

COMPETING NARRATIVES, IDENTITY POLITICS, AND CROSS-STRAIT RECONCILIATION

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After nearly sixty years of political confrontation, hopes for cross-Taiwan Strait reconciliation have run high since the traditionally pro-unification Nationalist Party (the Kuomintang, KMT) returned to power in Taiwan in May 2008. However, obstacles to reconciliation remain daunting, due to a fundamental disjuncture between the ideological beliefs of the two sides, in particular because China and Taiwan still lack a shared memory of Taiwanese history that can serve as the foundation for their reconciliation. This article examines a wide variety of sources from Taiwan and China over recent decades. It illustrates their conspicuous memory gap over the history of the island. Cross-Strait reconciliation needs to begin with recognizing rather than ignoring or covering up the memory gap. Dialogue and joint studies should be carried out to better understand each other's political perspective and emotional appeal associated with historical memory.

Key words: cross-Taiwan Strait relations, historical memory, reconciliation, Chinese nationalism, Taiwanese nationalism

Introduction

After nearly sixty years of political confrontation, hopes for cross-Taiwan Strait peace and reconciliation have surged since the traditionally anti-independence Nationalist Party (KMT) returned to power in Taiwan in May 2008. Under the auspices of President Ma Ying-jeou, the Taiwanese government has for the first time given the green light to two-way tourism, direct flights, mail, and shipping with mainland China. It also ended a ban on investment from China to Taiwan and further opened financial services. On June 29, 2010, China and Taiwan signed the historic Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA), which is considered their most significant agreement in six decades. In addition, discussions about establishing a long-term, stabilizing political framework across the Taiwan Strait have emerged in both policy and academic circles. In a 2009 lecture, former Taiwanese Foreign Minister Hung-mao Tien predicted that there could be a narrow window of opportunity to build “a framework for more lasting peace” before 2012.¹

Despite the earnest hope, most forecasts for future development of cross-Strait political dialogue are rather cautious due to the thorny issue of Taiwan sovereignty, which cannot be sidestepped. A few commonly mentioned obstacles to a quick breakthrough toward a mutually acceptable resolution include the continuing security pressure across the Taiwan Strait, Taiwan’s contentious domestic politics, and the long-standing distrust between China and Taiwan. An additional factor is the significant disjuncture between their ideologies. One disjuncture specifically pertains to the contrast between Taiwan’s democratic values versus China’s authoritarian system. Another ideological disjuncture, which has received much less attention from international relations scholars, is that the two sides lack a shared historical perspective that can serve as the basic founda-

1. Hung-mao Tien, “Clock Ticking on Taiwan Strait Resolution,” lecture at the UCLA International Institute, September 29, 2009; available at www.international.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=112360.

tion for reconciliation. Having been separated from mainland China since 1895, except for a brief reunion from 1945 to 1949, Taiwanese society has developed a collective memory of the island's history that is not shared by people across the Strait. Such a significant memory gap will have a long-lasting, constitutive effect on Chinese and Taiwanese mentality regarding politically consequential issues, such as national identity, reconciliation, and reunification.

Existing studies have noted a Sino-centric versus a Taiwan-centric school of historiography in Taiwan, but a systematic study of how pre-1949 Taiwanese history is remembered in mainland China and Taiwan is still lacking.² This article compares and contrasts the Chinese and Taiwanese nationalist memories covering four historical periods of the island: ancient Taiwan, Dutch colonization and the conquest by the Zheng family, rule of the Qing Empire, and Japanese colonization.³ Examined source materials, mostly dating from the 1980s, include history books, school textbooks, museums and commemorations, personal memoirs, speeches, and media coverage published in China and Taiwan.

A Taiwan-centric historiography is closely associated with a pro-independence nationalist movement in Taiwan that has been openly pursued since the 2-28 Incident (or Massacre) in

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2. For some examples of existing studies on the memory contestations in Taiwan, see Stephane Corcuff, "History Textbooks, Identity Politics, and Ethnic Introspection in Taiwan: The June 1997 'Knowing Taiwan' Textbooks Controversy and the Questions It Raised on the Various Approaches to 'Han' Identity," in Edward Vickers and Alisa Jones, eds., *History Education and National Identity in East Asia* (London: Routledge, 2005); Liu Meihui and Li-Ching Hung, "Identity Issues in Taiwan's History Curriculum," *International Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 37, Nos. 6-7 (2002), pp. 567-86; Ni Chung-chun, "Imagining Taiwanese-ness through History: The Reworking of Narrative in General Histories of Taiwan" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2008).
 3. For a comparison of Chinese and Taiwanese nationalist memories of the tragic February 28 (2-28) Incident in 1947, see Yinan He, "Historical Memories and cross-Taiwan Strait Reconciliation," paper prepared for the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, March 16-19, 2011, Montreal, Canada.

1947, when an island-wide uprising of native Taiwanese erupted but was soon put down by the KMT forces from the Chinese mainland. Since the 1980s, this historiography has gained significant influence and directly challenged the Sino-centric memory traditionally maintained by the KMT regime in Taiwan. Take Taiwan's school textbooks for example: Since the 1980s, the textbooks have dropped the previous emphasis on anti-communist ideology and China-centered nationalism. Instead, school curricula have had an increasing focus on "Taiwan's subjectivity" (*Taiwan zhutixing*), devoting more time to Taiwanese geography, culture, and history.⁴ In China, systematic studies on Taiwan hardly existed until the 1980s. At the same time, China's official view of Taiwanese history has also reoriented itself in light of a new policy shift toward Taiwan, namely, from "liberation of Taiwan" to peaceful unification under the "One Country, Two Systems" framework.

This article acknowledges that views within both schools of historical ideas are not uniform. Even in authoritarian China, where scholars are mindful of the official party lines when studying a politically sensitive topic such as Taiwan, debates on certain historical issues are not uncommon. Still, one can recognize an obvious commonality shared by advocates of each school. Chinese historiography on Taiwan tends to stress Taiwan's similarity and close ties with China, a "motherland" that discovered and developed Taiwan since ancient times. The historiography also stresses their common fate in modern history, in which both suffered imperialist aggression and China protected and assisted Taiwan whenever possible. In contrast, Taiwanese nationalist historiography contends that China and Taiwan are different and frequently detached, and stresses that throughout history, Taiwan has been a victim at the hands of various outsiders. China is a prominent perpetrator because it either ignored and despised Taiwan, or mismanaged, plundered, and even betrayed Taiwan.

Literature on social memory suggests that remembering the

4. See Liu and Hung, "Identity Issues in Taiwan's History Curriculum."

past is not a simple act of recording historical events, but a process of constant reconstruction of these events in light of present social and political changes.⁵ The Chinese and Taiwanese nationalists view the same Taiwanese history with such great discrepancy not simply because of their different experiences—for even in Taiwan very few people today have personally experienced any of the historical periods in question—but even more so because of the conflicting political agendas that motivate them to fit history into predetermined themes. Cross-Strait reconciliation needs to begin with recognizing, rather than ignoring or covering up, this memory gap. Dialogues and joint studies should be carried out to better understand each other's political perspectives and emotional appeals associated with historical memory.

Ancient Taiwan

“Taiwan has been a Chinese territory since ancient times!” is one of the most recited statements in Chinese discourse regarding Taiwan. Chinese historians have a general consensus that almost all people living in Taiwan today, both the Han and non-Han, had their ethnic origins in Chinese mainland, and that China and Taiwan have had close political ties for thousands of years. This argument is fiercely opposed by the Taiwan-centered historiography, which argues that before the Han arrived in Taiwan, many aborigines living there had nothing to do with China. Taiwanese historiography further states that despite sporadic official Chinese activities in Taiwan and Penghu (also known as the Pescadore Islands), Taiwan had never been under the jurisdiction of Chinese sovereignty prior to the Qing conquest.

On prehistoric Taiwan, three theoretical models exist in the academic debate: theories of southern origin, arguing that Tai-

5. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Jeffrey Olick and Joyce Robbins, “Social Memory Studies: From ‘Collective Memory’ to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 24, No. 1 (1998), pp. 105-40.

wan's aborigines are the carriers of the Austronesian languages who originally lived on the islands in Southeast Asia and later moved to Taiwan; theories of northern origin contending that the aborigines are descendants of the ancient *Baiyue* (hundreds of Yue tribes), people who came from southern China, although the Yue people remaining in China have since been assimilated by the Han; and theories suggesting that Taiwan is the homeland of the Austronesian languages and center of the southern islands culture.⁶ Early PRC historians and anthropologists supported the northern origin of Taiwan's aborigines, or what they call *Gaoshanzu* (mountain people), but their studies were scarce and based on secondary sources, ancient Chinese records, or piecemeal archeological evidence from Taiwan in the 1930s.⁷

In recent decades, Chinese literature on this topic has been booming. 1982 saw the publication of the first history book on Taiwan's aborigines, *Gaoshanzu jianshi*, and of Taiwan itself, *Taiwan difangshi*, in China.⁸ Another comprehensive study of the history and culture of the aboriginal Taiwanese, *Taiwan minzu lishi yu wenhua*, was published by the Central College for Nationalities in 1987.⁹ These books argue that the *gaoshanzu* have two lines of ancestors: one is a branch of the ancient Yue people, the other is a branch of the Austronesian people in the Philippines who descended from another Yue branch. Both lines point to the Chi-

6. Michael Stainton, "The Politics of Taiwan Aboriginal Origins," in Murray Rubinstein, ed., *Taiwan: A New History* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1999).

7. For some examples of the few early studies on Taiwan's prehistory published in the PRC, see Chen, Guoqiang, "Gaoshanzu lai yuan de tantao" (Investigating the Origins of Gaoshanzu), *Xiamen daxue xuebao* (Journal of Xiamen University), No. 3 (1961), pp. 104-109; Lin Huixiang, "Taiwan shiqi shidai yiwu de yanjiu" (A Study of Stone Age Relic in Taiwan), *Xiamen daxue xuebao*, No. 4 (1955), pp. 135-55.

8. Gaoshanzu jianshi bianxiezu, *Gaoshanzu jianshi* (A Concise History of Gaoshanzu) (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1982) and Chen Bisheng, *Taiwan difangshi* (The Local History of Taiwan) (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1982).

9. Shi Lianzhu and Xu Liangguo, *Taiwan minzu lishi yu wenhua* (The History and Culture of Taiwan Minorities) (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu xueyuan chubanshe, 1987).

nese mainland as the source of Taiwanese ancestry. Later works have reinforced the argument by using new archeological, linguistic, and anthropological findings in both China and Taiwan.¹⁰

More recently, Chinese geneticists have also joined the chorus. Two pieces of news caught peoples' eyes in 2001. First, two students of Fudan University compared the *gaoshanzu* with the osseous remains found in a Yue relic in Maqiao, near Shanghai, and claimed that their chromosome match was 50 percent or more.¹¹ In the other report, the Institute of Genetics of the Chinese Academy of Science concluded that the Li minorities living in Hainan Island today share ancestors with four *gaoshanzu* groups because their chromosome type is the same as the *Baiyue* people in Zhejiang province but differs from Southeast Asian people.¹²

The Chinese view of Taiwanese ancestry is rejected by many people from Taiwan. Shi Ming, a Taiwanese nationalist historian, published the first Taiwan-centered history book on Taiwan, *Taiwanren sibainian shi*, in Japan in 1962, and then an amended Chinese edition of the book in 1980. In the book, he supports theories of southern origin, citing mainly Japanese anthropological studies done during the colonial period. While admitting that some early aboriginal Taiwanese might have migrated from southern China and nearby islands, he dismisses the thesis that all Taiwanese came from the mainland because it was a politicized myth supported by false science.¹³ Others argue that Tai-

10. For examples, see Chen Kongli ed., *Taiwan lishi gangyao* (An Outline of Taiwanese History) (Beijing: Jiuzhou tushu chubanshe, 1996); Yao Tongfa, *Taiwan lishi wenhua yuanyuan* (The Origins of Taiwanese History and Culture) (Beijing: Jiuzhou chubanshe, 2002); Zhang Chonggeng, *Taiwan sibainian qian shi* (Taiwan's 400 Years of Prehistory) (Beijing: Jiuzhou chubanshe, 2005).

11. "The Ancestors of Gaoshanzu in Our Taiwan Province are the Descendants of the Baiyue People in the Shanghai Region," *Wenhuibao*, May 14, 2001.

12. "The Li People Have the Same Roots as Four Ethnic Groups in Taiwan," *Xinhua Daily Telegraph*, November 1, 2001.

13. Shi Ming, *Taiwanren sibainian shi* (The Four Hundred Years of Taiwanese History) (San Jose, Calif.: Pengdao wenhua gongsi, 1980), pp. 14-16.

wanese aborigines have multiple origins not limited to the Chinese mainland, and even suggest that people in both Taiwan and parts of China may have descended from a common Austronesian cultural world.¹⁴ Still other people, including historians and aboriginal political activists in Taiwan, claim that Taiwan is the origin of the Austronesian people, who have dispersed to a huge maritime region reaching as far as Madagascar and New Zealand.¹⁵ In the view of some Taiwanese nationalists, the Han people, who make up the majority of people living in Taiwan today, are genetically different from the Han in China because of the mixed blood between early male Han immigrants and aboriginal women.¹⁶ Taiwanese textbooks also acknowledge multiple sources of the ancient people and culture in Taiwan that include, but are not limited to, China. They explicitly define the aborigines as “Austronesian people” and accept their intimate linkage with Southeast Asia.¹⁷ Overall, the Taiwan-centered historiography refutes an exclusive influence of Chinese mainland on Taiwan’s prehistory.

Upon closer examination, one realizes there are some missing links in the works of both sides. For example, Chinese scholars say that geology makes the migration of Yue people from the mainland possible because, during the glacier epoch, the Chinese mainland and Taiwan were connected. But Chinese scholars hardly give any evidence to support the Yue migration to

14. Li Xiaofeng and Liu Fengsong, *Taiwan lishi yuelan* (A Review of Taiwanese History) (Taipei: Zili wanbaoshe wenhua chubanshu, 1994), pp. 14-18.

15. Stainton, “The Politics of Taiwan Aboriginal Origins,” pp. 27-44; and Xue Huayuan, Li Xiaofeng, Dai Baocun, and Pan Jida eds., *Taiwan de lishi* (The History of Taiwan) (Taipei: Yushanshe, 2004), p. 19.

16. Li and Liu, *Taiwan lishi yuelan*, pp. 24-25; and Lin Zhuoshui et al., *Wajie di huaxia diguo* (The Chinese Empire in Collapse) (Monterey Park, Calif.: Taiwan chubanshe, 1985), pp. 1-6.

17. See Lin Nengshi and Liu Xiangguang, eds., *Lishi* (History), First Grade of High School, vol. 1 (Tainan: Nanyi shuju, 2009), pp. 9, 16; Wang Zhongfu, Zheng Zhengcheng, and Zhao Youzhi, eds., *Lishi* (History), first grade of high school, vol. 1 (Taipei Xian: Kangxi wenhua, 2009), pp. 6, 11; Lai Jingui ed., *Shehui* (Social Studies), teacher’s manual for first grade of middle school, vols. 1-2 (Tainan: Hanlin chuban, 2009).

Taiwan via Southeast Asian islands. This hypothesis, apparently useful to explain away the obvious ethnic and language similarities between *gaoshanzu* and southern islanders, is naturally more disputed by the Taiwanese side of the debate. The laboratory data may verify the DNA connections between the specific objects of study, but are far from sufficient to support such sweeping claims that the *gaoshanzu* are descendants of the ancient Yue. After all, the *gaoshanzu* and the Yue are vastly diverse groups defined with murky standards, and have frequently mixed with other peoples in their prolonged ancient history. A small data set and isolated case studies are impossible to capture so many variables, and their scientific presumptions need to be explained and justified more rigorously. The lack of tests against competing hypotheses also compromises the validity of the DNA findings.

As for the Taiwanese nationalists' view on this topic, their research has not generated any significant new evidence, nor engaged the evidence and materials presented by the Chinese side. It is also unclear how the Austronesian people traveled either from the southern Pacific islands to Taiwan or the other way around. As of today, the theory of aboriginal Taiwan remains a hypothesis waiting to be rigorously investigated.

In addition, the two sides also dispute China's political relationship with Taiwan in ancient times. Earlier PRC scholars could not agree on the time when Han Chinese first interacted with Taiwan: the Qin and Han periods in the third century BC; the Three Kingdoms period in the third century; or the Song Dynasty in the thirteenth century.¹⁸ Since the 1980s, most Chinese history books treated the third or seventh century as the beginning of official Chinese contacts with Taiwan. They also enumerate various administrative agencies and military garrisons built by the Song, Yuan, and Ming governments in the

18. Wang Zhaocai, "A Territory Waiting to Be Liberated—Taiwan," *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily, Beijing), July 31, 1950; Liu Danian, "The 1700 Years of Taiwanese History," *People's Daily*, October 25, 1955; "Taiwan Is a Chinese Territory since the Ancient Times," *People's Daily*, September 8, 1958; and "Taiwan Has Been a Divine Territory of China since Ancient Times," *People's Daily*, October 23, 1971.

area of the Taiwan Strait as evidence of Chinese sovereignty over Taiwan.¹⁹ The problem is these official establishments in Taiwan are all named after Penghu, not Taiwan itself. It is not clear whether the administrative scope of Penghu during those dynasties covered Taiwan. Nor is it explained what kind of governance took place in Taiwan, given that the island remained unexplored and official communication with the aborigines was absent.

Taiwanese nationalist historians generally deny that Taiwan was ever part of China before the Qing rule. Shi Ming admits that mainland Chinese are the first people to interact with Taiwan aborigines, but argues that China treated Taiwan and Penghu quite differently in the history: While Penghu is geographically and culturally closer to China, Taiwan is farther away and seen as “*huangfudi*” (a destitute land) or “*huawai zhidi*” (land outside the pale of Chinese civilization).²⁰ In fact, a common belief held by Taiwanese nationalists is that throughout history, China never took Taiwan seriously and discriminated against the Taiwanese people, be they Han or non-Han. As discussed later, this theme of discrimination recurs when Taiwanese nationalists narrate a history of Taiwanese victimhood. Other Taiwanese historians completely disregard ancient Chinese records, only accepting Chinese official control of Penghu, not Taiwan itself, in the Yuan Dynasty.²¹ This is also the view upheld in Taiwanese history textbooks.²²

19. Chen, *Taiwan difangshi*, pp. 20-34; Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, pp. 21-28; Yao Liming, “1949 nian yiqian de taiwan haixia liangan guanxi yanjiu” (A Study of Cross-Taiwan Strait Relations before 1949), *Beijing daxue xuebao* (Journal of Peking University), vol. 36, No. 3 (1999), pp. 31-32; Yao, *Taiwan lishi wenhua yuanyuan*, pp. 124-39; and Zhang, *Taiwan sibainian qian shi*, chs. 8-12.

20. Shi, *Taiwanren sibainian shi*, pp. 34-35.

21. Li and Liu, *Taiwan lishi yuelan*, p. 32; and Xue, *Taiwan de lishi*, p. 14.

22. See Wang, *Lishi*, p. 20; Lin and Liu, *Lishi*, p. 23; Lai, *Shehui*, vol. 1, p. 65.

Dutch Colonization and the Conquest by the Zheng Family

The Dutch colonization of Taiwan began in 1624 and lasted until the Dutch defeat and expulsion in 1662 by Zheng Cheng-gong's army, which was made up of Han Chinese. Zheng, who died shortly afterwards, and his descendants, ruled the island for twenty-one years. These Dutch and Zheng regimes in Taiwanese history are remembered quite differently in the Sino-centric and Taiwan-centric historiography. Both schools see the Dutch as a cruel and greedy invader, but disagree on how Taiwan was lost to the Dutch and whether there is anything positive to say about them. Regarding the Zheng family, Chinese historians idolize Zheng Chenggong for "restoring Taiwan to the motherland" and praise his descendants for developing Taiwan. Taiwanese nationalist historians label the Zheng family an "outside regime," as they do the Dutch, and dismiss their contributions to Taiwan.

The cause of reunification calls for a national memory telling not just a common origin for the communities it tries to integrate, but also shared stories about their heroes and struggles vis-à-vis the same enemies. In the Chinese historical narrative, the Dutch are a common villain for the Chinese nation. They are described as having long had the ambition to take over Penghu, but were thwarted by the Ming government until 1624. They then expanded their area of control on the island by deception and coercion, and exploited the Taiwanese people voraciously during the thirty-eight years of colonization. They were also accused of culturally enslaving the people by setting up Dutch schools and Christian churches, and creating written scripts for the aborigines. When Taiwanese rebellions occurred, the Dutch authority used strategies of ruthless suppression along with divide and rule, pitting the aborigines against the Han.²³ Overall, the Chinese narra-

23. Chen, *Taiwan difangshi*, pp. 60-61, 65-68; Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, pp. 41-67. Also see Chinese school textbooks in Kecheng jiaocai yanjiusuo, *Zhongguo lishi* (Chinese History), seventh grade, vol. 2 (Beijing: People's Education Press, 2001), p. 103; Shanghai shi zhongxiaoxue kecheng gaige weiyuanhui, *Zhongguo lishi* (Chinese History), seventh grade, vol. 1

tive gives no credit to the Dutch. It also emphasizes how the Chinese government defended Taiwan. What is left out, however, is an important fact: In 1624, Ming officials reached an agreement with the Dutch, which allowed them to conduct trade on Taiwan in exchange for their withdrawal from Penghu.²⁴

In contrast, Taiwanese nationalist historians believe that the 1624 Ming-Dutch agreement officially permitted the Dutch to take Taiwan.²⁵ Wang Yude, one of the earliest authors to advocate a Taiwan-centric view of history, argues that the agreement crystallized the contempt and disgust that China had toward Taiwan. “[The Chinese] were full of malicious feeling, only caring about self-interest but disregarding Taiwan’s fate and the life of Taiwanese people.”²⁶ While discussing Dutch exploitation and Taiwanese rebellions, this view acknowledges some positive aspects of the Dutch period, such as the expansion of land reclamation, the surge of Han immigrants, the development of foreign trade, and the Dutch missionary effort that enlightened the aborigines. It also claims that the Dutch legacy brought a settler society, commercialization, and maritime culture to Taiwan, which diminished Taiwan’s ties with China and sent it into a distinctive development trajectory.²⁷ But this view contradicts the fact that Taiwan’s ties with the Chinese mainland increased precisely because the Dutch took over Taiwan to use it as a base to access the China market and its goods.²⁸ Nor could Taiwan develop to the extent it did without massive immigrants from

(Shanghai: Huadong shifan daxue chubanshe, 2007), p. 152.

24. One exception is Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, pp. 39-40, which admits this agreement but explains that at the time the Ming government had no energy to spare over Taiwan when it was under enormous pressure from peasant uprisings and the Manchu threat.

25. Li and Liu, *Taiwan lishi yuelan*, pp. 38-39; Xue, *Taiwan de lishi*, p. 25.

26. Wang Yude (O, Ikutoku), *Taiwan: Kumen de lishi* (Taiwan: A Gloomy History) (Taipei: Zili wanbaoshe wenhua chuban bu, 1993), p. 32.

27. Li and Liu, *Taiwan lishi yuelan*, pp. 43-44; and Shi, *Taiwanren sibainian shi*, pp. 92-97.

28. John E. Wills, Jr., “The Seventeenth-Century Transformation: Taiwan Under the Dutch and the Cheng Regime,” in Murray Rubinstein, ed., *Taiwan: A New History* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), pp. 93-94.

China. Taiwanese textbooks argue instead that the Taiwan-China relationship was kept close during the Dutch colonization. But the textbooks concur with the nationalist view that the Dutch were permitted by the Ming government to occupy Taiwan, and their economic and cultural development measures benefited the Taiwanese people.²⁹

If the Taiwanese had suffered greatly under Dutch rule, according to the Chinese narrative, Zheng Chenggong naturally becomes the national hero for liberating Taiwan from the Dutch rule. By the early 1960s, Chinese media had highlighted his struggle against foreign imperialists, the Dutch in his case, in order to inspire the urgent task of “liberating Taiwan” from the KMT and its American supporters at the time.³⁰ Temporarily out of favor during the Cultural Revolution, Zheng returned to Chinese official discourse in the early 1980s, apparently corresponding with Deng Xiaoping’s new policy that emphasized national unification. Since then, the anti-American and anti-KMT rhetoric has been dropped and the focus has shifted to urging people to carry on Zheng’s patriotic spirit and to strive toward “peaceful unification.”³¹ In August 1985, the Fujian provincial government completed a statute of Zheng in Xiamen, facing the direction of Taiwan.³² New memorial halls, stamps, movies, and a television drama series in honor of him have also appeared since the 1990s.³³ In commemorative and artistic reconstructions, Zheng is

29. See Wang, *Lishi*, pp. 22-27; Lin and Liu, *Lishi*, pp. 24-27.

30. For some examples, see the articles commemorating the 300-year anniversary of Zheng’s restoration of Taiwan in *People’s Daily* during May 1961-February 1962. Also see Ralph C. Croizier, *Koxinga and Chinese Nationalism: History, Myth, and the Hero* (Cambridge: East Asian Research Center Harvard University, 1977), pp. 70-74.

31. For some examples, see the many articles published in *People’s Daily* on the commemorative activities in Taiwan and China at the 320 years’ anniversary for Zheng’s restoration of Taiwan, from April 13, 1981 to August 1982.

32. “The Completion Ceremony for the Statue of Zheng Chenggong Was Held in Xiamen,” *People’s Daily*, August 30, 1985.

33. These include two movies—*Zheng Chenggong* (1997) and *Yinxiong Zheng Chenggong* (2001)—and the TV drama series *Zheng Chenggong* (2000) and *Dayingxiong Zheng Chenggong* (2007).

described as a steadfast patriot, gifted strategist, brave warrior, and virtuous man imbued with Confucian traditions. Additionally, Chinese textbooks praise the development measures by the Zheng family that brought Taiwan stability and prosperity, along with a better life to the aborigines.³⁴ Chinese historians particularly claim that the Zheng regime introduced important political, economic, and educational systems from the Chinese mainland, therefore making Taiwanese society similar to that in China.³⁵

This all-positive image of the first Han regime in Taiwan painted in the Chinese narrative is useful for the Chinese government to woo Taiwan into the fold of the motherland. For this reason, aspects of Zheng's personality and life that are not as glorious or patriotic are purposely omitted. Western historians question Zheng's loyalty to the Ming Empire and suspect that he conquered Taiwan simply to use it "as more of a refuge than a springboard back to the mainland." His military talent is probably exaggerated. His harsh military discipline caused tension with his subordinates, such as Shi Lang, who later defected to Qing and commanded a successful expedition that overthrew the Zheng regime. In fact, his mysterious death is likely to have been the result of a family scandal.³⁶

Only recently have Chinese historians painstakingly grappled with some of these controversies. The evaluation of Shi Lang is a particularly thorny one. Earlier studies depict him as a Han traitor for assisting the Manchu Empire.³⁷ But this would

34. See Kecheng jiaocai yanjiusuo, *Zhongguo lishi*, p. 104; Shanghai shi zhongxiaoxue kecheng gaige weiyuanhui, *Zhongguo lishi*, p. 153.

35. Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, pp. 84-86; and Yao, *Taiwan lishi wenhua yuanyuan*, pp. 140-42. But Chinese historians disagree among themselves whether the Zheng regime basically inherited the land system from the Dutch period (see Chen, *Taiwan difangshi*, pp. 95-96), or at least partially imported it from the mainland (see Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, pp. 105-10; and Yao, *Taiwan lishi wenhua yuanyuan*, p. 141).

36. Crozier, *Koxinga and Chinese Nationalism*, pp. 20-27. Quote is from p. 22. Also see Wills, "The Seventeenth-Century Transformation," pp. 96-98.

37. Shi Weiqing, ed., *Shi Lang yu Taiwan* (Shi Lang and Taiwan) (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2004), pp. 268-69.

undermine a new national unification discourse because if he was a traitor, the Qing incorporation of Taiwan would have been unjustified, nor would China's sovereignty claim over Taiwan exist today. Fu Yiling, a Xiamen University historian, first rehabilitated Shi Lang in an article published in 1982. He argues that Shi did not betray, but rather succeeded, Zheng Chenggong because they both defended Chinese territorial integrity.³⁸ Since then, more Chinese historians have followed suit.³⁹ While some still find his defection unforgivable, more recent works commend him for stopping Zheng's descendants from splitting Taiwan away from China. They downplay the moral issue of defection because Chinese patriotic discourse today stresses harmony between the Han and China's ethnic minorities, including the Manchus.⁴⁰ These works also explain that Shi had no choice but to defect; Zheng had killed Shi's family members and tried to have him assassinated as well.

While Chinese historians see Zheng as a great patriot and benefactor for Taiwan, Taiwanese nationalist see him through a more cynical lens. According to them, Zheng never cared about Taiwan until his army was routed toward Taiwan by the Manchus. Also, if Taiwan never belonged to China before the Dutch came,

38. Fu Yiling, "Zheng Chenggong yanjiu de ruogan wenti" (Several Issues Regarding the Study of Zheng Chenggong), *Fujian luntan* (Fujian Tribune) (The Humanities & Social Sciences Monthly), No. 3 (1982), pp. 1-5.

39. For some examples, see Wang Duoquan, "Guanyu Zheng Chenggong he Shi Lang de Pingjia" (On the Evaluation of Zheng Chenggong and Shi Lang), *Xueshu yuekan* (Academic Monthly), No. 8 (1982), pp. 4-6; Wang Duoquan, "Guanyu Shi Lang de zaiping jia" (Reevaluating Shi Lang), *Shanghai shifan xueyuan xuebao* (Journal of Shanghai Normal University), No. 3 (1983), pp. 89-95; Wang Minfen, "Guanyu Shi Lang de panzheng touqing" (On Shi Lang's Defection to Qing against Zheng), *Zhejiang shifan xueyuan xuebao* (Journal of Zhejiang Normal University) (Social Sciences), No. 1 (1984), pp. 47-52; Shi Weiqing, "Zailun Shi Lang de jige wenti" (Revisiting Several Issues on Shi Lang), *Taiwan yanjiu jikan* (Taiwan Research Quarterly), No. 4 (1984), pp. 34-42; Shi Weiqing, ed., *Shi Lang yanjiu* (A Study on Shi Lang) (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 2000); and Shi, *Shi Lang yu Taiwan* (Shi Lang and Taiwan).

40. "Age-Old Nationalist Hero Gets a Demotion in China," *Los Angeles Times*, January 28, 2003.

Zheng did not “restore” Taiwan. Rather, he imposed an outside regime on the aboriginal Taiwanese, which is therefore alien and illegitimate.⁴¹ By the same logic—to be discussed later—the Qing, Japanese, and KMT presence in Taiwan are outside regimes as well. This argument disregards the historical fact that Taiwan’s Han people accepted the Zheng, Qing, and KMT regimes without incident—at least initially—which is a stark contrast to the immediate eruption of widespread resistance once the Japanese arrived. It is also difficult to reconcile this argument with a central theme in Taiwanese nationalist historiography: that the Han settlers, outsiders in the eyes of the aborigines as well, constitute the backbone of Taiwanese history and society.

To delegitimize the Zheng regime, its contribution to Taiwan needs to be devalued as well. Since agricultural production and foreign trade developed significantly in the Zheng era, Taiwanese nationalist historians like to give the credit to some bureaucratic officials, such as Chen Yonghua, rather than the Zheng family.⁴² They also claim that the regime inherited the Dutch land system, which consisted of exploitation of the settlers and mistreatment of the aborigines. Some accuse the Zheng army of committing atrocities against the Dutch after landing on Taiwan and describe the fear among the Han people regarding his arrival. However, these historians rely on no other sources than the memoir of the former Dutch governor in Taiwan, substantially weakening the argument.⁴³

It should be noted that such total rejection of the Zheng regime is not reflected in Taiwanese history textbooks. On the one hand, due to the intervention of the ministry of education in 2007, textbooks have deleted language that described Zheng Chenggong as a “national hero” for “restoring Taiwan.”⁴⁴ Zheng’s

41. Li and Liu, *Taiwan lishi yuelan*, pp. 61, 67; Lin Zhuoshui, *Wajie di huaxia diguo*, pp. 47-50; and Shi, *Taiwanren sibainian shi*, p. 101.

42. Li and Liu, *Taiwan lishi yuelan*, pp. 67-68; Wang, *Taiwan: Kumen de lishi*, pp. 58-59.

43. Li and Liu, *Taiwan lishi yuelan*, pp. 60-61.

44. “Jiaokeshu quzhongguohua fengbo zaiqi,” July 25, 2007 at <http://tw.people.com.cn/GB/14812/14875/6027050.html>.

life and actions are narrated in a plain, matter-of-fact tone. Reference materials provided in the textbooks and teacher's manuals further debunk the myth about Zheng by encouraging students to consider the political motivations of Chinese nationalists, communists, and even the Japanese in their positive evaluation of him. On the other hand, textbooks have commonly credited the Zheng regime for developing agriculture, trade, culture, and education on the island.⁴⁵

More significantly, the Taiwanese nationalist view blames the Zheng family for trying to return to the mainland at the expense of Taiwanese people. It particularly attacks Zheng Jing, son of Zheng Chenggong, for wasting local resources to wage war against the Qing Empire; it often compares the Zheng regime with the KMT regime that is also preoccupied with a China mentality.⁴⁶ Interestingly, while Taiwanese nationalists argue that Zheng Jing should have focused on independent development rather than a return to China, Chinese historians condemn him for trying to maintain independence and split up the motherland. Such opposing views again drive home the point that both sides are projecting their present agenda onto history and making political use of historical figures who actually had no idea about either national unification or independence in the modern political sense.

The Rule of the Qing Empire

After Shi Lang's expedition ended the Zheng regime in 1683, Taiwan was formally ruled by the Qing until being ceded to Japan in 1895. When interpreting the Qing period, Chinese and Taiwanese nationalist historians dispute Taiwan's development, social conflict, relationship with the mainland, and mod-

45. See Wang, *Lishi*, pp. 29-35; Lin and Liu, *Lishi*, pp. 29-34; Lai, *Shehui*, vol. 1, pp. 91-95, 105-109.

46. Lin, *Wajie di huaxia diguo*, p. 51; Shi, *Taiwanren sibainian shi*, p. 107; and Wang, *Taiwan: Kumen de lishi*, p. 52.

ernization in late Qing. The Chinese argument describes the Qing government as a well-intentioned ruler willing to meet the needs of local people, albeit not always successfully, and claims that Taiwan's socioeconomic structure was not unique compared to that on the mainland. Comparatively, the Taiwanese view censures the government's negligence regarding, and callous exploitation of, Taiwan. They further claim that Taiwanese society developed with a distinctive local identity vis-à-vis the Chinese mainland.

When Taiwan was first conquered, the Kangxi Emperor of Qing felt that keeping the "tiny," "uncivilized" island was not worth the cost.⁴⁷ He only agreed to incorporate Taiwan into the empire after receiving Shi Lang's memorial to the throne, whereby he articulated the geostrategic importance and resource potential of Taiwan. Chinese historiography uses this episode to eulogize Shi for reunifying Taiwan and improving China's offshore defense.⁴⁸ The same episode, however, is viewed by Taiwanese nationalists as evidence that the Qing government despised Taiwan and did not see it as a part of China. They also believe that Shi Lang was more concerned with the interests of China, not Taiwan, when he advocated keeping Taiwan.⁴⁹

If Qing incorporated Taiwan out of concerns over national defense, not out of love for Taiwanese people or the land, according to the Taiwan-centric view, naturally the government never seriously developed Taiwan.⁵⁰ At least three reasons are presented to support the view. First, administratively, Taiwan was sub-

47. Quoted from Wang Sizhi, "Shi Lang pingyi" (A Fair Evaluation of Shi Lang), in Shi Weiqing, ed., *Shi Lang yu Taiwan* (Shi Lang and Taiwan) (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2004), pp. 36-37.

48. Wu Boya, "Shi Lang dui qingchao tongyi Taiwan de gongxian" (Shi Lang's Contribution to Qing Unification of Taiwan), and Wu Wennuan, "Shi Lang 'gongchen Taiwan qiliu shu' de zhanlue zhidao jiazhi" (The Strategic Values of Shi Lang's "Memorial on Keeping or Relinquishing Taiwan"), both in Shi, *Shi Lang yu Taiwan*.

49. Li and Liu, *Taiwan lishi yuelan*, pp. 74-75; and Shi, *Taiwanren sibainian shi*, pp. 118-19.

50. For example, see Shi, *Taiwanren sibainian shi*, p. 120, and Lin, *Wajie di huaxia diguo*, p. 53.

ordinate to Fujian and did not become a separate province until 1885, and all officials and garrison troops came from the mainland, not locally. Second, the Qing government restricted mainland immigration to Taiwan and forbade the Han from entering the aborigine areas, thus impeding land reclamation. Third, the government heavily taxed the land and took away much of Taiwan's agricultural products, especially rice and sugar, in the manner of a colonizer.

However, this argument oversimplifies a complex history of an imperial frontier. Qing policy toward Taiwan was constrained by the available resources at the time. Taiwan in 1683 was an undeveloped frontier with a sparse population (only 170,000⁵¹), little revenue, and hardly any local elites. In the early period, government operations in Taiwan relied on tax revenue from financially tight Fujian. Only gradually did Taiwan's academic standards improve and an emerging elite structure exert greater influence over local politics.⁵² As for the quarantine policy to limit Han immigration and stall settlement expansion, it was initially designed to prevent Taiwan from becoming a rebel base again, as it did in the Zheng era, and to minimize the Han-aborigine conflict. The government's concerns were not unfounded; as a settler society Taiwan was highly volatile during the Qing period, fraught with violent clashes both between the Han and aborigines and among the Han settlers themselves. After a major rebellion in 1721, the government reversed the immigration restrictions a number of times, but kept the Han-aborigines boundary largely intact, all in a painful attempt to balance the benefits of settlement expansion with the cost of social disturbances.⁵³

Qing's tax policy in Taiwan also varied over time. Initially,

51. John R. Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600-1800* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993), p. 161.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 208-14; Chen Chiukun, "From Landlords to Local Strongmen: The Transformation of Local Elites in Mid-Ch'ing Taiwan, 1780-1862," in Rubinstein, *Taiwan: A New History*, pp. 133-62.

53. For a summary of the fluctuations in Qing's quarantine policies, see *Shepherd, Statecraft and Political Economy*, pp. 140-41.

land-tax rates were indeed much heavier than the mainland's, but substantially decreased after 1731 to encourage land registration for taxation. Thus, the Taiwanese land tax was brought to par with or became even lower than the mainland rate.⁵⁴ Moreover, the government was ambivalent about Taiwan's rice exports to the mainland. On the one hand, the quarantine policy and the island's need for self-sufficiency called for restricting cross-Strait trade of rice. On the other hand, rice from Taiwan, especially when there was a surplus within the island, could help relieve famine in Fujian. Over time, the government eased restrictions on private exports of rice from Taiwan, but still reduced export quotas when Taiwan suffered rice shortages. Rice exports also benefited Taiwan's farmers and stimulated labor immigration to Taiwan and land reclamation. It was not a simple matter of the mainland's exploitation of Taiwan.⁵⁵

Compared to the Taiwan-centric historiography, the Chinese narrative of the Qing period is more lenient and positive. It describes in great detail the fast expansion of land reclamation and economic development in Taiwan, and credits it to the initiatives not just of the settlers—as Taiwanese nationalists insist—but also the government.⁵⁶ One author says that Taiwan's land-tax rates were lower than on the mainland during the early period of Qing and only increased later on, although he provides no sources to support this view.⁵⁷ Others discuss the reduction of land tax from 1731, and speak highly of Taiwan's rice export practice.⁵⁸ Relatively speaking, recent Chinese studies are more

54. According to Shepherd, the tax rate of 8.8 *shih* of grain per *chia* on first-grade paddy was twice the usual mainland rate. The rate for land opened after 1744, 2.74 *shih* per *chia*, was lower than the mainland rate, provided that the mainland rate did not decrease at the same time. The caveat is that the higher rate continued for land opened before 1729. See *ibid.*, pp. 230-36.

55. *Ibid.*, pp. 163-68.

56. Chen, *Taiwan difangshi*, pp. 105-12; and Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, pp. 142-55.

57. Chen, *Taiwan difangshi*, p. 109.

58. Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, p. 167, and Lin Renchuan, "Mingqing shiqi taiwan de daomi shengchan" (Rice Production in Taiwan during Ming

willing to criticize certain Qing policies, such as the restriction on immigration to Taiwan and suppression of both the Han and aborigines, so long as the overall evaluation of the Qing rule is positive.⁵⁹

A bigger issue of disagreement between the two historical views is whether there existed a fundamental watershed between the mainland society represented by the Qing government in Taiwan and Taiwanese society made up of the settlers. Taiwanese nationalist historians claim that the divide is real not only because of the mainland's exploitation of Taiwan. Other factors were the contrast between the agricultural tradition of a continental empire and the commercial orientation of an island,⁶⁰ as well as the distance between the settler community and the mainland.⁶¹ Additionally, the settlers were said to be hostile to the incompetent and corrupted Qing ruling class, and frequent *kangguan minbian* (popular revolts against the government) occurred in a fashion described by a common saying "*sannian yi xiaofan, wunian yi dafan*" (a small revolt every three years, a large revolt every five years). This is blamed on the Qing policy of rotating civil bureaucrats in Taiwan every three years, prompting the bureaucrats to grab as much money as possible before leaving, while neglecting their official duty.⁶²

Chinese historians reject a sense of separate community in Taiwanese society vis-à-vis the mainland (the so-called *tangshan*) under Qing rule. While acknowledging the peasant-landlord class conflict, they argue that Taiwan's social structure basically reproduced traditional Chinese society, at least before the modernization project started in Taiwan in late Qing.⁶³ They agree

and Qing), *Zhongguo nongshi* (Agricultural History of China), vol. 21, No. 3 (2002), pp. 3-8.

59. For example, see Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, pp. 136-41, 191-98.

60. Li and Liu, *Taiwan lishi yuelan*, p. 95.

61. Xue, *Taiwan de lishi*, pp. 37-39.

62. Li and Liu, *Taiwan lishi yuelan*, pp. 89-93; Lin, *Wajie di huaxia diguo*, pp. 55-56; Shi, *Taiwanren sibainian shi*, pp. 199-203; Wang, *Taiwan: Kumen de lishi*, pp. 79-84; and Xue, *Taiwan de lishi*, pp. 34-35.

63. Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, p. 177; Lin Renchuan, "Lun Qingdai Taiwan shehui de zhuanxing" (On the Transformation of Taiwanese Society in

that initially, Qing civil administration in Taiwan was weak and corrupt. However, they also emphasize that after experiencing a few large-scale uprisings, the government reinforced its rule and increased the rotation terms of high-ranking officials from three to five years.⁶⁴ One author calculates that among the 365 revolts in Taiwan during the Qing period, revolts against the government (only seven incidents) were much less frequent than other types of social disturbances, such as the violent clashes between the Han and aborigines (206 incidents), and between settlers from different hometowns on the mainland (seventy-three incidents).⁶⁵

However, there is at least one topic on which the Sino-centric and Taiwan-centric memories partially converge: the reform program during the last twenty years of Qing's rule in Taiwan. Triggered by increased Japanese ambitions toward Taiwan, the reform marked a clear departure from Qing's conservative policy on Taiwanese development. Instead of quarantining the Han and aborigines, the government under Shen Baozhen and his successors in Taiwan—most notably Ding Richang and Liu Mingchuan—implemented an active program of “opening the mountains, pacifying the aborigines” (*kaishan fufan*). They also strengthened the naval defense in Taiwan and introduced many modernization measures. Both schools of historiography agree that reform elevated the modernization level in Taiwan above the rest of China.

Still, the differing viewpoints select different focuses when narrating this history. Earlier Chinese studies of Taiwan's reform contain more critical comments. Liu Mingchuan, for instance, used to be denounced for suppressing peasant uprisings; only in 1987 did he finally receive a positive evaluation.⁶⁶

Qing), *Zhongguo shehui jingjishi yanjiu* (The Journal of Chinese Social and Economic History), No. 4 (2003), pp. 62-66.

64. Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, pp. 209-12.

65. Chen Kongli, “Qingdai taiwan shehui dongluan yuanyin yu xingzhi de fenxi” (An Analysis of the Origins and Nature of Social Unrest in Taiwanese Society in Qing Dynasty), *Taiwan yanjiu jikan* (Taiwan Research Quarterly), No. 4 (1996), pp. 46-59.

66. Xiao Kefei, Zhong Chong, and Xu Zehaoeds, *Liu Mingchuan zai Taiwan*

In 1995, Liu's home province of Anhui held a cross-Taiwan Strait academic symposium in his honor; in 2004 China Central Television broadcast a TV drama series on him.⁶⁷ Besides praising the accomplishments of late Qing reform, recent history books in China also claim that the government and Taiwanese people jointly struggled against foreign aggression in the late 19th century, which continued Taiwan's patriotic tradition since the anti-Dutch rebellions.⁶⁸

On the contrary, Taiwanese nationalists tend to emphasize the costs and setbacks in the reform, including Qing atrocities against the aborigines, the financial burden for Taiwanese people, corruption, and other obstacles.⁶⁹ They also deny that the Qing government actively defended Taiwan against foreign aggression, and argue instead that it was Taiwanese people who took up arms and fought. They accuse the government of being soft-kneed and quick to sacrifice Taiwan's interest, particularly in the Mudanshe Incident in which a few Ryuku people were killed by Taiwanese aborigines. To settle the incident, the government paid compensation to Japan and accepted Japanese possession of Ryukyu.⁷⁰

Compared to the Taiwanese nationalist historiography, Taiwanese textbook treatment of Qing's rule in Taiwan is relatively more balanced. The textbook guideline, against which all editions of textbooks are examined before approval by the ministry of education, requires all high school history textbooks to cover the passive policy of the Qing government to this "imperial frontier," the socioeconomic development, multilayered social relations in this settler society during Qing, and the active gov-

(Liu Mingchuan in Taiwan) (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 1987).

67. "Liu Mingchuan de lishi dingwei" (The Historical Status of Liu Mingchuan), *Anhui ribao* (Anhui Daily), August 20, 2004.

68. Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, pp. 281-310; Yao, "1949 nian yiqian de Taiwan haixia liangan guanxi yanjiu," pp. 150-72.

69. Li and Liu, *Taiwan lishi yuelan*, p. 105; Shi, *Taiwanren sibainian shi*, p. 218; Wang, *Taiwan: Kumen de lishi*, p. 94; Xue, *Taiwan de lishi*, p. 45.

70. Li and Liu, *Taiwan lishi yuelan*, pp. 102-105; Shi, *Taiwanren sibainian shi*, p. 243.

ernment efforts to modernize Taiwan beginning in the late 19th century. Nowhere does it stress the separation or contrast between Chinese and Taiwanese societies or contain a normative judgment about the Qing perception of or attitude toward Taiwan.⁷¹ Textbooks indeed use the “*sannian yi xiaofan, wunian yi dafan*” expression to describe anti-government uprisings, but they attribute the phenomenon not just to government policy and official corruption, but also to the unstable social structure and activities of secret societies in Taiwan.⁷²

Japanese Colonization

Explaining the Loss of Taiwan and Assessing Japan's Impact

The belated efforts of defense buildup and modernization in late Qing did not save the empire from a fiasco in the 1894-1895 war with Japan. In the Treaty of Shimonoseki that ended the war, Taiwan was ceded to Japan, which marked the beginning of fifty years of Japanese colonization of Taiwan. When narrating this history, the Chinese and Taiwanese nationalist memories diverge significantly over the responsibility for the loss of Taiwan, evaluation of colonization, and patterns of Taiwanese resistance movements. While the former focuses on condemning the Japanese aggressors, against whom the Taiwanese and mainland Chinese maintained solidarity, the latter blames China for abandoning Taiwan as well as appreciates certain colonial legacies and denies that China aided the Taiwanese resistance.

The Chinese narrative claims that the loss of Taiwan is a symbol of monumental humiliation and victimhood for the entire nation, including the Taiwanese people. The responsibility for the loss is placed upon both Japanese aggression and the

71. See Ministry of Education, Republic of China, *Putong gaoji zhongxue bixiu kemu “lishi” kecheng gangyao* (Teaching Guideline for the Required “History” Subject in Regular High Schools), 2008.

72. See Lin and Liu, *Lishi*, p. 54; Wang, *Lishi*, p. 57; Lai, *Shehui*, vol. 1, p. 139.

Qing government that capitulated to Japan. Meanwhile, the difficult negotiation between Qing and Japan is introduced to suggest that it was by no means easy for Li Hongzhang, China's chief negotiator, to give away Taiwan. "Weak countries are incapable of diplomacy," says one account, "and it was under Japanese diplomatic pressure and military coercion that Li Hongzhang decided to sign the treaty."⁷³ It is also noted that Chinese public opinion and some government officials strongly opposed ceding Taiwan.⁷⁴

In Taiwanese nationalist historiography, however, the word used most to describe the loss of Taiwan is *chumai* (sell, or betray). Through a so-called "ideology of abandonment,"⁷⁵ Taiwanese nationalists try to construct a Taiwanese identity centered on a logic of victimization: Because Taiwan was rejected by the old motherland and left to its own to endure Japanese colonization, it is legitimately entitled to national self-determination. Many authors claim that the Qing government bartered away Taiwan without any struggle because it saw Taiwan as an unimportant frontier that could bear the burden of China's failure and debts.⁷⁶ Some say it was the second time that a mainland regime sold Taiwan to alien nations, the first being the Ming's agreement with the Dutch in 1624.⁷⁷ In Wang Yude's words, while the Taiwanese despised the Japanese, they hated the Chinese betrayal even more.⁷⁸ Ng Chiautong argues that not only did Li Hongzhang not care about Taiwan; those who

73. Zhongguo dier lishi danganguan, *Taiwan guangfu jishi* (A True Record of Taiwan's Restoration) (Taipei: Baishi keji yishu, 2005), p. 43.

74. Chen, *Taiwan difangshi*, pp. 185-86; Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, pp. 318-20; and Zhongguo dier lishi danganguan, *Taiwan guangfu jishi*, pp. 57-59.

75. Leo T. S. Ching, *Becoming "Japanese": Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 179-80.

76. Li and Liu, *Taiwan lishi yuelan*, p. 112; Peng Mingmin, *Ziyou de ziwei: Peng Mingmin huiyilu* (A Taste of Freedom: Memoirs of a Formosan Independence Leader) (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 1988), p. 23; Shi, *Taiwanren sibainian shi*, pp. 244-46; Wang, *Taiwan: Kumen de lishi*, pp. 92, 98.

77. Lin, *Wajie di huaxia diguo*, p. 3.

78. Wang, *Taiwan: Kumen de lishi*, p. 99.

opposed the cession were actually concerned more with an internal power struggle than with Taiwan's fate, only hoping to stop Japan with the help of western pressure.⁷⁹ None of these authors believe the Qing Empire was *forced* to cede Taiwan and that Japanese imperialism was probably the bigger perpetrator. (This argument, as discussed later, contrasts with their other argument that Taiwan was *forced* to play an assisting role in Japanese aggression in China). Nor would they explain why Qing would think that Taiwan was unimportant when the government had invested heavily in Taiwan's modernization and defense during the previous two decades.

As for Japanese colonization, the Chinese evaluation is generally negative. It accuses Japan of enslaving the Taiwanese people with a dictatorial system of governors-general, a harsh police state, economic exploitation, and ubiquitous discrimination. Even if certain economic and cultural advances occurred during the period, it is said to have benefited the Japanese much more than the Taiwanese. Therefore, in the Chinese account, Japan's agricultural investment in Taiwan was made in order to seek high capital returns and gain a large supply of rice and sugar, while marginalizing local capitalists and hardly improving the life of Taiwanese peasants;⁸⁰ Taiwan's transportation, communication, public health, and energy facilities developed during the colonization mainly served the Japanese because many fewer Taiwanese could use these facilities.⁸¹ Japan was quick to develop primary and professional education in Taiwan because of the colonial need for quality labor and to culturally assimilate the Taiwanese people. However, the Japanese would not allow the Taiwanese to receive higher education.⁸²

79. Ng Yuzin Chiautong, "*Taiwan minzhuguo*" yanjiu: *Taiwan duli yundong shi de yi duanzhang* (A Study on the Republic of Formosa 1895: A Chapter in the History of the Taiwan Independence Movement) (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 2006), pp. 21-33.

80. Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, pp. 354-61.

81. Chen, *Taiwan difangshi*, p. 204.

82. *Ibid.*, pp. 208-211; Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, pp. 378-84; Zhong Anxi, "Riju shiqi taiwan jiaoyu zhidu shuping" (A Review of Taiwan's Edu-

Chinese historians particularly attack Japan's hastened industrialization of Taiwan and *Kōminka* (imperialization) campaign during World War II, whereby Taiwan not only served as a strategic base for Japan to invade China and the Pacific region but also was used to supply military goods, labor, and soldier recruitment. Chinese historians argue that Japan's attempt to convert the Taiwanese into pure imperial subjects failed for the most part because the Taiwanese people cherished their Chinese cultural traditions and thus tenaciously resisted Japanese language, customs, religion (Shintoism), and names.⁸³ When commenting on the participation of the Taiwanese in Japan's war, Chinese historians suggest that they were mostly induced or coerced to do so, and use the word "*shanghen*" (scar) or "*jixing*" (deformation) to illustrate their physical and psychological pains. Although admitting that a small minority was Japanized voluntarily and some even became troublemakers during the 2-28 Incident in 1947, they nevertheless insist that most Taiwanese people kept their Chinese roots. So the negative effects of *Kōminka* should not be exaggerated.⁸⁴

Compared to the Chinese narrative, Taiwanese nationalist memory of colonial history is more ambiguous. On the one hand, it agrees that the Japanese rule was oppressive and discriminative against Taiwanese people. On the other, it argues that Japan indeed brought modernization and civilization to the island. The dual evaluation of the colonial legacy is best captured by the following statement, displayed at the Taipei 228 Memorial

cation System during Japanese Colonization), *Jindaishi yanjiu* (Modern Chinese History Studies), No. 6 (1994), pp. 49-72.

83. Chen Xiaochong, "1937-1945 nian Taiwan huangminhua yundong shulun" (An Analysis on the Imperialization Movement in Taiwan in 1937-1945), *Taiwan yanjiu jikan* (Taiwan Research Quarterly), No. 4 (1987), pp. 72-81; Chen Xiaochong, "1937-1945 nian Taiwan huangminhua yundong zailun" (Revisiting the Imperialization in Taiwan in 1937-1945), *Taiwan yanjiu jikan* (Taiwan Research Quarterly), No. 4 (2007), pp. 71-78.
84. Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, p. 416; Chen Xiaochong, "Shilun rijū shiqi de taiji ribenbing" (An Analysis of Taiwan-Born Japanese Soldiers during Japanese Colonization), *Taiwan yanjiu jikan* (Taiwan Research Quarterly), No. 1 (2007), pp. 29-37.

Museum that was first opened in 1997:

In 1895, Taiwan was ceded to Japan, which extended an exploitative and suppressive rule over the Taiwanese. However, the Japanese colonialist government believed that it was in its interests to improve the island infrastructure, and thus surveyed natural land resources, learned about local customs, developed roads and railways, provided a modern education, improved public sanitation, and set disease-control measures. The Japanese also established a legal system and improved public security, raising the general quality of life. These moves greatly sped up Taiwan modernization.⁸⁵

The museum goes on to illustrate this thesis with four exhibition panels entitled “Modern Education,” “Modern Economy,” “Modern Public Sanitation,” and “Modern Life Style.”

This thesis is also echoed in the works and memoirs of Taiwanese nationalists. A number of authors state that even though there was no democracy or self-rule during colonization, and the Taiwanese were treated as second-class citizens, at least the Japanese efficiently ruled by law and even allowed the Taiwanese to vote in local elections toward the end of the war.⁸⁶ Taiwanese history textbooks also follow the logic of dual evaluation. They criticize Japanese oppression and discrimination against the Taiwanese, but at the same time introduce in detail the modernization measures which, even though motivated by Japan’s desire to facilitate colonization, brought development to Taiwan and benefited the local population.⁸⁷

Interpreting the War Years

Regarding wartime history, the Taiwan-centric narrative emphasizes that the Taiwanese were driven into the war with-

85. Author’s photos of the museum exhibition, supplemented by those taken by Shogo Suzuki. I thank Suzuki for his help.

86. Li and Liu, *Taiwan lishi yuelan*, p. 154; Peng, *Ziyou de ziwei*, pp. 71-72; Xue, *Taiwan de lishi*, pp. 15, 50.

87. See Lin and Liu, *Lishi*, pp. 89-100, 107-109; Wang, *Lishi*, pp. 106-108; Lai, *Shehui*, vol. 2, pp. 75-80, 88-106.

out choice, and their lives became miserable as a result. The 2-28 Museum describes the Taiwanese experience in the following way:

With the war in the Pacific, the Japanese government started to tighten its grip over Taiwan, at the same time speeding up the “Japanization” of the Taiwanese. During the war Taiwan society faced stricter controls politically and economically. Daily life was becoming increasingly difficult, and a ban was enforced on political protests. The Taiwanese found that their taxes were increasing and their savings were falling out of their control. In addition, they were being forced to fight for the Japanese army and perform hard labor as their daily lives under war plunged into fear.

Additional exhibition panels were dedicated to the subjects of military mobilization, economic control, and air raids that the Taiwanese suffered during the war.⁸⁸ The museum, textbooks, and Taiwanese nationalist historians all claim that more than 200,000 Taiwanese were recruited by the Japanese military, of whom about 30,000 died.⁸⁹

The sticky issue is that a military draft was not implemented in Taiwan until 1945; previously the Taiwanese as colonial subjects were not obligated to join the military. Peng Mingmin, a Taiwanese nationalist leader, recollected how he evaded the “invitation” to serve in the military.⁹⁰ But since *Kōminka* made it difficult to resist military duty, many Taiwanese were recruited by “*banqiangzhi*” (semi-force). On this point the Taiwanese narrative converges with that of the Chinese. Both narratives also assume that there was a preexisting, homogenized Chineseness (or Taiwanese-ness) identity held by the Taiwanese population,

88. However, certain experiences of Taiwanese victimhood were left out in the exhibition, most notably the comfort women issue. For a recent study exploring the political implication of this, see Shogo Suzuki, “The ‘Comfort Women’ Issue in Taiwan,” paper presented at the conference, “The ‘Long Arc’ of Sino-Japanese Relations,” University of Oxford, June 17-18, 2010.

89. Xue, *Taiwan de lishi*, p. 71. Also see Lin and Liu, *Lishi*, p. 122 and Wang, *Lishi*, p. 134.

90. Peng, *Ziyou de ziwei*.

and then evaluate the extent to which this identity was undermined or replaced by a Japanese identity during *Kōminka*. The problem with this assumption is that too often a sense of selfhood is not acutely felt until an encounter with otherness occurs. Taiwanese perception of their unique identity probably did not precede *Kōminka* but was actually turned on by the very process of it.⁹¹

The difference between the Chinese and Taiwanese narratives is that the former holds *Kōminka* failed to weaken the Chineseness of Taiwan, while the latter contends Japanization, although imposed on Taiwan by force, was real.⁹² Two implications of the Taiwanese nationalist view follow. One is a moral question: Does a colony hold any responsibility for its contribution to an unjust war launched by its colonizer? In Taiwan's case, this question is even more difficult because the war was against its old motherland, China. Peng mentions that his family had a complex feeling when they heard that Japan invaded China, and Peng himself even wrote a paper in school condemning Japanese aggression.⁹³ But Taiwanese nationalists insist that the Taiwanese were innocent because their actions were forced upon them, including voluntary assistance to the war due to transformation by *Kōminka*. Further, whatever Taiwan might have done to China would be well exceeded by Taiwan's suffering during the war and China's betrayal of Taiwan in 1895.⁹⁴

91. See Ching, *Becoming "Japanese,"* pp. 123-24. For the interdependent relationship between the self and other, see Iver B. Neumann, *Uses of the Other: "The East" in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), ch. 1; Charles Tilly, *Identities, Boundaries, and Social Ties* (Boulder, Colo.: Paradigm Publishers, 2005).

92. On this question, the view of Taiwanese textbooks is closer to the Chinese view than to the Taiwanese nationalist position. They admit that some Taiwanese, especially the younger generation during the wartime, were receptive to the *Kōminka*, but argue that the effect of *Kōminka* was only superficial for the majority of the population. See Lin and Liu, *Lishi*, pp. 120-21; Wang, *Lishi*, pp. 126-27.

93. Peng, *Ziyou de ziwei: Peng Mingmin huiyilu* (A Taste of Freedom: Memoirs of a Formosan Independence Leader), p. 31, 41.

94. Chen Fangming, *Taiwanren de lishi yu yishi* (History and Consciousness of the Taiwanese) (Gaoxiang: Dunli chubanshe, 1988), p. 96.

The 2-28 Museum conspicuously mentions that the first air bombing of Taiwan was done by airplanes based in China's wartime capital, Chongqing, therefore implying China's share in causing war damage to Taiwan.

The other implication is that, if *Kōminka* had been so effective, Taiwanese society ought to have become substantially de-Sinicized. Some authors say that, comprehensively speaking, Taiwan had become thirty to forty years more advanced than China by the 1940s, and all the modern technologies brought by the colonizers constituted the foundation for a "*Taiwan shehui gongtongti*" (Taiwanese social community).⁹⁵ The 2-28 Museum puts it simply: "It was Japan's efforts at modernizing Taiwan that set it apart from China at the time."

The Taiwanese Resistance

The deep separation between China and Taiwan is also a central theme in Taiwanese nationalist interpretation of the resistance movement on the island. It argues that when the Japanese occupation forces first arrived in Taiwan, only the native Taiwanese offered real resistance. Whether Taiwan's gentry class was part of the campaign remains debated since it was often obsessed with a "Greater China mentality."⁹⁶ But Taiwanese nationalists commonly deny any mainland assistance, despite the fact that the early resistance accepted troops and arms from the mainland.⁹⁷ They also discount or ignore that several uprisings in Taiwan were inspired by the constitutionalist and revolutionary movements in late Qing, especially the actions of Sun Yat-sen and *Tongmenghui*.⁹⁸ Shi Ming accuses Sun of conspiring with the

95. Li and Liu, *Taiwan lishi yuelan* (A Review of Taiwanese History), p. 154; Xue, *Taiwan de lishi* (The History of Taiwan), p. 57.

96. See, for instance, the arguments of Shi Ming versus Xue Huayuan and Ng Chiautong in Shi, *Taiwanren sibainian shi*, pp. 256-58; Ng, "*Taiwan minzhuguo*" *yanjiu*; and Xue, *Taiwan de lishi*, p. 49.

97. Harry J. Lamley, "Taiwan Under Japanese Rule, 1895-1945: The Vicissitudes of Colonialism," in Rubinstein, *Taiwan: A New History*, p. 206.

98. *Ibid.*, pp. 217-18.

Japanese governor-general in Taiwan to sabotage Taiwan's resistance movement. Wang Yude condemns the Qing government for handing over Jian Dashi, a leader of the Taiwanese uprising, to the Japanese, and dismisses the revolt planned by Luo Fuxing, a *Tongmenghui* member, as adventurous and self-defeating.⁹⁹

This certainly runs counter to the Chinese narrative, which stresses the Chinese influence over and assistance to Taiwan's armed resistance, and argues that the common desire of Taiwanese people at that time was to return to the Chinese motherland. One author says that Jian Dashi, even though he was turned in by the Qing government, did not regret being a subject of Qing.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, Chinese historians claim that the nonviolent resistance in the 1920s-30s was strongly motivated by the so-called *zuguo yishi* (motherland consciousness) and intimately tied to the Chinese nationalist movement on the mainland.¹⁰¹ They particularly point out that none of the major political forces in Taiwan contemplated Taiwan's permanent separation from China—not even the Taiwan Communist Party (TCP), whose program demanded Taiwan independence because it desired independence from Japan, not China, and all of whose main

99. Shi, *Taiwanren sibainian shi*, p. 412; Wang, *Taiwan: Kumen de lishi*, pp. 122-23, 127. One exception is Li Xiaofeng, who acknowledges a heavy Chinese influence over Taiwan's armed resistance by 1915. See Li Xiaofeng, "Yibainian lai Taiwan zhengzhi yundong zhong de guojia renting" (National Identity in Taiwan Political Movements in the Past One Hundred Years), in Zhang Yanxian, *Chen Meirong, and Yang Yahui, eds., Taiwan jinbainian shi lunwenji* (Collected Papers on the Recent Hundred Year of Taiwan History) (Taipei: Wu Sanlian Taiwan shiliao jijinhui, 1996), pp. 276-80.

100. Cai Jiarui, "Riju shiqi (1895-1945) Taiwan tongbao de minzu yishi yu guojia rentong" (The Nationalist Consciousness and National Identity of Taiwanese Compatriots during Japanese Colonization), *Tianjin daxue xuebao* (Journal of Tianjin University [social sciences]), vol. 3, No. 4 (2001), p. 296. Also see Chen, *Taiwan difangshi*, pp. 218-25; Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, pp. 349-52; Zhong Anxi, "Taiwan kangri wushi nian" (Fifty Years of Anti-Japanese Resistance in Taiwan), *Kangri zhanzheng yanjiu* (The Journal of Studies of China's Resistance War), No. 4 (1993), pp. 165-68.

101. For instance, see Chen, *Taiwan lishi gangyao*, p. 400.

leaders went to China after the war.¹⁰² They also argue that the campaign to promote Taiwanese culture, another part of the colonial resistance, was directly inspired by the New Cultural Movement on the mainland, and the Taiwanese culture it tried to promote was Chinese culture at its core.¹⁰³

How do we evaluate these competing narratives? Studies of Taiwanese history outside China acknowledge the influence of the New Cultural Movement and the Chinese nationalist revolution over Taiwan in the 1920s and 1930s, but not to the extent of treating Taiwan's resistance movement as part of the Chinese revolution.¹⁰⁴ After all, Taiwan was largely on its own when China was going through its most tumultuous period of modern history. China's two biggest nationalist forces, the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), both considered the Taiwanese as foreigners until the 1940s.¹⁰⁵ Wakabayashi suggests that Taiwanese resistance contained two factions seeking unification with and separation from China, and each faction had a "revolutionary" versus "reformist" wing, depending on the means of struggle it advocated.¹⁰⁶ Other historians argue that

102. Cai, "Riju shiqi (1895-1945)," pp. 298-99.

103. Ibid., pp. 297-98; Chen Xiaochong, "Riju shiqi Taiwan yu dalu de wenhua lianxi" (The Cultural Ties between Taiwan and the Mainland during the Japanese Colonization), *Taiwan yanjiu* (Taiwan Studies), No. 2 (1997), pp. 79-83; and Chen Xiaochong, "Riju shiqi Taiwan huawen yundong shulun" (A Study of Taiwan Vernacular Literature Movement during Japanese Colonialization), *Taiwan yanjiu jikan* (Taiwan Research Quarterly), No. 2 (2002), pp. 54-78.

104. Chen Cuilian, *Taiwanren de dikang yu rentong, 1920-1950* (The Resistance and Identity of the Taiwanese, 1920-1950) (Taipei: Yuanliu chuban, 2008), p. 124; and Lamley, "Taiwan Under Japanese Rule," p. 234. The influence of the New Culture Movement on Taiwan is commonly acknowledged in Taiwanese textbooks. See Wang, *Lishi*, p. 115; Lin and Liu, *Lishi*, p. 109. One middle school textbook touches upon the triggering effect of China's Xinhai evolution on Taiwan's resistance movement in 1907-1915. See Lai, *Shehui*, vol. 2, p. 38.

105. Christopher W. Hughes, *Taiwan and Chinese Nationalism: National Identity and Status in International Society* (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 5, 12-13.

106. Wakabayashi Masahiro, "Taiwan kōnichi Nashonarizumu no mondai jōkyō: saik?" (The Issue of Taiwan's Anti-Japanese Nationalism: A

Taiwan never had a full-fledged nationalistic movement, and that those groups flaunting nationalist rhetoric may have been simply acting strategically.¹⁰⁷

The bottom line is that elite and popular opinions in Taiwan were split and ambiguous, rather than demonstrating an overwhelming desire for restoration to China. The claim that Taiwanese cultural resistance only promoted Chinese culture is also far-fetched, since this campaign purported to draw upon advanced civilizations from around the world, not confined within any national or racial boundaries, to bring cultural enlightenment to Taiwan.¹⁰⁸

While Chinese historians commonly overemphasize the Chineseness of the Taiwanese resistance movement, Taiwanese nationalists are split on this issue. Some accept the fact that Taiwanese opinions were diverse and pro-China forces existed, but also criticize the pro-China people for indulging in blood kinship and prettifying China without an accurate understanding of China's problems.¹⁰⁹ This view has been challenged by recent studies, showing that many Taiwanese elites had first-hand experience with a weak, backward China but were still drawn to it emotionally. To some extent, longing for China was a psychological opposition to Japanese colonization.¹¹⁰ A more extreme view dismisses any important Chinese connections with the Taiwanese resistance. Lin Zhuoshui claims that many anti-Japanese groups organized by the Taiwanese on the mainland demanded Taiwan independence. He says that most Taiwanese (with the exception of the TCP) did not advocate independence due to Japanese oppression rather than because they did not desire it.

Revisit), cited in Li, "Yibainian lai Taiwan zhengzhi yundong zhong de guojia renting," pp. 281-82.

107. Chu Yu-han and Jih-wen Lin, "Political Development in 20th-Century Taiwan: State-Building, Regime Transformation and the Construction of National Identity," *China Quarterly*, vol. 165, No. 1 (March, 2001), p. 108.

108. Chen, *Taiwanren de dikang yu rentong*, pp. 93-103.

109. Shi, *Taiwanren sibainian shi*, pp. 688-90; Wang, *Taiwan: Kumen de lishi*, pp. 133-34.

110. For instance, see Chen, *Taiwanren de dikang yu rentong*, ch. 5.

Further, those pro-unification groups actually wanted Taiwanese self-rule.¹¹¹ Chen Fangming goes so far as to claim that no Taiwanese political groups or social classes depended on Chinese leadership, nor were they associated in any way with the New Cultural Movement or the Chinese nationalist revolution.¹¹²

Conclusion

The Taiwan independence movement, largely stimulated by postwar politics in Taiwan that led to the tragic 2-28 Incident in 1947, initially opposed China from within—the KMT regime. But since the 1970s and 1980s, the movement has turned increasingly against China from without.¹¹³ At the same time, the KMT and CCP have gradually dropped their previous ideological contention and Cold War mentality. Consequently, the cross-Strait relationship has transformed from a struggle for power and control to a national-identity contestation. The biggest challenge for the two sides to address is: Should Taiwan be considered Chinese?

Memory and identity are intertwined: Identity is sustained by remembering one's own past history, and what to remember is defined by the assumed identity.¹¹⁴ Whether China and Taiwan can work out a compatible national imagination to resolve the political status of Taiwan will depend considerably on the extent to which their historical memories converge. Having reviewed the Chinese and Taiwanese nationalist views on Taiwanese history, one finds that a convergent historical perspective is lacking. Neither view is purely historical; they are politi-

111. Lin Zhuoshui, *Tongzhi shenhua di zhongjie* (The End of the Ruling Myths) (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 1991), pp. 141-45.

112. Chen Fangming, *Tansuo Taiwan shiguan* (Exploring Taiwan's Historiography) (Taipei: Zili wanbaoshe wenhua chubanshe, 1992), pp. 26-40.

113. Li, "Yibainian lai Taiwan zhengzhi yundong zhong de guojia renting," pp. 287-95.

114. Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 22; and John Gillis, *Commemoration* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 3.

cized history, or historical myths. According to Paul Cohen, mythologizers tend to portray history as a one-dimensional picture, imposing a subjectively predetermined, often simplistic theme on the otherwise complex and multifaceted historical process.¹¹⁵ Both Chinese and Taiwanese nationalist historians have a tendency to disregard historical materials that disconfirm their predetermined themes and sacrifice balance and objectivity in historical interpretation. Self-glorification and self-white-washing are common. Thus, they highlight and exaggerate their own benevolence, innocence, and/or victimhood, but fail to be forthright about the harm they might have done to each other throughout history. A double standard is also visible. One's own negative actions are typically described to have been forced upon one against one's will, but the negative actions of others are said to be out of malice. Here, historical interpretation is a product not of objective study but rather of one's image of the actor in question.¹¹⁶

As H. Richard Niebuhr says, "the measure of our unity is the extent of our common memory." While fanciful myths are the rule rather than the exception in the historical narrative of any nation, mutually divergent or even clashing myths only drive communities apart.¹¹⁷ Biased historical ideas have been used by both the

115. Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 214.

116. The double standard in interpersonal relationship is captured by the attribution theory in social psychology literature. See Fritz Heider, *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1958); and John H. Harvey, William John Ickes, and Robert F. Kidd, eds., *New Directions in Attribution Research*, vols. 1-3 (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1976-1981). For a discussion of double standards in international politics, see Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 184-87.

117. On the importance of national myths to national integration and nationalism, see Geoffrey Hosking and George Schopflin, *Myths and Nationhood* (London: Hurst, 1997); Rumina Sethi, *Myths of the Nation: National Identity and Literary Representation* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1999); and Anthony Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999). On the inimical effect of

Chinese government and Taiwanese nationalists to mobilize popular support for their own nationalist visions. It is a competition that neither side can win, and the political consequence is more likely to be further escalation of tension than reconciliation.

So far, much of the effort to improve cross-Strait relationship has focused on economic cooperation, cultural exchanges, security dialogue, and confidence-building measures. While all of these are important, conventional methods of conflict resolution cannot substitute for a much more challenging dialogue over historical memory. Fundamentally, what needs to be reconciled in this case are the competing narratives about political identity and national imagination. To construct an ideological common ground for genuine reconciliation, China and Taiwan must try to understand the source of each other's beliefs and grievances through joint history study projects. Such projects usually cannot proceed smoothly without government support, either financially or politically. However, such dialogues are best carried out not by officials but by historians, who are relatively impervious to pressures for the instrumental use of history. More importantly, historians should not just criticize the biases of the other side but also seriously reflect on the myths in their own national historical narratives. Debates about historiography, which are almost certain to occur, need not degenerate into political polemics if both sides are open-minded and adhere to objective standards of historical studies.

Undoubtedly, there are political risks associated with history cooperation for both governments. Beijing may worry that such cooperation will unearth the truth that Taiwan was and will again be better off outside China. That truth will also make an anti-independence Taiwanese government equally nervous. Conversely, it may be hard for any pro-independence Taiwanese government in the future to tolerate a shared memory that Taiwan has been deeply attached to China throughout their

conflicting myths on reconciliation, see He Yanan, *The Search for Reconciliation: Sino-Japanese and German-Polish Relations since World War II* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

intertwined history. While these are all true, the cost of not building a shared memory is worse because it means perennial conflict in the Taiwan Strait and a constant thorn in the side for regional stability.

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