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"Mutual Historical Understanding": The Basis for Taiwan-Mainland Relations in the Twenty-First Century

Introduction

The concept of protest played a vitally important role in the definition and development of Taiwanese consciousness. From the period of the early Chinese migrations, through the era of Japanese colonization, to the conflicts of retrocession and Nationalist rule, and into the post-martial law period, protest and opposition has shaped Taiwanese identity. And yet the protest in modern Taiwan that has been directed at Communist China also brings with it risks and dangers. Resolving the Taiwan-Mainland relationship is perhaps the most pressing issue in East Asia in the twenty-first century—an issue that fills people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait with anxiety and uncertainty. This conflict threatens not only the future of Taiwan and China but also the peace and stability of East Asia as a whole. Is it possible to discover a firm basis for resolving this pressing issue and for repairing the relationship between Taiwan and Mainland China? In this chapter we will suggest that if both parties gained a better historical understanding of themselves and their neighbor, such a heartfelt historical understanding might be able to function as the basis for reconciliation.

In support of this suggestion, we will look first at the indispensability of historical understanding for both parties in this relationship. Genuine human relationships are established for the sake of, at the very least, not hurting either party involved; not hurting either party requires knowing each other well, and knowing each other well consists in understanding

each other's history. Therefore, if the Taiwan-Mainland relationship is to be healed, then such healing will depend on a mutual historical understanding of both parties. What, then, are the key points in the histories of both sides?

In Taiwan's case, the key factor is its sad history of imperial oppression, which in turn spawned an acute yearning for independence. In light of this, we can reject the most commonly proposed "quick-fix" solution: the quick reunification of Taiwan with the Mainland. This "solution" would hurt Taiwan, overriding its hard-earned institutions and autonomy, and it would also hurt the Mainland by sowing seeds of disunity. China remains ignorant of the historical reasons behind Taiwan's identity and unaware, for example, that Taiwan's four-hundred-year separation from the Mainland in political relations and sentiment has made it independent yet led it to feel always nostalgic for an "ideal" cultural China, a yearning to "return home" and reunite amid a cultural spring.

And yet the Taiwanese must understand the historical factors and events that shaped the Mainland and its present sentiment toward Taiwan, that "Taiwan is part of one China." In light of our historical grasp of Mainland China, we will then be able to criticize quick-fix solution number two: quick independence of Taiwan from the Mainland. This "solution" would be detrimental to Taiwan. Our neglect of the historical and attitudinal links between the Mainland and Taiwan would only rouse increasing hostility in the Mainlanders, which could result in military action against Taiwan. Such a violent backlash is not something we in Taiwan could face.

Instead, each side needs to cultivate a thorough understanding of the historical backgrounds of both parties involved. This will help us to establish a rational basis for resolving our problems, and find a way to create the conditions for harmony and mutual understanding. An adequate historical understanding by both parties is absolutely indispensable if we are to resolve the Taiwan-Mainland conflict satisfactorily in this new century.

The Importance of Historical Understanding

In this section, we will examine two questions: First, why is a historical understanding of both Taiwan and Mainland China so indispensable for managing their relationship? And second, in what respects do the two popular quick-fix proposals for managing this relationship lack this requisite historical understanding?

The Taiwan-Mainland relationship is perhaps the most pressing problem facing Taiwan today. Yet few really comprehend how to resolve it satisfactorily. This burning, emotional issue has produced much heat, but hardly any light able to guide us to an appropriate solution. The suggestions of quick unification or quick independence are both in vogue in Taiwan, yet these proposals are impatient and naïve, and they lack a depth of mutual historical understanding.

Before tackling the main issue, we must underscore the importance of our rationale; that is, that any negotiations regarding relationships between any social groups require, as their basis, some mutual historical understanding of all parties involved by all parties involved. When making this suggestion, we often hear a common, understandable—yet misguided—objection.

According to this objection, the situation of these two political groups across the Taiwan Strait is uneventful if not peaceful or amicable, and this stable condition, in all probability, will persist into the indefinite future. Therefore, any talk of resolution is unnecessary; the stability of the status quo and its likelihood of continuation are secure and well established. For examples of this view, we could look at Ralph N. Clough's article "Taiwan-PRC Relations," which concluded that in the future, after the economic integration of Taiwan with the Mainland and Hong Kong, Taiwan's economic position will continue to improve internationally, while the Taiwanese identity problem will remain unresolved.[1] We could also look at the December 2012 Opinion Poll on Cross-Strait Relations issued by the ROC Executive Yuan's Council of Mainland Affairs. This opinion poll examined the opinions of Taiwanese people regarding cross-strait relations, and it claimed that 83.7 percent of respondents prefer maintaining the status quo—only 3 percent sought quick-fix unification with the Mainland, while another 7.2 percent wanted quick-fix independence.[2]

Two important points must be raised against the above objection: one concerning two dangers of blind complacency with the status quo, and another that the objection altogether misses the basic point at issue.

First, maintaining the present "stable" situation without tackling the issue could involve two risks. Maintaining the present situation amounts to sitting on a time bomb and negligently refusing to deal with it at all. This bomb is the crisis of Taiwanese identity, which lies dormant but ready to explode and destroy Taiwan at any moment. A bomb hardly needs to be large to do great damage. The 10.2 percent of respondents in that same opinion poll who support either of the

quick-fix options is already enough to destabilize the entire situation, currently in an uneasy state. If popular sentiments about Taiwanese identity are suppressed and finally killed, then Taiwan *qua* Taiwan is already gone; there can be nothing more said about "peace" if it is bought at the price of authentic existence.

Second, this objection fails to realize that any negotiation regarding human relationships must be conducted on the basis of mutual historical understanding of every party involved. This indispensable condition must be enforced; otherwise each party risks the death of its own integrity. Discussing the two extreme positions is an explication of this point; the relative stability of the present situation is finally not relevant to the discussion.

Yet why is it necessary for each party to have such a historical understanding? In brief, the rationale is as follows: (1) A human relationship should consist of and be consummated in a mutual thriving, in which no party is harmed. (2) In order not to hurt either side, each party must understand all parties involved in the relationship. (3) Every human entity, no matter whether personal, political, or cultural, bears a historical background. To know a person, an ethnic group, a nation, a culture, one must understand its history, which forms the distinctive integrity of that human entity; this is especially and urgently true in the Chinese world. (4) Therefore, a good Taiwan-Mainland relationship will depend, critically, on a good, mutual understanding of their respective histories.

The third point requires some elaboration. To understand a person, we must hear that person's life story. Human integrity consists of the human biography, verbalized or not, that a person always bears in his or her heart. This is especially true of China. China's political identity and cultural integrity consist in its history. In China, politics is cultural, and the historical accumulation of its political-cultural experience constitutes its integrity.

Let us take this even slower. A person is a bundle of personal experiences held together by memory through time. This is personal identity across time, one's story self-composed and remembered through time. Such a holding together of memories and experiences across time is, in effect, historical consciousness. Therefore, personal identity is rooted in one's sense of historical consciousness. Since a society is a collective person, a society's identity consists in its possession of historical consciousness.

As we have said, this is especially true of China, as an ethnic group, a culture, and a nation. The Chinese traditionally have upheld the ideal of the good ordering of the world through politics.[3] This ideal has been a central core of nostalgia in Chinese culture since even before the time of Confucius. Therefore, in China, politics is cultural, and culture is often political in tone. This ideal has been tried, failed, and been tried again, and the records of the vicissitudes of these cultural-political experiments are what make up the history of China.[4] No wonder China is a people, a culture, a land with such a strong historical consciousness. The Chinese are steeped in history, and it acts as their background, their source of behavioral norms and political management, and the final arbiter of their lives. History is that in and for which they live, move, and hammer out their being.

Standing by a stream, Confucius sighed, "It passes on just like this, not ceasing day or night!"[5] Chen Zi'ang 陳子昂 (662–702) of the Tang dynasty lamented, "Beholding no ancients, / Beholding no one's coming, / Vainly thinking how vast the skies and broad the earth, / Being alone, I lament, shed tears."[6] Bearing historical sentiments of this sort, the Chinese, and especially their rulers, have been concerned with their historical legacy, whether in the memories of their families and friends or in the official annals of history. The emperors were all concerned with building their sepulchers, that their historic achievements might be recorded by the imperial historians, and that their posthumous *miaohao* (廟號, temple names), such as Wudi 武帝 and Wendi 文帝 of the Han, would be remembered and honored.

In short, in China, the society, the people, the culture, and the politics are all history. To engage the Chinese and their culture is to engage their history. Their history constitutes their flavor, their atmosphere—in fact, the very existence of China. Chinese history is the very flesh and blood of China. Chinese people do not just live in history; they are their history. China (its people, its politics, its culture) is its history. China is the place where we see most clearly that the human being is *Homo historicus* through and through.

Thus, both in a general sense and especially for the Chinese, historical consciousness and historical understanding are indispensable when making important decisions in China, and it would be unforgivable negligence on the part of those offering proposals for an amicable relationship between Taiwan and the Mainland to fall short in mutual historical understanding of these two political groups.

Sadly, the two ahistorical, quick-fix proposals seen in Taiwan today (quick unification or quick independence) share some regrettable traits. Adherents of both proposals press for quick solutions from mutually opposed angles, raising the stakes and making the problem increasingly incendiary. Adherents on both sides are impatient about tackling this complex problem. Adherents on both sides insist on a quick fix. Their increasing insistence in their either/or, all-or-nothing approach is potentially counterproductive; they both would entail destruction of the very thing they seek to defend: sanctity of the state as itself a promotion of the integrity and welfare of the people. Still, both sides are becoming so impatient and ahistorical as to exacerbate and complicate current tensions between Taiwan and Mainland China.

Therefore, instead of siding with either one of these proposals, in this chapter we will seek to undercut this dilemma and bring out a new basis, the common historical universe of their discourse. On and through this basis, Taiwan and Mainland China will be able to come together and hammer out a fresh approach, one in the interests of both parties.

Let us now turn to look at the relevant histories of Taiwan and Mainland China, then sketch out some risks of neglecting this mutual historical understanding, before finally offering a portrait of potential benefits that arise when basing cross-strait talks on a historical understanding.

Taiwan Historicity: The Centripetal-Centrifugal Spirit

The Taiwanese may appear to be Chinese, yet they differ in character and sentiment from the Mainlanders. To better understand the Taiwanese character, let us look at the exciting story of Taiwan's history. In general, we can say that (a) numerous outwardly directed tumultuous events have exhibited (b) an inner tension between the yearning for an ideal China and political independence from the Mainland. This tension contributes to Taiwan's youthful dynamism, which is the gem and pride of modern China. (c) Taiwan's quick unification with China, without a profound appreciation of this historical, youthful, cosmopolitan virility, would actually prove to be a fatal blow to modern China.

a. On the one hand, Taiwan's history is full of pathos, tension, frustration, confusion, and bloodshed. On the other hand, Taiwan has made impressive progress in terms of its industrial-economic development, its performance in international markets, its cosmopolitan outlook, and its rapid, pragmatic changes. Let us look briefly at (i) the many political upheavals in Taiwan and (ii) the attendant cultural dramas;

we will see that (iii) both of these forged the distinctively Taiwanese spirit, a Taiwanese historical consciousness in radical inner tension.

i. We have already seen that Taiwan has undergone several violent changes in national sovereignty. It was occupied by the Dutch (1624–1662), dominated by Koxinga during the Ming era (1661–1683), controlled by the Qing Manchus (1683–1895), colonized by the Japanese (1895–1945), and finally ruled by the Chinese Nationalists (1945–present).

So many radical political ruptures in such a short period affected the politico-cultural character of the islanders, and usually brought with them terrible bloodshed. Yet this implanted a centrifugal internationalism, progressivism, and independence within Taiwanese hearts and minds. At the same time, the frequent political displacements provoked a type of historical forlornness and centripetal yearning to return home to the cultural roots of an idealized China. This oceanic-insular frame of mind, in both cultural and geographical terms, has been anything but static; it is full of contrastive tensions: the centripetal yearning for an idealized China, and the centrifugal flight away from despotism—including that of the Mainland—toward national independence. (We will look at these features in subsection *b*.)

ii. Another historical factor behind the centripetal-centrifugal tension typical of Taiwanese historical consciousness (i.e., the Taiwanese spirit) is the diverse cultural legacies behind the social, cultural, and industrial "achievements" that the various political regimes bequeathed to Taiwan.

Two dramatic political changes helped push Taiwan into international modernity. First, from 1895 the Japanese made impressive cultural contributions to Taiwan as they set about modernizing the island. Japanese colonization provided the infrastructure of modernization, constructing power companies, factories, railroads, an irrigation system, and the Chianan Dam. At the same time, the Japanese also helped to organize farm associations and institute household registration, and they made primary school education compulsory.

The Nationalists arrived in 1945 and brought about four notable transformations: industrialization and urbanization, expansion of educational opportunity, social mobility, and liberation of the female population. The latter three were accomplished in the urban society that resulted from rapid industrialization. Society modernized, and people became more internationally minded. The Land Reform Acts of the 1950s dramatically changed the economic outlook of the Taiwanese.

Traditional views about the sanctity of soil and family-centeredness were replaced by mercantilism, individualism, industrialization, and competition.[7]

iii. These political and cultural changes uprooted Taiwanese people from the traditional sanctity of their native soil, both agricultural and cultural. Again, this feeling of spiritual forlornness accompanied the mercantile spirit that invigorated Taiwan's economy and pushed it into international modernity.

All of these cultural achievements instigated, on the one hand, the centripetal longing for historical roots in an idealized China and, on the other hand, the centrifugal drive toward brave independence. Years of political oppression and cultural discrimination led by various political regimes instilled in Taiwan a Janus-faced historical consciousness that is both centrifugal and centripetal, always in the interim, on the go, dynamic, and yet unstable.

b. The brief sketch above of Taiwanese history is incomplete as it stands. If the above description shows how outward political and cultural turbulence provoked a distinctive Taiwan historical consciousness, then we also need now to reverse the direction and ask what it is that has set the unique Taiwanese tone, style, and sentiment on all of these breathtaking waves of external change.

The answer lies in the Taiwanese historical consciousness itself. It lies in the Taiwanese historical spirit,[8] which marks all the historical vicissitudes in Taiwan as typically and distinctively Taiwanese. But what does this Taiwanese historical consciousness mean?

The Taiwanese historical consciousness is a spiritual[9] tension between profound nostalgia for an idealized Chinese culture amid the rapid social, industrial, and cultural modernization of Taiwan, and a vigorous persistent dream for political, social, economic, and industrial independence from all extra-Taiwanese ties, including those to the Mainland. This tension has kept Taiwanese people on their toes, and always pushing toward a future full of possibilities.

Dramatic recognition of the tension-filled nature of this Taiwanese spirit, of this historical consciousness, appears in the writings of pivotal figures from Taiwan's history up to today. The six following examples will serve to illustrate the centrifugal-centripetal tension felt in Taiwanese historical consciousness. We will then conclude with a recent declaration by Taiwan's intellectual class, which could not otherwise be understood apart from this sort of Taiwanese historical consciousness.

i. The first and most straightforward example is Koxinga (國姓爺 Zheng Chenggong), the embattled officer and military general of the defeated Ming dynasty. He was forced to flee to Taiwan, where he planned and prepared to launch a military and political-cultural recovery of the Mainland, then under the rule of the Manchurians (1644–1912). To compound the problem, his father had capitulated to the Manchurians, and urged him to do likewise.

Consequently, Koxinga’s nostalgic loyalty to the Ming clashed with his filial love and duty. He refused to capitulate, and his pain was unspeakable. Trapped on an island, his heart yearned for his homeland and the Ming regime. Yet meanwhile, his love of this island grew, as it provided him a base for gathering his military strength. He felt the ideal and the love, and he felt the hatred and independence; these sentiments clashed in his heart during his time on the island. Thus, Taiwanese historical consciousness as centrifugal-centripetal tension first emerged and crystallized in him.

His ideal was to restore the Ming on the Mainland; his antipathy was to the current “barbarian” Qing regime, in protest against which he stayed in Taiwan. That tension-filled historical consciousness was the first example recorded in Taiwan’s history.

Interestingly, the Ming royalty called Koxinga the *Yanping junwang* (延平郡王, lit. the local ruler who prolongs peace—presumably of the Ming rule), thus establishing him as a beacon of hope for the Ming. In this way, Koxinga became a crystallization of the centripetal force toward an ideal. Yet, at the same time, Chinese immigrants in Taiwan called Koxinga the *Kaishan shengwang* (開山聖王, lit. the wise ruler who opened up the [virgin] mount [of Taiwan]); this name establishes Koxinga as a crystallization of the centrifugal force of independence.[10]

ii. Our second example is Koxinga’s contemporary Shen Guangwen 沈光文, who arrived at Kinmen in 1649 from Zhejiang province. Shen wrote a poem full of nostalgic scenes of Zhejiang, unashamedly displaying his yearnings for the land.[11] Yet his contemporary Xu Fuguan 徐孚遠 wrote a poem in praise of Taiwan as a precious abode, well-suited for evading the oppressive “Qin,” an unmistakable allusion to the current despotic “barbarian” regime.[12] Again, this exhibits the centripetal-centrifugal tension experienced among the Taiwanese.

iii. Our third example is Li Chunsheng 李春生 (1838–1924), a grass-roots intellectual, a wealthy self-made businessman, a successful politician with the Japanese government, a Christian, and a Confucian, all rolled into one. He was sympathetic with the foreign regime

of Japan, yet he also cared for the popular welfare of the Taiwanese; he believed in the foreign Christian faith yet also held native Confucian ideals; and thus he in himself also exhibited both the centrifugal outreach and centripetal nativism that came to mark Taiwan's politics, culture, and religion.[13]

iv. Our fourth example is Ye Rongzhong, a follower of the eminent landlord Lin Xiantang. In his *Memoir* he recorded the following reflection about himself:

> Born in this occupied Taiwan, we have not been in our fatherland to touch its soil, to behold its rivers or its mountains. Without relatives or family there, we have no concretely experienced connection with the fatherland except in our minds, in our ideas, through written history, traditional culture. We feel a centripetal passion, what we might call *Volksgeist*. Composed as it is out of written history that we have read, this image of the fatherland, the object of our passion, is powerfully provoked by the acts and behaviors of the Japanese [in Taiwan] toward us. Whenever we oppose the Japanese oppression, they tell us, "If you don't want to be Japanese nationals, return home to China." Thus the bigger their oppression grows, the more fervent our Taiwanese yearnings for the fatherland become.[14]

v. Our fifth example is the well-known writer Wu Zhuoliu. Wu movingly depicted the fierce independence of the Taiwanese:

> After all, the Taiwanese were produced in the physical and historical environment of Taiwan, and so have traits distinctive of Taiwan. We are of course originally of the Han race, who migrated south after being defeated in battles with other races. We came down south to Fujian and Guangdong provinces because we would never capitulate to them. Similarly, political oppression brought us over to Taiwan (and elsewhere) to be overseas Chinese and develop the brave new world of our own freedom. We belong to the elements in the Han that always refused to capitulate to other ethnic groups; they fought bravely for their independence in the Mainland, then continued their heroic struggles in Taiwan. Later, having been reduced to being nationals under the Qing, they continued their numerous rebellions. Thus the Qing Manchus characterized Taiwan as a terrible place of "a small rebellion every three years, a great rebellion every five."[15]

This passionate feeling for independence stems from an equally passionate love of an idealized China. Accordingly, he poignantly confessed,

> The love of our fatherland, being invisible, is of course a mere idea. But, amazingly, this love is extremely subtle and forever draws my

> heart to it like a magnet, as if it were the reality. It is just like the admiration of an orphan who forever yearns for the parents he has never met—what his parents are really like is not important to him at all. His heart just aches and pines after them, always thinking that as long as he is held safely in their bosoms he will live a life of warmth and comfort. Instinctively, we also long for our fatherland, pine after it. This is a feeling that only those who have it can understand. Except for those who have experienced living under foreign colonial rule, there is perhaps no way to understand this feeling.[16]

This "invisible fatherland" is the idealized China. He continued,

> Taiwanese have an ardent love of our homeland, and our love of the fatherland is just as intense. Everyone loves one's own country. But, the Taiwanese love of fatherland is not any love of the Qing Dynasty, which is ruled by the Manchus not the Chinese. [. . .] Taiwan may be temporarily under the rule of the Japanese, but someday Chinese troops will arrive to recover Taiwan for China. Surely, we Chinese will rise up to recover our nation. Even the old folks are always dreaming that some day the Chinese army will come to rescue Taiwan. Deep in the Taiwanese heart lives this beautiful and great fatherland, our "China."[17]

Sadly, this image of a "beautiful great China" in Wu's Taiwanese heart was shattered during his visit to the Mainland and his encounters with harsh reality there:

> When I first landed on the Mainland, I couldn't understand a word of what the people said. Although it was my fatherland, it felt completely alien and foreign to me. [. . .] The train to Nanjing was horribly packed. People queued up, forming a long snake-line for tedious inspections. Since I was carrying a Japanese passport, I went to another line; on waving my passport, I was perfunctorily released, without having my luggage inspected. The Shanghai station had been bombed recently and was a mere temporary shack. The rails were all wide gauge, and the carriage was wider inside than those in Taiwan. But every passenger carried huge loads of luggage; very few did not. All the train stations along the way were temporary ones, displaying recent damage from the bombardments. The scenes we passed along the way were all deserted, forlorn, quite a contrast from the prosperity of Shanghai. Shanghai was a veritable center of exploitation by foreign powers. The tall, luxurious buildings of banks and companies lined the streets, intimidating pedestrians. The foreigners residing in that extraterritorial region were disgustingly and audaciously haughty beyond words.
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> A visit of no more than 3 or 4 days to China convinced me of the miseries of being Chinese. Hoodlums boldly approached us like

> floods; beggars rushed in like rapid streams—these made wretched scenes of the struggle for survival. In contrast, foreigners were like despots, unspeakably haughty, behaving like they ruled over everything.[18]

Wu was struck by the miserable actuality of China—the widespread devastation wrought by the Japanese invasion, the backwardness of Chinese society, the exploitation of foreign imperialism. This is the stark contrast of two Chinas, one ideal and one actual.

vi. Our final example is from a contemporary figure, Peng Minming. Peng holds a PhD from France and taught at National Taiwan University until he was expelled from his post. He then exiled himself abroad. His vivid description of his childhood journey to Mainland China is well worth quoting:

> When I was about five, I was brought to China. I still remember how cold Shanghai was, how long and many were the steps leading up to the Zhongshan Tomb in Nanjing. This trip gave my parents an opportunity to compare the living conditions of Mainlanders with those of the Taiwanese after several decades of Japanese occupation. They were of course impressed by the vastness of China, and felt nostalgia for the soil of our forefathers. However, in areas of social development, industrialization, education, public health and sanitation, they felt that, compared with conditions in Taiwan, China had much room for improvement.[19]

The last two quotations vividly illustrate the shock felt at the sheer contrast between these two Chinas—the actual versus idealized Chinas. The shock was so great that it instigated a centrifugal thrust away from China toward the independent development of Taiwan.

Regarding the Taiwanese spirit of independence, Peng wrote,

> During our fathers' generation, together with our own, thousands of educated Taiwanese have constantly supported the Taiwan self-government movement. At first, during World War I they organized such a movement, encouraged as they were by the American President's call to the world to recognize the rights of the minority races in the world. In the 1920s, Taiwanese leaders continuously demanded the Japanese government let the Taiwanese participate in the government and legislature of Taiwan, until in 1935 Japan began to yield. From local elections to local town meetings, the right to vote gradually expanded. In the early part of 1945, the Japanese government finally announced that the Taiwanese were allowed to enjoy the same political rights as those enjoyed by the Japanese.[20]

Peng was perhaps referring to the 1921–1934 movement to petition the Japanese for the establishment of a Taiwan parliamentary system—this was in opposition to the Japanese policy of assimilation.[21] In the same vein, Hong Shizhu 洪石柱, the founder of the Taiwan Culture Movement during the Japanese occupation, challenged the Nationalist government (in the early years of retrocession) to set up a legal provincial system of government to replace the temporary and arbitrary military government that ruled at the time.[22]

c. In light of above description of Taiwanese historical consciousness, we now understand the pathos and inner spiritual meaning of many struggles for political reforms that have occurred in Taiwan. We see this crystallized (i) in the recent epoch-making declarations that have been jointly issued by a group of young Taiwanese intellectuals. (ii) The unification proposal can ill afford to bypass this Taiwanese historical spirit and merely force quick unification onto Taiwan. Doing so would destroy Mainland China as well as Taiwan. Let us look closer at these two points.

i. In December 1993, on the eve of a visit to Taiwan by the delegation of the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait in Mainland China, a declaration of Taiwanese intent was issued jointly by no less than twenty-three organizations, including the powerful Taiwanese Professors' Association. The declaration concludes with the statement, "The Taiwanese have the right to decide on the future of Taiwan and choose their own respective styles of living. Whatever regime desires to win the support of the Taiwanese must recognize their identity and organize with them a 'community for the destiny of Taiwan.'"[23]

This was a declaration of Taiwanese dignity, identity, and subjectivity that occurred for the first time in the history of Taiwan, attended with all the historical depths described in the preceding. This declaration was not a simple, naïve protest out of frustrated individualism against a despotic Leviathan of statism. Such a simple individual-state antagonism, where each side neither can nor cannot do without the other, is a typical picture in the West. But it is not Taiwanese. Taiwan's centripetal pole in this tension is its historical consciousness; the origin and spirit of the declaration clearly demonstrates its yearning after an ideal China, to which the Taiwanese seek to be reunited. What the individual is to society in Taiwan is more like what the child is to the parents; this is not a relationship between enemies.

Wu Zhuoliu eloquently expressed this sentiment using the concepts of suffering-consciousness and orphan-mentality, masterfully presented

in his justly celebrated novel *The Orphan of Asia* (written during the Japanese occupation). The suffering does not only come from colonization, but also from the discrimination of "compatriots" in Mainland China. Suffering from foreign oppression is understandable; but to suffer because of one's own compatriots is not so easily understood, and is often harder to bear:

> I used to think that once I stepped out of Taiwan I would be free as a bird out of a cage. I found to my surprise that today's China has the same watchful eyes as the Japanese secret policemen sparkling at us from behind, just as they do in Taiwan. Our fellow Chinese, for their part, look suspiciously on us as Japanese spies dispatched from Taiwan. We dare not expose our identities under these circumstances; we merely say we are from Fujian or from Guangdong, and we use "potatoes" as a secret password to identify ourselves with those from Taiwan.
>
> Today's Taiwanese people are like orphans deprived of parents. No matter whether in Zhongjing or in the territory of the Chiang shadow regime, we are viewed as "elements differing from us." They not only refuse to recognize us as Taiwanese, they regard us as spies![24]

Here we are struck by how apt, and how justly renowned, Wu's image of the orphan's mind was in crystallizing the complex historical consciousness of the Taiwanese. Exiled, alone on the lonely island of Taiwan, continually oppressed by aliens, the Taiwanese people came to yearn after their parents in the Mainland fatherland. However, this centripetal yearning for one's historical roots was brutally stymied by the actual China, which was not only backward, but also just as brutal as the aliens. And so, the orphan's quest for parents turned into a quest for an idealized China, and the orphan took off in a new direction, centrifugally away from the actual China. Thus, the mind of the orphan neatly synthesizes the centripetal-centrifugal tension in Taiwan's historical consciousness.

Yet this orphan in Taiwanese hearts has matured, and as it reaches adulthood, its yearnings also grow and change. The orphan-sentiment, yearning after an idealized parent, was true of the pre-1945 times under foreign rule; but now it has undergone a contemporary metamorphosis, following the postwar economic miracles and educational and political reforms. The ideal parent of Chinese culture has changed into the ideal integrity of the self, grown out of orphanhood.

> The Orphan of Asia now knows that his autonomy, his standing on one's own feet means his *wofen* consciousness, a resolute rising-up to struggle. The self-dignity of Asia's Orphan consists not only in new developments in literature and philosophy, but in social, cultural, and institutional achievements. And this Orphan's (*wofen*'s) growth and accomplishments imply the establishment of a new China. This Orphan's standing up from childish crawling shall result also in the standing up of all peoples in the world.[25]

Here the sentiment has now become less forlornly nostalgic and more aggressively assertive, or rather, more nostalgic of the authentic Taiwanese subjectivity and integrity than of an idealized China. The image of an idealized China has been deconstructed, though far from lost, in the form of protest for Taiwanese sovereignty and individual integrity. Its focus is no longer the ideal old China but Taiwan's own ideal subjectivity and integrity, although it still lacks definition. This ignorance generates youthful Taiwan's eternal nostalgia, constituting a new centripetal force in Taiwan's transformed historical consciousness.

ii. The unification proposal, in light of the above understanding of Taiwan *qua* Taiwan in its historical spirit, must be tempered with an appreciation of the modern, historical consciousness of its people, expressed elegantly in the recent declaration for the silent majority. Otherwise, the tragic destruction of Taiwan *qua* Taiwan would follow, and that destruction would bring irreparable damage to the Mainland.

Taiwan is anything but a marginal, negligible territory to the Mainland. Taiwan is a gem, the cutting edge of Chinese modernity. Taiwan is as international as Hong Kong yet more historically Chinese than Hong Kong—a unique exhibition of Chinese strength to the contemporary world in democratic fervor, international marketing, industrial development, social dynamism, and virile cosmopolitanism. In thousands of years of history, China has never been more progressive and prosperous, democratically and internationally self-aware, virile and forward-looking than Taiwan is today.[26]

To crush this gem in blatant neglect of the Taiwanese spirit as the youthful vitality of China would be to crush the Chinese *Baodao* (treasure island), the envy of every Mainlander, the pride of China. If China were to crush the Taiwanese historical spirit, Mainland China would return to the impossible condition of premodern poverty in every respect: economically, politically, industrially, and internationally. The ease of destroying Taiwan—which, after all, is just a small island—would

result in a lethal gravity of liability to the Mainland. The Mainland could never crush Taiwan's historical spirit without crushing its own forward-looking, modern, futuristic, international self.

The Mainland's Historicity: Zealous Nationalism

This section can be as brief as its theme is simple: (a) foreign invasions and domestic warfare among local warlords has led to the development of nationalistic fervor in Mainland China; this fervor aims at protecting the Mainland's "own" territories, including Taiwan. (b) Without understanding this historical sentiment, any Taiwanese independence proposal will simply ruin Taiwan.

a. (i) In the last century, MC was an embattled territory, torn apart by internecine and international warfare. (ii) One of the results provoked by these constant threats to national unity is a strong feeling of nationalism. And (iii) nationalistic fervor demands a continuing zeal to control territories the government claims to be its own. Let us look at some historical support for these points.

i. Anyone familiar with the history of China knows that it has been torn apart by continuous violence, from the demise of Qing dynasty to the Tiananmen Square Incident in 1989.

We recall the Boxer Rebellion, the eight Western powers attacking Peking, and the subsequent and infamous Xinchou Treaty (1900–1901), which was followed by the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 that finally brought an end to Qing rule. But from the moment of Sun Yat-sen's inauguration as president of the provisional government of the Republic of China, China was torn apart by endless domestic and international violence. Chinese general Yuan Shikai (1859–1916) proclaimed himself emperor; Japan proposed Twenty-One Demands, intending to invade China (1915); and continual domestic warfare ensued, especially from 1917 to 1924, until China was officially unified in 1928.

But hardly ten years later, on July 7, 1937, the Sino-Japanese War broke out, plunging China into misery for eight long years. This suffering was intensified by additional domestic rivalries, ending in the retrocession of Taiwan from Japan to the Republic of China. Yet the subsequent Communist takeover of the Mainland failed to bring stability and concord to Mainland China. The Mainland suffered repeated waves of domestic violence, including the Anti-Right Movement (1957–1958), the Great Leap Forward (1958–1960), and the long turmoil of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), all culminating in the tragic Tiananmen Square Incident on June 4, 1989.

ii. Wartime miseries on the Mainland provoked nationalistic fervor. As early as January 1924, Sun Yat-sen launched his celebrated Three Peoples' Principles with a passionate nationalistic appeal.

> The Three People's Principles are the Principles to save our nation. [. . .] These Principles promote the international prestige of our nation, so as to strengthen our economic and political position in the world, so that our nation can exist vigorously in the world. Therefore, I say, our Three People's Principles are the Principles that will save our nation.[27]

At the October 1, 1949, Ceremony of the Founding of the Peoples' Republic of China, Mao Zedong opened his speech with the proclamation, "From today on, the people of China stand up." Their political successes at the time owed a great deal to this sort of manipulative incitement of seething nationalism.

Among Chinese intellectuals, Zhang Junmai 張君勱 (Chang Tung-sun, 1887–1969), the great architect of the Constitution of China, pushed for a Chinese translation of Fichte's fervent *Speech to the German People*. Zhang often lectured on the spirit of nationalism, the reexamination of Chinese culture and its future, and related issues.[28] Thus, nationalism rose up out of the ashes of the war miseries felt on the Chinese Mainland.

iii. Nationalism breeds protective zeal over territories the government regards as its own. As early as February 8, 1841, Qing Emperor Xuanzong 宣宗 (r. 1841–1850) issued an edict of advice expressing worries over Taiwan:

> [Many and varied violent incidents came up one after another in Taiwan.] I have dispatched officers with pay, both civil and military, to Taiwan to oversee, manage, and pacify the region. It has been several months since then, and there are yet no reports on the outcome; we are much worried. Taiwan is our key strategic area in the Min Ocean region, traditionally much desired by many barbarian nations. We do hope that our repulses of foreign vessels will ensure there will not be any more maritime invasions.[29]

Ding Richang 丁日昌 (d. 1882), the governor of Fujian province during the latter half of the nineteenth century, expressed the same sentiment over Taiwan in his official letter to the imperial court: "[Various nations hold various places in Asia and our country as their respective exclusive ports and enclaves.] Germany alone has no port to harbor its vessels. And so, Germany would desire to take over Taiwan more than other nations."[30]

On skimming through a friend's travelogue to Taiwan, the scholar Mei Wending 梅文鼎 (Dingjiu 定九, 1633–1721), lamented, "[Many foreign nations] already tarry, stoop over, and peep at the Southern part of our Ocean; the formation is set ominously."[31] All this shows that from the early days on, people in the Mainland, whether in the imperial court or among discerning commoners, have been concerned about the situation in Taiwan.

b. If we seek to move forward, we must then understand the Mainland's historicity—its nationalistic fervor and its protectionism. Protectionist sensibility naturally breeds defensiveness over even the slightest hints of foreign influence, especially political or cultural. This must act as a warning sign to those proposing Taiwan's independence. Any quick, clean-cut independence would prove fatal, both militarily and culturally.

On the eve of any independence, Taiwan would be destroyed by the Mainland's enormous military. Mainland China's antipathy toward subversion of its sovereignty, whether domestic or foreign, is well known. Taiwan would be crushed immediately upon its declaration of independence. Taiwan may be a gem, but it remains just a tiny irritant to the Mainland, easy enough to crush and discard.

More radically, there would be no true Taiwanese remnants, and thus not even a trace of hope for Taiwan's future. Taiwan would be destroyed upon its declaration of independence because it would have thrown out the baby of idealized China with the dirty water of China's reality. Bereft of Chinese cultural legacies, Taiwan would be impoverished at its root.[32] Cut off from the base of its centripetal yearning, Taiwan would have no more subjectivity to treasure, fight for, enrich, develop, and be invigorated by. It would simply drift away reactively, centrifugally, alone and rootless, destined to be lost in a centrifugal fog. Without a deep appreciation of the historical roots of Mainland China, a quick declaration of Taiwanese independence would bring about the immediate destruction of Taiwan.

Historical Understanding: The Hope of the Relationship

We have examined the necessity of mutual historical understanding in this relationship, and have suggested that such understanding is vital if we want to achieve an amicable, interdependent, and mutually thriving relationship.

We have shown that personal understanding in a true sense means historical understanding—delving into what has made Taiwan and the

Mainland what they are today (their respective historical experiences). And we have underscored the real risks of not going through the process of seeking mutual historical understanding. Such a lack would prove so disastrous as to endanger the existence of both sides.

And yet the contrary is also true. Negotiators who are sensitive to each other's histories will reap the benefits: complementarity, mutual satisfaction, and an interdependent flourishing that will see one party's prosperity contribute to the prosperity of the other. But how? To understand each other, both parties must communicate, and that must occur at a grass-roots level, not at an official, governmental one. Only in this way can we ensure a widespread, heart-to-heart understanding between the people. Popular communication should include commercial dealings and negotiations, at both personal and institutional levels. Popular communication should also include cultural exchanges—scholarly, artistic, and religious as well as popular. This is how one party can start to recognize the other in a deeply personal manner. In short, understanding is needed in human relations and negotiations, history is involved in human understanding, and understanding in historical depth is facilitated by communication on a long-term personal basis. In the human world, patience in communication aimed at historical understanding is the royal road—in fact, it is the only road to a successful relationship. The Taiwan-Mainland relationship is no exception.

Notes

1. Ralph N. Clough, "Taiwan-PRC Relations," in Robert G. Sutter & William R. Johnson (eds.), *Taiwan in World Affairs* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1994), 233.
2. http://www.mac.gov.tw/public/Attachment/2121418243231.pdf last accessed Jan 11, 2013.
3. Cf. Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (eds.), *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
4. It is lamentable that this interpenetration of culture and politics leaned more toward the politicization of culture than toward an enculturation of politics. But even here, we see the extent to which Chinese politics is close to culture and vice versa. For a recent treatment of this theme, see Frederick P. Brandauer and Chun-chieh Huang (eds.), *Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Traditional China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994).
5. The *Analects*, 9/16.
6. Chen Zi'ang, "Deng Youzhoutai ge," *Quan Tang shi* 3 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 902.
7. For details of this dramatic modernization in postwar Taiwan, see my "Zhanhou Taiwan de shehui wenhua bianqian: Xianxiang yu jieshi," in

Huang Chun-chieh (ed.), *Kaohsiung lishi yu wenhua lunji* (Kaohsiung: Ch'en Chung-ho and Weng Tsu-shan jijinhui, 1994), 1–60.

8. Cf. note 12 below.
9. Namely, cognitive, conscious, social, political, and cultural—not just emotional and psychological.
10. See Yang Ying, *Cong zhengshilu* (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi, 1958), 39, 184–85; Chiang Jih-sheng, *Taiwan waiji* (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1979), 191. The theme of our present concerns—the Taiwan spirit as centripetal yearning after an idealized China, combined with a centrifugal search for authenticity—is echoed by the continual debate among historians over whether Koxinga (Zheng Chenggong) "restored" the Chinese territory called Taiwan, or "opened up the new world of Taiwan" for immigrants from China. In my opinion, he did both. On these debates see, on the latter side, Yang Yun-ping, "Zheng Chenggong de lishi diwei kaichuang yu huifu," in Huang Fu-san and Tsao Yung-ho (eds.), *Taiwanshi luncong* (Taipei: Zhongwen tushu gongsi, 1980), 99–104; on the former side, see Huang Tien-chuan, "Cheng Yen-ping Taiwan shiye," in Huang and Tsao (eds.), *Taiwanshi luncong*, 105–24, and Sheng Ching-hsin, "Mingzheng de neizhi," in Huang and Tsao (eds.), *Taiwanshi luncong*, 125–62. In July 1987 an "International Conference on Zheng Chenggong" was held at the Institute for Taiwan Studies, Amoy University. Cf. Matsuda Yoshiro, "Tei Sei-ko Kenkyu Kokusai Gakujutsu Kaigi ni sanka shite," *Taiwanshih Kenkyu* 7 (February 10, 1989), 9–13.
11. Lian Heng, *Taiwan shicheng* (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi, 1960), 7–8.
12. Ibid., 13–14. For the centripetal-centrifugal sentiment expressed in Taiwan literature during the Ming of Cheng's period, see Chen Chao-ying, "Mingzheng shiqi Taiwan wenxue de minzuxing," *Zhongwai wenxue* 22/4 (1994): 18–47.
13. Cf. Huang Chun-chieh and Ku Wei-ying, "Xin-en yu jiuyi jijian: Li Chunsheng de guojia rentong zhi fenxi," in Li Ming-hui (ed.), *Li Chunsheng de sixiang yu shidai* (Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1995), 217–56.
14. Ye, *Xiaowu dacheji*, 212–13.
15. Wu, *Wuhuaguo*, 210.
16. Ibid., 40.
17. Ibid., 39.
18. Ibid., 120–23.
19. Peng, *Ziyou de ziwei*, 28–29. For Peng's China experiences, see Lai Tse-han, Ramon H. Myers, and Wei Wou, *A Tragic Beginning: The Taiwan Uprising of February 28, 1947* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 18–23.
20. Peng, *Ziyou de ziwei*, 72.
21. Cf. Chou Wan-yao, *Riju shidai yihui shezhi fayuan yundong* (Taipei: Zhili baoxi wenhua chubanbu, 1988), 183.
22. See Zhong, *Xinsuan liushi nian*, 364.
23. *Zili Wanbao* (December 12, 1993), 14.
24. Wu, *Taiwan lianqiao*, 104, 223.
25. Jiang Nianfeng, *Taiwanren yu xin Zhongguo: gei Minjindang de yige xingdong zhexue* (Taichung: self-published, 1988), 9.
26. All observers from Mainland China were overwhelmingly impressed by the tremendous prosperity of Taiwan. For Liang Qichao's praise of Taiwan in

1911, see Liang Qichao, "Yu Taiwan shudu diyi xin," in his *Yinbingshi wenji* (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1966), Vol. 4, 14. When Chen Yi, the governor of Fujian Province, visited Taiwan in 1935, he was so impressed, especially by the Japanese-constructed infrastructure in Taiwan, that he invited the Japanese engineers responsible for the Chianan Dam to visit Fujian. See Hurugawa Shozo, *Taiwan o Aishita Nihonjin: Kanan Taishin no Chichi Hatta Yoichi no Shogai* (Matsuyama Shi: Aoyama Tosho, 1989), 260–61. After World War II, technocrats at the Sino-American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (JCRR) came to Taiwan and praised the socioeconomic situation in rural areas. See *Zhongguo nongcun fuxing lianhe weiyuanhui gongzuo baogao* (Taipei: JCRR, 1950), 12. For a general discussion on the postwar transformation of Taiwan, see Chun-chieh Huang et al. (eds.), *Postwar Taiwan Experience in Historical Perspective* (College Park: University Press of Maryland, 1998).

27. Guofu quanji [Collected Works of the Father of the Nation], *Zhongguo Kuomintang zhongyangdangshi shiliao biancuan weiyuanhui* (Taipei: Zhonghuaminguo gejie jinian Guofu bainian danchen choubei weiyuanhui, 1965), Vol. 1, 2. Sun Yat-sen's doctrine includes nationalism, democracy, and the livelihood of the people.
28. Cf. Hsueh Hua-yuan, *Minzhu xianzheng yu minzhuzhuyi de bianzheng fazhan* (Taipei: Daohe, 1993), 42.
29. Yao Ying, "Cun zhi Fuzhou chuoyi Taiwan fuwuzhe (February 16, 1843)," in Hu Chiu-yuan (ed.), *Zhongguo dui xifang zhi lieqiang renshi ziliao huibian* (Taipei: Institute of Modern History, Academia Sinica, 1971), Vol. 1, Book 1, 308.
30. Ding Richang, "Minfu Ding Richang chuo Xibanya kuishi Taiwan qingxing pian," in *Qingmo waijiao shiliao xuanji* (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi, 1964), 16–17.
31. Mei Wending, *Jixuetang wenchao* (Woodblock ed. in the Naikaku Bunko, Japan, n. d.), chuan 4, 5b–7a.
32. For an elaboration of this point, see Chun-chieh Huang and Kuang-ming Wu, "Taiwan and Confucian Aspiration: Toward the Twenty-First Century," in Stevan Harrell and Chun-chieh Huang (eds.), *Cultural Change in Postwar Taiwan* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1994), 69–88.