

# Foreword

Between April 10 and 14, 1990, a group of Chinese and American scholars gathered in Seattle to exchange their views on cultural change in post-war Taiwan in a five-day conference sponsored by National Taiwan University and the University of Washington. This book is the product of their joint efforts.

As honorary chairman of that international affair, I have been given the privilege and honor to offer a few remarks; and, as an economist by profession, I can hardly avoid beginning with some words about economic change.

Over the past forty or so years, the people of the Republic of China on Taiwan have vigorously engaged themselves in national development to accelerate their economic growth. Forty years ago, Taiwan was poor and underdeveloped and trying to recover from the devastation of World War II. One and a half million servicemen and civilians from the mainland poured into the island, increasing the population of six million by one-fourth. The per capita GNP then was less than U.S.\$100. Low production, inflation, and the lack of capital and foreign exchange were keenly felt. Few people at the time looked forward to a bright future for Taiwan.

However, thanks to the concerted efforts of the people and government, the economy of Taiwan has progressed at an unprecedented pace. Taiwan has outstripped most other developing countries and areas, winning the admiration of the whole world. In 1990, with a per capita GNP of U.S.\$7,997, Taiwan ranked high among the upper-middle-income countries, approaching the level of the industrially advanced countries. According to United Nations statistics, in 1988, among all countries and areas with a population of over one million, the Republic of China on Taiwan ranked nineteenth in GNP and twenty-fifth in per capita GNP. Lawrence R. Klein, professor of economics at the University of Pennsylvania and Nobel Prize winner in economics in 1980, once predicted that toward the end of this century, Taiwan would take the lead among the developing countries and cut a figure among the developed ones.

Quite a number of economists, both Chinese and foreign, are studying the strategies and policies adopted by Taiwan to find out the reasons for its economic success, in the hope that the "Taiwan experience" can serve

as an inspiration for other developing countries aspiring toward rapid development.

Economic growth, however, is not an independent phenomenon. It is a complicated process of sociocultural and technological interaction reflected in the economic aspect of a society. Therefore, Taiwan's economic performance cannot be repeated in other countries by simply duplicating the strategies and policies adopted in Taiwan. Economic progress must be accompanied by other related changes in other aspects of society; and all factors continually interact and result in an integrated cultural entity.

This book comprises twelve chapters that discuss from a great variety of viewpoints many different aspects of cultural change in Taiwan during an unprecedented period of rapid transition. The original papers from which these chapters were selected were presented in Seattle by scholars from twelve Chinese and American universities and academic institutions. I very much admired the working spirit and good will of my fellow participants. For me, participating in this conference, held on the beautiful campus of the University of Washington, was an unforgettable experience. I feel obliged to give my hearty congratulations to Stevan Harrell and Huang Chün-chieh, coeditors of this book, for successfully completing the difficult task of editing contributions from scholars from eight different disciplines.

The academic agreement between the University of Washington and National Taiwan University has been substantiated by exchanges of professors and students and by cordial discussions between executives of both schools. This compilation of scholarship is one of the fruits of this long-standing reciprocal cooperation.

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