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Contributions to The Editor, *East Asian History*
Division of Pacific and Asian History
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies
Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200, Australia
Phone +61 2 6125 3140 Fax +61 2 6125 5525
email geremie@coombs.anu.edu.au

Subscription Enquiries to Subscriptions, *East Asian History*, at the above address, or to
marion@coombs.anu.edu.au

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 CONTENTS

- 1** Birds and the Hand of Power: a Political Geography of Avian Life in the Gansu Corridor, Ninth to Tenth Centuries
Lewis Mayo
- 67** A Tempestuous Tea-Port: Socio-Political Commentary in *Yokohama-e*, 1859–62
Todd S. Munson
- 93** Taiwan's Search for National History: a Trend in Historiography
Q. Edward Wang
- 117** Rai San'yō's Philosophy of History and the Ideal of Imperial Restoration
Barry D. Steben

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Cover illustration Avian signature from the time of Cao Yanlu 曹延祿 — see p.52
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TAIWAN'S SEARCH FOR NATIONAL HISTORY: A TREND IN HISTORIOGRAPHY

史 Q. Edward Wang 王晴佳

In March 2000, a political earthquake shook the island of Taiwan: in its second direct presidential election, Chen Shui-bian 陳水扁, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) (Min-chin tang 民進黨) candidate, won a stunning victory. Chen's success ended the Kuo-min-tang (KMT) 國民黨 rule of the island that had lasted for fifty years. It also brought to the fore the identity question facing the Taiwanese people since the 1980s (if not earlier), for the DPP had always advocated and pursued Taiwan's independence. Although Chen did not win the presidency by a large margin, his victory demonstrated that the idea of independence had gained more and more support from the electorate.¹ Since his inauguration on 20 May 2000, Chen of course has not declared Taiwan's independence. But his presidency has brought more tension to the island's already precarious relations with mainland China.

In this article, I propose to trace and analyze the identity issue by looking at the changes in Taiwan's historical writings over the last few decades. I will focus attention on the rise of Taiwan history (*Taiwan shih* 台灣史) since the 1980's, and examine how the study of Taiwan history reflects the public interest in searching for a Taiwan identity and shapes its outcome.² My research concentrates on three areas: (1) how the changing interests of academic historians in Taiwan over the last two decades gave rise to the study of Taiwan history; (2) the challenge involved in the study of Taiwan history as a political discourse on national identity; and (3) the controversy over the *Knowing Taiwan* (Jen-shih Taiwan 認識台灣) textbook series in 1997: how it mirrors the complex political life and the enduring influence of nationalist historiography in today's Taiwan. What intrigues me is not only the obvious issue about the affinity between ideology and historiography,

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¹ The election was a close one. Of the total votes cast in the election, Chen received 39 per cent, the KMT candidate Lien Chan 連戰 23 per cent and the independent candidate Soong Chu-yu (James Soong) 宋楚瑜 36 per cent.

² *Min-kuo i-lai kuo-shih yen-chiu te hui-ku yü chan-wang yen t'ao-hui lun-wen-chi* [Proceedings of the conference on the past and future study of national history in the Republic of China], ed. History Department, National Taiwan University (Taipei: Taiwan University, 1992), and "Taiwan shih yen-chiu te hui-ku yü chan-wang yen t'ao-hui chuan-hao" [Special issue on the past and future study of Taiwan history], *Ssu yü yen* 23.1(1985).

³ Chang Peng-yüan, *Kuo Ting-yee, Fei Cheng-ch'ing, Wei Mu-ting: Taiwan yü mei-kuo hsüeh-shub chiao-liu ko-an ch'u-tan* [Triangular partnership: Kuo Ting-yee, John Fairbank and C. Martin Wilbur and their contribution to Taiwan-US academic exchange] (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1997); Leonard Gordon, ed. *Taiwan: studies in Chinese local history* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970); and Douglas L. Fix, "North American memories of Taiwan: a retrospective of U.S. research on the history of Taiwan," *Min-kuo i-lai kuo-sih yen-chiu te hui-ku yü chan-wang yen t'ao-hui lun-wen chi* [Proceedings of the symposium on the past and present study of national history since the founding of the Republic] (Taipei: National Taiwan University, 1970), vol.2, pp.1355-86.

⁴ Joseph W. Ballantine, *Formosa: a problem for United States foreign policy* (Washington, D.C., Brookings Institution, 1952).

⁵ Thomas B. Gold, *State and society in the Taiwan miracle* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1986); James C. Hsiung, ed. *The Taiwan experience, 1950-80* (New York: Praeger, 1981); and Linda Chao and Ramon Myers, *The first Chinese democracy: political life in the ROC on Taiwan* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University, 1999).

which is quite apparent in the course of the development in Taiwan's post-WWII historical practice, but also how nationalist historians, on different sides and of different generations, have shared the belief in their commitment to nationalist ideology that their search for national history will enhance rather than deprecate the agency of the historical profession in modern society. In other words, what I hope to explore in this article is not only the external influence on, but also the internal development in, the historical study of Taiwan that accounts for this search for a Taiwan identity.

For many decades prior to the 1980s, few Taiwanese ever concerned themselves with the identity question. They had identified themselves naturally with China, or, more precisely, a culturally more "authentic" China, the Republic of China (ROC), which they believed their government still represented after retreating to the island in 1949, following a shattering defeat by the Communists on the mainland. Indeed, in contrast to the incessant, fierce political campaigns, and the disastrous Cultural Revolution launched by Mao Tse-tung 毛澤東 on the mainland, the nationalist government, or the KMT, led by Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石, clung to the Confucian legacy in ruling Taiwan, regarding the Communists merely as a puppet government under an alien cultural spell. China scholars and lobbyists in the West, from the 1950s through the early 1970s, also shared the belief that the KMT, while a defeated government in exile, was the "legitimate" representative of China, deserving of its place in the Free World. The once poignant question—"who lost China?"—led naturally to the search: since China was "lost" on the mainland, one had to look for a "real" China elsewhere. Taiwan became not only an anti-Communist military base in Asia during the Cold War period, especially during the Korean War, but also an educational base for learning Chinese language and culture, attracting many Western students and scholars.³ Cold War world politics strengthened Taiwan's image as the "Free China," reinforcing the Chinese identity on the island.⁴

Having ruled Taiwan with an iron hand for about forty years, however, the leaders of the KMT, the "Chiang dynasty," faced increasing pressure from the people who, beginning in the late 1970s and continuing well into the 1980s demanded political freedom and democracy. What powered this demand for political change was the island's phenomenal economic success, known as the "Taiwan miracle," of the period, which helped created a large middle class with an independent political consciousness.⁵ Unable to return to the mainland for several decades, Chiang Ching-kuo 蔣經國, who succeeded his father Chiang Kai-shek in the KMT government, also openly proclaimed himself a "Taiwanese" (*Taiwan jen* 台灣人). Chiang's posture reflected the harsh reality in world politics that most Western powers, especially the US, had decided, since at least the 1970s, to seek diplomatic relations with the mainland, the People's Republic of China (PRC) (Chung-hua jen-min kung-ho-kuo 中華人民

公和國). The PRC's replacement of Taiwan in the United Nations left both the Taiwan government and the people in a state of despair and abandonment. Several months before his death in 1988, Chiang Ching-kuo lifted martial law in the island and eased for the first time the KMT policy of political restriction. Opposition parties, such as the DPP, were allowed to challenge the KMT for seats in the Legislative Yuan and the National Assembly, and privately owned presses mushroomed.⁶ As people in Taiwan gained some freedom of speech, some of them began to cast doubt on the once taken-for-granted Chinese identity, especially because that identity had been associated closely with the KMT autocratic rule.⁷ In response to the public desire for a new identity reflecting the island's unique historical experience, a group of historians began plowing the field of Taiwan history, a field that has since borne as its fruit the most popular genre among all historical writings in today's Taiwan.

1. *Whither Taiwan?*

The KMT began to rule Taiwan in 1945. Prior to that time, Taiwan had been a colony of Japan, beginning in 1895 when China's Ch'ing 清 dynasty was defeated in the Sino-Japanese War and forced to cede the island to Japan by the terms of the Shimonoseki Treaty. Japan's colonial rule in Taiwan resulted in a lot of construction and development, including the founding of Taiwan University (1928). As a consequence, Japanese colonial rule is now credited by some Taiwanese historians with laying the foundation for Taiwan's modernization. In the post-WWII era, historical studies in Taiwan experienced a tremendous growth when a large number of Chinese historians followed the KMT government in its retreat to the island.⁸ These historians helped turn history into an academic subject for both research and teaching. Fu Ssu-nien 傅斯年 (1896–1950), a renowned historian in Republican China, played a key role during this transitional period. As both the president of Taiwan University (Tai-ta 台大) and the director of the Institute of History and Philology (IHP) (Li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so 歷史語言研究所) in Academia Sinica (the IHP was founded by Fu on the mainland in 1928 and moved by him to Taiwan in 1949), Fu Ssu-nien was responsible for designing the history curriculum at Tai-ta and for recruiting history graduates and training them in his Institute.⁹ Despite his untimely death at fifty-four, Fu's influence has been far-reaching in Taiwan's historical circles; the IHP still recruits top graduates in history from Tai-ta.¹⁰

In addition to his administrative contribution to the study of history, Fu Ssu-nien was also influential in establishing academic standards for historical research. Even before his relocation from the mainland to Taiwan, Fu was respected among Chinese academics, largely on account

⁶ John F. Copper, *A quiet revolution: political development in the Republic of China* (Washington DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1988); Gunter Schubert, *Taiwan-Die chinesische Alternative: Demokratisierung in einem ostasiatischen Schwellenland (1986–1993)* (Hamburg: Mitteilungen des Instituts für Asienkunde, 1994), #237; Steve Tsang, ed. *In the shadow of China: political developments in Taiwan since 1949* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993); and Chao and Myers, *The first Chinese democracy*.

⁷ Thomas Gold, "Taiwan's quest for identity in the shadow of China," *In the shadow of China: political developments in Taiwan since 1949*, ed. Steve Tsang (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993), pp.169–92, and "Civil society and Taiwan's quest for identity," *Cultural change in postwar Taiwan*, ed. Stevan Harrell and Chün-chieh Huang (Boulder, Col.: Westview Press, 1994), pp.47–68; and Alan Wachman, *Taiwan: national identity and democratization* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994).

⁸ Taiwan Imperial University had a history department, staffed only by Japanese historians. See *Academia, Taipei ti-kuo ta-bsüeh yen-chiu tung-hsun* 1 (April 1996).

⁹ Lee Tong-hwa, "Hsün-chi chin-tsui, ssu-erh hou-i: Fu Ssu-nien hsien-sheng tsai Taita" [Dedicated until death: Mr. Fu Ssu-nien in Taita], *Tai-ta li-shih hsüeh-pao* 20 (1996): 129–62, and Tu Cheng-sheng and Wang Fan-sen, eds, *Hsin hsiieh-shub chih lu: chung-yang yen-chiu yüan li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu suo chi-shih chou-nien chi-nien wen-chi* [Along new pathways of research: essays in honor of the 70th anniversary of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica] (Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1998), vols. 1 and 2.

¹⁰ The only notable difference is that since the 1980s, many IHP research fellows also have earned PhDs from leading universities in the United States after receiving their BA and/or MA from Tai-ta. In recent years, Taiwan historians have organized a number of conferences on Fu Ssu-nien.

¹¹ Georg G. Iggers, "The image of Ranke in American and German historical thought," *History and Theory* 2 (1962): 17–40.

¹² Wang Fan-sen, *Fu Ssu-nien: a life in Chinese history and politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹³ Arif Dirlik, *Revolution and history: origins of Marxist historiography in China, 1919–1937* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, Calif.: University of California Press, 1978), and Q. Edward Wang, "Historical writings in 20th-century China: methodological innovation and ideological influence," *An assessment of 20th-century historiography: professionalism, methodologies, writings*, ed. Rolf Torstendahl (Stockholm: Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, 2000), pp. 43–70, and id., *Inventing China through history: the May Fourth approach to historiography* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001).

¹⁴ Yü Ying-shih, "Chung-kuo shih-hsüeh te hsien-chieh-tuan: fan-hsing yü chan-wang" [The status quo of Chinese historiography: reflections and expectations], *Shih-hsüeh ping-lun* 1 (1979): 1–14.

of the slogan he coined: "historical study equals the study of historical sources" (*shih-hsüeh chiu-shih shih-liao hsüeh* 史學就是史料學). That slogan emphasized source criticism, the critical historiography exemplified by the Rankean School, which Fu was supposed to have learned during his sojourn in Germany during the 1920s. But Fu seemed unaware that despite Ranke's "*wie es eigentlich gewesen*" claim, Ranke remained interested in "grand narratives" in history.¹¹ Fu failed to grasp Rankean historiography in its entirety; before he went abroad, Fu had been the protégé of Hu Shih 胡適 (1890–1961) at Peking University (Peiching ta-hsüeh 北京大學), another key figure in modern Chinese historiography. Hu in his later years served as president (1958–62) of Academia Sinica in Taiwan. When Hu pursued his graduate study with John Dewey at Columbia University in the 1910s, he had already begun his search for the adoption of scientific methods in the study of Chinese history. Hu's search led him to discover the "scientific spirit" in Ch'ing scholarship on evidential research (*k'ao-cheng* 考證). To both Hu and Fu, source criticism was the key to scientific history, which requires painstaking exegetic research and refutes unverified sources in historical narratives. The most reliable sources, in Fu Ssu-nien's opinion, were unearthed archaeological findings.¹² Hu and Fu's advocacy of scientific history, aimed at a scientific and nationalist understanding of China's past, gained momentum in the 1920s and the 1930s before the outbreak of World War II. After the War, Hu and Fu began to face the challenge of Marxist historians who sought a more direct linkage between history and politics.¹³

Having retreated to Taiwan from the mainland, Fu Ssu-nien and Hu Shih were able to regain some influence without the presence of their opponents—the Marxists. What they represented was the "Historical Source School" (*shih-liao hsüeh-p'ai* 史料學派), if we use Yü Ying-shih's 余英時 term, which, while not immune to ideological influence, emphasized the minute examination of both written and material sources. The "Historical Source School" stood in contrast to the "Historical Interpretation School" (*shih-kuan hsüeh-p'ai* 史觀學派) known for its grand theoretical stipulations, as exemplified by Marx's theory of social development.¹⁴ Due to the dominance of the Historical Source School in 1950s Taiwan, most historical publications at the time, such as the *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology* (Li-shih yü-yen yen-chi-u-so jikan 歷史語言研究所集刊) at Academia Sinica and the *Journal of Literature, History and Philosophy of Taiwan University* (*Taiwan Ta-hsüeh wen-shih che-hsüeh bao* 台灣大學文史哲學報), were works of source analysis. Source criticism was also the major component in all history courses taught at Tai-ta and other colleges. In Historical Methodology (*shih-hsüeh fang-fa lun* 史學方法論) (a course required for history majors), taught by Yao Tsung-wu 姚從吾 (1894–1970), students also

learned basic skills in comparing, examining and analyzing sources, or the heuristics in historical study.¹⁵ Yao was a friend of Fu Ssu-nien who had studied history in Germany for eleven years and taught the course for many years at both Peking University and T'ai-ta. Lin Yü-sheng 林毓生, then a T'ai-ta history major, recalled:

The history department at Tai-ta proudly claimed that its faculty was composed of the best members of Peking University, Tsing-hua University and Chung-yang (Central) University. Yet the courses offered by the department, with few exceptions, were humdrum and uninspiring, all centering on source verification. To be sure, source verification, particularly verifying important sources, is quite meaningful, and is the basic work of the historian. But the research of the Tai-ta history faculty at the time appeared trivial and tiresome [to me].¹⁶

Like many of his cohorts, Lin Yü-sheng left Tai-ta after graduation and sought advanced degrees in the United States. During the 1960s, the first group of U.S.-trained historians returned to Taiwan. Among them were Hsü Cho-yün 許倬雲 and Tao Jing-shen [T'ao Chin-sheng] 陶晉生, who introduced many new changes to the historical circle. Hsü Cho-yün, the new chair of Tai-ta's history department (1962–70), having received his PhD from the University of Chicago in ancient Chinese history and focused in social science, openly challenged the dominance of the Historical Source School in the journal *Ssu yü yen* (Thoughts and Words). In founding the journal in 1963, Hsü and his friends who had had similar training in social sciences in the United States, advocated the multidisciplinary approach and the alliance between history and the social sciences. A leading article written probably by Hsü stated that the source-centered approach of the Historical Source School overlooked the importance of historical interpretation and therefore failed to comprehend the legacy of the Rankean School.¹⁷ Although source verification, the article said, is important for reconstructing the past, "we however do not have time to piece together the entire past; we must catch its spirit with the sketch technique in order to rebuild its body in as lively a form as possible."¹⁸ In other words, Hsü was campaigning for interpretation (*chieh-shih* 解釋) in historical study.

In the early 1970s, the *Ssu yü yen* journal also sponsored, with the help of Tao Jing-shen and others, a series of conferences exploring the implications of new social science methods for the study of history. Tu Wei-yün 杜維運, who succeeded Yao Tsung-wu in teaching the Historical Methodology course at Tai-ta, published extensively in the field of historiography. In his speech at one conference, Tu Wei-yun criticized the Historical Source School for its bias against historical narrative. Due to this bias, Tu lamented, "someone can spend an entire life studying the history of the Spring and Autumn period, but he/she is still unable to write a history of the Spring and Autumn period." Li En-han 李恩涵, another participant, further declared that "the age of 'historical study equals the

¹⁵ Wang, *Inventing China through history*, pp.89–100.

¹⁶ Lin Yü-sheng, *Yin Hai-kuang, Lin Yü-sheng shub-hsin lu* [Yin Hai-kuang and Lin Yü-sheng correspondence] (Shanghai: Yüen-tung Ch'u-ban-she, 1994), p.4.

¹⁷ When Hsü said this, he had probably read Georg Iggers' important article "The image of Ranke in American and German historical thought," which discussed Ranke's theoretical framework, often overlooked in historiography.

¹⁸ See "Ssu-shüeh ko-tsou chih lu" [The new direction of historical study], *Ssu yü yen* 2.4 (Nov. 1964); 1.

¹⁹ "Erh-shih nien lai shih-hsüeh fa-chan tao-lun-hui" [Symposium on the development of historiography in the last twenty years], *Ssu yü Yen* 10. 4 (1972).

²⁰ Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the 20th century: from scientific objectivity to the postmodern challenge* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1997).

²¹ Dirlík, *Revolution and history*.

²² Tao Hsi-sheng published the *Shih-buo* as a twice-monthly journal in 1934; it ceased publication in 1937 due to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War (1937–45). The new *Shih-buo* journal was issued monthly from 1971 to 1988. It closed down after Tao's death.

²³ I am indebted to Huang Kuan-ch'ung 黃寬重, director of the IHP, for information about *Shih-buo* and the discussion group held at the journal's office in the 1970s and the 1980s. A young historian at the time, Huang had taken an active part in both the group and the editorial work of the journal and kept good records of its activities.

study of historical sources' has passed. ... We must begin to search for historical interpretation."¹⁹ Both Tu and Li had been educated abroad. Like Hsü Cho-yün and Tao Jing-shen, they tried to follow the trend of historiographical change in the West by introducing social science theories into the study of history. Accordingly, during the 1960s and the 1970s, historians in Taiwan began to take a strong interest in social history, extending the trend of historiography in the West.²⁰

The study of social history not only interested young, Western-trained historians like Hsü Cho-yün and T'ao Jing-shen. It also achieved endorsement from T'ao Hsi-sheng 陶希生, a senior scholar and a KMT veteran who had made his name in the Social History Discussion of the 1930s as publisher of the journal *Shih-buo* 食貨.²¹ In 1971, T'ao Hsi-sheng and his son T'ao Jing-shen decided to resume the publication of the journal with family funding.²² The new *Shih-buo* journal attracted many contributions, not only from those interested in social history but also from others who were simply interested in new theories and methods. The fact that many young historians were shunned by other established, methodologically more conservative, journals, such as the *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology*, also contributed to the success and popularity of *Shih-buo*. For many historians in Taiwan, the journals *Shih-buo* and *Ssu yü yen* provided the chance to publish their maiden works. As a KMT veteran, T'ao Hsi-sheng's stature also provided a safe haven for foregatherings of young historians at the journal's office in 1970s and 1980s Taiwan, which was then under martial law. In most cases, a presentation given at one of these private gatherings would subsequently be published in the journal.²³

The new social science notwithstanding, both US-trained historians and *Shih-buo* contributors remained committed to the study of Chinese history. In fact, it was in the field of Chinese history that they established their careers in Taiwan and abroad. Hsü Cho-yün became an acclaimed scholar of ancient China who, since completing his term as chair of the History Department at Tai-ta in 1970, has taught at the University of Pittsburgh for the last thirty years. T'ao Jing-shen, an expert on the history of middle imperial China, holds a teaching position at the University of Arizona. Many of their students followed suit, teaching and researching Chinese history. Hsü's student Tu Cheng-sheng 杜正勝, a flamboyant advocate of the history of Taiwan, served as IHP director and is now the director of the National Palace Museum. Tu first earned his reputation as an expert on ancient Chinese history. During the 1950s and the 1960s, it was natural for history students to seek a career in Chinese history, for this was what they had studied in college and graduate school. An undergraduate history major in Taiwan during the period would spend two years learning Chinese history, from the birth of Chinese civilization to the early twentieth century, by reading texts written by such historians

as Ch'ien Mu 錢穆 (1895–1990), before taking specialized courses which were also predominantly Chinese history courses focusing on dynastic history. Prior to 1970 over 93 per cent of history majors selected topics in Chinese history for their MA and PhD theses. During the 1970s and the 1980s, over 80 per cent of students still chose the field of Chinese history, whereas those focusing on the history of Taiwan numbered less than 10 per cent.²⁴

For Taiwan scholars, it was politically necessary and financially wise to identify culturally and historically with China and make their island a base of Chinese studies for Western scholars. Besides the well-known Stanford/Tai-ta language center, which trained numerous Western China scholars over many years, Taiwan's research institutes and universities also established cooperative relations with their counterparts in the West which included generous funding. The most famous example is the Institute of Modern History (IMH) of Academia Sinica. Founded in 1955, the IMH was awarded over \$420,000 by the Ford Foundation between 1962 and 1971. This funding played a crucial role in its growth and also turned it into a convenient research base for American China scholars. Chang Peng-yüan 張朋園, a research fellow at the IMH, remarked that although John K. Fairbank and C. Martin Wilbur (two scholars who helped the IMH) were instrumental in securing the funding, "they did it not because they particularly liked the Institute, but because they wanted to strengthen it with the support of the foundation and make it a base of China studies for the United States."²⁵ Noticeably, as Fairbank and Wilbur involved Taiwan scholars in China studies, American Japan scholars tried to involve Japanese colleagues in the study of Japan. What prompted the American scholars to take a stronger interest in East Asia at the time was of course Cold War politics. Yet the trend also suggested a new interest in modernization theory,²⁶ which led the IMH to launch its very first collective project in the early 1970s.

In 1965, an epoch-making conference was held at Tai-ta, "The Significance of Taiwan Studies for the Study of Chinese History," sparking the interest of academic historians in Taiwan. Taiwan scholars began to justify the study of Taiwan by connecting it to the study of Chinese history. This was new. In subsequent years, many similar conferences were organized by Taiwan scholars and supported by funding from the United States.²⁷ One paper delivered at the 1965 conference bore the title: "Taiwan: a Laboratory for the Study of Changing Chinese Culture."²⁸ The title clearly suggests that the history of Taiwan is a microcosm of the history of China.²⁹ This image, analyzed by Stephen Murray, was promoted by both the KMT government and American scholars; the former were seeking foreign investment, while the latter "were grateful for a chance to study at least something they could call 'China'."³⁰

²⁴ Peng Ming-hui, *Taiwan shih-bsüeh te Chung-kuochan-chi* [The China question in the study of Taiwan history] (Taipei: Mai-tien, 2002), pp.151–206.

²⁵ Chang Peng-yüan, *Kuo Ting-yee, Fei Cheng-ch'ing, Wei Mu-ting*, p.1.

²⁶ John W. Hall, "Changing conceptions of the modernization of Japan," *Changing Japanese attitudes toward modernization* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), p.7–42.

²⁷ In 1972, American China scholars also organized a symposium on a similar theme, "Taiwan in Chinese history," in Asilomar, California. See Ralph Croizier, "Symposium: Taiwan in Chinese History," *Journal of Asian Studies* 34.2 (1975): 387–90, and Douglas L. Fix, "North American memories of Taiwan: a retrospective of U.S. research on the history of Taiwan," *Min-kuo i-lai kuo-shih yen-chiu te hui-ku yü chan-wang yen t'ao-hui lun-wen chi*, pp.1367–9.

²⁸ The author of the paper was Chen Shao-hsin 陳紹馨. For the conferences mentioned above, see Chang Yen-hsien, "Taiwan shih yen-chiu te hsin chin-shen" [A new spirit in the study of Taiwan history], *Chien-li Taiwan te kuo-min kuo-chia* [Establishing Taiwan as a nation-state], ed. Wu Mi-cha and Chang Yen-hsien (Taipei: Chien-wei, 1993), pp.104–14.

²⁹ Leonard Gordon, *Taiwan: studies in Chinese local history*, and Douglas L. Fix, "North American memories of Taiwan: a retrospective of U.S. research on the history of Taiwan," *Min-kuo i-lai kuo-shih yen-chiu te hui-ku yü chan-wang yen t'ao-hui lun-wen chi*, pp.1355–86.

³⁰ Stephen O. Murray and Hong Keelung, *Taiwanese culture, Taiwanese society: a critical review of social science research done on Taiwan* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1994), p.38.

³¹ "She-hui ko-hsüeh yü li-shih hsüeh tao-lun hui" [Symposium on history and social sciences], *Ssu yü Yen* 12:4 (1974), p.624.

³² Hsü Cho-yün, "She-hui hsüeh yü li-shih hsüeh" [Sociology and history], *Ch'iu-ku pien* [In search of ancient history] (Taipei: Lien-ching, 1984), p.624.

³³ Tu Cheng-sheng, "Chung-kuo she-hui shih yen-chiu te tan-suo: te-tsung li-lun fang-fa yü tzu-liao ko-ti lun" [Explorations on the study of Chinese social history: theories, methods, sources and topics], *Ti-san chieh shih-bsüeh-shih kuo-chi yen-tao hui lun-wen chi* [Proceedings of the 3rd International Symposium on the History of Historiography] (Tai-chung: History Department, National Chung-hsing University, 1991), pp.25-76.

2. From China to Taiwan

The attention Taiwan scholars paid to the study of Taiwan suggests an important change in their notions of history and historiography. This change resulted from their interest in the alliance between history and social sciences and their pursuit of social history. Compared with their predecessors of the Historical Source School, Taiwan historians of younger generations were no longer willing to confine their research to the examination of historical texts; they had developed an interest in applying social theories to interpreting social changes in history. This new interest led them to expand their historical horizons. In order to examine society as a whole, they studied the upper, middle and lower classes. They sought to apply social theories. At a conference organized by the journal *Ssu yü yen*, Chang Peng-yüan acutely observed: "what differentiated today's historical study from that of the past is its subject. We are no longer studying an emperor or a great man; we are studying the common masses. To study the masses, it is necessary to have social theories, for otherwise we cannot find any important issues."³¹

To apply a theoretical framework does not mean to accept Marxism. As a pioneer of social history in Taiwan, Hsü Cho-yün sought a marriage between history and sociology. In contrast to early sociological theories aimed at establishing general causal relations, Hsü points out, "sociological theories nowadays are middle-ranged, which can be applied to seeking certain causal relations in certain societies."³² In other words, although interested in theories, Hsü and like-minded historians were not sure if they could discover a general law in Chinese history. Tao Hsi-sheng also declared that what he was looking for was not dogmatism and Marxism, but a "free exercise" of historical methods, or something between source verification and theoretical stipulation, so that he could establish a "theory of social history" (*she-hui shih kuan* 社會史觀). To be sure, although Taiwan historians eschewed Marxism, they took a strong interest in new theories and methods of Western historiography. The *Shih-buo* journal of the 1970s, as Tu Cheng-sheng noted, bore traces of the American social science of the 1960s.³³

Two projects launched during the early 1970s clearly showed the influence of Western/American culture and education, and the impact of the Cold War on Asia. One was the "Interdisciplinary Research Project on the Nature and History of the Chuo-shui and Ta-tu River Regions in the province of Taiwan" (*Taiwan sheng chuo-shui ta-tu liang-hsi liu-yü tzu-yän yü wen-hua-shih ko-chi yen-chiu chi-hua*), or the "Chuo-ta Project" (*Chuo-ta chi-hua* 濁大計劃) for short, and the other was the "Chinese Modernization Regional Studies Project," or the "Modernization Project" (*hsien-tai-hua chi-hua* 現代化計劃). Both projects were launched to implement the notion of Taiwan as a laboratory of Chinese studies. Yet

they also gave rise to academic interest in Taiwan studies, especially the Chuo-ta Project. The Chuo-ta Project was led by Chang Kuang-chih 張光直, a renowned Chinese archaeologist in the United States, who collaborated closely with Li Yih-yüan 李亦園 and Wang Sung-hsing 王崧興 at Academia Sinica.³⁴ Raised in Taiwan, Chang hoped that the Chuo-ta Project would help shed light on the lives of the Chinese immigrants who moved to Taiwan in the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties, and offer comparative views on the Chinese societies across the Taiwan Strait. The Modernization Project was initiated by Kuo Ting-ye 郭廷以, the founding director of the IMH, but executed by Li Kuo-ch'i 李國祁 and Chang Peng-yüan, Kuo's colleagues at the IMH. Some of the history faculty from the Taiwan Normal University also participated. The interest in modernization theory and the interdisciplinary approach showed the intent of Taiwan scholars to follow the development in Western/American social sciences at the time.

As their names reveal, neither project was exclusively a study of Taiwan. The Chuo-ta Project, which regarded Taiwan as a virtual province of China, was aimed at offering a case study of Chinese society in a "frontier region." The Modernization Project simply grouped Taiwan with other provinces along China's southeast coast and divided China into several regions. In both projects, Taiwan was studied only because it enabled scholars to make comparisons with China's other provinces and regions. Yet the execution of these projects shifted the attention of Taiwan scholars from the mainland to the island, helping create the first generation of bona fide Taiwan scholars. Having compared the composition and structure of society in China and Taiwan, these scholars began to notice some of its distinct traits.

Chen Ch'i-nan 陳其南, a young participant in the Chuo-ta Project, was credited with developing the "indigenization" (*tu-chu hua* 土著化) theory of Chinese society in Taiwan. While pursuing his master's degree in anthropology at Tai-ta, Chen participated in the Chuo-ta Project and later worked with Chang Kuang-chih for his PhD in anthropology at Yale. His work, *Traditional Chinese Society in Taiwan* (Taiwan te chuan-tung Chung-kuo she-hui 台灣的傳統 中國社會), was based on his 1975 MA thesis and was officially published in Taiwan in 1987. Chen had already formulated his "indigenization" theory in his Master's thesis. As an anthropologist, he concentrated his research on the changes in group behavior and religious beliefs of Chinese immigrants in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Taiwan. He concluded that by the mid-nineteenth century, the Chinese living in Taiwan had gradually severed their ties with their ancestral places in the mainland and begun to identify themselves with Taiwan, hence the "indigenization" thesis.³⁵ As its title indicates, Chen Ch'i-nan's work was not aimed at championing a Taiwan identity. But his thesis certainly did serve to awaken "Taiwanese consciousness" (*Taiwan i-shih* 台灣意識) among academics.

³⁴ Chang Lung-chih, *Tsu-chün kuan-hsi yü bsiang-ts'un Taiwan: i-ko Ch'ing-tai Taiwan p'ing-p'u tsu-chün kuan-hsi yü bsiang-ts'un Taiwan: shih te ch'ung-chien yü li-chieh* (Ethnic relations and country Taiwan: constructing and understanding Taiwan's ethnic history of the Ping-pu group in the Ch'ing dynasty), Literature and History Series, #87 (Taipei: National Taiwan University, 1997).

³⁵ Chen Ch'i-nan, "Ch'ing tai Taiwan han-jen she-hui te chien-li chi-ch'i chieh-kou" [The establishment and structure of Chinese society in Taiwan in the Ch'ing dynasty] (MA diss., Department of Anthropology, National Taiwan University, 1975), and *Taiwan te chuan-tung chung-kuo she-hui* [Traditional Chinese society in Taiwan] (Taipei: Yün-chen Wen-hua, 1987).

³⁶ Li Kuo-ch'i, *Ch'ing tai Taiwan she-hui te chuan-hsin* [The social transformation of Taiwan in the Ch'ing] (Taipei: Dept. of Education, 1978).

³⁷ Martin Lasater, *The Taiwan conundrum in U.S. China policy* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2000). This policy change, as some have argued, can be taken as a gesture encouraging Taiwan's independence. See Pao Shao-lin, *Tai-tu mu-hou—Mei-kuo jen te chang-tao yü cheng-tse* [Behind Taiwan independence: American encouragement and policy] (Hong Kong: Chung-hua Shu-chü, 1992).

Although the so-called “Taiwanese consciousness” had crept into the minds of Taiwan scholars, especially the anthropologists, in the 1970s, many decided to resist it. Around the same time as Chen Ch'i-nan put forth his “indigenization” thesis, Li Kuo-ch'i, the leader of the Modernization Project, proposed a contrary view, called “Mainlandization” (*nei-ti hua* 內地化).³⁶ As mentioned earlier, the Taiwan study in the Modernization Project was paralleled to the studies of other provinces. Li Kuo-ch'i and his colleagues found that at both the political and social levels, Taiwan bore great resemblance to its neighboring provinces such as Che-chiang 浙江 and Fu-chien 福建, for it was ruled, during most of the Ch'ing dynasty, by the Fu-chien governor and was populated predominantly by immigrants from the mainland. Taiwan was therefore not only comparable to its geographical neighbors on the mainland, it also became an integral part of the mainland due to the effort of Chinese immigrants at sinicizing the local indigenous population. Chen's “indigenization” thesis became moot. Over the years, immigrants had succeeded in establishing a Chinese society in Taiwan. According to Li, once the “Mainlandization” process was complete, it became unnecessary to continue paying homage and making pilgrimages to the shrines of ancestral gods and/or goddesses in the mainland.

The real difference between Chen Ch'i-nan and Li Kuo-ch'i is not whether the Taiwan society under the Ch'ing dynasty was Chinese or non-Chinese (Chen also considers it a Chinese society), but the assessment of the degree of “Chineseness” in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Taiwan. Li Kuo-ch'i and others wanted to place Taiwan on a par with its neighboring provinces in the mainland, whereas Chen Ch'i-nan hoped to draw attention to the “uniqueness,” or “Taiwanness,” of the society. What really differentiates them is the identity issue. While many wished to cling to the Chinese identity, maintaining the belief that Taiwan was a laboratory for Chinese studies, Chen and like-minded young scholars were beginning to seek a new identity.

This was not coincidental but related to the changes taking place both within the island and without. During the 1970s, world politics had made it increasingly difficult for Taiwan scholars to entertain the Western notion that Taiwan was a laboratory for Chinese studies, for the United States had changed its policy toward China, which consequently caused its abandonment of Taiwan. Although the U.S. had tried to prevent China from entering the United Nations, when it ultimately happened in 1971, the US government decided to take a *realpolitik* approach toward the “two Chinas” across the Taiwan Strait.³⁷ President Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972, Japan's normalizing of diplomatic relations with China in 1973, and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China in 1978, all had a devastating effect on Taiwan's image as the “real” China. As a result, Taiwan, or the ROC, was now left in isolation, bidding

farewell to the foreign ambassadors being recalled, one after another, by their governments. The harsh reality is, if no country would associate Taiwan with China, what was the need of maintaining the Chinese identity in Taiwan? Having witnessed the devastation Taiwan went through, young scholars born and raised on the island, who had no memory of the mainland as their fathers or grandfathers did, naturally felt that it was time for them to look for a new identity of their own.³⁸

In an emotional recollection of his “discovery” of Taiwan, Tu Cheng-sheng confessed that it was the changing politics of the world that helped turn his eyes from China, where he was once a devoted and reputed Chinese historian, to Taiwan, the land where he was born and raised and had both physical and psychological ties to. He wrote:

Due to the increasing isolation of Taiwan in the world, I have gradually realized the real status and position of my identity. Can I continue to claim to be Chinese? Do other peoples in the world see me as Chinese? The more foreigners I have met, the less certain my answers have become. As Taiwan society thawed politically, Chiang's authoritarian government gradually softened, and the “Taiwanese consciousness” burgeoned, I, an intellectual steeped in Chinese cultural tradition who had experienced both internal introspection and external changes, came to notice the existence of Taiwan, as if awakened by the gentle breeze and fragrant earth of an early spring.³⁹

Tu is not alone. Many Taiwan intellectuals went through the same identity crisis when the KMT was forced to sever its diplomatic ties with many of its “old friends” around the world. According to A-chin Hsiau, Taiwan's diplomatic failure was a catalyst for radical changes in domestic politics: opposition forces sharply criticized the KMT and called eagerly for “Taiwanese nationalism,” which led to the the Kao-hsiung Incident of 1979 and culminated in the founding of the DPP in 1986.⁴⁰

From the early 1980s onwards, Taiwan studies witnessed tremendous progress.⁴¹ In the field of history, this progress could be seen in three areas. First, the term “Taiwan history” came into existence as a field of its own, no longer considered a sub-field of Chinese history. In colleges, courses on “Taiwan history” were offered regularly, and students were induced to write their theses on the subject. Since the early 1990s, some universities made the “Taiwan history” course one of the basic history survey courses, and many have simply made it a required course for all history majors. As a result, professors responsible for teaching the Taiwan history course in many schools including Tai-ta were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of their students as well as overburdened by the extra work that enthusiasm engendered.⁴² The percentage of both the MA and PhD theses on Taiwan history has risen steadily since the 1980s. From the early 1980s on, over 10 per cent of history graduate students consistently focused on Taiwan history. Between 1991 and 2000, the percentage of those choosing Taiwan history rose to 23.17 per cent. The increasing

³⁸ Huang Chün-chieh, *Taiwan i-shih yu Taiwan wen-hua* [Taiwanese consciousness and Taiwanese culture] (Taipei: Cheng-chung Shu-chü, 2000).

³⁹ Tu Cheng-sheng, “Tao Taiwan chih lu” [My discovery of Taiwan], *Tzu-yü shih-pao*, 10 January 1999.

⁴⁰ A-chin Hsiau, *Contemporary Taiwanese cultural nationalism* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.6.

⁴¹ Wakabayashi Masahiro, *Taiwan ni tsuite Taiwan shi kenkyū: seido, kankyo, seika* [On the study of Taiwan history in Taiwan: system, environment and accomplishment] [Tokyo: Tokyo Kōryō Kyōkai, 1996], and “Taiwan shih yen-chiu te hui-ku yü chan-wang yen t'ao-hui chuan-hao.”

⁴² Wu Mi-cha 吳密察, a specialist in Taiwan history at Taiwan University, expressed such frustrations in an interview with me on 14 April 1999 at Taiwan University, Taipei, Taiwan.

⁴³ Peng Ming-hui, *Taiwan shih-bsüeh te Chung-kuo ch'an-chi*, pp.198-9.

⁴⁴ Wakabayashi, *Taiwan ni tsuite Taiwan shi kenkyū*.

popularity of Taiwan history among students was achieved at the cost of interest in Chinese history (down from over 90 per cent pre-1970 to 66 per cent in the 1990s), while the percentage of students studying foreign history has remained unchanged over the past four decades, being maintained at about 10 per cent.⁴³

The second trend in the development of Taiwan history was the appearance of a large number of publications on Taiwan history and culture. Taiwan's bookstores have made an extra effort recently to display these publications in a special location, usually labeled "Taiwan studies," whose size is comparable to that of either the social sciences or the humanities section, if not larger. There are bookstores that specialize in Taiwan studies located near Tai-ta and other major campuses. Under the big umbrella of "Taiwan studies," one finds books that cover a great variety of topics, ranging from language, culture, and costume to history, religion, and anthropology. Publications in history boast both variety and quantity. There are books of general history, such as Shih Ming's 史明 *Four Hundred Year History of the Taiwan People* and Ong Jok-tik (Wang Yü-te 王育德)'s *Taiwan: A Gloomy History*, the two earliest histories of Taiwan that were originally published overseas in the 1940s and the 1950s, and were then banned by the KMT until the 1980s. There have also been new additions in more recent years. As Taiwan studies became a booming field, universities, cultural agencies, public and private foundations, and governmental offices at different levels sponsored and organized many conferences, workshops, and lectures. As a result, there are many published conference proceedings, lecture series and essay collections. But comparatively speaking, the collection of source materials on Taiwan history and culture constitutes by far the largest proportion of all publications in history. Taiwan studies enjoys strong public support; the incentives for collecting historical sources often come from below. Many counties and even townships have their own historical societies that take the initiative to collect and organize, with professional supervision, valuable local sources. These societies are often able to procure the funding to get the material published. As we will see in the next section, the public interest in Taiwan studies has also influenced the work of academic historians.

The third trend in the development of Taiwan history was the appearance of a number of agencies, institutes and associations in Taiwan studies.⁴⁴ In response to public interest, many agencies and offices were set up with or without government approval. It is impossible to count them with any accuracy. The number of official and semi-official institutes and associations also increased greatly. In 1977 the government established the Research Center of Historical Relics in Taiwan, which assumed the responsibility of supporting and monitoring the collection of historical sources at the local level. In 1987 the Association of Taiwan History

(*Taiwan shih yen-chiu hui* 台灣史研究會) was formed. During 1994 and 1995, there appeared, rather abruptly, three academic organizations, competing with the existing China associations: the Taiwan Politics Association (*Taiwan cheng-chih hsüeh-hui* 台灣政治學會), Taiwan Historical Association (*Taiwan li-shih hsüeh-hui* 台灣歷史學會) and the Taiwan Sociological Association (*Taiwan she-hui hsüeh-hui* 台灣社會學會). The Taiwan Historical Association is not the same as the Association of Taiwan History; the former pursues a different political agenda. All the associations publish their own journals and/or monographs. In addition, there is *Taiwan: A Radical Quarterly in Social Studies* (Taiwan she-hui yen-chiu chi-k'an 台灣社會研究季刊) (1988–), a comprehensive academic journal edited mainly by the Tsing-hua University faculty. More significantly, Academia Sinica, often regarded by Taiwan scholars as a conservative agency, established the “Fieldwork Office in Taiwan History” (Taiwan-shih t'ien-yeh yen-chiu kung-tso-shih 台灣史田野研究工作室) in 1988 and later turned it into the Institute of Taiwan History (Preparatory Office) in 1993. The establishment of the Institute suggests that the study of Taiwan history has been formally recognized as a legitimate field of research by academic historians.

To account for the remarkable progress of Taiwan studies in the 1980s and the 1990s, we must consider the notable change in government politics. Facing international isolation and domestic opposition, the KMT in the 1980s began its so-called “Taiwanization” (*Taiwan hua* 台灣化) project, recruiting native Taiwanese (e.g. Lee Teng-hui) into the echelons of government. Chiang Ching-kuo's death-bed decision to lift martial law in 1987 also removed a big obstacle to Taiwan's democratization. Many new members were elected into the Legislative Yüan, replacing ageing KMT members from the mainland.⁴⁵ Most of the new members, especially those belonging to the DPP, were born and raised in Taiwan in families that had lived on the island for hundreds of years. These members felt the strong need for an independent Taiwan and took the initiative of promoting Taiwan studies to help forge a new Taiwan identity. Provided with generous funding approved by the Legislative Yüan, therefore, Taiwan studies proliferated, gaining tremendous popularity.

The boom of Taiwan studies, or the rise of Taiwan history, also benefited from changes in academic and literary circles from the mid 1960s onwards. There was cultural development both within and outside the discipline of history. The debate on so-called “Country Literature” (*Hsiang-t'u wen-hsüeh* 鄉土文學) during the 1970s, for example, which was initially a reaction against Western-influenced, modernist literature, drew both public and scholarly attention to the question of national identity. While many associated this identity with Chinese culture, some, especially in the late 1970s, began to advocate “Taiwanese consciousness,”

⁴⁵ Gunter Schubert, *Taiwan-Die chinesische Alternative: Demokratisierung in einem ostasiatischen Schwellenland (1986-1993)* and, with Axel Schneider, ed., *Taiwan an der Schwelle zum 21. Jahrhundert: Gesellschaftlicher Wandel, Probleme und Perspektiven eines asiatischen Schwellenlandes* (Hamburg: Mitteilungen des Instituts für Asienkunde, #270, 1996); Chang Mao-kuei, “Political transformation and the ‘ethnization’ of politics in Taiwan,” *Taiwan an der Schwelle zum 21. Jahrhundert: Gesellschaftlicher Wandel, Probleme und Perspektiven eines asiatischen Schwellenlandes*, ed. Gunter Schubert and Axel Schneider, pp.135–52; Thomas Gold, “Civil society and Taiwan's quest for identity,” pp.47–68; and Chao and Myers, *The first Chinese democracy*.

⁴⁶ Cheng Ch'in-jen, "Taiwan-shih yen-chiu yü li-shih i-shi te chien-t'ao" [The study of Taiwan history and the critique of historical consciousness], *Taiwan wen-i* 84 (1983): 7–17.

⁴⁷ See "Chung-yang yen-chiu-yüan Taiwan shih t'ien-yeh yan-chiu-shih chien-pao" [Newsletter of the Field Work Office of Taiwan History in Academia Sinica], (4 March 1993); and "Taiwan shih yen-chiu-so she-so kuei-hua-an" [Proposal for the establishment of the Institute of Taiwan History], 19 March 1993. Both are kept in the library of the Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica.

⁴⁸ Hsiao, *Contemporary Taiwanese cultural nationalism*, pp.165–6.

⁴⁹ Hsü Cho-yun, "Tsou-hsiang shih-hsüeh te hsin tu-ching" [A new approach to historical study], *Shib-bsüeh—ch'uan-ch'eng yü pien-chien hsüeh-shih t'ao lun-hui lun-wen-chi* [Proceedings of the conference on the continuity and change of historical study] (Taipei: National Taiwan University, 1998), pp.5–8.

putting it against "Chinese consciousness." This kind of search for identity eventually led to a quest for a history of Taiwan. In 1983 historian Cheng Ch'in-jen 鄭欽仁 published an essay in *Taiwan Literature*, one of the main publications in the "Country Literature Debate," calling for a re-evaluation of Taiwan's historical study and the need of studying Taiwan's own history.⁴⁶ Cheng's essay was "a pioneering exposition of the 'pro-Taiwan' view of history'.⁴⁷

In the historical world, having broken away from the dominance of the Historical Source School, scholars began to take an interest in source materials outside the conventional, namely the voluminous dynastic records kept by court historians in imperial China. They were looking for something more local and more immediate. This interest in new historical sources reflected the changing historical interests. In Hsü Cho-yün's opinion, since the 1960s a gradual process of "topic expansion" (*chü-t'i k'uo-san* 主體擴散) in Taiwan's historical circle; historians expanded their interest from the center to the periphery, or China to Taiwan, due to the shift in their interest from political and institutional history to social and economic history.⁴⁸ This shift in interest was largely due to the influence of the social sciences, not only through the works of Hsü Cho-yun and Tao Jing-shen who were concerned with social theory and method, but also through those of the social scientists themselves. Chang Kuang-chih, for example, who had promoted the interdisciplinary "Chuo-ta Project" in the 1970s, played a leading role in the process of establishing both the Field Work Office and the Institute in Academia Sinica. Not only did he suggest the idea but he also secured the collaboration and support of other institutes in Academia Sinica, including the two history institutes (IHP and IMH) as well as the Institutes of Ethnology and Social Sciences, in their establishment. More important, he helped procure the initial funding from both the National Science Council in Taiwan and the Henry Luce Foundation in the U.S. for both the Fieldwork Office and the Institute of Taiwan History in Academia Sinica⁴⁹. Thus viewed, the rise of Taiwan history to some degree parallels historiographical developments in Taiwan over the previous few decades. The nurturing environment provided by political democratization since 1987 has enabled it to enter a period of explosive growth.

3. *Toward a National History*

Although the growth is truly impressive, historians working in the field of Taiwan history have not reached a consensual view of the island's past that satisfies all its current inhabitants. The desire to know about the past comes, of course, from concerns about identity. But the desire is neither

simple nor singular; there are many divergent views on the identity question.⁵⁰ At a political level, there has been a general interest in creating a national identity for Taiwan, in response to the effort made by the current government under Chen Shui-bian to seek *de facto* independence for the island. But this general interest seems to have only divided people, not united them, for the creation of a new national identity in Taiwan entailed a new relationship with mainland China. Given the PRC's insistence on its sovereignty over the island and the unreliability of the ambiguous assurance of safety to Taiwan by the United States (following its "betrayal" in the 1970s), many Taiwanese think a declaration of an independent national identity would only invite military invasion by the PRC.⁵¹ Although many Taiwanese readily dismiss the idea of unification with the PRC, they too are unwilling to make any radical moves toward independence. The DPP, for example, having made remarkable gains in the 1989 election, in which it won over 30 per cent of the vote for the seats in the Legislative Yuan and other assemblies, "stumbled badly as a result of placing Taiwan independence at the center of its platform" in 1991.⁵² More recent public polls also indicate that there has always been a consistent majority of the people who would like to maintain the status quo; they are simply uninterested in making any change with regard to the island's relation with the PRC.⁵³ All this helps explain why the new president Chen Shui-bian has since his inauguration adopted a cautious and prudent policy toward the issue of independence.

Apart from the fear of military invasion from the outside, there remain other problems internally. Taiwan's people are divided into four major semi-ethnic groups (*tsu-ch'ün* 族群). The majority is the Hoklo 福佬 (70 per cent), who immigrated to the island from China's Fu-chien Province during the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries. The second is the Hakka 客家 (14 per cent) who, mostly from Kuang-tung 廣東 province, came to Taiwan a little later than the Hoklo.⁵⁴ The third is the so-called Mainlanders, referring to the one and a half million Chinese who retreated to the island with the KMT government in 1949 and now constitute nearly 14 per cent of the population. Fourth are the Aborigines who, according to a recent study by both Taiwan and foreign scholars, have lived on the island for over five thousand years and belong to the same ethnic group as the Polynesians in the South Pacific.⁵⁵ Ethnically and historically, therefore, the first three groups are Han Chinese and were from China originally. But with regard to their identification with Taiwan, the Hoklo appear most enthusiastic, followed by the Hakka, for both groups have lived on the island for over a century and are comfortable with the term "Taiwanese." Although interested in finding a Taiwan identity, the Hakka are also suspicious and wary about the possible dominance of the Hoklo in Taiwan, which would remind them of their difficult, sometimes painful, experience of the past in competing with the Hoklo in colonizing Taiwan,

⁵⁰ Lu Chien-jung, *Fen-lieb te kuo-tsu jen-tung, 1975-1997* [The ambivalence of national identity in Taiwan] (Taipei: Maitien, 1999); Shelley Rigger, "Competing conceptions of Taiwan's identity," *Across the Taiwan Strait: mainland China, Taiwan, and the 1995-1996 crisis*, ed. Zhao Suisheng (London: Routledge, 1999), pp.229-42; and *Politics in Taiwan: voting for democracy* (London: Routledge, 1999).

⁵¹ Zhao, *Across the Taiwan Strait*; David Tawei Lee and Robert Pfaltzgraff, Jr., eds. *Taiwan in a transformed world* (Washington: Brassey's, 1995); and Lasater, *The Taiwan conundrum in U.S. Chinapolicy*.

⁵² Thomas Gold, "Civil society and Taiwan's quest for identity," p.56.

⁵³ Jiang Yi-huah, "Tang-chien Taiwan kuo-chia jen-tung lun-shuh chih fan-hsing" [Reflections on the discourses of national identity in Taiwan], *Taiwan she-hui yen-chiu chi-kan* 29 (1998): 218-19; Chang Mao-kuei, "Political transformation and the 'ethnization' of politics in Taiwan," pp.135-52; and "Report on the recent poll on the Taiwanese opinions on unification or independence," *The China Press*, 4 December 2000.

⁵⁴ John Robert Shepherd, *Statecraft and political economy on the Taiwan frontier, 1600-1800* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993).

⁵⁵ Chen Chung-min, Chuang Ying-chang, and Huang Shu-min, eds, *Ethnicity in Taiwan: social, historical, and cultural perspectives* (Taipei: Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, 1994), and Chou Wan-yao, *Taiwan li-shih tu-shuo* [Taiwan: an illustrated history] (Taipei: Lien-ching, 1997).

⁵⁶ Monanen Malialiaives, "Ah Neng's critique," *Positions* 8:1 (Spring 2000): 179–200.

⁵⁷ Hill Gates, "Ethnicity and social class," *The Anthropology of Taiwanese Society*, ed. Emily Martin Ahern and Hill Gates (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1981), pp.242–81; Chang Mao-kuei, "Political transformation and the 'ethnization' of politics in Taiwan," pp.135–52; Harrell and Huang, *Cultural change in postwar Taiwan*, pp.1–21; and Wakabayashi Masahiro, *Taiwan: Bunretsu kokka to minsbuka* [Taiwan: its division and democratization] (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1992).

⁵⁸ Harrell and Huang, *Cultural change in postwar Taiwan*, pp.1–21, and Gold, "Civil society and Taiwan's quest for identity," *ibid.*, pp.47–68.

⁵⁹ Wakabayashi Masahiro, *Taiwan: bunretsu kokka to minsbuka*.

not to mention the social and cultural prejudice they often feel they are subjected to in their daily life. By comparison, the Mainlanders, mostly former servicemen and civilians of the KMT government, are ambivalent; while many of them dislike the PRC, they seem also uncomfortable with the DPP. Then, there is the question about including the Aborigines. Although they only constitute less than 2 per cent of the current population, as the first inhabitants in Taiwan, their voices and presence are crucial to the endeavor for creating a new identity for both historical and political reasons. However, as we shall discuss below, in standard accounts of Taiwan's history the Aborigines have been marginalized, if not neglected.⁵⁶ This is ironic, since from a purely nativist point of view, they would be considered the only "bona fide Taiwanese" on the island. How to mediate relations among these groups, therefore, has become a challenge to anyone who seeks a unified Taiwan identity.⁵⁷

Perceived ethnic differences aside, there are linguistic differences. Although the Hoklo, Hakka, and Mainlanders are Han 漢 Chinese, they speak different languages, which are incomprehensible to one another. In general, all the Hoklo are able to communicate among themselves, as are the Hakka. However, the two groups cannot understand each other. The Mainlanders and the Aborigines are even more problematic, for there are many dialects used within each group. Over the last several decades, the KMT government had pushed hard for linguistic unity, demanding that Mandarin be taught in schools and spoken in public. As a result, most Taiwanese speak Mandarin better than many Chinese in the PRC whose mother-tongue is not Mandarin. However, in the eyes of some Taiwanese who seek political independence for Taiwan, Mandarin is a "foreign" language imposed on them by an "alien" KMT government from the mainland. Many DPP leaders thus chose to speak Hokkien in public, as a challenge to the Mainlanders who are unable to understand them.⁵⁸ A problem remains: if Hokkien is the Taiwanese language, what about Hakka and the several other languages spoken by the Aborigines? At present, it seems that because of the demographic majority, Hokkien is gaining popularity, particularly among politicians who use it to stump for votes in the Hoklo communities. But there are already protests against it from other ethnic groups.

Due to these ethnic, political, and cultural differences, it seems unlikely that a consensual view of Taiwan's past can be reached any time soon.⁵⁹ Conversely, if historical viewpoint is a reflection of historical experiences, different historical viewpoints suggest the diverse experiences the people have had in both the island's remote and recent past. Prior to the 1980s, as the KMT government emphasized the necessity of recovering the mainland, the teaching of Chinese history occupied the center of the school curriculum at all levels. Taiwan was regarded as a frontier region; its history was mentioned occasionally. To be precise, there were three

occasions on which Taiwan, most likely, would be mentioned in Chinese history courses: Cheng Ch'eng-kung 鄭成功 (Koxinga)'s use of Taiwan as his base for resisting the Ch'ing dynasty in the seventeenth century; the Ch'ing dynasty's cession of the island to Japan after its defeat in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895; and the KMT's reclaiming of Taiwan after World War II in 1945. These three events also demarcated the general history of Taiwan, as considered by the authors who wrote Taiwan history prior to the 1980s. These authors, including Kuo Ting-ye, ⁶⁰ sometimes mentioned a few contacts China made with Taiwan in an earlier period, e.g. the Three Kingdoms of the third century, in order to demonstrate the island's historical ties with the mainland before it became Cheng Cheng-kung's anti-Ch'ing base in the seventeenth century, when immigrants from the mainland began to colonize the island on a large scale.⁶¹

Given the many changes taking place in Taiwan's political and academic life from the 1980s on, this China-centered historical approach is no longer acceptable to most Taiwanese. Yet the ethnic and linguistic diversity and cultural and political differences in its population also means that an alternative—namely, a balanced and coherent view of Taiwan's history—is hard to effect. Over the past decade, although the study of Taiwan history enjoyed tremendous popularity among both history students and the public, Taiwan historians in Taiwan have yet to provide a comprehensive and scholarly account of the island's history. However, this has not prevented them from writing new textbooks on Taiwan's history as well as on other histories, including world history, for both secondary and college levels. This interest in textbook writing, needless to say, is related to their overall concern about Taiwan's historical education over the past few decades and the effort to re-envision Taiwan's position *vis-à-vis* its Asian neighbors and Western powers in today's world.⁶² Like nationalist historians in other countries, Taiwan historians are fully aware of the twofold importance associated with textbook writing in modern society: the formation of citizenship and the promotion of patriotism.⁶³ The former seeks to offer a narrative that recognizes any existing differences in a given society, while the latter addresses the issue of national identity by relating it to the country's foreign relations. While these two issues seem to be concerned with different areas, domestic and foreign, they are often inseparable, especially when we look at the case of Taiwan. For Taiwan textbook authors, finding a unified historical narrative means to recognize and reconcile different historical experiences of the island's current inhabitants, which requires them to describe the island's colonization, and consequential occupations, by various peoples and ethnic groups over the last four hundred years. At the same time, they also need to work out a coherent understanding of the lives of the Aborigines, despite the latter's marginalized presence in today's society. At present, it appears that authors have chosen, rather,

⁵⁹ Kuo Ting-ye, *Taiwan shih-shih kai-shuo* [General remarks on Taiwan history] (1954; reprint ed., Taipei: Cheng-chung Shu-chü, 1990), pp.1-3.

⁶⁰ John R. Shepherd, *Statecraft and political economy on the Taiwan frontier, 1600-1800*.

⁶² "Li-shih chiao-yü yü hsiang-tu-shih chiao-yü" [Historical education and local history education], *Tang-tai* 120 (Aug. 1997): 32-67, and "Li-shih chiao-ko-shu yü li-shih chiao-hsüeh tso-tan-hui" [A discussion on history textbooks and history teaching], *Hsin-shih-bsüeh* 11.4 (Dec. 2000): 139-94.

⁶³ Laura Hein and Mark Selden, "Introduction: the lessons of war, global power, and social change," *Censoring history: citizenship and memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States*, ed. Laura Hein and Mark Selden (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2000), pp.3-52.

⁶⁴ *Jen-shih Taiwan—li-shih pien* [Knowing Taiwan: History] (Taipei: Kuo-li Pien-yi-chü, 1997), p.34.

⁶⁵ Monanen Malialiaves, "Ah Neng's critique," *Positions* 8:1 (Spring 2000): 179–200.

to focus their attention on the island's colonization, namely the immigration experiences of large demographic groups such as the Hoklo and Hakka.

This presentist approach to textbook writing was shown in the publication of a new series of middle-school textbooks entitled "Knowing Taiwan" (*Jen-shih Taiwan*), which covers such subjects as history, society, and geography. In *Knowing Taiwan: History*, students are taught that the island's history has gone through several major periods: prehistoric; international competition (including the partial occupation of the island by the Netherlands in the sixteenth century); Cheng Ch'eng-kung's occupation of the island; the rule of the Ch'ing dynasty during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; Japan's occupation between 1895 and 1945; and the ROC period from 1945 to the present. This historical framework and periodization clearly suggest the presentist approach adopted by the authors' textbook. Chang Sheng-yen 張勝彥, a noted historian of Taiwan history who wrote the first half of the book, states that the goal of the book is to let students "know about the historical facts of the colonization of Taiwan and its satellite islands by all ethnic groups."⁶⁴ Although he tries to include "all ethnic groups," he also wants to place Taiwan's colonization at the center of the book, which may well leave out the Aborigines. It is worth noting that Chang was actually assigned to write the first half of the book that supposedly deals with the period from the island's remote past, when the Aborigines were active, up to its becoming a province under the Ch'ing.

This presentist and colonization-focused approach is shown not only in *Knowing Taiwan: History*, but also in other texts in the series, hence naturally arousing the objection of the Aborigines. Monanen Malialiaves, for example, protested on different occasions against the attempts of the textbook authors at "marginalizing" the experience of the Aborigines: "We find that *The History* [in *Knowing Taiwan*] situates indigenous people in prehistory; indigenous people become 'prehistorical men' and cease to exist once history begins." He strongly disagrees with the textbook writers' characterization of Taiwan history as a history of "discovery" and Taiwan society as an "immigrant society," for this kind of characterization fails to account for the presence of the Aborigines in both the island's past and present.⁶⁵

For the textbook writers, their decision to take the presentist approach by concentrating on Taiwan's colonization from the seventeenth century onward seems to be both academic and political. Over the past few decades, three periods of Taiwan history received most attention: the rule of the Ch'ing, the Japanese occupation, and the post-WWII years.⁶⁶ By comparison, the Aborigines and their integration with the immigrants have engendered interest mainly among anthropologists, archaeologists and linguists; historians are yet to make more effort to incorporate the research findings of their neighboring disciplines into their writings. It is

also political because by characterizing Taiwan's history as a history of "discovery," it forces one to rethink the island's ties with the mainland, hence challenging the conventional belief in its Chinese identity. Indeed, in *Knowing Taiwan: History*, the authors intend to de-emphasize the Chinese influence in Taiwan history. In contrast to Kuo Ting-yee's work, for instance, the textbook even-handedly describes the rule of the Dutch, the Chinese (including the Manchu rulers of the Ch'ing), and the Japanese in different historical periods. By creating the image of Taiwan as an "international" island, they have downplayed the once dominant Chinese influence.⁶⁷ The authors' intention is most clearly shown in their creation of an "international competition" period, in which they describe colonization by the Dutch, the Spaniards, the Japanese, and the Chinese prior to Cheng Ch'eng-kung's takeover, hence minimizing the island's historical connection with the mainland. In so doing, the textbook drives home the point that the island, ever since the sixteenth century, has been ruled mostly by outsiders and that it now deserves an independent status in the world.⁶⁸

But this attempt at "de-sinicization" (*ch'ü Chung-kuo hua* 去中國化) seems more controversial than the presentist focus, for it revokes many not so distant yet quite different historical memories in the minds of the people. Moreover, as different ethnic groups develop different interpretations with regard to the island's history, shaped by their distinct historical experiences and cultural/political predilections, there is also a thorny and important issue that always looms large in their minds: namely, Taiwan's relation with the PRC, or the "t'ung" 通 (unification) and "tu" 獨 (independence) question. To many Chinese nationalists, especially Li Ch'ing-hua 李慶華, the son of a KMT veteran, who was then a New Party (*hsin-tang* 新黨) representative in the Legislative Yuan, the publication of *Knowing Taiwan* amounted to a deliberate yet dangerous step toward the declaration of Taiwan's independence.⁶⁹ Established in 1993 by a group of KMT members who disapproved of Lee Teng-hui's pro-independence policy, the New Party represents the pro-reunification and Chinese nationalist political voice in Taiwan.⁷⁰ After the publication of the textbook, it was Li Ch'ing-hua who first challenged the authors and started the debate.⁷¹

A strong advocate of "de-sinicization" in Taiwan history is Tu Cheng-sheng, who served on the editorial board of the *Knowing Taiwan* series. A student of Hsü Cho-yün, Tu established himself in the field of ancient Chinese history and, ironically, had not made any study of Taiwan history until the 1990s. However, Tu's position as the director of the IHP (1996-2000), still the most respected research institute in Taiwan's historical circle, and his status as an academician (*yüan-shih* 院士) in Academia Sinica add considerable weight to his

⁶⁶ This statement reflects the consensus among many practising Taiwan historians whom I interviewed in both 1999 and 2001. There are also a few corroborating articles and statistical studies on this finding, such as Peng Ming-hui, *Taiwan shih-hsüeh te Chung-kuo chan-chi*; Liao Su-hsiang, "Taiwan ti-ch'ü ko-ta-hsüeh yen-chiu-suo yu-kuan Taiwan-shih yü Taiwan min-su chih po-shuo-shih lun-wen hsüan-mu" [Selected topics of doctoral and MA theses on Taiwan history and folklore in the historical research institutes of Taiwan's universities], *Shih-lien tsa-chih* 30/31 (Dec. 1997): 189-214; and Shih Chih-wen, "Taiwan shih yen-chiu te fan-szu, 1983-1992" [A reflection on the study of Taiwan history], *Kuo-li Taiwan shih-fan ta-hsieh li-shih hsüeh-pao* 22 (June 1994): 413-46.

⁶⁷ *Jen-shih Taiwan—li-shih pien*.

⁶⁸ Some of these new interpretations of Taiwan history have been incorporated by American scholars in a recent publication on Taiwan history. See Murray Rubinstein, ed. *Taiwan: a new history* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1999). Taiwan's media had extensive coverage of the *Knowing Taiwan* textbook controversy. Soon afterwards, Taiwan scholars of different disciplines began to study it, such as Peter Kang, "Knowing whose Taiwan? Construction of the Chinese identity in the high school history education of Taiwan," *Hua-lien shih-yuen hsüeh-pao* 8 (June 1998): 217-36; Lu Chien-jung, *Fen-lieh te kuo-tsu jen-tung, 1975-1997*; Wang Fu-chang, "Min-tsu hsiang-hsiang, tsu-chün i-shih yü li-shih: 'Jen-shih Taiwan' chiao-ko-shu cheng-i feng-po te nei-jung yü mai-lo fen-hsi" [National imagination, ethnic consciousness, and history: content and context analyses of the *Knowing Taiwan* textbook disputes], *Taiwan-shih yen-chiu* 8.2 (Dec. 2001): 145-208; and Peng Ming-hui, *Taiwan shih-hsüeh te Chung-kuo chan-chi*. As an author of the sociology textbook in the series, Peng's study is particularly interesting because it tries to stay neutral, which is indicative of the political sensitivity of the textbook issue in today's Taiwan society. See pp.207-60. By contrast, Tu Cheng-sheng openly defends his thesis and his role in the controversy, as shown here.

⁶⁹ Peter Kang, "Knowing whose Taiwan?," and Wang Fu-chang, "Min-tsu hsiang-hsiang, tsu-chün i-shih yü li-shih," pp.145-208.

⁷⁰ Murray Rubinstein, *Taiwan: a new history*, pp.457-9.

⁷¹ *Lien-bo pao*, 4 June 1997.

⁷² Tu Cheng-sheng, *Taiwan hsin, Taiwan bun* [Taiwan: my heart and soul] (Taipei: Ho-pan Chu-ban-she, 1998).

⁷³ Karen Wigen, "Teaching about home: geography at work in the prewar Nagano classroom," *Journal of Asian Studies* 59.3 (Aug. 2000): 550–74.

⁷⁴ *Hsiang-tu-shih chiao-yü bsüeb-shu yen t'ao-hui lum-wen-chi* [Proceedings of the conference on local history education] (Taipei: Kuo-li Chung-yang Tu-shu-kuan Taiwan Fen-kuan, 1997), and "Li-shih chiao-yü yü hsiang-tu-shih chiao-yü" [Historical education and local history education], *Tang-tai* 120 (Aug. 1997): 32–67.

⁷⁵ Hein and Selden, "Introduction: the lessons of war, global power, and social change," p.4.

⁷⁶ Tu Cheng-sheng, *Taiwan hsin, Taiwan bun*, pp.149–69, and Lu Chien-jung, *Fen-lieh te kuo-tsu jen-t'ung, 1975-1997*, pp.273–4.

⁷⁷ Tu Cheng-sheng, *Taiwan hsin, Taiwan bun*.

voice. Before he got involved in textbook writing, Tu had proposed an interpretative theory, the "Concentric Circles" (*t'ung-hsin yüan* 同心圓) theory, for the teaching of Taiwan history. The theory is quite simple: the center is Taiwan and its surrounding circles are formed by China, Asia, and then the world, respectively. Tu intends that Taiwan students begin their learning process from knowing Taiwan, the land where they live—hence the textbook title—then gradually expand their knowledge to include China, Asia and the world.⁷²

Tu's proposal is reminiscent of the introduction of "kyōdoka" 郷土課 (native-place studies) to elementary schools in early twentieth-century Japan, in which the teaching of national history began with the study of one's native place.⁷³ But what prompted Tu to propose such a pedagogical idea seems to have more to do with the general interest of today's Taiwan historians in local history (*hsiang-tu-shih* 郷土史). The origin of this interest can be traced back at least to the 1970s in both literary and academic circles. As the "Country Literature Debate" drew people's attention to the lives of the inhabitants of small farms and villages, the influence of the social sciences, especially anthropology, sociology, and ethnology, encouraged historians to take an empirical, hands-on approach and study the daily and local life of the island's past. Since the early 1990s, Taiwan historians have organized several conferences on local history, which generated a large number of research papers and articles. A key issue in their discussion appears to be the linkage between local and national history, in which they often draw on the experiences of other countries for comparison. Some have also investigated their own past experience of, for example, the role of local history studies in Taiwan's public education during the colonial rule of Japan.⁷⁴

Although the Concentric Circles theory seems to reflect the general interest in adopting a Taiwan-centered historical view, it caused a great public stir after Tu and his colleagues introduced it into textbooks in 1997. This is not at all surprising because, as Laura Hein and Mark Selden analyze, "textbooks are carried into neighborhood schools and homes, and because, directly or indirectly, they carry the imprimatur of the state, they have enormous authority."⁷⁵ Indeed, the publication of the *Knowing Taiwan* textbook series seemed to have attracted wide public attention in Taiwan. In response to the intense, emotional, and sometimes agitated, public reaction (a large number of readers from different walks of life wrote to the newspapers), the major newspapers and magazines organized several debates. In the meantime, the media also used other means to cover the controversy.⁷⁶ Tu Cheng-sheng was the main target of the critics, for he strongly defended the purpose of these textbooks and his Concentric Circles theory. His position was clear; he wanted students to identify with Taiwan (*jen-t'ung Taiwan* 認同台灣).⁷⁷ The critics however charged that this identification was achieved by trivializing the brutality

and oppression of Japanese colonial rule because it treats this period as just another epoch, like the Dutch, Cheng, and Ch'ing periods.⁷⁹ Indeed, in the *Knowing Taiwan* textbooks, the Japanese colonial rule of the island is referred to as “*Jib-chih*” 日治 (Japanese rule) rather than according to the traditional usage “*Jib-chü*” 日據 (Japanese occupation), suggesting the authors' intention of treating the Japanese occupation in parallel with the rules of the Dutch, Cheng Ch'eng-kung, and the Ch'ing on the island. Along with this change in nomenclature, the authors, while noting the “dark side” of Japanese colonialism, also praise the modernization project launched by the Japanese after 1895 and acknowledge its contribution towards the development of Taiwan history.⁷⁹ The Japanese media, indeed, noticed the new position taken by the textbook authors and welcomed the change.⁸⁰ In 2000, Japanese scholars translated and published the textbook—the first time a Taiwan textbook had a Japanese rendition.⁸¹ There was also reaction across the Taiwan Strait, as expected. In 1999 a group of mainland historians, mostly Taiwan experts, put together a pamphlet, excoriating the textbook and denouncing the authors.⁸²

Besides the attention the textbook received from the outside, its critics inside Taiwan have stated that its authors place too much emphasis on various eras of foreign rule on the island and therefore neglect the central role of the Taiwanese people themselves in the island's history. Thus the effects of the textbook were paradoxical: it tried to present an autonomous Taiwan, or “Taiwan's autonomy” (*Taiwan chu-t'i-hsing* 台灣主體性), by minimizing its Chinese heritage, but ultimately failed because it denied agency to the majority of the island's inhabitants.⁸³ Moreover, as one critic points out, the emphasis on foreign rule in Taiwan shows the intention of arousing a “tragic sentiment” (*pei-ch'ing* 悲情) among the Taiwanese people when viewing the past, which is by no means healthy nor recommended for Taiwan society.⁸⁴

It should be noted that in the textbook controversy, its critics were not all China sympathizers, or unificationists; there were also DPP leaders who disliked the textbook for its failed promotion of Taiwan's autonomy. Facing the criticisms, one author responded defensively that the criticism of the textbook by both China sympathizers and their opponents actually showed its “neutrality and objectivity,” and implied the kind of quality desirable in a textbook.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the textbook had to be revised again, in response to the criticisms from many sides.

Although the textbook editors seem unable to defend themselves by resorting to academic “neutrality and objectivity”—the latter reminds us of the claim made by Ranke and Fu Ssu-nien's “Historical Source School”—they believe that by refuting the China-centered approach and restoring “Taiwan subjectivity,” they are presenting a history that is based on historical facts and hence closer to historical truth. In other words, like

⁷⁸ *Lien-bo pao*, 4 and 8 June 1997; Monanen Malialiaives, “Ah Neng's critique,” pp.188-90.

⁷⁹ *Lien-bo pao*, 6 June 1997.

⁸⁰ Lu Chien-jung, *Fen-lieh te kuo-tsu jen-tung, 1975-1997*, p.277.

⁸¹ *Chung-kuo shih-pao*, 4 June 2000.

⁸² Chen Kung-li et al., *Jen-shih Taiwan chiao-ko-shu p'ing-hsi* [A critique of the textbook *Knowing Taiwan*] (Peking: Chiu-ch'ou Tu-shu Chu-pan Kung-si, 1999).

⁸³ *Lien-bo pao*, 9 and 11 June 1997.

⁸⁴ Chen Chao-ying, “Tu-chetou-shu” [Letter to the editor], *Lien-bo pao*, 7 June 1997.

⁸⁵ Huang Hsiu-cheng, "Tu-che tou-shu" [Reader correspondence], *Chung-kuo shih-pao*, 6 June 1997; Lu Chien-jung, *Fen-lieh te kuo-tsu jen-tung, 1975-1997*, pp.275-6; Wang Fu-chang, "Min-tsu hsiang-hsiang, tsu-chün i-shih yü li-shih," pp.145-208.

⁸⁶ Tu Cheng-sheng, *Taiwan hsin, Taiwan hun*, pp.149-61.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, pp.177-85.

⁸⁸ Chou Wan-yao, "Ming Ch'ing wen-hsien ch'ung 'Taiwan fei Ming pan-tu' li-cheng" [Evidence of "Taiwan not part of the Ming" from Ming and Ch'ing historical sources], *Cheng Ch'in-jen chiao-shou jung-tui ch'i-nien lun-wen-chi* [Essays in commemoration of Professor Cheng Ch-in-jen's retirement] (Taipei: Tao-hsiang, 1999).

⁸⁹ Chang Mao-kuei, "Political transformation and the 'ethnization' of politics in Taiwan," p.151, and Wang Fu-chang, "Min-tsu hsiang-hsiang, tsu-chün i-shih yü li-shih," pp.145-208.

their predecessors of the "Historical Source School," these historians, mostly working in academic circle, think it possible to construct a national history on the basis of rigorous source criticism. In his recollection of the 1997 textbook controversy, Tu Cheng-sheng states that the goal of historical study is "seeking truth" (*ch'iu-chen* 求真) and that his Concentric Circles theory, compared with the KMT's nationalist, China-centered interpretation, is a better means to that goal.⁸⁶ By exercising source criticism, Tu pieced together historical sources, mostly from official Chinese dynastic histories and local gazetteers, to offer proof that Taiwan was independent prior to the Ch'ing.⁸⁷ Adopting the same method while also including private writings, Chou Wan-yao 周婉窈 reached the same conclusion: Ming rulers never considered Taiwan their own territory.⁸⁸ The style of their research resembles, a great deal, that of the "Historical Source School," as does their attempt at national history. But the difference is also clear: while their method might be the same, Tu Cheng-sheng and his followers are now writing a history of Taiwan.

The difficulty in the formation of a Taiwan identity and the textbook controversy suggest that Taiwanese national history has come of age. Activists, historians, and educators alike have discovered that no one master narrative will encompass the complexity of lived experience on Taiwan, nor will it satisfy the pedagogical and political demands of a population whose diverse class, gender, and ethnic positions defy unilinear, exclusionist historical narratives.

Given the complexity which has been revealed through the turn to social history, the fresh bodies of evidence produced by a new generation of scholars, and the efforts of local historical societies, some have argued that in order for the identity discussion to reach some fruitful outcome, there is a need to oppose "both the concept of cultural assimilation promoted by Chinese nationalism and Hoklo-Taiwanese nationalism."⁸⁹ In other words, the existence of the four main semi-ethnic groups in Taiwan, along with the island's complex historical and cultural legacy, has made the nationalist discourse on identity insufficient to address the problems facing Taiwan society.

4. Concluding Remarks

Despite the challenges and criticisms, most textbook authors, popular histories, and academic works that provide synthetic accounts remain largely committed to the task of reversing the island's history by delinking it from that of China. Their work, as shown above, has been centered on creating a coherent master-narrative for the island's history, or "an evolutionary narrative of historical continuity" that supports such grand concepts as tradition, people, and nation.⁹⁰ In so doing, they delve

⁹⁰ Homi Bhabha, "Introduction: narrating the nation," and "DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation," *Nation and narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), p.3.

into the island's remote past in order to find its "roots" which they believe are distinct from those of China proper. They also characterize the island's history as international and ocean-oriented, in order to make a contrast to the self-insulated and land-centered image conventionally associated with Chinese civilization. Their endeavor is best shown in the Concentric Circles theory put forth by Tu Cheng-sheng, which manifests a clear intention of replacing the China-focus with a Taiwan-focus in historical education and research.

From the perspective of historiography and at the supra-national level, this new focus extends the general trend in Western historical writings, marked by the rise of social history and/or social science history.⁹¹ The efforts of some American-educated historians, who drew attention to the study of local history, led to the rise of Taiwan history. Compared to the Western experience in historiography, however, the boom of Taiwan history has not resulted in the dissemination of historical narratives.⁹² Instead, due to the tense situation along the Taiwan Strait, historians in Taiwan have been making a valiant attempt to make history available to the formation of a national identity. To that end, therefore, they have basically adopted the same "colonial" practice of homogenization,⁹³ hoping to evoke a "common" historical experience and memory for all the "Taiwanese." But their effort is bound to result in certain exclusions. The Aborigines, the Mainlanders, and, to a lesser degree, the Hakka, often refuse to share such "common" historical legacy either because of their Chinese ties or because of their unwillingness to be subject to Hoklo cultural assimilation. In other words, the Concentric Circles are supposed to share a center, but this center so far has appeared dubious, failing to support all the circles. Rather, it looks temporal and indeterminate, for the term "Taiwanese" itself is ambiguous.⁹⁴

Apart from the intention to follow the practice of national history, historians in Taiwan have also been influenced by the tradition of the Historical Source School, established by Fu Ssu-nien and Hu Shih in China in the early half of the twentieth century. This tradition manifests itself mainly in two areas, as shown in the current work of Taiwan historians. One is the attempt to discover/recover historical truth and the other is the emphasis on the critical use of historical sources. In explaining his Concentric Circles theory, Tu Cheng-sheng simply says that the China-focus in Taiwan's historical education has not been able to reflect the historical truth.⁹⁵ Of course, the China-focus indeed has in the past been responsible for blocking the attention of historians from the island. But can one be sure that the Concentric Circle centering on Taiwan is able to reflect adequately the historical truth of the island's past? The emphasis on historical sources, too, has a grip on the scholarly output of Taiwan historians. Due to its influence, most academic historians in Taiwan regard the work of source analysis as the most important and prestigious

⁹¹ Iggers, *Historiography in the 20th century*.

⁹² Bhabha, *Nation and narration*, pp.291–322, and id., *The location of culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

⁹³ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The post-colonial critic: interviews, strategies, dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (London: Routledge, 1990), pp.59–66.

⁹⁴ Hill Gates, "Ethnicity and social class," pp.242–81; Harrell and Huang, *Cultural change in postwar Taiwan*; Lu Chien-jung, *Fen-lieb te kuo-tsu jen-tung, 1975-1997*; Chang Mao-kuei, et al., eds. *Tsu-ch'ün kuan-bi yü kuo-chia jen-t'ung* [Ethnic relations and national identity] (Taipei: Yeh-chiang, 1993); and Wang Fu-chang, "Min-tsu hsiang-hsiang, tsu-ch'ün i-shih yü li-shih," pp.145–208.

⁹⁵ Tu Cheng-sheng, *Taiwan hsin, Taiwan bun*.

⁹⁶ Angela K. C. Leung, "Li-shih hsieh-men cheng-chiu ping-ku pao-kao" [Report on the accomplishment in the discipline of history], *Jen-wen yü she-hui ko-hsüeh chien-bsün* [Humanities and social sciences newsletter quarterly], Taipei: National Science Council, 2.1 (1999), pp.17–21.

⁹⁷ Chou Wan-yao and Chang Lung-chi, two research fellows at the Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica, expressed such feelings in my interviews with them in April, 1999.

⁹⁸ Michel Foucault, "Truth and power," *The Foucault reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), pp.51–75.

in historical research. In a recent poll of the quality of academic history journals, the *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology*, a journal founded by Fu Ssu-nien, well known for publishing works of penetrating source analysis, earned the highest marks, whereas theory-oriented journals such as the *Taiwan: a Radical Quarterly in Social Studies* was ranked close to the bottom against its peers.⁹⁶ This emphasis on source collection and criticism has created more problems for historians interested in Taiwan history. On the one hand, they are interested in exploring new theories in their research, for the subject itself (given its novelty) often demands it. On the other hand, however, they are often given the responsibility of taking charge of many source collection projects, which prevent them from developing more tangible interpretative frameworks in their studies.⁹⁷

To be sure, the desire for historical truth, along with the emphasis on source criticism, has long been an important driving force for improving the work of the historian. This is true for many historical cultures across different parts of the world. But the desire itself, in modern times, has also been amplified and mystified to the extent that it has lent support to the practice of cultural hegemonization, which links knowledge with power.⁹⁸ That is, the truth-claiming process in historical study is often more to do with the pursuit of power than of knowledge. The search for an autochthonous, homogenous people who inhabit a unique landscape, a pursuit of nationalist historians around the globe, can only support the dominance of a majority group at the expense of the rest, be they Aborigines, Mainlanders, or Hakka.

● Edward Wang

History Department
Rowan University
201 Mullica Hill Road
Glassboro, NJ. 08028-1701 USA
wangq@rowan.edu