

Lee Teng-hui and the Idea of “Taiwan”*

J. Bruce Jacobs and I-hao Ben Liu

ABSTRACT Lee Teng-hui, president of Taiwan from 1988 to 2000, played an important role in launching the widespread nationalism in Taiwan today. Since the end of his presidency, Lee has pushed very hard for a separate Taiwan nation, but during his terms of office he moved very cautiously and only announced his “special state-to-state” relationship to describe Taiwan’s relations with China after China repeatedly refused to negotiate. Although Lee’s efforts at democratization have received widespread affirmation in Taiwan, his efforts in creating Taiwan nationalism have proven more controversial.

Since Lee Teng-hui (李登輝) first became president of Taiwan in 1988, a strong nationalism has developed on the island. Many have contributed to this process including the Democratic Progressive Party, but Lee Teng-hui’s importance, both as president (1988–2000) and since, is undeniable. In his mid-80s and out of government for seven years, Lee remains a figure of great political importance in Taiwan. One cannot draw a definitive judgement on a still active individual, but this article attempts to assess, at least in a preliminary way, Lee Teng-hui’s contributions to the creation of Taiwan nationalism. It begins, however, with a short biography of Lee before he became president.

Lee Teng-hui, 1923–1988

Lee Teng-hui was born on 15 January 1923 near Tamshui (淡水), north-west of Taipei, in the midst of the period of Japanese colonial rule (1895–1945). During the movement to get Taiwanese to take Japanese names, Lee became Iwasato Masao (岩里政男) in 1940, though he never used this name after the end of Japanese colonialism.¹ In October 1943, following his graduation from Taipei High School in August, Lee went to Japan and became a student of agricultural economics at Kyoto Imperial University. In December 1944, he became a “student soldier” in the Japanese Army.² In retrospect, these few years in Japan

* Professor Jacobs expresses his gratitude to the Australian Research Council (ARC) for a three-year discovery research grant that supported field research in Taiwan including interviews that underpin this article.

1 Wakabayashi Masahiro, *Jiang Jingguo yu Li Denghui (Chiang Ching-kuo and Lee Teng-hui)*, trans. Lai Xiangyin (Taipei: Yuanliu, 1998), pp. 52–53 and Li Denghui, *Taiwan de zhuzhang (Advocating for Taiwan)* (Taipei: Yuanliu, 1999), p. 317.

2 Zhang Yanxian *et al.*, *Li Denghui xiansheng yu Taiwan minzhuhua (Mr Lee Teng-hui and Taiwan’s Democratization)* (Taipei: Yushan she, 2004), pp. 43, 100.

were important to Lee Teng-hui, and his attitude towards Japan became a matter of considerable political debate after he became president of Taiwan.

Lee returned to Taiwan after the Second World War, possibly via Shanghai. Several of his opponents have accused him of joining either the Chinese Communist Party or the Taiwan Communist Party during this period. We have seen no evidence of such membership and Kamisaka believes it unlikely,³ though clearly Lee did have an interest in Marxism at this time.⁴ At the time of the 28 February 1947 Incident, Lee says he participated in a group that was clearly related to the “Taiwan Democratic League” led by Hsieh Hsüeh-hung (謝雪紅, 1901–70), one of the early leaders of the Taiwan Communist Party and a central Taiwan leader of the 28 February 1947 Incident.⁵ There are some problems with this statement, however. Most importantly, the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League was not founded until eight or nine months after the 28 February Incident and in Hong Kong, not Taiwan.⁶ After a year, Lee left this group and, soon afterwards, its members were arrested.⁷ In an earlier interview, Lee stated: “I did attend several meetings convened by the Taipei Resolution Committee, but I definitely did not participate in the discussions because I felt it was very dangerous.”⁸ Whether these two interviews refer to the same group remains unclear.

In April 1946, upon returning to Taiwan from Japan, Lee continued his studies in agricultural economics at National Taiwan University, graduating on 1 August 1949 and becoming a tutor at the university. A few months earlier, on 9 February 1949, at the age of 26, he married Tseng Wen-hui (曾文惠), a marriage that united the “wealthy Tseng family with the learned Lee family.”⁹ Lee obtained a Sino-American scholarship and went to Iowa State University for a year where he obtained an MA in agricultural economics. In addition to teaching at National Taiwan University, Lee worked as an economist at the Taiwan Co-operative Bank, the Department of Agriculture and Forestry of the Taiwan Provincial Government, and the Joint [Taiwan and United States] Commission on Rural Reconstruction (JCRR). In September 1965 he went to

3 Kamisaka Huyuko, *Hukou de zongtong: Li Denghui yu Zeng Wenhui (President in the Tiger's Lair: Lee Teng-hui and Tseng Wen-hui)*, trans. Luo Wensen and Yang Mingzhu (Taipei: Xianjue, 2001), p. 68.

4 Li Denghui, *Advocating for Taiwan*, pp. 44–47. For an English translation of this book, see Lee Teng-hui, *The Road to Democracy: Taiwan's Pursuit of Identity* (Tokyo and Kyoto: PHP Institute, 1999), pp. 31–35.

5 Yoshida Katsutsugu, *Jiyū no nigai aji: Taiwan minshushugi to shimin no inishiatibu (The Bitter Taste of Freedom: Taiwan Democracy and Citizens' Initiatives)* (Tokyo: Nihon Hyōronsha, 2005), p. 369. Yoshida (pp. 347–79) contains a May 2004 interview with Lee. For a prize-winning biography of Hsieh Hsüeh-hung, see Chen Fangming, *Xie Xuehong pingzhuan (A Critical Biography of Hsieh Hsüeh-hung)* (Taipei: Qianwei, 1991).

6 *Tongyi zhanxian gongzuo shouce (Handbook for United Front Work)* (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1986), p. 272.

7 Yoshida, *The Bitter Taste of Freedom*, pp. 369–70. An article in the *Zhongshi dianzibao (China Times Interactive)*, 21 February 2006, draws attention to Yoshida's book, but goes well beyond the data presented to conclude Lee “continued to engage in anti-government underground activities”; see <http://tw.news.yahoo.com/060221/19/2vfd3.html>, accessed 21 March 2006.

8 Kamisaka, *President in the Tiger's Lair*, p. 63.

9 *Ibid.* p. 46.

Cornell University, where he received his PhD on 1 July 1968 for his award-winning dissertation on "Intersectoral capital flows in the economic development of Taiwan, 1896–1960."¹⁰

Within a year of his return, in June 1969, Lee had a frightening experience when the Taiwan Garrison Command, then one of Taiwan's leading security agencies, called him in for questioning. The first session lasted 17 hours and the questioning went on for a week. Fortunately, he was allowed to return home at night. Afterwards, a Taiwan Garrison Command officer told Lee: "No one but Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國) would dare to use someone like you."¹¹ It is possible that Lee's hosting of noted Taiwan Independence advocate Huang Wen-hsiung (黃文雄) for a meal during his study at Cornell University may have accounted for the interrogation.¹² Yet, Huang Wen-hsiung's attempted assassination of Chiang Ching-kuo in New York only occurred some ten months *after* Lee's interrogation by the Taiwan Garrison Command. In any case, after his interrogation, Lee received a promotion to become Chief of the Rural Economic Division of JCRR. He joined the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang 國民黨, KMT) in October 1971 "in order to solve Taiwan's agricultural problems."¹³

The big step which catapulted Lee Teng-hui into a political career came on 29 May 1972 when Chiang Ching-kuo, the new premier, appointed him a minister without portfolio.¹⁴ As part of Chiang Ching-kuo's reforms, the number of native Taiwanese increased from only one-sixth of the old cabinet to one-third of the new one.

Ministers without portfolio in Taiwan tend to undertake special tasks for the premier and Lee Teng-hui was assigned work in the area of agriculture. Taiwan then had a system requiring farmers to exchange grain in order to obtain fertilizer, which made fertilizer especially expensive for the farmers. Lee worked to end this system, which was finally abolished in January 1973. He also worked in developing the petrochemical industry in the "Ten great projects," agricultural development and vocational training.¹⁵ Only on 17 November 1976, after having been a cabinet minister for more than four years, did Lee become a member of the KMT's Central Committee.¹⁶

10 Published as Teng-hui Lee, *Intersectoral Capital Flows in the Economic Development of Taiwan, 1896–1960* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 1971).

11 There is very little published on this incident. The quotation is from Lee Teng-hui, *The Road to Democracy*, p. 51; Li Denghui, *Advocating for Taiwan*, p. 62 is a little less concrete. See also Kamisaka, *President in the Tiger's Lair*, pp. 103–05; Li Denghui and Kobayashi Yoshinori, *Li Denghui xuexiao de jiaohui* (*Teachings of the Lee Teng-hui School*), trans. Yang Ziying (Taipei: Xianjue, 2001), p. 72; and Zhang Yanxian *et al.*, *Mr Lee Teng-hui*, p. 101 for more details.

12 Kamisaka, *President in the Tiger's Lair*, p. 105 and Wakabayashi, *Chiang Ching-kuo and Lee Teng-hui*, p. 141.

13 Zhang Yanxian *et al.*, *Mr Lee Teng-hui*, pp. 44, 101. Quotation on p. 44.

14 At this stage, Lee became an adviser to the JCRR, see Li Denghui, *Advocating for Taiwan*, p. 323. Chiang Kai-shek's appointment of Chiang Ching-kuo as premier in 1972 clearly indicated the son would succeed his father. For the context and analysis, see J. Bruce Jacobs, "Taiwan 1972: political season," *Asian Survey*, Vol 13, No. 1 (1973), pp. 102–12.

15 Zhang Yanxian *et al.*, *Mr Lee Teng-hui*, pp. 44–45, 101.

16 *Ibid.* p. 102.

These six years in cabinet began Lee's intensive training in what he calls the "Chiang Ching-kuo school" of politics.¹⁷ Lee developed a very close relationship with Chiang that lasted from 1972 until Chiang's death in January 1988, but Lee clearly remained subordinate. Anyone who challenged the school's headmaster lost power.

When Chiang Ching-kuo was elected president in 1978, he appointed Lee Teng-hui as mayor of Taipei on 9 June.¹⁸ During the first three months that Lee served as mayor, President Chiang would come three or four times a week after work to the municipal guest house and question Lee on his work, the problems he faced and Lee's solutions to the problems. After three months of this intensive "tutoring," President Chiang said he would no longer come and that he felt confident with Lee's administration of the city. During his term as mayor, Lee introduced the use of computers, reduced the time for registration of businesses from fifteen days to six days, constructed housing, and built dams, reservoirs, incinerators and expressways.¹⁹ He became a member of the KMT's Central Standing Committee for the first time on 14 December 1979.²⁰

During a cabinet reshuffle, President Chiang appointed Lee as governor of Taiwan province on 26 November 1981. In July 1983, Lee gave a report to the KMT's Central Standing Committee on "Methods the provincial government uses to send down roots" (*Shengzheng xiang xia zhagen de zuofa* 省政向下紮根的做法). Chiang Ching-kuo gave this report considerable praise²¹ and Lee Teng-hui's reputation in Taiwan's political circles continued to rise.

President Chiang's selection of Lee as his vice-presidential running mate in 1984 gave Lee his key political opportunity. He was not the first Taiwanese vice-president as his predecessor, Hsieh Tung-min (謝東閔), had served from 1978 to 1984, though during the Japanese colonial period Hsieh had spent considerable time on the mainland working with the Nationalists and thus was a "half-mountain" or "half-mainlander" Taiwanese.²² In the year preceding Lee's nomination as vice-president, his name together with those of Lin Yang-kang (林洋港) and Chiu Chuang-huan (邱創煥), two other prominent Taiwanese, had been touted as possible contenders.²³ According to Lee's own account, Chiang

17 Li Denghui, *Advocating for Taiwan*, pp. 266–68; Lee Teng-hui, *The Road to Democracy*, pp. 195–97; Li Denghui and Kobayashi, *Teachings of the Lee Teng-hui School*, pp. 71–76.

18 Zhang Yanxian et al., *Mr Lee Teng-hui*, pp. 45, 102. Only at this time did Lee resign his positions as part-time professor at National Taiwan University and as adviser to the JCRR, Li Denghui, *Advocating for Taiwan*, p. 324. Some have suggested that Chiang Ching-kuo wished to appoint Lee as governor of Taiwan, but several people feared Lee would have difficulty dealing with the Taiwan Provincial Assembly, so Premier Sun Yun-hsün suggested that Lee be appointed mayor of Taipei, where he could learn the work of an executive position.

19 Zhang Yanxian et al., *Mr Lee Teng-hui*, p. 45 and interviews.

20 *Ibid.* p. 102. This was at the major KMT meeting held following the Kaohsiung Incident of 10 December 1979.

21 *Ibid.* p. 45.

22 On the "half-mountain" Taiwanese, see J. Bruce Jacobs, "Taiwanese and the Chinese nationalists, 1937–1945: the origins of Taiwan's 'half-mountain people' (banshan ren)," *Modern China*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (1990), pp. 84–118.

23 See, for example, Xu Ce, "Li Denghui shi xia yi jie fuzongtong?" ("Is Lee Teng-hui the next vice-president?"), *Qianjin zhouban* (*Progress Weekly*), No. 10 (4 June 1983), pp. 6–12.

Ching-kuo did not tell Lee of his decision to nominate him until just before the public announcement at the Second Plenum of the 12th KMT Central Committee on 15 February 1984.²⁴

At that time, the National Assembly elected the president and vice-president. While the KMT nominees were reasonably assured of being elected, Lee still had to visit the members of the National Assembly and request their support. As a gift, he gave each member a copy of his writings on Taiwan's agricultural economics, a total of 808 pages of Chinese materials and 1,923 pages of English materials.²⁵ One can imagine the puzzlement of the aged members of the National Assembly when they received their five kilograms of Lee's writings filled with mathematical formulae!

Lee's three years and eight months as vice-president clearly helped him prepare to become president upon Chiang's death on 13 January 1988. Chiang gave Lee a variety of tasks and responsibilities including aspects of foreign relations and dealing with political prisoners. This final phase of study in Chiang Ching-kuo's school of politics was also very important. Chiang clearly trusted Lee, but their relationship remained fairly formal and Lee did not belong to Chiang's inner group of mainlanders.²⁶

When Chiang died, many of the mainlander elite were prepared to allow Lee Teng-hui to become president in accord with the constitution, but they also wanted to sideline him politically. The precedent for this was the elevation of vice-president Yen Chia-kan (嚴家淦) to president following Chiang Kai-shek's (蔣介石) death on 5 April 1975, but the appointment of then premier Chiang Ching-kuo as KMT party chairman. During the remainder of Yen's term as president, power in Taiwan clearly lay in chairman (and premier) Chiang Ching-kuo's hands.

Debate raged for two weeks before the KMT Central Standing Committee agreed on 27 January 1988 to make Lee Teng-hui *acting* chairman of the KMT.²⁷ Lee only became the formal chairman on 8 July 1988, almost six months after Chiang Ching-kuo's death, at the 13th KMT Congress.²⁸ President

24 Lee's account appears in Li Denghui, *Jianzheng Taiwan: Jiang Jingguo zongtong yu wo* (Witness for Taiwan: President Chiang Ching-kuo and Me) (Taipei: Yunchen, 2004), pp. 3–11. This book is a very important account of Lee's vice-presidential years. It includes the texts of his original notes for each of his 156 meetings with Chiang Ching-kuo throughout the three years and eight months of his vice-presidency as well as Lee's later comments and the notes of the editors.

25 These three large volumes of Lee's work, one volume of Chinese materials and two volumes of English materials, were published in January 1983 by his wife in honour of Lee's 60th birthday. The Chinese title of the set is *Taiwan nongye jingji lunwen ji* while the English title is *Agriculture & Economic Development in Taiwan*.

26 See Li Denghui, *Witness for Taiwan*, passim and Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son: Chiang Ching-kuo and the Revolutions in China and Taiwan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 398.

27 During this period the weekly meeting of the Central Standing Committee scheduled for 20 January 1988 was cancelled. See Zou Jingwen, *Li Denghui zhizheng gaobai shilu* (Announcing a True Record of Lee Teng-hui's Time in Office) (Shulin: Chengyang, 2001), pp. 62–66. See also Li Denghui, *Witness for Taiwan*, p. 260 and Zhang Huiying, *Li Denghui: 1988–2000 zhizheng shiennian* (Lee Teng-hui: 1988–2000 12 Years in Power) (Taipei: Tianxia yuanjian, 2000), pp. 42–45.

28 On the 13th KMT Congress, see the useful article, Jürgen Domes, "The 13th Party Congress of the Kuomintang: towards political competition?" *The China Quarterly*, No. 118 (1989), pp. 345–59.

Lee moved quickly to increase the numbers of native Taiwanese in key positions. Although native Taiwanese accounted for 85 per cent of Taiwan's population, they had never held a majority of the cabinet posts and the KMT's Central Standing Committee until after Lee Teng-hui became president and KMT chairman.²⁹

Thus, Lee Teng-hui in many ways symbolized the hybrid nature of Taiwan itself. Educated in both Japan and the United States, he began work as a technocrat. Given patronage from the very top, he rose through both the government and the party. Upon the death of his patron, he used both his support and his own political skill to become party chairman as well as president. From his new leadership posts, Lee Teng-hui took immediate steps to implement democracy. He also moved, somewhat less rapidly, to create a separate Taiwan nation, the subject of this article.

President Lee Teng-hui as a Taiwan Nationalist

While most observers in Taiwan and overseas credit President Lee Teng-hui for making important contributions to Taiwan's democratization, there is much less unanimity concerning his role in creating a new Taiwanese identity. In the early years of his presidency, Lee moved slowly and cautiously on this issue, though in the last few years he took new steps especially after the Chinese began using military threats. Since retiring from the presidency, Lee's comments have become much more freewheeling and the attacks from his enemies have become much more strident.

When President Lee came to office in January 1988, Taiwan was extremely isolated diplomatically. The United States had formally recognized China for nine years and Canada, Europe and Australia had recognized China for fifteen years or more. Under Taiwan's "one China" policy, which began under President Chiang Kai-shek and continued under President Chiang Ching-kuo, when a country recognized China, Taiwan broke relations. This policy also led to the island's withdrawal from the United Nations in October 1971.³⁰ The policy changed only after Lee became president.

At a press conference on 9 March 1989, called just after President Lee returned from a trip to Singapore, a reporter asked him if he was satisfied being called "President Lee who has come from Taiwan" (*cong Taiwan lai de Li zongtong* 從臺灣來的李總統). President Lee answered:

The Republic of China is an independent, sovereign country, but everyone understands our present difficulty very well. Since 1971 under the structure of the United Nations, our

29 Jaushieh Joseph Wu, *Taiwan's Democratization: Forces Behind the New Momentum* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 44, 103.

30 On the history of Taiwan's diplomatic relations, see J. Bruce Jacobs, "One China, diplomatic isolation and a separate Taiwan," in Edward Friedman (ed.), *China's Rise, Taiwan's Dilemmas and International Peace* (London: Routledge, 2006) pp. 85–109.

various international activities have suffered many limitations. At present, our most important matter is to work out how to break through this structure³¹

Later in the same press conference, President Lee said, "in our traditional Chinese history ... I believe the Republic of China is an orthodox successor."³²

At the time of his first inaugural speech on 20 May 1990, President Lee continued to maintain that Taiwan was part of China. In this speech, entitled "A solemn declaration to 1.2 billion Chinese people" (*xiang shi'er yi Zhongguo ren zhuangyan xuangao* 向十二億中國人莊嚴宣告), Lee stated: "Taiwan and the mainland are indivisible parts of China's territory, and all Chinese are compatriots of the same flesh and blood."³³ But he also stated that China would have to implement political democracy and renounce the use of military force in the Taiwan Strait before both sides could, on the basis of equality, establish a foundation for discussions on unification. He concluded: "When objective conditions are ripe, based on the common will of the Chinese people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, we hope to be able to discuss the matter of national reunification."³⁴ The next day, the Chinese rejected Lee's appeal.³⁵

These themes gained a formal status with the founding of the National Unification Council (*guojia tongyi weiyuanhui* 國家統一委員會) in the presidential office on 1 October 1990. At its third meeting on 23 February 1991, the council passed the National Unification Guidelines (*guojia tongyi gangling* 國家統一綱領).³⁶ The first principle in the guidelines states, "the mainland and Taiwan are both territories of China," but the fourth principle adds, "China's unification, its timing and its method, must first respect the rights of the people in the Taiwan region. Furthermore, it must protect their security and happiness. Unification must be gradually reached in phases under the principles of rationality, peace, equality and mutuality."³⁷

From the perspective of President Lee, a key change took place in 1991 when the Republic of China on Taiwan recognized that it did not control the Chinese mainland. This was done through three key documents: article 10 of the constitutional amendments of 1991,³⁸ the final clause of the first phase of the

31 Li Denghui, *Jingying da Taiwan (Managing a Great Taiwan)* (Taipei: Yuanliu, 1995), p. 296.

32 *Ibid.* pp. 304–05.

33 Lee Teng-hui, *Creating the Future: Towards a New Era for the Chinese People* (Taipei: Government Information Office, 1992), p. 7. The Chinese text of this speech appears in Li Denghui, *Luoshi minzhu changzhi jiu'an (Implementing Democracy, Permanent Rule for Eternal Peace)* (Taipei: Zhongyang wenwu, 1991), pp. 62–67. This latter book has several of Lee's speeches delivered in 1990.

34 Translation based on Chinese original, see *ibid.* p. 66. See Lee Teng-hui, *Creating the Future*, p. 8 for the official English translation.

35 Li Yongzhi and Xue Huayuan, *Taiwan lishi nianbiao, Vol. V (1989–1994) (Chronicle of Taiwan History, Vol. V (1989–1994))* (Taipei: Guojia zhengce yanjiu zhongxin, 1998), p. 96.

36 The guidelines were also approved by President Lee on 5 March 1992 and the Cabinet on 14 March 1992. The Chinese text can be found in *Guojia tongyi gangling yu dalu zhengce (The National Unification Guidelines and Mainland Policy)* (Taipei: Guoli bianyi guan, 1993), pp. 82–84. An English translation appears in *Republic of China Yearbook 1991–92* (Taipei: Kwang Hua, 1991), pp. 583–84.

37 *The National Unification Guidelines*, p. 83.

38 For the English text of the 1991 amendments, see *Republic of China Yearbook 1991–92* (Taipei: Kwang Hua Publishing Company, 1991), pp. 580–81.

National Unification Guidelines³⁹ and the termination of the “Period of national mobilization for suppression of the communist rebellion,” effective on 1 May 1991.⁴⁰ According to an official Republic of China source, “thus, the ROC government recognized the fact that two equal political entities exist in two independent areas of one country.”⁴¹ These actions helped convene the Wang–Koo talks between China and Taiwan, led by Wang Daohan (汪道涵) and Koo Chen-fu (辜振甫), in Singapore during 27–29 April 1993, which reached four agreements.⁴² However, the Qiandao Lake (千島湖) Incident of 31 March 1994, in which 24 Taiwanese tourists to China were killed, reduced the momentum of cross-Straits interaction.⁴³

Thus, in the early years of his presidency, Lee had declared the ROC and the PRC were two separate but equal entities that must, at some future time, unify. However, before any unification, China must democratize. President Lee had given no timetable as he did not wish to lock himself into a fixed process that would deny him room to respond to new situations. Lee said “yes” to unification, so he could not be attacked for refusing, but his strategy of gradualism enabled him to remain flexible and to adapt his ideas and actions as he felt necessary.

From 9 to 16 February 1994, over the Lunar New Year, President Lee conducted “vacation” diplomacy to the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand. In each country, President Lee held talks with the head of state – President Fidel Ramos, President Suharto and King Bhumibol – though he met Ramos at Subic Bay rather than in Manila and Suharto in Bali rather than Jakarta. This trip followed shortly after the release of Taiwan’s “go south” policy in December 1993.⁴⁴ In 1994 and 1995 Taiwan made record investments in South-East Asia becoming, for a while, the largest source of foreign investment in the area.⁴⁵

Upon his return to Taiwan, President Lee held a major press conference.⁴⁶ First, he noted that at banquets he was often called “Dr Lee” or “Professor Lee.”⁴⁷ In response to a direct question from a newspaper reporter, Lee rhetorically asked if being called “The Honorable Eighth Term President of the Republic of China” would be any more “dignified” (*zunyan* 尊嚴).⁴⁸ President Lee also expanded upon Taiwan’s status:

39 For English translation see *ibid.* pp. 583–84; original text in *The National Unification Guidelines*, p. 84.

40 See statement of President Lee Teng-hui, 30 April 1991, in *Republic of China Yearbook 1991–92*, pp. 584–85.

41 *Ibid.* p. 141.

42 *Republic of China Yearbook 1995* (Taipei: Government Information Office, 1995), pp. 148–49.

43 J. Bruce Jacobs, “China’s policies toward Taiwan,” in C.L. Chiou and Leong H. Liew (eds), *Uncertain Future: Taiwan–Hong Kong–China Relations after Hong Kong’s return to Chinese Sovereignty* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 96–97.

44 Chen Jie, *Foreign Policy of the New Taiwan: Pragmatic Diplomacy in Southeast Asia* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2002), p. 111.

45 *Ibid.* pp. 107–10.

46 For the full transcript, see *Li zongtong Denghui xiansheng bashisan nian yanlun xuanji* (*A Selection of Speeches by President Lee Teng-hui in 1994*) (Taipei: Xingzhengyuan xinwenju, 1995), pp. 322–49.

47 *Ibid.* pp. 335, 344.

48 *Ibid.* p. 344.

As everyone knows, the Republic of China on Taiwan must develop. One can say that the Republic of China is one nation (*guojia* 國家) of a divided China. People of the whole world must understand that there is only one China. This is a goal that we will reach in the future. But the actual situation is division – a divided nation. Under a situation of divided rule, we must have our own development direction. When in the future China truly wishes to unify, then there will be a much greater result.⁴⁹

On 30 March 1994, President Lee gave an important interview with the well-known Japanese writer, Shiba Ryōtarō.⁵⁰ Many of President Lee's critics both in China and in Taiwan claimed that he said in this interview that he was Japanese. In fact, Lee made no such statement; Shiba made the only mention of Lee's having been Japanese when he said: "Mr Lee Teng-hui, when you were 22 years old, you changed from being a Japanese into a citizen of the Republic of China."⁵¹ Lee's interview with Shiba did, however, contain some sensitive, new material. Perhaps most importantly, he called the KMT a "regime that came [to Taiwan] from the outside" (*wailai zhengquan* 外來政權): "In the past, those who controlled Taiwan all came from the outside. In very recent times, I can now frankly say this. Even the Kuomintang was also a regime that came from the outside. It was simply a party that came to rule the Taiwanese. So it was necessary to make it a Kuomintang of the Taiwanese."⁵²

Lee also made several other comments that became important in later speeches. Although the topic received little attention in the Shiba interview, Lee, at the suggestion of his wife, mentioned "the sorrow of being born Taiwanese,"⁵³ which became a key theme. He also talked briefly about Moses and the Exodus from Egypt saying the Taiwanese people have already started on their journey from Egypt.⁵⁴ Lee stressed the importance of using the Taiwanese language and learning about Taiwan, rather than about China, in schools.⁵⁵

Yet President Lee remained cautious. In early August 1994 he met members of the World United Formosans for Independence. In response to a suggestion that Taiwan change its national name, Lee responded: "Our name is the Republic of China and, at present, the Republic of China is Taiwan. We needn't discuss changing the national name during my term of office." In addition, Lee asked

49 *Ibid.* p. 326.

50 For the original interview, which took place in Japanese, see Shiba Ryōtarō, *Taiwan kikō* (*A Taiwan Journey*) (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun, 1994), pp. 483–502. We have used two different Chinese translations: Shiba Ryōtarō, *Taiwan jixing* (*A Taiwan Journey*), trans. Li Jinsong (Taipei: Taiwan dongfan, 1996), pp. 519–39 and Li Denghui, *Managing a Great Taiwan*, pp. 469–83. This latter version, trans. Luo Yiwen, originally appeared in the Taiwan magazine, *Heibai xinwen zhoukan* (*Black and White Newsweekly*), No. 34 (29 May–4 June 1994). The two different Chinese translations follow the Japanese text very closely. The date for the interview comes from the chronology in Zhang Yanxian *et al.*, *Mr Lee Teng-hui*, p. 105.

51 Shiba, *Taiwan kikō*, p. 495; Shiba, *Taiwan jixing*, p. 531; Li Denghui, *Managing a Great Taiwan*, p. 477.

52 Shiba, *Taiwan kikō*, p. 495; Shiba, *Taiwan jixing*, p. 531; Li Denghui, *Managing a Great Taiwan*, p. 477. Sometimes *wailai zhengquan* is translated as "alien regime."

53 Shiba, *Taiwan kikō*, p. 488; Shiba, *Taiwan jixing*, p. 524; Li Denghui, *Managing a Great Taiwan*, p. 471.

54 Shiba, *Taiwan kikō*, pp. 488, 502; Shiba, *Taiwan jixing*, pp. 524, 538; Li Denghui, *Managing a Great Taiwan*, pp. 471, 483.

55 Shiba, *Taiwan kikō*, pp. 493–94; Shiba, *Taiwan jixing*, pp. 529–31; Li Denghui, *Managing a Great Taiwan*, pp. 476–77.

that everyone, “discuss the issue slowly, have a good think and look a bit more to the future.”⁵⁶

On 8 April 1995, President Lee addressed the National Unification Council.⁵⁷ In this speech Lee put forward a number of propositions “in the hope of normalizing bilateral relations.” Most importantly, he argued, “China’s unification [must be] based on the reality that the two sides are governed respectively by two governments [that] in no way are subordinate to each other.” Surprisingly, in view of his later criticism of Chinese culture, he called for strengthening “bilateral exchanges based on Chinese culture” as “Chinese culture, known for its comprehensiveness and profundity, has been the pride and spiritual support of all Chinese.” And Lee called for “ensur[ing] that both sides join international organizations on an equal footing and that leaders on both sides meet in a natural setting.”⁵⁸

Although in recent years President Lee has argued that he had his current ideas of Taiwan independence and changing Taiwan’s national name ever since he became president,⁵⁹ he exercised considerable caution in the early years of his presidency. Some of this caution was a result of the power of the mainlander elite in Taiwan. However, one could also argue that at least part of the reason for President Lee’s apparent change in his ideas came from the constant rejections he received from the Chinese. In a sense the turning point came with President Lee’s visit to his alma mater, Cornell University, in early June 1995.

At a group meeting on 17 April 1995, President Lee said he had not been invited to America, nor had he applied. However, he clearly wanted to go. At the same time that the United States Department of State was assuring the Chinese that President Lee would not receive a visa, the United States Congress overwhelmingly – unanimously in the House and with only two dissenting votes in the Senate – passed a resolution stating that Lee should be granted a visa. President Clinton gave in to public opinion. The Chinese, unfamiliar with the American separation of powers, felt betrayed. They believed that President Lee’s visit to Cornell University was a quantum leap beyond “vacation” meetings with Presidents Ramos and Suharto and with King Bhumibol the year before.⁶⁰

In the event, President Lee’s speech at Cornell was very mild. It focused on Taiwan’s democratization and the “close traditional ties” between the United States and Taiwan. It said very little about China other than President Lee’s hope for a “win-win” strategy with an end to ideological confrontation and a

56 Zhang Huiying, *Lee Teng-hui: 1988–2000*, p. 195.

57 Text in *President Lee Teng-hui’s Selected Addresses and Messages 1995* (Taipei: Government Information Office, 1996), pp. 21–28. This speech, informally called “Lee’s six points,” responded indirectly to Jiang Zemin’s eight points delivered on Chinese New Year 1995. For the full text of Jiang’s speech, see *Renmin ribao*, 31 January 1995, pp. 1–2.

58 *President Lee Teng-hui’s Selected Addresses and Messages 1995*, pp. 24–25.

59 For example, at a group interview with foreign scholars on 14 December 2004.

60 This draws on Jacobs, “China’s policies toward Taiwan,” p. 98. An excellent analysis of this crisis from the perspective of the United States government may be found in Richard C. Bush, *At Cross Purposes: U.S.–Taiwan Relations Since 1942* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), pp. 225–30.

new era of peaceful competition across the Taiwan Strait.⁶¹ Yet, the Chinese responded with vitriolic personal attacks on Lee in their official press and shifted from a "moderate" to a "hard line" on Taiwan.⁶²

Not long afterwards, in August 1995, when accepting the KMT nomination to run for president in the 1996 election, Lee Teng-hui began to emphasize "Taiwan consciousness." In his words, "in my announcement of my decision to run in the election, I emphasized 'Taiwan' consciousness for the first time. I felt the Taiwan people must truly possess sovereignty before they can develop their will for freedom and create their own future."⁶³ In his acceptance speech, Lee noted:

Everyone knows that Taiwan is a society of immigrants. Except for the aboriginal compatriots in the earliest period, most came from China in various historical periods. And even though there is a difference between coming earlier or later, whether born here or growing up here, early on this piece of land was irrigated by several generations of people's perspiration and blood which has enabled today's prosperity ... One only needs those who identify with Taiwan and sympathize with Taiwan, who are willing to strive and struggle for Taiwan, it is they who are Taiwanese. We must encourage a concept of "New Taiwanese." At the same time, those who cherish nationalist feelings, uphold Chinese culture and do not forget the ideals of China's unification, they are Chinese.⁶⁴

This speech presaged Lee's use and elaboration of the concept of "New Taiwanese" when he supported Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) in the 1998 Taipei mayoral election.

Clearly President Lee had changed direction. Whether, as he said in late 2004, he always had these ideas but was forced to tread carefully because of the power of the mainlander elite when he came to the presidency, or whether he finally believed that the Chinese would not deal with him no matter what he did, or whether he felt that a more Taiwanese approach would be electorally advantageous – or whether it was some combination of these factors, Lee clearly now moved in a different direction.

In September 1995, Lee again spoke openly about Taiwanization. He said: "The Kuomintang chairman is a Taiwanese, its secretary-general is a Taiwanese, its director of the Organization Department is a Taiwanese. The Kuomintang long ago Taiwanized. It would only be correct to call it the Taiwan Kuomintang."⁶⁵ One of the writers visited the KMT central headquarters at this time and was surprised to see leaders, cadres and secretaries all speaking Hokkien (Taiwanese) in an informal atmosphere. This was unlike the KMT under the two Chiangs and was unlike the KMT under Chairman Lien Chan (連戰) (2000–05).

61 The full text appears in *President Lee Teng-hui's Selected Addresses and Messages 1995*, pp. 32–43.

62 Jacobs, "China's policies toward Taiwan," pp. 98–101.

63 Li Denghui, *Advocating for Taiwan*, p. 76.

64 *Ibid.* p. 77.

65 Lin Yaosong, *Li Denghui yu Guomindang fenlie (Lee Teng-hui and the Kuomintang Split)* (Taipei: Haixia xueshu, 2004), p. 7.

Lee did not particularly highlight the status of Taiwan during either the December 1995 legislative election or the March 1996 presidential election. Chinese missile tests as well as military and verbal threats did play an important role in both campaigns and led to over 600 foreign correspondents converging on Taiwan for the presidential campaign. There, the foreign correspondents discovered democracy, a great contrast with the Chinese system. Taiwanese refused to buckle under Chinese threats and voters from both sides of the political spectrum moved to give Lee support. In a four-person campaign, according to polls, Lee's winning margin increased from around one-third to over 54 per cent of the vote.⁶⁶

During the first part of his inauguration speech of 20 May 1996, President Lee emphasized democracy,⁶⁷ but he moved to the topic of cross-Straits relations. "The reason the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu* 中華民族) has experienced 5,000 years without collapsing relies on the maintenance and development of its excellent culture." But in the mid 19th century, Western civilization attacked Chinese culture and the nation declined. Lee "hoped that the compatriots in the Taiwan region can establish a new living culture ... building on the foundation of our nation's vast cultural traditions and drawing on the quintessence of Western culture to combine and create a new Chinese culture."⁶⁸

Lee noted that great cultures all began in small places. Taiwan's culture "has not only maintained its cultural traditions, it also has had wide contact with Western democracy, science and contemporary industrial and commercial social culture." With its high educational standards – much higher than other places in China – it can undertake the heavy responsibility of creating this new culture.⁶⁹

Lee said that, owing to different ideologies, history had created a tragedy of "Chinese fighting Chinese." He recommended creating a new situation of "Chinese helping Chinese."⁷⁰ Because of this, "under the precondition of maintaining the security of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu and maintaining the happiness of all the people, there has been no time in which we have not ... pushed the great enterprise of national unification." But the Chinese Communists have from beginning to end refused to recognize the Republic of China.⁷¹ "Since last year, in order to oppose democracy, the Chinese Communists have launched wave after wave of 'trumped up' slander against me, but I have endured this humiliation in order to complete an important task and have not responded ... This [slander] will not solve the historical problems which have accumulated over 50 years."⁷²

66 This statement is based on extensive internal polling by the Kuomintang throughout the presidential campaign provided to one of the authors.

67 *Li zongtong Denghui xiansheng bashiwunian yanlun xuanji* (*A Selection of 1996 Speeches by President Lee Teng-hui*) (Taipei: Xinwenju, 1997), pp. 126–27.

68 *Ibid.* pp. 130–31.

69 *Ibid.* p. 131.

70 *Ibid.* p. 132.

71 *Ibid.* p. 133.

72 *Ibid.*

Lee noted that the Chinese Communists had used military exercises to try to influence the first popular presidential election. "We know that peaceful tolerance is the only method to allay the hate of opposites. We will not negotiate when being threatened, but we absolutely do not fear negotiations. We believe that only by having communications between both sides can we truly solve the problems across the Strait."⁷³

Lee continued:

It goes without saying that the Republic of China is a sovereign country. Both sides of the Strait have no nationality (*minzu* 民族) or cultural identity problems. The only problems are competition between systems and ways of living. Under these circumstances, we have no need and it would be impossible for us to use the line of "Taiwan independence." In the past 40 years, owing to historical elements, both sides of the Strait have been ruled separately. This is a fact. But both sides of the Strait seek the goal of national unification. That too is a fact.⁷⁴

Lee expressed his willingness to travel to the Chinese Mainland in a "journey of peace." He also expressed willingness to meet China's highest leaders to exchange opinions.⁷⁵

Another major change in President Lee's approach to China occurred on 14 September 1996 when he declared the policy of "avoid haste, be patient" (*jieji yongren* 戒急用忍) towards China in the areas of "high technology, investments exceeding US\$50 million and basic infrastructure."⁷⁶ Lee was attempting to slow down Taiwanese investment in China and to preserve Taiwan's vital comparative advantages as well as its capital. At the National Development Conference in December 1996, Lee achieved a tri-partisan consensus on cross-Strait policy as well as for the key constitutional changes approved at that time.

In a speech to the National Unification Council on 22 July 1998, Lee reiterated that "China must be reunified," but "this reunification must be under a system of democracy, freedom and equitable prosperity that will safeguard the rights and interests of all Chinese, and is in keeping with the global trend. The nation should, by no means, be reunified under the proven failure of communism or the so-called 'one country, two systems' formula."⁷⁷ Lee later criticized the "one country, two systems scheme" as making "a very unequal distinction between central and local" and being "undemocratic" in that "power is exercised from the top down and not from the bottom up."⁷⁸ Lee reiterated, "Our long-term goal is peaceful unification of China under principles of democracy, freedom and equitable prosperity for all."⁷⁹

The second Koo–Wang meetings were held in Beijing during October 1998. In accord with the past, the talks had no specific agenda. President Lee asked Koo

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 133–34.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 134.

⁷⁶ Zhang Huiying, *Lee Teng-hui: 1988–2000*, p. 221.

⁷⁷ Lee Teng-hui, *The Road to Democracy*, p. 120.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* p. 121.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* p. 123.

Chen-fu to emphasize two factors, “equality between both sides of the Strait” and “Taiwan’s democratization.”⁸⁰ While polite, these talks, according to participants, achieved nothing.

In the campaign for the election of mayor of Taipei on 5 December 1998, Ma Ying-jeou ran as the KMT candidate against the incumbent DPP mayor, Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁). Unlike Chen Shui-bian, a Taiwanese, Ma was of mainlander background. Ma took Lee’s advice and ran as a “new Taiwanese”: “I was brought up in Taiwan and raised on the nourishing food of Taiwan. I love Taiwan. I am a new Taiwanese.”⁸¹ With this campaign theme, Ma defeated Mayor Chen, who would of course rise again and become president in 2000.

In his book, *Advocating for Taiwan*, published in 1999 towards the end of his presidency, Lee came back to several earlier themes. In his 1994 interview with Shiba, Lee had mentioned “the sorrow of being born Taiwanese.” Now Lee argued that being born Taiwanese was “happy.” Not only did Taiwan have an excellent climate and fertile land, it had also avoided the chaos of the mainland and had been able to nurture a multi-cultural social system.⁸²

Lee later answered the question, “what does ‘identifying with Taiwan’ mean?” Most importantly, Lee answered, is “love of Taiwan.” He argued that “Taiwan identity” need not be tied down by the formality of “Taiwan independence” but can be the pragmatic “Republic of China Taiwan” or “Taiwan’s Republic of China.” Lee noted that he used “Republic of China on Taiwan” to indicate that it only ruled Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu and not the Chinese mainland. “But, I believe, Taiwan must first clearly and steadily walk [on its own].” Lee concluded, “most importantly, Taiwan must first obtain international identity and status. Considering the problem of the whole of China is something for later.”⁸³

Later in the same book, Lee argued that Asia’s future is bound to Taiwan’s existence. But he also argued that Taiwan did not need to declare a “Republic of Taiwan” as this “would endanger Taiwan’s sovereign independence and, ultimately, its existence.”⁸⁴ Of course, these ideas underwent significant change after Lee left the presidency.

During Lee’s presidency, perhaps the most significant change in policy about Taiwan’s status came during an interview with Deutsche Welle on 7 July 1999. In response to the first question, which included, “Taiwan is considered by Beijing’s government as a ‘renegade province’,” Lee’s response included the following statement: “The 1991 constitutional amendments have placed cross-strait relations as a state-to-state relationship or at least a special state-to-state relationship, rather than an internal relationship between a legitimate government and a renegade group, or between a central government and a

80 Kamisaka, *President in the Tiger’s Lair*, p. 252.

81 Lee Teng-hui, *The Road to Democracy*, pp. 191–92.

82 Li Denghui, *Advocating for Taiwan*, pp. 19, 34.

83 *Ibid.* pp. 62–63.

84 *Ibid.* p. 240.

local government.”⁸⁵ (The term for state here is *guo* (國), sometimes translated as “nation.”)

The response to Lee’s statement was immediate both in Beijing and in Taipei. The Chinese reacted strongly to Lee’s description of cross-Straits relations as “special state-to-state” relations and cancelled Wang Daohan’s planned October 1999 visit to Taiwan. The *Lianhe bao* (聯合報 *United Daily News*), the most “pro-China” of Taiwan’s major newspapers, called Lee’s statement “two-states theory” (*liangguo lun* 兩國論). Although originally an attack on Lee, the term “two-states theory” has now become part of Taiwan’s political lexicon and is used by Lee’s supporters as well as by his enemies.

Lee’s “special state-to-state” relations did represent an abrupt change in Taiwan’s policy. One of the writers has conducted a number of interviews with people involved in the development of this policy. At the time research groups, primarily composed of academics, were examining Taiwan’s legal status, especially in light of international law. Charged with attempting to strengthen Taiwan’s sovereignty, they made many reports. One report contained a small section by one professor which mentioned “special state to state” relations, a phrase Lee liked and used in the interview.

In an extended group interview on 14 December 2004, Lee gave considerable detail behind his decision to make this statement.⁸⁶ He noted that originally Wang Daohan was scheduled to come to Taiwan in April 1999, but that Beijing postponed this to the end of October 1999. Lee feared that Jiang Zemin was going to announce Wang’s trip to Taiwan on the first of October, the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the People’s Republic, as a great victory for the Chinese Revolution.

Initially, President Lee would have preferred an interview with *Time* or *Newsweek*, but they did not make a request for an interview, so he used the opportunity of the interview with Deutsche Welle. The original questions were in written form and Lee was also presented with draft responses prepared by either the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Government Information Office. In Chinese, the first question referred to a “province in rebellion” (*panluan sheng* 叛亂省).⁸⁷ Angered, Lee answered that Taiwan is not a province and that relations with China were of a special state-to-state nature. In response to a direct question from one of the writers, Lee stated that he “deliberately” made this statement to prevent Wang Daohan from coming to Taiwan at that time as he did not want Jiang Zemin to exploit Wang’s trip as a breakthrough in the

85 “President Lee Tenghui interviewed by Deutsche Welle, July 9, 1999,” *Taipei Speaks Up: Special State-to-State Relationship, Republic of China’s Policy Documents* (Taipei: Mainland Affairs Council, Executive Yuan, 1999), pp. 1–8, quotation from pp. 1–2. A Chinese version of the interview may be found in Huang Zhaoyuan (ed.), *Liangguo lun yu Taiwan guojia dingwei* (*Two States Theory and Taiwan’s National Status*) (Taipei: Xuelin wenhua, 2000), pp. 535–38, quotation from p. 534.

86 Group interview with several foreign scholars. Lee made many of the same points in a book published just after the end of his presidency, Li Denghui and Nakajima Mineo, *Yazhou de Zhilue* (*The Wisdom of Asia*), trans. Luo Wensen and Yang Mingzhu (Taipei: Yuanliu, 2000), pp. 43–46.

87 The Chinese text used in Huang Zhaoyuan, *Two States Theory*, p. 533 is “*panluan de yi sheng*” or “one province in rebellion.”

reunification of China on the 50th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic.

In 1999 many people in Taiwan were concerned about “two states theory.” Later, many became upset when President Chen Shui-bian similarly declared on 3 August 2002 that there is “a state on each side” (*yibian yiguo* 一邊一國) of the Taiwan Strait. However, in just a short period of time, these ideas have now become part of “mainstream” thinking in Taiwan and no longer create controversy.

Lee Teng-hui Since 2000

While Lee Teng-hui campaigned vigorously for Lien Chan, the KMT nominee for president in 2000, his relationship with the KMT deteriorated after the election. Many demonstrators outside the KMT central party headquarters after the election loss of 18 March were in fact supporters of James Soong (宋楚瑜) rather than Lien Chan, but their pressure contributed to Lee's resignation on 24 March 2000 as KMT chairman. (This was almost two months before his term as president ended.) Yet, in the year after his presidency ended, Lee Teng-hui did not change his ideas significantly.⁸⁸

The key changes in Lee's thinking came with the foundation of the Taiwan Solidarity Union, of which Lee became “spiritual leader,” on 12 August 2001. In his remarks at the founding meeting, Lee said:

The Taiwan Solidarity Union has come forth from the goal of solidarity. It promotes the ideology of Taiwanization (*bentuhua* 本土化) ... It unites a strengthening of national identity with the power of the whole people ... The 400-year history of Taiwan is a great history of generations of immigrants sacrificing and struggling. No matter whether they came earlier or later ... each person has lived and developed on this piece of earth. Taiwan, this piece of earth, is our common mother. Identifying with Taiwan is like thanking and respecting our mother.⁸⁹

Three months later on 14 November 2001, at the founding of “Friends of Lee Teng-hui Association,” Lee declared, “Taiwan is our nation. Concern for Taiwan, loving Taiwan, protecting Taiwan is our joint mission and responsibility.”⁹⁰ By this time, on 21 September 2001, the KMT had “revoked” the party membership of its former chairman.⁹¹

On the night of Thursday, 29 November 2001, at a campaign rally in Taipei for the Taiwan Solidarity Union held two days before the legislative election, Lee Teng-hui and his wife, Tseng Wen-hui, spoke movingly on what it meant to be Taiwanese under the KMT dictatorship of Chiang Kai-shek. Tseng, who is

88 For example, Kamisaka, *President in the Tiger's Lair*, p. 285 and Li Denghui and Nakajima, *The Wisdom of Asia*, pp. 34–42. In the latter book, published soon after his presidency ended, Li called for a “new republic” or a “second republic,” *ibid.* p. 42.

89 Li Denghui, *Cibei yu kuanrong: kuayue xiwang de menkan* (*Mercy and Tolerance: Crossing the Threshold of Hope*) (Taipei: Taiwan News, 2002), pp. 24–27, quotation from p. 26.

90 *Ibid.* p. 41.

91 Stephanie Low, “KMT breaks it off with Lee Teng-hui,” *Taipei Times*, 22 September 2001, p. 1.

normally very reserved in public, compared Taiwanese to a flock of sheep that dared not speak up for 50 years owing to oppression.⁹²

In a draft speech dated 6 September 2003, Lee explained why Taiwan needed to be called Taiwan: "When I was president for 12 years, I encountered many difficulties and obstacles in promoting Taiwan's freedom and democracy. These made me deeply feel that our nation is not a normal nation (*zhengchang de guojia* 正常的國家)." ⁹³ Lee continued:

No matter whether in domestic matters or in foreign relations, I deeply feel that the difficulties we meet are all related to the national name, "Republic of China," not being realistic. If we want to solve this problem, we must start with correcting Taiwan's name. We must make the nation of Taiwan and its national name fit the facts.

Not so long ago, I said: "The Republic of China does not exist." This sentence received criticism from some people. But I didn't speak carelessly. I spoke this sentence in accord with historical fact. First, in 1912 when the Republic of China was established, it didn't include Taiwan. Second, when the Second World War ended, the Republic of China militarily occupied Taiwan. Taiwan's true status should have been land belonging to no one in accord with its international status being undecided. It was not territory that originally belonged to the Republic of China. Third, after 1949, the mainland territory of the Republic of China was occupied by the Chinese Communists.

So, in reality, the Republic of China already had no land – only its national name existed. Even though the national name of "The Republic of China" was hung in Taiwan, ever since the People's Republic of China replaced the Republic of China at the United Nations in 1971, the Republic of China has disappeared in international society. These are the historical facts that the Republic of China already does not exist.⁹⁴

Lee therefore called for naming the nation "Taiwan."

Clearly, both during and after Lee's presidency, Taiwan's citizenry has undergone a major change in national identity. In 1992 the National Election Study Centre of National Chengchi University in Taiwan began examining identity in Taiwan. People basically had three choices: "both Taiwanese and Chinese," "Taiwanese" and "Chinese." With blips in the data, those replying that they are "Chinese" in these surveys have shown a consistent downward trend from more than one-quarter to about one-sixteenth of those surveyed. In other words, in just over 12 years, the number identifying as "Chinese" is about one-fourth of the earlier proportion. On the other hand, the number replying that they are "Taiwanese" has increased from about one-sixth to over two-fifths of the respondents, an increase of almost 2.7 times. The percentage of those claiming to be both Taiwanese and Chinese has remained in the low 40s. The reduction of the non-response rate from 11 per cent to about 4 per cent also demonstrates that these issues have been widely discussed in Taiwan and that people are not afraid to respond to surveys (see Table 1).

92 *Ziyou shibao* (*Liberty Times*), 30 November 2001, p. 3.

93 Li Denghui, "Li qian zongtong xiansheng lalin wuyi Taiwan zhengming yundong jianghuagao" ("Draft speech of former president Mr Lee Teng-hui to the May 11 movement for correcting Taiwan's name"), taken from <http://www.advocates.org.tw>. Note the original 11 May 2003 demonstration was postponed owing to the SARS epidemic.

94 *Ibid.*

Table 1: **Identity in Taiwan, 1992–2005**

Identity	June 1992	Dec 2005	Low Score	High Score
Both Taiwanese and Chinese	45.4	42.0	39.1	50.9
Taiwanese	17.3	46.5	17.3	46.5
Chinese	26.2	7.3	6.1	26.2
Non-response	11.0	4.1	4.1	11.0
Total	99.9	99.9	NA	NA

Source:

Election Study Centre, NCCU (National Chengchi University).

Two scholars from National Chengchi University have analysed these data in greater detail.⁹⁵ They show these trends have occurred among all ethnic groups in Taiwan, though Minnan have higher rates of Taiwanese identification while mainlanders have higher rates of Chinese identification. From 1994 to 2000, the numbers of mainlanders identifying as only Chinese declined from 55.6 per cent to 29.9 per cent.⁹⁶ Ho and Liu are very cautious in attributing reasons for these important trends, but we believe that Lee Teng-hui, the Democratic Progressive Party and the Chinese Communists – the last unintentionally – have made important contributions towards the creation of a new Taiwan nation.

Conclusions

With the presidency of Lee Teng-hui and then the election of President Chen Shui-bian, many so-called “blue” voters and supporters have lost their privileged positions in Taiwan’s polity. This has led to substantial attacks on Lee among politicians, the media and academics. Some foreign academics repeat these attacks as well. Thus, for example, many of the chapters in two recent books strongly criticize Lee.⁹⁷

President Lee clearly was not perfect. Under his leadership, during the first half of the 1990s, the KMT nominated many “black and gold” (that is, criminal and wealthy) figures for office and the number of criminals holding high office rose considerably. Some county leaders were murdered and others have been jailed or run away overseas to avoid prosecution.⁹⁸ Vote-buying became rife and the old “morality” in vote-buying disappeared.

Yet, we believe President Lee Teng-hui deserves praise for what he achieved. Under his leadership, Taiwan did democratize. As part of this process, Lee clearly helped give voice to the 85 per cent of the population who are native

95 Szu-yin Ho and I-chou Liu, “The Taiwanese/Chinese identity of the Taiwan people in the 1990s,” in Wei-chin Lee and T.Y. Wang (eds.), *Sayonara to the Lee Teng-hui Era: Politics in Taiwan, 1988–2000* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2003), pp. 149–83.

96 *Ibid.*, p. 155 (Table 6.2).

97 Bruce J. Dickson and Chien-min Chao (eds.), *Assessing the Lee Teng-hui Legacy in Taiwan’s Politics* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002) and Wei-chin Lee and T.Y. Wang (eds.), *Sayonara to the Lee Teng-hui Era*. Some of the chapters in each book also strongly support Lee.

98 A problematic, but still useful source is Ko-lin Chin, *Heijun: Organized Crime, Business, and Politics in Taiwan* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003).

Taiwanese and who had been suppressed under Presidents Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo. Under Lee's presidency, native Taiwanese gained a majority of the membership in the KMT's Central Standing Committee and in the government's cabinet for the first time. Taiwanese began to fill such formerly forbidden positions as premier and foreign minister.

In examining Lee's positions on building Taiwan as a separate nation, we have to distinguish between his time as president and the period since then. Clearly, Lee felt the responsibilities of the presidency with its pressures from China, the United States and domestically. As shown above, he moved slowly and maintained that Taiwan was the "Republic of China" throughout his presidency. In a sense, the high point of nation-building during this period came with his declaration that he saw "cross-Straits relations as a state-to-state relationship or at least a special state-to-state relationship" on 7 July 1999. As noted earlier, this caused great concern in Taiwan at the time, but such an idea is mainstream or even a bit passé today on the island.

Since the founding of the Taiwan Solidarity Union on 12 August 2001, and without the responsibilities of the presidency, Lee Teng-hui has moved much more radically in support of a separate Taiwan nation. This has given President Chen Shui-bian some headaches. As President Chen said on 1 March 2005: "During my term in office I can't change the nation's official name from Republic of China (ROC) to Republic of Taiwan ... Former president Lee Teng-hui was unable to do so during his terms in office and I believe even if he was the incumbent president, he wouldn't be able to do it either."⁹⁹

One of the referees for this article noted the important influence of Lee Teng-hui on Taiwan's contemporary political parties. Lee clearly influenced the KMT during his chairmanship and today's KMT under Ma Ying-jeou¹⁰⁰ in many ways reflects Lee's contributions from the early 1990s. The rhetoric of the DPP today resonates with Lee's language of the late 1990s. And, of course, the Taiwan Solidarity Union reflects Lee's ideas from the present. Many have contributed to the formation of Taiwan's nationalism, but Lee Teng-hui has unquestionably made major contributions to his nation.

99 Huang Tai-lin, "Chen pleads Taiwan's case with European officials," *Taipei Times*, 2 March 2005, p. 1.

100 After Ma Ying-jeou was indicted for corruption on 13 February 2007, he resigned a chairman of the KMT and announced he was running for president in the 2008 election.