programs became popular anyway, their airtime was further reduced. In 1972 the government ordered that TV broadcasters could not air more than one hour a day of Holo Taiwanese [programming and that hour had to be in two 30 minute section, one at lunch time and one in the evening. In 1976 the government tightened the policy

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<sup>153</sup> Chun, Allen (2000) “Democracy as Hegemony, Globalization as Indigenization, or the ‘Culture’ in Taiwanese National Politics,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 35, (1): p11

even more. Passing a requirement that all Holo Taiwanese programming be phased out.

But as well as the apparatus of oppression, the KMT government showed a deft use of the apparatus of cultural suggestion to make local languages appear inferior. On TV, for example:

Compared with Mandarin programs, Tai-yu [Holo Taiwanese] programs were vulgar because of tight budgets. Normally the roles depicted in these programs were of low socio-economic status, illiterates, peasants, workers, fishermen, elders, especially old women and the like. Thus Tai-yu was represented by a most powerful agent of socialization as a marker of backwardness, vulgarity, ignorance, femininity, aging and so on.<sup>154</sup>

Secondly, “traditional Chinese culture” created a sense of national identity, not only through the explicit means of patriotic movements, but also through the cultivation of a specific set of social values and shared beliefs—for example a conviction of the ethical superiority of Confucianism and a sense of possession of cultural achievements which allowed people to pride themselves on “our” 5,000 years of cultural achievement. (As an indication of how these first two factors come into play, let me say anecdotally that, during my 20 years in Taiwan, I have encountered a considerable number of Holo Taiwanese, all of them well-educated intellectuals, whose rejection of Taiwanese nationalism is grounded either in a class snobbery—they associate it with the lower classes to which they do not belong and with which they cannot identify—or a sense of value grounded in cultural proprietorship—they believe that the “greatness” of Chinese culture adds something to their life and even their sense of self that would be lost were they to limit that sense of proprietorship to “just Taiwan.”)

The third way in which “traditional Chinese culture” in its Chinese Nationalist incarnation was important was in serving to legitimize the apparatus of the Chinese Nationalist state. The state apparatus might have been the guardian of a government with no legitimacy either legally or democratically, but it posed very successfully as the guardian of a sacred chalice of “civilization” which gave it a moral legitimacy that made up for what it lacked elsewhere.

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Hsiao, A-chin (1997) “Language Ideology In Taiwan: The KMT’s Language Policy, the Tai-yu Language Movement and Ethnic Politics,” *Journal of Multicultural and Metalingual Development*, 18, (4): p307

### 6.3.4) Cultural Hegemony and the Education System

The Chinese Nationalist cultural program could in itself make a much longer thesis topic of its own then we have space for here. So to demonstrate the thinking behind it and its results I want to take as an example the education reform program.

The Chiang regime instituted education reform in Taiwan in the early 1950s had a highly centralized top-down character. It was devised primarily to create loyal patriotic subjects. The curriculum itself, and both the teaching materials and methods to be used were vetted politically at the highest level, in some cases by Chiang Kai-shek himself<sup>155</sup>, to ensure they were transmitting the right message in the right way. Chiang believed that one of the reasons for the debacle on the mainland was that people here had an insufficient understanding of Sun Yat-sen's Three Principles of the People. The failure of the KMT's cause was, therefore, at least in part a failure of the education system. This had to be addressed with a rigorous overhaul, putting KMT ideology (the Three Principles of the People, Chinese nationalism and anti-communism), Confucian virtues, and national self-awareness at the center of the curriculum of what was called "national spirit education."

Three interesting points might be made about the curriculum reform before we go further:

- The goals of the education system were set not by educationalist themselves but by political figures outside the education system with no pedagogical background<sup>156</sup>.
- While the Confucian virtues of obedience, loyalty, devotion to family, friends and teachers had long been a part of any Chinese education, the Chiang regime extended this to include "the nation" and "the government" thus, according to some critics, distorting Confucianism with political paternalism<sup>157</sup>.
- Social studies, an interdisciplinary subject comprising history, geography and civics, became a primary area for inculcation of national spirit education.

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<sup>155</sup> Tsai Ching-Tien , & Bridges, David (1997) "Moral Piety, Nationalism and Democratic Education," in David Bridges (Ed.), *Education, Autonomy, and Democratic Citizenship: Philosophy in a Changing World*, (pp. 36-47). London: Routledge: p38)

<sup>156</sup> Tsai Ching-Tien (2002) "Chinese-ization and the Nationalistic Curriculum Reform in Taiwan," *Journal of Education Policy*, 17, (2): p231

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

#### **6.3.4.1) Developing and Disseminating the Curriculum**

Central to the curriculum reform was the Curriculum Standards, laid down by the Ministry of Education. These standards specified exactly what the curriculum was to contain. After specifying what was to be taught, the next requirement was teaching materials. These were provided by the National Institute of Compilation and Translation. This organization had been established in China in 1932 and after the government's removal to Taiwan was swiftly re-established in Taipei. Its principle job was the compilation and editing of textbooks. For this task the NICT formed ad-hoc editing and reviewing committees composed of 50 percent subject experts, 30 percent school teachers, 10 percent education theorists, 5 percent education administrators and 5 percent NICT editors. Usually the director of the NICT would chair the committee and would appoint one professor as the editor for the textbook. He had to produce a proposal for the treatment of the subject which had to be passed by the committee, then edit the textbook material assembled by the NICT on the recommendation of the subject experts, which was then subject once again to review by the committee.<sup>158</sup>

Since the editorial staff at the NICT was, almost without exception, Mainlanders, the government's goal of using the curriculum to propagate the values of Chinese nationalism was strengthened by the limitations on the knowledge of the textbook compilers. They knew almost nothing about Taiwan, nor was it seen as important in the greater Chinese picture. As a result, the textbooks in use on Taiwan contained very little about the place.

Textbooks were only part of the program. The NICT was also supposed to produce Instructional Guides in how subjects/textbooks should be taught. On top of this, the Taiwan Provincial School Visiting and Guidance Team as well as the county level guidance teams were supposed to provide demonstrations of how to use the NICT material. The centrally drive curriculum was such that each grade in every school in Taiwan was supposed to learn the same material, at the same time, from the same book in the same approved manner, each day.

#### **6.3.4.2) What was Taught?**

In the 1983 edition of Curriculum Standards for Junior High Schools, the

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid*, p234-235

first general objective emphasized “cultivating [Chinese] national consciousness. The objectives of the subject “Civics and Morality” emphasized “establishing the foundation for the revival of Chinese culture,” “promoting [Chinese] national consciousness” and “developing excellent Chinese culture.” The objectives of the subject “History” emphasized “understanding the development of the Chinese nation and the change of its territory” “understanding national tradition spirit through knowing our country’s long history and brilliant culture.” The objectives of the subject geography emphasized “understanding our country’s general geographical environment” and “understanding the establishment of the Taiwan region to be the geographical foundation for the reunification of China under the three Peoples Principles.<sup>159</sup>

Liu Meihui and Hung Li-chung in a very interesting paper<sup>160</sup> present details from the 1975 Social Studies syllabus for elementary schools. The second of the four major goals states:

To guide students to understand the relationship between Chinese culture and modern society, through the process of historical evolution in order to cultivate love for the nation and a willingness to contribute to building the community and the nation.

The sub-goals for grades 3 and 4 include: “To guide students to understand the importance of Taiwan as a base for the recovery of mainland China.” The sub-goals for grades 5 and 6 include:

- To guide students to understand the superior national attributes of the Chinese such as wisdom, competence and morality in order to build national confidence.
- To guide students to understand and glorify Chinese tradition and culture.
- To guide students to respect Dr Sun Yat-sen’s and Chiang Kai-shek’s contributions to

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<sup>159</sup> Wang Chien-lung (1999) “National Identities and the Controversy Regarding the New Subject: ‘Knowing Taiwan’,” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association, Montreal, Canada: p7.

<sup>160</sup> Liu Meihui, & Hung Li-ching (2002) “Identity Issues in Taiwan’s History Curriculum,” *International Journal Of Educational Research*, 37: pp 567-586.

national revolution.<sup>161</sup>

Robert Wilson in research carried out in 1966-7, produces an interesting list of the amount of time spent studying in a city public junior school. In grades 1 and 2 120 minutes a week was spent on “citizenship and morals,” the same amount of time that was devoted to general knowledge and twice the time that was given to arithmetic. Grades 3 and 4 got 120 minutes a week on citizenship and morals, as well as another 60 minutes a week on social studies. Ideology-directed education thus got as much time as arithmetic—180 minutes. Grades 5 and 6 spent 180 minutes on citizenship and morals, as well as 60 minutes each in the heavily ideologically oriented history and geography courses—slightly longer (30 minutes) in total than was devoted to reading.<sup>162</sup>

On top of this ideological training in class were the morning orations, usually ideologically based, and delivered at school assemblies along with the singing of patriotic songs, prior to the start of lessons, usually by the school principal.

One interesting aspect of Wilson research is to point out that:

It is only through their group membership and in coordination with others that Chinese children enter the political process. When they identify with the political process, they identify predominantly in terms of their group leader, who is the symbol and representative of the group and the initiator and arbiter of group politics. These feelings are formed and reinforced by training in the home and the school.<sup>163</sup>

Hence, we may assume, the cult of leader-worship of Chiang Kai-shek.

The curriculum was designed with little idea of what knowledge was intrinsically valuable, but largely out of political concerns. Its job was to reinforce a political dogmatism and a specific cultural hegemony. The textbook became a tool of political and cultural indoctrination.

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<sup>161</sup> *Ibid*, p576

<sup>162</sup> Wilson, Robert W. (1970) *Learning to Be Chinese: The Political Socialization of Children in Taiwan*, Cambridge Massachusetts: MIT: p163-4.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid*, p97

#### 6.3.4.3) Where was Taiwan's Place?

In the 1975 edition of the official Social Studies textbooks Taiwan was regarded merely as a province and China was the main focus. Taiwan's outlying islands were ignored altogether. Book Nine used the title "Our Territory" to introduce the Chinese mainland. The definition of "our territory" encompassed mainland China, Taiwan Penghu Kinmen and Matsu islands (and even included Outer Mongolia). It stated, "Taiwan is located in the southeast of our country".<sup>164</sup>

#### 6.3.4.4) Weaknesses of the System

There were two kinds, pedagogical and ideological. The pedagogical weaknesses were part of the inadequate provision of the necessary material and training to teach the curriculum as it was supposed to be taught. Basically the curriculum was pared down to reading, oral recitation and memorization of textbook contents. Questions in the textbooks were not questions for discussion but catechistic, in that prepared answers were applied and designed to be memorized.

Another weakness of the textbooks was that they were written by subject experts with no elementary school teaching experience. As a result the textbooks tended to be simply too difficult, likened by one commentator to "an academic research report which could not be used in elementary schools."<sup>165</sup>

In the Choushan model:

Pupils were treated as materials to be molded to any shape by pre-determined plans and teachers were the mechanics manipulating the machinery in the factory.... Human nature under this manufacturing model was one-dimensional, regimented and dehumanized. Human behavior was to be driven by extrinsic political demands and not by inner learning needs; human nature was passive and inactive the subjectivity and autonomy of human beings was totally devalued.

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<sup>164</sup> Liu and Hung *op. cit.* p580

<sup>165</sup> Quoted in *Ibid*, p289

The Choushan system was never a happy one. In fact, in a society where criticism of government policy was largely suppressed, there was a surprising amount of criticism of the education system. Wilson noted, amid the ideological strait-jacket of the 1960s that;

“There is in fact probably no other topic in Taiwan which receives as much attention as education. Editorials are constantly written on the subject. Much of this comment ... is criticism of the educational system. The underlying thread is always the desire to see education better serve the needs of a rapidly changing society.”<sup>166</sup>

But what of identity formation? Did the system turn Taiwanese into obedient, law-abiding citizens with a strong Chinese national consciousness, which was supposed to overcome ethnic differences?

The system’s ability to propagate “correct” behavior suffered from an internal contradiction. As Wilson describes it:

In the schools themselves the children soon become aware of (in fact, are partners in) probably the most talked about example of corruption in society. ... The very institution which attempt so strenuously to “mold” correct attitudes is also the one which gives children their first systematic introduction in the evasion and undermining of the ideals that are taught.<sup>167</sup>

Wilson is referring to the extra cramming sessions taken by children ambitious to get into good high schools. Given that the tutoring was paid for, it was also illegal. As such children had to be taught not to reveal any details about the tutoring and to lie if questioned about it. The tutoring sessions could also be manipulated by teachers to their advantage. By withholding information in regular school time, only to give it out during the cram sessions they could thereby force children to attend the cramming. Or they could simply arbitrarily lower the grades of students who did not take the tutoring. Children were thereby introduced at an early age both to illegality and coercive pressure to take part in the illegal behavior.

But more important are two related questions:

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<sup>166</sup> Wilson, *op. cit.*, p163

<sup>167</sup> Wilson, *op. cit.*, p130

- Did the system manage to win regime support from Taiwanese schoolchildren?
- And did this lessen the identity gulf between Mainlanders and Taiwanese?

Such evidence as there is suggests it was only partially successful.

#### 6.3.4.5) Regime Support

The only survey of this topic I could find (not surprising given the sensitive nature of the topic) was a separate paper by Wilson.<sup>168</sup>

Wilson sees congruence between the opinions of mainlander and Taiwanese children as a result of some deep residual “Chineseness” in the Taiwan population as a whole, rather than a specific result of the curriculum.

Wilson also did much of his research in a city school with a nearly even split between Taiwanese and mainlander children, which was certainly not representative of Taiwan as a whole, and a county school which also had an unusually high proportion of mainlander Children — 37.3 percent, double the proportion in the population as a whole. Given the acculturation pressure of both the curriculum and the demographics of the school on Taiwanese children, Wilson’s results might not be representative of all Taiwanese children but something of a best-case scenario as far as regime identification goes.

Wilson’s research finds a “general overall similarity between Mainlander and Taiwan children.” He attributes this, however, to both groups “adhere[ing] closely to similar political cultural norms despite their separation for the first half of this century, rather than the intensity of the education process. Since these similar cultural norms were central to his hypothesis, it is hard not to think that the conditioning of the education process itself has been overlooked. Wilson concluded:

With regard to politically relevant attitudes, observation revealed a strong similarity in training practices while the questionnaire data indicated a high level of congruence in response patterns. ... Mainlander and Taiwanese children show no difference in awareness of who makes the law and only minor differences in symbolic associations of cognitive images of

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<sup>168</sup> Wilson, Robert W. (1968) “A Comparison of Political Attitudes of Taiwanese Children and Mainlander Children on Taiwan,” *Asian Survey*, 8, (12): pp 988-1000

government. ... There is little support for any assumption about alienation of Taiwanese children from the political system in which they live. The bitterness expressed by some older Taiwanese and their alienation from certain specific political objectives (particularly the “return to the mainland”) are not matched by any evidence of alienation from the political system as a whole. ... The basic data reveals that similar basic political loyalties are becoming firmly established for both Taiwanese and Mainlander children.<sup>169</sup>

Another possible problem with Wilson’s approach here is that it is possible the children he was asking were just too young for politics to have much salience with them. Knowledge of what they been taught, and the use of that knowledge to provide the “right” answer to questions—thereby pleasing the authority figures asking the question—displays training rather than ideological conviction. Even among societies with more sophisticated education systems with more emphasis on thinking for oneself, one would not expect sophisticated and nuanced political understanding from junior schoolchildren. This is not to dismiss his results. Rather it is to wonder what a similar survey amongst, say, senior high-school students. The only survey I could find which comes close to this topic is work by Sheldon Appleton, regarding two surveys done in 1967 and 1970.<sup>170</sup>

Appleton’s survey group was composed of high school and college students, so we might expect more sophisticated question and answers. Appleton in his findings finds no significant differences in the attitude of the Taiwanese and Mainlander students as regards comparing their own society to others, particularly on the basis of the “relationship between government officials and the people.”<sup>171</sup>

In terms of expectations of the future Appleton found “future expectation of Mainlander students were somewhat higher than those of Taiwanese, which might suggest Taiwanese students perceived advantages accruing to Mainlanders within the ruling system. There is no follow up on this question so we do not know.

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<sup>169</sup> Wilson, 1968, *op. cit.*, p999.

<sup>170</sup> Appleton, Sheldon (1973) “Regime Support Among Taiwan High School Students,” *Asian Survey*, 8, (13): pp 750-760.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid*, p754.

What is interesting from Appleton's results however is that he find no appreciable differences in attitudes towards the political system between Taiwanese and Mainlanders, with both groups placing issues such as protection of dissent, political pluralism and the rule of law relatively low on their scale of political values compared with capable government and "decent living standards for all."

Appleton concluded that most of the students were "more concerned with economic progress, strong leadership and 'good government' than with civil liberties or participatory democracy."<sup>172</sup>

Appleton also finds however, that students had a fairly high opinion of the country but a rather low opinion of its political institutions. It would be tempting to conclude that this would be a reaction to the authoritarian system prevailing at the time. This would be a mistake. The students do not question the system's values, but rather seem to be concerned with its ability to deliver.

And yet elsewhere Appleton interprets his findings as showing that students were beginning to take prosperity for granted and stating "to aspire to the quality of life goals which seem to motivate most Western student movements." A majority disagreed with the statement "economic security is more important than political freedom" despite elsewhere showing preferences indicating the reverse. And older students showed more support for Western liberal concepts than their juniors, though these were still a minority.

Appleton himself thinks his data reveal some discontent among students as these products of the Choushan system became more aware of the explosion of Western liberal values in the 1960s.

However, as regards our main topic, regime support, two findings from his survey seem paramount: Only a quarter of those surveyed thought that political pluralism was personally important to them, and only 8 percent thought that majority rule was with only 1 percent making this their first choice among "characteristic of democracy."

Given that majority rule meant a handover of the power monopolized by Mainlanders to Taiwanese, and while Appleton never tells us the exact Mainlander:Taiwanese ration in his survey group, if it was at all representative, the majority must have been Taiwanese, then there seems to be very little discontent among

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<sup>172</sup> *Ibid*, p756.

Taiwanese students with their lack of political power or desire to redress the situation. All of which suggests that the Choushan system produced a very high level of regime identification and support.

#### **6.3.4.6) Narrowing Ethnic Divisions**

But to what extent did it break down the differences between Taiwan and Mainlanders? To what degree did it accomplish the eradication of ethnic sensitivities? While the data is sketchy, it suggests a far smaller degree of success.

Wilson says he saw no significant ethnic animosity in schools during his research. But one teacher he spoke to suggested that children respected their teachers too much to openly display ethnic conflict in front of them.<sup>173</sup>

It is possible that the Fordist nature of the teaching system and its emphasis on memorization and catechism, simply hid ethnic conflict. Children were taught the “correct” answer to certain questions, but they were not led to understand why these answers were correct. It is quite possible therefore that there was a lack of connection between how pupils answered questions in their civics lessons and what they actually thought outside school.

Evidence from other studies seems to confirm that whatever happened at school, the ethnic divide persisted outside the classroom. Appleton from his surveys in 1967 and 1970 writes:

Another inauspicious finding is the continuing tendency of Taiwanese and Mainlander students to associate largely with members of their own “ethnic group.” The students were asked about the last occasion when they and a companion went to a movie... More than 90% of the Taiwanese students reported that the person with whom they went to the movies was also a Taiwanese. Almost three quarters of the Mainlander students reported that their companion was also a Mainlander. Well over 90% in each group were able and willing to report whether their companion was a Mainlander or Taiwanese.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Wilson, (1970), *op. cit.*, p126

<sup>174</sup> Appleton *op. cit.* p759.

Appleton adds that this situation had in fact deteriorated between 1967 and 1970.

#### **6.3.4.7) Effects on Identity Consciousness**

While we have looked at what school pupils in the Choushan system were taught and their reactions to it, to get a general grasp of its effectiveness it might be useful to ask what they thought in adult life. For this we can look at later surveys of national identity consciousness.

The earliest I could find was from 1992 done by National Chengchi University's Election Studies Center which asked people if they identified as Taiwanese, Chinese or both. Some 19.3 percent identified as Taiwanese, 30.2 percent as Chinese and 46.4 percent as both.<sup>175</sup>

Amongst a population of only 15 percent Mainlanders, the number self-identifying as Chinese and the relatively low number identifying solely as Taiwanese shows some success in the instilling of Chinese nationalistic consciousness among Taiwanese. It is however impossible to say from the data whether the large number identifying as both, were doing so because they believed that to be Taiwanese was to be Chinese—if one accepted that Taiwan was a province of China—or because they identified with China culturally but with Taiwan politically.

This system with its China-centric and nationalistic goals remained largely unchanged for 40 years. Allen Wachmen has a remarkable quote from the Holo Taiwanese journalist Antonio Chiang on the results of this system:

Under KMT indoctrination, we not only don't know much about Taiwan, we learn[ed] to despise Taiwanese-ness, Taiwanese language. They said Taiwan has no language, no culture ... Taiwanese history started from the day the KMT arrived in Taiwan. ... Everything here is so small. Mountains are small, rivers are so short. There are volcanoes and earthquakes, "so how can we stay here" Mainlanders asked. The KMT brought that kind of philosophy, that kind of view to Taiwan and imposed that view on Taiwanese. So we felt humiliated, downgraded. We have no hope because

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<sup>175</sup> Lin Tsong-jyi (2002) "The Evolution of National Identity Issues in Democratizing Taiwan," in Stephane Corcuff (Ed.), *Memories of the Future: National Identity Issues and the Search for a New Taiwan*, (pp. 123-143). New York: M.E. Sharpe: p135.

we are too small. We have no culture.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Wachmen, Allen (1994) "Competing identities in Taiwan," in Murray A. Rubinstein (Ed.), *The Other Taiwan: 1945 to the Present*, (pp. 17-80). New York: M.E. Sharp: p55

### 6.3.5) Building a Chinese Taiwan: Conclusions

There can be no doubt that the KMT was partially successful in creating a Chinese consciousness among Taiwanese, as can be seen by the large number of Taiwanese who identify themselves as both Taiwanese and Chinese. They might not be making the claim of strict identity that the program aimed at—that is, they are not saying that to be Taiwanese is *ipso facto*, to be Chinese—but it seems quite clear that they strongly identify with China—not the China of the PRC perhaps, but some Chinese nationalist vision of a past and future China, culturally. One facet of this can be seen in the widespread acceptance of the Republic of China as the name of the country and the rather limited support given to name rectification campaigns by Taiwanese nationalist in the last decade.

Once again, as Taiwan engaged in huge reforms in the 1990s, the period of democratization, and given that the education system was heavily weighted in favor of Chinese identity consciousness, it is interesting to look at what reforms were demanded and why.

A demonstration in April 1994 saw the biggest turnout in a street protest since the lifting of martial law in 1987. The 4-10 Educational Reform Movement included parents students, academics, politicians and civic groups and their complaints included out-of-date textbooks, a curriculum that gave pupils little opportunity to develop creativity, ideologically based teaching that gave no opportunity for student to think for themselves, political intervention in the school system, over-emphasis of rote memorization, and exam-oriented cramming with little practical application. Huang Wu-hsiung, a math professor at National Taiwan University, was quoted as saying; “Taiwan’s educational system is still in a state of martial law. The system is anachronistic, considering that Taiwan’s social and political structures have already undergone democratic reforms.”<sup>177</sup>

The 4-10 participants give the impression that little had been achieved by 1994. This was not quite true and certainly not for the want of trying. Students had, in the months before the lifting of martial law in July 1987, published underground newsletters demanding amendment of the University law and less political control on campuses. The lifting of martial law saw a number of groups set up in support of different aspects of

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<sup>177</sup> Information about the 4-10 movement is from Her, Kelly (1997) “Education Revamped,” *Free China Review* (July), Taipei: Government Information Office.

educational reform, for example the Zhenduo Association, in support of a modernized pedagogy, the Association of Promoting Teachers' rights, which wanted more protection for teachers, the Foundation for Fundamental Education which supported curriculum change, and the League of Housewives, which sort more parental participation in education.<sup>178</sup> A non-governmental conference on education reform was held in January 1988 with over 30 groups participating. Another conference was held the following year, and it particularly focused on localizing curricular standards and liberalizing textbook production.<sup>179</sup>

As a result of the pressure from these groups a number of laws relating to education such as the University law, Teacher Training Law and Teachers Law were scheduled for examination and revision. Revisions to the University law were passed in 1993, allowing universities some autonomy over personnel curricula and funding. The new law allowed faculty members to elected presidents, and prevented the dismissal of faculty members for political reasons. Universities were also given the freedom to determine curricula in the light of the professional requirements of different disciplines. A large degree of political control was thus removed.

But for the 4-10 movement this was not nearly enough. The movement wanted thorough reform of the curriculum, textbooks and teaching methods. But the movement's complaint was not with the ideological bent of the curriculum, the inappropriateness of its touting the political ideology of one particular party as part of the basic learning for all students. That is to say that it was not the ideological part of the curriculum that was the principle bone of contention—at least for most of the reformers—but rather the usefulness of the subjects taught and the nature of the teaching involved. Of course the ideological bent of the system was criticized but largely as an example of how out of touch with modern educational needs the system was. It was not that learning about greater China affronted parents and students' self-identity. Rather they thought it was a waste of time, which failed to equip pupils with the kind of information they need to have to make headway in an increasingly knowledge-based economic environment.

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<sup>178</sup> Huang Yiling (2004) "Educational Reform in Taiwan: Change and Continuity Since the Change in Ruling Party," Paper presented at the European Association of Taiwan Studies Conference, London.

<sup>179</sup> Chen Jyh-jia (2002), *Reforming Textbooks, Reshaping School Knowledge: Taiwan Textbook Deregulation the 1990s*. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 10 (1), p49

Textbooks ... have been criticized for their old-fashioned “Greater China” ideology and out-of-date factual content as much as for their neglect of local issues and the Taiwanese language, to say nothing of their quality: all of them are cheap, mass-produced paperbacks.

For example, the standard geography textbooks still describe the ROC as comprising thirty-five provinces, one special administrative district (Hainan Island), and two territories (Mongolia and Tibet). But senior high student Lai Szu-ping says that the problems do not stop with geography—history textbooks pay too much attention to dry-as-dust facts, without providing sufficient analysis. “In our English book,” she goes on, “there’s a section on credit cards which tells us how rare and unusual they are. No wonder we get bored.”

Lydia Lai, who teaches English at the same high school, has some sympathy with her. “The textbooks are outdated and far removed from students’ experience,” she confesses. “They have no chance to apply what they learn in their daily lives, and so naturally they forget everything as soon as they’ve taken the test.”<sup>180</sup>

Whilst the questions of textbooks and the teaching of Taiwanese history was eventually to become highly politicized, initially demands for reform were for practical reasons to do with parents and teachers idea of a suitable modern education.

#### **6.4) Nativist Challenges to “Chinese” Hegemony**

It remains, I contend, an unresolved question as to which came first in Taiwan, political liberalism or social pluralism. Many of the sweeping cultural and societal changes that have occurred since the late 1980s are seen as expressly the result of a great political change, the ending of martial law and its limitations on constitutional freedoms of expression and formation in 1987. The ending of martial law itself was the result of two factors which meshed together: the flagging of the Cold War, which led to the Taiwan regime needing to find a way of gaining international, especially US support (one is tempted to say “international respectability”) other than through staunch anti-communism,

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<sup>180</sup> Her, Kelly, *op. cit.*.

and the increasing demand for reform of the political process, particularly the introduction of representative democracy, by “native Taiwanese.” The opprobrium caused by the state-sanctioned murder of Henry Liu, the author of a critical biography of Chiang Ching-kuo, in the US in 1984 and the 1986 people power revolution in the Philippines caused a window of liberalism to open which in effect the KMT could never subsequently close.

Subsequently there followed massive campaigns for political rights which were also associated with movements supporting a nativization not only of the political sphere but also of the cultural one, with Taiwan’s suppressed ethnicities demanding equality and respect for their cultural traditions. Out of this eventually evolved a design for a multicultural Taiwan. But it is important to realize that “multicultural Taiwan” was not simply the result of a flowering of liberal pluralism. It was rooted in politics, in a new conception of what the state in Taiwan should be, or perhaps we might say *whose* state it was to be, and it was intended primarily to reassure minorities that nativization was not about to replace one hegemony with another.

### **6.4.1) Identity Again**

With regard to identity, I contend that multiculturalism has done something to redress the cultural alienation was that the cognitive dissonance required by the Chinese Nationalist cultural project had created, as well as going some way to allay suspicion on the part of other ethnic groups particularly the Hakka and Mainlanders that Taiwanese nationalism was a Holo-Taiwanese supremacist ideology. It has the problem, however of multicultural projects elsewhere in the world that in focusing on diversity, it weakens social and cultural cohesion. From the point of view of national consciousness, it weakens identification with to quote Anthony D. Smith again “the symbols, values, myths, memories and traditions of the community and the artifacts that express them.” Under multi-culturalism, the imagined community either becomes smaller—the celebration of diversity and difference means identifying primarily below the level of the nation, and possibly not identifying with it at (for example some Asian communities in Britain—or it becomes too large, a “citizen of the world” is a citizen of nowhere, this time producing a personal alienation and *anomie*.

### **6.4.2) Roots of Taiwanese Nationalism**

The basic grievance of Holo Taiwanese in the 1980s was the same as it was in the 1920s

under Japanese rule, although they constituted a majority of the population, they were given no say in their own affairs. This, of course, applied to Hakka and Aborigines as well, of course. But since the overwhelming majority of the population were Holo Taiwanese, any movement toward majority government would mean devolving power to this particular ethnic group and a potentially uncertain position for everyone else. The problem of any Taiwanese nationalist movement has always been to build a Taiwanese consciousness that has room for the Hakka, (and latterly the Mainlanders) that does not espouse Holo-Taiwanese chauvinism.

Whilst the expression “ethnic politics” has come into common use in the last few years, Taiwan has always had ethnic politics and the most subtle player of this game has often been the KMT. As hopes for a swift return to China faded in the 1960s the party needed to recruit local talent to replace its aging cadre. The fact that it preached a doctrine of universal Chineseness did not blind the party to the distinctions and rivalries between the *bensheng* Han groups and the party proved an adept practitioner of the colonial strategy of divide and rule by recruiting *bensheng* apparatchiks from among the Hakka. This created a far stronger clientelist link between KMT and the Hakka than between the party and the Holo Taiwanese. While, ironically, some of the most ardent Taiwanese nationalists have been Hakka, for the most part the Hakka communities been wary observers of the “Taiwanese consciousness” movement. A fascinating interview with four of Taiwan’s best known cultural figures produced this fascinating exchange:

Interviewer: Why do the Hakka communities in Taiwan vote solidly Blue?

Tang Nuo: They don’t—rather, they vote solidly against Chen [Shui-bian].

Chu Tien-hsin: Exactly: it’s the other way around. They refuse to vote Green.

Hou Hsiao-hsien: Their situation is like this. I’m a Hakka myself, but I was brought to Taiwan by my family in 1947, right after I was born. Basically I am what they call “mainland Hakka.” When I was a boy, I refused to admit this because my schoolmates all said that Hakkas were mean and stingy. Such stereotypes were very strong. Therefore I absolutely would not admit that I was a Hakka in my childhood. Later, I found that Hakkas tended to live in highland areas of agricultural counties, in self-contained groups with a very strong sense of clan self-protection. They

were conservative in their ways, and had long been on bad terms with the much more numerous Minnan [Holo Taiwanese]. Since they had so often been attacked or threatened in the past, going right back to the seventeenth century, Hakkas were reluctant to marry Minnan, or into any other ethnic group. Their rate of inter-marriage was always low. So after the KMT arrived from the mainland, maybe they looked to the Blue camp as some sort of shield.

Chu: Let me add something. Because my mother is Hakka, most of my relatives are Hakkas. I believe we should say that they have received neither preferential treatment nor special humiliation or oppression from the KMT, so their attitude towards the KMT is to stay at a respectful distance from it. But they are scared by Minnan and dislike them very much, because historically there were so many violent conflicts fought between these two ethnic groups. We have a saying that Zhangzhou people and Quanzhou people came to Taiwan one after another. Then there were Minnan and Hakka. Many died in the fights between them. So they have been enemies for ages. Tang Nuo is right to point out that Hakkas fear the Green rather than trust the Blue. The Green's ethnic base is the Minnan population who make up about 70 per cent of Taiwan's total population, and they have shown some increasingly exclusivist tendencies in recent years. They talk continuously about the Taiwanese people or the Taiwanese language, but these usages do not include the Hakka. They are referring only to the Minnan. That's why some Hakkas would reply, 'the state you want to establish is yours—we didn't say we wanted to found a state: have you ever listened to us? If in your Republic of Taiwan, it is only the Minnan who are going to rule and become masters of the country, then what's the difference from the Mainlanders ruling us, as it used to be? We are still the same, the ruled. Therefore we are not at all interested in your nation-building project.' I think this is their basic attitude.<sup>181</sup>

I quote this at such length because it so amply demonstrates Hakka suspicions of the

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<sup>181</sup> Hou Hsiao-hsien, Chu Tien-hsin, Tang Nuo, & Hsia Chu-joe (2004) "Tensions in Taiwan," *New Left Review* (July-August): p29-30

Taiwanese nation-building project. This is not to say that there were not Hakka involved in the Taiwan nation-building project, former president Lee Teng-hui, the architect of KMT “localization” in the 1990s was a Hakka. But it is to say that by and large Hakka communities have shown strong support for the KMT, not because the KMT’s Chinese Nationalist project appealed to them but, as Chu Tien-hsin points out, given the past history of the Hakka-Holo relations and the Holo Chauvinism displayed by some Democratic Progressive Party ideologues. They were deeply suspicious of the alternative Taiwan nation-building project.

Sometimes this chauvinism could show itself quite unintentionally. For example, in 2003 the national promotion exam for customs officials and the admittance exams for the police force included question, which although written in Chinese characters, only made sense to speakers of Holo Taiwanese. This would, of course, disadvantage any non-Holo speaker but it especially irked the Hakka examinees, who roundly criticized Examination Yuan President Yao Chia-wen. That Yao was a former DPP chairman and a pioneer of Taiwan’s independence movement was hardly a reassuring sign nor was the explanation that the inclusion of the questions represented thoughtlessness rather than chauvinism. The fact is that while the Hakka and the Holo Taiwanese, are often conflated as *benshengren* and assumed to have the same nativist political interests; they do not. And however bad Hakka-Holo relations might be, those between *bensheng* Han and the Aborigines have been far worse. Just as the Hakka have little taste for a majority rule if that means putting in power a political party largely representative of their traditional rivals/enemies, the same applies to the aborigines, with the addition that aboriginal social strictures have aided a far more extensive KMT clientelist politics among Aboriginal communities.

If one of the problems of developing a Taiwanese national consciousness has been the minority ethnic groups have been wary of, as Renan puts it, “having, in the future, a shared program to put into effect” when the principle architects of that program, assuming a democratic system, would be the Holo-Taiwanese.

It has been to allay these fears that Taiwanese nationalists have in recent years tried consciousness-building using a multicultural discourse, as an attempt to allay fears that Taiwanese consciousness means replacing one ethnic hegemony with another.

### **6.4.3) A New Taiwanese Consciousness**

In 1992, the Taiwanese nationalist Democratic Progressive Party won 31 percent of the vote in the first representative national election—for the Legislative Yuan—to be held in Taiwan. Since that time the DPP and latterly the pan-green alliance’s share of the vote has climbed, but seldom exceeded 40 percent. The KMT manages to get around 60 percent of the vote while its natural supporters—mainland Chinese, Hakka and Aborigines—comprise only some 30 percent of the population. This suggests that almost half the Hoklo-Taiwanese—the ethnic group most identified with Taiwanese consciousness, do not vote for the party which represents that consciousness in the political arena. As Chang Mau-kuei expresses it:

Taiwanese nationalism seems to have taken another significant turn during the 1990s. Since then many Taiwanese have chosen to side with the Kuomintang and support the institutional arrangement of the ROC. The name and symbols of the previous “outsiders’ regime” continue to exist and many people still vote for the Kuomintang, despite the rising tide of nationalistic thinking. Supporters of Taiwanese nationalism have explained this in terms of the “indoctrination” of nationalistic education and ideology. They argue that the Taiwanese people were not awakened to the fate of an “authentic” Taiwanese. But the success of indoctrination cannot explain why, even after political liberalization, support for unequivocal Taiwan independence has not exceeded a low 15 percent.<sup>182</sup>

Why is this? I have yet to see serious survey work done on this question. The only evidence I have is anecdotal, from my years as a journalist in Taiwan but the explanations that I have encountered are:

- Some people value the link with China and its classical culture and believe that Taiwan nationalism would, in some way, sever their sense of personal inheritance of this;
- Some think that the issue is simply an annoying irrelevance when what really matters is the economy, at the management of which the KMT is much superior;
- There is also a strong element of snobbery among middle-class Holo-Taiwanese, who read Taiwan consciousness in class-war terms, as a grab for power by those

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<sup>182</sup> Chang Mau-kuei, *op. cit.*, p51

insufficiently cultured to be able to wield it (an outlook that is surely a legacy of Chinese Nationalist stigmatism);

- Some Holo liberals who dislike the chauvinism they encounter within the movement;
- Others dislike the culture of victimhood that is often central to Taiwanese consciousness, the sorrow of being Taiwanese as Lee Teng-hui memorably expressed it, the idea that Taiwanese have historically been continual victims of foreign domination or DPP election campaign material which in effect says remember 228, vote DPP.
- The post-authoritarian KMT is simply no longer seen as an “alien” regime. Lee Teng-hui used democratization, the issue of an apology for the 228 Incident, and concepts such as a “community of fate” and “new Taiwanese” to legitimize the KMT in Taiwan.

The problem for Taiwanese nationalists is how to win over these groups and also the ethnic minorities. Much of what is core to Taiwanese nationalist feeling, the sufferings of colonialism under Japan followed by the colonialism of the KMT, memories of 228, wounded cultural pride, simple does not resonate with those they need to attract. The result of this has been to try to use multiculturalism as a tool of Taiwanese consciousness building. Essentially this has involved detaching the idea of being “Taiwanese” from ethnicity, point of origin or time of arrival and reinventing it as a civic consciousness, a commitment to a certain set of values, that everyone might share. The model for this new conception of being Taiwanese is the DPP’s Resolution on Ethnic Diversity and National Unity issued in October 2004.<sup>183</sup> Central to this interesting document is the idea that “national identification should be built on civic awareness.”

With national sovereignty having been secured through democratization, Taiwan is no longer faced with the problem of alien rule. What remains is the question of how to meet the challenge of foreign annexation. National identification should transcend the awareness of one’s place of origin and be built on a civic awareness which stands shoulder to shoulder with the protection of the fruits of democracy and helps forge the Taiwan experience. The DPP recognizes the significance and shoulders the historic

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<sup>183</sup> See Appendix 1 for the full text of this.

responsibility of this paradigmatic change.<sup>184</sup>

To further this the DPP admonishes people not to equate the past sins of the KMT with Mainlanders in general, and to practice forgiveness for past wrongs even if these cannot be forgotten. It denounces the idea of ethnic prejudice, claims, “each ethnic group is a master of Taiwan” and says “exchanges between ethnic groups should be initiated in order to promote ethnic reconciliation.” And resolves to “build Taiwan into a global model of a culturally diverse nation. In response to globalization, our nation shall actively promote cultural diversification policies, become a practical model for the global effort to diversify ethnic culture, and follow democratization by building a culturally diverse nation with a shared future.” The resolution concludes:

... The unity of the Taiwanese state is created by the intertwining of a diversity of ethnic groups. Only by guaranteeing that there is space for the cultural development of each ethnic group will it be possible to build a harmonious society based on mutual recognition and respect, consolidate constitutional democracy and realize “unity through diversity.”

We also believe that cultural diversity is an asset of human civilization as a whole, and an active soft national strength. In addition to offering each ethnic group ample resources to help maintain and pass on their unique languages and cultures, the government should also create an opportunity for the cultures of minority ethnic groups to enter the daily lives of the nation’s population and the public sphere, thereby offering these cultures the opportunity to develop in step with the modern world through exchanges and interaction.

We are deeply convinced that building a multi-ethnic republic with mutual support between ethnic groups and cultures will create a new model for ethnic reconciliation and cultural diversification following the completion of the democratic project.<sup>185</sup>

#### **6.4.4) Is Multiculturalism in Taiwan Possible?**

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<sup>184</sup> Text taken from the *Taipei Times*, Oct 2, 2004, page 8

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

Multiculturalism in Taiwan is a discourse with a specific political purpose advocated by a particular political group. It is essentially a tool of Taiwanese separatism, seeking to redefine Taiwan as something other than a part of China as the PRC and diehard unificationists in Taiwan would have it. The aim is to define Taiwan as a “community of fate” not a nation by virtue of consanguinity but by virtue of common interests, a shared historical past and a shared destiny. The alternative is to see Taiwan as a part of China temporarily detached but someday to be reattached to a “motherland.”

As we have seen, the main problem in the “community of destiny” idea is that it is advocated especially by members of the largest ethnic group, and is looked on with suspicion by members of the minorities. Mainlanders are sensitive to the role they have played in Holo Taiwanese demonology as, unscrupulous carpetbaggers, merciless colonial exploiters and the villains of the 2-28 Incident. In a Holo Taiwanese nationalist Taiwan, is there, they wonder, any place for them. The Hakka and the Aborigines, meanwhile have rather unfavorable historical memories of Holo domination and have not felt sufficiently reassured that Holo chauvinism has been successfully eradicated.

Multiculturalism therefore is not simply a way to work out a *modus vivendi* among contending ethnic groups, but it is specifically an ideology used by one ethnic group to reassure others of its good intentions and to win them over to that group’s political aims. If we look closely at the DPP’s Resolution on Ethnic Diversity and National Unity, each of the 10 points is there to reassure at least one ethnic group that its interests, culture, history and right to share Taiwan, will be protected.

It is possible to read the resolution and to know immediately to which ethnic groups or groups each article is directed. For example, there is an attempt to reassure Mainlanders that they will not be held responsible for the sins of the KMT, and to reassure them that they are as much a part of Taiwan as any other group. Hakka and Aborigines are told that they have an equal voice and that Holo-Taiwanese majoritarianism will not disempower them. In short, the resolution is aimed specifically at reassuring doubters that the overthrow of forcibly inclusive Chinese Nationalist hegemony as regards identity, ethnicity, and culture, will not be replaced by an exclusive and intolerant Holo Taiwanese hegemony.

Will it work? It is still too early to tell. One criticism that is often made of multiculturalism is that it weakens social cohesion, i.e. by stressing the differences between groups and asserting the right to retain those differences it narrows the size of

the “we” group of which people see themselves as members and promotes rivalry and divisiveness instead of collectivism. In Taiwan some could argue that the attention paid to ethnic claims and rights following democratization has exacerbated a situation that under the authoritarian KMT’s Great China ideology was controlled. Liberal multiculturalism thus opens the Pandora’s box of ethnic hatred. Fear of ethnic disquiet, however, can hardly justify the denial of basic rights. But certainly the situation appears to have become worse in the last 15 years or so. Will it continue to do so or will the resolution do some good?

Many of the suspicions the resolution sets out to address are rooted in a perception of a Taiwanese nationalism that itself is in danger of becoming anachronistic. There appears to be growing evidence that young people identify more with Taiwan than they did during the years of the hegemony of the Chinese Nationalist grand narrative over the education system. But they do not identify with the history of oppression that Taiwanese nationalists want to make central to their project. They do not, in fact, identify much with history at all.<sup>186</sup> What they do identify with is globalization. They see themselves as being rooted in Taiwan but as citizens of a global community. Ethnic grudges, their historical origins and their modes of redress just do not figure very much as a part of their perception of the world. If this is so, then multiculturalism might fail in Taiwan, not because the obstacles to tolerance are so insurmountable, but because the reasons for its proselytization are simply disappearing.

### **6.4.5) Teaching Taiwanese History**

While Taiwan has been developing its multi-cultural narrative it has also been trying to increase knowledge of Taiwanese history. History curriculums are a prime element of national consciousness building<sup>187</sup> and it is no accident that the Choushan system

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<sup>186</sup> My source for these impressions—I do not claim them as anything more—is from a discussion in December 2005, with Prof. Shelley Rigger concerning her latest research work on perceptions of identity among Taiwan’s youth.

<sup>187</sup> One of the strongest elements of France’s national identity building program, embarked on in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century as a response to the increasing challenge from Germany, was the creation of a national high school history curriculum centered on the promotion of French cultural nationalism. The curriculum survives to this day, with an almost scriptural authority among the French, although the values it supports, while providing great social and cultural cohesion amongst the French are regarded as posing serious integration problems among France’s new multi-cultural population. The ongoing controversy over the rewriting of Russia’s high school history textbooks by the Putin regime, or Japanese history text books attitudes to World War II are other indicators of the importance of history curriculums in national consciousness formation.

neglected Taiwanese history almost completely. The problems of teaching history which conflicted with the old China-centric program are interestingly displayed in a controversy over history textbooks. If creating a national consciousness depends in some way upon knowing, a national historical narrative— it is the story that matters, but this might only be tangentially related to the facts—the one of the problems Taiwanese consciousness raising has faced is that Taiwanese history has not, until the last decade, ever been taught. In 1997 a new curriculum for junior high school student was introduced which was to include three sessions a week on the new textbooks *Knowing Taiwan*.<sup>188</sup>

There were three volumes in the series covering history, geography and society. They aimed at redressing the shortcomings we saw Antonio Chang complaining about earlier<sup>189</sup> Law Wing-wah identifies “four major perceptual changes” introduced in the series:

- Taiwan is no longer described as a periphery of the ROC but as a political entity, the ROC on Taiwan, in of and by itself. The jurisdiction of the ROC is limited to its present territory rather than the previously claimed on which included the Chinese mainland. The history and culture of Taiwan are traced back to at least four centuries ago.
- The government no longer uses people’s differences in the place of origin and time of settlement to maintain the domination of the Mainlanders over native Taiwanese. Instead the Taiwan government appeals for building up ethnic solidarity and fostering a common and shared identity, the “Taiwan people” with “Taiwan consciousness” rather than Chinese.
- The Taiwan people are encouraged to further develop the spirit of Taiwan, which is inherited from the attitudes and lifestyles of the Taiwan people who have fought for their own fate and against external powers including past colonizers and the PRC for centuries.
- Taiwan people are described as masters of their past and future. They are given the responsibility to build up a new Taiwan (instead of a bastion to recover the

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<sup>188</sup> The series’ name in Mandarin was *Renshi Taiwan* (認識台灣); this was translated variously as *Know Taiwan*, *Knowing Taiwan* and *Getting to Know Taiwan*.

<sup>189</sup> Page 113 above.

Chinese mainland).<sup>190</sup>

It would be a mistake to think that Knowing Taiwan, at least in its history component, presented the unvarnished truth. For example “the teaching materials studiously avoid references to past conflicts between Han settlers and Aboriginal tribes, instead painting a highly misleading picture of harmonious and peaceful coexistence.”<sup>191</sup> Nor of course was anything said about sub-ethnic conflict between and within the Han settler groups themselves.

Knowing Taiwan was bitterly criticized by both scholars and politicians. On June 3 1997, Legislator Lee Ching-hua of the New Party, a breakaway faction of the KMT which disagreed with Lee Teng-hui’s Taiwanization policy, held a symposium at the Legislative Yuan in which six scholars attacked the new textbooks. Lee’s opposition was particularly vociferous because he was at the time the head of the legislature’s Education Committee and yet he apparently had no idea that the texts were to go into use that autumn until being, he claimed, tipped off by a teacher.

At the seminar the scholars criticized Knowing Taiwan for “eulogizing the era of colonial rule in Japan,” “adopting the historical perspective of Japanese imperialism” and for being filled with de-Sinicizing ideology. Two days later Lee went to the Ministry of Education to demand that the textbooks introduction be delayed, as they constituted a “preparation for Taiwan independence.”<sup>192</sup>

On June 22 Lee renewed his demand in another symposium, where he called the textbook propaganda and faulted them for being insufficiently critical of colonial rule in Taiwan and the focus on building a “new Taiwan,” without reference to future unification with the mainland.<sup>193</sup>

Lee’s campaign though was stifled under the weight of pro-textbook sentiment. For example the day following this symposium saw DPP legislator Chen Chi-mai

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<sup>190</sup> Law Wing-wah (2002) “Education Reform in Taiwan: A Search for a National Identity through Democratization and Taiwanization,” *Compare*, 32, (1): p75

<sup>191</sup> Liu and Hung, *op. cit.*, p580

<sup>192</sup> Wang Chien-lung (1999) “National Identities and the Controversy Regarding the New Subject: ‘Knowing Taiwan’,” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association, Montreal, Canada: p20

<sup>193</sup> Central News Agency (1997, 06/22) “Textbook About Taiwan Called ‘Propaganda’.”

announced that a petition in support of the textbooks had been started the previous Friday and in three days gained the support (predictably) of 31 opposition legislators and (more persuasively) 185 academics.<sup>194</sup>

The following day the National Institute of Compilation and Translation, by whom the series was commissioned, approved the books for use in the autumn.

Huang Hsiu-cheng, the National Taiwan University professor who edited the history volume for the NICT, defended his work saying that the question of Taiwan's status—Chinese province or putative nation state—had been vigorously debated on the reviewing committee of the work and the resulting volume was the result of a compromise, after some 20 meetings, between experts of all shades of political opinion.

Chao Li-lun, the head of the NICT and a KMT stalwart not known for strong Taiwanese-consciousness, also vigorously defended the books.

Given the controversy over *Knowing Taiwan*, it might be thought that its use in schools represented the complete rejection of the old China-centric history curriculum and the total victory of the Taiwan-centrists. The truth is rather more ambiguous. *Knowing Taiwan* was a supplementary text. It was not meant to replace the core textbooks, it was not part of the core curriculum. Instead, it was meant to be taught *in addition* to the China-centric version of history that the core textbooks still propounded.

As Chen Wei-chi puts it:

The [*Knowing Taiwan*] series was actually a mere supplementary reading to the official history textbook taught at the junior high school level. The content of the official textbook was then still a China-centered narrative of history. Chinese history, from archeological findings down to contemporary China, accounted as usual for the major portion of the text. ... [*Knowing Taiwan*] ... was only a brief supplement to the official ... curriculum.<sup>195</sup>

This is important to note. It was not the case that one national narrative had been replaced

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<sup>194</sup> Central News Agency (1997, 06/23) "Lawmakers, Scholars Support New Textbook 'Get To Know Taiwan'."

<sup>195</sup> Chen Wei-chi (2004) "The History of an Alien Nation or the Alienation of History? The Controversy over History Textbook Reform in the 90s," Paper presented at the 18th Conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia, Taipei.

with another, rather than two different narratives were being taught side by side.<sup>196</sup>

If this sounds confusing it should also be remembered that Taiwanese have historically had another identity forced upon them, that of Japanese. While some might think that the Japanese colonial era is a long time past, anyone familiar with both China and Taiwan can immediately see Japanese influences in the patterns of everyday life. To be raised with two contending identities and living in the influence of a third; it is not surprising that Taiwanese identities seem vague, nor that Stephane Corcuff calls Taiwan a “laboratory of identity.”

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<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*

