

## The Great Exodus from China

Dominic Meng Hsuan Yang examines one of the least understood migrations in modern East Asia—the human exodus from China to Taiwan when Chiang Kai shek’s regime collapsed in 1949. Peeling back layers of Cold War ideological constructs, he tells a very different story from the conventional Chinese civil war historiography that focuses on debating the reasons for Communist success and Nationalist failure. Yang lays bare the traumatic aftermath of the Chinese Communist Revolution for the hundreds of thousands of ordinary people who were forcibly displaced from their homes across the sea. Underscoring the displaced population’s trauma of living in exile and their poignant “homecomings” four decades later, he presents a multiple event trajectory of repeated traumatization with recurring searches for home, belonging, and identity. This thought provoking study challenges established notions of trauma, memory, diaspora, and reconciliation.

Dominic Meng Hsuan Yang is Assistant Professor at the University of Missouri Columbia.



# The Great Exodus from China

*Trauma, Memory, and Identity  
in Modern Taiwan*

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Dominic Meng-Hsuan Yang

*University of Missouri, Columbia*



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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314 321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06 04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

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education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108478120](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108478120)

DOI: [10.1017/9781108784306](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108784306)

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First published 2021

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*

Names: Yang, Dominic Meng Hsuan, 1976 author.

Title: The Great Exodus from China : Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Modern  
Taiwan / Dominic Meng Hsuan Yang, University of Missouri, Columbia.

Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom ; New York, NY : Cambridge  
University Press, 2020. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020013543 (print) | LCCN 2020013544 (ebook) | ISBN  
9781108478120 (hardback) | ISBN 9781108784306 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: China History Civil War, 1945-1949 Veterans. |  
China History Civil War, 1945-1949 Refugees. | China History Civil  
War, 1945-1949 Personal narratives. | Zhongguo guo min dang Biography. |  
Soldiers Taiwan Biography. | Veterans Taiwan Biography. | Refugees  
Taiwan Biography. | Homeless persons Taiwan Biography. | China  
Emigration and immigration History 20th century. | Taiwan Emigration  
and immigration History 20th century.

Classification: LCC DS777.542.Y36 2020 (print) | LCC DS777.542 (ebook) |  
DDC 951.042 dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2020013543>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2020013544>

ISBN 978 1 108 47812 0 Hardback

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and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,  
accurate or appropriate.

For my parents, sister, and the people of Taiwan



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## Acknowledgments

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This book, which grew out of my PhD dissertation, has been a decade-long intellectual marathon. Producing it has been a trying experience, albeit an extremely rewarding one, not only intellectually but also personally, for reasons that will be expounded in the epilogue. During the past ten years, I benefited from the advice and help of many individuals and received support from a number of institutions. I would like to express my deep gratitude to them. This project would not be what it is today without their encouragement, camaraderie, insight, inspiration, guidance, and endorsement. Their involvements have made this book infinitely better; any and all errors and shortcomings are solely my own responsibility.

I want to begin by thanking my mentors at the University of British Columbia (UBC). My dissertation supervisor Glen Peterson, whose research then focused on the opposite migration flow to the great exodus of 1949, provided sage advice, astute tutelage, and unconditional backing. Steven Hugh Lee taught me the importance of comparative history, while Henry Yu first acquainted me with the intellectual debate revolving around the concept of “diaspora.” Diana Lary, who has devoted most of her academic career to studying the impact of modern warfare on Chinese people and society, remains a constant source of inspiration, guidance, and support. It is Diana who first prompted me to explore the theories concerning trauma and memory, and I am eternally in her debt for doing so. In the same vein, I am beholden to Timothy Cheek who suggested that my research on the social history of the mainlanders in Taiwan should start with reading the daily newspapers – a suggestion that has benefited this work tremendously. My appreciation also goes to Josephine Chiu-Duke, Paul Evans, Timothy Brook, Leo Shin, and Christopher Rea for their comments and words of encouragement at different times. Furthermore, I am grateful to Christopher Lee for reading the manuscript at its earliest stage and offering some wise counsel. My heartfelt thanks also goes to my peers at UBC, whose fellowship has helped sustain the project’s momentum: David Luesink, Laura Madokoro, Guo Weiting,

Karl Wu, Desmond Cheung, Anna Belogurova, Wu Yang, Szu-Yun Hsu, Hua Rui, and Sandy Chang.

At Academia Sinica in Taipei, where the bulk of the archival research for this project was conducted, I would like to express my profound gratitude and appreciation for Chang Mau-kuei – one of the pioneering scholars for research on the mainlanders in Taiwan. I learned so much from Mau-kuei and received so much help from him and his assistant Chen Li-jing over the years that words simply cannot describe my sense of indebtedness. The same can be said for Wang Fu-chang, whose expertise on Taiwan’s ethnic relations/identities and great knowledge of the archival documents produced in postwar Taiwan were immensely beneficial. I can’t even count the amount of times Fu-chang allowed me to barge into his office uninvited just to discuss my latest findings in the libraries and archives. I miss these long, stimulating, and mutually inspiring conversations, which contributed immeasurably to the making of this book. I would also like to acknowledge a number of research fellows at the Institute of Sociology (IOS), Academia Sinica, from whom I received advice, assistance, and emotional support: Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao, Tsai Shu-Ling, Wu Nai-teh, Hsiau A-chin, Wang Horng-luen, Yang Wen-Shan, Wong Ting-Hong, Lin Thung-hong, Tsai Yu-yueh, Lee Zong-Rong, and Michelle Fei-yu Hsieh.

At the Institute of Taiwan History (ITH), my “second home” in Academia Sinica, my sincere thanks goes to Huang Fu-san, Hsu Hsueh-chi, Hsieh Kuo-hsing, Chang Lung-chih, Lin Yu-ju, and Michael Shiyung Liu, who has now left the ITH. At the Institute of Modern History (IMH), I would like to acknowledge Lin Man-houng, Chang Li, Chen Yi-shen, and Chang Jui-te. At the Institute of Ethnology (IOE), I am grateful to Hu Tai-li, Allen Chun, and Derek Sheridan; at the Institute of European and American Studies, I tip my hat to Andy Chih-ming Wang. The staff at the IOS, ITH, IMH, and IOE, as well as the archivists working in these institutes’ affiliated libraries/archives, have shown remarkable courtesy, efficiency, and professionalism throughout my multiple research visits during the past decade. This book would have been impossible without their kind assistance. I am forever in their debt.

This book would also have been impossible, or at least not in its current form, without the one-year postdoctoral fellowship offered by the Institute for Historical Studies (IHS) at the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin), where most of the theoretical arguments for trauma and memory were formulated. I am truly grateful beyond words to Madeline Y. Hsu. Madeline, more than anyone else, saw the potential of this project early on. She not only provided sagacious comments on my manuscript, but also constantly prodded and encouraged me to get it

done sooner rather than later. Others at UT Austin also read part or all of the manuscript and offered invaluable suggestions: Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, Li Huaiyin, Tracie Matysik, Seth Garfield, Yoav Di-Capua, and Benjamin Claude Brower. My intellectual rumination on trauma and historical memory was also aided enormously by my weekly discussions with three other external IHS fellows at UT Austin for the theme of “trauma and social transformation” in 2013–2014: Carel Bertram, Leslie M. Harris, and Ronen Steinberg. I thank Carel, Leslie, and Ronen from the bottom of my heart. As “trauma fellows,” we will indeed “haunt” one another’s memory forever. Lastly, at Austin, I would also like to give thanks to Jeremi Suri, Chung Mung Ting, Zeng Zhaojin, and to Tsai Chien-hsin who kindly opened up his home to me.

Turning to my home institution at the University of Missouri-Columbia (Mizzou), I must convey my boundless gratitude to my colleagues in the Department of History. They have provided a nurturing environment and an unfailing sense of support for a junior scholar working on his first book. In particular, I would like to give credit to Linda Reeder and Ilyana Karthas for reading part of the manuscript in its final stage and offering some much-needed suggestions. I would also like to acknowledge Jonathan Sperber for his penetrating remarks on history, memory, and commemoration. For their insights, collegiality, and words of encouragement, I am grateful to John Wigger, Catherine Rymph, Lois Huneycutt, A. Mark Smith, John Frymire, Robert Smale, Jeffrey Pasley, Michelle Morris, Victor McFarland, Kristy Wilson-Bowers, Keona Ervin, Jerritt Frank, and Devin Fergus. Thanks are also in order to Michael Volz in the German and Russian Studies and to Harrison Cheehyung Kim and Daniel Domingues, who have now left Mizzou. Last but not least, a word of appreciation for Sheena Greitens in the Political Science Department.

During the past decade, this project received financial assistance from a number of institutions. This book would not have come to fruition without such generous support. I would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the UBC Graduate Fellowship, the Government of British Columbia’s Pacific Century Graduate Scholarship, the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, the IOS of Academia Sinica, the IHS in UT Austin, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROC. I also like to thank the Research Council of the University of Missouri for providing me with summer research salary and travel grants.

At conferences, invited talks, and workshops, I met other scholars whose research and comments contributed to my work. I would first like to recognize Stéphane Corcuff, Antonia Chao, Scott Simon, and

Joshua Fan. Their exceptional knowledge of the mainlanders in Taiwan has greatly benefited this book. David Der-wei Wang and Jeremy Brown deserve my earnest gratitude for helping this project along the way at key moments. I am also grateful to Melissa Brown, Helen Zia, Evelyn Hu-Dehart, Rebecca Nedostup, Liao Ping-hui, Shih Shu-mei, Julia Strauss, Yeh Wen-hsin, Michelle Yeh, J. Bruce Jacobs, Lien Pei-te, Michael Berry, Michelle King, Asano Toyomi, Amae Yoshihisa, Leo Ching, Matsuda Hiroko, Adina Zemanek, Meredith Oyen, Deng Jian-bang, Hsu Hsin-wen, and Elaine Lynn-Ee Ho. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge a cohort of junior historians from whom I drew constant support and inspiration: David Cheng Chang, Philip Thai, Tan Ying Jia, James Lin, Shirley Ye, Kung Chien-Wen, and Wang Xian. My thanks also goes to Shelly Chan and Lin Yen-Yu for thought-provoking discussions on diaspora and collective memory respectively. Core members of the Ethics of Historical Memory study group hosted by the Institutum Iurisprudentiae, Academia Sinica should be credited with reading and commenting on the last chapter of the book: Jimmy Chia-Shin Hsu, Huang Cheng-Yi, Shi-chi Mike Lan, Hung Tzu-wei, Yeh Hao, Shaw Yung-Djong, and Chen Po-liang.

Another group of people I would really like to convey my profound gratitude to is my interviewees in Taiwan and their family members, friends, and associates who helped to facilitate these interviews. Thank you for sharing your personal stories. In accordance with the agreement I signed with them, I will keep their names confidential by using pseudonyms. The only exception is Jiang Sizhang (Chiang Ssu-chang). Jiang's story has already been published in Taiwan due to his leading role in the 1987 Veterans' Homebound Movement. I am grateful to the assistance of the Mainlander Taiwanese Association. I will never forget the day that the Association's staff Chou Ssu-nuo took me on my very first tour of a *juancun* (military families' village) in Taipei. I appreciate Wu Hsin-yi for her remarkable insights on *juancun* literature. My colleagues from the North American Taiwan Studies Association also deserve a word of thanks for their wonderful friendship and partnership.

The list seems endless. One has to come to a stop at a certain point. A main theme of this book is that human memory is selective and also fallible at times. I wholeheartedly apologize to anyone whom I have left out.

There remain several individuals whose contributions to this book are too significant to be left out. I am indebted to two anonymous readers for providing constructive feedback on the manuscript. I would like to acknowledge Kelli Hansen of the Special Collections in Ellis Library at the University of Missouri-Columbia for her consultation on the Chinese

civil war photos. I am eternally grateful to Jeffrey Wasserboehr, who volunteered his precious time and energy to proofread the entire manuscript. Last but certainly not least, my most sincere gratitude goes to Lucy Rhymer of Cambridge University Press. Lucy has been a staunch supporter of this book since day one, when we first discussed the proposal. Over the years she has been a patient, accommodating, and reassuring editor to a first-time book author like me. I really cannot thank her enough. My appreciation also goes to the production team at Cambridge: Ian McIver, Karen Oakes, Natasha Whelan, Allan Alphonse, and Emily Sharp.

My final thanks are personal in nature. First, to my good friend Tony Shen and his family for their kind assistance and wonderful hospitality every time I visited Taiwan. Second, I am grateful to my wife Sydney Yueh, who has been my anchor and my most honest critic. And finally, I cannot end the acknowledgments without thanking my parents. They worked extremely hard and made enormous personal sacrifices for their children to have a better future in Canada and beyond. I therefore dedicate this book to my parents.

# Note to the Reader

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## **Romanization of Chinese Characters**

I use the Pinyin system for most of the Chinese characters in the book. Wade-Giles and other alternative forms are adopted in the following three situations: (1) well-known historical figures/terms, such as Chiang Kai-shek, Pai Hsien-yung, Peng Ming-min, and Kuomintang, etc.; (2) geographical names of cities, towns, and counties in Taiwan; (3) the Taiwanese scholars who published in English or whose names I have mentioned in the acknowledgments.

## **English Translation of Chinese Works**

Many of the Chinese books and articles I cite provide an English translation for their titles. I try to stick to these original translations as they appear in print. But I have also made some minor changes as I see fit.

## Abbreviations

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|       |   |
|-------|---|
| CCK   | Chiang Ching-kuo                                  |
| CCP   | Chinese Communist Party                           |
| CCRM  | Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement             |
| CF    | Compensation Foundation                           |
| DPP   | Democratic Progressive Party                      |
| KMT   | Kuomintang (Nationalist Party)                    |
| NPC   | National People's Congress                        |
| NTD   | New Taiwan Dollar                                 |
| NTUH  | National Taiwan University Hospital               |
| PLA   | People's Liberation Army                          |
| PRC   | People's Republic of China                        |
| PTSD  | post-traumatic stress disorder                    |
| ROC   | Republic of China                                 |
| SSCLR | Society for the Study of Chinese Local References |
| VAC   | Veterans Affairs Council                          |
| VHM   | Veterans' Homebound Movement                      |



Map 1 China

Source: CIA Maps

[https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/cia\\_maps\\_publications/China.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/cia_maps_publications/China.html)



Map 2 Taiwan

Source: Perry Castañeda Library Map Collection, the University of Texas at Austin.

[https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle\\_east\\_and\\_asia/taiwan.gif](https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/taiwan.gif)

# Introduction

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There was so much pain in that memory; so many paradoxes; entanglement of pain upon pain; contradiction of paradox upon paradox. How can I find a coherent thread? Where should I begin?

It took me years to understand where this different from others feeling of loneliness came from. It came from *liuli* (diasporic displacement).

Long Yingtai, *Dajiang dahai yijiushiju* [Big river big sea 1949]

## The Rivers and the Seas of 1949

The year 2009 marked the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC). "Sixty years" (一甲子) holds a special meaning in traditional Chinese cosmology. It signifies the completion of a full cycle and the dawn of a new era. For the PRC officials, the eagerness to throw a grand party for the occasion was also inspired by their tremendous success in hosting the Beijing Summer Olympics one year earlier. In what could perhaps be described as China's finest moment in recent memory, hundreds of millions of its citizens basked in the splendor of state-sponsored extravaganzas, enjoyed spectacular performances put on by the world's best athletes, and reflected on how far their country had come. The PRC's glorious national saga began in 1949 when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) led by Chairman Mao Zedong defeated the Nationalist Party (*Kuomintang*, KMT) headed by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. The triumph of the CCP brought national unity as it put an end to the KMT-dominated but still largely divided Republic of China (ROC). According to the official CCP line, the Chinese Communist victory liberated the nation's oppressed masses. It washed off a century of shame and humiliation suffered at the hands of foreign imperialists and their Chinese lackeys: the warlords, the capitalists, the landlords, and of course, the Nationalists. In the midst of all the unbridled patriotism and triumphalism generated by the huge military parade and the official celebrations, the PRC's traumatic origins remained deeply buried; the

horrors of the Maoist era and the massacre at Tiananmen Square felt like nothing more than a distant memory.

As the PRC celebrated its sixtieth birthday with pride and confidence, a book titled *Big River Big Sea 1949* (大江大海一九四九) published in the same year was creating a different kind of buzz among Chinese-speaking communities outside of China. Written by Taiwan-born female writer Long Yingtai (龍應台, 1952–), *Big River* provides a counter-narrative to the ideologically and teleologically driven CCP (and also KMT) history. The book is based on a large number of personal recollections from the common folks who fought on the losing side of the Chinese civil war and those who, for a variety of different reasons, ended up in Taiwan with Chiang Kai-shek's expelled Nationalist regime (the ROC). *Big River* portrays 1949 not as a revolution for nationalism, social justice, and mass liberation, but as a maelstrom of appalling fratricide, massive social dislocation, and heartbreaking family separations. The book became an instant best seller in Taiwan and Hong Kong.<sup>1</sup> It also stirred up considerable discussions among Chinese readers living in other parts of the world. The PRC authorities promptly banned the book, but an electronic copy was easily accessible for China's netizens who knew how to circumvent the Great Firewall.

Long Yingtai was born in a “military families’ village” (*juancun* 眷村) in southern Taiwan. *Juancun* were residential enclaves established by the exiled KMT to house its displaced military officers and their families.<sup>2</sup> There have been different translations of *juancun*: “military dependents’ village,” “veterans’ village,” “military compound,” and so on. I prefer “military families’ village.” The reason is to underscore the point that these communities mean home/family for the people who grew up in them. Long’s parents were among the roughly one million Nationalist personnel, soldiers, and war refugees who were displaced from China to Taiwan when Chiang Kai-shek’s government collapsed on the mainland. In Taiwan, the exiles of the Chinese civil war and their descendants – like Long – are called “mainlanders” (*waishengren* 外省人). On October 1, 1949, when Chairman Mao stood on top of Tiananmen and proclaimed the founding of a new socialist republic for the people, many of them were actually leaving the country. This was, in fact, one of the largest and least understood instances of out-migration in twentieth-century China. This human exodus scattered in Vietnam, Burma, and other countries in

<sup>1</sup> Leo Ou fan Lee, “Book Reviews: Lung Yingtai, *Da jiang da hai 1949* (Big River, Big Sea Untold Stories of 1949) and Chi Pang yuan, *Ju liu he* (The River of Big Torrents),” *China Perspectives* 2010/1 (2010): 114.

<sup>2</sup> Roughly 900 of these villages were erected all over Taiwan. Most have now been demolished for new public housing projects.

Southeast Asia. A small number of the top Nationalist elites were allowed to enter the United States.<sup>3</sup> An overwhelming majority landed in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Today, the mainland exodus to Taiwan and the unsettled dust of the Chinese civil war continue to have important implications for Sino-American diplomacy and regional politics in East Asia. However, even with a cornucopia of literature on the “Taiwan problem” and “cross-strait relations” (Taiwan–China relations), the human migration story that started it all remains relatively obscure. There has been little research and few publications on both the exodus itself and on *waishengren*, aside from a small number of studies looking into the ethnic politics in contemporary Taiwan and some fictional works by mainland writers that have been translated into English.<sup>4</sup> Among historical scholarship, nothing was written until the early 2010s with Joshua Fan’s *China’s Homeless Generation* (2011) and Mahlon Meyer’s *Remembering China from Taiwan* (2012).<sup>5</sup> Like Long’s best-selling book, both Fan’s and Meyer’s monographs are based on oral history.

*Big River* attracted considerable attention internationally due to Long’s status as a famous writer/public intellectual in the Chinese-speaking world and a well-orchestrated global book tour arranged by her publisher.<sup>6</sup> Yet, *Big River* is only one example among a surfeit of oral history books and personal memoirs produced by *waishengren* during the past three decades, since Taiwan became a democracy. This conspicuous memory boom has focused on the traumatic and diasporic recollections associated with the great exodus in 1949. In this mnemonic community,

<sup>3</sup> Notable examples included Chiang Kai shek’s brothers in law T. V. Soong (宋子文, 1894 1971) and H. H. Kung (孔祥熙, 1881 1967). Thousands of Chinese students were stranded in the United States after 1949. For more on the latter issue, see Madeline Hsu, *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), chapter 5.

<sup>4</sup> Kuang chün Li (chapter 5) and Stéphane Corcuff (chapter 8) in *Memories of the Future: National Identity Issues and the Search for a New Taiwan*, ed. Stéphane Corcuff (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2002), 102 122, 163 195; Scott Simon, “Taiwan’s Mainlanders: A Diasporic Identity in Construction,” *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales* 22:1 (2006): 87 106. For translated works, see Pai Hsien yung, *Wandering in the Garden, Waking from a Dream: Tales of Taipei Characters*, trans. the author and Patia Yasin, ed. George Kao (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982); Chi Pang yuan and David Der wei Wang eds., *The Last of the Whampoa Breed: Stories of the Chinese Diaspora* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

<sup>5</sup> Joshua Fan, *China’s Homeless Generation: Voices from the Veterans of the Chinese Civil War, 1940s 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Mahlon Meyer, *Remembering China from Taiwan: Divided Families and Bittersweet Reunions after the Chinese Civil War* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> In recognition of her status and contribution, the President of Taiwan Ma Ying jeou (馬英九, 1950 ) made Long the island state’s first Minister of Culture in 2012. She held the position until the end of 2014.

the elderly and still surviving first-generation migrants acted as the storytellers. Their Taiwan-born children and grandchildren, such as Long Yingtai, served as the curators and proponents of their parents' and grandparents' memories. Notable publications in the same year – publications that employed the same river/sea trope as a metaphor for *waishengren*'s agony and melancholy of living in displacement – included Chi Pang-yuan's (齊邦媛, 1924–) *The River of Big Torrents* (巨流河) and Zhang Dianwan's (張典婉, 1959–) *Pacific 1949* (太平輪一九四九).<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the oral history books and memoirs, there have also been novels, films, TV dramas, and stage plays spotlighting two particular groups of *waishengren*: the disenfranchised Nationalist army retirees, or “old soldiers” (*laobing* 老兵), and the residents of the aforementioned *juancun*. Fan found a trove of published personal stories readily available in Taiwan during the 2000s, when he was conducting research there on the “old soldiers,” whom he fittingly referred to as “China’s Homeless Generation.”<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Meyer observed that the former civil war refugees in their twilight years were “eager to talk, eager to imagine and re-image his or her identity in the context of the present.”<sup>9</sup>

Despite being aware of the mnemonic nature and identity politics of these individual narratives, Meyer, as well as Fan, treats oral history mainly as history – as a way to recover and retell grassroots experiences that had been suppressed by the authoritarian Nationalist regime in Taiwan before democratization. My book is different. It treats oral history both as history and as the social production of memory or “social memory” – what a group of people, a society, or a nation concentrates on recalling or commemorating at a certain point in time in order to satisfy a particular need or serve a specific purpose. Every mainlander family in Taiwan is said to have a heartrending “refugee story” (逃難故事). Even so, it took nearly half a century before people started to take these stories out of their private homes/conversations, and began to articulate, exchange, and promote them in public. Why? There had been a Nationalist taboo on discussing defeat, and that surely accounts for the many decades of silence, but is that the only reason? What were the mainland refugees thinking and reminiscing about before the late 1980s and early 1990s? What do these personal accounts – told decades after the initial event – tell us about the history of the mainlanders and their

<sup>7</sup> Chi Pang yuan, *Jiliuhe* [The river of big torrents] (Taipei: Tianxia yuanjian, 2009); Zhang Dianwan, *Taipinglun yijiushijiu: Hangxiang Taiwan de gushi* [Pacific 1949: Stories of the journey to Taiwan] (Taipei: Shangzhou, 2009). An English version of Chi's book was published by Columbia University Press in 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Fan, *China’s Homeless Generation*, xv.   <sup>9</sup> Meyer, *Remembering China*, 11.

forced migration to Taiwan? What do they not tell us? What does narrating the suffering and dislocation of their forebears mean for the Taiwan-born children and grandchildren of the former civil war exiles at the present time?

The historical trajectory I delineate in the chapters of this book – based primarily on documentary research and with oral history as supplementary evidence – provides answers to these complex and interwoven questions. The painful memories of the great exodus were, in fact, relatively unimportant for *waishengren* before they were impacted by two overwhelming and shattering experiences in the wake of Taiwan's political liberalization. Such shocks were produced by their belated return to a China that they could hardly recognize and Taiwan's stormy post-authoritarian politics. I describe these difficult and unsettling episodes in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 respectively, as “the social trauma of the homecoming in China” and “the social trauma of the homecoming in Taiwan.” Furthermore, my research uncovers the salience of two earlier social memory productions, or “mnemonic regimes,” among the mainlanders in Taiwan before the late 1980s. From the beginning of their exile to the late 1950s, their previous refugee experiences during the Japanese invasion of China held special meaning for the newly displaced mainland refugees in Taiwan. From the early 1960s until about midway through the 1980s, the historical and cultural knowledge associated with their native places in China became significant as the basis for rebuilding communities. I use the term “mnemonic regime” to signify the rise and fall of three historically and culturally conditioned memory booms in three separate periods of mainland history in this book. The two earlier mainland mnemonic regimes, like the current one revolving around the great exodus, were a direct response to substantive social trauma. Chapter 1, Chapter 2, and Chapter 3 shed light on these important historical developments that *waishengren*'s contemporary memories have elided.

This elided past informs my interpretation of the reason and meaning behind the resurgence of “the rivers and the seas of 1949,” more than four decades after the initial traumatic cataclysm. My main argument consists of two related points. First, *waishengren*'s social production of memory centering on the great exodus since Taiwan's democratization has turned the event into a shared cultural trauma for the still ongoing but only partially successful process of mainland identity formation. I borrow the term “cultural trauma,” or more precisely, “the cultural construction of collective trauma,” from sociologist Jeffrey Alexander to underscore the discursive and instrumentalist aspects, as well as to highlight the political nature of this

meaning-making enterprise.<sup>10</sup> *Waishengren's* mnemonic “cultural trauma” is different from the four separate and substantive “social traumas” that they had lived through at four different points in their history. These overwhelming and shocking instances of social dislocation and disorientation included: the mass expulsion from China (1948–1955), the moment when the hope for return began to fade (late 1950s – early 1960s), the heartbreaking homecoming in China (late 1980s – early 1990s), and the equally disheartening reality of the homecoming in Taiwan that immediately followed.

The idea of making a categorical distinction between “social trauma” and “cultural trauma” is derived from the empirical research presented in the book. My take on social trauma resonates with the views expressed by Neil Smelser and Piotr Sztompka, two coauthors of Jeffrey Alexander’s anthology on cultural trauma. Smelser opines, “It is possible to describe social dislocations and catastrophes as social traumas if they massively disrupt organized social life.”<sup>11</sup> Similarly, Sztompka proposes the notion of “traumatogenic social change” to depict the widespread maladjustment felt by the citizens of Poland and other Eastern European states following the collapse of the socialist system.<sup>12</sup>

The second point of my main argument is that despite the strong diasporic sentiment of displacement and rootlessness articulated by *waishengren's* great exodus memories, which has prompted several scholars to consider them as a type of “diaspora” or “Chinese diaspora,” the aim of their contemporary mnemonic regime is to do the exact opposite of being a diaspora – and that is to construct a locally based identity as “mainlander Taiwanese.”<sup>13</sup> The unfolding diachronic narrative in the ensuing chapters will support my claim. Initially, the main protagonists of the book are the Chinese civil war exiles/migrants, or first-generation mainlanders. Second- and third-generation mainlanders, that is, the Taiwan-born children and grandchildren of the mainland exiles, will appear in the latter part of the book. They bear witness to their parents’ and grandparents’ repressed wounds of 1949 not only to mitigate their own traumatic sense of exclusion and stigmatization in democratized Taiwan, but also more importantly – to assert themselves as deserving members of the island state’s new imagined community. Since early post–World War II

<sup>10</sup> Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2012), 2; Jeffrey C. Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), chapter 1.

<sup>11</sup> Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma*, 37. <sup>12</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>13</sup> Zhao Yanning (Antonia Chao) and Scott Simon have been the two main proponents of considering *waishengren* as a “diaspora.” I will discuss their arguments in the last section of this chapter.

Taiwan, the label “*waishengren*” had been used to describe mainland Chinese who arrived with the KMT. However, a self-conscious and collective *Waishengren* identity did not begin to emerge and crystalize among the descendants of the great exodus until the early 1990s.

Contrary to popular belief, most who fled China for Taiwan with Chiang Kai-shek’s defeated regime were not Nationalist military/bureaucratic elites or influential business tycoons. Most of the one million civil war exiles reaching the island’s shores in the late 1940s and early 1950s were ordinary folks: common soldiers, petty civil servants, and dispossessed war refugees from different walks of life. Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 will reveal that many were not even loyal supporters of the Generalissimo. The unfinished war between the KMT and the CCP had fundamentally altered the lives of these expellees and the families they had left behind on the mainland, whom they would not see again for another four decades, if at all.

The story told in the following pages thus stands in contrast to the mainstream historiography of the Chinese civil war, which largely concentrates on analyzing the causes of the Nationalist downfall and the Chinese Communist victory. Instead of ruminating on this politically/ideologically driven and over-researched question, this monograph draws attention to a long-neglected aspect of the war: how ordinary people and communities were affected by the final battle for China between the KMT and the CCP. In particular, it delves into what this vicious fratricide has caused for the one million mainland Chinese who were forcibly displaced to Taiwan, as well as for their Taiwan-born descendants and the semi-Japanized native Taiwanese who were compelled to receive them.

The mainlander story I bring to light in this book not only offers a new vantage point to rethink the historiography of the Chinese civil war, it also provides a stimulating case study for the research and writing of historical trauma in relation to memory and diaspora. The psychoanalytic notion of trauma as “unclaimed experience” or unprocessed/inaccessible memory – made famous by Cathy Caruth’s writings in the 1990s – has been challenged and complicated by the sociological notion of trauma, such as the abovementioned “cultural trauma” theory proposed by Jeffrey Alexander and his colleagues.<sup>14</sup> While my theorization of social and cultural traumas is more in line with the sociological perspective of trauma rather than the psychoanalytic perspective, the empirical research introduced in the subsequent chapters shows that both perspectives need

<sup>14</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma*.

to be reconsidered. *Waishengren's* traumatic and diasporic history is worthy of scholarly attention, especially for those who do not work on Taiwan or China, because it illustrates three interconnected theoretical points concerning trauma, memory, and diaspora.

The first of these points is the need to move beyond what I would characterize as the “single event” model that is symptomatic to both the psychoanalytic approach and the sociological approach to trauma. For the first approach, trauma, mainly individual but sometimes collective (social), is induced by one shocking external event. For the second, a single traumatic occurrence in the past, real or sometimes fabricated, becomes the focal point of collective memory and identity. *Waishengren's* ruptured and anachronistic history – with multiple instances of social traumatization and recurring efforts at mitigation via shared recollections – illuminates the limitations of these two major schools of thought in trauma theory. Both schools have arisen from the complex debates within the Euro-American academy on issues regarding psychoanalysis, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Holocaust representations, collective memory, modernity, nationalism, and so on. My contention here echoes postcolonial literary scholars Michael Rothberg's and Stef Craps's critique of the Freudian “event-based model” in trauma studies, which constitutes part of the scholarship's Eurocentric bias.<sup>15</sup>

The second theoretical point is the function of social memory in assuaging traumatic experiences – how reflecting collectively on a particular kind of past has helped a displaced population like *waishengren* find solace, bearings, and a sense of belonging at different times in their history. This view of memory as salutary and therapeutic is different from the psychoanalytic approach that has a strong tendency to problematize the “access” to traumatic memory. It is also different from the sociological approach that has an equally strong tendency to problematize the “excess” of traumatic memory. Both of these tendencies result from the fixation on one major shocking incident that becomes the focal point of either memory restoration (psychoanalytic approach) or reproduction (sociological approach).

To be fair, the psychoanalytic position does consider recalling and coming to terms with the initial traumatogenic event (claiming the Caruthian “unclaimed experience”) central to the healing process. Still, *waishengren's* history exhibits three aspects that are counterintuitive to the established psychoanalytic thinking. First, as traumatized and expelled

<sup>15</sup> Michael Rothberg, “Decolonizing Trauma Studies: A Response,” *Studies in the Novel* 40:1&2 (2008): 224–234; Stef Craps, *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds*, paperback ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

people, most of the mainlanders did remember and they did not necessarily need others to help them remember. Second, the mainlanders concentrated on recalling different things at different times to ease their perturbation and shock; what they chose to remember was historically conditioned and culturally specific. Third, the two types of social memory that they found particularly comforting and meaningful initially at two different points in their history did not focus on the initial traumatic incident, and hence the inadequacy of the “single event” model in explaining the mainland experience.

Scholars who take the sociological approach to study collective memory like Jeffrey Alexander are concerned about the “excess” of traumatic memories in our time.<sup>16</sup> They are wary of the “affect” generated by ethnic/religious/social groups or nation-states evoking their past suffering for toxic identity politics, chauvinistic nationalism, or other menacing purposes. Therefore, the primary mode of operation is to expose the constructiveness, the selectivity, and the instrumentality of these joint recollections of pain. While I do not fundamentally disagree with this mode, and in fact see it as an important scholarly undertaking to put the present-day narratives of a cultural trauma, such as *waishengren*'s great exodus memories, in historical perspective, I would nonetheless argue that the therapeutic function of shared memories should not be taken lightly or even denied just because they are “socially constructed.”

The human agency of individuals or groups that employ a variety of their past experiences in specific historical and cultural contexts to alleviate their despondency, grief, and shock should be recognized and analyzed. To say only people who have trouble remembering are “traumatized subjects” worthy of the attention of trauma studies (the psychoanalytic position), or to say people conjuring up some long-forgotten historical events only to serve a sinister purpose (the sociological position), is to limit our imagination of the complicated relationship between trauma and memory. By doing so, we delegitimize the human agency and respect for cultural diversity that can contribute to the process of healing and reconciliation.

My third and final theoretical proposition is that *waishengren*'s forced exodus, with reference to both trauma and memory, can help start a fresh and productive conversation on theorizing diaspora in the field of Chinese migration studies. In the past few decades, the debate on what constitutes a diaspora became a pointless academic exercise. The main reason is the liberal application of the word to stand for all forms of dispersion and

<sup>16</sup> See Alexander's take on the Holocaust memory in Israel in Alexander, *Trauma*, chapter 3.

displacement globally, which, according to French sociologist Stéphane Dufoix, has made the concept “theoretically lifeless.”<sup>17</sup> Similar to the larger global debate, theorizing Chinese diaspora has also run into an intellectual cul-de-sac. Other than the proliferated and unreflective usage, there is a problem that is specific to the Chinese context. For many scholars of the “Chinese overseas,” using the term “Chinese diaspora” to describe their research subjects suggests a primordial linkage between China/the Chinese state and the dissimilar peoples of Chinese descent living outside of the country, thereby encouraging an essentialist/homogenous notion of Chineseness. Oddly, this version of diaspora goes up against an anti-essentialist/anti-nation state version of Chinese diaspora influenced by the theories of globalization and transnationalism, which puts emphasis on the diversity and hybridity of Chineseness. This thorny definitional issue is one main reason why I have refrained from identifying the Chinese civil war exiles and their Taiwan-born descendants as a type of “diaspora” or “Chinese diaspora,” despite attempts by others to do so.

That said, *waishengren*’s lived experiences and memories are without doubt “diasporic” when the term is employed as an adjective to describe the condition of displacement created by forced migration. While dismantling the essentialist notion of Chineseness is still a crucial intellectual project, I argue that diaspora does not have to be dismantled together with it. Drawing insights from the writings of Edward Said, Cathy Caruth, and in particular, James Clifford, my research connects trauma and memory to diasporic displacement. It demonstrates that *waishengren*’s diasporic history reorients the theoretical discussion of diaspora in three important ways.<sup>18</sup> The first is the need to apply the term in a more attentive and circumspect manner to exiles, refugees, and other more extreme forms of involuntary relocation and social dislocation. The second is the need to investigate the temporal displacement of uprooted communities beyond the more frequently explored spatial dispersion. This point is epitomized by my rephrasing of Clifford’s famous description of a diasporic condition – “of living here [*and now but*] remembering/desiring another place [*in another time*].”<sup>19</sup> The main conceptual focus is not only between “roots and routes,” but also between

<sup>17</sup> Stéphane Dufoix, *Diasporas*, trans. William Rodarmor (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008), 107.

<sup>18</sup> Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*; Edward Said, “Reflections on Exile,” in *Altogether Elsewhere: Writers on Exile*, ed. Marc Robinson (Winchester, MA: Faber and Faber, 1994), 137–149; James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

<sup>19</sup> Clifford, *Routes*, 255.

“moments and mementos.” The third is the need to pay closer attention to the politics of claiming diaspora rather than trying to categorically define what constitutes a “diaspora” or a “Chinese diaspora.” The latter attempt has proven to be a rather fruitless intellectual endeavor.

The duality of first-generation *waishengren*, both as displaced refugees and politically and culturally dominant colonizers to the semi-Japanized local residents in Taiwan, makes narrating their traumatic and diasporic history a matter that requires careful ethical considerations. Inspired by Rothberg’s “multidirectional memory” and Dominick LaCapra’s “empathic unsettlement,” I reflect on my own subject position and put forward the concept of “multidirectional empathic unsettlements” in the Epilogue to underscore the potential of a critical and boundary-crossing historiography.<sup>20</sup> I argue that the possibility of finding empathy, reconciliation, and justice arises from a historically informed understanding of traumatic and diasporic memories that put them in proper perspective. In the case of *waishengren*, a historically informed understanding of their “rivers and seas of 1949” should start with a broader understanding of Taiwan’s multilayered history of colonialism, migration, and displacement.

### An Island of Displacements

Taiwan is slightly larger than Vancouver Island in Canada or the US state of Maryland. It sits not just “off the coast of China” in the west Pacific Ocean, but on major sea routes connecting Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific archipelago.<sup>21</sup> Geography made the island one of the northern nexuses of the ancient Austronesian diaspora, whose descendants today, in spite of tribal, cultural, and linguistic diversity, came under the ethnic label of “Aborigines” (*yuanzhumin* 原住民).<sup>22</sup> Geography also contributed to Taiwan’s emergence as a major node in the multi-ethnic trade networks and rivalries in maritime East Asia during the so-called “long seventeenth century” (1550–1700).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009); Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), xi.

<sup>21</sup> Joseph R. Allen, *Taipei: City of Displacements* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2012), 3.

<sup>22</sup> Wang Fu chang, *Dangdai Taiwan shehui de zuqun xiangxiang* [Ethnic imagination in contemporary Taiwan] (Taipei: Qunxue, 2003), 101–119; Melissa Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese? The Impact of Culture, Power, and Migration on Changing Identities* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), chapter 2.

<sup>23</sup> Tonio Andrade and Xing Hang eds., *Sea Rovers, Silver, and Samurai: Maritime East Asia in Global History, 1550–1700* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2016).

Despite Taiwan's geographic proximity to mainland China, Chinese colonization of the island did not begin until the early 1620s under what Tonio Andrade precisely refers to as the Sino-Dutch "co-colonization."<sup>24</sup> Unable to turn the native Austronesians into commercial farmers, the Dutch East India Company brought in settlers from the nearby Chinese coast. This initiated an immense migration across the Taiwan Strait that spanned several centuries under three successive colonial regimes – the Dutch (1624–1662), the Zheng [Kingdom of Tungning] (1662–1683), and the Qing Empire (1683–1895). The Qing ceded the island to Japan as part of the indemnity for the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895). Japan governed Taiwan as a colony for half a century (1895–1945) before returning it to Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist China in the wake of World War II. A few years later, the CCP defeated the KMT in China, and the remnants of Chiang's government/army fled to Taiwan along with a large number of mainland refugees.

Multiple instances of colonialism and regime change produced shattered worlds and displaced peoples. Taiwan's population grew rapidly from about 130,000 in the late seventeenth century to approximately 2.5 million by the end of the Qing rule in the late nineteenth century.<sup>25</sup> Chinese colonists who spoke Hokkien and Hakka dialects from the coastal regions of southern Fujian Province and northern Guangdong Province were the main contributors for this growth. For most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the island was a dangerous frontier zone plagued by interethnic wars and violent rebellions against the weak Qing authorities.<sup>26</sup> Hoklo (the Hokkien-speaking group) and Hakka expansion came at the expense of the native Austronesians. The indigenous peoples of Taiwan suffered not only the loss of land and livelihood, but also cultural genocide at the hands of the Chinese settlers via intermarriage and forced assimilation. As Emma Teng has disclosed, the prejudicial knowledge of aboriginal communities and justification for their subjugation or annihilation went hand in hand in Chinese colonialism similar to that of Western and Japanese colonialism.<sup>27</sup>

Japanese colonialism produced a new set of political, social, and economic displacements in Taiwan, turning the former colonizers into

<sup>24</sup> Tonio Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese: Dutch, Spanish, and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 2.

<sup>25</sup> See John Robert Shepherd's chapter in *Taiwan: A New History*, ed. Murray A. Rubinstein (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1999), 126.

<sup>26</sup> For more, see John Robert Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600–1800* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993).

<sup>27</sup> Emma Jinhua Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683–1895* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center/Harvard University Press, 2004).

the colonized; making it possible for the bitterly divided Hoklo and Hakka to start seeing themselves as a collectivity. The Japanese administration was exploitative, methodical, and designed solely for the benefit of Japan, but it also modernized and transformed the island.<sup>28</sup> After putting down the initial Taiwanese resistance with sheer force and brutality, the Japanese authorities undertook intensive campaigns to turn the island's Chinese and Austronesian inhabitants into "Japanese" through compulsory education and state-sponsored cultural and religious programs.<sup>29</sup> These endeavors were by and large effective. Despite being treated like second-class citizens by their colonizers, the Taiwanese had served the interests of the Japanese Empire well. They became hardworking colonial agents in places that came under Japanese occupation, including China. Approximately 200,000 Taiwanese served the imperial army in various capacities by the end of the Pacific War. Though many were draftees and not everyone had volunteered, about 30,000 of them died in loyal service to the emperor.<sup>30</sup>

Consequently, the formation of "Taiwanese identity" under Japanese colonialism has been a subject of intense research and debate. Scholars hold different views on what Leo Ching aptly characterizes as "a contradictory and irreducible triple consciousness" intersected by residual Chinese culturalism, dominant Japanese colonialism, and emerging Taiwanese localism.<sup>31</sup> More recently, Evan Dawley offers a refreshingly nuanced interpretation of the emergence of an autonomous and "nonnational" Taiwanese ethnic identity among the residents in the port city of Keelung.<sup>32</sup> In this book, I refer to Taiwan's pre-1945 Hoklo, Hakka, and aboriginal residents as "semi-Japanized" to take account of this complexity.

Whether the "Han" Chinese population in Taiwan became Japanese, retained their respective Hoklo/Hakka identities, or developed a shared Taiwanese national or ethnic identity before 1945 will remain a point of scholarly contention. Yet, very few Taiwan studies scholars would dispute the fact that different historical trajectories between China and Taiwan from 1895 to 1945 had nurtured conflicting worldviews,

<sup>28</sup> See Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie eds., *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); Liao Ping hui and David Der wei Wang eds., *Taiwan under Japanese Colonial Rule, 1895–1945: History, Culture, Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

<sup>29</sup> Leo T. S. Ching, *Becoming "Japanese": Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), chapter 3.

<sup>30</sup> Shi chi Mike Lan, "(Re)Writing History of the Second World War: Forgetting and Remembering the Taiwanese Native Japanese Soldiers in Postwar Taiwan," *positions: asia critique* 21:4 (2013): 801–851.

<sup>31</sup> Ching, *Becoming "Japanese,"* 176–177.

<sup>32</sup> Evan N. Dawley, *Becoming Taiwanese: Ethnogenesis in a Colonial City, 1880s to 1950s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019).

lifestyles, and expectations. These irreconcilable differences later resulted in the traumatic unfolding of the 228 Incident, an event that Lai Tse-han, Ramon Myers, and Wei Wou rightly depict as “a tragic beginning” to the island’s post–World War II history of displacement.<sup>33</sup>

On February 28 (i.e. 228), 1947, less than two years after the Nationalist takeover from Japan, a massive anti-government and anti-mainlander riot broke out in the capital city Taipei and soon spread to other major cities on the island. Triggered by a relatively minor event, the riot was a result of pent-up anger against what the local islanders deemed egregious misgovernance since the retrocession. The KMT administration in Taiwan from 1945 to 1947 was notorious for its poorly disciplined troops, rampant corruption, brazen nepotism, wholesale economic plundering, and systematic discrimination against the Japanese-speaking Taiwanese. Instead of “home rule,” many Hoklo/Hakka Taiwanese thought the new regime from their ancestral homeland was just another form of colonialism, one that was considerably worse than the Japanese rule.<sup>34</sup>

In response to the uprising in Taiwan, the KMT in China, which was locked in a life-and-death struggle with the CCP, sent an expeditionary force across the sea to exterminate what Chiang Kai-shek thought was a Chinese Communist-inspired insurrection. In the ensuing bloodbath and mass arrests, the Generalissimo’s army slaughtered a considerable number of the island’s civilian population.<sup>35</sup> The Japanese-educated Taiwanese elites were targeted in particular; the move effectively eliminated a portion of the island’s local leadership while cowing the rest into submission.<sup>36</sup> The heavy-handed crackdown had serious repercussions nonetheless as it gave rise to a deep Taiwanese resentment against the KMT and the mainlanders in general. Though inhibited initially, this resentment would last for decades, and in fact continues to affect the island’s politics today.

After putting down the unrest, the Nationalists blamed both the Japanese colonialism and the Chinese Communists for causing the Taiwanese revolt. Chiang’s regime strictly prohibited any public discussion

<sup>33</sup> Lai Tse han, Ramon H. Myers, and Wei Wou, *A Tragic Beginning: The Taiwanese Uprising of February 28, 1947* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991).

<sup>34</sup> For more, see George H. Kerr, *Formosa Betrayed* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1965); Steven E. Phillips, *Between Assimilation and Independence: The Taiwanese Encounter Nationalist China, 1945 1950* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003); Li Wangtai et al., *Ererba shijian zeren guishu yanjiu baogao* [An investigative report of the responsibility for the 228 Incident] (Taipei: Ererba shijian jidian jijinhui, 2006).

<sup>35</sup> There have been different estimates of the 228 death toll. Due to the official cover up, the actual number will probably never be known. The figure could fall anywhere between 18,000 and 28,000. See Li et al., *Ererba shijian*, 73.

<sup>36</sup> Whether a majority of the surviving Taiwanese elites withdrew from politics or they were later enticed or coerced into working with the KMT is still a subject of debate.

of what happened and downplayed the brutal massacre as a minor “incident.” In the next four decades, the silence on the 228 Incident was effectively enforced on the island until the end of the KMT single-party dictatorship in the late 1980s.<sup>37</sup> When the floodgates of repressed memories were finally allowed to open following democratization, the 228 tragedy, along with the Nationalist “White Terror” (白色恐怖), became the focal point of Taiwan’s post-authoritarian historiography and social memory construction, which manifests itself in a plethora of oral history publications as well as literary and cinematographic productions.<sup>38</sup> The “White Terror” here refers to the displaced KMT’s anti-communist witch hunt and suppression of the Taiwan independence movement before political liberalization.

Consequently, the 228 Incident not only serves as a rallying point for the Taiwan independence movement, but also develops into the main cultural trauma for the island’s Hoklo and Hakka communities, who still form a majority of the island’s population today. Though Hoklo and Hakka are considered two different ethnic groups, they are also habitually lumped together and called the “native Taiwanese/*benshengren*” (台灣人/本省人), as opposed to the “mainlanders/*waishengren*” who came from China with the Nationalist regime after 1945.

The concept of “ethnic difference” has only become salient in Taiwan’s political/social discourse since democratization. It is an integral part of what sociologist Wang Fu-chang terms the “Taiwan-centered paradigm.” Different from the previously dominant “China-centered paradigm” under the KMT dictatorship, the “Taiwan-centered paradigm” considers the island as an independent political, social, and cultural entity separated from China.<sup>39</sup> This sovereign and democratic polity is said to have been formed by “four major ethnic groups” (四大族群): Hoklo, Hakka, *Waishengren/Mainlanders*, and *Yuanzhumin/Aborigines*. Respectively, these groups constitute roughly 73 percent, 12 percent, 13 percent, and 2 percent of the island’s population, according to government statistics.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> The traumatic memories of the 228 were kept alive by the victims’ families in Taiwan as well as in the Taiwanese communities in Japan and the United States.

<sup>38</sup> For the literary and cinematographic representations, see Sylvia Li chun Lin, *Representing Atrocity in Taiwan: The 2/28 Incident and White Terror in Fiction and Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Michael Berry, *A History of Pain: Trauma in Modern Chinese Literature and Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), chapter 3.

<sup>39</sup> See Wang Fu chang’s essay in John Makeham and A chin Hsiau eds., *Cultural, Ethnic, and Political Nationalism in Contemporary Taiwan: Bentuhua* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 58–73.

<sup>40</sup> Gao Gefu (Stéphane Corcuff), *Fenghe rinuan: Taiwan waishengren yu guojia rentong de zhu bian* [Gentle breeze and warm sunshine: Taiwan’s mainlanders and the transformation of national identity] (Taipei: Yunchen wenhua, 2004), 15. For the development of “ethnic consciousness” among the “four major ethnic groups,” see Wang Fu chang,

Notwithstanding the numbers shown by the official census, a person's ethnicity has become a matter of self-identification these days, which means these percentages tend to fluctuate with different surveys, but all within a reasonable range. Interestingly, among the younger Taiwan-born generations, there has been a noticeable decrease in the percentage of mainlanders who claim the ethnic label of *Waishengren* in recent surveys.<sup>41</sup> This is mainly due to the prevailing popular perception of this ethnic group as a privileged ruling class or a group of "colonizers" who migrated to the island with Chiang Kai-shek's authoritarian government.

The concept of "four major ethic groups" is the byproduct of a tension-filled political and cultural makeover process associated with the rise of Taiwanese nationalism and Taiwanese identity that developed alongside democratization, which Taiwan studies scholars refer to as *bentuhua* (本土化). *Bentuhua* is translated literally as "indigenization." Benefiting from both J. Bruce Jacobs and Stéphane Corcuff's nuanced and insightful thoughts on the concept, my preference is to use "Taiwanization" instead.<sup>42</sup> "Indigenization" usurps the nativist claim of Taiwan's aboriginal peoples, who were the reluctant receivers of all forms of colonialism on the island. For the same reason, I dislike the conventional translation of *benshengren* as the "native Taiwanese," but have nevertheless adopted the term for lack of a better substitute. To emphasize the fact that the ethnicities in Taiwan are recent constructions, lowercase letters are used in this book for both the "mainlanders/*waishengren*" and the "native Taiwanese/*benshengren*," with the exception of referring to them as contemporary ethnic labels. I will explain what *waishengren* and *benshengren* actually mean later on when expounding on the ethnic politics and mainlander identity dilemma in democratized Taiwan.

## Chapter Outline

Approximately one million mainland Chinese were forcibly displaced to Taiwan with the ousted Nationalist regime. Tens of thousands of KMT personnel and well-to-do civil war refugees were already there before the main human tidal waves hit the island in 1949. During the first half of the

*Dangdai Taiwan*. It has also been proposed in Taiwan that "new residents" (新住民) recent immigrants from China, Hong Kong, Macao, and Southeast Asian countries should be considered as the fifth "ethnic group."

<sup>41</sup> For example, see Fu Yangzhi et al. eds., *Taiwan shehui bianqian jiben diaocha jihua: Diliuqi disici diaocha jihua zhixing baogao* [Basic investigation project for Taiwan's social change: results from the fourth survey of the sixth period] (Taipei: Zhongyangyanjiuyuan shehuixue yanjiusuo, 2014), 170.

<sup>42</sup> For Jacobs, see Makeham and Hsiau, *Cultural, Ethnic, and Political Nationalism*, 18–19. For Corcuff, see Gao, *Fenghe rimuan*, 74–75.

1950s, scattered groups continued to stream in from the coastal regions of China and via places such as Hong Kong, Vietnam, Burma, and Korea. This gigantic influx of dispossessed people, many with only the clothes on their backs, brought a new set of socioeconomic displacements to Taiwan. At the time, the resource-poor and still relatively underdeveloped island was home to roughly six million semi-Japanized *benshengren* and about 100,000 aboriginal peoples. I make use of the terms “atomized” or “socially atomized” to describe a general condition of uprootedness experienced by a considerable number of lower-class mainlander males in Taiwan, especially the common soldiers. The political turmoil in China had physically wrested many of the mainland exiles from their families and communities, which turned these involuntary migrants into socially isolated individuals. As we shall see, this state of diasporic displacement was very traumatic and unsettling for the expelled *waishengren*.

Chapter 1, “The Exodus,” examines by way of archival research and oral history the enormous social upheaval produced by mainlander migration. The chapter argues that the great exodus produced two massive social dislocations, or “social traumas” – one experienced by the mainland exiles and the other by the native Taiwanese residing in the island’s major cities. By illuminating the discrepancy between *waishengren*’s traumatic and diasporic recollections and the larger picture provided by a document-based historical investigation, the chapter cautions against seeing history and memory as interchangeable. It drives home the point concerning the necessity of conducting archival research to put present-day memories in historical perspective. My view here is similar to the distinction made by Avishai Margalit between “shared memory” and “critical history.”<sup>43</sup>

While the great exodus memories have become significant for the children and grandchildren of former civil war exiles in recent decades as a basis for identity formation, back in the early 1950s the mass expulsion from China actually held very little meaning for the exiles themselves. During this time, most thought their stay in Taiwan would only be temporary, and they were still living through a vicious civil war between the KMT and the CCP that had not yet reached its finale. Chapter 2, “Wartime Sojourning,” probes into the historicity of this mentality and the social memory production that came with it. When most mainlanders were still expecting a major confrontation in the Taiwan Strait, the previous refugee experiences during the Japanese invasion of China in the

<sup>43</sup> Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 60–61.

1930s and early 1940s became a major source of consolation, revelation, and inspiration. This gave rise to the salience of a mnemonic regime suggested by the chapter's title. *Waishengren*'s sojourner mentality contributed to the gradual forging of a bond between them and the displaced KMT regime; it also deepened the preexisting rift between them and the native Taiwanese.

The stalemate in the Taiwan Strait eventually diminished the civil war exiles' hope for a swift final showdown between the Nationalists and the Chinese Communists. In particular, the outcome of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958 became an important turning point. By the early 1960s, many mainland refugees began to contemplate the possibility that they might never again see the home and family they had left behind in China. This produced an overwhelming sense of loss, disorientation, and depression. I describe the situation as "the social trauma of the diminishing hope." This social trauma triggered a need to find solace, bearings, and a sense of community locally in Taiwan, which many exiles-turned-migrants found when they participated in a form of social memory production that centered on their provincial native places. Chapter 3, "Cultural Nostalgia," draws attention to the local history and culture projects funded by the mainlander native-place associations that had contributed to the emergence of a specific mnemonic regime under the same title from the 1960s to the mid-1980s.

More than two decades of mainlander cultural nostalgia was shattered into pieces in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the political reforms, first in post-Mao China and then in post-Chiang Kai-shek Taiwan, finally allowed the now-aging first-generation *waishengren* and their Taiwan-born offspring, who had never seen "home," to return physically and reunite with their relatives on the mainland. Sadly, for many, the long-awaited homecoming turned into a disappointing trip, as the home and family that *waishengren* had longed to see again – for nearly half a century – were nowhere to be found in the PRC. Loved ones had died; houses were gone; ancestral graves were destroyed; old sceneries had changed; surviving relatives had become complete strangers. Chapter 4, "The Long Road Home," lays bare the emotional travails of this devastating reverse culture shock for the mainlander returnees, which I term "the social trauma of the homecoming in China." I argue that this social trauma effectively reoriented *waishengren*'s sense of belonging from China to Taiwan.

*Waishengren*'s emotional travails did not end after arriving back in Taiwan from their huge disappointment in China. The momentous political and social transformations in democratized Taiwan quickly turned the island – which had been *waishengren*'s actual place of residence for

decades – into an unfamiliar and unwelcoming place for many of them. I call this latter shock “the social trauma of the homecoming in Taiwan” in Chapter 5, “Narrating the Exodus.” The twin social traumas of the homecoming on both sides of the Taiwan Strait thus combined to produce a new search for belonging/identity based in Taiwan for the mainlanders from the early 1990s onward. The Taiwan-born *waishengren* play a key role in spearheading this search – a search that has increasingly converged on the social production of memory that centered on their forebears’ suffering and dislocation as a result of the mass expulsion from China. The great exodus then emerges as the salient shared cultural trauma for all people of mainland descent in post-authoritarian Taiwan. Chapter 5 discusses the intricacy of these developments. It also performs a historicized memory discourse analysis to highlight how the events in 1949 have been portrayed in Taiwan from the early 1950s to the present.

### The Cold War and the Making of a Historiographical Lacuna

Until Joshua Fan and Mahlon Meyer’s monographs appeared in the early 2010s, little was written on either the mainland exodus to Taiwan or on *waishengren* in the English language historiography. The mass departure from China during and following the KMT collapse was one of the largest forced migrations in post-World War II East Asia. Approximately one million mainland Chinese reached Taiwan and another million or so flooded the tiny British colony of Hong Kong.<sup>44</sup> Contemporaneously, even though the scale of the people displaced to Taiwan paled in comparison to the refugee figures in postwar Europe (tens of millions, including nine million displaced Germans), the Middle East (two million), and during the Partition of India (fifteen million), it is roughly equivalent to the number of family members (about 750,000) separated by the Korean War.<sup>45</sup> The sheer magnitude of this involuntary migration warrants some

<sup>44</sup> It was estimated that more than one million refugees entered Hong Kong during the Chinese civil war. About 200,000 eventually returned to the mainland by 1950. See Edvard Hambro, *The Problem of Chinese Refugees in Hong Kong: Report Submitted to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1955), 144, table IV.

<sup>45</sup> For displaced populations in post World War II Europe and the Partition of India, see Gunther Beyer, “The Political Refugee: 35 Years Later,” *International Migration Review* 15:1/2 (1981): 28–30. For Korea, see James A. Foley, *Korea’s Divided Families: Fifty Years of Separation* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 60. An estimated 1 to 1.4 million North Koreans (10–15 percent of the entire North Korean population) fled to the South from 1945 to 1951. Andrei Lankov, *The Real North Korea: Life and Politics in the Failed Stalinist Utopia*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 9.

scholarly attention, not to mention its contemporary significance for East Asian politics. During the past decade, there has been an increasing number of informative historical works on Hong Kong's refugee influx from Communist China after 1949. These studies illustrate how the Cold War obstructed and distorted the humanitarian goals of relief and resettlement when refugees themselves became political tools for ideological struggle.<sup>46</sup> In contrast to the research on Hong Kong, relatively little was produced on the one million Chinese civil war refugees who landed in Taiwan, and the main reason for this glaring omission can also be attributed to the Cold War.

The KMT–CCP rivalry, which constituted part of the larger Cold War conflict, has greatly influenced how *waishengren* and the events in 1949 are interpreted in China. Positioned on the losing side of what the official PRC history extolled as the “War of Liberation” (解放战争), the mainlanders had once been cast as the ultimate villains in Chairman Mao’s revolutionary ideology. Beijing denounced those who fled to Taiwan as “remnants of the Nationalist bandits” (国民党残匪).<sup>47</sup> For the victorious CCP, these ejected people were traitors and criminals. They had no place in the socialist “New China.” They were counterrevolutionaries and the “running dogs” of US imperialism, who brought misery and terror to the unfortunate masses of Taiwan, whom the CCP intended to “liberate” by force. Their families and friends who remained on the mainland were also vilified as dangerous “enemies within,” with some heartrending consequences, as Chapter 4 will show.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, when Deng Xiaoping emerged as the leader of the PRC after the death of Mao and initiated the “reform and opening-up” (改革开放) policy, peaceful negotiation under the framework of “one country, two systems” (一国两制) replaced military conquest as the main party line that dealt with Taiwan. The Chinese Communist state propaganda stopped traducing *waishengren* at this point. The civil war exiles in Taiwan were no longer bandits or quislings. Rather, like the native Taiwanese and aboriginal peoples they had supposedly trampled over for decades, the mainlanders suddenly joined the

<sup>46</sup> Glen Peterson, “To Be or Not to Be a Refugee: The International Politics of the Hong Kong Refugee Crisis, 1949–55,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 36:2 (2008): 171–195; Hsu, *Good Immigrants*, chapters 6 and 7; Laura Madokoro, *Elusive Refuge: Chinese Migrants in the Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016). Also see Dominic Meng Hsuan Yang, “Humanitarian Assistance and Propaganda War: Repatriation and Relief of the Nationalist Refugees in Hong Kong’s Rennie’s Mill Camp, 1950–1955,” *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 10:2 (2014): 165–196.

<sup>47</sup> See “Wancheng shengli, gonggu shengli, yingjie yijiuwulingnian yuandan” [Achieving victory, consolidating victory, welcoming the New Year’s Day of 1950], *Renmin ribao*, January 1, 1950, 1.

intimate category of “fellow Taiwanese compatriots” (台湾同胞). The motherland would welcome them back with open arms to visit their abused but “rehabilitated” relatives. Beijing had hoped that these family reunions together with increasing trade and interaction across the strait would eventually pave the way for the unification between the “two Chinas.” I will explain in the latter part of the book why these belated family meetings had the exact opposite effect anticipated by the Chinese authorities.

On the other side of the Taiwan Strait, Chiang Kai-shek’s ousted government continued to demonize the Chinese Communists, as it had done on the mainland. The official KMT discourse depicted the newly established PRC as an illegitimate usurper regime and the war against communism as a “mobilization for counterinsurgency” (動員戡亂).<sup>48</sup> For the Nationalists, the Chinese Communists were the bandits and traitors – not them. In an effort to turn the humiliating debacle in 1949 into an inspiration for future victory, the Generalissimo’s displaced party-state in Taiwan put the full weight of its propaganda machine behind the construction of something called “restorative nationalist ideology” (中興復國思想). One outcome of this, as I will demonstrate in Chapter 5, is that the traumatic and diasporic memories of the great exodus were suppressed publicly on the island until democratization. Backed by Washington DC during the Cold War, Chiang’s military dictatorship presented itself to the rest of the world as “Free China”: an anti-communist bastion populated by professional soldiers/militarized citizens ready to attack “Red China” and retake the mainland at any given moment.

Due to its alliance with the United States, from the 1950s to the 1970s, Taiwan had been a major destination for Western academics who studied China but were prohibited from entering the PRC. However, when Washington and Beijing “normalized” their diplomatic relations in 1979, a large number of the foreign experts – including many historians – began to migrate across the strait to conduct research on the “real China.” Those who still had an interest in studying Taiwan were drawn to the island’s economic miracle, political liberalization, and marginalized groups under the KMT dictatorship; groups such as the native Taiwanese and the aborigines. This partially explains why the great exodus continues to fly under the radar of English-language scholarship, even though the flood-gates of memory have been opened since the late 1980s.

In the past two decades, there was a growing interest among Western historians to study the impact of modern warfare on Chinese society with

<sup>48</sup> The term came from a temporary war mobilization law against the Chinese Communists that the Nationalists enacted in Nanjing in July 1947.

emphasis on the social dislocations and refugee movements created by protracted military conflicts.<sup>49</sup> Despite the production of sophisticated and informative empirical works, most of the research efforts have thus far concentrated on the Japanese invasion of China (1931–1945); what the Chinese call the “War of Resistance against Japan” (抗日战争) or simply the “Resistance War” (抗战). The turmoil caused by the violent clashes between the KMT and the CCP for the control over China (1945–1950) that instantaneously followed Japan’s surrender in 1945 remains a relatively unexplored subject in this field of inquiry.

One obvious reason for this lacuna is the PRC’s official restriction on this area of research. This restriction equates to limited access to archival materials and a muted general public. For the Chinese authorities, the study of human suffering and communal displacement produced by the Japanese incursion helps to promote a patriotic sentiment and foster people’s loyalty toward the party-state. Research on the same subject in the subsequent KMT–CCP struggle is politically sensitive because it could cast doubt on the PRC’s vaunted “War of Liberation” narrative when certain atrocities and civilian suffering are proven to be caused directly or indirectly by the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). The ban on Zhang Zhenglong’s (张正隆, 1947–) 1989 book *White Snow, Red Blood* is a good example.<sup>50</sup> I will talk more about Zhang’s book in Chapter 1.

Like the migration of foreign China experts across the Taiwan Strait, the CCP censorship is only one of the reasons why the great exodus and other human costs of the KMT–CCP war have remained largely invisible. Another reason – the most important one in my opinion – is the fixation that China studies scholars have on one dominant research question concerning the Chinese civil war: How could the Chinese Communists have possibly won the war, when it seemed that the Nationalists held all of the advantages? The decades-long obsession with unraveling this mystery grew out of the politically charged “loss of China” controversy in 1950s America. During this time, many of the country’s leading specialists on China fell victim to McCarthyism as they were wrongfully accused of

<sup>49</sup> See the research essays in Diana Lary and Stephen R. MacKinnon eds., *Scars of War: The Impact of Warfare on Modern China* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2001). Also see Stephen R. MacKinnon, *Wuhan, 1938: War, Refugees, and the Making of Modern China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008); Diana Lary, *The Chinese People at War: Human Suffering and Social Transformation, 1937–1945* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); R. Keith Schoppa, *In a Sea of Bitterness: Refugees during the Sino-Japanese War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

<sup>50</sup> The book was later republished in Hong Kong. See Zhang Zhenglong, *Xuebai xuehong: Guogong dongbei dajuehan lishi zhenxiang* [White snow red blood: The historical truth behind the decisive war between the KMT and the CCP in Manchuria] (Hong Kong: Tiandi tushu, 1998).

providing their government and the general public with misinformation about the nature of the Chinese Communist Revolution. Then in the 1960s and early 1970s, after the Red Scare had subsided, pioneering studies emerged that analyzed the reasons for the rise of the CCP. Scholars such as Chalmers Johnson, William Hinton, and Mark Selden began the task of setting the record straight.<sup>51</sup> These seminal works spawned a rich, diverse, and evolving field of research and debate on a broad range of historical factors which contributed to the CCP victory or the KMT downfall, such as peasant support for Mao's revolution, the Japanese invasion that weakened the KMT, botched post-World War II reforms by Chiang's regime, early post-World War II international politics, and so on. These research efforts have continued to the present time. While this scholarship has provided a remarkably detailed knowledge of the long-term revolutionary/state-building trajectories of both the KMT and the CCP, it also effectively turned their bloody military clash in the end into an unimportant sideshow. In the mid-1990s, Joseph Esherick reflected critically on what he identified as "a teleology of revolution" that had "dominated and distorted" much of the modern Chinese historiography.<sup>52</sup>

Since the 2000s, some historians have begun to move away from examining the competing developmental paths of both parties. Instead, they place the battle for China between the KMT and the CCP at the center of attention in what Odd Arne Westad's meticulously researched monograph calls "decisive encounters."<sup>53</sup> More recent books by Christopher Lew and Harold Tanner have provided the much-needed military history of pivotal civil war campaigns, especially those fought in Manchuria between 1946 and 1948.<sup>54</sup> Notwithstanding the illuminating new insights offered by these studies, the main research question they pursue remains: Why did the CCP win and how did the KMT lose?

<sup>51</sup> Chalmers A. Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China, 1937-1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962); William Hinton, *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966); Mark Selden, *The Yan'an Way in Revolutionary China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

<sup>52</sup> Joseph W. Esherick, "Ten Theses on the Chinese Revolution," *Modern China* 21:1 (1995): 69.

<sup>53</sup> Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946-1950* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

<sup>54</sup> Christopher R. Lew, *The Third Chinese Revolutionary Civil War, 1945-49: An Analysis of Communist Strategy and Leadership* (New York: Routledge, 2009); Harold M. Tanner, *Where Chiang Kai-shek Lost China: The Liao Shen Campaign, 1948* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015); Harold M. Tanner, *The Battle for Manchuria and the Fate of China: Siping, 1946* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013).

The “loss of China” controversy is long gone. It is time to move on to the previously ignored aspects of the two revolutionary parties’ brutal struggle for China – aspects that have great intellectual and contemporary significance. In her effort to reconceptualize the Taiping Rebellion in nineteenth-century China as a harrowing “civil war,” Tobie Meyer-Fong invites fellow historians to contemplate the question of “what remains?” after a traumatic fratricide that continued to haunt the postwar society for decades.<sup>55</sup> In the meantime, Diana Lary’s groundbreaking book *China’s Civil War* (2015), which has provided the very first systematic examination of the social history of the KMT–CCP conflict, asks scholars to consider the broader implications of this devastating fratricide not only inside China but also outside of it.<sup>56</sup>

The outpouring of *waishengren*’s great exodus memories in recent decades has given contemporary historians a window into what this war has caused for the one million mainland Chinese who were forcibly displaced to Taiwan. Rather than using the uppercase “Chinese Civil War,” which suggests the time span of the major battles (1945–1950), I employ the lowercase “civil war” throughout the book to denote the lasting aftereffects of this traumatic conflict. The sense of time for an uprooted and exiled population like the mainlanders in Taiwan was non-linear and anachronistic. As we will see, their overwhelming impulse was to “return” – not only to return home to China physically, but also to return mentally to earlier times (i.e. social memory production). They needed to return mentally to assuage the substantive social traumas they had experienced. And on that note, we now turn to the discussions regarding trauma, memory, and diaspora.

### Trauma, Memory, and Diaspora

The study of trauma encompasses a broad range of fields and disciplines that include but are not limited to psychiatric, neurobiological, cognitive, and behavioral sciences, as well as history, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, ethics, and so on. Broadly speaking, there are two discernable approaches to trauma studies in the humanities and social sciences disciplines. The works associated with these two schools of thought see memory differently. The first and arguably the more dominant – especially in comparative literature – is what can be labeled as the “psychoanalytic/deconstructive/poststructuralist” approach. This

<sup>55</sup> Tobie Meyer Fong, *What Remains: Coming to Terms with Civil War in 19th Century China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).

<sup>56</sup> Diana Lary, *China’s Civil War: A Social History, 1945 1949* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

approach has its origins in the late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century psychological theories that were developed by studying the victims of railway accidents, sexual assaults, and battlefield fatigue. Notable theorists included figures such as John Erichsen, Jean-Martin Charcot, Pierre Janet, Morton Prince, Josef Breuer, and Breuer's star protégé – the famously controversial father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud.<sup>57</sup>

The interest in studying traumatic neurosis had subsided after World War I, but trauma later came back to haunt the last few decades of the twentieth century, and it has been doing so ever since. This renewed haunting was driven by three roughly concurrent developments that began in the 1970s and ran through the 1990s. The first was a collective movement by psychiatrists and feminist activists to establish PTSD as a sanctioned disorder by the American Psychiatric Association for the Vietnam War veterans and victims of domestic violence. The second was a surge of interest in Holocaust testimonies/representations spearheaded by scholars affiliated with the Fortunoff Video Archive at Yale University, such as Geoffrey Hartman, Shoshana Felman, and Dori Laub.<sup>58</sup> And last, but certainly not least, was the growing preeminence of a deconstructive/poststructuralist perspective with Lacanian psychoanalytic pedigree that privileged literary criticism and aporetic aesthetics in representing trauma. This particular school was associated with the writings of Cathy Caruth.<sup>59</sup> Due to Caruth's influence, it comes as no surprise that the scholars of comparative literature who analyze the literary/cultural/cinematographic representations of emotional wounds from the past, in what David Der-wei Wang refers to metaphorically as "the monster that is history," have been at the forefront of engaging trauma theory.<sup>60</sup>

Drawing on Lacanian thought and the idea of constitutive loss, as well as deconstruction and the fascination with the aporia (the undecidable), Caruth found in trauma a comparable logic – as the experience that is

<sup>57</sup> For more, see Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

<sup>58</sup> Shoshana Felman, and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Geoffrey H. Hartman ed., *Holocaust Remembrance: The Shapes of Memory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

<sup>59</sup> For more on the development of psychoanalytic trauma theory in the West, see Allan Young, *The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman, *The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood*, trans. Rachel Gomme (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

<sup>60</sup> David Der wei Wang, *The Monster That Is History: History, Violence, and Fictional Writing in Twentieth Century China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004).

unprocessed or “unclaimed.”<sup>61</sup> Her theoretical formulation fascinated and in fact resonated with scholars across many different fields and disciplines. A particularly productive response/critique came from historian Dominick LaCapra, who sought to recognize the power of trauma in this light, but also tried to mitigate the Caruthian theory’s obsession with the sublime, the abyss, and the aporia by putting emphasis on the process of “working through” traumatic memories.<sup>62</sup> LaCapra’s distinction between “acting out” and “working through” is crucial to my conception of “multidirectional empathic unsettlements.” I will return to LaCapra in the Epilogue.

The idea that literature is a privileged site to probe into and represent the repressed/unconscious/unspeakable nature of psychic trauma has provoked some criticism from other academic circles. One noticeable voice of dissent comes from scholars who take the sociological approach to trauma. This second school of thought is associated with the much larger intellectual project that examines “collective memory” or “social memory.”<sup>63</sup>

The collective memory scholarship has an even more complicated genealogy than the research on psychic trauma with rich and multifaceted thoughts/debates in disciplines like history, sociology, philosophy, psychology, anthropology, and media studies.<sup>64</sup> The concern with memory first “boomed” in the late nineteenth century when modernity, industrialization, and urbanization broke long-standing communal and religious ties. This produced the need to find a new form of collective identity that many nations and communities had found in the recalling of a shared and oftentimes fictive past – a phenomenon that Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger later coined as “invented traditions.”<sup>65</sup>

The interest in studying collective memory “boomed” again in the last several decades of the twentieth century. The most salient scholarly influence since the late 1970s has been the Durkheimian approach previously undertaken by French sociologist/philosopher Maurice Halbwachs in his landmark study *Social Frameworks of Memory* (1925).<sup>66</sup> Not all who study

<sup>61</sup> Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*. Also see the essays in Cathy Caruth ed., *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

<sup>62</sup> LaCapra, *Writing History*.

<sup>63</sup> For the difference between the two, see Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, “Social Memory Studies: From ‘Collective Memory’ to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105–140.

<sup>64</sup> For more, see Jeffrey Olick, Vered Vinitzky Seroussi, and Daniel Levy eds., *The Collective Memory Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 22–29.

<sup>65</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>66</sup> Olick, Vinitzky Seroussi, and Levy, *Collective Memory Reader*, 16–22.

memory as a social phenomenon examine traumatic events. The “realms of memory,” according to French historian Pierre Nora, include cultural landmarks, historical figures, shared social practices, the “invented traditions,” and so on.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, because of Halbwachs and his mentor Émile Durkheim, the sociological approach to trauma is predominantly collectivist as opposed to the more individualistic tendency of the psychoanalytic approach. The sociological school also tends to focus on the function of memory as a basis for group identity and politics. The main idea is that collective memory is selective, constructive, and instrumentalist. In his acclaimed study of Holocaust memorials, James E. Young writes, “Memory is never shaped in a vacuum; the motives of memory are never pure.”<sup>68</sup>

A major point of difference between the psychoanalytic understanding of trauma and the sociological understanding of trauma is their views on the etiological origin and latency of traumatic memories. Because of this difference, scholars coming from these two schools also hold different views on the emotive power of trauma to unite or divide people and nations. For those who take the psychoanalytic position, trauma is caused by an overwhelming, shocking, unexpected, and sometimes life-threatening external event that impedes the human mind’s normal function to process memory. The event leaves a psychic imprint but is relegated to the unconscious. Later on, the repressed and unprocessed fragments of this imprint come back to haunt the individual, producing neurotic symptoms like agitation, anxiety, depression, paranoia, insomnia, recurring nightmares, and so forth. The latency of trauma thus results from an inability to recall or come to terms with a real but suppressed occurrence, and hence Caruth’s famous concept of “unclaimed experience.”<sup>69</sup> Based on this line of reasoning, the key to recovery is to help the traumatized subjects or communities remember.

In Caruth’s well-known but nonetheless controversial interpretation of Freud’s equally controversial last work *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), she states, “For history to be a history of trauma means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs; or to put it somewhat differently, that a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence.”<sup>70</sup> Caruth also makes reference to the collectivity and interconnectedness of traumatic experiences via reading

<sup>67</sup> Pierre Nora ed., *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past (Volume I: Conflicts and Divisions)*, ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

<sup>68</sup> James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 2.

<sup>69</sup> Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*. <sup>70</sup> Ibid., 18.

and listening. She writes, “[I]n *Moses and Monotheism*, that history, like trauma, is never simply one’s own, that history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other’s traumas.”<sup>71</sup>

For those who take the sociological approach to study traumatic memories, the psychoanalytic/deconstructive hermeneutics offered by Caruth is arbitrary, haphazard, and pseudoscientific. While it might work at the individual level, at the collective social level it flies in the face of a surfeit of heartrending experiences articulated by aggrieved peoples and nations in our time. Thus, for this second school of scholars, the most critical issue regarding trauma is not the inability to access memory or the “absence” of memory; on the contrary, it is the “excess” of traumatic memories and the conflicts among nations and communities set off by this excess. Cultural sociologist Jeffrey Alexander criticizes the psychoanalytic scholars such as Caruth for proposing a “lay trauma theory” that commits a “naturalistic fallacy” by assuming the external events themselves as inherently traumatic.<sup>72</sup> For Alexander, what makes an event “traumatic” is the social, political, and historical process whereby the event is remembered, recognized, narrated, and transformed into what he calls a “trauma drama” that is then widely accepted by a social group.<sup>73</sup> Viewed from this radical constructivist/instrumentalist position, the animated debate on “false memories,” or what Ruth Leys characterizes as the “mimetic” and “anti-mimetic” poles in the clinical literature, is really beside the point.<sup>74</sup> For Alexander, the ontological claims to trauma are inconsequential. What is important is trauma’s epistemological creation. Latency – understood as the emergence of post-event mnemonic discourses – is mainly the result of political and social developments rather than some intrinsic psychological qualities of how the human mind operates, both on the individual level and the collective level.

What this book tries to demonstrate is that neither approach fully explains or appreciates the mainland experience. *Waishengren*’s latency in narrating the shared trauma of the great exodus, nearly half a century after the initial expulsion from China, is neither a return of the unconscious and its repressed memories in a psychoanalytic sense, nor is it just a contingent and instrumentalist response to present circumstances in a political or sociological sense. Rather, it is a result of the historical trajectory narrated by the chapters in this book. This trajectory was impacted by four successive “social traumas” – “the social trauma of the exodus” (Chapter 1), “the social trauma of the diminishing

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 24.    <sup>72</sup> Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma*, 2 10.    <sup>73</sup> Ibid., chapter 6.  
<sup>74</sup> Leys, *Trauma*, 8 10.

hope” (Chapter 3), “the social trauma of the homecoming in China” (Chapter 4), and “the social trauma of the homecoming in Taiwan” (Chapter 5). The latter three social traumas were not only a direct consequence of the great exodus, but were also the product of historical changes that took place after the initial cataclysmic event. In response, *waishengren* engaged in three historically and culturally conditioned social productions of memory or “mnemonic regimes” – “wartime sojourning” (Chapter 2), “cultural nostalgia” (Chapter 3), and “narrating the exodus” (Chapter 5) – to lessen the shocks, disorientation, and perturbation generated by these three different social traumas.

I refer to *waishengren*’s three salient memory booms that emerged at different historical times to mitigate their respective social traumas as “mnemonic regimes.” I also employ the term “social memory” instead of the more commonly used “collective memory.” This decision is influenced by historical sociologist Jeffrey Olick’s caution against homogenizing and reifying both the social collectivity and the multifarious threads of “mnemonic practices” within a social collectivity at any given time.<sup>75</sup> Simply put, the salience of a particular mainlander “mnemonic regime,” or social production of memory, does not mean that there were no other concurrent mnemonic activities among *waishengren* during that time. Nor does it mean that the previously prominent social memory discourses had disappeared completely.

The mainlander history – with its ruptured trajectory of multiple traumatizing events and repeated attempts at mitigation via social memory production – illustrates the need to think beyond what I would identify as the “single event” model in both psychoanalytic and sociological approaches to trauma. Despite their differences, both approaches pivot their analysis on one single catastrophic event – real or imagined. The former is preoccupied with traumatized subjects’ inability to remember or come to terms with this event. The event is traumatic because a person’s faculty to memory is denied. The latter delves into how the said event is remembered (or forgotten) collectively due to an instrumentalist process of political and social shaping. The event is traumatic because of its narration, which produces shocks and elicits negative emotions among a group of people. The story I tell is not only different, but also more intricate. In this book, I explore the ways in which the uprooted and dispossessed *waishengren* dealt with the changing circumstances of their

<sup>75</sup> See Jeffrey K. Olick, *The Politics of Regret: On Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility* (New York: Routledge, 2007), chapter 2; Olick and Robbins, “Social Memory Studies.” For an insightful discussion of social memory from a historian’s standpoint, see Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2007), 14–20.

displacement – changes that were unsettling and traumatizing – with the historical and cultural means that they had at their disposal. The mainlander history shows that traumatized people do remember, and the act of remembering is therapeutic. More importantly, it exhibits a multiple-event trajectory that complicates the current understanding of trauma.

My critique of the “single event” model resonates, at some level, with Michael Rothberg’s and Stef Craps’s intellectual salvo against what they call the Freudian “event-based model” in trauma studies.<sup>76</sup> Rothberg and Craps are members of an intellectual movement in the literary and cultural studies circles that has emerged since the late 2000s. The movement challenges the Caruthian theory and psychoanalytic approach from the position of postcolonial critique.<sup>77</sup> Calling for “decolonizing trauma,” scholars affiliated with this movement point out that, despite Caruth’s emphasis on the ethical mission and cross-cultural connectivity of trauma, her works largely overlook the suffering of non-Western “others,” especially those who have been on the receiving end of Euro-American colonialism. Rothberg, a leading figure of the group, argues that part of trauma theory’s Eurocentrism lies in its fixation on the effects of a singular event, while neglecting the sustained and long-term processes of colonial traumas, many of which persist to the present day.<sup>78</sup>

This book joins the intellectual movement to “decolonize” trauma theory. It goes one step beyond the postcolonial literary methodology, which mainly analyzes fictional works written in English or other Western languages. There is indeed a need for more inclusive and more historically specific and culturally diverse research on the pain of nations/peoples living outside of mainstream Western societies – regardless of whether these instances of pain were caused by Euro-American colonialism or not. Our compassion for human suffering is universal; however, our attempts to study these traumatic experiences should not produce mere replicas or similar variants of the two existing approaches. The historical traumas of non-Western nations/peoples or colored/marginalized groups living in Euro-American societies must be understood and acknowledged on their own terms and on their own timelines.<sup>79</sup> A research based on Chinese archives and language sources, such as this monograph, can yield interesting and significant new insights for building a trauma theory that is truly universal.

<sup>76</sup> For a summary of the argument, see Craps, *Postcolonial Witnessing*, 31–33.

<sup>77</sup> For an overview of the studies associated with this movement, see Irene Visser, “Decolonizing Trauma Theory: Retrospect and Prospects,” *Humanities* 4:2 (2015): 250–265.

<sup>78</sup> Rothberg, “Decolonizing Trauma Studies,” 230.

<sup>79</sup> See also the argument made by Craps, *Postcolonial Witnessing*, 20–24.

Other than rethinking the “single event” model, another theoretical insight gained by studying *waishengren*’s ruptured and anachronistic history of displacement is the intimate connections among trauma, memory, and diaspora. Forced exile is an inherently traumatic experience across many different cultures. In his widely read essay, “Reflections on Exile,” the late Edward Said famously wrote: “Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted.”<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, what is often acknowledged but not really discussed with regard to Freud’s *Moses and Monotheism* – one of Caruth’s main texts for developing her trauma theory – is the link between trauma and forced migration. According to Roger Luckhurst, “The book has been read as a barely encrypted autobiographical reflection on [Freud’s own] expulsion and exile.”<sup>81</sup> Freud wrote this controversial last book in the midst of an involuntary displacement from Vienna to London. Anschluss and Nazi persecution of the Jews and psychoanalysts compelled him, in his advanced years, to leave his beloved Austria for Great Britain. The experience must have been extremely disconcerting and miserable.

In Taiwan, *waishengren*’s trauma of living in exile is expressed in an abstract idea called *liuli* (流離), which is presented in the epigraph of this chapter. *Liuli* could be literally understood as “drifting separation” or “floating dispersion.” I translate it as “diasporic displacement.” From the psychoanalytic standpoint, losing the capacity for memory is particularly traumatic for a Western subject because it impinges on individual faculty autonomy and identity. For mainland Chinese who lived in the mid-twentieth century, a prolonged period of forced separation from home and family was equally traumatic. Studying Chinese refugee movements during the Resistance War, historian R. Keith Schoppa states:

To flee from one’s home was not a decision any Chinese would take lightly. Choosing to become a refugee was difficult and emotional: the Chinese were rooted in their localities for their very identities. For many, if they chose to take flight and become refugees, they were leaving the place where their ancestors had lived, had died, and were buried, a place that gave them considerable part of their personal identity.<sup>82</sup>

This explains why *waishengren*’s native places in China became the focal point of their social memory production in the early 1960s, when the social trauma of the diminishing hope for return began to set in (Chapter 3). It also explains why the reverse culture shock of

<sup>80</sup> Said, “Reflections on Exile,” 137.    <sup>81</sup> Luckhurst, *Trauma Question*, 10.

<sup>82</sup> Schoppa, *In a Sea of Bitterness*, 9.

the belated homecoming in China during the late 1980s and early 1990s (Chapter 4) – when the perceived “home” was no longer home – had been so devastating for *waishengren*.

Curiously enough, despite the diasporic nature of this forced migration, academic research concerning “Chinese diaspora” has remained silent on the great exodus, and in fact, on political refugees in general. This is because the debate on diaspora in Chinese migration studies has not only privileged the “overseas” or transnational migration, but it has also deadlocked on two contradictory versions of diaspora theory that really aim at achieving the same goal. Neither of these versions has shown much interest in exploring the historical experiences of political exiles or war refugees.

“Diaspora” is a concept associated with expatriation, dispersion, nostalgia, and rootlessness born out of a rich and combined legacy of Greek, Jewish, Black Atlantic, and Armenian histories. Its introduction into Chinese migration studies in the 1990s has faced considerable opposition from the very beginning. Paradoxically, this is notwithstanding the fact that “Chinese diaspora” has become one of the most commonly used terms to describe Chinese migrants or peoples of Chinese descent living outside of China. The doyen of “Chinese overseas” study, Wang Gungwu, remarks, “The more I think about it, the unhappier I am that the term has come to be applied to the Chinese. I have used the term with great reluctance and regret, and I still believe that it carries the wrong connotations.”<sup>83</sup> Wang is not the only one who has serious reservations. Notable voices of opposition against diaspora include Ien Ang’s “can one say no to Chineseness,” Rey Chow’s “on Chineseness as a theoretical problem,” Allen Chun’s “there ain’t no Black Atlantic in cultural China,” and Shih Shu-mei’s “Sinophone studies.”<sup>84</sup>

What these critics have in common is that they all share Wang’s apprehension – that the term “Chinese diaspora” carries “the wrong connotations.” The connotations imply a homogenous, essentialist, and timeless notion of Chineseness or Chinese culture. This then suggests an everlasting attachment/loyalty of the diasporic communities to the political regime in China and other similar groups worldwide. Interestingly enough, this version of diaspora goes directly against a heterogeneous,

<sup>83</sup> Quoted from Huang Jianli “Conceptualizing Chinese Migration and Chinese Overseas: The Contribution of Wang Gungwu,” *Journal of Chinese Overseas* 6:1 (2010): 14.

<sup>84</sup> For Ang, Chow, and Shih, see Shu mei Shih, Chien hsin Tsai, and Brian Bernards eds., *Sinophone Studies: A Critical Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), chapters 1, 2, and 3; for Chun, see Allen Chun, “Diasporas of Mind, or Why There Ain’t No Black Atlantic in Cultural China,” *Communal/Plural: Journal of Transnational & Cross Cultural Studies* 9:1 (2001): 95–109.

anti-essentialist, and anti-nation state version of diaspora influenced by the theories of globalization and transnationalism. This second version celebrates the diversity, malleability, and hybridity of Chineseness. It highlights various border-crossing activities, identities, and cultural formations in the global Chinese diaspora. Two good examples of this second school are: the late Adam McKeown's call to reconceptualize Chinese diaspora(s) as transnational networks of movements, nodes, and connections, and Laurence Ma and Carolyn Cartier's anthology, which examines the diverse meanings of different physical localities for various Chinese immigrant communities.<sup>85</sup>

There are thus two contradictory versions of diaspora in Chinese migration studies – the homogenous/essentialist version versus the heterogeneous/anti-essentialist version. Despite staunch opposition from some of the most influential thinkers in the field, diaspora continues to have staying power mainly because of the heterogeneous/transnational notion of it. In the introduction to the *Routledge Handbook of the Chinese Diaspora* (2013), the editor Tan Chee-Beng writes, "In this Handbook, Chinese diaspora is used generally to refer to Chinese outside the Chinese lands. However, each scholar uses the term that he or she feels comfortable with or prefers. It is important that we hold a liberal attitude as long as we know what is meant."<sup>86</sup>

Though scholars of Chinese migration are divided on "diaspora" because of their conflicting definitions, they actually share the same goal of dismantling the homogenous notion of Chineseness. This endeavor remains a crucial intellectual project, in this day and age especially, as an expansionist PRC and a new worldwide wave of mainland Chinese immigrants could combine to create a renewed sense of Yellow Peril.

While I do support dismantling the homogenous notion of Chineseness, what I argue in this book is that diaspora does not necessarily have to be dismantled with it. The liberal and proliferated use of the term to represent all forms of uprootedness, marginality, and inbetweenness has already deprived diaspora of its conceptual vitality. Setting up diaspora as an all-purpose straw man only to be knocked down for endorsing a monolithic version of Chineseness, or as an all-purpose catchphrase signifying transnational hybridity/connectivity, has muddied

<sup>85</sup> Adam McKeown, "Conceptualizing Chinese Diasporas, 1842–1949," *Journal of Asian Studies* 58:2 (1999): 306–337; Laurence J. C. Ma and Carolyn Cartier eds., *The Chinese Diaspora: Space, Place, Mobility, and Identity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

<sup>86</sup> Tan Chee Beng ed., *Routledge Handbook of the Chinese Diaspora* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 3.

the already muddy pool of intellectual inquiry even more. Both help to ensure that any future discussion of diaspora will be dead in the water.

What we need instead is a more cautious, deliberate, and constrained application of the concept of diaspora to exiles, refugees, deportees, and other grievous and extreme instances of physical displacement and social dislocation such as the victims of slavery and human trafficking – what Adam McKeown calls “diaspora-as-exile.”<sup>87</sup> Some would feel that this is a step backward, returning the rigid and “outdated” version of diaspora. Nevertheless, it is the liberal use of the term that has created all the problems in the first place. Given the scope of refugee movements and other kinds of social displacement produced by political turmoil in modern China, one wonders why this “outdated” version of diaspora is always ceremoniously critiqued, but has never been given any serious consideration in the study of Chinese migration.

One obvious reason for this neglect, other than how the debate on diaspora is framed, has been the long-standing dichotomy between domestic migration and transnational migration, and the entire field’s privileging of the latter. What is interesting and remarkable about the mainland migration, as Fan has rightly pointed out, is the linguistic and cultural differences created by half a century of Japanese colonialism in Taiwan, which made this particular relocation experience “perhaps closer to migration to a foreign country than an internal migration.”<sup>88</sup> As we will see in Chapter 2, *waishengren*’s perceived national border was incongruent with the actual linguistic and cultural borders they had to traverse on a daily basis while living in postwar Taiwan – another contributing factor to their sense of displacement. That said, we also need to recognize that in early postwar Taiwan, the mainlanders were a dominant migrant group in relation to the local Taiwanese, despite the internal social diversity within the displaced population. It was *waishengren*’s language and worldview that their local hosts needed to adopt, not the other way around. Today, the Taiwan-born mainlanders, especially the descendants of many low-ranking KMT personnel, feel that their parents and grandparents are unjustly stigmatized as “foreign colonizers.” Yet, for the semi-Japanized native Taiwanese and aborigines living in the 1950s, the mainlander rule did resemble a form of colonialism.

A productive theoretical insight offered by *waishengren*’s history manifests in their recurring mitigation efforts via social memory production – their anachronistic returns to an earlier time/space. This mode of repeated returns connects trauma, memory, and diaspora. It opens up

<sup>87</sup> McKeown, “Conceptualizing Chinese Diasporas,” 311.

<sup>88</sup> Fan, *China’s Homeless Generation*, 7.

a new way to conceptualize temporal displacement alongside spatial dispersion in displaced communities. As exiled people and descendants of exiled people, the mainlanders struggled constantly to deal with what Clifford describes as a diasporic condition – “of living here and remembering/desiring another place.”<sup>89</sup> The empirical research contained in the ensuing pages of this book illustrates that this condition, or *liuli*, in the words of *waishengren* themselves, was never static. The displaced mainlanders did not just drift aimlessly in a universal empty time of melancholia and nostalgia. Neither was *liuli* fixated upon a singular mode of physical return to China as *waishengren*’s “returns” had also been temporal via memory production. In the 1950s, when the hope for a swift homecoming to China was still very much alive, the ousted mainland writers reminisced about their earlier refugee experiences during the Resistance War. When that hope was dashed in the 1960s and 1970s, people began to fall back on the recollections of native places from their youth. When the twin social traumas of the homecomings on both sides of the Taiwan Strait impacted the former civil war exiles and their Taiwan-born offspring in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the previously suppressed memories of the great exodus emerged as a basis for creating a new form of shared identity based in Taiwan.

The diasporic itinerary exhibited by the chapters in this book thus revises Clifford’s emblematic statement by adding the temporal dimension – “of living here [*and now but*] remembering/desiring another place [*in another time*].” The main conceptual focus is not only between Clifford’s dual concepts of roots and routes, but also between what I would call “moments and mementos” – how displaced and traumatized people remembered different things at different times in order to come to terms with the shocks of changing circumstances. On a broader level, my argument echoes fellow historian Shelly Chan’s recent call for scholars of modern Chinese history, as well as Chinese overseas and Chinese Americans, to explore “the temporalities of diaspora,” as opposed to the more frequently and systematically researched spatial dispersion of diaspora.<sup>90</sup>

### **Colonizers, Diaspora, and the Mainlander Identity**

Another theoretical insight that can be gained by looking into the mainlander story is the politics of claiming diaspora. Here, I am responding to

<sup>89</sup> Clifford, *Routes*, 255.

<sup>90</sup> Shelly Chan, *Diaspora’s Homeland: Modern China in the Age of Global Migration* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 12.

the most fundamental question Clifford poses regarding the concept: “what is at stake, politically and intellectually, in contemporary invocations of diaspora[?]”<sup>91</sup> For the locally born *waishengren* in present-day Taiwan, narrating the exodus eases their profound sense of perturbation, stigmatization, and exclusion, because it refutes the mainstream Taiwanese society’s portrayal of their forebears – or even all *waishengren*, as alien colonizers. More importantly, the shared history of displacement and pain associated with 1949 – the “cultural trauma” of the exodus – becomes an important identity marker for “mainlander Taiwanese,” even for the people of mainlander descent who have rejected the ethnic label of Mainlander/*Waishengren*. Thus, what we are witnessing in contemporary Taiwan is a paradoxical case of diasporic narratives/memories being used for an anti-diaspora purpose to claim a local identity – turning the concept of diaspora on its head.

The idea that *waishengren* can be considered a type of “diaspora” or “Chinese diaspora” came out of the research/debate on the mainlander “identity crisis” or “identity dilemma” in Taiwan during the 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s. The few existing English language publications on *waishengren* by nonhistorians were part of this scholarship. In 2010, I coauthored a review article detailing this interdisciplinary field of inquiry with sociologist Chang Mau-kuei.<sup>92</sup> In that article, we demonstrated that the study of *waishengren* in Taiwan began in the early 1990s with what the local scholars called “ethnic relations studies” (族群關係研究). During this time, the concept of “four major ethnic groups” replaced the idea of “provincial native place” (*jiguan* 籍貫) as a basis for perceiving communal differences on the island. The change was closely related to the aforementioned *bentuhua* (Taiwanization) and the rise of Taiwanese nationalism on the heels of the island’s political liberalization.<sup>93</sup>

*Bentuhua* and the Taiwan-centered thinking it represents have transformed the dominant political and social discourses in the newly democratized nation. Taiwan is no longer a breakaway province of China; no longer part of a divided state with the PRC due to the Chinese civil war. Rather, it is an independent political, social, and cultural entity formed by different “ethnic groups,” each with its own unique history. It is interesting to note here that the Chinese terms for the mainlanders and the native Taiwanese actually originated from the now abolished *jiguan* distinction under the KMT dictatorship. *Waishengren* literally

<sup>91</sup> Clifford, *Routes*, 244.

<sup>92</sup> Dominic Meng Hsuan Yang and Mau kuei Chang, “Understanding the Nuances of *Waishengren*: History and Agency,” *China Perspectives* 2010/3 (2010): 108–122.

<sup>93</sup> See the discussions provided by the essays in Makeham and Hsiau, *Cultural, Ethnic, and Political Nationalism*.

means “people from outside of the province [of Taiwan]” and *benshengren* means “people of the local province.”<sup>94</sup>

For the nonmainlander peoples, especially the native Taiwanese – the long-suppressed majority population – Taiwanization constitutes belated political, social, and cultural justice after nearly four decades of KMT/mainlander dominance. It recognizes and empowers the previously disdained and inhibited local cultures, languages, and histories under the Nationalist authoritarian rule and its mainland-centered ideology. For many of the elderly civil war migrants as well as their children and grandchildren, *bentuhua* represents a wholesale rejection of mainlander history, and even mainlander presence in Taiwan. The rewriting of Taiwan’s past according to the Taiwanization thinking has also given rise to a radical postcolonial historiography. This version of history paints all *waishengren* as oppressive colonizers who arrived with Chiang Kai-shek’s brutal military regime after World War II to enslave the local Taiwanese and aborigines.

A majority of the still surviving former exiles and their Taiwan-born descendants felt upset, incensed, and vilified by this depiction. Some undertook what sociologist Li Kuang-chün calls “masking” or “impression management” to hide their true identity in social interactions.<sup>95</sup> Later on in Chapter 5, I describe the situation as “the social trauma of the homecoming in Taiwan” for *waishengren*. This shock took place after they returned from their heartbreaking and disappointing “social trauma of the homecoming in China” discussed in Chapter 4. It was in response to these disturbing and frustrating changes that many educated mainlanders, particularly among the second generation, became strong advocates of their family/community histories in Taiwan. The traumatic departure from China during and following the Nationalist collapse then emerged as the common starting point of these personal narratives/recollections despite great diversity within the mainlander experiences. In addition to oral history books, films, TV shows, and staged plays, this memory boom also manifested itself in a considerable number of academic works, many of which were graduate theses.<sup>96</sup>

In 2001, in the midst of *waishengren*’s post-authoritarian memory boom, local anthropologist Zhao Yanning (Antonia Chao), who had

<sup>94</sup> For more, see D. Yang and Chang, “Understanding the Nuances,” 111–112.

<sup>95</sup> See Li’s chapter in Corcuff, *Memories of the Future*, 103.

<sup>96</sup> Some of the best graduate works are published in Chang Mau kuei ed., *Guojia yu rentong: Yixie waishengren de guandian* [Nation and identity: Perspectives of some mainlanders] (Taipei: Qunxue, 2010); Li Kuang chün ed., *Li yu ku: Zhanzheng de yanxu* [Sufferings of *waishengren* under the war regime] (Taipei: Qunxue, 2010); Zhang Hanbi ed., *Fusanghua yu jiayuan xiāngxiāng* [Hibiscus and imaging home] (Taipei: Qunxue, 2011).

conducted hundreds of personal interviews, proposed the idea that first-generation *waishengren* could be seen as a type of “Chinese diaspora.”<sup>97</sup> The idea became popular in the mainlander studies circles in Taiwan during the first decade of the 2000s. Similarly, in 2006, Canadian anthropologist Scott Simon argued that the mainlander identity in contemporary Taiwan was “a diasporic identity in construction.”<sup>98</sup> Drawing parallels between the predicament faced by *waishengren* in democratized Taiwan and the predicament faced by the white minority in post-apartheid South Africa, Simon wrote, “Amidst all of the changes, Mainlanders had to negotiate new identities in daily life. In order to distinguish themselves from the legacy of Chiang Kai-shek and a history of oppression, many began to portray their family histories as a diasporic journey from China to Taiwan.”<sup>99</sup>

While I have observed the same storytelling phenomenon identified by Simon, I am hesitant to consider the contemporary mainlander identity formation based on the great exodus memories as “a diasporic identity in construction.” In my 2010 article written with Chang Mau-kuei, we tentatively proposed that the early 1960s could be a better starting point to talk about the “diasporization” of *waishengren*.<sup>100</sup> My view has since changed due to the historical research I have conducted. In Chapter 3, I contend that the 1960s were actually the beginning of *waishengren*’s “localization” process.

Most of the Taiwan-born mainlanders have felt displaced, marginalized, and unjustly denigrated in the *bentuhua* environment because of their family backgrounds. Yet, to interpret the group identity they are currently constructing to deal with this difficult situation as “diasporic” – suggesting either a perpetual sense of rootlessness or a persistent attachment to their homeland in China – is rather misleading, in light of the historical trajectory I uncover in this book.

My contention on the mainlander identity finds an interesting parallel in French political scientist Stéphane Corcuff’s work. Corcuff had studied the mainlander identity dilemma under *bentuhua* in the 1990s. According to a questionnaire he designed in 1997, Corcuff claimed that, *waishengren*, notwithstanding their steadfast electoral support for the KMT and their strong aversion to the Taiwan independence movement, had exhibited a discernible tendency to identify with Taiwan. This

<sup>97</sup> Zhao Yanning (Antonia Chao), “Dai zhe caomao dao chu luxing: Shilun Zhongguo liuwang nuxing zhuti yu jiyi jian de jiangou guanxi” [A forever banished uterus: Chinese diaspora, fertility, and the politics of suffering], *Taiwan shehui yanjiu jikan* 41 (2001): 53–97.

<sup>98</sup> Simon, “Taiwan’s Mainlanders,” 87. <sup>99</sup> Ibid., 95.

<sup>100</sup> D. Yang and Chang, “Understanding the Nuances,” 121.

tendency was especially apparent among the younger generation. Corcuff described the phenomenon as the “unavoidable Taiwanese ‘tropism’” of the mainlanders.<sup>101</sup> In 2007, Corcuff conducted another survey focusing only on the Taiwan-born *waishengren*. He discussed the limits of this tropism by introducing the twin concepts of “creolization” and “liminality.”<sup>102</sup> I would suggest that the “limits” shown by Corcuff’s 2007 survey are in fact a symptom of the island’s conflicting mnemonic communities rather than locally born *waishengren* turning their backs on identifying with Taiwan. Longitudinal survey data collected in Taiwan will confirm this view.<sup>103</sup> I will elaborate on these points in the Epilogue.

Clifford refers to a conceptual “slippage” between “invocations of diaspora theories, diasporic discourses, and distinct historical experiences of diaspora.”<sup>104</sup> This “slippage” has beclouded many intellectual debates associated with the concept of diaspora. Therefore, a clear distinction should be made between understanding the lived historical experiences of *waishengren* as exilic/diasporic people and their descendants’ politics of claiming diaspora in contemporary Taiwan. The two are not the same, but the former informs the latter. And it is the former that we will begin to explore in Chapter 1.

<sup>101</sup> See Corcuff, *Memories of the Future*, 188. Also see Gao, *Fenghe rinuan*, 136–137.

<sup>102</sup> Gao Gefu (Stéphane Corcuff), *Zhonghua linguo: Taiwan yujingxing* [Neighbor of China: Taiwan’s liminality] (Taipei: Yunchen wenhua, 2011), 168–185.

<sup>103</sup> See Shen Shiau Chi and Wu Nai teh’s chapter in *The “One China” Dilemma*, ed. Peter C. Y. Chow (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 117–143.

<sup>104</sup> Clifford, *Routes*, 244.

# 1      The Exodus

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*Suitcases, countless suitcases were bobbing on a darkened sea covered with petroleum.*

Long Yingtai, *Dajiang dahai yijiūsījiū* [Big river big sea 1949]

Due to the increase of people over the years after the retrocession, in particular following the arrival of evacuees from Hainan and Zhoushan Islands, Taipei City's total population has surged from 300,000 to 600,000 in only four to five years. The municipal administration was entirely unprepared for this. There are no longer organized plans, but only expedient measures trying to catch up.

Mayor of Taipei, Wu Sanlian, *Zhongyang ribao*, October 4, 1952

## The Two Social Traumas of the Exodus

Disoriented and confused, Ying Meijun arrived at a wharf on Hainan Island (海南島) holding on tightly to the only precious thing that mattered to her at that point, her newborn baby boy. The time was early May 1950; the exact date was hazy due to the traumatic nature of the entire experience. The young army wife and her infant were among a terrified group of Nationalist soldiers and civilian refugees scurrying toward the island's shoreline. Lying on the southern tip of mainland China, Hainan was one of the last remaining strongholds of Chiang Kai-shek's regime in the late stage of the Chinese civil war. Upon reaching the sea, Meijun found herself wrestling with others as she fought desperately to get onto one of the few sampans ferrying people to the KMT naval evacuation ships mooring at a distance.

About a year and a half earlier, before this disorganized flight from Hainan, Meijun, at age twenty-four, left her home county of Chun'an (淳安), located in the rural backwater of western Zhejiang Province. She trekked hundreds of miles to join her husband, Long Huaisheng, a young junior officer enlisted in a Nationalist military police unit. When the city of Guangzhou (廣州) fell to the CCP in mid-October 1949, Meijun lost contact with Huaisheng. Not knowing what to do, she fled south with the

withdrawing Nationalists, and months later, ended up on a busy dock at the southernmost edge of her country. Meijun lived to tell the tale about the horror scene on the day of evacuation as she and her baby were fortunate enough to board one of the ships – a fortune many others did not share. She later passed this traumatic memory on to her Taiwan-born children. In 2009, her famous daughter Long Yingtai wrote the experience into her best seller *Big River Big Sea 1949*:

[P]eople climbed rope ladders and cargo nets up the sides of the ships like spiders using all of their might. Many could not go up or hold on. They dropped straight into the sea. “Oh, they screamed, and the sound of them hitting the water like dropping dumplings, plop and plop,” Meijun said.

With the roaring sounds of artillery approaching, people began to push and shove frantically. Some of the small boats capsized; some got close to the big ships only to watch them sail away. Countless heads were bobbing up and down in the ocean. People were crying for help everywhere, but no one cared. Those who were left on the dock became panic stricken; their cries shook the heaven.<sup>1</sup>

As her ship set sail for Taiwan, Meijun focused her mind on the countless pieces of luggage floating in the petroleum-soaked water, trying to block out all of the carnage and all of the horrible crying and screaming from her memory.

Today, we know a lot more about the great exodus out of China in the mid twentieth century – a massive forced migration that straddled the supposedly watershed year of 1949, from the late 1940s to the first half of the 1950s – thanks to the outpouring of *waishengren*'s traumatic and diasporic memories in democratized Taiwan. Many who had survived Hainan like Long Yingtai's mother Ying Meijun were forever haunted by the pandemonium and the horrors of the entire fiasco.<sup>2</sup> The KMT's chaotic departure from their southern island stronghold was only one of the traumatic events in the larger and deeper historical wound produced by the downfall of Chiang Kai-shek's regime in 1949. In order to replenish its dwindling ranks before leaving Hainan for Taiwan, the Generalissimo's army conscripted a large number of the indigenous male islanders, many at gunpoint, which devastated thousands of Hainanese families.<sup>3</sup> Similar roundups, much larger in scale, were conducted in the vicinity of Qingdao (青島) in Shandong Province, about a

<sup>1</sup> Long Yingtai, *Dajiang dahai yijiushiji* [Big river big sea 1949] (Taipei: Tianxia zazhi, 2009), 25.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the evacuation from Hainan Island, see Wang Dakong et al., *Likai dalu de nayitian* [The day we left the mainland], 2nd ed. (Taipei: Jiuda wenhua, 1989), 146–149.

<sup>3</sup> Changtian chuanbo, Ding Wenjing, and Tang Yining eds., *Zuihou daoyu jishi: Taiwan fangweizhan 1950 1955* [The last islands: The war to defend Taiwan 1950–1955] (Taipei: Shizhou wenhua, 2012), 96–98.

year prior to the retreat from Hainan. At approximately the same time as Hainan, the mass kidnapping of able-bodied men was also carried out on the Zhoushan Islands (舟山群島) near Ningbo in Zhejiang Province, and on Dongshan Island (東山島) in southern Fujian Province.<sup>4</sup>

Soldiers, army abductees, and civilian escapees from Hainan, Qingdao, Zhoushan, and Dongshan were part of an immense and continuous population flow across the Taiwan Strait prior to, during, and following the Nationalist collapse in 1949. Between 1948 and 1955, roughly one million KMT personnel and Chinese civil war refugees poured into Taiwan, an island slightly larger than the US state of Maryland and home to about six million semi-Japanized local peoples of Hoklo, Hakka, and aboriginal descent.<sup>5</sup> This great human exodus started streaming into Taiwan in late 1948 and early 1949. During this period of time, business elites, urban professionals, and family members of prominent KMT statesmen – people with the financial means and political connections to exit war-ravaged China – took the voyage first in relative comfort. These “early birds” saw the recently reacquired former colony of Japan as a temporary haven from the turmoil on the mainland. This initial stream of well-to-do refugee seekers was soon followed by a tsunami of demoralized troops and emaciated refugees that hit the island in successive waves, starting in the second half of 1949 and continuing into the early 1950s. When these latter waves of displaced people took flight from vastly different places in China, many had no idea they would eventually land in Taiwan. If we accept Lin Hsiao-ting’s argument that the exiled ROC in Taiwan was an “accidental state,” then, many of the latecomers who reached the island’s shores could be considered “accidental migrants.”<sup>6</sup>

A majority of the Nationalist personnel and their families, in fact, did not leave China. Unwilling to abandon home, family, and community to become socially atomized refugees, they would take their chances with the new communist regime. In the meantime, hundreds of thousands did attempt to escape, but they wound up getting trapped inland or left behind along the way. The individuals who had previously worked for or with the KMT, along with their relatives and friends – individuals who

<sup>4</sup> See Long, *Dajiang dahai*, 81–85 for the roundups in Qingdao. For those in the Zhoushans, see Chen Ling, *Zhoushan chetui jimi dangan: Liushinian qian de yiye canggang* [Zhoushan withdrawal secret files: A page of history from sixty years ago] (Taipei: Shiyiying, 2010), 22–25, 243–347.

<sup>5</sup> Taiwansheng xingzheng zhangguan gongshu tongjishi ed., *Taiwansheng wushiyinian lai tongji tiyao* [A summary of statistical records for Taiwan Province during the past fifty one years] (Taipei: Taiwansheng xingzheng zhangguan gongshu tongjishi, 1946), 83–85.

<sup>6</sup> Hsiao ting Lin, *Accidental State: Chiang Kai-shek, the United States, and the Making of Taiwan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

stayed on the mainland for whatever reason – would later suffer tremendously in Mao’s PRC, being tainted forever with the label of “class enemy.”<sup>7</sup> Four decades later, when the communication across the strait finally resumed, the mainlanders in Taiwan would learn the tragic fate of the loved ones they had left behind in China. This heartrending story will be told in Chapter 4.

After 1950, scattered groups began to reach Taiwan via China’s border regions with Hong Kong, Vietnam, and Burma.<sup>8</sup> In early 1954, roughly 14,000 Chinese People’s Volunteer Army prisoners of war, captured by the US and UN forces during the Korean War, joined the displaced population in Taiwan. Some of these “righteous anti-communist fighters” (反共義士), as the Generalissimo’s propagandists called them, were KMT troops who had surrendered to the CCP during the civil war.<sup>9</sup> The final large group of mainlanders entering Taiwan were the residents of the Dachen Islands (大陳列島).<sup>10</sup> The Dachens lie just off the southern coast of Zhejiang Province. The Nationalists occupied these islands until being forced out in early 1955 during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis. When his army departed, Chiang Kai-shek decided to evacuate all of the 18,000 local fishermen, farmers, and their families to Taiwan. The US Seventh Fleet provided the aerial cover and sea transport in what was to become the Generalissimo’s last withdrawal from China.<sup>11</sup>

During the past three decades, a deluge of *waishengren*’s memories revolving around the great exodus, what I described previously as “the rivers and the seas of 1949,” has provided researchers today with invaluable insights into one of the least understood migrations in modern China and Taiwan. Yet, memory is not history. Despite being informative and engaging, oral history, or more precisely, social memory – what a group of people, a society, or a nation chooses to focus on remembering or commemorating at a certain time to satisfy a particular need or serve a specific purpose – cannot be the only source for historians to reconstruct the past. Mnemonic practices are unavoidably selective and self-centered.

<sup>7</sup> The CCP executed, imprisoned, and sent to labor camps hundreds of thousands of former KMT personnel and suspected KMT sympathizers in the early 1950s. For more, see Yang Kuisong, “Reconsidering the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries,” *China Quarterly* 193 (2008): 102–121.

<sup>8</sup> For Hong Kong, see D. Yang, “Humanitarian Assistance.” For Vietnam, see Huang Xiangyu, “Zhiyue junmin zhi jieyun laitai (1949–1953)” [Transportation of detained soldiers and civilians from Vietnam to Taiwan, 1949–1953], *Guoshiguan xueshu jikan* 11 (2007): 143–188. For Burma, see Chang, *Guojia yu rentong*, 211–236.

<sup>9</sup> Shen Xingyi, *Yiwan siqian ge zhengren: Hanzhan shiqi “fangong yishi” zhi yanjiu* [Fourteen thousand witnesses: A study of the “righteous anti communist fighters” during the Korean War] (Taipei: Guoshiguan, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> The Dachen Islands are now called the Taizhou Islands (台州列岛).

<sup>11</sup> For more, see Zhang Hanbi, *Fusanghua yu jiayuan*, 143–183.

Remembering and forgetting are two sides of the same coin. Noticeably absent from *waishengren*'s contemporary recollections of the great exodus is how their migration negatively affected the local people and society.

In this chapter, I argue that the mainland exodus to Taiwan in the mid twentieth century produced two massive social dislocations or two “social traumas” – one experienced by the civil war exiles and the other by Taiwan’s semi-Japanized local residents, a majority of whom were the native Taiwanese (*benshengren*) living in the island’s major cities. My contention is based on documentary evidence as well as oral history. The former includes historical information collected from *Zhongyang ribao* (Central Daily News) and *Lianhe bao* (United Daily News), and from the recently declassified government files and archival social data in Taiwan. *Zhongyang ribao* and *Lianhe bao* were the two largest newspapers published in Chiang Kai-shek’s “Free China” in the 1950s. They constitute valuable sources to explore the social history of the mainlander migration. The social trauma of the great exodus has become a basis for *waishengren*'s cultural trauma and identity formation in present-day Taiwan. The social dislocation experienced by the native Taiwanese as a result of the mainland exodus is not recalled by anyone at the moment, but can nonetheless be observed in the newspapers and archival documents produced seventy years ago.

Not all civil war exiles reaching Taiwan were scarred mentally or physically during the course of the exodus. Even so, traumatic and sensational escape stories, such as the one told by Long Yingtai's mother, have come to dominate *waishengren*'s contemporary recollections of 1949. Available historical social data does indicate that a socially shattered people arrived in Taiwan between 1948 and 1955. Collectively, the mainland population had higher crime rates, suicide rates, and cases of mental illness compared to the native Taiwanese population. There was a sizable group of what I characterize as “dispossessed and atomized male persons” among both the civilian refugees and low-ranking military personnel.

The semi-Japanized *benshengren* did not migrate physically; nevertheless, the world they once knew was irreparably shattered and transformed by the great exodus. Previous research on the Taiwanese experience during this period has largely focused on the political elites and political history. The historiography has also concentrated on the retrocession years (1945–1947) and the 228 Incident (1947). The extent to which *waishengren*'s migration adversely affected the host society socially and economically is a long-neglected subject. The research in this chapter thus fills a lacuna in the historical scholarship on early postwar Taiwan by drawing attention to the extensive social disruptions caused by the influx

of one million mainland soldiers and refugees in the island's major cities, especially Taipei.

### Recalling the Journey to Taiwan: Traumatic Narratives and Other Stories

From 2008 to 2014, I interviewed twenty-one mainlanders in Taiwan.<sup>12</sup> Nineteen were former civil war exiles (i.e. first-generation *waishengren*). Among these nineteen individuals, three women – Han Xiaoli from Anhui Province, Liu Chenghui from Guangxi Province, and Ma Hui from Shanghai – were married to junior Nationalist military or police officers. Like Ying Meijun, they also became pregnant during the Chinese civil war and had a traumatic and dramatic relocation experience similar to Long Yingtai's mother. The stories of these incredibly resourceful and resilient women – how they managed to survive and reunite with their husbands in Taiwan – could each be written as a book chapter.<sup>13</sup>

Han Xiaoli's story is given here as an example. She bore witness to instances of “collateral damage” during the Chinese civil war and nearly became a victim herself. Han Xiaoli was born into a small but prosperous merchant household near the city of Bengbu (蚌埠) in northern Anhui Province. The Japanese invasion destroyed her home, killed her beloved father, and reduced the family business to smoking ruins. Xiaoli's surviving relatives then married her off to the son of a local landlord for money. Her young husband later joined a Nationalist tank training corps to fight the Japanese. Like Long Yingtai's mother and many of the KMT army wives during this time, Xiaoli spent the Resistance War trailing her husband's armored battalion across several provinces in northern and central China.

In early November 1948, on the eve of the colossal Huaihai Campaign that would decide the fate of China, Xiaoli was sitting on top of a night train heading south with her husband. She was in the advanced stages of her first pregnancy. Her husband was called to Nanjing on official business, so he took this opportunity to get his wife and the unborn baby out of an impending war zone. According to Xiaoli, their train's passenger cars were jam-packed with refugees. Most were local townsfolk fleeing from the

<sup>12</sup> During the past decade, I listened to a great number of personal stories offered by *waishengren* from different generations. These twenty one individuals are the people who signed the consent form and agreed to have their stories included in this book. Here, I would like to thank all of those who had shared their family histories with me. Whether they signed the consent form or not, their testimonies and perspectives helped me to better understand the mainlander experience.

<sup>13</sup> Han Xiaoli (pseudonym), interviewed by the author, Chungli, Taoyuan, August 2, 2008; Liu Chenghui (pseudonym), interviewed by the author, Tachih, Taipei, October 12, 2008; Ma Hui (pseudonym), interviewed by the author, Miaoli City, October 21, 2008.



Figure 1.1 Nationalist troops retreat to the Yangtze River following their defeat in the Huaihai Campaign, January 1949. Source: Photograph by Jack Birns/The LIFE Picture Collection via Getty Images.

imminent showdown between the more than one million KMT and CCP troops amassing in the region (see Figure 1.1). Arriving late, the couple had to climb up onto the roof of one of the carriages with hundreds of other refugees because there was simply no room left below (see Figure 1.2).

The train did not get very far south. A CCP guerrilla unit ambushed it in the pitch-dark night, thinking it was a Nationalist military transport train. Awakened by sudden gunfire and explosions, the passengers pushed, screamed, and ran for their lives. Immobilized by her pregnancy and bound feet, Xiaoli could not jump off and run like the others; her



Figure 1.2 A train loaded with war refugees arriving in Shanghai, May 1949. Like the previous Japanese invasion, the battle for supremacy between the Nationalists and the Chinese Communists displaced a large number of civilians. Source: Image courtesy of Bettmann Archive via Getty Images.

husband refused to abandon her and the baby to save himself. With machine gun bullets whizzing through the air and mortar shells exploding everywhere, the couple simply lay flat on the roof. They held each other tightly, closed their eyes, and prepared to meet their ends together. Xiaoli and her husband did not die, however. Miraculously, neither of them suffered even so much as a scratch. Staying on top of the train saved them while many others who hopped off and fled actually perished.

Sixty years later in 2008, as an octogenarian grandma sitting in the comfort and security of her own home in Chungli (中壢), Taiwan, telling me the story, Han Xiaoli's voice and body still trembled. "The day was breaking as the train – littered with bullet holes – rolled slowly into a station," she said to me. "I peeked into one of the carriages and 'oh my mother!' (我的媽呀!) There were so many dead bodies. I was scared to death!" The couple soon got onto another train to Nanjing. When they passed through the same spot during the day, they saw hundreds of corpses scattered on both sides of the tracks stretching deep into the field.<sup>14</sup>

Han Xiaoli's trials and tribulations continued in Nanjing in the months that followed. Her husband went off to fight the war with his armored battalion, and she was left to fend for herself with other KMT army dependents. Xiaoli gave birth to a son in a roadside tent. She and her infant endured constant cold, starvation, and sickness as they were driven from one military camp to another. Still, the worst of the ordeal was not the wartime deprivations, but the psychological torment caused by the lack of information and communication. Like Long Yingtai's mother Ying Meijun, Han Xiaoli did not know where her husband's unit was or whether he was still alive throughout most of the war (see Figure 1.3).

When the young couple finally reunited again in Shanghai in April 1949, they discussed the possibility of returning home to Anhui Province for the sake of their baby boy. Both feared persecution by the CCP since the husband was a Nationalist military officer. Even so, after what they had endured, living under communist rule suddenly did not sound like such a bad idea. The commanding officer of her husband's tank squad somehow got wind of the couple's talk. He threatened to have them both shot as CCP spies if they tried to stay behind. Thus, Xiaoli and her husband had no choice but to make preparations for whatever the army had in store for them.

A week later, Xiaoli and a group of military families were sent to a bustling Shanghai dock to board a bulky naval ship bound for Taiwan. The sailors led them through a narrow corridor hemmed in by military equipment, wooden chests (filled with gold bars and silver dollars), and luggage that was stacked as high as the ancient city walls. All were forced

<sup>14</sup> Han Xiaoli, interviewed by the author.



Figure 1.3 Nationalist military personnel and their families taking a break by the roadside during the withdrawal from Shanghai, April 1949. Source: Photograph by Jack Birns/The LIFE Picture Collection via Getty Images.

to abandon their personal belongings before getting on the overfilled ship. While the soldiers and porters were still busy loading weapons, boxes, and passengers, a real CCP spy posing as a dock worker set fire to a heap of

ammunition on the ship's deck in an attempt to blast everyone into oblivion. The fire was put out quickly; the heap did not explode, but the panic-driven stampede of hundreds to abandon ship did unfortunately claim many lives. What Xiaoli witnessed that day was horrifying beyond words. As if reliving the trauma six decades ago, she pointed to an empty corner of her living room during our interview, and mumbled deliriously, "Can you see, my son? Can you see those tiny bodies of one-year-old and two-year-old babies on the ground being trampled into pieces by hundreds of frightened people? Can you see?"<sup>15</sup> I was on the verge of tears at that point (see Figure 1.4).



Figure 1.4 A ship taking families out of China, November 1949.  
Source: Photograph by Jack Birns/The LIFE Picture Collection via Getty Images.

<sup>15</sup> Han Xiaoli, interviewed by the author.

During the course of my ten-year research on *waishengren's* history, besides the formal interviews, I have read and heard so many of these heartrending personal stories, some of which also brought tears to my eyes. After a while, I began to have serious doubts about the epistemological foundation of the entire Chinese civil war historiography, which, as I argued in the Introduction, has been greatly influenced by the legacy of the Cold War – particularly the “loss of China” controversy in the United States during the early 1950s. Why should historians perpetuate this legacy and bias by continuing to focus on the reasons for the Nationalist defeat and the Chinese Communist victory? How could they refrain from exploring the widespread human suffering and the larger social history of this brutal conflict, which had long-term effects on both Taiwan and China after 1949? Granted, one of the main messages of this book is that oral history needs to be treated as social memory rather than actual history. That said, the previously repressed great exodus memories coming out of democratized Taiwan do suggest that the scholars of modern China should at least rethink how to approach the history of 1949.

Recently declassified government documents in Taiwan, many produced by the KMT military in 1949 and 1950, offer insights into the tremendous hardship suffered by the retreating Nationalist units and their dependents during the great exodus. For example, in January 1949, thousands of officers, clerks, and soldiers working for the Nationalist Army Command Headquarters (陸軍司令部) left Nanjing with their families. They embarked on a harrowing one-year “long march” across several provinces in southern and southwestern China – a march not altogether different from the one taken by Mao and the survivors of the Jiangxi Soviet a decade and a half earlier. The group lost all the equipment, provisions, documents, and files on the road. Repeatedly, its members fell victim to hunger and disease, as well as to the attacks by CCP militias and the PLA regulars in hot pursuit. Hundreds deserted, while those who could not go on were simply left behind. In the end, only a dozen or so individuals were all that remained to board a plane to Taipei from Chengdu (成都), Sichuan Province, in December 1949.<sup>16</sup> The Nationalist Military Police Headquarters (憲兵司令部) went through the same ordeal as the Army Command Headquarters. Among the 700 officers and their families evacuated from Nanjing in early 1949, only four people managed to catch one of the last flights out of Chengdu in late 1949. General Zhang Zhen (張鎮, 1900–1950), head of the Nationalist

<sup>16</sup> “Lujun ge danwei zhuanjin Taiwan jingguo baogaoshu” [The written reports of individual Nationalist army units on the course of their withdrawal to Taiwan] (January 1, 1949–December 31, 1950) NAA, B5018230601/0038/543.4/7421, 002 008.

military police, was among the four lone survivors. He died shortly after reaching Taipei due to illness and exhaustion.<sup>17</sup> The internal report filed by his successor in Taiwan in June 1950 stated, “[T]he hardship suffered by the rank and file was indescribable. Family members lived out in the open constantly. Countless people succumbed to sicknesses and perished, especially women and small children.”<sup>18</sup> All over China, similar “marches” were taken by many Nationalist military units, agencies, and schools. These roaming bands were joined by a motley crowd of displaced refugees as well as KMT collaborators and supporters – expelled landlords, local merchants, and conservative intellectuals.

In Taipei, the KMT elites who had gotten out tried to rescue their friends and family members still trapped on the mainland.<sup>19</sup> Regrettably, due to the limited capacity in air and sea transport, and the speed of the Nationalist collapse, little could be done in most cases. As Jay Taylor writes, “Perhaps hundreds of thousands or more of those who made it to ports still in government hands would find that no passage was available.”<sup>20</sup> Available historical data clearly indicates that a fairly large number of *waishengren* left their wives and female relatives behind in China and relocated to Taiwan alone. Figure 1.5 illustrates the mainlander population pyramid (excluding the military personnel) constructed according to Taiwan’s 1956 census. In the pyramid, we can see that a sizable portion of the female mainland population from the age cohort of thirty-and-above is “missing.” A side-by-side comparison with the native Taiwanese pyramid from the same census data (Figure 1.6) further demonstrates this point. Four decades later, when the aging civil war exiles were finally allowed to return to China, reconciling separated families became a tormenting experience.

Not every person who worked, or had ever worked for the Nationalists, felt compelled to leave the country or escape to Taiwan, though most would later come to regret that decision in Mao’s China. In only a few years after achieving victory over Japan and putting China on an equal footing with the Western powers, Chiang Kai-shek’s regime had managed

<sup>17</sup> Huang Zhenwu, “Xianbing silingbu ji suoshu danwei you shoudu zhuanjin Taiwan jingguo baogaoshu” [A written report of the withdrawal from the capital to Taiwan by the ROC Military Police Headquarters and its subordinate units] (June 1950) NAA, B5018230601/0036/581.26/6010/1/001, 008.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 006.

<sup>19</sup> Xingzhengyuan, “Xingzhengyuan di 100 ci huiyi: Xianzai liu rong … shangyou yiqian yuren ying ruhe shefa qiangjiu an” [The 100th meeting of the Executive Yuan: How to rescue more than 1,000 personnel still remaining in Chengdu …] (December 9, 1949) NHD, 014000013516A.

<sup>20</sup> Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 405.

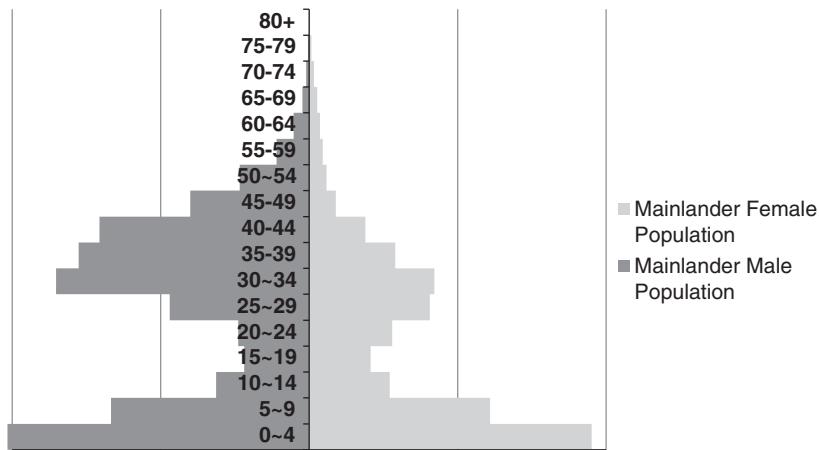


Figure 1.5 Population pyramid of the mainlander population in 1956 (military personnel excluded). Source: Taiwansheng hukou puchachu ed., *Zhonghuaminguo hukou pucha baogaoshu* [The census report the ROC] Vol. 2:2 (Taipei: Taiwansheng hukou puchachu, 1959), 1 6.

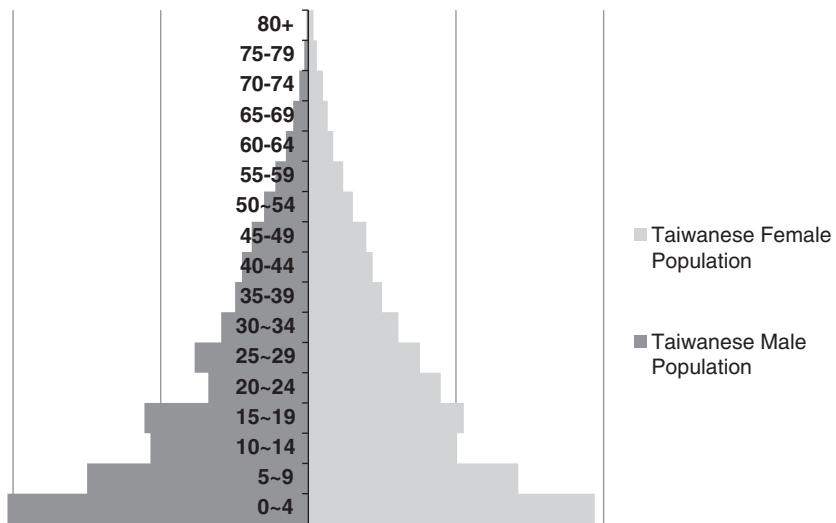


Figure 1.6 Population pyramid of the native Taiwanese population in 1956 (military personnel excluded). Source: Taiwansheng hukou puchachu, *Zhonghuaminguo hukou*, Vol. 2:2, 1 6.

to alienate most of its people. This story has already been told in great detail by historians such as Suzanne Pepper and Lloyd Eastman.<sup>21</sup> Archival documents kept by the KMT show that during the early 1950s, the Nationalists had trouble persuading some of their former top officials who had fled to Hong Kong to rejoin the expelled government in Taipei.<sup>22</sup> A confidential telegraph produced by the Nationalist Customs Administration Office in November 1949 reveals that, despite the official order to evacuate to Taiwan, most of the Office's employees actually did not want to leave the mainland.<sup>23</sup> The identities and livelihoods of ordinary Chinese living during this time were based primarily on family/kinship relations and, as we will see in Chapter 3, on native-place networks. Choosing to become a refugee meant separating oneself from this web of connections to become a single and socially atomized individual. It was not a choice people would make easily, especially when they viewed the outgoing regime as "corrupt" or "hopeless."

As a result, a disproportionate share of *waishengren*'s trauma stories comes from *laobing* or "old soldiers." Numbering approximately 100,000, these destitute, single, and retired KMT veterans form a marginalized social group in Taiwan. In the mid-1980s anthropologist Hu Tai-li was among the first local scholars to study *laobing*, whom she identified as a "subethnic group" among *waishengren*.<sup>24</sup> In his book, Joshua Fan referred to the population as "China's homeless generation." Not all indigent former soldiers in Taiwan were press-ganged at gunpoint in China; nevertheless, many joined the Nationalist army or guerrilla forces because of the extreme circumstances created by destructive modern warfare. Individuals enlisted out of patriotism, survival instinct, or were simply sold into service by impoverished family members when the Resistance War and the Chinese civil war wreaked havoc on their communities.<sup>25</sup> In Taiwan, *laobing* received little pay and assistance from the KMT. Those who were discharged from the military before the early 1960s got next to nothing in terms of retirement benefits and

<sup>21</sup> Suzanne Pepper, *Civil War in China: The Political Struggle, 1945-1949* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978); Lloyd E. Eastman, *Seeds of Destruction: Nationalist China in War and Revolution, 1937-1949* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1984).

<sup>22</sup> For example, see Xingzhengyuan, "Xingzhengyuan di 108 ci huiyi: Xianling liugang renyuan fantai gongzuo an deng" [The 108th meeting of the Executive Yuan: Ordering personnel staying in Hong Kong to come work in Taiwan] (January 4, 1950) NHD, 014000013516A.

<sup>23</sup> "Caizhengbu guanwushu daidian" [A telegraph message on behalf of the Customs Administration, (ROC) Ministry of Finance] (November 14, 1949) NAA, A307510000D/0038/012/01/016/060.

<sup>24</sup> Hu Tai li, "Ethnic Identity and Social Condition of Veteran Mainlanders in Taiwan," *Revue Européenne des Sciences Sociales* 27:84 (1989): 255.

<sup>25</sup> Fan, *China's Homeless Generation*, 19-31.

health care. The disenfranchised army retirees later rose up to protest against the Nationalist government in the late 1980s, a subject I will discuss in Chapter 4. Due to chronic poverty and a 1950s army law that prohibited all low-ranking military personnel from marrying, a considerable number of *laobing* remained single throughout their lives. Their sense of homelessness and displacement was thus deeper than the rest of the civil war exiles.<sup>26</sup> Some *laobing* later found young wives in their mainland hometowns when the travel ban was finally lifted in 1987. The old soldiers who managed to marry before 1987 usually had to tie the knot with socially undesirable women in Taiwan, including young girls who were physically handicapped or mentally challenged, as well as aboriginal women, widows, divorcees, and former prostitutes.<sup>27</sup>

Being abducted by the Nationalist army is perhaps one of the most noticeable trauma stories of 1949 in Taiwan today. As mentioned, the Generalissimo's depleted forces carried out massive roundups to replenish their ranks before leaving the mainland. A community on Dongshan Island in southern Fujian was dubbed the "Widow Village" because the Nationalists took most of its men to Taiwan.<sup>28</sup> Jian Bucheng was the deputy quartermaster of the KMT Sixty-Fourth Division, which had fought its way out of Hainan Island. According to Jian, when the remnants of his division disembarked in eastern Taiwan, he counted more than 1,000 teenage Hainan boys among the approximately 7,000 survivors, whom the army had "recruited" on that island.<sup>29</sup>

An interviewee of mine, Jiang Sizhang, was a native of the Zhoushan Islands. In May 1950, teenage Jiang and his two classmates were abducted and brutalized by a band of Nationalist soldiers while they were walking home from their middle school.<sup>30</sup> In the late 1980s, Jiang became an important proponent of the Veterans' Homebound Movement in Taiwan. We will learn more about Jiang's story and the movement he helped launch in Chapter 4. Another interviewee of mine, a Shandong Province native named Li Tiancheng, was also a middle school student when the Nationalist regime crumbled. Li left his hometown with a large mobile group formed by teachers and students from several public

<sup>26</sup> See the chapters by Wu Mingji, Liao Rufen, Zhang Suyu, Lin Qiufen, and Zeng Shuhui in Li Kuang chün, *Liyu ku*, 1 135, 207 244.

<sup>27</sup> Hu Tai li, "Yuzai yu fanshu: Taiwan 'rongmin' de zuqun guanxi yu rentong" [Taro and sweet potatoes: Ethnic relations and identities of "glorious citizens" (veteran mainlanders) in Taiwan], *Zhongyangyanjiuyuan minzuxue yanjiusuo jikan* 69 (1990): 118 124; Fan, *China's Homeless Generation*, 82 87.

<sup>28</sup> Joshua Fan, "From Tongbo Village to Widow Village: The Legacy of the Chinese Civil War," *Frontiers of History in China* 12:1 (2017): 75 92.

<sup>29</sup> Wang Dakong et al., *Likai dalu*, 148.

<sup>30</sup> Jiang Sizhang, interviewed by the author, Academia Sinica, Taipei, July 27, 2014.

schools in his home province; a group of people who did not want to live under the Chinese Communist rule. On their way to Taiwan on the Penghu Islands (Pescadores) in July 1949, Li and about 8,000 of his fellow students were forcibly conscripted into the KMT army by the local garrison commanders stationed there. Two school principals, along with a number of teachers and student representatives from the mobile group, protested vehemently against the draft. Annoyed, the commanders had them arrested and executed on charges of sedition and spying for the CCP. Many of the students who were unwilling to serve were either tortured or killed to set an example; the brutal measures quickly cowed the rest into submission.<sup>31</sup>

The traumatic recollections of *waishengren* in present-day Taiwan reveal that the CCP also did its share of press-ganging male civilians into its armed forces. Seventeen-year-old Zuo Xixin was abducted by the communist New Fourth Army in the wake of Japan's surrender. Though he later managed to escape, Zuo was twice jailed by the KMT for serving briefly in the Chinese Communist army.<sup>32</sup>

A *juancun* resident and a second-generation *waishengren* talked about her father's experience of being kidnapped and locked up during the CCP's general conscription in her mainland hometown. Fortunately, her family was able use their connections to secure her father's release, and arrange for him to leave town immediately. Ironically, when the war expanded later on, her father had to join the Nationalist military.<sup>33</sup> Due to the lack of research, we do not yet know the full extent of the KMT's impressment regime, let alone the CCP's (see Figure 1.7). What Diana Lary has maintained is probably true: that many men during the Chinese civil war "had simply been grabbed, by one army or another, by the accident of being in the wrong place at the wrong time."<sup>34</sup> Odd Arne Westad argues that for most common folks, living through the final years of the KMT–CCP struggle in China "was about escaping warfare and other effects of authoritarian centralism."<sup>35</sup> Accounts by the exiled soldiers and civilian refugees in Taiwan largely confirm his interpretation.

In China today, in stark contrast to the outpouring of "the rivers and the seas of 1949" in democratized Taiwan, mass suffering and dislocation

<sup>31</sup> Li Tiansheng (pseudonym), interviewed by the author, Hsintien, Taipei, June 13, 2009. For more, see Tao Yinghui and Zhang Yufa eds., *Shandong liuwang xuesheng shi* [A history of Shandong exile students] (Taipei: Shandong wenxian she, 2004) and Chen Yunjuan's essay in Chang, *Guojia yu rentong*, 149–209.

<sup>32</sup> Fan, *China's Homeless Generation*, 28.

<sup>33</sup> Sun Limei, "Waishengren de 'jia': Duoyi de jiyi yu yidong de rentong" [The mainlanders' "home": Multiple meanings in memory and shifting identities] (master's thesis, National Tsing Hua University, Institute of Anthropology, 2001), 29.

<sup>34</sup> Lary, *China's Civil War*, 128. <sup>35</sup> Westad, *Decisive Encounters*, 330.



Figure 1.7 A twelve year old Nationalist soldier drinking from another soldier's canteen. The group waits on the wharf of Shanghai to be transferred to the front in November 1948. Years of brutal warfare in China destroyed homes, families, and communities. Countless minors were uprooted and incorporated into the fighting armies. Many were press ganged at gunpoint. Source: Photograph by Jack Birns/The LIFE Picture Collection via Getty Images.

during the “War of Liberation” remains a politically sensitive topic. As Westad rightly points out, “For the CCP regime, it is obviously of crucial importance that the heroic image of the civil war persist – for instance, through the way the war is presented in history textbooks.”<sup>36</sup> The civilian deaths, especially those caused directly or indirectly by the Chinese Communist forces, can neither be seriously researched nor publically acknowledged. The official ban on Zhang Zhenglong’s controversial book *White Snow, Red Blood* (1989) serves as a case in point. Zhang was a PLA officer and writer. His controversial book about the PLA’s civil war campaigns in Manchuria exposed, for the first time, the deliberate strategy of the CCP to starve out the KMT defenders who were entrenched in the city of Changchun (長春).<sup>37</sup> From May to October 1948, in a siege that lasted five months, the PLA soldiers were ordered to drive back waves of hungry refugees attempting to leave the largest city in central Manchuria. The ruthless tactic won Changchun for the CCP, but it resulted in hundreds of thousands of the city’s residents being starved to death.<sup>38</sup> Zhang Zhenglong’s exposé caused a sensation among the readers in China. Predictably, it also provoked the ire of his army superiors and many top PRC officials who promptly banned the book in 1990. Zhang and his editor were both imprisoned briefly for producing *White Snow, Red Blood*.

While many of the unknown historical wounds of the KMT–CCP struggle remain to be explored, it is worth noting that refugee experiences also differed tremendously – even in the same war. Among the mainlanders who reached Taiwan, not everyone took flight at the last moment. Not everyone was exposed to unspeakable atrocities or subjected to extreme hardship despite a great number of the sensational “last boat/last plane/last train” stories that are circulating in contemporary Taiwan. Anthropologist Zhao Yanning (Antonia Chao) interviewed hundreds of elderly and still surviving former civil war exiles on the island in the late 1990s and early 2000s. She discovered one interesting fact: many of her informants did not tell the typical refugee story.<sup>39</sup> In one of her research essays, Zhao tells the story of a retired Peking opera singer who had initially traveled to Taiwan as a tourist in mid-1948. The retired singer hailed from an esteemed official/merchant family in Beijing that specialized in international shipping. To celebrate her university graduation, she went on an excursion to Taiwan. As a northerner, she had always dreamed about vacationing on a tropical island and gorging on

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 330. <sup>37</sup> For more, see Zhang Zhenglong, *Xuebai xuehong*.

<sup>38</sup> Lary, *China’s Civil War*, 122–127. For different estimates of the civilian death toll in Changchun, see Tanner, *Where Chiang Kai-shek*, 326, note 4.

<sup>39</sup> Zhao, “Daizhe caomao,” 56–57.

fresh fruit. While in Shanghai, on her way back from the Taiwan trip, she received a telegraph from her family in Beijing telling her not to come back home for the time being. While she was exploring Taiwan, the CCP had taken her home city, and was actually preparing to cross the Yangtze River into southern China. Thus, she was forced to sail across the strait again, and this time, as a refugee.<sup>40</sup>

This particular migration experience could be unique; however, reaching Taiwan before the main human tidal waves hit the island in the second half of 1949 is not. Notwithstanding the salience of the “last boat/last plane/last train” stories in *waishengren*’s social memory production today, the 1956 census data, which is fairly reliable, shows that approximately 26 percent (167,756/640,072) of the nonmilitary civil war exiles had landed in Taiwan before 1949 (see Table 1.1 and Figure 1.8). In other words, at least a quarter of the civilian mainland population did not experience the rapid disintegration of the KMT. These “early birds” or “pre-49ers” were thus sheltered from the worst suffering and deprivations during the final days of the KMT downfall. According to native Taiwanese historian Dai Guohui (戴國輝, 1931–2001), these “pre-49ers” came from diverse backgrounds. They included Nationalist civil servants, merchants, educated people who had studied in Japan, former employees of the Japanese puppet regimes in

Table 1.1 *Chinese civil war exiles entering Taiwan, 1945–1956 (military personnel excluded)*

| Year | Total  | Male   | Female | Sex ratio |
|------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|
| 1945 | 7915   | 6822   | 1093   | 6.24      |
| 1946 | 26922  | 18062  | 8860   | 2.04      |
| 1947 | 34339  | 23594  | 10745  | 2.20      |
| 1948 | 98580  | 61679  | 36901  | 1.67      |
| 1949 | 303707 | 199026 | 104681 | 1.90      |
| 1950 | 81087  | 58604  | 22483  | 2.60      |
| 1951 | 13564  | 8465   | 5099   | 1.66      |
| 1952 | 10012  | 6632   | 3380   | 1.96      |
| 1953 | 19340  | 13932  | 5408   | 2.58      |
| 1954 | 14851  | 10829  | 4022   | 2.69      |
| 1955 | 26838  | 15459  | 11379  | 1.36      |
| 1956 | 2917   | 1620   | 1297   | 1.25      |
| Sum  | 640072 | 424724 | 215348 | 1.97      |

Source: Taiwansheng hukou puchachu, *Zhonghuaminguo hukou*, Vol. 2:1, 719 722.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 71 75.

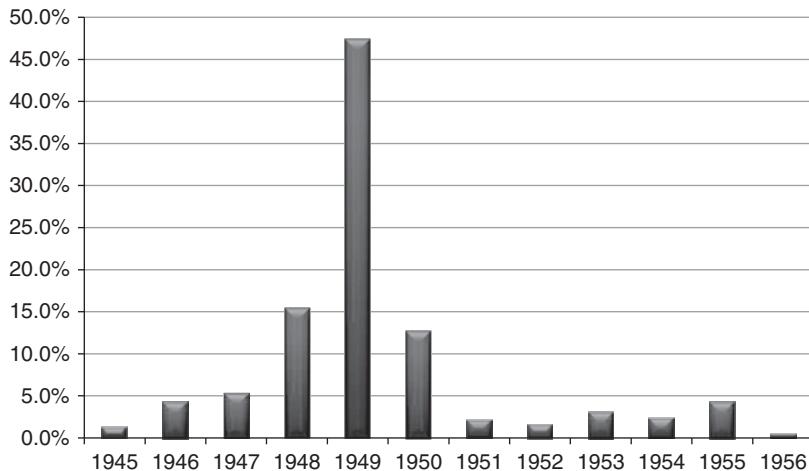


Figure 1.8 Percentages of Chinese civil war exiles entering Taiwan, 1945–1956 (military personnel excluded). Source: Taiwansheng hukou puchachu, *Zhonghuaminguo hukou*, Vol. 2:1, 719–722.

China, and migrant workers from nearby Fujian Province.<sup>41</sup> The “pre-49ers” became involuntary exiles when they were forbidden from leaving the island to go back to China by Chiang Kai-shek’s “central government,” which relocated to Taiwan at the end of 1949.

Among my twenty-one interviewees, four were already residing in Taiwan before 1949. The first two, Yuan Yifang from Hebei Province and Cheng Zilong from Shandong Province, were KMT air force staff. Cheng was posted to the island in 1948, and Yuan had resided there since early 1947.<sup>42</sup> The third individual, Liu Qian, was a business clerk from Shanghai. In 1947, he came to Taiwan and started working for a trading company in the northern port city of Keelung (基隆).<sup>43</sup> The last person, Luo Yuanyi, was a Nanjing native. Coincidentally, like the Peking opera singer whom Zhao Yanning interviewed, he was also a young university graduate from a rich merchant family; after finishing

<sup>41</sup> Ye Shitao, *Taiwan wenxue shigang* [A historical survey of Taiwanese literature], 2nd ed. (Kaohsiung: Chunhui chubanshe, 1993), 83–84.

<sup>42</sup> Yuan Yifang (pseudonym), interviewed by the author, Chungshan District, Taipei, June 18, 2008; Cheng Zilong (pseudonym), interviewed by the author, Chuangwei, Yilan County, July 26, 2008.

<sup>43</sup> Liu Qian (pseudonym), interviewed by the author, Ta'an District, Taipei, August 14, 2010.

college, he also took a long vacation in Taiwan. While Luo was enjoying himself on one side of the strait, on the other side the CCP advanced south to occupy his home city in late April 1949. Luckily for Yuanyi, his entire family was airlifted out of Nanjing to join him in Taiwan. Despite their wealth, the Luo family had no connections in high places. Even so, they boarded one of the last planes out of the beleaguered Nationalist capital while many high-ranking KMT generals and party officials did not. The reason for their miraculous escape was sheer luck and good karma. Yuanyi's family owned several buildings near an army airfield in Nanjing; therefore, a number of the Nationalist air force pilots who were stationed there rented homes from the Luo family. During bouts of hyperinflation in the civil war, Yuanyi's kindhearted father helped many of his struggling tenants out financially. Thus, when the PLA attacked the city and the order came down from their superiors to evacuate to Taiwan, the pilots that the Luo family had previously assisted invited the Luos to come along. On the day of departure, Yuanyi's family members posed as KMT personnel. They flew to Taipei in relative ease and comfort.<sup>44</sup>

The story of the Luo family suggests that, even among the hundreds of thousands who fled during the final stage of the KMT collapse, the journey to Taiwan was not necessarily a traumatic and dangerous escape. There were those who reached the island simply by accident. For example, a soldier from Guangxi Province was loading military provisions onto a naval ship in Shanghai's main wharf. Unbeknownst to others, he slipped and fell from a ladder, then tumbled down the stairs to a lower deck and hit his head on something hard. Hours later, when he came to, the ship was already at sea on its way to Taiwan.<sup>45</sup>

According to Mahlon Meyer, for one of his interviewees, going to Taiwan in 1949 was a liberating experience. Ku Chi was a nineteen-year-old bank clerk in Shanghai. He joined his adoptive father to work in a relocated government money-casting plant in Taiwan. The new job meant more money than he could ever spend and freedom from all of the nagging family problems in China. Ku ate expensive meals at Taipei's chic Western restaurants. He had a wonderful time visiting famous tourist spots in Taiwan.<sup>46</sup>

In 2008, Fan Shijie, an eighty-eight-year-old KMT customs official who was originally from Shanghai, told me that when he had taken the

<sup>44</sup> Luo Yuanyi (pseudonym), interviewed by the author, Academia Sinica, Taipei, September 8, 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Waisheng Taiwanren xiehui, *Liuli jiyi: Wufa jida de jiashu* [Diasporic memories/affections: Letters that cannot be mailed home] (Chungho: INK, 2006), 132.

<sup>46</sup> Meyer, *Remembering China*, 31–33.

journey to Taiwan six decades ago, he brought not only his wife and children, but also twenty of his subordinates and their families. The group stayed at a cozy guesthouse in Xiamen (廈門), Fujian Province, en route. Their chartered liner zipped through the security check in Keelung while other ships filled with injured soldiers and starving refugees had to wait afloat for days on end for permission to dock.<sup>47</sup> I will talk about my meeting with Fan and his wife in the next chapter.

### **The Need for Document-Based Research on the Great Exodus**

Oral history provides illuminating insights into the Chinese civil war and *waishengren*'s migration to Taiwan, as the previous section has demonstrated. That said, individual recollections are inevitably present-oriented, selective, and self-centered. Moreover, a historical interpretation that focuses too much on microlevel personal narratives risks not seeing the forest for the trees. On top of these reasons, there are ethical implications that one needs to consider when writing about a social group's history based on their traumatic testimonies given at the present time. I will take up this critical issue in the Epilogue. According to Stephen MacKinnon, historians of modern China often have trouble describing the demography of refugees in more analytically satisfying terms due to the lack of reliable numbers and sources.<sup>48</sup> While this may apply to many other cases, it certainly does not apply to *waishengren*. During the course of my research, I was able to gather reasonably accurate population data and a copious collection of historical documents that not only offered some key demographic information about the civil war exiles in Taiwan, but also shed light on the nuances of their social trauma resulting from the exodus. Furthermore, the documents that I have collected and examined over the years also uncover the social trauma/dislocation that *waishengren*'s migration created for the local *benshengren* in early postwar Taiwan. They help provide a more comprehensive picture of the great exodus, including the most basic question of all: "How many people moved from China to Taiwan?"

<sup>47</sup> Fan Shijie (pseudonym) and Jiang Mengdie (pseudonym), interviewed by the author, Tienmu, Taipei, June 20, 2008.

<sup>48</sup> MacKinnon, *Wuhan, 1938*, 45.

## A Demographic Question: How Many?

When writing about postwar Taiwan, scholars have routinely cited figures on the mainland refugees ranging from 1.5 million to two million, often without providing any reference to this information.<sup>49</sup> For Fan and Meyer, the two historians who specialize in *waishengren*, the number they offer is about two million.<sup>50</sup> In Taiwan, the most sophisticated estimate is proposed by historian Lin Tongfa based on his exhaustive study of the declassified KMT documents, and Lin's total is around 1.2 million.<sup>51</sup> In the meantime, another expert on the mainlanders, political scientist Stéphane Corcuff, has opined that anything over two million is "most likely grossly overestimated."<sup>52</sup> I argue that the number should be lower; the actual figure could fall just under one million.

My contention is based on three components. First, there was the relatively trustworthy government census in 1956 that registered a total of 640,072 "nonmilitary" civil war refugees from China (Table 1.1 and Figure 1.8). Second, there was strong evidence to suggest that the number of mainland exiles in the Nationalist military was a lot lower than the frequently cited figure of 600,000. Third, a demographer in Taiwan named Li Dongming (李棟明) produced a population study in 1969, which provided a plausible extrapolation of postwar Taiwan's "social increase" in population at just 908,500.<sup>53</sup>

The biggest problem one encounters when trying to determine the size of the great exodus is that the statistics recorded by Taiwan's customs and port services in the late 1940s and early 1950s did not reflect the real population inflow.<sup>54</sup> During the final stage of the civil war, a throng of ships and planes arrived at the island's airstrips and seaports every day. The Nationalist authorities simply could not keep track of the thousands of defeated troops and refugees flocking in from all directions. Many sneaked in undetected and undocumented. A large number of civilians

<sup>49</sup> For examples, see Linda Chao and Ramon Myers, *The First Chinese Democracy: Political Life in the Republic of China on Taiwan* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 9; Denny Roy, *Taiwan: A Political History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 76; Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo's Son: Chiang Ching-kuo and the Revolutions in China and Taiwan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 181; Phillips, *Between Assimilation*, 89; Allen, *Taipei*, 10.

<sup>50</sup> Fan, *China's Homeless Generation*, 18–19; Meyer, *Remembering China*, 8.

<sup>51</sup> Lin Tongfa, *1949 dachetui* [The great withdrawal in 1949] (Taipei: Lianjing, 2009), 323–336.

<sup>52</sup> Corcuff, *Memories of the Future*, 164.

<sup>53</sup> Li Dongming, "Guangfuhou Taiwan renkou shehui zengjia zhi tantao" [A study of the social increase of Taiwan's population after the retrocession], *Taipei wenxian* 9/10 (1969): 244.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 236–237.

who fled with the army and other mobile groups also entered with fake identities.

Despite these issues, there is one particular set of statistical data that provides fairly reliable, though partial, information on the great exodus: the 1956 census.<sup>55</sup> The 1956 census was the first comprehensive population survey on all nonmilitary citizens conducted by the displaced government in Taiwan. Beyond practical administrative needs, this massive headcount served an important purpose. With swarms of unregistered refugees entering the island, the infiltration of CCP agents was a serious security threat to the Nationalist regime in the early 1950s. On the night of September 15, 1956, people were ordered to return home and wait until dawn for census takers to come knock on their doors. Police and army units patrolled cities, towns, countryside, roads, and major transportation hubs. Anyone caught roaming about on the streets was taken into custody and checked for identity.<sup>56</sup> In total, close to 190,000 government workers, policemen, and members of the armed forces were mobilized.<sup>57</sup> The results of the survey were by no means accurate down to the last digit. Still, they were much more solid compared to other records kept by the Nationalist authorities during this time.

Thus, we are quite certain that there were approximately 640,000 “nonmilitary” civil war refugees in Taiwan. The question then becomes: “How many mainlanders were in the KMT army when the 1956 census was taken?” The answer to this question has remained unclear thus far. The Veterans Affairs Council of the ROC (國軍退除役官兵輔導委員會, VAC) was the official organization established by the KMT in 1954 to assist and manage its army retirees. According to the VAC data published in 1987, the total number of civil war exiles in the Nationalist army was 582,086; hence the frequently cited figure of 600,000.<sup>58</sup> If we add 640,072 to 582,086, the sum is 1.22 million. This number comes close to Lin Tongfa’s estimate.

Yet, there is an important reason why the 1.22 million could still be an overestimation: the troop figures recorded by the KMT military bureaucracy during the 1950s were most likely inflated. The Nationalist army units in early postwar Taiwan were plagued by high desertion rates, many

<sup>55</sup> The results of the 1956 census were later published in Taiwansheng hukou puchachu, *Zhonghuaminguo hukou pucha baogaoshu* [The census report of the ROC], Vols. 1, 2:1, 2:2.

<sup>56</sup> “Huzheng shishang kongqian chuangji taimin hukou pucha mingchen lingshi kaishi jiangyu mingchen liushi wancheng” [The unprecedented task in the history of population registry, the Taiwan Fujian population census, will begin at 12:00 am and end at 6:00 am tomorrow], *Lianhe bao*, September 15, 1956, 1.

<sup>57</sup> Taiwansheng hukou puchachu, *Zhonghuaminguo hukou*, Vol. 1, 19.

<sup>58</sup> Hu, “Yuzai yu fanshu,” 111.

of which went unreported by their commanders. This is made evident by a sizable collection of recently declassified Nationalist government documents that dealt with the “deserted soldiers and vagrants” (散兵遊民) problem at the time.<sup>59</sup> According to sociologist Lin Shengwei, the Nationalists did not begin to carry out systematic surveys in their armed forces until 1956.<sup>60</sup> Even after the surveys were conducted, the regime kept the numerical strength of its forces confidential by excluding all military personnel from the regular population census until 1969. Corcuff submits that Chiang Kai-shek puffed up the size of his standing army on paper to deter the CCP invasion, and the basis for Corcuff’s claim comes from Xia Gongquan (夏功權, 1919–2008). Xia was the Generalissimo’s aide-de-camp and strategic advisor in the early 1950s.<sup>61</sup>

In 1969, a local demographer named Li Dongming made an attempt to determine the “social increase” of Taiwan’s postwar population. Different from natural increase, which is regulated by births and deaths, social increase (and social decrease) is usually a result of migration.<sup>62</sup> Li performed a sophisticated mathematical extrapolation using the Japanese colonial records, the 1956 census, and other survey data that he knew were reasonably accurate. He concluded that Taiwan’s social increase in population from 1947 to 1965 was about 908,500.<sup>63</sup> Given that no migrant groups other than the civil war exiles from China could have contributed to this increase in the same historical period, this would be the most likely figure for the great exodus. The final tally came in at just under one million (958,500) when the 50,000 mainlanders already on the island from 1945 to 1946 were added.<sup>64</sup> Li’s calculation was done with the utmost scholarly rigor, but a mathematical extrapolation should never be simply taken as representing reality. However, on the other hand, if the calculation is considered along with other corroborating historical evidence, such as the case here, it becomes much more believable.

<sup>59</sup> For examples, see the files contained in “Jubu sanbing youmin banli shixiang” [Things that needed to be done when arresting deserted soldiers and vagrants] (October 27, 1947 December 20, 1949) NAA, A301010000C/0037/01926/0008. Also see “Taiwansheng baoan silingbu sishidian yiye zhi shieryue fen zhengsu gongzuo shishi tongjibiao [The table for the cleanup work carried out by the Garrison Command Headquarters of the Taiwan Province from January to December 1951] (January December 1951) NHD, 0040/0410.03/4032.3/2.

<sup>60</sup> Lin Shengwei, “Zhengzhi suanshu: Zhanhou Taiwan de guojia tongzhi yu renkou guanli” [Political calculus: State governance and population management in postwar Taiwan] (PhD diss., National Chengchi University, Department of Sociology, 2005), 125. I would like to thank Wang Fu chang for bringing Lin’s unpublished dissertation to my attention.

<sup>61</sup> Corcuff, *Memories of the Future*, 192–193, note 6. Xia Gongquan is also known as “Konsin Shah.”

<sup>62</sup> Li Dongming, “Guangfuhou,” 215. <sup>63</sup> Ibid., 244–245. <sup>64</sup> Ibid., 246.

### The Social Trauma of the Exodus for *Waishengren* Illustrated by Documentary Sources

The 1956 census offers illuminating details about the mainland exiles in Taiwan despite its exclusion of the Nationalist military personnel. A noticeable phenomenon was the concentration of the nonmilitary mainland population in the island's major cities. Nearly 40 percent of *waishengren* resettled in the KMT's capital, Taipei, and its surrounding area (Taipei County). Those who settled down in the other four major municipalities – Kaohsiung (高雄), Keelung, Taichung (台中), and Tainan (台南) – constituted another 25 percent of the civilian mainland population in Taiwan.<sup>65</sup> In total, 65 percent of the civilian civil war exiles resided in urban centers.

The concentration of *waishengren* in the cities was mainly due to their status as displaced, dispossessed, and socially atomized people. The cities had a great number of empty houses and facilities left by the repatriated Japanese. They were also the sites at which various public institutions, schools, and civil organizations from the mainland had relocated. Thus, for many of the mainland exiles who arrived with absolutely nothing, the major towns offered a far better chance to find housing, employment, and short-term assistance from individuals they had known back in China compared to the countryside.

Hundreds of classified ads posted in *Zhongyang ribao* and *Lianhe bao* during the late 1940s and early 1950s illustrate the social diversity of the displaced population. They are also a testament to a throng of dispossessed and atomized mainlanders trying to rebuild their shattered personal networks. In these newspaper ads, we see three main types of social organizations that sprang up in Taiwan's major cities, especially in Taipei: “alma mater societies” (同學會), “professional/trade associations” (同業公會), and “native-place associations” (同鄉會). Chapter 3 will offer a closer examination of the mainland native-place associations.

Gender imbalance is another distinctive demographic feature of Taiwan's exiled mainland population, which one can observe in the 1956 census. The male to female ratio is approximately 2:1 (see Table 1.1). If the military personnel left out of the census had been included, the ratio could have been as high as 3:1.<sup>66</sup> In the mainland age-sex pyramids constructed based on the 1956 census shown in Figure 1.5, the imbalance in sex ratio is clearly visible in the cohort groups

<sup>65</sup> Taiwansheng hukou puchachu, *Zhonghuaminguo hukou*, Vol. 2:1, 609–614.

<sup>66</sup> Li Dongming, “Jutai waishengji renkou zhi zucheng yu fenbu” [Constitution and distribution of the mainland population living in Taiwan], *Taipei wenxian* 11/12 (1970): 66.

between the ages of thirty and sixty-four. The ratio reaches approximately 4:1 in the two age groups in the forties.<sup>67</sup> The native Taiwanese age-sex pyramid in Figure 1.6 is presented as a comparison. As mentioned, the mainlander pyramid demonstrates that a considerable number of middle-aged mainlander males left their wives and female relatives behind in China. The great exodus not only separated families, but also dislodged individuals from their previous provincial ties and social relations in China. It turned many male exiles into “dispossessed and atomized persons,” whom the Generalissimo’s ousted regime could easily subdue, manipulate, and absorb. Chapter 2 will examine this aspect of mainlander history in further detail.

Perhaps the most striking evidence of *waishengren*’s displacement and social atomization is the sheer number – well into the hundreds – of “search for missing person notices” (尋人啟事) in the classified ads section of *Zhongyang ribao* during this time. With thousands of people trying to find the family members from whom they had been separated during the chaotic flight to Taiwan, there were sometimes more than a dozen of these published on any given day. The mainlanders also desperately searched for former colleagues, friends, or fellow provincials who could help them find a job or lift them out of dire circumstances. Behind each tiny ad box was a dispossessed individual and a broken family.

Another type of newspaper ad during this time asked for “adoptive parents” (徵義父母). The following are two typical postings in *Lianhe bao* in 1952:

- 1 A twenty-five-year-old male from Manchuria who was a student of a national university now works as a public servant. He came to Taiwan alone and often feels lonely. Thus, he is asking for adoptive parents regardless of provincial origin. Potential candidates should be over forty years of age, and from a decent and honest family. Individuals interested in this proposal should send letters to the following address.<sup>68</sup>
- 2 A twenty-three-year-old male from Zhejiang Province who graduated from an art college in mainland China. He is now working in a military institute, and is a trustworthy and hardworking fellow. Nevertheless, he is often beset by loneliness after work. He is thus asking for adoptive parents, regardless of provincial origin. The candidates should come from a decent and honest family. It does not matter if they are rich or poor, but they must have an interest in art and literature. Those who are interested should send a letter with pictures.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 70.    <sup>68</sup> *Lianhe bao*, July 3, 1952, 5.    <sup>69</sup> Ibid., June 30, 1952, 5.

From these rather bizarre ads, we can see that these “parent-seekers” were young, single males with government jobs. Family separation and social isolation made them want to become the adopted sons of other people. This meant giving up their own family names/ancestries, which was not a decision many Chinese people would take lightly at the time.

Such “adoptive parents” ads could also be a reaction to the Nationalist social control mechanism known as the “joint guarantee” (聯保), which was an integral part of the KMT’s White Terror in Taiwan during the 1950s. It required all military personnel and civil servants to find more than two individuals who would vouch for their identity and loyalty. People who did this for each other were often close friends, relatives, or coworkers, because the guarantors would be punished if the person they vouched for committed a crime or turned out to be a CCP spy.<sup>70</sup> The fact that many young, educated, and relatively successful mainlander men resorted to finding surrogate parents via newspaper ads illustrates the extent of social fragmentation and dislocation produced by the great exodus.

The “mainlander maid wanted” (徵外省女傭) ads are also informative. These ads were posted by individuals or families looking for domestic help. Some of them even stated the specific Chinese provinces or regions that potential applicants should hail from.<sup>71</sup> Many of the same ads ran for an extended period of time, suggesting that the demands were not met. Given the gender imbalance in the mainlander population, the lack of female *waishengren* is hardly surprising. The real significance of the mainlander maid ads is that they point to one thing: that the gender issue was intertwined with social class. There was not only a dearth of mainlander women, but also a dearth of lower-class mainlander women. This explains why so many mainlander soldiers and low-ranking civil servants had trouble finding spouses among their own provincial communities. It also points to the fact that the social trauma of the great exodus was more readily felt among lower-class male migrants.

Besides the 1956 census and the newspaper ads, the social trauma of the exodus for the civil war exiles can also be observed in other historical data:

<sup>70</sup> For “joint guarantee,” see “Juban jungong renyuan ji renmin jiansu feidie lianbao qiejie” [Implementing joint guarantees for military, officials, and people in order to purge the communist spies] (September 7, 1951) NAA, B3750347701/0040/3131355/55. I would like to thank Chang Mau kuei for pointing me to this possibility.

<sup>71</sup> For a few examples, see “Zheng laoma” [Hiring old mothers], *Zhongyang ribao*, January 17, 1950, 8; “Zhaogu nuyong” [Hiring maids], *ibid.*, February 10, 1950, 7; “Xiaojiating zhengqiu nuyong” [A small family is asking for maids], *ibid.*, February 20, 1952, 6; “Zheng xiangji nuyong” [Maids from Hunan wanted], *ibid.*, March 7, 1952, 6.

Table 1.2 *Mainlander crime rates versus total crime rates in Taiwan, 1958–1972*

| Year | Total crime rates in Taiwan | Mainlander crime rates |
|------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1958 | 28.15                       | 51.04                  |
| 1959 | 30.09                       | 56.70                  |
| 1960 | 27.03                       | 49.39                  |
| 1961 | 24.22                       | 48.96                  |
| 1962 | 24.97                       | 46.17                  |
| 1963 | 25.81                       | 41.11                  |
| 1964 | 22.99                       | 36.37                  |
| 1965 | 25.43                       | 37.02                  |
| 1966 | 25.23                       | 33.82                  |
| 1967 | 21.25                       | 27.06                  |
| 1968 | 22.86                       | 25.11                  |
| 1969 | 24.68                       | 25.35                  |
| 1970 | 23.25                       | 23.38                  |
| 1971 | 20.85                       | 20.92                  |
| 1972 | 19.94                       | 20.46                  |

Source: Taiwansheng jingwuchu ed., *Taiwansheng fanzui tongji* [Crime statistics of Taiwan Province] (Taipei: Taiwansheng jingwuchu), No. 1 (1959) No. 9 (1967); Taiwansheng jingwuchu ed., *Taiwan diqu fanzui tongji* [Crime statistics of Taiwan region] (Taipei: Taiwansheng jingwuchu), No. 10 (1968) No. 15 (1972).<sup>72</sup>

crime and suicide rates. Table 1.2 and Figure 1.9 provide a comparison between the mainlander crime rates and the overall crime rates in Taiwan from 1958 to 1972. The data for these were drawn from the records kept by the Taiwan Provincial Police Administration (臺灣省警務處). Table 1.2 lists the numbers; Figure 1.9 exhibits the trend. In Table 1.2, we see that the mainlander crime rates are roughly double the overall crime rates in Taiwan during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Nonetheless, as the trend in Figure 1.9 indicates, their rates declined steadily throughout the 1960s until there was very little difference between *waishengren* and the rest. While the mainlander crime statistics before 1958 were not available, I was able to find social data in a longer diachronic

<sup>72</sup> Crime rates are the number of recorded offenders per 10,000 in a given population. In Taiwan's police records, the mainlander offenders were recorded under the category of "other provinces." They are listed in Taiwansheng jingwuchu, *Taiwansheng fanzui tongji* No. 1 (1959): 49, No. 2 (1960): 51, No. 3 (1961) No. 8 (1966): 47, No. 9 (1967): 55, Taiwansheng jingwuchu, *Taiwan diqu fanzui tongji* No. 10 (1968) No. 15 (1972): 55. The total crime rates in Taiwan by year are drawn from the tables in *Taiwansheng fanzui tongji* No. 3 (1961): 5; *Taiwan diqu fanzui tongji* No. 12 (1970): 73, No. 15 (1972): 73.

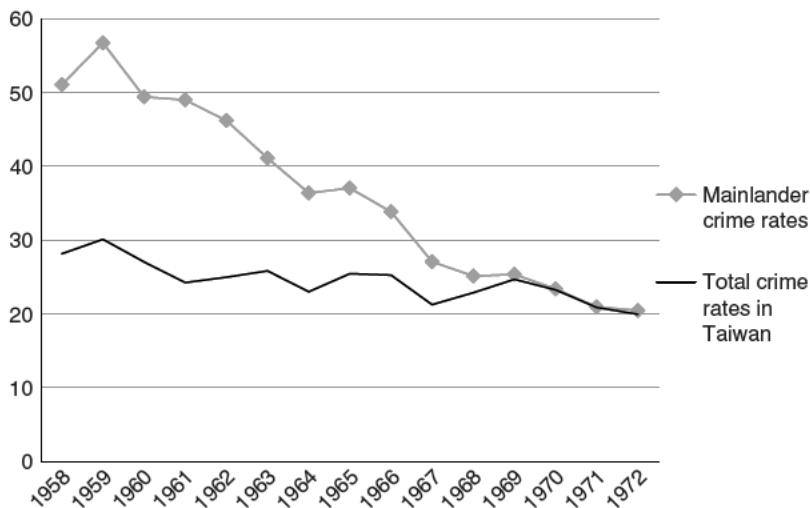


Figure 1.9 Mainlander crime rates versus total crime rates in Taiwan, 1958–1972. Source: Taiwansheng jingwuchu ed., *Taiwansheng fanzui tongji* [Crime statistics of Taiwan Province] (Taipei: Taiwansheng jingwuchu), No. 1 (1959) No. 9 (1967); Taiwansheng jingwuchu ed., *Taiwan diqu fanzui tongji* [Crime statistics of Taiwan region] (Taipei: Taiwansheng jingwuchu), No. 10 (1968) No. 15 (1972).

sequence for suicides, but for only one city. Figure 1.10 displays the suicide rates in Taipei for both the mainlander population and the native Taiwanese population from 1948 to 1973. The data was compiled by the city's police authorities. In the first half of the 1950s, the *waishengren* in Taipei had much higher suicide rates compared to the *benshengren* living in the same city. The situation improved in the late 1950s and early 1960s until there was no difference between the two populations. Both data sets presented here are limited in some ways. Historians do not always have the most comprehensive evidence needed to interpret the past. That said, one could perhaps submit that *waishengren*'s declining crime and suicide rates could be taken as signs of many "dispossessed and atomized males" gradually settling down in Taiwan.

The number of suicides in the KMT army was rumored to be a lot higher than the civilian population. The Nationalist military kidnapped a considerable number of people to Taiwan. Declassified minutes from high-level government meetings that took place in the early 1950s

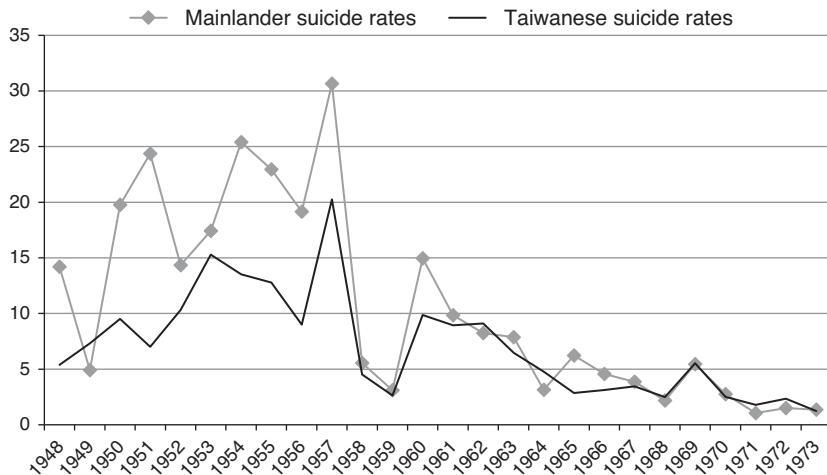


Figure 1.10 Suicide rates in Taipei City: Mainlanders versus native Taiwanese, 1948–1973. Source: *Taipei zhengfu zhujichu ed., Taipeishi tongji yaolan* [The statistical abstract of Taipei City] (Taipei: *Taipei zhengfu zhujichu*, 1960, 1965, 1970, 1974).<sup>73</sup>

described members of the Legislative Yuan (立法院)<sup>74</sup> expressing concerns about the growing number of cases of depression and suicide in the barracks.<sup>75</sup> A retired soldier reflected back on the situation:

In the first five years, everyone thought about retaking the mainland. Later on, our yearning for home grew intense. Suicides became a serious issue around 1956. When you heard gun shots in the barracks, you didn't even have to go check. Someone would tell you that so and so from certain battalion, certain company, and certain platoon had killed himself. People

<sup>73</sup> The figures for the mainlander and the native Taiwanese suicides in Taipei are culled from the tables in *Taipei zhengfu zhujichu, Taipeishi tongji yaolan* (1960): 443, (1965): 605, (1970): 417, (1974): 467. The numbers of both populations actually living in the city by year are drawn from the tables in *Taipei tongji yaolan* (1965): 57–58; (1970): 33–34, (1974): 35–36. The mainlanders are also tabulated under the category of “people from other provinces and cities.” The suicide rates are calculated as the number of suicides per 100,000 people.

<sup>74</sup> Dubbed “the parliament” (國會) in Taiwan today, the Legislative Yuan is the law making branch of the ROC government. During the 1950s, an overwhelming majority of Legislative Yuan members were representatives who had been elected in China in 1947.

<sup>75</sup> “Xingzhengyuan di 275 ci huiyi mimi baogao shixiang (yi): Lifawei yuan . . . jilu” [Items for confidential discussion in the 275th meeting of the Executive Yuan (one): Members of Legislative Yuan . . . records] (January 7, 1953) NHD, 014000013553A.

couldn't go home; they couldn't even write letters. Correspondence was considered colluding with the communist bandits! This was why many chose to end their lives.<sup>76</sup>

Before Taiwan's democratization, it was actually not uncommon for the KMT authorities to cover up the suicides of their servicemen as deaths caused by illnesses or training accidents.

The civil war and the exodus left indelible mental scars on a lot of mainland exiles, and some of these were made evident by Dr. Lin Xian's records (林憲, 1925–2016).<sup>77</sup> Born in Taiwan under the Japanese colonial rule, Lin was a native Taiwanese trained in one of the best medical schools in Japan. After the island's retrocession back to Nationalist China, he became a leading psychiatrist in postwar Taiwan and the longest serving chair of the Department of Psychiatry at National Taiwan University Hospital (NTUH).<sup>78</sup> Accumulated over several decades, the records kept by Dr. Lin and his team demonstrated that Chinese civil war exiles were overrepresented in the NTUH's mental patients throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. For example, in 1954, among the 1,428 individuals treated, 908 (64 percent) were mainlanders and 520 (36 percent) were native Taiwanese. In particular, mainland males formed a majority of the people who sought treatment for mental illnesses at the hospital. Lin attributed *waishengren*'s psychological problems to something he referred to as "the pressure produced by sudden relocation and change" (急遽遷徙變動所產生的壓力).<sup>79</sup> Interestingly, like the trends for crime and suicide rates, the percentage of mainland mental patients also decreased over time.

Some might argue that the KMT's health care system before democratization, which benefited mainly military and government personnel, could have contributed to the higher number of male mainland mental patients in the NTUH (compared to native Taiwanese patients). This idea sounds reasonable, but it cannot explain why the percentage of their cases went down over time, when the same system that gave them preferential treatment did not change much. It also cannot explain why the mainlanders were only overrepresented in psychological disorders, but not in other categories of illness documented by the NTUH.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Sun, "Waishengren de 'jia,'" 36.

<sup>77</sup> Lin Xian, "Shehui bianqian chongji xia zhi jingshenjibing" [Psychological illnesses due to the impact of social change], in *Taiwan shehui yu wenhua bianqian (xiace)* [Social and cultural change in Taiwan, Vol. 2], eds. Qu Haiyuan and Zhang Yinghua (Taipei: Zhongyangyanjiuyuan minzuxue yanjiusuo, 1986), 591–616. I would like to thank Wang Fu-chang for bringing Lin's research to my attention.

<sup>78</sup> Established by the Japanese colonial authorities in 1895, the NTUH is still the leading institute for medical research and health care in Taiwan today.

<sup>79</sup> Lin, "Shehui bianqian," 597. <sup>80</sup> Also see Lin's explanation in *ibid.*, 604.

Dr. Lin was not the only specialist to observe *waishengren*'s individual psychological trauma due to war and forced migration. One of his contemporaries and fellow psychiatrists, Dr. Li Xuchu (李旭初), was a mainlander. US-trained Li was the surgeon general of the Nationalist air force during the 1950s. In a public lecture given in 1954, Dr. Li told his audience that psychological illness was a serious threat to the well-being of many people who had recently come to Taiwan from China. He summarized what he observed clinically, and identified four major sources of depression, which were all related to the great exodus. These included feelings of anxiety and frustration due to dispossession/social downgrading, lengthy family separation, low-paying government jobs, and family/marriage problems resulting from the emotional strain of living in displacement.<sup>81</sup>

### The Social Trauma of the Exodus for *Benshengren*

The mainland exiles were not the only people displaced by the great exodus, for they did not move to an empty island. The same newspapers and archival documents that shed light on the various aspects of *waishengren*'s social dislocation also reveal another thing: the host society and its people were negatively impacted by the influx of a large number of dispossessed refugees – especially brutalized soldiers. For many ordinary *benshengren*, the home they once knew was never quite the same again after the arrival of the mainland exiles, and this constituted a form of social trauma for the local population.

Previous research on the native Taiwanese experience during the mid twentieth century has tended to focus on their travails in traumatic political events, such as the 228 Incident and the White Terror. The studies put a lot of emphasis on the semi-Japanized Taiwanese elites' struggle for identity and self-determination under the KMT dictatorship and mainland cultural dominance.<sup>82</sup> They also underscore the difficult transition from the Japanese colonial rule to the Nationalist rule for the Taiwanese who lived during this time, whom historian Zhou Wanyao has fittingly characterized as “a lost generation” (失落的世代).<sup>83</sup> Many *benshengren* felt silenced and marginalized. They felt as if they had become

<sup>81</sup> Liu Zong, “Dalu laitai renshi de ziran diren: Duofa jibing de jiantao” [The natural enemies of people who came from the mainland to Taiwan: Looking into different illnesses], *Lianhe bao*, July 5, 1954, 3.

<sup>82</sup> For examples, see Phillips, *Between Assimilation*; Chen Cuilian, *Taiwanren de dikang yu rentong (1920-1950)* [The resistance and identity of Taiwanese (1920-1950)] (Taipei: Yuanliu, 2008).

<sup>83</sup> Zhou Wanyao, *Haixing xi de niandai: Riben zhimin tongzhi moqi Taiwanshi lunji* [Marching toward the sea: Essays on Taiwan's history in the late Japanese colonial period] (Taipei: Yunchen wenhua, 2003), 12-13.

displaced people on their home soil, as their language and professional trainings were seen as inferior or even treacherous in the eyes of their new rulers from China. This was the most conspicuous form of social trauma experienced by the native Taiwanese in early post–World War II Taiwan – especially for Japanese-educated elites.

There was, however, another form of social trauma experienced by the native Taiwanese during this time: massive social disruptions caused by the civil war refugees pouring into the island's major cities and towns in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Unlike the 228 Incident and the KMT's White Terror, which are routinely commemorated and rigorously researched because of their contemporary significance as *benshengren*'s shared cultural trauma, the tremendous shock that they experienced as a result of *waishengren*'s forced migration has been largely forgotten. Lary remarks, "The social fall-out of the Civil War on Taiwan was almost as complicated as that on the Mainland, although much less violent."<sup>84</sup> The research provided in the remainder of this chapter is an attempt to delve into this complex and neglected past. It uncovers the broader social history of everyday life that contributed to the communal division between the mainlanders and native Taiwanese beyond the 228 Incident/White Terror.

The Chinese civil war displaced *waishengren*, but their forced migration displaced the people in Taiwan. This is something that the surviving civil war migrants and their Taiwan-born descendants rarely think about today when reflecting back on their own trauma of 1949. The great exodus disrupted normal social life and transformed living conditions on the island. A sizable floating male population, many of them defeated soldiers and traumatized army abductees, contributed to a rise in the frequency of robberies, rapes, and other violent crimes – crimes that terrified the native Taiwanese. The sudden arrival of hundreds of thousands of dispossessed refugees in the island's major cities also led to commodity shortages, hyperinflation, shantytowns, and the confiscation of local Taiwanese properties. Fan maintains that fifty years of Japanese colonial rule had turned Taiwan into a virtual foreign land for many *waishengren* despite the great exodus being perceived by them as an internal migration.<sup>85</sup> I would argue that the feeling was mutual on the part of the receiving population; the world they once knew was irreversibly transformed by the need to absorb and accommodate a seemingly endless stream of soldiers and refugees from China. If what happened between late 1945 and early 1947 constituted a tremendous blow for

<sup>84</sup> Lary, *China's Civil War*, 234.    <sup>85</sup> Fan, *China's Homeless Generation*, 7.

*benshengren*, the great exodus magnified and sustained that shock by tenfold or even more.

By drawing attention to the widespread social problems produced by the great exodus, especially those caused by the brutalized and displaced KMT military personnel, I highlight the contrast between *waishengren*'s present-day recollections and the historical conditions made evident by a document-based investigation. In the 1950s, unruly mainland soldiers were considered an abomination, even by fellow *waishengren*, and no one really felt sorry for them. Decades later, as we will see in Chapter 5, the same group of people would attract strong public sympathy. They would be called "old soldiers," or *laobing*, and came to represent the suffering and displacement of the entire mainlander population in Taiwan.

The vicious struggle between the KMT and the CCP in China produced a large number of routed or renegade soldiers. Some of this floating population entered Taiwan, causing a number of social problems. As early as the second half of 1947, the police and security agents on the island started rounding up what the official documents back then referred to as "deserted soldiers and vagrants" – male drifters who were found roaming the streets. The authorities repatriated many of these individuals back to the mainland.<sup>86</sup> This did not stop people from coming, though. In 1949, the year Chiang's government relocated to Taiwan, the Nationalists captured over 7,000 of these homeless vagabonds in the island's major cities. Repatriation back to China was no longer possible, so these folks were either pressed into military service or thrown into prison. Approximately 8,000 were arrested and processed in a similar fashion the following year.<sup>87</sup> In 1951, that number ballooned to over 12,000.<sup>88</sup> Describing this unsettling period, Jay Taylor writes, "The strengthened Taiwan Garrison Command remained disciplined, and in the cities summary executions of looters, including miscreant soldiers and others disturbing the public order, took place on a daily basis."<sup>89</sup>

While the initial bedlam soon calmed down, the problem of "deserted soldiers and vagrants" actually continued to plague Taiwanese society for at least a decade. Declassified government files illustrate that the Nationalists pulled thousands of male drifters off the streets every year until the early 1960s.<sup>90</sup> The Taiwan Provincial Police Administration data

<sup>86</sup> See the files contained in "Jubu sanbing youmin banli shixiang" (note 59).

<sup>87</sup> "Sanbing youmin youduoshao qunian zhuohuo qiqianren" [How many deserted soldiers and vagrants? Seven thousand individuals were rounded up last year], *Zhongyang ribao*, January 27, 1950, 4; "Taiwansheng baoansilingbu sanshiji niandu gongzuo jiantaobiaoshiwu" [The table for the work carried out by the Garrison Command Headquarters of Taiwan Province in 1950 (fifteen)] (1950) NHD, 0040/0410.03/4032.3/1.

<sup>88</sup> Lin Shengwei, "Zhengzhi suanshu," 117. <sup>89</sup> Jay Taylor, *Generalissimo*, 413.

<sup>90</sup> See the chart produced by Lin Shengwei, "Zhengzhi suanshu," 117.

displayed in Table 1.2 and Figure 1.9 shows that the overall mainlander crime rates were roughly twice as high as that of the overall Taiwanese crime rates in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In the 1950s, the exiled Legislative Yuan members, in their interpellations of the government officials, voiced their concerns about the social problems created by discharged soldiers entering the general population.<sup>91</sup> Newspapers and archival documents from the same period show various unlawful activities committed by troublemaking soldiers and violent mainlander men. These activities included capital crimes such as robberies, rapes, and public shootings, as well as less serious offenses such as squatting on local civilian properties, free riding public transportation, burglaries, embezzlement, solicitation of prostitution, loitering, and reckless driving.<sup>92</sup>

In her study of the Taiping Civil War in nineteenth-century China, Tobie Meyer-Fong asks us to consider “demobilized soldiers of all kinds who continued to trouble civilian society in the war’s aftermath.”<sup>93</sup> In Taiwan, expelled mainland soldiers had no local roots – a circumstance that turned some of them into reckless and dangerous individuals. The people in Taiwan were certainly no strangers to the cruelty of modern warfare, especially given the fact that the island had been bombed extensively by the US forces from 1944 to 1945. Over 80,000 Taiwanese and aboriginal men served in the Japanese military. Another 126,000 were employed by the army as auxiliary personnel. In total, about 30,300 died serving the Japanese emperor.<sup>94</sup> That said, the Taiwanese who grew up under Japanese rule had never met rapacious and undisciplined troops who preyed on their own people until the first batch of KMT units arrived in late 1945. The viciousness of these mainland soldiers was one of the main reasons for the Taiwanese uprising in early 1947. The great exodus brought these nightmares back, and on a much larger scale.

<sup>91</sup> “Xingzhengyuan di 275 ci.”

<sup>92</sup> Records kept by the Garrison Command Headquarters of Taiwan Province show the types and numbers of offenses committed by military personnel. For example in 1950, a total of 1,360 cases were documented. See “Taiwansheng baoansilingbu sanshijiū niandu gongzuo baogao dierzhang zhuguān yewu diyijie zhēnggōng yewu zhī tuixīng yiqí chéngxiào” [The implementation and results of the political work carried out by the Garrison Command Headquarters of Taiwan Province in the second chapter and first section of the annual work report for 1950] (1950) NHD, 0040/0410.03/4032.3/1. Newspapers covered hundreds of cases in the early 1950s. For examples, see “Jubu bei jibi qiangjianfan cengzai jishi qiangjie zhipiao” [The rapist who was shot dead while resisting arrest had robbed checks in Keelung], *Zhongyang ribao*, June 14, 1955, 5; “Kangdinglu guangzhoujie liangqi jiean … Wang Heng fufa” [Two robberies in Kangding Road and Guangzhou Street … Wang Heng was brought to justice], *Lianhe bao*, May 24, 1953, 4.

<sup>93</sup> Meyer Fong, *What Remains*, 12.    <sup>94</sup> Roy, *Taiwan*, 53.

Many of the routed or disbanded troops still carried guns and ammunition after landing in Taiwan. Some of them immediately melted into the general population, and the arms they possessed became a serious threat to public safety. Declassified Nationalist files demonstrate that the provincial police force in Taiwan made a concerted effort to seize firearms from the general public. From the middle of 1948 to late 1950, a large number of weapons were confiscated. These included pistols, rifles, machine guns, and even grenade launchers.<sup>95</sup> The confiscation campaign was quite successful, and the number of illegal guns in Taiwan dropped precipitously in two to three years. Unfortunately, this was not before many violent crimes were committed with these tools of modern warfare. In one such case, several discharged army officers and sergeants used their revolvers, knives, and grenades to rob a home in Taipei in late December 1949. The group then escaped south, to the city of Taichung, where they teamed up with another group of renegade soldiers to hold up a bus in January 1950. When the municipal authorities finally caught these desperadoes, the officials held a public execution in Taichung to appease the frightened and dismayed Taiwanese public.<sup>96</sup>

The crackdown on illegal firearms prevented a great deal of mayhem and deaths, but it did not stop disgruntled military personnel on active duty from using their army-issued weapons to commit violent crimes. The social displacement resulting from the exodus contributed to at least some of these personal tragedies. For example, in the summer of 1952, Zheng Zhenqian, a twenty-nine-year-old junior officer from Hubei Province, was executed for using his handgun to hijack and rob a commuter bus from Taipei to Peitou (北投).<sup>97</sup> The offense was committed under extenuating circumstances. Zheng desperately needed money to pay back a huge debt he had accumulated due to his illness. With no relatives or close friends to help him out in Taiwan, he made a reckless decision that resulted in his own tragic demise.<sup>98</sup> In June 1956, Ye Chaopeng, a thirty-year-old Sichuan Province native, was a second lieutenant in an artillery unit stationed in the city of Hsinchu (新竹). For unknown reasons, he snapped and went homicidal. Ye took his submachine gun to exact revenge on a local native Taiwanese family who he thought had offended and humiliated

<sup>95</sup> Files and receipts for many of these purchases and registrations can be found in “Shougou minjian qiangzhi” [Purchasing civilian guns] (July 17, 1948 December 29, 1950; July 22, 1950 September 30, 1950) NAA, A301010000C/0038/01956/0027. This portfolio contains about 2,000 cases.

<sup>96</sup> “Jiehuo qiangjie qifan qiangjue” [Seven men convicted of gang robbery and executed], *Zhongyang ribao*, February 24, 1950, 4.

<sup>97</sup> “Peitou jiechefan Zheng Zhenqian fufa” [The car hijacker in Peitou Zheng Zhenqian was executed], *Lianhe bao*, June 21, 1952, 5.

<sup>98</sup> “Xingzhengyuan di 275 ci.”

him. He planned to wipe out the entire family, but was only able to shoot and kill three (the grandfather, the daughter-in-law, and the granddaughter) before escaping into the nearby mountains. A massive manhunt involving hundreds of heavily armed police and soldiers followed. Three days later, Ye was shot and injured during a gunfight with his pursuers. The following week, the local Nationalist authorities brought Ye back to the site of the original murders. They put a bullet in the back of his head in front of the grief-stricken local people.<sup>99</sup>

Nothing upset and alarmed the local Taiwanese more than the news of male drifters or undisciplined soldiers who raped young girls in their communities. In many of these assaults, the perpetrators killed the victims in order to cover up their crimes. There were a considerable number of such reports in Taiwan's newspapers during the early 1950s.<sup>100</sup> Declassified military files offer corroborating evidence, as well as additional insights into the individual soldiers who were court-martialed and executed for these offenses.<sup>101</sup> A few of the cases became sensational and attracted a great deal of public attention. For instance, on September 12, 1951, a seventeen-year-old native Taiwanese girl named Wu Jinying was gang-raped and strangled to death in the township of Shalu (沙鹿) just outside of Taichung. Wu had gone into the forest near her house to pick the seeds of Acacia trees. When she did not return home, her family members went on a frantic search. Later that night, her older brother found Jinying's half-naked body on a trail in the forest. Her death incensed the entire city of Taichung. Three of the four men arrested for the crime were young mainlanders. One managed to fight the court and plead his innocence. The others were swiftly put to death to assuage the Taiwanese anger.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>99</sup> “Yishi chongdong zhucheng dacuo Ye Chaopeng fufa” [Ye Chaopeng was executed because of a big mistake made due to his impulse], *Lianhe bao*, July 2, 1956, 3; “Hsiangshan xiang qiangsha xuean xiongshou xianjing junmin bu luowang . . .” [The shooter in the Hsiangshan township massacre finally captured by the joint efforts of military, police, and local people . . .], *ibid.*, June 26, 1956, 3.

<sup>100</sup> For examples, see “Zuochen feidie siming yu qiangjian fan yiming fufa” [Yesterday morning four communist spies and one rapist were executed], *ibid.*, March 12, 1952, 6; “Qiangjian younu zhisi zhongbei buhuo faban” [Raping a young girl to death; (the perpetrator) was finally captured and trialed], *ibid.*, June 27, 1953, 4; “Qiangjian sharenfan bei jingcha buhuo” [A murderous rapist was captured by the police], *ibid.*, August 31, 1954, 5.

<sup>101</sup> For examples, see “Qian Shaoyun Hui Guofa qiangjian” [The rapes committed by Qian Shaoyun and Hui Guofa] (June 4, 1949 – July 30, 1949) NAA, A305550000C/0038/273.4/120; “Xi Daoqi qiangjian weisui zui shenpan qingxing” [Court proceedings of Xi Daoqi's attempted rape] (December 30, 1950) NAA, B3750347701/0039/3136011/11; “Xiang Hengshan qiangjian an” [Xiang Hengshan rape case] (March 1, 1952 – March 27, 1972) NAA, A305440000C/0041/273.4/22.

<sup>102</sup> “Shalu shaonu beisha an fuying” [A sketch of Shalu's teenage girl homicide], *Lianhe bao*, September 19, 1951, 6; “Shalu shaonu beisha an puohuo zhucongfan siming jun luowang” [Shalu township's teenage girl homicide case has been solved. Four suspects were all arrested], *ibid.*, September 24, 1951, 7.

The tragic fate of Wu Jinying was covered extensively by the island's major newspapers. The frequency of the reports on similar rapes/deaths during this time created a mass hysteria among the native Taiwanese population. For example, in late March 1953, a horrifying story began to circulate among the citizens of Tainan. A teenage girl selling sugarcane in the municipal park was said to have been dragged into a nearby air-raid shelter by five men. The men not only raped the sugarcane girl, but also took her machete and hacked her into pieces. The story caused a city-wide panic. People flocked to the scene in search of the poor girl's body parts. The city police promptly stepped in to investigate. They quickly determined that the alleged murder was a false rumor, and vowed to punish anyone who dared to circulate this kind of misinformation in the future.<sup>103</sup> Though the story was not true, I would argue that the speed in which this rumor spread, and the way people reacted, illustrates a profound sense of fear and a strong collective anxiety.

There was a plethora of stories on violent crimes, rapes, and homicides committed by single mainland men in both *Zhongyang ribao* and *Lianhe bao* during the 1950s. Some might think that newspaper reports such as these unveiled only part of the reality, and social news coverage had a tendency for tabloidism in order to boost sales. Moreover, both of the papers also provided coverage on native Taiwanese and aboriginal crimes that were no less violent or egregious compared to the ones committed by *waishengren*. Thus, anecdotal evidence from these two daily newspapers alone, though quite considerable in number, might not be sufficient to support my argument. Yet, if we consider these news reports in light of the historical social data and other archival evidence presented in the previous section, the overall picture becomes clear.

The extent of the disruptions and woes caused by the "deserted soldiers and vagrants" in early postwar Taiwan offers a new vantage point for rethinking the historical legacy of the VAC. Formed in late 1954, and headed by the Generalissimo's eldest son and later his successor, Chiang Ching-kuo, the main purpose of the VAC was to put demobilized soldiers to work on infrastructure and farmsteads in remote areas. These construction projects took many of these "troublemakers" away from Taiwan's major cities and towns, preventing them from becoming a drag on society. Decades later, the VAC developed into a large and complex organization with pension offices, farms, hospitals, retirement homes, and state-

<sup>103</sup> "Yaochuan lunjian sharen qingke hongdong quancheng nanshi jingju cha jiujing" [A rumor of gang rape and murder caused a sensation in the whole city. Tainan police launched an investigation], *ibid.*, March 27, 1953, 4.

sanctioned monopolies.<sup>104</sup> In Taiwan's contemporary politics, the VAC is seen as an outdated vestige of the Nationalist preferential treatment for retired KMT military personnel, most of whom were *waishengren*. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that the VAC was originally established out of an urgent need to mitigate the social ills produced by displaced soldiers.

Disruptive soldiers and wandering vagrants were only two among the many social problems created by the great exodus. Due to their concentration in the urban centers, *waishengren*'s forced migration put an incredible strain on the services and resources of Taiwan's major cities. In the 1950s, Taiwan was a resource-poor island with a struggling economy. The mainstay was still agriculture, despite some industrial development that had occurred while the island was under Japanese rule. From 1945 to 1949, the KMT had plundered the island's assets, industry, and produce for their failed war efforts against the CCP in China. This greatly disrupted the local economy and caused tremendous hardship among the Taiwanese, many of whom rose up against the Nationalists in early 1947. After 1949, Chiang Kai-shek directed most of the US aid and the island's meager resources toward rebuilding his ragtag army.<sup>105</sup> Little was left to provide assistance to the mainland refugees, let alone improving the welfare of the local residents. A large number of the civil war exiles arrived in Taiwan with only the clothes on their backs. This widespread dispossession, coupled with insufficient government support, turned many disadvantaged newcomers from China into impoverished squatters – whom the already struggling local residents and their municipal authorities were forced to accommodate. As Steven Phillips notes, the arrival of the mainland exiles, during a time when the island's economy and infrastructure were already in shambles, only exacerbated inflation, crime, unemployment, and housing shortages.<sup>106</sup>

Native Taiwanese politician and entrepreneur Wu Sanlian (吳三連, 1899–1988) was the mayor of Taipei from 1950 to 1954.<sup>107</sup> In early October 1952, in a public meeting hosted by *Zhongyang ribao*, Wu

<sup>104</sup> For the official history of the VAC, see Wang Yunlong ed., *Fuwu yu zunchong: Xingzhengyuan guojun tuichuyi guanbing fudao weiyuanhui wushi zhounian jinian zhuan kan* [Service and honor: A commemorative volume for the fiftieth anniversary of the VAC] (Taipei: Xingzhengyuan guojun tuichuyi guanbing fudao weiyuanhui, 2004).

<sup>105</sup> “Xingzhengyuan di 212 ci huiyi mimi taolun shixiang(yi): Xingzhengyuan sanshijunian shiyue zhi shishinian shiyue shizheng bagao an” [Items for confidential discussion in the 212nd meeting of the Legislative Yuan (1): An administrative report from October 1950 to October 1951] (November 19, 1951) NHD 014000013537A; “Xingzhengyuan di 275 ci.”

<sup>106</sup> Phillips, *Between Assimilation*, 94.

<sup>107</sup> For more on Wu's life and career, see Wu Sanlian and Wu Lishan, *Wu Sanlian huiyilu* [The memoir of Wu Sanlian] (Taipei: Zili wanbao, 1991).

addressed Taipei residents' growing concern about the deteriorating living conditions in the city since he had become mayor. Among the pressing issues discussed was the rapidly declining quality of sanitary and other public services. The Taiwanese mayor talked candidly about the difficulty of managing a city that had its population more than doubled in just a few years.<sup>108</sup> As mentioned, close to 40 percent of the nonmilitary *waishengren* population settled in Taipei and its surrounding area. In total, 65 percent of them chose to live in the island's main cities during this time. Thus, it was not only the size of the migrant population, but also their concentration that produced all of the problems and shortages. In Taipei, there were simply not enough houses, clinics, and schools to accommodate this sudden incursion of people. Public transportation, water supply, sewage, waste disposal, and other vital services became overextended. The traffic in the city was nightmarish. Streets were littered with garbage; ditches were filled with fetid human waste.<sup>109</sup> For *benshengren* who were used to the orderliness and cleanliness of the Japanese municipal administration, Taipei was turning into a city that they could no longer recognize.

According to the mayor, the need to deal constantly with the social problems created by the influx of soldiers and refugees from China drained the resources of his administration and much of his energy. Decades later, Wu revisited the situation in his memoir:

A large number of troops withdrew to Taiwan suddenly, so we put them in elementary school classrooms. With units after units of soldiers moving in, students had to be divided into two or even three different groups for their classes. This greatly affected the progress and quality of teaching. When to billet the troops and when to pull them out became an important task during my four and a half year tenure as mayor.

Billeting soldiers was relatively easy compared to settling refugees from the mainland. In order to survive, the refugees sought places to live. If they took over empty government facilities, there were fewer problems. If the local civilian properties were occupied, disputes would arise. Many refugees erected dwellings on empty lots they happened to come across. These "illegal constructions" (違章建築) troubled Taipei's city administration for decades to come.<sup>110</sup>

The Taiwanese mayor wrestled with problems that could not be resolved in a short span of time due to the insufficient resources at his disposal and

<sup>108</sup> Wu Sanlian, "Beishi renkou jizeng shizheng jihua kunnan" [Rapid population growth in Taipei has made city administration and planning difficult], *Zhongyang ribao*, October 4, 1952, 3.

<sup>109</sup> Cai Ce, "Bensi de huanjing weisheng" [The environment and sanitation of our city], *Zhongyang ribao*, June 5, 1950, 4; "Women dui shizheng dangju de qiwang" [Our expectations for the municipal authorities], *ibid.*, October 4, 1952, 2.

<sup>110</sup> Wu and Wu, *Wu Sanlian*, 133.

the sheer magnitude of the situation. Years later in early 1957, an editorial in *Lianhe bao* reported that some of the army units were still stationed in public schools.<sup>111</sup>

Housing shortages gave rise to quarrels and litigations, which the mayor had mentioned. In these disputes, the native Taiwanese proprietors and some mainland refugees who lacked political connections often got the short end of the stick. Before 1947, the KMT's confiscation of former Japanese properties purchased or jointly owned by *benshengren* had fueled the Taiwanese anger and resentment in the 228 Incident.<sup>112</sup> When the human tsunami of the great exodus flooded the island, the scramble for Japanese real estate escalated into outright appropriations and forced evictions. Things got ugly when displaced government institutions, military bureaus, and individual officials forced unlucky native Taiwanese owners to surrender their legally obtained Japanese properties, and sometimes even their own homes and/or ancestral properties.<sup>113</sup> In short, displaced people from China with political clout forcibly displaced local people in Taiwan with little clout.

Official corruption made the situation even worse.<sup>114</sup> Recognizing the enormity of the problem, the exiled government announced plans to construct affordable housing for the common folks who lived in cities.<sup>115</sup> However, lack of money and wartime expediency meant that most of these schemes remained on the drawing board. The KMT did not begin to build new *juancun* or "military families' villages" until the second half of the 1950s. There was still a small number of new housing projects being built in the early 1950s. Unfortunately, these units were anything but affordable.<sup>116</sup> In 1956, an article in *Lianhe bao* disclosed that most of the 700 new owners of the state-sponsored "public housing" were high-ranking Nationalist officials. Some of

<sup>111</sup> "Guoxiao zhujun wenti jidai jiejue" [The problem of billeting soldiers in public schools needs to be resolved immediately], *Lianhe bao*, March 28, 1957, 1.

<sup>112</sup> Chen Liangzhou, "Zhanhou jinzhiri chan zhuanyi riqi zhengyi chutan" [A preliminary investigation into the dispute on the date for banning Japanese property transfer in the early postwar period], *Taiwan fengtou* 51:3 (2001): 73–90.

<sup>113</sup> Ou Suying, "Taiwansheng canyhui dui richan jiufen zhi tiaochu (1946–1951)" [The mediation of the Taiwan Provincial Assembly regarding the disputed Japanese properties, 1946–1951], *Taiwanxue yanjiu* 18 (2015): 128–142.

<sup>114</sup> Tong Shizhang, "Shenghuo xiaopin (si): Huyu zhuyi" [A short skit on life: *Huyu* ism], *Lianhe bao*, February 26, 1957, 6.

<sup>115</sup> For example, see "Shifu nixiang taiyin daikuan jianzhu pingmin zhuzhai" [The city government plans to secure a loan from the Bank of Taiwan to construct housing for the regular folks], *Zhongyang ribao*, May 9, 1951, 4.

<sup>116</sup> "Pingmin zhuzhai taigui" [Public housing is too expensive], *Zhongyang ribao*, October 2, 1952, 3.

them already owned several pieces of properties in Taiwan prior to their new purchases.<sup>117</sup>

For many mainland refugees who came to Taiwan with virtually nothing and lacked any sort of connections, squatting became the only option.<sup>118</sup> As a result, the “illegal constructions,” which formed into various “shantytowns,” became a long-term problem and the “cancers” of Taiwan’s major cities – especially Taipei.<sup>119</sup> These neighborhoods were fire hazards, crime hot spots, and the government sanitary inspectors’ worst nightmare. In 1961, a state-sponsored study of the slums in Taipei indicated that about 25 percent of the city’s destitute population were *waishengren*.<sup>120</sup> The same study also suggested that the indigent mainlanders remained the poorest in the city – even after more than a decade since their arrival.<sup>121</sup>

A majority of the people living in the shantytowns or “illegal constructions” in Taiwan’s early postwar cities were either expelled refugees from China or recent migrants from the island’s impoverished countryside. Therefore, it was hard for the municipal authorities to enforce the law and raze these unauthorized dwellings, because such a policy would produce mass dislocation and exacerbate the already existing social problems. In August 1950, the US ambassador to the ROC, Karl Rankin, arrived in Taipei to find half of his embassy grounds occupied by illegal squatters. Despite their political influence with the KMT regime, it took the Americans two years to evict these people.<sup>122</sup> In early 1952, Chiang Kai-shek traveled to the city of Pingtung (屏東) in southwest Taiwan to inspect the troops stationed there. To impress the Generalissimo, the municipal authorities forced the mainland refugees living on both sides of the city’s main road to tear down their small huts. The action led to a

<sup>117</sup> “Bubi qianxu” [There is no need for modesty], *Lianhe bao*, March 17, 1956, 3.

<sup>118</sup> Declassified government files contain a considerable number of cases dealing with unauthorized squatting on public lands and facilities during this time. See “Kongjun Jia Yulong and Nian Dingtong deng zhanyong Hsinchu zhan ludi an” [The case of air force personnel Jia Yulong and Nian Dingtong occupying the land alongside Hsinchu Station] (June 17, 1953 – January 14, 1954) NAA, A315180000M/0042/034.036/002; “Chiayi changfang di jiufen” [Dispute on factory land in Chiayi] (January 7, 1961 December 16, 1961), NAA, A313460000K/0050/5125/4; “Yang Mingqing zhanyong Nanhua zhan di an” [The case of Yang Mingqing squatting on the land near Nanhua Station] (n.d.) NAA, A315180000M/0050/992/001/1/001.

<sup>119</sup> “Weizhang jianzhu wenti xingcheng dushi zhiliu” [The problem of illegal constructions has become the cancers of cities], *Lianhe bao*, March 6, 1956, 5.

<sup>120</sup> Wang Weilin, *Taipeishi pinminqu zhi diaocha yu fenxi* [A survey and analysis of the slums in Taipei City] (Taipei: Shengli zhongxing daxue fashang xueyuan shehuixuexi, 1962), 45–46.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>122</sup> Karl L. Rankin, *China Assignment* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), 47–48.

public outcry in Pingtung, so much so that Chiang later received a confidential report on this unhappy incident.<sup>123</sup> The clearing of shantytowns along Roosevelt Road and Chunghua Road were two famous cases of state-mandated demolition and forced relocation involving thousands of people in Taipei during the 1950s. These projects took years to complete due to repeated protests from the tenants.<sup>124</sup>

### The Great Exodus: Memory and History

The outpouring of great exodus memories in contemporary Taiwan has provided fresh evidence for historians to reconsider the existing interpretations of the Chinese civil war. These vivid personal recollections, born out of real lived experiences and real war trauma, fundamentally challenge the official histories of the war presented by both the KMT and the CCP. They also demonstrate the need to reflect critically upon Western historiography's obsession with finding out the reasons for the Chinese Communist victory and the Nationalist defeat. As previously argued, this obsession had its origin in the "loss of China" controversy in the United States during the early 1950s.

Memory is an important primary source for historical investigation. Yet, it can neither replace history nor can it be considered the same as history. In *waishengren*'s current social memory production, very little is said about the negative effects of their forced migration on the local people and society. The native Taiwanese, who were on the receiving end of the tremendous social dislocation brought by *waishengren*'s forced migration, have also said very little about this entire experience thus far. Instead, *benshengren*'s main cultural trauma nowadays revolves around the political victimization associated with the 228 Incident and the White Terror. This interesting discrepancy illustrates the selectivity of all

<sup>123</sup> “Tai(41)gai mishi zi di 0078 hao Zhang Qiyun Tang Zong cheng” [Tai(41) revised secret room word number 0078 presented by Zhang Qiyun and Tang Zong] (February 18, 1952) KA, *Zongcai piqian* 41/0064.

<sup>124</sup> See “Luosifulu weizhangjianzhu sanyuedi qian zidong chaichu” [The illegal constructions on Roosevelt Road must be dismantled automatically by the end of March], *Zhongyang ribao*, January 19, 1950, 4; “Guiqiu jiuming!” [Kneeling and begging for our lives!], ibid., February 19, 1951, 1; Hsu Hsueh chi and Zeng Jinlan, *Ke Taishan xiansheng fangwen jilu* [The reminiscences of Mr. Ke Taishan] (Taipei: Zhongyangyuanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo, 1997), 103 106; “Chunghualu tielu ce pen ghu shengfu chongling xianqi chaichu” [The provincial government again ordered the shantytown on the side of Chunghua Road railroad tracks to be razed], *Lianhe bao*, December 21, 1956, 3; “Chunghualu weijian fangwu zhengjian Chunghua shangchang an” [The case of reconstructing illegal houses on Chunghua Road into Chunghua Mall] (n.d.) NAA, A315180000M/0050/933/007/1/001.

mnemonic practices. It offers a caveat to those who see memory and history both as “social constructions” – as not too different from each other.

In this chapter, I call attention to the need for document-based historical research to put contemporary social memory in perspective, especially traumatic and diasporic recollections, which could generate affect, group identities, and divisive ethnic politics. The next chapter will reveal that, during *waishengren*'s first decade in Taiwan, the great exodus was really not all that important as a subject of daily reflections or discussions. At the time, most of the civil war exiles thought that they would soon return to China. As reluctant sojourners living in a war that had not yet ended, another kind of shared memory occupied their minds.

## 2 Wartime Sojourning

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*One, two, three, coming to Taiwan  
There's an Ali Mountain in Taiwan  
On the Ali Mountain lies a divine tree  
Next year we will surely return to the mainland across the sea*

Lyrics of a popular jingle, early 1950s, origin unknown

There is no doubt that, during the past ten years, our compatriots from the mainland had kept the hope of returning home alive, counting on the authorities' promise. Yet since the Sino American Joint Communiqué, when the government announced publically not to take the mainland by force, this glimmer of hope was gone!

Yu Wuyuan, "Taipeixing" [Journey to Taipei], *Ziyou Zhongguo*

### **Wartime Sojourning, Wartime Memory**

On the morning of June 20, 2008, I sat down in an elegantly decorated apartment to interview eighty-eight-year-old retired Nationalist customs official Fan Shijie and his ninety-one-year-old wife Jiang Mengdie about their relocation from Shanghai to Taipei in 1949. The couple's deluxe apartment was located in Tienmu (天母), a cozy and affluent enclave in Taipei populated by former officials, social celebrities, and wealthy citizens. Before the end of the formal diplomatic relations between Taiwan and the United States in 1979, Tienmu was home to many US embassy staff, Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG)/Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) personnel, and their families. Notwithstanding the pleasant surroundings and a rather warm introduction by the couple's granddaughter – a former university classmate of mine who helped to arrange the meeting – the mood in the room quickly soured.

The husband, Fan Shijie, an urbane and affable old gentleman, became visibly upset with how I framed my questions, in particular about my description of his move across the Taiwan Strait as a case of "exile" (流亡). The former official insisted that he had government orders to evacuate to Taiwan. "We are not your typical refugees," said Mr. Fan,

raising his voice.<sup>1</sup> It was at this point he told me about how he was able to arrange for his family, together with about twenty subordinates of his and their dependents, to sail on a chartered steamer from Shanghai via Xiamen to Keelung in great comfort, with full amenities provided. Knowing full well that had he, his wife, and his children remained in Shanghai, they would probably not have survived Mao's China, Mr. Fan was still adamant about his 1949 relocation being a "migration" (遷徙), not an involuntary exile. After making this point, he stood up, walked directly into his study, and shut the door – *bam!* A long and awkward silence followed among us three people who were left sitting uncomfortably in the apartment's living room. This was the very beginning of my decade-long intellectual journey into *waishengren*'s history and only my third interview. I did not know how to react. Naturally, I felt terribly sorry and embarrassed. I looked toward my former classmate. She smiled, winked, and nodded gently at me, telling me that it was okay to stay and continue. She calmed me down.

It occurred to me back then that I had just witnessed firsthand the lingering effects of the trauma of 1949. For a senior KMT official such as Mr. Fan, his government's collapse in China was a painful and humiliating event that negated the entire life's work that he and people like him had undertaken in an effort to modernize and remake China. Later on, when I learned more about the social stigma many elderly mainlanders faced in democratized Taiwan, I realized his reaction could also have been linked to more recent events.

Mr. Fan did not kick me out of his apartment. He was a doting grandfather to a loving granddaughter, who had brought a good friend home from Canada. Besides, his wife apparently still wanted to continue the conversation. Fan's early exit turned out to be a blessing in disguise. The reticent wife, Jiang Mengdie, finally got a chance to talk – and talk she did. As I watched this timorous old lady suddenly come alive in the absence of her husband, I could not help but think about Zhao Yanning's (Antonia Chao) and Urvashi Butalia's works. Zhao did interviews on the "mentally unstable" mainland housewives in Taiwan and Butalia on the rape victims during the Partition of India.<sup>2</sup> Both found women's voices constantly muffled, distorted, or hijacked by their male relatives.

I learned something important from Mrs. Fan that day, something that became the main subject of this chapter. When I asked casually whether she knew any fellow Shanghai citizens opening grocery stores or hair

<sup>1</sup> Fan Shijie and Jiang Mengdie, interviewed by the author.

<sup>2</sup> Zhao, "Daizhe caomao," 61–67; Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).

salons after settling in Taipei in 1949, she stopped talking and paused for a moment. Then this frail and senescent woman suddenly lunged forward from her reclining sofa – her arched back suddenly straightened and her blurry eyes now opened wide. Looking me straight in the eye, she exclaimed: “We never thought we would stay. We were going to go back! We were going to go back!”<sup>3</sup> Taken aback by her sudden outburst, I nonetheless knew the sentiment she was communicating was significant.

After this meeting, I started asking my other interviewees to reflect on this point. I began to read published oral history accounts by *waishengren* with a different focus. Then, I learned of the jingle “One, Two, Three, Coming to Taiwan” from Chang Mau-kuei, one of the pioneering scholars of mainland studies in Taiwan and my coauthor for the review article mentioned in the Introduction.<sup>4</sup>

The standard narrative offered by the elderly first-generation mainlanders still alive today is that when they first came to Taiwan, most believed in a promise made by the Nationalist dictator Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. The promise was encapsulated in his regime’s famous slogan: “retaking the mainland” (反攻大陸). More specifically, the official motto was “making preparations in the first year, counterattack in the second year, mopping-up operation in the third year, mission accomplished in five years” (一年準備、二年反攻、三年掃蕩、五年成功). Most of the civil war exiles thus thought their stay on the island would only be temporary. This is later referred to by people in Taiwan as “sojourner mentality” (過客心態), or as Stéphane Corcuff puts it, “guest mentality.”<sup>5</sup> Such mentality led to first-generation *waishengren*’s delayed marriage and parenthood. The idea of an impermanent stopover also influenced economic decisions. People had refrained from purchasing a permanent home or investing in local businesses when they first arrived.

The story sounded reasonable at first, but as I began to think deeper, something just did not feel right. Senior *waishengren*’s shared recollections on the main reason for their sojourner mentality really puzzled me. Why would the mainland exiles in 1950s Taiwan believe Chiang Kai-shek? Why did they have so much blind faith in a political leader who had just made arguably the biggest blunder in modern Chinese history, losing the entire mainland to the CCP despite all the advantages his regime and army possessed, including US assistance? What really made *waishengren* think they could go home at the beginning of their stay in Taiwan? How did this sojourner mentality shape their relationships with the exiled

<sup>3</sup> Fan Shijie and Jiang Mengdie, interviewed by the author.

<sup>4</sup> D. Yang and Chang, “Understanding the Nuances.”

<sup>5</sup> Corcuff, *Memories of the Future*, 166.

regime and the semi-Japanized native Taiwanese? When did people begin to realize their temporary sojourn could become permanent? *Waishengren's* testimonies given at the present time offer no satisfactory answers to these questions.

This chapter explores the historicity of *waishengren's* sojourner mentality. It draws supporting evidence from two important magazines published in Taiwan during the 1950s – travel journal *Changliu* (暢流, “Free Flow”) and political journal *Ziyou Zhongguo* (自由中國, “Free China”). Evidence is also culled from newspapers *Zhongyang ribao* and *Lianhe bao*, as well as archival documents and the recently declassified White Terror cases in Taiwan. I make three interrelated arguments based on these historical sources. First, the prevailing sense of impermanency among the Chinese civil war exiles in 1950s Taiwan was a product of living in the *longue durée* of warfare and displacement that straddled both sides of the Taiwan Strait. The idea of sojourning was not new to many Chinese living during this time. For those who had left home in search of greener pastures in Southeast Asia or chasing Gold Mountain dreams in the Americas, return was always the perceived goal, though it was not always realized. Different from the Chinese overseas, the mental world of the mainlanders in Taiwan was profoundly conditioned by war-related displacement. The psychological pressure of war created anxiety, uncertainty, wishful thinking, and a *carpe diem* attitude in some people. Without knowing what the future held, people tried to make sense of an unsettling situation by looking back on similar experiences in the past. This was, in fact, how *waishengren* dealt with the social trauma of the exodus. In early postwar Taiwan, exiled mainland writers and intellectuals, when trying to make sense of their circumstances, reflected constantly and habitually on their refugee experiences in China during the Japanese invasion. A great number of these texts can be found in *Changliu* magazine and many other concurrent publications. These documentary sources illuminate a particular kind of social memory production that contributed to the salience of a mnemonic regime among the mainlanders in Taiwan during the 1950s – something I describe as “wartime sojourning.” Understanding how this wartime sojourning came about requires contemporary historians to see through the Generalissimo’s broken promise, which was essentially part of the official KMT propaganda. It also requires scholars to see beyond the current historiographical boundaries separating the Resistance War, the Chinese civil war, and the Cold War, which are drawn based on political events and regime change. I borrow the term “*longue durée*” from the historiography of the French *Annales* school to underscore this point.

Second, I argue that this mentality, born of wartime displacement, was an important contributing factor to the historical formation of the bond between the mainlanders and the KMT, as well as the continued alienation between *waishengren* and the island's majority population, the native Taiwanese (*benshengren*). As we have seen in the previous chapter, the great exodus separated families. It dispersed communities, severed social networks, and turned many civil war exiles in Taiwan into "dispossessed and atomized persons" – individuals that the displaced party-state could easily incorporate or suppress. Living through the Japanese invasion in China had deepened *waishengren*'s Sinocentric prejudice and condescending attitude toward the semi-Japanized native Taiwanese. Combined with their sojourner mentality, it widened the gulf between the newcomers from China and the local residents. I propose the ideas of "unholy alliance" and "coachable compatriots" to demonstrate the intricacy of these historical developments.

Third, I contend that the Sino-American Joint Communiqué announced following the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958 signaled the beginning of the end for *waishengren*'s wartime sojourning. Initially, many mainlanders thought they could eventually return home, as had happened in the previous war against Japan. This was why the refugee memories of the Resistance War held such a special meaning for the civil war exiles when they first landed in Taiwan. Nevertheless, as time went by, people grew increasingly skeptical of both the resolve and the ability of the Nationalist regime to carry out its self-professed historical mission of returning to the mainland. When Chiang Kai-shek's US backers forced the extremely reluctant Generalissimo to make a public statement in 1958 renouncing the use of military force to reconquer the mainland, many of the exiles started to contemplate on the possibility that their temporary stay could become permanent. Chiang's proclamation thus constituted an important watershed moment in *waishengren*'s history of displacement and memory production. When more and more mainlanders began to think that homecoming was impossible in their lifetimes, they started to produce another kind of social memory to cope with that shattering and demoralizing reality.

### **Sojourning across 1949: The Longue Durée of War and Displacement**

In October 1950, the US ambassador to the recently displaced ROC, Karl Rankin, observed in an early dispatch from his new post in Taipei to Washington DC that many Chinese refugees in Taiwan firmly believed

the new communist regime in China would become unstable in due course.<sup>6</sup> Rankin wrote:

They refuse to accept the possibility of communist success in imposing definitively the Lenin Stalin pattern of state and life upon the Chinese people. They foresee a partial collapse of the communists within the next few years, followed by chaotic conditions which would require the use of the armed forces now on Formosa to help restore order on the mainland. Whether the present Nationalist government would preside on that occasion, or some successor, may well prove to be a detail which will have solved itself by that time.<sup>7</sup>

Rankin was a staunch anti-communist. He had a lot more sympathy for Chiang Kai-shek's defeated regime than many of his cautious superiors back in Washington. His bleak view on the survivability of the KMT was illustrative of the many uncertainties during this time. To paraphrase Dean Acheson, Rankin's superior at the State Department, the "dust" of the Chinese civil war had not yet "settled." The conditional support and limited engagement the United States had for Chiang's "Free China" would later develop into a well-known US policy for the Taiwan Strait: "strategic ambiguity."<sup>8</sup>

In 1950, sitting in his old and rickety embassy building in Taipei, surrounded by haggard and dispossessed squatters from the mainland, Rankin envisioned World War III in the form of an aggressive imperialist expansion launched by the Soviet bloc. He maintained that strong US support for the anti-communist exiles in Taiwan and other parts of the world would serve as an effective deterrent to that eventuality. Toward the end of the dispatch, to strengthen his argument, the ambassador asked rhetorically, "There will be a return to the mainland in any event. The questions are simply: When, and whose mainland?"<sup>9</sup>

Rankin's view was heavily tinged by the Containment strategy that dominated US geopolitical thinking during the early Cold War period. Even so, what he wrote did shed light on a certain kind of thinking among the recently arrived mainland exiles in Taiwan. The thinking was that a final KMT–CCP showdown in the Taiwan Strait was looming on the horizon. The Chinese civil war was far from over.

For the people living in 1950s Taiwan, the specter of a traumatic war was never too far away. The Generalissimo's displaced regime spent over

<sup>6</sup> Rankin was in charge of the US diplomatic mission in Taipei from August 1950. He was formally named the US ambassador to the ROC in 1953 and served until 1957.

<sup>7</sup> Rankin, *China Assignment*, 61–62.

<sup>8</sup> For a good historical survey and contemporary implications of the policy, see Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, *Strait Talk: United States Taiwan Relations and the Crisis with China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> Rankin, *China Assignment*, 64.

80 percent of its budget on rebuilding the ragtag Nationalist army and shoring up the island's defensive apparatus. In government meetings and assemblies, military issues were the first items to be discussed and military concerns superseded all other concerns.<sup>10</sup> Following the outbreak of the Korean War in late June 1950, US President Harry S. Truman ordered the Seventh Fleet to patrol and "neutralize" the Taiwan Strait. The resumption of US aid rescued the Nationalists from the abyss of defeat and abandonment in 1949. Still, the KMT leaders knew their position was far from secure. While their propaganda machine harped on retaking the mainland and destroying the Chinese Communists, on the ground, the Nationalist authorities mobilized the general population to prepare for an invasion from China. Archival documents and newspaper reports from the early 1950s recorded these feverish preparations. The exiled state moved hundreds of thousands of civilians into action. Air and gas attack drills, militia trainings, and air-raid shelter diggings became part of everyday life.<sup>11</sup> Hastiness, lack of planning, scarcity of resources, and, perhaps, passive resistance on the part of local population led to hurriedly built structures that were often poor in quality.<sup>12</sup> The thousands of air-raid shelters dug during this time became dilapidated sites where people committed crimes, had secret liaisons, dumped garbage, and abandoned unwanted babies.<sup>13</sup> A CCP-led invasion or an air strike on Taiwan never did happen, even though real battles were being fought over the offshore islands during the two Taiwan Strait Crises (1954–1955, 1958). The remnants of these shelters and ditches are nonetheless still physically visible in different parts of Taiwan today. They stand testament to the extent of the KMT's mobilization for a war that never came.

The psychological strain of living in a wartime environment created polar extremes. It produced actions as well as inertia; exhilaration as well as despair; boredom as well as bouts of anxiety. When a large number of

<sup>10</sup> For examples, see "Xingzhengyuan di 212 ci"; "Xingzhengyuan di 275 ci."

<sup>11</sup> From 1950 to 1951, approximately 800,000 civilians received military training. They were organized into eighteen units of self defense corps. See "Xingzhengyuan di 212 ci." For air raid drills and civilian mobilization, see "Quansheng zuo fa jingbao juxing fangkong yanxi" [A provincial wide alarm was sounded yesterday to hold an air raid drill], *Zhongyang ribao*, May 23, 1953, 3; "Nanshi jingju fadong minzhong jue fangkon ghaao wuwan gongchi" [The Tainan police mobilized people to dig 50,000 meters of air raid ditches], *Lianhe bao*, October 26, 1951, 5. Also see "Fangkongjie youguan ziliao" [Files regarding the Air Defense Day] (November 1955) KA 558/263.

<sup>12</sup> You Gui, "Tan fangkongdong" [Talking about air raid shelters], *Changliu* 3:6 (1951): 28; "Juti de fangkong gongzuo" [Concrete work on air defense], *Zhongyang ribao*, June 27, 1953, 2.

<sup>13</sup> "Shi gonggong fangkongdong yicheng cesuo huo youhui changsuo" [The air raid shelters in the city have become public bathrooms or places for lovers to meet secretly], *Zhongyang ribao*, July 9, 1952, 3; "Fangkongdong qiyng huoren shouyang" [Someone has adopted the abandoned baby in the air raid shelter], *ibid.*, January 15, 1956, 3.

restless men thought there could be no tomorrow, many found ways to escape reality by indulging in whoring, drinking, gambling, and other vices. Foreign journalists visiting Taipei during this time made frequent comments on the hedonism and the general carefree mood of the city; comments that embarrassed the Nationalist authorities.<sup>14</sup> The government tried repeatedly to promote its ideal version of the ascetic “wartime living” (戰時生活), but their words fell on deaf ears. Some small businesses prospered, such as winehouses, tearooms, coffee shops, and public canteens, in part because they offered prostitution on the side. This thriving pleasure industry was driven by both the intense warlike atmosphere and the influx of a huge throng of atomized single males, as discussed in the previous chapter.<sup>15</sup> In an article published in *Ziyou Zhongguo* in 1950, a mainlander intellectual described the attitude of his fellow compatriots in Taiwan facing the prospect of a destructive war as “numbness” (麻木).<sup>16</sup>

Fearing a catastrophic breakdown in morale, the Nationalist state employed an army of displaced mainlander writers to bombard the general public and their troops with a heavy dose of anti-communist propaganda. This propaganda was disseminated through newspapers, radio programs, stage plays, motion pictures, and roadside billboards. The state’s message extolled the virtue of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek’s crusade against the Chinese Communist tyranny. It reiterated again and again the certitude of his party’s eventual return to China. The front pages of major newspapers such as *Zhongyang ribao* and *Lianhe bao* were filled with information like the uplifting news of the CCP retreats in Korea and the daring raids on southeast and southwest China by the brave Nationalist guerrilla forces. Stories, essays, poems, songs, comic strips, and other art forms condemning and mocking the Chinese Communists, or voicing a strong desire to fight back home, dotted the “literary supplement” (副刊) sections of newspapers, and the pages of countless books and magazines in print during this time.<sup>17</sup> The first half of the 1950s in Taiwan came to be known as the heyday of the state-sponsored

<sup>14</sup> “Jiuzheng shechi xingwei dadao haochi laanzuo” [Correct extravagant behavior; strike down gluttony and laziness], *ibid.*, March 7, 1952, 1.

<sup>15</sup> “Yiyuan ru chashi bingfang chong wuting” [Hospital like teahouse; sickroom like dance hall], *ibid.*, January 11, 1950, 8; “Xiaochu shemi lixing jieyue” [Eliminate extravagance and strictly implement saving], *Ziyou Zhongguo* 3:1 (1950): 4; Luo Xia, “Xianhua ‘sha long’” [Talking about “saloons”], *Changliu* 3:9 (1951): 26.

<sup>16</sup> Hao Ran, “Women xiwang like gaishan de san jian shi: Taipei tongxun” [Three things we hope that can be improved immediately: Dispatch from Taipei], *Ziyou Zhongguo*, 3:1 (1950): 30.

<sup>17</sup> According to a conservative estimate, 1,500 to 2,000 writers in 1950s Taiwan produced roughly 70 million words in novels alone. A majority of these were anti communist works. Wang Dewei (David Der wei Wang), *Ruhe xiandai, zenyang wenxue?: Shijiu ershi shiji zhongwen xiaoshuo xinlun* [The making of the modern, the making of a literature:

“anti-communist literature” (反共文學). Responding to the government’s call, many mainland writers and intellectuals devoted the bulk of their time and energy to producing “literature and art for war” (戰鬥文藝), which Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang rightly characterizes as a “collectivist paradigm” of wartime literary production that can be traced back to the earlier situation in China during the Resistance War.<sup>18</sup>

Literary scholars such as Chang hold different opinions on the legacy and the values of the writings produced during this era of intense official propaganda, a point on which I will elaborate in Chapter 5. An emerging view among them is that, despite the KMT’s strong influence and its censorship, literary texts published in Taiwan during the 1950s were by no means monotonous state propaganda. On the contrary, they were surprisingly rich in content and diverse in genre. They also revealed certain historical conditions.<sup>19</sup>

Like my colleagues in literature, I recognize the value of the writings produced in 1950s Taiwan as historical evidence, but the kind of texts that captured my attention differed when I conducted archival work. While most literary scholars have concentrated on analyzing fictional and semifictional writings, such as novels, poems, or translated works from the Western literature, my research focused on nonfiction writings: travelogues, prosaic essays, and self-reflective pieces on daily occurrences. One noticeable subject that kept appearing in these texts was the connection between *waishengren*’s earlier refugee experiences during the Resistance War in China and their present circumstances of living in exile in Taiwan.

Some of these nonfiction writings were published in the literary supplement sections of *Zhongyang ribao* and *Lianhe bao*. For example, Ai Wen (艾雯, 1923–2009), a female writer born in Suzhou (蘇州) recalled her sojourn in the tranquil and hilly backwaters of southwest Jiangxi Province during the Resistance War. The experience, according to Ai, taught her fortitude and patience in waiting for things to change.<sup>20</sup> In May 1952, Wang Hanzhuo (王漢倬), an official from Manchuria, returned by train from Taipei City to Yilan County (宜蘭縣) in northeast Taiwan, where he worked and resided. Wang missed his stop and ended up reaching the terminal station, the port city of Su’ao (蘇澳). He took the opportunity to

New perspectives on nineteenth and twentieth century Chinese fiction] (Taipei: Maitian, 1998), 147–148.

<sup>18</sup> Sung sheng Yvonne Chang, *Literary Culture in Taiwan: Martial Law to Market Law* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 49–54.

<sup>19</sup> For a good survey of the literary scene in the 1950s, see the chapter by Ying Fenghuang in Chen Jianzhong et al., *Taiwan xiaoshuo shilun* [Essays on Taiwan literary history] (Taipei: Maitian, 2007), 111–195.

<sup>20</sup> Ai Wen, “Zheyinian” [This one year], *Zhongyang ribao*, February 24, 1950, 6.

go sightseeing for half a day. Writing on this accidental excursion, Wang stated casually, “Looking back on the Resistance War, I was in Sichuan. Now I am in Taiwan. The goal of returning home remains the same. All these trips are mere detours along the way.”<sup>21</sup> In June 1956, a contributor to *Lianhe bao*, a Hunan native by the name of Hu Lu, reflected on his personal suffering in the Resistance War. Hu lost contact with his entire family and his beloved childhood sweetheart during the Japanese attacks on the city of Nanjing and Hunan Province respectively. He lamented, “[T]he trauma in people’s minds caused by the last great war has not yet healed. Another great war is already brewing. How many family separations and mayhem, like the ones we suffered, were produced by war? Many people curse the war but when can war be stopped?”<sup>22</sup> These are only three examples from a large pool of similar writings. It is obvious that they are not mere state propaganda. The last piece could even be considered anti-war.

A considerable number of similar accounts relating the wartime sojourn in China to the ongoing sojourn in Taiwan can also be found in *Changliu*. *Changliu* was a widely circulated travel magazine published fortnightly in postwar Taiwan. It was also one of the leading outlets for the exiled mainland writers to showcase their works during the 1950s.<sup>23</sup> In 1955, a state-sponsored poll indicated that several of *Changliu*’s serial novels and literary columns were ranked as the most popular among college and university students in Taiwan.<sup>24</sup> To present-day readers, what makes the early issues of the magazine stand out is its apolitical and quotidian style amid a sea of anti-communist publications in the 1950s. In fact, unlike most literary journals in Taiwan during this time, *Changliu* was not set up to be a mouthpiece for the KMT or an official institution. The magazine was created by a group of mainland officials/intellectuals working for the Taiwan Railways Administration (臺灣鐵路管理局, TRA) in February 1950 with the aim of promoting modern transportation and railway tourism.<sup>25</sup> The original plan was to use the TRA’s limited resources to provide train passengers with some good quality reading during their rides. The resulting publication quickly

<sup>21</sup> Wang Hanzhuo, “Suao zhixing” [The trip to Su’ao], *ibid.*, May 12, 1952, 6.

<sup>22</sup> Hu Lu, “Liluan” [Separation in chaos], *Lianhe bao*, June 4, 1956, 6.

<sup>23</sup> Ying Fenghuang, *Wuling niandai Taiwan wenxue lunji* [Essays on Taiwanese literature during the 1950s] (Kaohsiung: Chunhui, 2004), 86–87.

<sup>24</sup> Zhang Yuru, “Yijuan fengxing shishinian: Lun taitie de zonghexing zazhi ‘Changliu’ banyuekan” [Rolling in style for forty years: The Taiwan Railways Administration’s comprehensive *Changliu* fortnightly], *Taipei wenxian* 172 (2010): 190.

<sup>25</sup> See “Fakanci” [A foreword to the magazine], *Changliu* 1:1 (1950): 2. The Taiwan Railways Administration was established based on the Japanese colonial railway bureau. Since 1945, the TRA has been running Taiwan’s railroads.

developed into a multipurpose outlet for a broad range of content due to the need to make the journal commercially viable.<sup>26</sup> The KMT did put *Changliu* under the supervision of the party's railway branch starting in 1952, along with a change in its editorial board members.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, due to the apolitical and mundane nature of the materials published, the new editors received little interference from state authorities. The magazine eventually became one of the longest running literary journals in post–World War II Taiwan with close to 1,000 issues published from 1950 to 1991.<sup>28</sup>

*Changliu* contained a large number of travelogues and personal reflections in the 1950s; almost all of them were authored by *waishengren*. For a travel magazine established to promote railway tourism in Taiwan, *Changliu* published a lot more writings on places in China than places in Taiwan. Its contributors reflected frequently and habitually on the tourist attractions they had visited or the cities and regions they had lived in briefly on the mainland, mostly during the Resistance War. A great number of these sites were in southwest China, particularly Sichuan Province, where the Nationalist regime relocated to after being driven out of eastern and central China by the Japanese.<sup>29</sup>

In 1950, a female writer who had previously fled inland to Sichuan from Shanghai expressed her nostalgia for the KMT's wartime capital Chongqing (重慶). She wrote with a touch of passion, “It's been five years, Chongqing! We have not been apart for that long. Still, every time I walk by the Tamsui River (in Taipei), the endless stream and the lonely shoal give rise to boundless melancholy. Hey you, Chongqing! I miss you!”<sup>30</sup> About a dozen issues later, *Changliu*'s chief editor Wu Kaixuan (吳愷玄), in a rather personal essay, pondered on his present circumstances:

I got used to listening to the sound of rain in Chongqing at night. Now I am in Taiwan. But the rainy nights here pull me back to Sichuan. Chongqing was the capital during the war against Japan. Today, Taiwan is the base for retaking the mainland. The circumstances might be different, but the goal is the same.

<sup>26</sup> For more, see Zeng Pingping, “‘Changliu’ gaishu” [An overview of *Changliu*], *Wenxun* 240 (2005): 21–24.

<sup>27</sup> Zhang Yuru, “Yijuan fengxing,” 145–146.

<sup>28</sup> Zeng Pingping, “Sishinian lai ‘Changliu’ jiren weiduguo? Lu Yingyu dakewen” [How many people have not read *Changliu* after forty years? Lu Yingyu answers questions], *Wenxun* 240 (2005): 18.

<sup>29</sup> For examples, see Yun Lu, “Yeyu bashan nian Yuxi” [Thinking about Yuxi in Ba Mountain's (Sichuan) rainy nights], *Changliu* 2:6 (1950): 9; Xie Bingying, “Chengdu zayi” [Miscellaneous reflections on Chengdu], ibid., 8:7 (1953): 31–32; Lu Wangjia, “Sishu ji” [Thinking about Sichuan], ibid., 14:6 (1956): 5–7.

<sup>30</sup> Li Wan, “Tamsui hebian yi wucheng” [Recalling the fog city by the Tamsui River], ibid., 1:3 (1950): 18.

Thinking about Sichuan and Chongqing on rainy nights, how can I not get emotional?<sup>31</sup>

For Wu, Taipei's rainy nights dredged up not-too-distant memories of the cold and misty Chongqing, where he was also alone and separated from his home and family. Present-day readers can see that, even with the depressing situation of being displaced involuntarily, his reference to the earlier refugee experience during the Resistance War implies a sense of optimism regarding the eventuality of returning home to China.

Sichuan and Chongqing were by no means the only places or subjects in *waishengren*'s Resistance War-related memories during the 1950s. In *Changliu*, the civil war exiles in Taiwan wrote copiously about the interesting localities they had visited, and the alien local peoples they had encountered in remote regions of China during their previous exile and dispersion. They reminisced about the legendary karst landscape near the city of Guilin (桂林), the exotic food and social customs of the various ethnic groups in Yunnan Province and Guizhou Province, and the ancient tombs in the barren desert of Gansu Province.<sup>32</sup> The mainland exiles also recalled their sojourns and travels in China before Japan invaded. There were also a very small number of travelogues reflecting on the early years of the KMT–CCP war following Japan's surrender in 1945.<sup>33</sup> Yet, the number and the frequency of the Resistance War-related memories trumped all others. The great exodus was noticeably absent from *waishengren*'s writings and recollections in *Changliu*, and, in fact, from most of the literary and cultural productions in postwar Taiwan before the island state democratized in recent decades.<sup>34</sup> We will revisit this issue in Chapter 5.

The salience of the mainlander mnemonic regime revolving around the Resistance War in early postwar Taiwan also manifests itself in other ways. The widespread anxiety about air raids is a case in point. In 1950, in

<sup>31</sup> Wu Kaixuan, "Yeyu yi bayu" [Thinking about Sichuan and Chongqing on rainy nights], *ibid.*, 2:3 (1950): 10.

<sup>32</sup> Qiong Yin, "Qiufeng qi si Guilin" [Thinking about Guilin when autumn wind blows], *ibid.*, 4:7 (1951): 26; Xi Ke, "Yiyou Guizhou Huaxi" [Reflecting on the tour of Huaxi in Guizhou], *ibid.*, 6:1 (1952): 20–21; Xue Yin, "Fengguang yini yi huadu" [Reflecting on the exquisite scenery of flower city], *ibid.*, 6:5 (1952): 31; Wang Zuhua, "Jiye chengling" [Visiting Genghis Khan's tomb], *ibid.*, 7:11 (1953): 10.

<sup>33</sup> For accounts before the Japanese invasion, see Jian Chao, "Yi Baoding" [Thinking about Baoding], *ibid.*, 4:11 (1952): 9; Deng Gongxuan, "Lushan zhi qiu" [The autumn of Lushan], *ibid.*, 4:3 (1951): 14. For accounts during the civil war period, see Wang Wenyi, "Gebi zhixing" [Journey through the Gobi Desert], *ibid.*, 6:10 (1953); 46–48; Gu Kuang, "Moganshan yiyou" [Remembering the trip to Mogan Mountain], *ibid.*, 13:12 (1956): 16–17.

<sup>34</sup> There were a few exceptions. For example, see Fu Hongliao, "Wo zenyang taochu Shanghai?" [How did I escape from Shanghai?], *ibid.*, 4:5 (1951): 24–25.

a written recreational piece from *Changliu*, which set out to offer comments on the general public's attitude, tourist hot spots, and recent trends in Taipei, the author digressed into talking about the importance of getting ordinary citizens trained and organized for attacks from the air. He recounted, with gruesome details, the tragedies he had personally witnessed in Changsha (長沙) and Chongqing. In the latter instance, thousands were asphyxiated or trampled to death due to uncoordinated evacuation plans and blocked exits during a massive Japanese bombing of the city.<sup>35</sup> In the same vein, another article in 1951 expressed great concern about the poorly constructed air-raid shelters in Taipei, as well as the lack of preparedness among the citizens. The author reminded everyone, including the government, of the hard lessons learned during the previous war.<sup>36</sup> In 1954, another contributor, who had been evacuated to scenic Guilin in the 1940s, recalled vividly the destruction of the entire city by heavy Japanese bombing toward the end of the war.<sup>37</sup> Dreadful experiences of carnage and destruction during the Japanese invasion left indelible marks on people's minds. Despite the frequency of the state's air-defense drills, some mainlanders continued to feel that the next big disaster was lurking on the horizon (see Figure 2.1).

Waiting for a war to happen was intense. Still, human minds could only take so much intensity. Boredom and mundane concerns inevitably replaced bouts of psychological strain, before the next cycle began. Miscellaneous writings on everyday life in *Changliu* show how the prior instance of displacement shaped the thinking of many displaced mainlanders from China. For example, in 1951, an essay contributor drew parallels between *baibai* (拜拜), the native Taiwanese religious festivals, with the "periodic markets" (趕場) he had observed in Guizhou during the Resistance War.<sup>38</sup> In the same issue, another essayist compared a local Taiwanese store selling shaved ice and cold drinks to the wineshop he had frequented in Sichuan.<sup>39</sup> Earlier in the same year, upon hearing that many of his fellow exiles were complaining about the shabbiness of wooden Japanese dormitories in Taiwan, a journalist recounted the many deaths caused by the rickety and inflammable bamboo homes in Chongqing to help people put things in perspective.<sup>40</sup> In 1955, a *waishengren* residing on the outskirts of a city in central Taiwan talked

<sup>35</sup> Hou An, "Shiyin xianhua" [Gossip from obscure city corners], *ibid.*, 1:3 (1950) 12–13.

<sup>36</sup> You Gui, "Tan fangkongdong," 28.

<sup>37</sup> Wang Kang, "Yi Guilin" [Thinking about Guilin], *Changliu*, 8:12 (1954): 28–29.

<sup>38</sup> Liu Ye, "Baibai yu ganchang de lishi" [The history of *baibai* and *ganchang*], *ibid.*, 4:1 (1951): 20.

<sup>39</sup> Zhuang Shen, "Beigou" [North ravine], *ibid.*, 4:1 (1951): 26.

<sup>40</sup> Hou An, "Chongqing de zhuwu" [The bamboo houses in Chongqing], *ibid.*, 2:10 (1951): 37–38.



Figure 2.1 The specter of air raids and invasion from Communist China, 1955. A father and daughter sit on a bench in front of a billboard in Taipei. The billboard's message warns civilians of air attacks. The photo captures the intense war atmosphere at the time. Source: Photograph by Fernand Gigon/Hulton Archive via Getty Images.

about the benefits of his newly constructed thatched house. He made a similar comparison with the flimsy bamboo hut in Sichuan he used to dread living in.<sup>41</sup>

Several issues later, in the same year, another mainlander wrote about the fun he had touring Sichuan's countryside during the Resistance War

<sup>41</sup> Yun Zhong, “Wo de xinju” [My new residence], *ibid.*, 12:5 (1955): 20–21.

on “slipping poles” (滑竿), which were a rudimentary palanquin operated by two porters that was common in Sichuan. He stated:

We have been in Taiwan for six years. Everyone is waiting eagerly for the counter attack so we can return to the mainland soon. This is the same with how we used to hope for a final victory during the Resistance War in Sichuan. Thus, in recent gatherings, friends talked a lot about how things used to be in Sichuan. Life was a lot harder back then, but that experience holds great meaning for us now when we look back on it.<sup>42</sup>

The passage neatly encapsulates *waishengren*’s mindset at the very start of their exile in Taiwan. The displacement during the Resistance War had a special place in their hearts because that experience had resulted in a positive outcome: everyone got to go home in the end.

For a lot of mainlanders, who were not first-time refugees, moving to Taiwan was like taking flight to southern and southwestern China during the Japanese invasion. Consequently, the civil war exiles’ initial optimism regarding their eventual homecoming to the mainland should be understood in the historical context of living in the longue durée of war across the Taiwan Strait. Steven Phillips shows that the native Taiwanese elites in the late 1940s and the early 1950s interacted with the Nationalist regime based on their previous dealings with the Japanese colonial government.<sup>43</sup> In the same vein, one cannot understand the historicity of *waishengren*’s sojourner mentality in the 1950s without considering what many of them had experienced in the preceding decades.

China was in turmoil during the first half of the twentieth century. The Japanese invasion pushed the KMT state, which had already been fractured and ravaged by numerous ongoing civil wars, almost to the brink of total collapse. Yet, against all odds, Chiang’s regime managed to hold out against a much superior enemy. The tide was eventually turned by Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States’ entry into World War II. In the early 1950s, with the preparations for war in Taiwan ongoing; the “hot battles” in Korea raging; the tensions rising between the Western democracies and the socialist states; many mainlanders believed that another tide-turning global conflict could be right around the corner. This sort of thinking was prevalent among the exiled mainland intellectuals in the early 1950s, as evidenced by the editorials and commentaries published in political magazine *Zizhou Zhongguo* during this time.<sup>44</sup> Renowned

<sup>42</sup> Zhen Zhi, “Sichuan de huagan” [The slipping poles in Sichuan], *ibid.*, 12:9 (1955): 23.

<sup>43</sup> Phillips, *Between Assimilation*, 9.

<sup>44</sup> For examples, see Hu Shi, “Minzhu yu jiquan de chongtu” [Conflict between democracy and totalitarianism], *Zizhou Zhongguo* 1:1 (1949): 5 8; “Hanzhan yinian dui shijie de yingxiang” [The Korean War’s influence on world politics after one year], *ibid.*, 5:1

May Fourth intellectual Hu Shi's (胡適, 1891–1962) famous motto during the Resistance War – “hanging on bitterly and waiting for a change” (苦撐待變) – was often cited as inspirational words of wisdom.<sup>45</sup>

Diana Lary argues that during the Resistance War, “Few people thought of themselves as long-term refugees; even those who fled long distances did not think they would be away permanently, only for the duration of the war.”<sup>46</sup> Similarly, Stephen MacKinnon describes “the desperately optimistic atmosphere” among the traumatized Chinese refugees in the beleaguered city of Wuhan (武漢) in central China in 1938. He writes, “[P]recisely because the violence had been so extreme and arbitrary, and the path to survival so haphazard, the refugee experience became transformative … uniting to make a last stand became a moral necessity and, psychologically, a way of facing survivor guilt.”<sup>47</sup> R. Keith Schoppa, who examined refugee movements in Zhejiang Province in the same war, shows that stress and uncertainty in wartime displacement created a “rumor-rich” atmosphere. Ordinary people chose to believe the news that best suited their existential frame of minds. He observes that, for the refugees, “reality was malleable.”<sup>48</sup>

In Taiwan during the early 1950s, it was neither the persuasiveness of the Nationalist propaganda nor the regime’s monopolistic control of the media that brainwashed the mainland exiles into thinking that the war to reconquer China could happen soon, or that World War III was looming on the horizon. Rather, it was the experience of living in the longue durée of wartime displacement on the part of the Chinese civil war refugees that turned Chiang Kai-shek’s lofty promise into a make-believe prophecy. People living under KMT martial law did not have freedom of expression, but they were not a gullible mass easily duped by empty slogans. The writings produced by *waishengren* in the 1950s were mediated and inhibited by official censorship, and infused with elements of state propaganda. Even so, upon careful reading, they do offer valuable historical traces for contemporary researchers to make sense of the past. As we will see later in this chapter, following the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958, people began to have serious doubts about the Generalissimo’s ability to deliver on his promise.

<sup>45</sup> (1951): 5 6; “Zhanwang minguo shisiyi nian de guoji jushi” [The prospect of the international situation in 1952], *ibid.*, 6:1 (1952): 3.

<sup>45</sup> Hang Liwu, “Kucheng daibian: Wei ‘Ziyou Zhongguo’ erzhounian zuo” [Hanging on bitterly and waiting for a change: Celebrating the second anniversary of *Ziyou Zhongguo*], *ibid.*, 5:11 (1951): 8 9; Wu Xiangxiang, “Kucheng daibian yu fangong kange bisheng xinnian” [Hanging on bitterly and waiting for a change and the strong belief in victory against communism], *ibid.*, 5:11 (1951): 10 13.

<sup>46</sup> Lary, *Chinese People at War*, 28. <sup>47</sup> MacKinnon, *Wuhan*, 1938, 114.

<sup>48</sup> Schoppa, *In a Sea of Bitterness*, 79.

### Wartime Sojourning, Atomized Exiles and the “Unholy Alliance”

There has been very little research on the historical relationship between the displaced *waishengren* and the displaced Nationalist regime in early postwar Taiwan.<sup>49</sup> As a result, one of the biggest misconceptions about the civil war exiles is that they were mostly staunch supporters of the Generalissimo who followed the KMT to a desolate island on the fringe of China. This idea has certainly been reinforced by the fact that first-generation *waishengren* and their Taiwan-born descendants have worked predominantly in the military, civil service, education, and state-owned enterprises. It has also been reinforced by the fact that the mainlanders, since Taiwan’s democratization in 1987, have become one of the KMT’s most loyal constituencies in the island’s highly contentious electoral politics.<sup>50</sup> The retired mainlander military personnel and *juancun* residents in particular have earned the nickname “iron ballot troopers” (鐵票部隊) on account of their steadfast support for Nationalist candidates. The ties between *waishengren* and the KMT are not only institutional; they are also psychological and emotional, as Mahlon Meyer’s interviews have shown.<sup>51</sup>

The “iron ballot” was not naturally given, though. As sociologist Gong Yijun has shown, they were forged out of the displaced KMT’s intense party-building efforts in the 1950s and 1960s. These efforts resulted in the party’s seamless infiltration of the military and the public sectors.<sup>52</sup> Gong’s research, which receives little attention outside of Taiwan, adds important nuances to the now familiar story of the Nationalist Party’s reorganization following its defeat in China told by scholars such as Linda Chao, Ramon Myers, and Bruce Dickson.<sup>53</sup> Upon reaching Taiwan, the KMT needed to manage both the unfriendly semi-Japanized local residents and the messy refugee crisis created by the great exodus. For the former, the party neutralized the native Taiwanese leaders and the communities they

<sup>49</sup> The only exception is Joshua Fan’s book. See Fan, *China’s Homeless Generation*, chapter 3 and 4. Fan focuses on the relationship between the KMT veterans and the Nationalist state.

<sup>50</sup> For more on party politics in democratized Taiwan, see Dafydd Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan: Party Change and the Democratic Evolution of Taiwan, 1991–2004* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>51</sup> Meyer, *Remembering China*.

<sup>52</sup> Gong Yijun, *Wailai zhengquan yu bentu shehui: Gaizao hou Kuomintang zhengquan shehui jichu de xingcheng* (1950–1969) [“Alien regime” and local society: The formation of the social basis of the KMT after party reformation (1950–1969)] (Panchiao: Daoxiang chubanshe, 1998), 71–132.

<sup>53</sup> Chao and Myers, *First Chinese Democracy*; Bruce J. Dickson, “The Lessons of Defeat: The Reorganization of the Kuomintang on Taiwan, 1950–1952,” *China Quarterly* 133 (1993): 56–84.

represented by sponsoring them as opposing camps in local level elections – a move that cultivated what Wu Nai-teh fittingly describes as “patron-client relations.”<sup>54</sup> The electoral system and the political factions created later contributed to Taiwan’s democratization, a situation for which Shelley Rigger coins the term “voting for democracy.”<sup>55</sup> For the latter, the party provided the dispossessed and atomized mainland exiles with job security, welfare, and educational benefits in exchange for their loyalty and service.<sup>56</sup> A large number of *waishengren* thus worked for the Nationalists as civil servants and military personnel. According to Gong, by 1967, the KMT had effectively absorbed and isolated close to one-third of the mainland population from the rest of Taiwan. These individuals served in the army, resided in *juancun*, or lived in VAC-sponsored farms, dormitories, and retirement homes.<sup>57</sup>

What remains obscure in this story is that there was a lot of tension and disunity between the regime in exile and the people in exile, especially during the 1950s. Wartime sojourning thus contributed to the formation of what I characterize as the “unholy alliance” between *waishengren* and the KMT. Chapter 1 has demonstrated that not all mainland refugees who ended up in Taiwan had been diehard supporters of the KMT. Many of the exiles arriving before 1949 were well-off city folks seeking temporary refuge from the turmoil in China. Those entering the island after 1949 were people from different walks of life displaced by the war. There were also tourists, business agents, and a sizable male civilian population dragooned by the Nationalist military, including many young teenagers. And this is not counting the fact that the KMT itself was a heterogeneous organization in China divided by rival cliques, institutional factions, and, as we will see in the next chapter, by provincial loyalties. Following the great exodus, most mainlanders, regardless of their prior relationships with the KMT or with Chiang’s regime in China, worked as employees or military personnel of the Generalissimo’s exiled government because there were simply no other alternatives. However, due to low pay, corruption, and political suppression, many had serious grievances against the Generalissimo’s dictatorship.

It is not widely known today how deeply the mainland exiles were affected by Chiang Kai-shek’s White Terror and anti-communist witch hunt in early postwar Taiwan. Instead, first-generation *waishengren* are usually seen as the Generalissimo’s “executioners,” the key constituents of his authoritarian/colonial apparatus on the island. While individuals

<sup>54</sup> Nai teh Wu, “The Politics of a Regime Patronage System: Mobilization and Control within an Authoritarian Regime” (PhD Diss., University of Chicago, Department of Political Science, 1987).

<sup>55</sup> Shelley Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan: Voting for Democracy* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>56</sup> Gong, *Wailai zhengquan*, 28. <sup>57</sup> Ibid., 99.

working as policemen, security agents, or military personnel were certainly the enforcers of state violence, most mainlanders, including the enforcers themselves, also lived under the shadow of political tyranny created by the vicious struggle between the KMT and the CCP. In the early 1950s, when the threat of an invasion from the PRC was real, Chiang's regime tried to root out mainland spies and hidden communist sympathizers in Taiwan. A great number of the people victimized by this campaign were actually *waishengren*.

As the previous chapter has shown, the great exodus separated families and uprooted people from their existing social worlds. The dislocation turned many civil war exiles in Taiwan into atomized persons that the state could easily incorporate, coerce, and suppress. Even with their doubts, fears, and discontent, being displaced people bent on going home, most *waishengren* saw no other viable options except for continuing to support a brutal military dictatorship (see Figure 2.2). Living in the longue durée of war and displacement benumbed people to brutality. It internalized state repression, what Sheena Chestnut Greitens terms “coercive institutions,” as a part of everyday existence.<sup>58</sup> Before long, many mainlanders came to rely on the exiled party-state for their livelihoods. In return, the exiled party-state could count on *waishengren* against the Taiwanese and against the CCP in China. An interdependent relationship to sustain an oppressive system was formed, and hence the “unholy alliance.”

The downfall of *Ziyou Zhongguo* is a good illustration of my argument. The political magazine enjoyed considerable prestige and popularity as an outlet for the suppressed mainland voices in the 1950s. Even so, when the liberal intellectuals behind the magazine called for a mainland-Taiwanese political alliance to challenge Chiang Kai-shek's rule, their call fell on deaf ears. Different from the longevity of the aforementioned *Changliu*, *Ziyou Zhongguo* was published only for roughly a decade, from 1949 to 1960, before the KMT finally shut it down. Notwithstanding its short existence, the magazine stood as a towering symbol of the mainland liberal opposition against the Nationalist single-party dictatorship in Taiwan. It was, without doubt, one of the most widely read nongovernmental publications on the island in the 1950s, and the only political journal that dared to publish *waishengren*'s dissenting opinions against the regime.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> For a similar opinion, see Lary and MacKinnon, *Scars of War*, 7. For the “coercive institutions,” see Sheena Chestnut Greitens, *Dictators and Their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions and State Violence* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

<sup>59</sup> For more on the magazine's readership and volumes printed, see Zhong Yapeng, “Zhenglun zazhi yu Taiwan minzhuhua: ‘Ziyou Zhongguo’ gean yanjiu” [Political magazine and democratization in Taiwan: *Ziyou Zhongguo* as a case study] (master's thesis, National Chung Cheng University, Department of Political Science, 2005), 58–59.



Figure 2.2 The KMT White Terror in the 1950s. The presence of armed soldiers patrolling the streets was a common sight in early postwar Taiwan.  
Source: Photograph by Mondadori Portfolio/Mondadori Portfolio Collection via Getty Images.

*Ziyou Zhongguo* had been founded in November 1949 by a group of esteemed mainland intellectuals in Taipei to promote constitutional democracy and anti-communist thoughts.<sup>60</sup> Several of these intellectuals had been participants of the May Fourth Movement (1919) in China. Notable figures included Hu Shi, Fu Sinian (傅斯年, 1896–1950), Lei Zhen (雷震, 1897–1979), Zhang Foquan (張佛泉, 1907–1994), Xia Daoping (夏道平, 1907–1995), Yin Haiguang (殷海光, 1919–1969), and Fu Zheng (傅正, 1927–1991). The spiritual leader of the group, Hu Shi, resided in the United States during most of the 1950s, but lent his name to *Ziyou Zhongguo* by becoming the magazine's president until 1953.<sup>61</sup> Lei Zhen, a learned scholar of the ROC Constitution, worked as the chief editor and the magazine's manager.<sup>62</sup> In 1960, when the KMT closed the magazine down, Lei became the government's main target of persecution. He ended up serving a ten-year jail sentence.<sup>63</sup>

Initially, Chiang Kai-shek applauded the magazine because of its anti-communist stance, and the Nationalist Party even contributed money to it.<sup>64</sup> The official subsidy was promptly withdrawn in 1953 when problems between the liberal intellectuals and the Nationalist leadership began to emerge. Historian Xue Huayuan has identified five different phases of this deteriorating relationship, from the initial honeymoon period between the two in the early 1950s to the open confrontation after the second half of 1956.<sup>65</sup> At first, the mainland intellectuals condoned Chiang's dictatorship, seeing it as wartime expediency. Nevertheless, after the possibility of returning to China began to decline in the wake of a succession of events – the armistice in Korea (1953) and the two Taiwan Strait Crises (1954–1955, 1958) – the magazine started to campaign publicly and vehemently for the exiled regime to undertake democratic reforms. This set it on a collision course with the KMT.

In late 1959 and the first half of 1960, the intellectuals affiliated with *Ziyou Zhongguo* launched a public campaign against Chiang Kai-shek's bid for a third-term presidency, which they deemed

<sup>60</sup> Hu Shi, “‘Ziyou Zhongguo’ de zongzhi” [The aim of *Ziyou Zhongguo*], *Ziyou Zhongguo* 1:1 (1949): 2; “Fakan ci” [A foreword to the magazine], ibid., 1:1 (1949): 3–4.

<sup>61</sup> For more, see Xue Huayuan, “*Ziyou Zhongguo*” yu minzhu xianzheng: 1950 niandai Taiwan sixiangshi de yige kaocha [Free China and constitutional democracy: An investigation of Taiwan's intellectual history during the 1950s] (Panchiao: Daoxiang chubanshe, 1996), 56–72.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 75–76.

<sup>63</sup> For the Lei Zhen case, see Ren Yude, *Lei Zhen yu Taiwan minzhu xianzheng de fazhan* [Lei Zhen and the development of constitutional democracy in Taiwan] (Taipei: Guoli zhengzhi daxue lishi xuexi, 1999), 275–301.

<sup>64</sup> Xue Huayuan, “*Ziyou Zhongguo*,” 76–77. <sup>65</sup> Ibid., 73–176.

unconstitutional.<sup>66</sup> Lei Zhen and his associates also tried to forge an alliance with several influential native Taiwanese politicians to establish an opposition party to the KMT.<sup>67</sup> At this point, the Generalissimo decided that *Ziyou Zhongguo* could no longer be tolerated. He ordered the arrest of Lei along with three of his colleagues in September 1960. This put an end to both the magazine and the opposition party.<sup>68</sup>

*Ziyou Zhongguo* is a good source to study not only Taiwan’s political history, but also social history during the 1950s. The magazine began publishing a section called “readers’ letters” (讀者投書) early on in the decade.<sup>69</sup> It also carried many opinion pieces submitted by the general public. Many of the letter senders and essay contributors were petty civil servants and low-ranking military personnel. They were frustrated with extremely low wages, the abuse of power by their superiors, and the KMT’s reign of terror.<sup>70</sup> Writing under real names as well as pseudonyms, these personal accounts offered remarkable details not only on the lived experiences of ordinary mainland exiles when they first arrived in Taiwan, but also on the tension and conflict between *waishengren* and the Nationalist regime, which is largely forgotten in the context of the island’s ethnic and electoral politics today.

Low salaries were a constant complaint from the displaced exiles.<sup>71</sup> Most *waishengren* reached Taiwan after losing all of their worldly possessions. They survived on government or military rations and stipends. The Nationalist authorities raised the wage levels and general rations of public

<sup>66</sup> “Jiangzongtong buhui zuocuo jueding leba?” [Did President Chiang make a wrong decision?], *Ziyou Zhongguo* 20:12 (1959): 3; “Jingxiang Jiangzongtong zuoyi zuihou de zhonggao” [A final and sincere advice for President Chiang], *ibid.*, 22:3 (1960): 3 4.

<sup>67</sup> Lei Zhen, “Women weishenme poqie xuyao yige qiangeryouli de fanduidang” [The reasons why we need a strong and powerful opposition party], *ibid.*, 22: 10 (1960): 7 10.

<sup>68</sup> For more, see the forward and documents contained in Chen Shihong et al. eds., *Lei Zhen an shiliao huibian: Guofangbu dangan xuANJI* [A documentary collection of the Lei Zhen case: Selected files from Ministry of National Defense archives] (Hsintien: Guoshiguan, 2002).

<sup>69</sup> For examples, see Shi Zhang, “Zhengqu renmin duhougan” [Feedback on “winning over the people”], *Ziyou Zhongguo* 4:3 (1951): 35; “Yiwei duzhe de laixin” [Letter from one reader], *ibid.*, 7: 11 (1952): 13.

<sup>70</sup> For an overview, see Fu Zheng, “Cong benkan de duzhetoushu shuodao guoshi wenti” [Talking about issues concerning our nation from the “readers’ letters” in our magazine], *ibid.*, 21:10 (1959): 36.

<sup>71</sup> Lin Bingkang, “Gongjiao renyuan daiyu banfa de jiantao yu gaishan chuyi” [My humble opinion on improving terms of employment for public servants], *ibid.*, 5:9 (1951): 14 16; Huang Zhong, “Gongjiao deciyang” [Feeding public servants], *ibid.*, 8:8 (1953) 13 14; “Jungongjiao renyuan daiyu de tiaozheng haike zaituo ma?” [Could the pay raise for military personnel, teachers, and public servants be delayed any further?], *ibid.*, 16:1 (1957): 5; “Wei jungongjiao renyuan jiao buping” [Speaking out for the injustices suffered by army personnel, public servants, and teachers], *ibid.*, 22:12 (1960): 5 6.

servants and military personnel twice – first in 1950 and then again in 1953. Despite these periodic increases, people were barely getting by, and the income of a majority of the state's employees continued to lag considerably behind the inflation rates on the island.<sup>72</sup>

Not having enough was one thing. Most could live with that since they were no strangers to wartime hardships. What people could not stand, however, was the corruption, unfair treatment, and flat-out lies. These made their sense of deprivation more poignant and intolerable. In 1953, a civil servant named Wang Daren exposed the fact that many government bureaus were secretly appropriating their unused funds to subsidize some of their employees. Wang urged the authorities to curb these practices because they gave rise to frustration and resentment from those who received nothing additional.<sup>73</sup> In 1954, an impoverished school teacher complained bitterly about his measly wage and benefits compared to those received by staff that worked in customs service, state banks, and government monopolies.<sup>74</sup> In May 1958, a destitute retired army captain named Ji Jicai lashed out at the VAC:

The VAC was set up to help us find jobs. We have been hoping for nearly five years. Now we are disappointed sorely disappointed! The Council was founded in 1954. It became a complete mess under Fu Yun's tenure. Over 40 million (NTD) worth of US aid was squandered on feeding its gigantic bureaucracy. What do retired military personnel like us really get?<sup>75</sup>

Ji was jobless and restless; he was starving and angry. He said his heart “chilled” every time he walked by the VAC’s shiny, magnificent headquarters in downtown Taipei.

Captain Ji’s sentiment was shared by many of the enlisted men who distrusted their superiors and the Nationalist authorities in general. For example, in 1959, *Ziyou Zhongguo* published a letter from a soldier questioning how the semiofficial “Friends of the Army Society” (軍人之友社) spent its charity funds. The soldier pointed out that the rank and file received next to nothing from the Society, which was originally set up to raise money for the troops. In the meantime, the Society continued to

<sup>72</sup> Tao Shizhi, “Shishi tiaozheng wenxu gongjiao renyuan daiyu pingyi” [Comments on the timely adjustment of pay for military personnel, teachers, and public servants], *ibid.*, 15: 8 (1956): 6–7.

<sup>73</sup> Wang Daren, “Buping zhiming” [A voice of discontent], *ibid.*, 9: 8 (1953): 31.

<sup>74</sup> Tian Chang, “Zhengshi jiaoshi daiyu” [Taking the treatment of teachers seriously], *ibid.*, 11: 7 (1954): 31–32.

<sup>75</sup> Ji Jicai, “Yige jiatusheng junguan de huyu” [An appeal from a retired army officer], *ibid.*, 18:10 (1958): 31.

rack up huge expenditures that were questionable in nature.<sup>76</sup> In June 1960, three lowly privates, fed up with the corruption and the lies in Chiang’s army, sent an angry letter to *Ziyou Zhongguo*:

In mid March, our superiors sent a colonel to talk to us about problems in the military. The colonel said a private second class now receives over 300 NTD a month, which is high enough already. But in fact, our real monthly salaries are: 45 dollars for a private first class, 48 dollars for a private superior, and 70 dollars for a corporal. It goes without saying that a private second class [like us] earns a lot less. There is a huge gap between our actual income and what the colonel told us. Who is cheating us?<sup>77</sup>

The feeling of being cheated or mistreated was prevalent among the ordinary mainlanders working for the exiled regime during the 1950s. *Ziyou Zhongguo* was a major platform for expressing one’s suspicion, dissatisfaction, and criticism of the KMT. As a matter of fact, the magazine received a fairly large number of similar writings every month; it could only publish several selected pieces in each issue.<sup>78</sup>

Another main source of tension between the mainland exiles and the KMT was the regime’s overzealous anti-communist witch hunt in the 1950s. Upon reaching the island, the Generalissimo’s son, Chiang Ching-kuo, assumed control of the Nationalist security apparatus, and his first priority, according to Jay Taylor, was “ferreting out spies and moles in the military, rather than focusing on suspected native Taiwanese dissidents.”<sup>79</sup> Thus, Denny Roy was right when he suggested in 2003 that the White Terror in Taiwan was “not solely an anti-Taiwanese campaign; thousands of Mainlander refugees were killed as well.”<sup>80</sup>

*Waishengren* wrote many personal essays in *Ziyou Zhongguo* that provided detailed accounts of living through these frightening years. The mainland exiles wanted the Nationalist authorities to stop performing the dreaded background checks on their personal histories in China, which could incriminate them.<sup>81</sup> They wanted the state’s security agents to stop throwing suspected “communist spies” in jail with no concrete evidence,

<sup>76</sup> Yuan Fu, “Qingkan junren zhiyou she!” [Please take a look at the Friends of the Army Society!], ibid., 20:12 (1959): 31.

<sup>77</sup> Diao Miange, “Yiqun shibing de jige yiwen” [A few questions from a group of soldiers], ibid., 22:12 (1960): 21.

<sup>78</sup> Fu Zheng, “Cong benkan,” 36. <sup>79</sup> Jay Taylor, *Generalissimo*, 423.

<sup>80</sup> Roy, *Taiwan*, 90.

<sup>81</sup> For examples, see “Ziqing yundong yaobude!” [Stop the self purging campaign!], *Ziyou Zhongguo* 13:9 (1955): 3 4; “Qingsu tingban dalu laitai guomin diaocha!” [Please stop immediately the investigation of “citizens in Taiwan from the mainland!”], ibid., 21:11 (1959): 5.

and torturing them to confess and tell on others.<sup>82</sup> In many “readers’ letters,” we see civil servants, teachers, and common soldiers protesting vehemently against the introduction of a mutual surveillance system in their workplaces, as well as against the abuse of power by individuals who were put in charge of public security.<sup>83</sup>

In December 1957, *Ziyou Zhongguo* printed a reader’s letter from a middle school teacher named Xie Xiuru. Xie condemned the KMT’s policy of establishing a “security office” in all middle schools that year. She wrote, “The middle schools in Taiwan have been safe havens during the past decade. Now we have these ‘Mr. Securities’ in our life. Other than losing the hearts and minds of people and creating feelings of prejudice and hatred among colleagues, I do not see what else this will accomplish.”<sup>84</sup> In 1959, upon hearing about a new government law declared to rectify many wrongful convictions by its military court against innocent civilians, an angry soldier writing under an alias wondered why the military personnel previously imprisoned by the state could not be protected by the same law. He asked in the letter, “From 1950 to roughly 1954 and 1955, the army just arrested people left and right. Can’t you see that the prisons at all levels are packed like sardines?”<sup>85</sup>

Why did Chiang’s exiled regime persecute so many *waishengren* in the early 1950s immediately following the great exodus? The reason was rather simple: the mainlanders came from China and their migration was not regulated by the state. When the Nationalist regime collapsed in 1949, swarms of defeated troops and war refugees entered Taiwan every day unchecked, without proper documentation, and many under fake identities. As the previous chapter has indicated, the infiltration of Chinese Communist agents was a serious security concern back then for the KMT. Michael Szonyi’s study of Taiwan’s frontline island bastion Quemoy (金門) demonstrates that the fear of communist subversion turned many Quemoy islanders with family ties in China into the subjects of suspicion in the eyes of the local military officials.<sup>86</sup> In Taiwan, the Nationalists not only rounded up deserted soldiers and vagrants on the

<sup>82</sup> Wang Jianbang, “Qing zhengfu qieshi baozhang renquan!” [We ask the government to safeguard people’s rights!], *ibid.*, 19:11 (1958): 24–26; “Yuanyu ruhe liao?” [When will we end the wrongful convictions?], *ibid.*, 19:12 (1958): 31.

<sup>83</sup> Chen Lixing, “Wo taochu liangxin shuohual!” [I speak sincerely from the bottom of my heart!], *ibid.*, 16:9 (1957): 28; Li Shilong, “Zhianjiguan ying zhisuo jingti” [The security agencies should be warned], *ibid.*, 18:2 (1958): 31.

<sup>84</sup> Xie Xiuru, “Yizai suowei anquansi zhuren” [What a strange thing called the director of the security office], *ibid.*, 18:1 (1958): 38.

<sup>85</sup> Niu Bufan, “Junren yinggai renyuan ma?” [Should we allow military personnel to be wrongfully accused?], *ibid.*, 21:6 (1959): 29.

<sup>86</sup> Michael Szonyi, *Cold War Island: Quemoy on the Front Line* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 38.

streets, they also undertook a systematic and sustained campaign to search out and eradicate all underground communist cells in the civilian population and in the military.

Though scholars such as Taylor and Roy have made reference to *waishengren* being persecuted by the Nationalist state, it was not until 2009 that aggregate data illustrating the extent of their victimization became available in Taiwan. In 1998, the democratically elected Legislative Yuan (Taiwan's parliament) passed a law to form a nonprofit organization called “Compensation Foundation” (補償基金會, CF), run jointly by academics, government officials, judges, and representatives of political prisoners and their families. Its main function was to compensate and reinstate those who were the targets of state violence under KMT dictatorship.<sup>87</sup> In the decade that followed, the CF reviewed and investigated 8,726 individual petitions submitted by the general public, a majority of which were compensated.<sup>88</sup> Among the 6,139 known cases that have been confirmed and received reparations from the state, 57.7 percent (3,542) were native Taiwanese and 42.3 percent (2,597) were mainlanders.<sup>89</sup> Given that the mainland exiles constituted only 10–15 percent of Taiwan’s population back then, their number seems exceptionally high.<sup>90</sup>

This set of data has its limitations, though. According to the existing KMT military court case files, the state put roughly 16,000 individuals on trial for political reasons from 1949 to 1987. Nearly 60 percent of these cases occurred from 1950 to 1955.<sup>91</sup> The 6,000 political prisoners identified by the CF thus constitute close to 40 percent of the potential White Terror victims.<sup>92</sup> Still, one thing is certain: even if we assume all the remaining unidentified political prisoners were Taiwanese, the percentage of mainlander victims would still be slightly higher than their population percentage. With a dwindling number of survivors and family members coming forward in 2009, the CF ceased to function in 2013. Up until the writing of this book, public access to these court records

<sup>87</sup> The full name of the organization was “The Compensation Foundation for Improper Trials and Convictions of Seditionists and Communist Spies during the Martial Law Period” (財團法人戒嚴時期不當審判亂暨匪諜審判案件補償基金會).

<sup>88</sup> See Qiu Rongjiu, Zhang Yanxian, and Dai Baocun, *Zhanhou Taiwan zhengzhi anjian shuliang yu leixing fenxi (1949–1987)* [An analysis of the number and type of political prisoner cases in postwar Taiwan, 1949–1987] (Taipei: Buchang jijinhui, 2009), 4.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 26–27. <sup>90</sup> Ibid., 29. <sup>91</sup> Ibid., 16–17.

<sup>92</sup> There are other higher estimates of White Terror victims. For examples, see Jay Taylor, *Generalissimo*, 464, 691, note 48; Hou Kunhong, “Zhanhou Taiwan baise kongbu lunxi” [An analysis of White Terror in postwar Taiwan], *Guoshiguan xueshu jikan* 12 (2007): 143.

remains somewhat restricted due to government regulations protecting the privacy of the victims and their families.

While future legislation might offer full access to the remaining files, it is reasonable to speculate that the civil war exiles could form a substantial share of the remaining unidentified White Terror victims for two important reasons. First, as a displaced community dominated by atomized single males, deceased mainlander victims have no surviving families in Taiwan who can file restitution claims on their behalf after democratization. Their relatives in China probably did not even know they were in Taiwan in the first place. During the Chinese civil war, hundreds of thousands of people simply went missing and were presumed dead by their families. Second, close to 60 percent of the White Terror cases happened between 1950 and 1955. During this time, the KMT concentrated on purging suspected leftists and communist supporters instead of arresting Taiwan independence activists. The latter became the main targets of state persecution only after 1961.<sup>93</sup>

The White Terror was not only about the political prisoners who were jailed and executed, or their families who were both devastated and socially stigmatized, but also about an entire society of people living in constant fear and mutual suspicion.<sup>94</sup> Most of the displaced mainlanders did not rise up against the KMT, even in spite of being adversely affected by the Generalissimo's anti-communist witch hunt, and in spite of their distrust, anger, and resentment toward his regime. *Ziyou Zhongguo* provided a relief valve for a legion of frustrated *waishengren* to vent their grievances, but a majority did not go beyond complaining. When the government shut the magazine down for advocating a political coalition with *benshengren* to challenge the status quo, *Ziyou Zhongguo*'s readers and supporters stood by and did nothing. This coalition would take another decade to form, when the second-generation mainlanders and the native Taiwanese born after World War II came of age in the 1970s in what sociologist Hsiau A-chin calls the "return-to-reality generation" (回歸現實世代).<sup>95</sup> During most of the 1950s, first-generation mainlanders were reluctant sojourners still living in the longue durée of war. They expected a final showdown between the KMT and the CCP to happen soon, and they expected to go home at the end of it – one way or the other. Thus, most did not really feel the need to connect with the local residents in

<sup>93</sup> Qiu, Zhang, and Dai, *Zhanhou Taiwan*, 56.

<sup>94</sup> For a need to consider the suffering and the agency of the victims' surviving families, see S. L. Lin, *Representing Atrocity*, 17.

<sup>95</sup> Hsiau A chin, *Huigui xianshi: Taiwan 1970 niandai de zhanhou shidai yu wenhua zhengzhi bianqian* [Return to reality: Political and cultural change in 1970s Taiwan and the postwar generation] (Taipei: Zhongyangyanjiuyuan shehuixue yanjiusuo, 2008).

Taiwan. They also internalized state violence as a part of their everyday existence. This was how the symbiotic relationship – the “unholy alliance” – between the regime in exile and the people in exile was formed historically.

### **Wartime Sojourning, Cultural Prejudice and the “Coachable Compatriots”**

The sojourner mentality of *waishengren* contributed not only to the formation of their “unholy alliance” with the KMT, but also to their continued alienation from the island’s local majority population, the native Taiwanese. The persisting estrangement between *waishengren* and *benshengren* then further consolidated the “unholy alliance.” As mentioned in the previous chapter, historians of postwar Taiwan tend to locate the main reasons for the mainlander–Taiwanese split in the retrocession period and the 228 Incident, before the arrival of the great exodus. Sociologists, anthropologists, and political scientists in Taiwan have looked beyond the early postwar years. Yet, influenced by the “ethnic relations studies” discussed in the Introduction, many have concentrated on highlighting the statistically measurable differences between the two populations on the macrolevel – in education, employment, income, residential segregation, language use, political affiliation, marriage patterns, and so on. The inequalities illustrated statistically, they submit, were the manifestations of a tangible social boundary between the privileged *waishengren* and the disadvantaged *benshengren*, which was reconceptualized as an “ethnic” divide in recent decades.

What is interesting is that both the current historiography and the “ethnic relations studies” consider the authoritarian Nationalist regime as the main culprit of the mainlander–Taiwanese rift. It was the Nationalist misrule and brutal suppression during the 228 Incident that forever antagonized the Taiwanese. It was the Nationalist policy that suppressed *benshengren*’s political aspirations, languages, and cultures. It was the state’s favoritism that led to the concentration of *waishengren* in government jobs, in the military, in certain residential enclaves (i.e. *juancun*), and so forth.

The role played by the exiled regime is without doubt significant; however, it was only part of the complex and interrelated reasons for the communal division in postwar Taiwan. Notwithstanding the occupational and residential segregations underscored by Gong Yijun and other “ethnic relations studies” scholars, most civil war exiles did come into contact with the local population on a daily basis. In Taiwan’s cities and towns, they met and interacted with *benshengren* in workplaces, on the streets, when riding public transportation, and even in their very own

homes. Even mainland soldiers locked away in distant barracks received a new batch of Taiwanese conscripts every year. People could live and work alongside each other but their hearts never truly met. In addition, as Wang Fu-chang has shown, they could intermarry (this was a necessity, given the high number of single *waishengren* men), but the political and cultural dominance of the mainlanders before democratization ensured one thing: the acculturation process was mostly one-sided. The native Taiwanese wives and their children took on mainlander identities and perspectives, and not the other way around.<sup>96</sup>

The mainlanders possessed cultural bias against the semi-Japanized *benshengren* because of their Sinocentric view on the low level of social and cultural attainments among people living in the peripheral regions of China. Ironically, this view is not fundamentally different from the one that was held by the predecessors of *benshengren* (i.e. Hoklo and Hakka colonizers) toward Taiwan's aboriginal peoples when they first migrated from southeast China to the island from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century. In the 1950s, *waishengren*'s prejudice toward *benshengren* was clearly displayed in their writings on the latter at the time, which exhibited a mixture of exoticism, aversion, and paternalistic condescension. I condense these nuanced opinions into one single term. In the eyes of the civil war exiles, the local people were "coachable compatriots." The fact that the mainlanders left behind many written records about the native Taiwanese, but not the other way around, indicates that this relationship was fundamentally unequal – despite social class differences within each group.

*Waishengren*'s earlier dislocation and suffering at the hands of the Japanese strengthened their Sinocentric bias against the semi-Japanized *benshengren*. Deeply immersed in their own misery and bent on returning to China, the civil war exiles thought very little about the political and social consequences of their forced relocation for the host society. Discouraged from speaking their own local dialects and promoting their provincial identities by the KMT, they saw no need to learn the Hokkien or Hakka spoken by the native Taiwanese, or the aboriginal languages for that matter. Their reactions to the lively religious festivities central to the communal life of *benshengren* were a combination of novelty, disdain, and cultural affirmation. The mainlanders thought the local Taiwanese activities were profligate practices of a bygone era. They were a sure sign of the islanders' backwardness and superstition, but also a sign of their

<sup>96</sup> For an overview of Wang's research in this area, see Wang Fu chang, "Taiwan de zuqun tonghun yu zuqun guanxi zaitan" [A further investigation of the ethnic intermarriages and ethnic relations in Taiwan], in *Shehui zhuanxing yu wenhua bianmao: huaren shehui de bijiao* [Social transformation and cultural change: comparisons among the Chinese societies], ed. Liu Zhaojia et al. (Hong Kong: Xianggang zhongwen daxue yatai yanjiusuo, 2001), 393–430.

quintessential Chineseness.<sup>97</sup> These conflicting ideas reflect not only a deep-seated Sinocentric bigotry, but also a psychological need to neutralize the linguistically and culturally alien local population they encountered every day while living in displacement.

Many *waishengren* actively supported the Nationalist government’s campaign to promote Mandarin education in order to raise the cultural level of their fellow countrymen in Taiwan, and to purge all vestiges of Japanese influence.<sup>98</sup> From their perspective, their wretched Taiwanese compatriots had suffered a double dose of misfortune: living on the fringe of Chinese civilization and being “enslaved” (奴化) by half a century of Japanese colonialism. The poor locals needed to be coached, educated, and re-Sinicized before being treated as equals. This condescending view, as historian Chen Cuilian has shown, had alienated the native Taiwanese during the retrocession period and contributed to the 228 uprising.<sup>99</sup> In the 1950s, it continued to drive a wedge between the civil war exiles and the local residents.

In a 1957 editorial, the mainland intellectuals affiliated with *Zizyou Zhongguo* pointed to the “divide” (隔膜) between *waishengren* and *benshengren*, which had been deepening since Taiwan’s retrocession in 1945.<sup>100</sup> The article alluded to the 228 tragedy, and the cultural differences created by the Japanese colonialism. It attributed the main cause of the divide to KMT authoritarianism and mainlander dominance in politics. The editors thought that *waishengren*’s fear of losing power to *benshengren* and their patronizing attitude were the biggest contributing factors to the widening fissure.<sup>101</sup> Years later, the magazine’s editor-in-chief Lei Zhen wrote while in prison:

The mainlanders possess a sense of superiority over the Taiwanese. This mentality is prevalent. They look down on the Taiwanese and prance around

<sup>97</sup> For examples, see “Baibai daguan: Taiwan minjian de yizhong jingren langfei” [Looking at “worship festivals”: A shockingly wasteful habit of Taiwanese society], *Zhongyang ribao*, February 12, 1951, 4; He Fan, “Ji baibai ji” [Going to the “worship festivals”], *Lianhe bao*, June 5, 1956, 6; Yang Yifeng, “Taiwan de baibai” [The “worship festivals” in Taiwan], *Changliu* 7:9 (1953): 11–12.

<sup>98</sup> He Rong, “Liunianlai bensheng guowu yundong de jiantao” [Examining the Mandarin learning movement in this province during the past six years], *Zhongyang ribao*, November 17, 1951, 3; Liang Shiqiu, “Jiao guowen de yidian jingyan” [My little experience teaching Chinese], *Zizyou Zhongguo* 6:5 (1952): 25–26.

<sup>99</sup> Chen Cuilian, “Qu zhimin yu zai zhimin de duikang: Yi yijiusiliumian ‘tairen nuhua’ lunzhan wei jiaodan” [Decolonization vs. recolonization: The debate on the “enslavement of Taiwanese” in 1946], *Taiwanshi yanjiu* 9:2 (2002): 145–201.

<sup>100</sup> “Women de difang zhengzhi” [Our local political system], *Zizyou Zhongguo*, 17:10 (1957): 5.

<sup>101</sup> For another similar editorial, see “Taiwanren yu daluren” [The native Taiwanese and the mainlanders], *ibid.*, 23:2 (1960): 3–4.

pretentiously thinking that they are “awesome” like “conquerors,” “civilized people,” or “persons from a superior nation.” Though they would not say it out loud, these ideas permeate their thinking.<sup>102</sup>

US State Department official Herbert Levin’s reflections resonate with Lei’s view. Levin arrived in central Taiwan for his Chinese language training in 1959. He remembered that, by then, many had begun to see that the Nationalists were not going to retake China. Even so, the mainland elites held on doggedly to their positions. According to Levin, for the mainlanders, reforming the political system in Taiwan to share power with the native Taiwanese was an “anathema.”<sup>103</sup>

An important reason for this “anathema” was *waishengren*’s strong aversion to the visible traces of the Japanese influence on *benshengren*. Nothing upset the mainlanders more than hearing their fellow Taiwanese compatriots speak Japanese casually and noisily in public, even inside government offices and workplaces, in blatant disregard for the law prohibiting the use of the language. A mainlander journalist fed up with the situation wrote in 1955:

The use of Japanese in some of the government offices in Taipei County is especially prevalent. People visiting these places thought they made a mistake of entering a Japanese consulate. Ten years have passed since Taiwan’s retrocession. If a state employee was willing to learn Mandarin, he or she should have learned how to speak it by now, even not very fluently. The use of the local Taiwanese dialects [Hokkien and Hakka] would also be acceptable. Why do they have to speak Japanese? I really cannot understand their motive.<sup>104</sup>

There were many other mainlanders writing about the same problem.<sup>105</sup> Another account written concurrently stated:

This is really an old topic. I do not know how many people have already spoken it out loud. Although this habit [of speaking Japanese] has died down a little bit, it never goes away completely. In public places, and also on the buses, I often encounter individuals who are heavily “Japanized.” When these folks converse loudly in Japanese without considering the feeling of others around them, I really feel ashamed for them.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Chang, *Guojia yu rentong*, 262.

<sup>103</sup> Nancy Tucker ed., *China Confidential: American Diplomats and Sino American Relations, 1945-1996* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 137.

<sup>104</sup> Zhen Fen, “Ribenhua daochu kewen” [Japanese could be heard everywhere], *Lianhe bao*, November 28, 1955, 5.

<sup>105</sup> For examples, see Gong Shi, “Shancheng jinshuo Riyu” [A ban on speaking Japanese in the mountain town], *ibid.*, November 16, 1954, 5; “Xishuo Ribenhua yifei Zhongguoren” [Those who like to speak Japanese came under suspicion of not being Chinese], *ibid.*, January 7, 1955, 5.

<sup>106</sup> You Shuru, “Yanjin zaishuo Riyu” [The speaking of Japanese should be strictly prohibited again], *ibid.*, June 7, 1955, 3.

Though we only hear one side of the story here, these comments are nonetheless illuminating. *Benshengren* knew that the mainlanders hated the Japanese; hence, for the native Taiwanese, speaking the language forced upon them by their former colonizers was an oblique way to strike back at their current colonizers. Roy describes a similar situation in the military. The native Taiwanese recruits would converse openly in Japanese or would write letters home in Japanese to cause difficulties for their mainland superiors who could not understand the language.<sup>107</sup>

Several historians in Taiwan have pointed out that *waishengren*'s views on the native Taiwanese during the early postwar years were diverse, consisting of both positive and negative comments.<sup>108</sup> I would argue that even the “positive comments” were the product of the same sojourner mentality and patronizing attitude discussed earlier. Exoticism and prejudice were two sides of the same coin in mainland exiles’ wartime sojourning. *Waishengren*'s understanding of *benshengren* remained superficial, despite some nice words. Local people, along with their cultures and their perspectives, were marginal to the overall concern of the mainlanders. Take *Changliu*, for example, which, as already mentioned, contained more travelogues on places in China than in Taiwan. Moreover, in the pieces on Taiwan, the descriptions of landscapes and infrastructure outweighed the descriptions of people. Like temporary tourists, *waishengren* saw only what they wanted to see. They understood Taiwan’s culture and history only in relation to their own version of Chinese culture and history.<sup>109</sup>

One particular type of mainlander writings in the 1950s aptly captured their pedagogical impulse and condescending attitude toward the native Taiwanese. Numerous personal essays and short stories described the various kinds of trouble caused by the erratic behaviors of their Taiwanese maids (*xianu* 下女) – the local women-folk whom *waishengren* introduced into their homes and interacted with on a daily basis.<sup>110</sup> In these texts, the mainland employer complained bitterly about their inability to find suitable domestic

<sup>107</sup> Roy, *Taiwan*, 95.

<sup>108</sup> For examples, see You Jianming, “Dang waishengren yudao Taiwan nuxing: Zhanhou Taiwan baokan zhong de nuxing lunshu (1945–1949)” [When the mainlanders met the native Taiwanese women: Discourses on women in newspapers and magazines in postwar Taiwan, 1945–1949], *Zhongyangyanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiusuo jikan* 47 (2005): 165–224; Lin Tongfa, 1949 *dachetui*, 362–373.

<sup>109</sup> Wu Jiaqing, “Xianjing de Tainan” [Quiet Tainan], *Changliu* 1:12 (1950): 17; Xu Yinxian, “Chiayi youji” [The trip to Chiayi], *ibid.*, 9:5 (1954): 18–19.

<sup>110</sup> For more, see You, “Dang waishengren yudao,” 198–199; Shi Cuifeng, “Xianu kaoyuan” [The origins of “xianu”], *Changliu* 12:9 (1955): 20–21.

servants or to keep the ones currently employed from seeking greener pastures.<sup>111</sup> They vented their anger by ridiculing the absurd and despicable acts of the Taiwanese women they brought into their households. The maids were stereotypically portrayed as infantile country bumpkins, lazy miscreants, and superficial tarts. These troublesome ladies lacked the basic human decency and loyalty that made them prone to job-hopping.<sup>112</sup> There were also essays that depicted them as cunning thieves who stole from their host families or flirtily temptresses who seduced their male bosses and caused family problems.<sup>113</sup>

How true were these apparently biased and misogynistic depictions? Like the aforementioned mainlander writings on speaking Japanese, we get only one side of the picture. Historian You Jianming opines that, despite these disparaging views, the Taiwanese maids, even with their gender, social class, and ethnicity, were not the weaker party. The labor market actually worked in their favor during this time. Many *waishengren* families went out of their way to accommodate and please their servants fearing that they would leave to find a better deal elsewhere.<sup>114</sup> You's assessment is by and large accurate. The underlying socioeconomic cause for the "maid issue" was the strong market demand for domestic servants among the mainlander population, and this was due to the existence of a large number of atomized and single men exiled from China. This gave the supposedly disadvantaged Taiwanese female servants a considerable advantage in the employer–employee relationship.

That said, I would argue that it was exactly the unsavory tension created by the Taiwanese maids' low status in the eyes of their mainland employers and their economic upper hand that caused the latter so much frustration and consternation, so much so that the unhappy employers wrote excessively on this particular subject. *Waishengren*'s contempt for these local women, and *benshengren* in general, was illustrated by the fact that they easily and readily attributed the misunderstandings arisen from linguistic and cultural barriers to various personal defects. Some of the

<sup>111</sup> Zi Yue, "Banjia, yingou, xianu" [Moving, the ditch, and the maid], *Zhongyang ribao*, October 9, 1952, 6.

<sup>112</sup> For examples, see Zhou Junliang, "Xianu liezhuan (shang)" [The stories of maids, part 1], *Changliu* 14:4 (1956): 21–23; Zhou Junliang, "Xianu liezhuan (xia)" [The stories of maids, part 2], *ibid.*, 14:5 (1956): 16–19; Li Erkang, "Xu xianu liezhuan shang" [The stories of maids continued, part 1], *ibid.*, 14:11 (1957): 15–17; "Xu xianu liezhuan xia" [The stories of maids continued, part 2], *ibid.*, 14:12 (1957): 15–17; Qian Gechuan, "Ranmei zhiji" [Burning eyebrows], *ibid.*, 16:8 (1957): 20–21.

<sup>113</sup> Yi Han, "Zhufu" [Blessing], *Zhongyang ribao*, December 21, 1953, 4; Li Wan, "Amei de chanhui" [The repentance of Amei], *Changliu* 1:8 (1950): 19; Kang Ling, "Xianu" [Maids], *ibid.*, 23:9 (1961): 31–32.

<sup>114</sup> You, "Dang waishengren yudao," 203.

maids' "erratic behaviors" could even be interpreted as passive resistance.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, in these accounts, the mainland employers, both male and female, often played the role of a teacher or a surrogate parent. They wanted to teach the maids Mandarin; they tried to correct their servants' misdeeds at every turn; they attempted to inculcate some culture and decorum in these seemingly deranged local women.<sup>116</sup>

### **Watershed 1958: The End of Wartime Sojourning**

When did the civil war exiles begin to feel that they faced a situation different from the Resistance War, and their temporary sojourn in Taiwan could become permanent? Present-day recollections point to different times. Joshua Fan's interviewees told him dates ranging from three years after the great exodus to the death of Chiang Kai-shek in 1975.<sup>117</sup> Beyond personal anecdotes are assumptions. According to Stéphane Corcuff, *waishengren* asked "when will we go back?" during the 1950s and 1960s. The question gradually became, "will we ever go back?" in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>118</sup> Chang Mau-kuei suggests that 1949 to 1955 were pivotal years when *waishengren* had come to realize the irreversibility of their fate and the impossibility of return.<sup>119</sup>

Chang is right about the pivotal years being in the 1950s. Yet, I argue that they were at the end of that decade rather than during the first half of it. My document-based research in this section and the next chapter makes evident that the time between the late 1950s and early 1960s constitutes an important transitional period in *waishengren*'s ruptured history of displacement and shifting mnemonic regimes. As the "hot wars" in the Taiwan Strait continued to result in stalemates, people began to have serious doubts about the likelihood of a final KMT–CCP showdown. The 1958 Sino-American Joint Communiqué following the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis became a palpable turning point in particular. Pressured by the United States, Chiang Kai-shek grudgingly made an important public announcement to the people in Taiwan – with a message that directly contradicted his regime's hard-line war rhetoric since being expelled from China. The Generalissimo declared that the Nationalist government would henceforth seek political means instead of military means to reacquire the mainland. Chiang's proclamation came as a shock to many, but it also confirmed what a growing number of

<sup>115</sup> Li Erkang, "Xu xianu liezhuan shang," 16–17.

<sup>116</sup> Li Wan, "Amei de chanhui," 19; Zhou Junliang, "Xianu liezhuan (xia)," 16.

<sup>117</sup> Fan, *China's Homeless Generation*, 57–58. <sup>118</sup> Gao, *Zhonghua linguo*, 134.

<sup>119</sup> Chang, *Guojia yu rentong*, v.

mainlanders had already been suspecting. The event marked the beginning of the end for wartime sojourning.

Historians studying Chiang Kai-shek's diary and the declassified Nationalist and US government documents, such as Jay Taylor and Lin Hsiao-ting, have recently presented a revisionist view of the Generalissimo's thinking and decision-making process in early postwar Taiwan. Both Taylor and Lin show that in the early 1950s, Chiang was rather cautious with war and also much more preoccupied with consolidating his base in Taiwan.<sup>120</sup> This interpretation is very different from the now familiar story of an aging and wayward dictator hell-bent on starting World War III in the Taiwan Strait in order to facilitate his return to China, much to the consternation of his benefactors in Washington DC. Taylor and Lin also suggest that Chiang's belligerent harping on reconquering the mainland was done primarily for domestic political purposes.<sup>121</sup> The social history presented in this chapter largely supports these contentions. The extent of the disunity and tension among the displaced party-state, the displaced people, and a majority of the local population in Taiwan meant that the newly routed Nationalists needed to undertake serious rebuilding efforts before they could even think about attacking the PRC. Chiang's constant talk of "retaking the mainland," which worried and irritated his American friends, was used as a justification for his regime's centralizing and authoritarian measures. With that said, *waishengren* were not easily duped by state propaganda. While they were being forcibly and inescapably incorporated into the Generalissimo's party-state system in Taiwan because of their displacement, many did not really trust the regime.

By the mid-1950s, the KMT started facing a restless mainlander population that had reservations about the Generalissimo's ability to deliver on his promise. Signs of this misgiving first appeared in the midst of the First Taiwan Strait Crisis (1954–1955). Earlier during the Korean War (1950–1953), the KMT guerrilla forces – assisted by the CIA – conducted small-scale raids into the coastal regions of southeast China. These skirmishes had kept alive *waishengren*'s hopes of an all-out war with the PRC involving the United States. The fighting in Korea ended in 1953; the US-sponsored raids were stopped after the signing of the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty in late 1954. As Nancy Tucker has rightly pointed out, the 1954 defense treaty between Washington and Taipei, a product of the first strait crisis, provided the Nationalists with some security assurance and "urgently needed support," while giving the

<sup>120</sup> Jay Taylor, *Generalissimo*, 457–458; H. Lin, *Accidental State*, 9–10. For an example of the established interpretation, see Tucker, *Strait Talk*, chapter 1.

<sup>121</sup> Jay Taylor, *Generalissimo*, 478; H. Lin, *Accidental State*, 237.

Americans, “the ability to circumscribe, if not prevent, Nationalist Chinese risk taking.”<sup>122</sup> It was during this time that several editorials in *Ziyou Zhongguo* began expressing concerns about whether or not the war in the Taiwan Strait would become a permanent standoff between “two Chinas.” What upset the mainland exiles was how easily the Nationalists folded under American and international pressure to disengage from the war in the 1954–1955 crisis.<sup>123</sup> For many waiting anxiously to return home, this ceasefire meant a stalemate and an extended stay in Taiwan.

*Waishengren*’s impatience and suspicion grew in the second half of the 1950s. This growing sentiment was illustrated by a famous and controversial editorial published in *Ziyou Zhongguo* in August 1957, which talked rather candidly and audaciously about the touchy subject of “retaking the mainland”:

Generally speaking, there are two different opinions on this particular matter. One comes from the government. The officials have been overwhelmingly confident about the eventual success of mainland recovery . . . The other one comes from the general public, usually off the record comments. People have begun to think differently as time goes by. The officials should not just think that the people will continue to believe whatever the government says without suspicion. The officials also should not think that as long as they can keep intimidating people and making everyone keep their mouths shut, they will be able to maintain control, and the people will be afraid to say what is really on their minds.<sup>124</sup>

The editorial went on to argue that a major war between the capitalist nations and the socialist bloc had become less likely in the wake of recent events: the Korean Armistice Agreement, the division of Vietnam, and the push for the Non-Aligned Movement following the Bandung Conference (1955). It then accused the KMT authorities of using its mainland objective as a pretext to justify their ruthless authoritarianism in “Free China.”<sup>125</sup>

The editorial was part of the widely read and debated “today’s problems series” (今日的問題系列) in *Ziyou Zhongguo*, which contained fifteen consecutive articles from late 1957 to early 1958 discussing a wide range of political, social, and economic issues in Taiwan.<sup>126</sup> Facing such

<sup>122</sup> Tucker, *Strait Talk*, 14.

<sup>123</sup> See “Dui Aisenhao zongtong guanyu yuandong zhengce ziwen de guangan” [(Our) views toward President Eisenhower’s Far East policy report], *Ziyou Zhongguo* 12:3 (1955): 5; “Chi suowei tinghuo yu liangge Zhongguo zhi miushuo” [Denouncing the nonsense of “ceasefire” and “two Chinas”], *ibid.*, 12:4 (1955): 3; “Taiwan haixia tinghuo tanpan shizaibixing ma?” [Is a ceasefire and negotiation in the Taiwan Strait really necessary?], *ibid.*, 12:10 (1955): 5.

<sup>124</sup> “Jinri de wenti (er): Fangong dalu wenti” [Today’s problems (2): The question of retaking the mainland], *ibid.*, 17:3 (1957): 5.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 7. <sup>126</sup> Xue Huayuan, “*Ziyou Zhongguo*,” 144–145.

an outright attack, the Nationalists mobilized the state-run media to condemn the magazine for spreading anti-government lies that aided the Chinese Communist cause. Interestingly enough, some of the mainland intellectuals who distrusted the official propaganda also responded to the editorial negatively. They thought the view presented by the piece was too pessimistic. Obviously, despite their mounting suspicions, there were still those who were not yet ready to come to terms with the prospect of a protracted exile.<sup>127</sup>

The real turning point thus came in late 1958, in the aftermath of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, roughly a year following the publication of the controversial editorial. In August 1958, Chairman Mao resumed the earlier 1954–1955 strait war. His forces began shelling Chiang's troops amassing on Quemoy and Matsu (馬祖), the two island strongholds off the coast of Fujian Province still occupied by the Nationalists. As had happened during the first crisis, the United States came to the Generalissimo's aid. The intense artillery war petered out in a month or so, and the clash ended in another stalemate.<sup>128</sup> The two sides continued to bombard each other on alternate days for the next two decades, but with shells carrying propaganda leaflets instead of high explosives and shrapnel.

The US assistance came with strings attached. In late October 1958, as the fighting subsided, US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles flew to Taipei to see Chiang Kai-shek in person. The ensuing negotiation was an uneasy and contentious one. The United States needed reassurance from the Nationalists that they would not escalate the current conflict or attack the PRC in the future without consulting Washington first. The Nationalists wanted the Americans to show a stronger commitment toward protecting Taiwan by strengthening the terms stipulated previously in the 1954 mutual defense pact. In his book, Jay Taylor portrays a crafty and patient Generalissimo gaining the upper hand in the talks. The Nationalist ruler got Dulles to offer the stationing of nuclear-capable Matador missiles in Taiwan while acknowledging the importance of Quemoy and Matsu to the island's defense without giving much in return.<sup>129</sup>

Taylor's assessment of the 1958 Chiang–Dulles meeting overlooks the domestic scene in Taiwan, however. There was indeed something that the old dictator had to give his US backers in return, something he was extremely reluctant to do up to this point in time. Previously, by

<sup>127</sup> “Guanyu fangong dalu wenti de wenti,” [The problem with “the question of retaking the mainland”], *Ziyu Zhongguo* 17:5 (1957): 6–8.

<sup>128</sup> For more on the 1958 crisis and the role played by the United States, see Tucker, *Strait Talk*, 16.

<sup>129</sup> Jay Taylor, *Generalissimo*, 498–501.

entering into a protective relationship with the United States in 1954, Chiang Kai-shek had essentially relinquished his regime's ability to unilaterally make war on China without the United States' approval. Washington had allowed Taipei to keep this fact vague in its official announcement to the people in Taiwan for the sake of maintaining morale. In 1958, the Americans wanted further reassurance from the Nationalists. They thus required the Generalissimo to make a strong public statement to renounce the use of military force as the primary means to recover the mainland, in particular to the Chinese refugees who had followed him to Taiwan. For Dulles, this part of the bargain was absolutely nonnegotiable. Before leaving Taipei, the secretary of state was able to pressure Chiang into making this statement after "some very tough arm-twisting"<sup>130</sup> (see Figure 2.3).

The resulting proclamation, which came to be known as the Sino-American Joint Communiqué of 1958, declared that the restoration of people's freedom in mainland China would henceforth be accomplished mainly by political means and not the use of military force. The announcement stunned the general public in Taiwan, as well as the Chinese communities living in Hong Kong and other parts of the world.<sup>131</sup> Most of Taiwan's private newspapers, even those that were very pro-KMT, interpreted it as Chiang's exiled regime giving up on its promise to fight its way back to China. The statement led to a lot of negative reactions on the island, even in a repressive era, so much so that Taiwan's well-respected ambassador to the United States, George Yeh (葉公超, 1904–1981), needed to publically defend the communiqué by denouncing the general public's interpretation as "complete nonsense."<sup>132</sup> However, by then, it was already too late. Despite Yeh's vehement defense and those made by other high-ranking Nationalist officials, the damage had been done.

Shocking as it was, the 1958 communiqué nevertheless confirmed what many mainlanders had already been suspecting for some time since the mid-1950s. Now it began to dawn on them that, even with the ongoing struggle between capitalism and communism, the rest of the world, including the United States, wanted to see peace in the Taiwan Strait, even if it meant a permanent standoff between the "two Chinas." Therefore, unless something drastic or unexpected happened, they could be in Taiwan for the long haul. Many of the editorials and essays in *Ziyou Zhongguo* published in response to the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis and the ensuing Taipei–Washington

<sup>130</sup> Tucker, *China Confidential*, 129.

<sup>131</sup> "Yi zhengzhi jianshe kaituo fuguo xinjushi" [Using political construction to open up a new situation for the restoration of our country], *Lianhe bao*, November 2, 1958, 2.

<sup>132</sup> "Sheizai 'hushuo'?" [Who is "talking nonsense"?], *Ziyou Zhongguo* 19:10 (1958): 35.



Figure 2.3 The negotiation for the 1958 Sino American Joint Communiqué in Taipei. The US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles (left), Ambassador George Yeh (center), and Chiang Kai shek (right). Source: Photograph by James Burke/The LIFE Picture Collection via Getty Images.

communiqué clearly illustrated this kind of thinking.<sup>133</sup> Even opinion pieces arguing that the KMT should not completely abandon the military option conceded that the fight to return to China had henceforward become a long-term struggle.<sup>134</sup> Chiang Kai-shek never did relinquish his plan to seize the mainland by force, and he asked his generals to make war preparations in secret. Several years later, in 1962, the Nationalist dictator initiated an operation to invade a China weakened by Mao's Great Leap famine. The scheme

<sup>133</sup> For examples, see “Renqing dangqian xingshi zhankai zixin yundong” [Recognizing the present situation and undertaking a self renewal movement], *ibid.*, 19:8 (1958): 3 6; “Lun fangqi zhudong shiyong wuli zhi chengnuo” [A discussion of the promise to give up the military option], *ibid.*, 19:9 (1958): 5 6.

<sup>134</sup> Shi Zhihua, “Fenxi zhongmei huitan jieguo ji bushiyong wuli shengming” [An analysis of the result of the Sino American talks and the announcement of “giving up the military option”], *ibid.*, 19:9 (1958): 11; Jin Sikai, “Guojijushi yu fangongfuguo zhi dao” [International situation and the path to counterattack and restoring the nation], *ibid.*, 21:11 (1959): 9 10.

irritated the Kennedy administration, which upon discovering it, immediately took steps to block the Nationalist efforts.<sup>135</sup>

What the Generalissimo continued to plan in secret, or what his state propaganda machine continued to preach, was irrelevant to what ordinary mainland exiles really thought at this particular historical juncture. Here again, the recent memories of the Resistance War shaped people's thinking. Many mainlanders in Taiwan had lived through the Japanese invasion in China. They could all remember the key role played by the United States in the KMT's final victory. Moreover, most understood that the security of "Free China" depended largely upon US assistance. People might take the words of the Generalissimo and his officials with a grain of salt. When the message came straight from the Americans, they knew it was for real.

The immediate effect of the 1958 communiqué on the people in Taiwan was observable. Lindsey Grant was an economic officer with the US Embassy in Taipei from 1958 to 1961. Reflecting back on the event, Grant remarked:

There were a lot of people in Taiwan who were delighted with that communiqué. One thing happened within weeks. We began to notice people started fixing up their residences. They obviously had read it and they said, "Uncle Sam ain't gonna put us back there. We are not going to be able to get back on our own. We're going to be here." That movement was just palpable. It went right through the community. Even for the hardest bitten return to the mainland types, they began to recognize that they'd better make their peace with Taiwan.<sup>136</sup>

Grant's memory resonates with an account written by an ordinary traveler named Yu Wuyuan in 1959. Yu lived and worked in New York, but had relatives in Taiwan. In late April 1959, he traveled to Taipei on a business trip. The journey was actually his first trip back since leaving the island for the United States in 1949. Yu then returned to the United States and wrote a travelogue that provided some intriguing and perceptive observations on the capital of "Free China." He sent the piece to *Ziyou Zhongguo*; the magazine published it in 1960. Yu wrote that he sensed a prevailing mood of "emptiness and loneliness" (空虚寂寞) among Taipei's citizens while he was there:

There is no doubt that, during the past ten years, our compatriots from the mainland had kept the hope of returning home alive, counting on the authorities' promise. Yet since the Sino American Joint Communiqué, when the government announced publically not to take the mainland by force, this glimmer of hope was gone!

<sup>135</sup> Tucker, *China Confidential*, 175–178.   <sup>136</sup> Ibid., 129.

Emptiness in the present and shattered hope for the future was the main theme of Taipei's society from top to bottom. A minority at the top could keep themselves entertained by indulging in sensual pleasures. For those at the bottom, if they did not want to spend their days muddling along without any aim, focusing on religion to seek spiritual salvation seemed to be the only option! Consequently, Islam, Buddhism, Catholicism, and a variety of protestant sects flourished in different places!<sup>137</sup>

Different from Grant's recollections, Yu saw the disorientation among his fellow mainlanders: the traumatic effect of shattered hopes and dreams. Both accounts, despite their differences, illuminate the transformation that was taking place in the late 1950s. This was the beginning of the end for wartime sojourning, and the start of something new among the exiled mainlanders. This "something new" is the subject of the next chapter. Borrowing a term coined by renowned mainlander novelist Pai Hsien-yung, I call it "cultural nostalgia."

<sup>137</sup> Yu Wuyuan, "Taipeixing" [Journey to Taipei], *Ziyou Zhongguo* 22:2 (1960): 19. Yu traveled to Taipei in April 1959. *Ziyou Zhongguo* published his travelogue in early 1960.

### 3 Cultural Nostalgia

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But I don't consider Taipei my home; neither was Guilin. Maybe you won't be able to understand. I miss home dearly in America. There is no physical "home," a house, a place, or any place – it's a collection of places and combined memories about China. It's very hard to explain. But I really miss it dearly.

Pai Hsien-yung, *Moran huishou* [Looking back suddenly]

[F]or latecomers like us to know that so many of our fellow natives came to Taiwan in earlier times, we will no longer feel alone from this point on. We no longer feel like we are drifting in an alien land or wandering overseas.

Feng Zhutang, "Changhua Chutangxiang Hebei zaoqi yimin fangwenji"  
[A record of visiting early Hebei migrants in Changhua's Chutang Township],  
*Hebei pingjin wenxian*

#### Rethinking Cultural Nostalgia

Pai Hsien-yung (白先勇, 1937–) is one of the most celebrated Chinese novelists in the twentieth century. In 1960, while still a student in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at National Taiwan University, Pai founded *Modern Literature* (現代文學) magazine with fellow undergraduates. The magazine fostered a cohort of avant-garde writers who experimented creatively with Western Modernist aesthetics.<sup>1</sup> It spawned a new literary and artistic movement in Taiwan synonymous with the magazine – a movement that gradually transformed and supplanted the anti-communist realism sponsored by the KMT.<sup>2</sup> In 1963, Pai left Taiwan for graduate studies in the United States. He honed his literary skills at the famous Iowa Writers' Workshop. Upon graduation, Pai taught Chinese literature at the University of California, Santa

<sup>1</sup> Hsiao, *Huigui xianshi*, 81–86.

<sup>2</sup> For more on Modern Literature, see Wang Dewei ed., *Taiwan: Cong wenxue kan lishi* [Taiwan: A history through literature] (Taipei: Maitian, 2005), 301–306; Chang, *Literary Culture in Taiwan*, chapter 4.

Barbara, until retiring in 1994.<sup>3</sup> Following his retirement, Pai traveled and lectured throughout China, where his writings received belated attention and acclamation.

Pai was born into a Chinese Muslim family in Guilin, Guangxi Province just days after the start of Japan's full-scale invasion of China on July 7, 1937. His father Bai Chongxi (白崇禧, 1893–1966) was a powerful Guangxi militarist and a major rival of Chiang Kai-shek in the Nationalist Party back on the mainland. In late 1944, young Pai and his siblings were loaded onto a train with hundreds of other terrified refugees when the Japanese forces approached Guilin. As the railcars left the station, Pai watched his beloved hometown being engulfed by flames – a horrifying scene that would forever be etched in his memory. The flight from Guilin was followed by brief sojourns in Chongqing, Nanjing, Shanghai, Hankou, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong, before he eventually landed in Taiwan in 1952.<sup>4</sup>

A prominent theme in Pai's fiction is "cultural nostalgia" (文化鄉愁), which embodies the mentality of a displaced individual. The individual indulges in anachronistic and nostalgic longing of an elapsed time or locality that is recalled abstractly as refined, sublime, and superior. Pai wrote most of his stories between the early 1960s and early 1980s when he lived and worked in the United States.<sup>5</sup> While being both a homosexual and a foreigner undoubtedly shaped his diasporic perspective, this "cultural nostalgia" was also the product of his personal history. At a 2008 academic conference in Taipei, at which Pai's illustrious career was celebrated, the esteemed novelist told the audience, "Looking back on my life, I was born in sorrow and misfortune. My childhood was the life of a refugee running off to different places."<sup>6</sup>

No other works in the great novelist's oeuvre epitomize the leitmotif of cultural nostalgia better than *Taipei People* (臺北人). The book contains fourteen short stories Pai wrote between 1965 and 1971. They depict *waishengren* living in Taipei a decade or so after the great exodus. Though Pai produced these stories while living in the United States, they were nonetheless based on his personal observations of his parents and their fellow exiles in Taiwan. As such, *Taipei People* is said to have captured the mental world of the displaced mainlanders at this particular historical

<sup>3</sup> Pai Hsien yung, *Taipeiren* [Taipei people], 29th ed. (Taipei: Erya chubanshe, 2007), 345, 353.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 343.   <sup>5</sup> Ibid., 345 350.

<sup>6</sup> Chen Fangming and Fan Mingru eds., *Kua shiji de liuli: Pai Hsien yung de wenxue yu yishu guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* [Diasporic displacement across different centuries: An anthology for the international conference on the literature and art of Pai Hsien yung] (Chungho: INK, 2009), 8.

juncture – when a temporary sojourn gradually turned into a permanent exile. The characters that appear in the book include people from different walks of life: urban socialites, opera singers, army generals, high-ranking officials, widows of air force pilots, petty civil servants, common soldiers, former May Fourth students-turned-intellectuals, small shop owners, domestic servants, dance girls, prostitutes, and vagrants, among others. Despite their diverse social backgrounds and personal circumstances, these individuals are united by their inability to let go of the past. They all left family members behind on the mainland; they all had unfinished business there. Everyone is trapped in a melancholic limbo between nostalgic memories of the “good old days” in China and their now lackluster existence in Taiwan.<sup>7</sup>

Years later, while reflecting back on his frame of mind when he was creating these fictional characters, Pai talked about his constant yearning for “a collection of places and combined memories about China” that was real but very hard to describe in tangible terms.<sup>8</sup> Many of his contemporaries had echoed this intangible nostalgia during this time. A noticeable example was the poet Yu Guangzhong (余光中, 1928–2017), who penned the famous “Four Rhymes of Nostalgia” (鄉愁四韻) in 1974.<sup>9</sup> In this poem, Yu uses natural elements (rivers, leaves, snow, and flowers) as metaphors to convey his everlasting longing for an abstract cultural homeland; one that he cannot return to.

Pai’s *Taipei People*, Yu’s poem, and the Modernist genre have been instrumental in shaping our understanding of first-generation *waisheng-ren*’s mentality and cultural production before political and social changes on both sides of the Taiwan Strait finally allowed them (and their Taiwan-born offspring) to go home in the late 1980s. Sociologist Hsiao A-chin characterizes the exiled mainland writers and intellectuals in Taiwan during the 1960s as part of a passive “generation in-itself.” They were different from the active “generation for-itself” that was coming of age in the 1970s. The latter, comprised of the mainlanders, native Taiwanese, and aborigines born after World War II, for which Hsiao coins the term “return-to-reality generation,” became dynamic agents of the island state’s democratic transition in the 1980s and beyond.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Pai, *Taipeiren*, 2.

<sup>8</sup> Pai Hsien yung, *Moran huishou* [Looking back suddenly] (Taipei: Erya chubanshe, 1978), 167 168.

<sup>9</sup> For more, see Hsiao, *Huigui xianshi*, 88 89, note 18.

<sup>10</sup> See A chin Hsiao, “A ‘Generation In Itself’: Authoritarian Rule, Exilic Mentality, and the Postwar Generation of Intellectuals in 1960s Taiwan,” *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture* 3:1 (2010): 1 31.

This chapter complicates that picture by attempting to rethink the mainlander cultural nostalgia. The Chinese civil war exiles were not completely “passive” in the 1960s and 1970s. Their nostalgia for home and their search for belonging were much more complex than an abstract and diasporic longing that could only be communicated through sublime Modernist aesthetics. The following research brings to light the hitherto little-known magazine publication and cultural activities sponsored by the “mainlander native-place associations” (*waisheng tongxianghui* 外省同鄉會) in Taiwan. I argue that these associations’ combined effort to gather, preserve, and disseminate historical knowledge of their respective home provinces, counties, and towns in China – a cultural phenomenon that started in the early 1960s and lasted well into the 1980s – illustrates a major shift in first-generation *waishengren*’s mnemonic regime from “wartime sojourning” to “cultural nostalgia.” The shift happened in response to the rapidly declining possibility of return. I further argue that, in some of the cultural activities that the *waisheng tongxianghui* undertook, interesting traces of “localization” can be observed. This localization tendency developed in tandem with the better-known and studied nativist cultural movement in the 1970s introduced by the younger and politically active “return-to-reality generation.” It would take two more shattering social traumas for a Taiwan-based and collective “Mainlander identity” to emerge in the early 1990s. That said, the research in this chapter underscores an important fact: *waishengren*’s localization process in Taiwan started long before the 1990s.

Chapter 2 demonstrated that most mainland exiles had at first considered their stay in Taiwan to be temporary due to their previous refugee experiences in China. The expelled mainlanders drew parallels between their displacement during the Resistance War and their displacement to Taiwan. This gave rise to a specific kind of social memory production and a mnemonic regime during the first half of the 1950s in response to the social trauma of the exodus, something I termed “wartime sojourning.” By the late 1950s, especially after Chiang Kai-shek’s shocking public announcement in the 1958 Sino-American Joint Communiqué, more and more exiles began to realize that they faced a situation radically different from the earlier war. When the displaced *waishengren* thought they might not be able to return home in their lifetimes – and never again see the parents, grandparents, spouses, siblings, and children they had left behind, let alone resume the lives they once knew or be buried in a communal graveyard with their ancestors – intense feelings of loss, disorientation, and depression began to set in. I call this the social trauma of the diminishing hope (for return).

Facing this disheartening reality, which became apparent by the late 1950s and early 1960s, people did not just wallow in a gloomy limbo that could only be represented indirectly and aesthetically through novels, poems, and abstract cultural metaphors. Yu Wuyuan's travelogue at the end of Chapter 2 suggested that some of the upper-class mainlanders escaped into a world of sensual pleasures while those with lesser means turned to religion to forge a new sense of community and belonging. This chapter uncovers the ways in which *waishengren*'s native places in China became the focal point of their social memory production for the purpose of rebuilding communities from the early 1960s onward to the mid-1980s. When the anticipated return seemed unlikely, the exiles-turned-migrants tried to connect with fellow provincials and hometown natives in Taiwan. Such efforts were made in order to compensate for the permanent loss of home, family, and community they had left behind in China. Moreover, in accumulating a plethora of historical and cultural information about their mainland native places – mostly by the way of personal memories – first-generation *waishengren* sought to create a repository of knowledge. The idea was that this knowledge would serve as a basis for existing and future generations to maintain and strengthen their native-place/provincial identities in Taiwan. These local history and culture projects were funded exclusively by the mainland native-place associations. The displaced Nationalist regime neither fully supported them nor actively encouraged them.

The efforts by the exiled generation to bring young people in their communities into the fold of their respective native-place associations were not very successful. The civil war migrants wanted to educate their children and grandchildren, who grew up in Taiwan and never saw China, about their individual provinces, counties, and hometowns on the mainland. In the perhaps likely scenario in which none could ever go home, future generations would at least be acquainted with their roots. Unfortunately, Taiwan-born mainlanders reacted rather indifferently to the native-place-based memories and cultural activities. They would, however, be interested in exploring, promoting, and anthologizing another kind of memory – one told by their parents and grandparents later on when the island state democratized: personal narratives that are associated with the great exodus.

### ***Tongxianghui Historiography and Waisheng Tongxianghui in Taiwan***

*Tongxianghui* (同鄉會) can be translated literally either as “same-native-place associations” or “fellow provincials associations.” They are mutual assistance groups formed by Chinese migrants based on

native-place ties at various geographic and administrative levels (region, province, county, township, etc.).<sup>11</sup> These associations have a long history. Similar organizations can be found both inside and outside of China during different historical periods. According to Bryna Goodman, the label *tongxianghui* was not used until the early twentieth century. The term signifies “a new and self-consciously ‘modern’ form” of associations that emerged during the Republican period (1912–1949).<sup>12</sup> Notwithstanding the existence of a mélange of regionally based social and religious groups that had long operated in Chinese society, the precursor to *tongxianghui* was *huiguan* (會館), which Richard Belsky translates as “native-place lodges.” These lodges – both the physical structures and the organizations that constructed them – can be traced back to the reign of Ming emperor Yongle (永樂帝, 1402–1424).<sup>13</sup> When Yongle moved the imperial capital from Nanjing to Beijing, southern elites who migrated with the court formed groups to help cope with the relocation.<sup>14</sup> *Huiguan* later came to stand for the head office or the common hall of a *tongxianghui*. *Gongsuo* (公所), which literally means “common place,” was another term associated with native-place groups before the onset of modern *tongxianghui*. *Gongsuo* was interchangeable with *huiguan*, though it carried a stronger connotation for commercial activities.

In China, native-place organizations were vital intermediaries in both interregional trade and urban politics from their inception in the early Ming dynasty to the founding of the PRC in 1949. They performed a wide range of social functions that were different according to provinces, regions, and historical circumstances. These included the housing of civil service exam candidates from the provinces, as well as banking, trade, labor recruitment, schooling, communal charity, ancestor worship, funeral arrangement, conflict mediation, and so on.<sup>15</sup> These functions also changed and evolved with time.

Besides these key functions, *tongxianghui* also catered to both the practical and psychological needs of migrants, sojourners, and refugees, which

<sup>11</sup> For more on the *waisheng tongxianghui* in postwar Taiwan, see Zhong Yanyou, *Zhengzhixing yimin de huzhu zuzhi* (1946 1995); *Taipeishi zhi waisheng tongxianghui* [Political migrants’ mutual assistance organizations (1946 1995): The mainland native place associations in Taipei] (Panchiao: Daoxiang chubanshe, 1999), 84–87.

<sup>12</sup> Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1853–1937* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 40.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Belsky, *Localities at the Center: Native Place, Space, and Power in Late Imperial Beijing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 6.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 33–34.

<sup>15</sup> Dou Jiliang, *Tongxiang zuzhi zhi yanjiu* [Research on native place organizations] (Chongqing: Zhongzheng shuju, 1943), 87–96; William Rowe, *Hankow: Commerce and Society in a Chinese City, 1796–1889* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1984), chapters 7–10.

was especially true during messy wartime situations. With reference to the Resistance War, R. Keith Schoppa writes, “In a culture that depended on personal connections and networks that had been built up over many years in one’s native place, leaving that source of security and sustenance was daunting. Beyond that native place was a world of strangers, where there were no connections, only threats and dangers.”<sup>16</sup> For ordinary Chinese born in a time of great political and social upheaval, *tongxianghui* was one’s home away from home – an extension of a local community at distant localities. Native-place identities were an integral part of Chinese identity. People thought they had a moral obligation to further the interests of their native place and to assist fellow provincials in need.

Given their complex and overlapping roles, the native-place associations during late imperial China and the Republican period were prominently featured in the now largely defunct debate on the nature of Chinese modernity versus Western modernity. The crux of the matter revolved around Max Weber’s view on the “failure” of highly commercialized Chinese cities to develop capitalism and civil society in contrast to what happened in early modern Europe. Weber saw the ingrained parochialism of urban associations in China as a major obstacle to the formation of rational and autonomous civil organizations that could challenge the established feudal order. Weber’s idea was first challenged by He Bingdi (Ho Ping-ti) in the 1960s and then by William Rowe in the 1980s. Both attempted to turn Weber’s thesis on its head by showing that much of what Weber had described in Europe had also taken place in China.<sup>17</sup>

Historians began to fundamentally question the debate centered on Weber’s proposition by the early 1990s. Bryna Goodman and Richard Belsky’s monographs reflected this trend. Their works shifted *tongxianghui* studies from a concern with capitalism, modernity, and civil society to a concern with regionalism, nation, and nationalism. Both have connected native-place identities with the emergence of a broader national identity in China. Goodman’s book offers a well-researched account of the metamorphosis of *tongxianghui* in Shanghai from the mid nineteenth century to 1937. She cogently illuminates “the flexibility, adaptability, and utility of native-place ideas to forces of economic, social, and political change in the city.”<sup>18</sup> According to her, the evolution of native-place ties and institutions in Shanghai contributed not to the rise of an autonomous

<sup>16</sup> Schoppa, *In a Sea of Bitterness*, 10.

<sup>17</sup> He Bingdi, *Zhongguo huiguan shilun* [A historical survey of huiguan in China] (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1966); Rowe, *Hankow*, 1984; William Rowe, *Hankow: Conflict and Community in a Chinese City, 1796–1895* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989).

<sup>18</sup> Goodman, *Native Place*, 3.

civil society/public sphere or a common Shanghai identity, but to the formation of Chinese national identity.<sup>19</sup> Still, Goodman argues that *tongxianghui* neither submitted fully to state control nor operated entirely independently of it. Instead, there were “shifting areas of partial autonomy, interpenetration, and negotiation.”<sup>20</sup> Belsky’s study of *huiguan* in Beijing from the fifteenth century to the Chinese Communist takeover in 1949 expands on Goodman’s idea. The book describes a symbiotic relationship between the imperial authorities and the provincial elites who ran the lodges at the capital. The relationship made it possible for the elites to imagine a collective national entity by the late nineteenth century. The native-place associations thus contributed to “China’s evolution from a late imperial to a national socio-political system.”<sup>21</sup>

Goodman and Belsky both provide a brief discussion of *tongxianghui*’s rapid demise in China after the PRC was established.<sup>22</sup> They nevertheless seem oblivious to the associations in Taiwan formed by the civil war exiles. Once again, this illustrates how the dividing line of 1949 has influenced modern Chinese historiography. Though *tongxianghui* withered in Mao’s China, where native-place sentiments and organizations were denounced as feudal, backward, and counterrevolutionary, these associations continued to exist and function in Chiang Kai-shek’s “Free China.” Native-place ties and networks were instrumental in helping to resettle the displaced population when the Nationalist regime was in disarray due to its defeat. This explains why the KMT authorities did not ban *tongxianghui* outright in Taiwan. Instead, they opted for state supervision and regulation, as they had done previously on the mainland.

Initially, most *waisheng tongxianghui* were weak financially and organizationally. Many of the associations in the 1950s were ad hoc in nature. As we shall see, the laws governing *tongxianghui* were designed to balkanize these associations and curb their membership sizes. The Nationalist ideology subsumed provincialism (the love for the native place) under nationalism (the love for the party-state). Since the early days of the Nanjing Decade (1927–1937), the Nationalists sought to prevent *tongxianghui* from developing into powerful social organizations that could compete with the party-state for people’s loyalty.<sup>23</sup> In 1950s Taiwan, the island’s depressed economy meant that mainland exiles could contribute little money and resources to their native-place groups. Beyond

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 312–314. <sup>20</sup> Ibid., 304. <sup>21</sup> Belsky, *Localities at the Center*, 17.

<sup>22</sup> Goodman, *Native Place*, 305, 311; Belsky, *Localities at the Center*, 256–258.

<sup>23</sup> The official KMT line on *tongxianghui* is best illustrated by an article published in *Zhongyang ribao* in 1929. See Zuo Ren, “Gao ban tongxianghui zhe” [Advice to those who organize native place associations], *Zhongyang ribao*, March 5, 1929, 5.

government policy and the economy, quarrels among fellow natives also divided and weakened some of the associations.

There was, however, a much more important reason why *tongxianghui* activities in Taiwan, particularly on the cultural front, did not pick up until the 1960s. The reason was *waishengren*'s sojourner mentality during their first decade in exile, as discussed in the previous chapter. While people still thought they might be able to go back to their relatives and townsfolk in China soon, there was little motivation to rebuild communities locally. Gathering, recording, and disseminating knowledge of their native places or creating new family genealogies based in Taiwan would be utterly meaningless. While people still believed they would return to the mainland in the near future, they saw no need to raise money to construct in Taiwan a permanent *huiguan* building for fellow natives to interact socially. They saw no need to purchase land for a communal graveyard to lay their deceased to rest. As the following historical research will show, things began to change in the early 1960s.

The mainlander native-place associations were patriarchal and conservative. A majority of active members were elderly or middle-aged men.<sup>24</sup> In fact, *tongxianghui* organizers constantly sought the endorsement and participation of retired KMT elites in order to gain both social prestige and political protection. These associations were thus a far cry from the autonomous civil society in early modern Europe presented by Weber. They were not powerful social organizations that could pressure an authoritarian military regime like the KMT to make progressive changes; nor were they corporatist entities the state could simply control or absorb to implement policy. Similar to what Goodman has delineated in Shanghai, there were definitely “shifting areas of partial autonomy, interpenetration, and negotiation” in *waisheng tongxianghui*’s relationship with the displaced party-state.<sup>25</sup> Many *tongxianghui* leaders in Taiwan were retired provincial statesmen or senior KMT officials. Because of this, the associations were able to exercise limited agency. They advanced their own local projects under the guise of supporting the state’s agenda. Also similar to *tongxianghui* in Shanghai, *waisheng tongxianghui* in Taiwan were utilitarian and flexible. They served the needs of their provincial constituencies according to changing times and circumstances. In the 1950s,

<sup>24</sup> See the membership surveys provided by Li Xiaoling, “Minjian shetuan zhi yanjiu: Yi Taipei diqu tongxiang zuzhi weili” [Research on civil organizations: Using the native place organizations in the Taipei region as a case study] (master’s thesis, National Taiwan University, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1979), 63; Xu Lijuan, “Taipeishi Jiangxi tongxianghui zhi tantao” [An investigation of the Jiangxi native place association in Taipei] (master’s thesis, National Taiwan Normal University, Department of History, 2005), 49–51.

<sup>25</sup> Goodman, *Native Place*, 304.

resettlement and short-term relief were their main tasks. From the early 1960s onward, these associations became the main vehicles for promoting native-place histories and cultures.

Both Goodman and Belsky argue that native-place identities were crucial for the formation of national identity in modern China. The research presented in this chapter offers a caveat to this idea. There was, in fact, a subtle but palpable tension between *waisheng tongxianghui*'s promotion of native-place histories/identities and the KMT ideology of national unity in postwar Taiwan. *Tongxianghui* organizers on the island paid constant lip service to the official line, trying to align their provincial projects with a major state-sponsored cultural campaign. Even so, the Nationalist authorities provided these associations with little financial and institutional support while setting up an umbrella organization to monitor their activities closely. Recognizing this tension – the fundamental contradiction between nationalism and provincialism – allows us to see *tongxianghui*'s activities not as state-led projects (or even derivatives of state-led projects), but as genuine cultural responses from a displaced population attempting to mitigate their social trauma of the diminishing hope, when the homecoming became increasingly impossible.

Stéphane Corcuff suggests that identification with a Chinese province or a native place was an “evident dimension of the forty-niners’ psyche.”<sup>26</sup> In Taiwan, however, there has been little interest in exploring the history of *waisheng tongxianghui*. Only three master’s theses were ever produced on the subject, and only one of them was published as a book.<sup>27</sup> There are a number of reasons. First, before democratization, the tension between loyalty to the native place and loyalty to the nation meant that the study of *tongxianghui* was not something that the Nationalist authorities would actively encourage. After democratization, the membership of these associations declined precipitously. The social trauma of the homecoming in China, something I will delve into in the next chapter, had shattered *waishengren*'s cultural nostalgia. Second, as we move to the present, age and generation constitute another main reason. The elderly exiled generation are passing away. Their Taiwan-born children and grandchildren are not interested in maintaining *tongxianghui*. Third, and more importantly, ties and loyalties to provinces and hometowns in China have become unpopular and even politically incorrect in the face of rising Taiwanese nationalism since democratization.

<sup>26</sup> Corcuff, *Memories of the Future*, 173.

<sup>27</sup> Li Xiaoling, “Minjian shetuan”; Zhong Yanyou, *Zhengzhixing yimin*; Xu Lijuan, “Taipeishi Jiangxi.”

These developments have combined to produce a collective amnesia on the subject.

### ***Waisheng Tongxianghui during the 1950s***

Taiwan received massive migration from southeast China (southern Fujian and northern Guangdong) during the second half of the eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth century. Though native-place organizations had existed on the island long before the arrival of the great exodus, the primary functions of the newer mainlander associations were somewhat different from the commerce-oriented groups during the Qing and the Japanese colonial periods. As I stated previously, *tongxianghui* were malleable entities. The precursors to *waisheng tongxianghui* in post–World War II Taiwan were the native-place associations in China formed during the Resistance War. According to Bryna Goodman, *tongxianghui* played an important role in evacuating refugees from Shanghai when the Japanese attacked the city in 1937.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Stephen MacKinnon and R. Keith Schoppa offer accounts of the relief efforts by *tongxianghui* in the city of Wuhan and in Zhejiang Province.<sup>29</sup> The native-place associations provided food, shelter, medical care, and temporary employment for their displaced provincials.<sup>30</sup> The wartime capital Chongqing became a major hub for *tongxianghui* activities.<sup>31</sup>

Chapter 2 showed that many first-generation mainlanders who ended up in Taiwan had fled to Sichuan and other inland provinces earlier in the midst of the Japanese invasion. When the Nationalist regime collapsed in 1949, a considerable number of refugees, regardless of their social status, had to fend for themselves when reaching Taiwan. These uprooted and atomized individuals often sought the help of fellow natives in securing housing and jobs, as well as finding missing relatives, friends, and colleagues on their treacherous journeys to the island. Like wartime Chongqing, Taipei became a hub for *tongxianghui* activities.<sup>32</sup>

Records kept by the Social Affairs Bureau of Taipei City indicate that 62 *waisheng tongxianghui* registered with the municipal authorities between 1948 and 1955. More specifically, 15 *tongxianghui* were founded in 1951, 14 in 1952, 19 in 1953, and 8 in 1954. In 1947, there had only

<sup>28</sup> Goodman, *Native Place*, 287–291.

<sup>29</sup> MacKinnon, *Wuhan*, 1938, 57; Schoppa, *In a Sea of Bitterness*, 51–52.

<sup>30</sup> “Gesheng tongxianghui xiejiu nanmin qingxing” [The native place associations are helping refugees from their respective provinces], *Zhongyang ribao*, August 11, 1938, 4.

<sup>31</sup> For more, see Dou, *Tongxiang zuzhi*, 96–102.

<sup>32</sup> *Zhongyang ribao* was filled with announcements made by the newly established *waisheng tongxianghui* in Taiwan during this time.

been 5 such associations. Such a sharp increase in a short span of time was a testament not only to their utility but also their necessity for displaced people in need of assistance. By the year 1960, there were 92 *waisheng tongxianghui* in Taipei.<sup>33</sup>

Numbers aside, newspapers and archival documents shed light on *tongxianghui*'s vital role in providing immediate, short-term relief for their fellow natives arriving in Taiwan. For example, in mid-July 1949, Dongbei (東北) native-place association doled out money to hundreds of impoverished students exiled from northeast China (Manchuria). The association also struck a deal with National Taiwan University Hospital to provide free medical treatment for Dongbei people who got sick or injured during the exodus.<sup>34</sup> A month earlier, Zhu Foding (朱佛定, 1889–1981), head of the preparatory committee for the Jiangsu native-place association in Taipei, wrote to the Civil Affairs Department of the Taiwan Provincial Government. He wanted to rent vacant land owned by the state to build a farm and a handicraft shop that would offer fellow provincials food and temporary employment. The provincial authorities gave Zhu and his associates a small plot on the fringe of Taipei City that had previously been owned by a Japanese company.<sup>35</sup> In December 1949, Zhu's association started registering unemployed Jiangsu people in the city in order to provide relief.<sup>36</sup> In June 1953, after receiving more than twenty letters in a single month from jobless Zhejiang refugees seeking aid, entrepreneur Cheng Jiajun (成家駿), the then chairman of the Zhejiang native-place association in Taipei, donated all the proceeds generated from a commercial patent he owned to his native-place association. The association used Cheng's donation to set up a zero-interest loan program to help exiled Zhejiang residents start small businesses in Taiwan.<sup>37</sup> The civil war exiles also established *tongxianghui* in other major cities and towns on the island.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately, due to insufficient sources, we know less about the groups outside of Taipei.

<sup>33</sup> Zhong Yanyou, *Zhengzhixing yimin*, 70–71.

<sup>34</sup> “Dongbei tongxianghui choukuan jiiji tongxiang” [Dongbei native place association raised fund to assist fellow provincials], *Zhongyang ribao*, July 16, 1949, 4.

<sup>35</sup> Zhu Foding, “Taipeishi Jiangsu tongxianghui choubai weiyuanhui … youwu shidang gongyou tudi” [The preparatory committee for Taipei Jiangsu native place association … if there is suitable public land] (June 17, 1949) NHD, 453/639.

<sup>36</sup> “Jiangsu tongxianghui jue dengji shiye tongxiang” [Jiangsu native place association decided to register unemployed fellow provincials], *Zhongyang ribao*, December 15, 1949, 4.

<sup>37</sup> “Canhe jiareqi Zhejiang Cheng Jiajun chushou zhuanliquan jiiji shiye tongxiang” [Zhejiang's Cheng Jiajun donated all proceeds from the sale of a patent for meal box heater to help unemployed fellow provincials], *Lianhe bao*, June 6, 1953, 3.

<sup>38</sup> “Tongxianghui zuzhi” [Native place organizations] (December 21, 1947) NAA, A376610000A/0036/B012.73/1/002; “Taichungshi Guangdong tongxianghui shenqing dengji juan” [Taichung City Guangdong native place association registration application files] (May 19, 1950) NAA, A376590000A/0035/123.2 9/1/013.

What we do know is that there was a collective drive by *waisheng tongxianghui* in the early 1950s to provide relief for the tens of thousands of fellow exiles stranded in Rennie's Mill Refugee Camp in Hong Kong.<sup>39</sup> The tiny British colony was swamped by a human tidal wave when the Chinese Communists came to power. The mainlanders reaching Taiwan were anxious to learn the whereabouts of their families and friends who could be languishing in Rennie's Mill Camp. Many turned to their native-place associations for help. From September 1950 to January 1952, forty-one different *waisheng tongxianghui* in Taiwan sent money and supplies donated by their members to Hong Kong via the state-sponsored "Free China Relief Association."<sup>40</sup>

Liu Chenghui, whom I interviewed, was one such beneficiary of these relief efforts. She was the wife of a local police captain in a small rural town of Guangxi Province. Her husband had fled without telling her several days before the CCP cadres entered her hometown. Upon discovery, Chenghui took her small children and embarked on a perilous journey to find her husband. Months later, they entered Hong Kong with a group of refugees and lived in Rennie's Mill Camp for several years. The Guangxi native-place association in the Camp not only took care of Chenghui and her children, but also later reunited them with her husband through networking with the Guangxi association in Taipei. Without *tongxianghui*, it was likely that neither Chenghui nor her little ones would have survived the ordeal of 1949.<sup>41</sup> Native-place relations and organizations were literally lifesavers for ordinary refugees such as Chenghui and her family.

There was a hierarchy of affinity in native-place relations. Those from the same province were "big natives" (大同鄉) to each other. Those from the same county, town, or village were "small natives" (小同鄉).<sup>42</sup> One naturally felt closer to the latter compared to the former.

In a single-party dictatorship, the people's loyalty should lie primarily with the state and its supreme leader. Native-place identities and ties were potentially harmful if they took precedence over one's national identity.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> For more on the Camp, see D. Yang, "Humanitarian Assistance."

<sup>40</sup> "Ge shengxian tongxianghui fen juankua jiu nanbao muqian yiyou sishiyi qi" [Forty one provincial and county level native place associations have donated money to help the refugees (in Hong Kong)], *Lianhe bao*, February 11, 1952, 2. For more on Free China Relief Association, see Madokoro, *Elusive Refuge*, 46, 62–63; D. Yang, "Humanitarian Assistance," 176–177.

<sup>41</sup> Liu Chenghui, interviewed by the author.

<sup>42</sup> Yi De, "Xiaozhang kujing" [The difficulties faced by school principals], *Lianhe bao*, May 10, 1956, 6. I would like to thank Wang Fu chang for bringing this article to my attention.

<sup>43</sup> "Diyu guannian yu tongxianghui" [Regionalism and native place associations], *Lianhe bao*, December 3, 1951, 2.

Thus, in Mao's China, these associations had little room to survive. When *tongxianghui* sprang up in Taiwan during and following the great exodus, the displaced Nationalist regime did not crack down on these organizations. The reason was simple: the native-place groups helped to provide instant relief for the refugee crisis at hand. Recognizing the utility of *tongxianghui*, the Nationalists followed their previous practice in China. They opted for registration, regulation, and supervision instead of outright suppression.<sup>44</sup> In March 1950, representatives from several government branches met to discuss the laws governing *tongxianghui* in Taiwan. They followed the legal framework and guidelines established by their predecessors in China during the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>45</sup>

Two important aspects of the laws illustrate a clear intention by the Nationalists to limit both the influence and the membership size of the associations. First, all active military personnel were barred from joining *tongxianghui*.<sup>46</sup> Military personnel could only become members after retiring or withdrawing from service. Second, the formation of large, island-wide associations was strictly prohibited.<sup>47</sup> *Tongxianghui* of the same province or county established in different cities were kept isolated from each other. They were made to register with their respective municipal authorities, and were forbidden by law to form a joint association.<sup>48</sup> Setting up a combined *tongxianghui* with an umbrella organization at the provincial level to oversee a number of smaller groups at the county level was banned as well. *Tongxianghui* incorporating multiple provinces were also outlawed. The provinces in Manchuria had a relatively small number of people in Taiwan compared to the rest. Consequently, an exception was made for them to establish a multiprovince association.<sup>49</sup>

Native-place networks were instrumental in resettling mainland refugees initially; nonetheless, beyond short-term relief, the actual benefits and services these associations could provide to their members during the 1950s were rather limited. *Tongxianghui* facilitated some

<sup>44</sup> For the governing of *tongxianghui* during the Nanjing decade, see Goodman, *Native Place*, 292–295.

<sup>45</sup> “Fudao tongxianghui yi shangding banfa” [Methods to guide native place associations have already been discussed and decided], *Zhongyang ribao*, March 10, 1950, 4.

<sup>46</sup> Taiwansheng zhengfu, “Taiwansheng zhengfu shehuichu han” [A letter from the Bureau of Social Affairs of the Taiwan Provincial Government], *Taiwansheng zhengfu gongbao* no. 29 (Spring 1963): 2. The exiled Nationalist leaders considered rampant provincialism in their military a major factor for their defeat in China. The KMT divisions on the main land had diverse loyalties. Many could not fight together effectively.

<sup>47</sup> Taiwansheng zhengfu, “Shehuichu: Taiwansheng zhengfu daidian” [The Bureau of Social Affairs: A cable message relayed by the Taiwan Provincial Government], *Taiwansheng zhengfu gongbao* no. 80 (Winter 1950): 1172–1173.

<sup>48</sup> Zhong Yanyou, “Zhengzhixing yimin,” 43–44. <sup>49</sup> Ibid., 33.

business exchanges among fellow natives.<sup>50</sup> Several associations set up scholarships for children in their communities who excelled in school.<sup>51</sup> Others periodically doled out, in small amounts, rice, money, and winter clothes to help destitute people from their hometown or home province get by.<sup>52</sup> Taipei Ningbo (寧波) *tongxianghui* was probably the most well-to-do native-place association in early postwar Taiwan. The association was able to offer its members some additional benefits such as financial aid for childbirth and zero-interest loans to start businesses.<sup>53</sup> Ningbo was the exception rather than the rule, and this was as far as the benefits offered by *tongxianghui* would go.

Fund shortage was a common problem for *tongxianghui* in the 1950s. For example, the natives from Rehe (熱河) Province wanted to form an association in Taipei as early as May 1950, but many struggled financially and could not contribute enough money toward this end. The Rehe *tongxianghui* was established belatedly in 1962.<sup>54</sup> Even some of the larger associations failed to assist those in need on a regular basis. The Hebei *tongxianghui* in Taipei was a good example. In 1962, the Hebei association had about 1,200 regular members and boasted 80,000 NTD in total endowment funds collected. Nevertheless, by the admission of its own chairman, the association had to turn down many requests for help from impoverished Hebei natives because there was simply not enough money to go around.<sup>55</sup>

Vicious infighting also weakened some of the *tongxianghui*. The inability to maintain the Wuxi (無錫) *tongxianghui* during the 1950s is a case in point. Internal bickering had plagued the Wuxi association in Taipei since its inception – so much so that the city government ordered it to

<sup>50</sup> Advertisements in the newspapers indicate that some clinics and businesses offered discounts if customers presented membership cards issued by their respective native place associations.

<sup>51</sup> “Ningbo tongxianghui sheli jiangxuejin” [Ningbo native place associations set up scholarships], *Lianhe bao*, August 21, 1952, 2; “Hubei tongxianghui zuofa jiangxuejin” [Hubei native place association handed out scholarships yesterday], *ibid.*, October 29, 1956, 2.

<sup>52</sup> “Wenzhou tongxianghui ban dongling jiuzhi” [The Wenzhou native place association doles out winter alms], *Zhongyang ribao*, December 27, 1958, 4; “Fuzhou tongxianghui dingqi fa zhenmi” [The Fuzhou native place association distributes rice periodically], *Lianhe bao*, January 24, 1959, 5.

<sup>53</sup> “Ningbo tongxianghui ban shengyu buzhu” [The Ningbo native place association provides subsidies for childbirth], *Lianhe bao*, October 2, 1952, 3; “Yong tongxianghui juban xiaoben wuxi daikuan” [The Ningbo native place association offers zero interest loans to start small businesses], *Zhongyang ribao*, March 23, 1955, 4. Also see Zhong Yanyou, *Zhengzhixing yimin*, 231 232, 246 247.

<sup>54</sup> Tan Shangqing, “Benhui shi zenyang dansheng de” [How our association came into existence], *Rehe tongxun* 1 (1963): 15.

<sup>55</sup> Wang Bingjun, “Jinnian de hua” [Talking about this year], *Hebei huikan* 2 (1962): 1.

disband.<sup>56</sup> When some of the Wuxi people got together and called another meeting to vote for a new association in 1959, police officers had to be posted at the door to prevent things from getting out of hand. The meeting failed to inaugurate a new Wuxi association. The 139 attendees spent most of the time squabbling over unresolved disputes from the past. A majority of them walked out in disgust before actual voting even took place.<sup>57</sup>

People with means turned away from *tongxianghui* when the moral obligation to assist other hometown natives became unwanted peer pressure. An interesting newspaper article published in 1956 captures the delicacy of managing native-place relations for school principals in Taiwan. The author, who wrote under an alias, complained:

If you hire a lot of fellow natives, your school will be tinged with favoritism. Others will call your school “xxx native place association.” Your job performance will be viewed with a jaundiced eye. But if you do not handle things properly [by hiring hometown people], your fellow natives will become your worst enemies . . . Those who once praised you as a community leader will treat you like strangers. They will say that you have failed to take care of your own people, and then threaten you with retribution after getting back the mainland.<sup>58</sup>

Though the passage describes what happened in a public school, it is not hard to imagine that similar things went on in the military and in other government institutions populated by the mainlanders.

Notwithstanding the importance of native-place relations in the social life of most civil war exiles, the disunity among fellow natives, a depressed economy, and restrictive government laws had combined to contribute to *tongxianghui*'s relative inertia during the 1950s. Remarkably, in the early 1960s, something interesting began to develop. Faced with the diminishing hope for return, the mainland native-place associations became important vehicles for a new form of social memory production. The three decades that followed the 1950s would become the golden age of *tongxianghui* cultural activities.

### **Nostalgic Memories and the Production of Local References, 1960s–1980s**

With a small number of exceptions, *waisheng tongxianghui* did not publish or distribute any printed materials to their fellow natives or the general

<sup>56</sup> “Wuxi tongxiang yijianduo chengli dahui liuchan” [Wuxi natives failed to establish an association due to conflicting opinions during the inauguration meeting], *Lianhe bao*, May 4, 1959, 2.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 2. <sup>58</sup> Yi De, “Xiaozhang kujing,” 6.

public during the 1950s.<sup>59</sup> Many associations did not even keep records of their finances and activities during the first decade in Taiwan. Conversely, from the early 1960s onward, *tongxianghui* began to produce a considerable number of publications. In particular, there was a growing and coordinated effort by these associations to promote something called “local references” (*difang wenxian* 地方文獻) through magazine publication. Local references encompassed a wide range of information – history, geography, personal biographies, trading goods, industries, agricultural produce, natural resources, folklore, social customs, songs, poems, proverbs, dialects, operas, cuisines, and practically anything and everything about *waishengren*'s respective home provinces, counties, and native towns in China. People not only contributed money, but also volunteered their time and labor for the gathering, compilation, and dissemination of this knowledge. Most of the knowledge came from individual memories instead of historical documents.

The drive to produce *difang wenxian* started with neither instructions nor financial incentives from the government. In fact, it took place before the “Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement” (中華文化復興運動, CCRM), a state-led campaign scholars have associated with most cultural and pedagogical activities in Taiwan during this time, including *tongxianghui* activities. The CCRM was a multifaceted but loosely organized enterprise. It began in late 1966, when Chiang Kai-shek, then approaching his eighties, called for the revival of traditional Chinese culture as part of his regime's continued struggle against Communist China.<sup>60</sup> The movement lasted well into the 1980s, even after the death of the Generalissimo in 1975. Tens of millions of dollars of party and state money was funneled into book and magazine publications, radio broadcasts, movie/TV productions, publicity campaigns, ritual ceremonies, school activities, overseas outreach programs, and so on.<sup>61</sup> The conventional view is that the movement was the old dictator's response to Mao's Cultural Revolution, though unlike the latter, it neither generated massive social upheaval and human misery, nor did it have a profound influence on social movements and revolutions around the globe. Scholars hold different views on the CCRM's domestic influence.

<sup>59</sup> Zhongguo difang wenxian xuehui ed., *Zhongguo difang wenxian shetuan huiyao* [A summary report of the Chinese local references organizations] (Taipei: Zhongguo difang wenxian xuehui, 1985), 78, 120, 211 212, 242.

<sup>60</sup> Lin Guoxian, “Zhonghua wenhua fixing yundong tuixing weiyuanhui” zhi yanjiu (1966 1975): *Tongzhi zhengdangxing de jianli yu zhuanbian* [The research on “Committee for the Promotion of the Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement” (1966 1975): The establishment and transformation of ruling legitimacy] (Panchiao: Daoxiang, 2005), 83 85.

<sup>61</sup> For the funding of the CCRM, see ibid., 117 121.

Warren Tozer and Hsiao A-chin maintain that the campaign had no meaningful political and social effects, for it was a top-down program and the general public felt largely detached from it.<sup>62</sup> Yang Congrong argues the exact opposite. He claims that the CCRM was part of a systematic state campaign to suppress local Taiwanese languages and cultures. The movement was quite effective in achieving this goal as it helped consolidate the mainland Chinese cultural hegemony.<sup>63</sup> Lin Guoxian asserts that the CCRM was the Generalissimo's attempt to bolster the ruling legitimacy of his government in the mid-1960s, which had, up to that point in time, failed to deliver on its promise to retake the mainland.<sup>64</sup> Denny Roy points to the Nationalist vigilance against the American cultural influence on Taiwanese society. Roy notes, "This movement denounced communism but also decried Western liberalism and its undue emphasis on individualism."<sup>65</sup>

While the CCRM's legacy remains a moot point, I argue that it is problematic to see *waisheng tongxianghui*'s drive to produce local references as a derivative of the CCRM for two important reasons. First, *Sichuan wenxian* (四川文献) – the first magazine set up to compile and promote *difang wenxian* – started publishing in 1962. This was several years prior to the launching of the CCRM.<sup>66</sup> Before the Generalissimo's call in late 1966, at least nine other similar magazines also began publishing. Second, though *tongxianghui* publishers tried to align their local references initiatives with the state-sponsored CCRM after the latter commenced, one simple fact separated *tongxianghui* projects from the state projects – the Nationalist authorities offered little encouragement and financial assistance to the cultural activities introduced by *tongxianghui*. This was in stark contrast to the money and resources the KMT invested in CCRM-affiliated undertakings. The incorporation of the "Society for the Study of Chinese Local References" (中國地方文獻學會, SSCLR) in 1970 placed the publication of *difang wenxian* under official supervision. But in the meantime, state support for *tongxianghui*-related projects continued to be minimal.

The mainlander native-place associations published magazines under different titles. Some of these magazines operated independently from the associations, but most of the editorial staff were members of their *tongxianghui*. *Tongxianghui* magazines can be lumped into two general types: "bulletin magazines" and "references magazines." The first type usually fell under names such as *tongxun* (通訊), *huixun* (會訊), *xiangxun* (鄉訊),

<sup>62</sup> Warren Tozer, "Taiwan's 'Cultural Renaissance': A Preliminary View," *China Quarterly* 43 (1970): 81–99. For Hsiao's argument, see Lin Guoxian, *Zhonghua wenhua*, 5–6.

<sup>63</sup> Lin Guoxian, *Zhonghua wenhua*, 6–7. <sup>64</sup> Ibid., 2–4. <sup>65</sup> Roy, *Taiwan*, 144.

<sup>66</sup> Zhong Shunan, "Fakanci" [A forward to the magazine], *Sichuan wenxian* (1962): 1.

*jianxun* (簡訊), and *tongxiang* (同鄉). These can be translated respectively as “communication,” “association news,” “native-place news,” “newsletter,” and “native place.” They suggest a shared communal forum to make announcements, exchange information, and facilitate social interactions among fellow hometown people; hence my choice of the word “bulletin.” The second type, which constituted a majority of the publications by *tongxianghui*, was called *wenxian* (文獻). The literal translation of *wenxian* is “documents” or “documentary sources.” However, instead of using these, I choose another word – “references” – to underscore the publishers’ intentions when they produced and circulated these periodicals. Like compiling an encyclopedia, the aim was to create a repository of knowledge for a specific native place so that both the present and future generations could utilize it as a basis for identity formation and communal consolidation. That native place could be a province, a county, a city, or a township. For the exiled mainlanders, other than assuaging their own social trauma of the diminishing hope, the production of local references was also a crucial task to get their Taiwan-born offspring acquainted with their roots in China.<sup>67</sup>

In theory, bulletin magazines and references magazines served two different purposes. In practice, there was little difference between the two. Taipei Henan *tongxianghui* actually ran two journals: *Zhongyuan wenxian* (中原文獻), which began publishing in 1969; and *Henan tongxiang* (河南同鄉), in 1974.<sup>68</sup> Henan’s case was an exception, though. Most of the mainland native-place associations only had resources and personnel to maintain one periodical. Those published under “bulletin” titles also collected and published local references. A small number of magazines had alternative names such as *Zhejiang yuekan* (浙江月刊), *Funingren* (阜寧人), and *Suifeng* (穗風).<sup>69</sup> They too tried to promote native-place histories and cultures.

There were at least four different native-place periodicals that appeared before *Sichuan wenxian*.<sup>70</sup> That said, *Sichuan wenxian* was the first to propose the local references project and explain its importance in 1962

<sup>67</sup> See the views expressed by Zhong Shunan, “Fakanci,” 1; Zhou Kaiqing, “Women de zhiqu” [Our intent], *Sichuan wenxian* 2 (1962): 1; Feng Zhutang, “Tongxiang jingshen lianxi zhi qiaoliang,” [A bridge to connect native place spirit], *Hebei pingjin wenxian* 1 (1971): 3; Tian Jiongjin, “Chuangkanci” [Preface to the magazine], *Gansu wenxian* 1 (1973): 4 5; “Fakanci” [Preface to the magazine], *Shandong wenxian* 1 (1975): 6 7.

<sup>68</sup> “Fakanci” [Preface to the magazine], *Henan tongxiang* 1 (1974): 1.

<sup>69</sup> Taipei Zhejiang *tongxianghui* introduced *Zhejiang yuekan* in 1968. *Funingren* was the magazine for Taipei Funing County *tongxianghui* (Jiangsu Province). It started publishing in 1983. The first issue of *Suifeng* was produced by a group of Guangzhou natives in Taipei in 1965.

<sup>70</sup> These were *Hainan jianxun* (海南簡訊), *Yixing xiangxun* (宜興鄉訊), *Hebei huikan* (河北會刊), and *Taipeishi Guizhou tongxianghui huikan* (台北市貴州同鄉會會刊).

(see Figure 3.1).<sup>71</sup> The Sichuan native-place association in Taipei did not actually start the magazine. As mentioned, the organization and finances of most *waisheng tongxianghui* up to this point in time were fairly weak. Rather, *Sichuan wenxian* began as a private study group on Sichuan's modern history and culture. In July 1960, eleven provincial elites affiliated with the Sichuan association formed the "Sichuan References Research Club" (四川文獻研究社). Five of them were members of the ROC National Assembly (國民大會) elected in China in 1947.<sup>72</sup> Others were civil servants, publishers, and university professors.<sup>73</sup> The group's initial plan was to assemble and preserve historical documents and artifacts for the study of their home province Sichuan during the Republican period. It was not long before they decided to publish some of the information they gathered.

The main person behind the Club was Zhou Kaiqing (周開慶, 1904–1987). Zhou's career mirrored countless patriotic youths born at the turn of China's tumultuous twentieth century. In 1926, he was a student attending Beijing Normal University. In what later came to be known as the March 18 Massacre, young Zhou stood courageously in front of a picket line to protest against the warlord government in Beijing.<sup>74</sup> He was shot, arrested, and incarcerated. After being released, Zhou found his calling working as a writer for KMT newspapers, first in Hankou and then in Chongqing. When Japan invaded, he enlisted as a political commissar in the Nationalist army. Gaining a reputation as a talented writer, propagandist, and an able administrator, Zhou rose quickly through the ranks. By the end of the Resistance War, he was a magistrate of two important counties in Sichuan. In 1947, Zhou was elected to the National Assembly.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Zhou Kaiqing, "Tan wenxian zhengli" [Talking about the collection of references], *Sichuan wenxian* 4 (1962):1; Zhou Kaiqing, "Women de zhiqu," 1.

<sup>72</sup> Many of the *tongxianghui* leaders in Taiwan were provincial elites elected to the ROC National Assembly in 1947. Among some 3,000 members elected, only about half landed in Taiwan. The exiled Assembly, with members retaining their seats due to the suspension of "national level" elections, had long been regarded as a rubber stamp of the KMT. It was dissolved in 1991 when Taiwan democratized.

<sup>73</sup> Zhou Kaiqing, "Tan difang wenxian de zhengli: Sichuan wenxian de chengli jingguo he jinkuang" [Talking about the collection of local references: The founding of Sichuan references and its recent situation], *Sichuan wenxian* 45 (1966): 1; Zhongguo difang wenxian xuehui, *Zhongguo difang wenxian*, 101.

<sup>74</sup> Warlord Duan Qirui's (1865–1936) troops opened fire on the protestors (mostly university students and Beijing citizens) gathering outside of the government compound on March 18, 1926. Forty seven died; hundreds were wounded.

<sup>75</sup> For more on the life and career of Zhou Kaiqing, see the articles contained in "Chuankangyu wenwuguan chuanganren" [The founder of Sichuan Xikang Chongqing Cultural Museum], *Chuankangyu wenwuguan niankan* 16 (1997): 170–183.

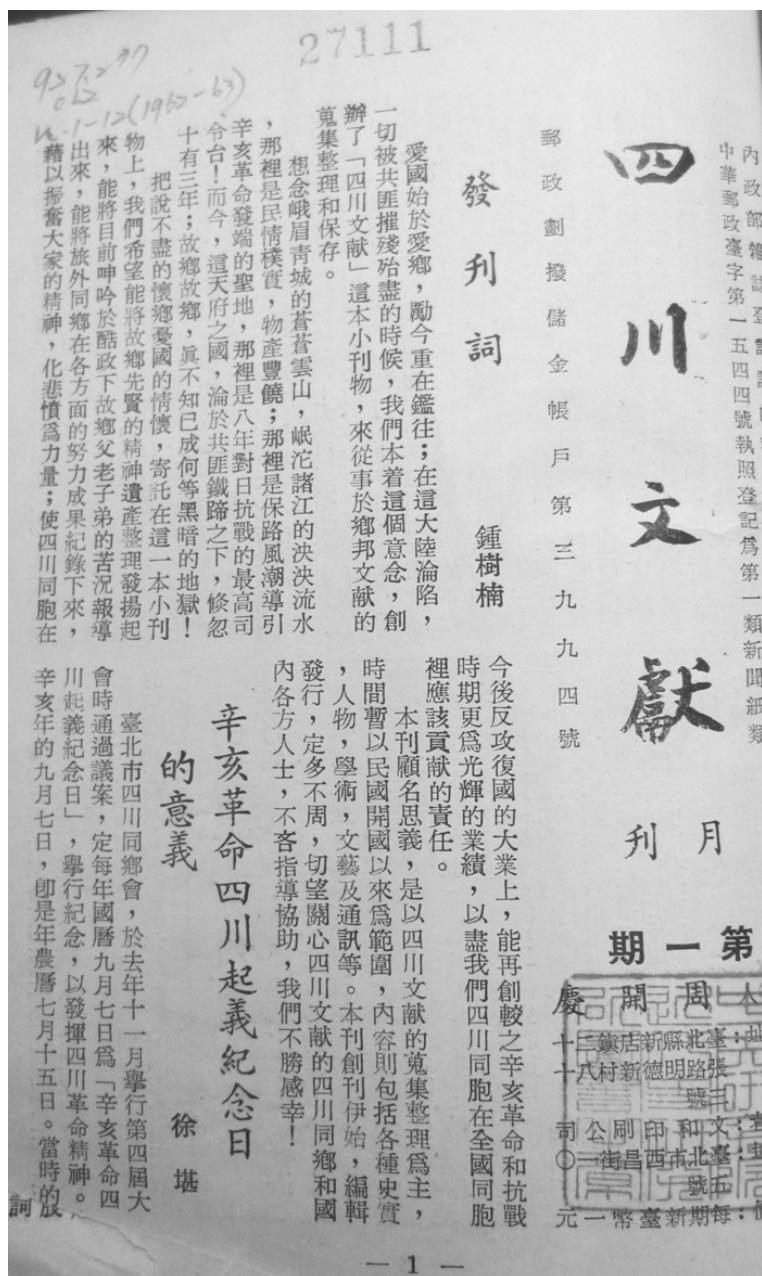


Figure 3.1 The first issue of *Sichuan wenxian* (1962). Source: Photograph by the author.

After escaping to Taiwan, Zhou Kaiqing lived a life of semi-retirement, like many expelled provincial leaders from China. Yet, as time went on, the inability to see his home and family in Sichuan tormented him. He needed to work on something to fill the gaping void he felt in his heart. In 1960, Zhou organized the Sichuan References Research Club with his close friends. After two years of collective work, the first issue of *Sichuan wenxian* was born. The publication expenses were paid for by members of the Club and donations from other Sichuan natives.<sup>76</sup> The magazine was published as a monthly journal. The first couple of issues contain only a dozen or so pages and resemble cheaply produced pamphlets.

Despite poor quality and limited distribution, *Sichuan wenxian* quickly gained some popularity. After only two issues, Zhou received about 600 letters of support from enthusiastic readers. The magazine's call for the gathering of local references apparently struck a chord with a lot of people. Many of the letter senders wanted to become regular subscribers or to submit their own writings or documents for publication. Some wanted to join the Sichuan native-place association. About 80 percent of the senders were actual Sichuan natives. The other 20 percent hailed from other provinces and regions – having resided in Sichuan for an extended period of time, many of whom lived there during the Resistance War, they felt emotionally connected to the province.<sup>77</sup>

*Sichuan wenxian* set an example for others to follow. Community leaders from Jiangsu Province sent a letter to Zhou Kaiqing not long after witnessing the latter's success. They congratulated Zhou and his colleagues on a job well done while informing Zhou that the Jiangsu elites were preparing to launch their own references magazine in early 1963, much to Zhou's delight.<sup>78</sup> The folks from Rehe Province actually beat the Jiangsu people to it. On January 24, 1963, the Rehe natives in Taipei introduced *Rehe tongxun* (熱河通訊). *Jiangsu wenxian* (江蘇文獻) debuted the next day.<sup>79</sup> *Yangzhou xiangxun* (揚州鄉訊) started running the following month. Six months later, the first issue of *Ningbo tongxiang* (寧波同鄉) was made available to all Ningbo natives. At least five more local references journals would begin publishing before the aging Generalissimo called for the CCRM in late 1966. They were *Dabu huixun* (大埔會訊), *Suifeng* (穗風), *Guizhou wenxian* (貴州文獻), *Jiangxi wenxian* (江西文獻), and *Hubei wenxian* (湖北文獻).

The production of local references did not start as part of the CCRM, but *wenxian* magazine publication did pick up momentum after the state

<sup>76</sup> Zhongguo, *Zhongguo difang wenxian*, 102.

<sup>77</sup> Bianzhe, "Zhi duzhe" [A message to the readers], *Sichuan wenxian* 3 (1962):1.

<sup>78</sup> Zhou Kaiqing, "Tan wenxian zhengli," 1.

<sup>79</sup> Zhongguo, *Zhongguo difang wenxian*, 8.

campaign was launched. More and more *tongxianghui* justified their promotion of local histories and identities by linking their provincial projects to the island-wide cultural revival campaign sponsored by the Nationalist authorities.<sup>80</sup> Among these were *Zhejiang yuekan* (浙江月刊) in 1968, *Nanjing tongxun* (南京通訊) in 1969, and *Shaanxi wenxian* (陝西文獻) in 1970.

The 1970s and 1980s saw the heyday of *wenxian* production. Notable province-based references magazines appeared during this time, including *Hainan wenxian* (海南文獻), *Hebei pingjin wenxian* (河北平津文獻), *Yunnan wenxian* (雲南文獻), and *Shandong wenxian* (山東文獻), just to name a few. Following in the footsteps of Ningbo, Yangzhou, Dabu, and Nanjing, city- and county-based associations also started churning out their own periodicals. Examples included *Danyang wenxian* (丹陽文獻), *Chaozhou wenxian* (潮州文獻), *Jianli wenxian* (監利文獻), and *Xiaoxian wenxian* (蕭縣文獻). In total, mainland native-place groups published at least forty-eight different references magazines by 1985 (see Figure 3.2).<sup>81</sup> Besides the magazines, *waisheng tongxianghui* also reproduced, both for sale and free distribution, a sizable collection of historical materials associated with their own native places: local gazetteers (方志), maps, paintings, photographs, stone rubbings, calligraphy scrolls, and an assortment of old books and pamphlets.

During the 1950s, many native-place associations had lain dormant or only existed on paper; but by the 1960s, they were resuscitated by the new movement to produce historical knowledge of their home provinces, counties, and towns. For example, when Taipei's Rehe native-place association was finally constituted in 1962, its main task was to publish *Rehe tongxun*. Earlier, in July 1955, the PRC had literally wiped Rehe off the map. The province had been broken up into parts that were merged with neighboring provinces and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. Rehe exiles felt dispossessed upon hearing the news. It was as if their physical existence as a people was obliterated by this cartographic erasure. Consequently, recording and preserving the province's unique history consisting of Han, Manchu, and Mongolian legacies became an important mission for the Rehe natives in Taiwan.<sup>82</sup>

The story of the Hubei *tongxianghui* in Taipei is also telling. The association itself was founded as early as 1947. Unfortunately, it was mired in financial difficulties throughout the 1950s; hence the lack of

<sup>80</sup> The editorials of references magazines published after 1966 constantly paid lip service to the CCRM.

<sup>81</sup> Zhongguo, *Zhongguo difang wenxian*, 48.

<sup>82</sup> "Fakanci" [A preface to the magazine], *Rehe tongxun* 1 (1963): 2; Lin Yinguo, "Sanyan liangyu, hua jiachang" [Casual talks, in two three words], *ibid.*, 1 (1963): 18.



Figure 3.2 An assortment of *difang wenxian* (local references) magazines funded and published by the mainland native place associations. Source: Photograph by the author.

meaningful activities.<sup>83</sup> The publication of *Hubei wenxian* brought new life to the association. In early 1966, a group of young civil servants and recent university graduates from Hubei wanted to start a references magazine for their province. The actions taken by the Sichuan natives and others had inspired them.<sup>84</sup> They raised money and knocked on the doors of their provincial elites to seek patronage, so that their magazine would be recognized and accepted by other Hubei natives. Many of the senior Hubei leaders were quite hesitant because of the financial burden the project could entail. It was not until the septuagenarian Wan Yaohuang (萬耀煌, 1891–1977) lent his name to *Hubei wenxian* that the magazine was able to be published.<sup>85</sup> Wan was a former warlord from Hubei who had allied with the KMT and became governor of his home

<sup>83</sup> Taipeiishi Hubei tongxianghui huishi bianji weiyuanhui ed., *Hubei lutai tongxianghui huishi* [History of the Hubei native place association in Taiwan] (Taipei: Hubei tongxianghui, 1984), 7 12.

<sup>84</sup> For more, see ibid., 302 303.   <sup>85</sup> Ibid., 303.

province following the Resistance War. Like most of the elderly provincial elites who escaped to Taiwan, Wan was kept out of the corridors of political power.<sup>86</sup>

While the native-place associations themselves were often dominated by retired statesmen such as Wan, the production of local references resonated with a much larger provincial community beyond *tongxianghui*. The 600 letters of support Zhou Kaiqing received is a good case in point. People might not have regularly attended the Chinese New Year celebrations and other social events hosted by their *tongxianghui*. Others might not have even gotten along with their fellow natives. Even so, most were willing to donate money or submit their own writings and private collections to help preserve their native-place histories, cultures, and customs for future generations. The donors and content contributors to references magazines included retired soldiers, petty civil servants, teachers, and small business owners.<sup>87</sup>

In the late 1960s, the Nationalist authorities began to take notice of the increasing number of references magazines and the role of *waisheng tongxianghui* in producing them. On May 9, 1969, Zhou Kaiqing, Wan Yaohuang, and other promoters of local references were summoned to a meeting with KMT party historians as well as officials from the Ministry of the Interior (內政部) at Academia Historica (國史館).<sup>88</sup> After the meeting, these retired provincial elites were charged with creating an umbrella organization to bring together all native-place associations that were churning out *difang wenxian*. Approximately a year later, in early April 1970, the “Society for the Study of Chinese Local References” (SSCLR) was born.<sup>89</sup> Under the new arrangement, the state would provide a moderate subsidy to cover the cost of running the SSCLR and play an advisory role to the Society. In return, the SSCLR was required to hold yearly meetings and to publish a yearbook. The yearbook provided an annual report on *tongxianghui*’s local references projects and all related cultural activities.

<sup>86</sup> For more on Wan, see Shen Yunlong et al., *Wan Yaohuang xiansheng fangwen jilu* [The reminiscences of Mr. Wan Yaohuang] (Taipei: Zhongyangyanjiuyuan jindaishi yanjiu suo, 1993).

<sup>87</sup> See Li Xiaoling, “Minjian shetuan,” 48, 51; Leng Wagai, “Lengwa shuo lenghua xianhua ‘Shaanxi lengwa’” [Cool dolls talking cool; casual talks about “Shaanxi cool dolls”], *Shaanxi wenxian* 45 (1981): 61; Zhongguo, *Zhongguo difang wenxian*, 322.

<sup>88</sup> Academia Historica had its origins in China during the early Republican period. The institution stored government documents and produced the official history of the ROC.

<sup>89</sup> See Zhongguo, *Zhongguo difang wenxian*, 9 14; Zhou Kaiqing “Zhongguo difang wen xian xuehui chengli jingguo” [The events leading to the establishment of the SSCLR], *Zhongguo difang wenxian xuehui niankan* (1971): 32–35.

During the 1970s, under the auspices of the state, the promotion of native-place histories and cultures benefited from several large public exhibitions cohosted by the SSCLR, Academia Historica, and a number of public universities, libraries, and museums. These exhibitions drew hundreds of thousands of people.<sup>90</sup> Local references publishers also gained permission to reprint some previously classified documents: gazetteers and rare books stored in the Ministry of the Interior archives.<sup>91</sup> Beyond these, however, the mainland native-place associations received next to nothing from the government.<sup>92</sup> Their plea for state money to build cultural museums for each of the mainland provinces fell on deaf ears.<sup>93</sup>

Ever since the first issue of *Sichuan wenxian*, Zhou Kaiqing and his colleagues from the study group had aligned their projects with the state's anti-communist crusade.<sup>94</sup> When the CCRM commenced, *tongxianghui* people went out of their way to show that their promotion of provincial cultures and histories was in direct response to the Generalissimo's call.<sup>95</sup> Still, the Nationalist authorities offered no substantive assistance beyond token recognition. The government's incorporation of the SSCLR was actually a way for it to keep tabs on what the native-place associations were doing. The state had no intention of paying either for the production of references magazines or for the proposed provincial museums. An island-wide survey conducted by the Ministry of the Interior in 1989 indicated that official subsidies accounted for less than 3 percent of *tongxianghui*'s annual income.<sup>96</sup> The tension between regionalism and nationalism has persisted, but the overlapping of personnel from the

<sup>90</sup> Zhongguo difang wenxian xuehui, "Zhongguo difang wenxian zhanlan jingguo" [The course of the SSCLR exhibition], *Zhongguo difang wenxian xuehui niankan* (1971): 38 40; Zheng Xiuqing, "Zhongguo ditu wenxian zhanlan jingguo" [The course of the Chinese map references exhibition], *ibid.*, (1973): 39 41.

<sup>91</sup> Zhongguo, *Zhongguo difang wenxian*, 26 27.

<sup>92</sup> Li Xiuru, "Cong lishi guandian kan difang wenxian" [Looking at local references from the perspective of history], *Hunan wenxian jikan* 8:1 (1980): 5.

<sup>93</sup> Zhang Yufa, "Wenhua jianshe buying hushi dalu wenwu" [Cultural construction should not overlook the mainland artifacts], *Zhongguo difang wenxian xuehui niankan* (1978): 11 13.

<sup>94</sup> Zhong Shunan, "Fakanci," 1.

<sup>95</sup> Wang Fuzhou, "Zhongyuan wenxian fakanci" [A preface to Zhongyuan references], *Zhongyuan wenxian* 1:1 (1969): 1 2; Zhang Qingyuan, "Fakanci: Hebei pingjin wenxian chuangkan xiyanan" [A preface: a dedication to the founding of Hebei pingjin references], *Hebei pingjin wenxian* 1 (1971): 1 2.

<sup>96</sup> Close to 90 percent of the *tongxianghui* income came from membership fees, private donations, and the annual interest generated by its fund and endowment. See Neizhengbu tongjichu ed., *Zhonghuaminguo Taiwan diqu geji renmin tuanti diaocha baogao* [An investigative survey of the civilian organizations at all levels in Taiwan, ROC] (Taipei: Neizhengbu, 1989), 71 73.

party-state and *tongxianghui* ensured that government intervention was benign tutelage rather than punitive censorship.

At the end of the day, the mainland native-place associations and their members bore the cost of compiling and propagating *difang wenxian*. The nostalgia for home and the desire to rebuild a community in Taiwan contributed to the production of a considerable number of references magazines, gazetteers, books, and pamphlets. That said, the longevity of these projects largely depended upon the money and resources individual associations and publishers were able to muster. The associations offered their magazines to fellow natives or to anyone who asked for them either free of charge or at a fairly low price. They also donated copies to public libraries and universities in Taiwan. In some cases, the donation extended to universities and academic institutions in Japan, Europe, and the United States.<sup>97</sup> The largesse resulted in heavy debts for some of the associations and even individuals.

Local references publishers without a sizable endowment or frequent donations from fellow natives were mired in financial troubles. Some of the journals ran out of funds and ceased to exist quickly.<sup>98</sup> Others had to publish intermittently. *Hunan wenxian* is a good example. In February 1969, a university professor from Hunan started the references magazine as a bimonthly journal with his own retirement money. A small number of close friends also chipped in. After eight issues, the professor exhausted his life savings and the magazine went into bankruptcy in April 1970. The Hunan native-place association in Taipei took over and financed *Hunan wenxian* as a quarterly (*jikan*). In June 1973, the magazine stopped publishing again. *Tongxianghui* leaders threw in the towel as the association's own coffers became depleted because of the magazine. It was not until 1975 that an independent press was established, when the head of the association secured a long-term financial commitment from several well-to-do Hunan community leaders. Shortly thereafter, the magazine was up and running once again.<sup>99</sup> *Hunan wenxian jikan* was not the only references magazine that had to stop publishing for an extended period of time due to financial shortage; *Jiangsu wenxian*, *Guizhou wenxian*, and *Hebei pingjin wenxian*<sup>100</sup> went through similar stoppages.

<sup>97</sup> Zhongguo, *Zhongguo difang wenxian*, 110, 258, 325.

<sup>98</sup> *Anhui wenxian* was an example. See *ibid.*, 84 85.

<sup>99</sup> Benkan ziliaoshi, "Hunan wenxian de yange wu fazhan" [The evolution and development of Hunan references], *Hunan wenxian jikan* 13:1 (1985): 23 24.

<sup>100</sup> Zhu Peilian, "Jiangsu wenxian de zhengji yu zhengli" [The collection and categorization of Jiangsu references], *Zhongguo difang wenxian xuehui niankan* (1971): 41 42; Hu Guofan, "Guizhou wenxian zhi dansheng yu fusu" [The birth and resuscitation of Guizhou references], *ibid.*, (1971): 60; Feng Zhutang, "Hebei pingjin wenxian gaishu" [An overview of Hebei pingjin references], *ibid.*, (1971): 61.

Another problem associated with references magazines and many other *tongxianghui* publications is the authenticity of the information collected. This point touches upon the central argument of this chapter. The collection of local references was a communal mnemonic project, not an academic endeavor. The magazine editors had neither the manpower nor the expertise to verify the accuracy of the vast amount of historical texts, personal writings, and miscellaneous materials submitted by their fellow natives.<sup>101</sup> Drawing from the Confucian classics, Zhou Kaiqing demonstrated that *wenxian* had two components: *wen* signifying “documents”; *xian* denoting “biographies and testimonies of elders.”<sup>102</sup> For the first component, *waisheng tongxianghui* collected and reprinted a large number of local gazetteers, books, maps, paintings, calligraphy scrolls, and stone-rubbings. The second component literally turned references magazines into storehouses of memories.

Despite Zhou Kaiqing’s emphasis on having both documentary sources and individual testimonies, the latter actually constituted a majority of the information published by the references magazines. Over half of the articles in *Sichuan wenxian* were based on personal recollections. People relied heavily on memory when producing biographies and autobiographies, and when writing about food, social customs, folklore, operas, music, dialects, and idioms from their native provinces and counties. In other *tongxianghui* magazines, memory-based information became even more dominant. For example, the editors of *Guizhou wenxian*, in their preface to the very first issue of the magazine, lamented over the loss of the entire provincial archives during the disorderly flight to Taiwan. To compensate for the loss of actual written records, they encouraged provincial elders and virtuous scholars from Guizhou to tap into their memories.<sup>103</sup> The Guizhou natives answered the call. Accordingly, most of the information published in *Guizhou wenxian* was based on personal testimonies. In *Rehe tongxun*, the production of local references became a collective mnemonic exercise. Many essay contributors apologized for their dearth of knowledge or fading memory. They invited others to revise what they had written or to fill in the blanks as needed.<sup>104</sup> People also remembered things differently, which caused minor disputes to arise from time to time. In *Shandong wenxian*, concerned readers wrote to correct “mistakes” made by earlier

<sup>101</sup> Liu Xiuru, “Cong lishi guandian,” 6. <sup>102</sup> Zhou Kaiqing, “Women de zhiqu,” 1.

<sup>103</sup> “Fakanci,” [Preface to the magazine], *Guizhou wenxian* 1(1965): 1.

<sup>104</sup> For examples, see Shang Qing, “Xinnian yijiu” [Reflecting on the old Chinese New Year], *Rehe tongxun* 1 (1963): 72; Li Rubao, “Si guxiang hua xinnian” [Thinking about home and talking about the New Year], *ibid.*, 3 (1964): 79; Zhao Zhongwu, “Jingpengxian jianjie” [A profile of Jingpeng county], *ibid.*, 8 (1966): 49.

contributors.<sup>105</sup> Responding to the frequency of this kind of feedback, the Shandong editors set up a “corrigenda” section in their magazine as a means for authors and subscribers to communicate with each other.<sup>106</sup>

### **Rebuilding Community: Localization and Searching for Roots in Taiwan**

Displaced people are not set in stone as perpetual objects of loss and sorrow. They adapt to changing circumstances; they find ways to ease their feelings of rootlessness and alienation. In *China's Homeless Generation*, Joshua Fan discusses *chengjia* (成家) – attempts in the 1960s and 1970s by single Nationalist soldiers to marry and establish families in Taiwan.<sup>107</sup> Focusing on *tongxianghui* publications and cultural activities that took place roughly during the same period, this chapter argues that these nostalgic projects also had certain root-planting components. The promotion of native-place histories, cultures, and identities recreated some semblance of home and community locally in Taiwan. When going back to China seemed impossible, fellow mainland natives on the island – those who shared the same fate and hometown attachment – became potential surrogates with whom one could build communal ties and a new sense of belonging. I call this phenomenon the “localization” of first-generation *waishengren*. Rather than being permanent exiles, the mainland refugees were becoming settlers, and hence my increase in use of the term “civil war migrants” as opposed to “civil war exiles” to describe the exodus population in Taiwan from this point onward. *Waisheng tongxianghui*'s publications and cultural activities, which began in earnest in the early 1960s, signal the start of this transformation.

The “localization” of first-generation *waishengren* is of course different from the nativist cultural movement (associated with the “return-to-reality generation” coined by Hsiao A-chin) in the 1970s and the burgeoning Taiwanization trend in the 1980s.<sup>108</sup> As the discussion at the beginning of this chapter has suggested, due to the stereotype of a timeless

<sup>105</sup> For example, see Han Zhaoqi, “Baidu ‘Xindu Shandong wenxian ji’ de yidian shuoming” [Some explanations after reading the “Joyful reading of Shandong wenxian”], *Shandong wenxian* 1:3 (1975): 24.

<sup>106</sup> “Zhengwupian” [Corrigenda], ibid., 1:3 (1975): 81.

<sup>107</sup> Fan, *China's Homeless Generation*, chapter 4.

<sup>108</sup> For a critical analysis of the “return to native soil” cultural movement, see Hsiao, *Huigui xianshi*, chapter 4. For more on Taiwanization, especially the political opposition’s mobilization against the KMT, see Wang Fu chang, “Taiwan fandui yundong de gongshi dongyuan: Yijiujijiu zhi yijiubajiu nian liangci tiaozhan gaofeng de bijiao” [Consensus mobilization of the political opposition in Taiwan: Comparing two waves of challenges, 1979–1989], *Taiwan zhengzhi xuekan* 1 (1996): 129–210.

subject of cultural nostalgia established by the Modernist aesthetics of influential writers such as Pai Hsien-yung and Yu Guangzhong, China-born mainlanders often serve as a foil for the rest of Taiwan. While others moved forward, they stayed behind – perpetually immersed in a state of incurable homesickness. The following will demonstrate that the civil war migrants did not just live in some kind of nostalgic time capsule that was otherwise insulated from the island's main sociocultural and political developments during these two tumultuous decades of change. They too had changed, evolving with time. The former exiles produced Taiwan-based family genealogies. Certain native-place groups actively sought local roots for their communities on the island. *Waishengren*'s localization later contributed to their profound reverse culture shock in China. After residing in Taiwan for nearly four decades, the mainlanders and their native places/families back in the mainland had become strangers to each other.

The native-place communities and identities that the civil war migrants tried to rebuild and promote at this point in time still fell under the rubric of the Chinese cultural and national identity advocated by the ruling Nationalist regime, despite the aforementioned tension between regionalism and nationalism.<sup>109</sup> The next two chapters will show that it was only after *waishengren* experienced the “twin social traumas of the homecomings” on both sides of the Taiwan Strait in the late 1980s and early 1990s that they started distancing themselves from their respective native places in China, as well as the authoritarian past of the KMT. The word “*waishengren*” has been part of the daily lexicon in Taiwan since 1945, but a common *Waishengren* identity rooted in Taiwan did not begin to take shape until the first half of the 1990s.<sup>110</sup>

A tangible sign of the people settling down and rebuilding communities locally in Taiwan is *waisheng tongxianghui*'s efforts to erect permanent structures. There were not many of these types of projects in the 1950s when returning to China was still thought possible.<sup>111</sup> Starting in the 1960s and 1970s, and running parallel to the production of local references, some of the more well-endowed native-place associations began to invest in constructing *huiguan* (a *tongxianghui*'s main building),

<sup>109</sup> According to Hsiao A chin, *waishengren* were not alone. The native Taiwanese writers in the 1970s still understood Taiwanese literature and identity in the framework of Chinese cultural and national identities. See Hsiao, *Huigui xianshi*, 155–200. The Taiwanization for both groups happened only after 1980.

<sup>110</sup> D. Yang and Chang, “Understanding the Nuances,” 111–113; Wang Fu chang, *Dangdai Taiwan*, 151–153.

<sup>111</sup> Taipei Ningbo *tongxianghui* was one of the exceptions. It had a *huiguan* building and purchased a communal graveyard in the 1950s. Zhong Yanyou, *Zhengzhixing yimin*, 252.

graveyards, temples, and cultural museums. As examples, the Dabu and Henan native-place associations in Taipei completed their new *huiguan* buildings at roughly the same time as they started publishing their magazines.<sup>112</sup> In 1972, the Henan association built a communal cemetery in the Nankang (南港) District of Taipei City. A rich Henan family donated the land, and the *tongxianghui* raised the money for construction. Some of the deceased Henanese in Taiwan, whose families were willing to pay premium prices, could subsequently enjoy their eternal slumbers in the company of fellow natives. Every year during the Qingming Festival (清明節), the Henan *tongxianghui* would organize a pilgrimage to perform the “tomb sweeping and ancestor worshiping” (掃墓祭祖) ritual at the cemetery on behalf of all the Henan natives in Taiwan. These visits were carried out well into the 1990s, even after people were allowed to visit surviving relatives and ancestral tomb sites in China.<sup>113</sup> For the Hebei *tongxianghui* in Taipei, the sale of burial lots in its communal graveyard actually accounted for most of the association’s income during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>114</sup>

In the mid-1960s, the Taipei Jiangxi *tongxianghui* started gathering donations from fellow natives to erect the “Ten Thousand Year Longevity Temple” (萬壽宮). The temple would be home to Xuzhenjun (許真君), the revered Daoist deity of the Jiangxi people.<sup>115</sup> Immediately after the temple was finished in 1971, it became the spiritual and cultural center for all the Jiangxi natives in Taiwan. The Jiangxi association continued to collect funds to improve on the house of worship for Xuzhenjun throughout the 1970s.<sup>116</sup> By 1980, the expanded and renovated three-story structure served multiple functions. It was the *huiguan* for the Taipei Jiangxi native-place association, a communal temple for both ancestral worship and the cult of Xuzhenjun, as well as a cultural museum for Jiangxi Province (see Figure 3.3). In 1978, at roughly the same time, Zhou Kaiqing’s local

<sup>112</sup> “Choujian Taipeishi Dabu tongxianghui daxia mujuan yuanqi” [The origin of the call for donations to construct the building for the Dabu native place association in Taipei], *Dabu huixun* 1 (1964): 15; Liu Jingyan and Wang Jiangong eds., *Henan tongxianghui: Zhongzhou huiguan luocheng jinian tekan* [Henan native place association: A special issue to commemorate the completion of zhongzhou huiguan] (Taipei: Taipeishi Henan tongxianghui, 1970).

<sup>113</sup> Rao Yunying, “Ba: Henan tongxianghui muyuan yu Nankang muyuan de guanxi” [Eighth: The relationship between Henan native place association cemetery and Nankang cemetery], *Henan tongxiang* 100 (1998): 39–40.

<sup>114</sup> Zhong Yanyou, *Zhengzhixing yimin*, 207, note 90.

<sup>115</sup> Jiang Bozhang, “Wei jinian Xuzhenjun xiang tongxiang shuo jijuhua” [Speaking to fellow natives on behalf of the efforts to commemorate Xuzhenjun], *Jiangxi wenxian* 3 (1966): 1–3. The Jiangxi association purchased the land for the temple in the 1950s. The actual construction took place in the late 1960s.

<sup>116</sup> Xu Lijuan, “Taipeishi Jiangxi,” 66–68.



Figure 3.3 The *huiguan* (會館) building for the Jiangxi native place association in Taipei (also known as the “Ten Thousand Year Longevity Temple”). The building is located in the Wenshan District. Source: Photograph by the author.

references study group established the “Sichuan–Xikang–Chongqing Cultural Museum” (川康渝文物館). The museum utilized the floor space provided by the Taipei Sichuan *tongxianghui*’s new *huiguan* building to exhibit paintings, calligraphy scrolls, photographs, and other historical materials the group had accumulated for nearly two decades.<sup>117</sup> *Sichuan wenxian* actually stopped publishing in 1982, and in the following year, it was replaced by a yearbook for the museum.

*Waishengren*’s localization during this time can also be observed in an interesting phenomenon: their efforts to produce Taiwan-based family genealogies. In December 1975, *Taiwan Political Review* (台灣政論),

<sup>117</sup> For more, see Zhong Rongzhao, “Chuankangyu wenwuguan zhi chengli ji xiankuang” [The founding of Sichuan Xikang Chongqing Cultural Museum and its current situation], *Chuankangyu wenwuguan niankan* 1 (1982): 1–12. Xikang Province (西康省), or the “Kham” region, was established by the KMT in 1939. In 1955, the CCP abolished the province. Sichuan Province absorbed the eastern part while the Tibetan dominated western part was later incorporated into the Tibet Autonomous Region.

a popular but short-lived political opposition (*dangwai* 黨外) magazine, featured a telling article titled “*waishengren’s depression*” (外省人的苦悶).<sup>118</sup> According to the article, retired mainland elites were indulging in past memories. Their middle-aged sons and daughters were focusing on making money and pushing their children into top universities in order to obtain foreign scholarships that would facilitate the family’s relocation overseas.<sup>119</sup> For the rest, that is, a vast majority of ordinary *waishengren* who could not afford to emigrate or send their kids abroad, producing new locally based family genealogies became somewhat popular. In these genealogies, the civil war exiles reinvented themselves as “first-generation ancestors” (第一世祖) – pioneering settlers in Taiwan from their respective native places in China. In doing so, they hoped to integrate their families locally through intermarriage, neutralizing the division between *waishengren* and *benshengren*, which was understood back then as a “provincial issue” (省籍問題).<sup>120</sup>

The accidental discovery of “Shaanxi Village” (陝西村) in the rural backwaters of central Taiwan presents a bizarre but remarkable case of a mainland community seeking local roots on the island. They did so by fabricating kinship ties with a native Taiwanese community. In the autumn of 1976, a school inspector named Xu Bingyan (徐秉琰, 1919–2005), a native of Shaanxi Province, was preparing to perform his duty in Changhua County (彰化縣). Browsing the list of schools in that county, Xu saw something that really piqued his curiosity. In the remote and sparsely populated Hsiushui Township (秀水鄉), there was a “Shaanxi Elementary School” located in a place called “Shaanxi Village.” Intrigued by the titles of the school and the village, which shared a name with his home province in China, Xu made the school part of his inspection tour the following summer.<sup>121</sup> Like a majority of rural communities in Taiwan, the peasants in Hsiushui were descendants of migrants from southern Fujian Province. They were Hoklo people who spoke Hokkien. Their social customs and religious practices were unmistakably Hokkien. In addition, the place was so deep into the countryside that even after more than three decades of the Nationalist rule, only a few

<sup>118</sup> *Dangwai* literally means “outside of [the KMT] party.” It was a coalition of political opposition groups in postwar Taiwan before the island’s democratization—the predecessor of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). *Taiwan Political Review* was one of the most important magazines produced by the *dangwai* participants. The magazine ran for five issues in 1975 before the KMT shut it down.

<sup>119</sup> Zhou Qier, “Waishengren de kumen” [The mainlanders’ depression], *Taiwan zhenglun* 5 (1975): 64–65.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>121</sup> Xu Bingyan, “Shaanxicun yu Shaanxi guoxiao” [Shaanxi Village and Shaanxi Elementary School], *Shaanxi wenxian* 33 (1978): 104.

could converse with Xu in Mandarin. To present-day observers, there is little evidence linking this population to Xu's native province in northwest China thousands of miles away, except for the names of the village and the school. Nevertheless, following his visit, the education inspector, apparently thrilled by what he had discovered, made a bold declaration. He asserted that the some 1,500 peasants living in this area were descendants of Shaanxi people who had migrated to Taiwan hundreds of years ago. Xu's claim was based on two things: a subjective observation of human physiognomy and amateur archaeology. Many of the villagers in Hsiushui, according to Xu, had wide jaw bones. This matched the dominant facial feature of Shaanxi people in China. Furthermore, he found many old graves near the village with inscriptions of two Chinese characters "Shaanxi."<sup>122</sup>

To contemporary historians and professional archaeologists, Xu's assertion seems outlandish and laughable. First, a subjective reading of a certain facial feature is hardly persuasive evidence for determining human ancestry legitimately. Second, it was common for early Hoklo and Hakka migrants in Taiwan to trace their genealogical origins to northern or central China. Thus, it is hardly surprising that Xu found engravings of "Shaanxi" on many old tombstones in the region. Yet, for his fellow Shaanxi natives at the time, Xu's accidental discovery was no laughing matter. The way in which Shaanxi people in Taiwan responded to this rather dubious construction of kinship relations in the late 1970s and early 1980s exhibits a profound desire to seek some local connections on the part of a mainlander community.

In January 1978, Shaanxi *tongxianghui*'s references magazine, *Shaanxi wenxian*, published inspector Xu's amazing "findings."<sup>123</sup> Several months later, *Lianhe bao* and other mainstream media outlets in Taiwan provided extensive coverage of the story, sparking an island-wide sensation.<sup>124</sup> The news galvanized Xu's provincial constituency. Shaanxi people living in various corners of Taiwan started making pilgrimages to Hsiushui. Entire families and communities traveled to this small township in the middle of nowhere to reconnect with their distant relatives, and to get acquainted with the previously unknown cultural heritage of the Shaanxi people in Taiwan.

<sup>122</sup> Ziliaoshi, "Changhuaxian Hsiushuixiang 'Shaanxicun' jianjie" [A brief introduction of "Shaanxi Village" in the Hsiushui Township of Changhua County], *Shaanxi wenxian* 32 (1978): 42.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 41–42.

<sup>124</sup> Xu Bingyan ed., *Shaanxi wenwuguan luocheng dianli zhuanjian* [A special commemorative volume to celebrate the completion of the Shaanxi Cultural Museum] (Taichung: Shaanxi wenwuguan choujian weiyuanhui, 1981), 7.

In late September 1978, the Hsiushui peasants held their most important religious festival of the year to celebrate the birthday of Shaanxi Village's patron deity, the "Black-Faced General" (烏面將軍). More than 3,000 Shaanxi people came from all over Taiwan to attend the event with their own gifts and offerings.<sup>125</sup> Initially, Xu did not specify the origin of the early Shaanxi migrants that he claimed had settled in Hsiushui centuries ago, so Shaanxi intellectuals and *wenxian* producers stepped in to fill the gaps. They speculated that the people in this region could be the direct descendants of Shaanxi soldiers under the command of general Ma Xin (馬信, ??–1662). Ma and his troops arrived in Taiwan some 300 years before the discovery of Shaanxi Village. They fought under the legendary pirate leader and self-professed Ming loyalist Koxinga/Zheng Chenggong (鄭成功, 1624–1662) to expel the Dutch from Taiwan in 1662.<sup>126</sup> Many Shaanxi people came to see the mysterious "Black-Faced General" worshipped by Hsiushui residents as an incarnation of Ma himself, though there was little historical evidence to support this idea.<sup>127</sup> In the following year, the same festival attracted 4,000 to 5,000 Shaanxi visitors to the village.<sup>128</sup> This communal myth-making and search-for-roots project had grown to such a degree that Shaanxi community leaders decided to gather donations from fellow natives in order to build the "Shaanxi Cultural Museum" (陝西文物館) right next to the Black-Faced General Temple in Shaanxi Village. The majestic three-story structure was completed in 1981 (see Figure 3.4 and Figure 3.5).<sup>129</sup>

We know relatively little about what the native Taiwanese farmers in Shaanxi Village thought about the sudden invasion of all these strangers from the big cities who claimed to be their distant cousins. Most of the existing accounts of these faux "family reunions" in Hsiushui were written by Shaanxi pilgrims. They present a rosy and one-sided picture of lavish banquets and lively celebrations. There was always profound gratitude on the part of the villagers for the generous donations made by the visitors to improve the temple and the local community's

<sup>125</sup> Jiang Bolong, "Shaanxiren juhui Shaanxicun" [The gathering of Shaanxi people in Shaanxi Village], *Shaanxi wenxian* 35 (1978): 73–74.

<sup>126</sup> Huang Dianquan, "You Shaanxicun tandaomingzheng mingjiang Ma Xin" [Talking about the famous Ming loyalist general Ma Xin from Shaanxi Village], *ibid.*, 35 (1978): 8–10; "Bianhouji" [Editor's notes], *ibid.*, 35 (1978): 113–114.

<sup>127</sup> Some Shaanxi natives questioned the identity of the "Black Faced General." For example, see Gao Zhongqian, "Shaanxiren yu Shaanxicun: Shaanxi wenxian zuzi zhongshi de dashi" [Shaanxi people and Shaanxi Village: An important matter that *Shaanxi wenxian* needs to look into seriously], *Shaanxi wenxian* 36 (1979): 51–52.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>129</sup> For more, see Xu Bingyan, *Shaanxi wenwuguan*, 24–30; Jia Jizhe, "Shaanxi wenwuguan luocheng dianli jisheng" [A report on the inaugural ceremony for the Shaanxi Cultural Museum], *Shaanxi wenxian* 46 (1981): 58–60.



Figure 3.4 The Black Faced General Temple in Shaanxi Village, Hsiushui Township, Changhua County, central Taiwan. Source: Photograph by the author.

infrastructure.<sup>130</sup> Still, even in these exceedingly positive accounts, there are some definite signs of friction. For instance, the local peasants flatly rejected the proposal by their newfound relatives and donors to rename their beloved village deity or to link it in any way to the Shaanxi general Ma Xin.<sup>131</sup> This fundamental disagreement was one important reason why the pilgrimages ended eventually.

By the mid-1980s, the Shaanxi pilgrims stopped visiting Hsiushui; the frenzy surrounding the village proved to be short-lived.<sup>132</sup> Other than the

<sup>130</sup> For examples, see Wang Kongzhang, “Fangwen Changhua Shaanxicun de Shaanyi xiangqin lianhuan jishi” [An account of visiting and partying with Shaanxi descendants at Shaanxi Village], *Shaanxi wenxian* 32 (1978): 42–45; Jiang Bolong, “Shaanxiren juhui,” 73.

<sup>131</sup> Gao Zhongqian, “Shaanxicun wumianjiangjun miao ‘yijiang’ wenti: Benkan de kanfa ji zhuzhang” [The issue of “changing the general” for the Black Faced General Temple in Shaanxi Village: Our views and position], *Shaanxi wenxian* 44 (1981): 62.

<sup>132</sup> The museum had fallen into disrepair by 1985. See Feng Tingheng, “Xiegei Shaanxi tongxiang de yifeng gongkaixin” [An open letter to fellow Shaanxi natives], *ibid.*, 61 (1985): 78.



Figure 3.5 The three story Shaanxi Cultural Museum (white building on the right, located just behind the original Black Faced General Temple). The structure was built in 1981 with generous donations from the Shaanxi Province natives in Taiwan. Yet, it was quickly abandoned as a heritage site by the Shaanxi pilgrims. The building is apparently still in use today by the local villagers, but it no longer serves as a museum. Source: Photograph by the author.

disagreement over their god, another important factor that led to the end of these pilgrimages was the opening up of mainland travel not long after Xu's exciting discovery. In the next chapter, we will see that more and more people were taking the side door into China via Hong Kong and other foreign locations during the second half of the 1980s. On their part, the Taiwanese villagers did a terrible job maintaining the newly constructed Shaanxi Cultural Museum. The building quickly fell into disrepair when the outsiders stopped coming.<sup>133</sup> The Shaanxi Village at Hsiushui was abandoned rather quickly as a site of memory. Nowadays,

<sup>133</sup> He Ziwen, "Zhuanfang Shaanxicun: Youguan 'Shaanxi wenwuguan' jinkuang baodao" [A special coverage of Shaanxi Village: A report concerning recent conditions of the Shaanxi Cultural Museum], *ibid.*, 98 (1999): 91–94.

its existence has largely been forgotten by the surviving Shaanxi mainlanders and their descendants. Nonetheless, the dilapidated museum, which still remains today, stands as a testament to this remarkable history of local-roots searching.

Shaanxi natives were not the only mainlander group trying to find roots in Taiwan during the late 1970s and early 1980s before mainland travel opened up. For example, the Taipei Hunan *tongxianghui* began to participate in the commemoration of a group of Hunanese soldiers at roughly the same time as Shaanxi people were flocking to Hsiushui. These soldiers were stationed in Taiwan during the Qing dynasty. They were praised for repelling the French invasion during the Sino-French War (1884–1885). Three thousand of them later died in a campaign to suppress the aboriginal tribes hostile to Chinese colonization in central Taiwan. Their remains were buried in a mass grave located in the town of Cholan (卓蘭), Miaoli County (苗栗縣), about 55 kilometers north of Hsiushui. In 1959, Cholan residents built a small shrine on top of the mass grave to pacify the wandering ghosts of these soldiers that, according to the local townsfolk, had haunted them for decades. But the shrine had fallen into disrepair by the early 1970s. In 1975, a subscriber of *Hunan wenxian jikan* magazine brought this issue to the attention of the Hunan community in a letter to the editor.<sup>134</sup> The Hunan leaders visited Cholan in the early 1980s. After the visit, they decided to join the local Taiwanese farmers in their annual religious ceremony to honor the fallen soldiers. The Hunan leaders also started a fundraising campaign to help repair the shrine.<sup>135</sup>

In late 1979, Xu Bingyan accompanied several Hebei natives and a reporter from a state-owned radio station to visit another rural village in Changhua County. The village was located in Chutang Township (竹塘鄉). Before the frenzy of searching for local roots had subsided in the mid-1980s, Xu had continued to examine gravestones in Changhua on his own time and at his own expense. Based on the same questionable archaeological method, the school inspector announced that he had made another important discovery. Xu determined that the Taiwanese communities living in Chutang were actually descendants of early migrants from Hebei Province. He notified the Hebei native-place association in Taipei. The association sent several representatives and a reporter to visit Chutang with Xu. The visitors had a meeting with some of the local

<sup>134</sup> “Zhang Ke xiānshèng zhī fāxìngrén han” [A letter from Mr. Zhang Ke to the publisher], *Hunan wenxian jikan* 3:3 (1975): 94–95.

<sup>135</sup> “Kuojian Miaoli Cholanzhen junminmiao jinian Zhongfa zhanyi xiangji zhanshi” [Expanding the Soldier and People’s Temple in Miaoli’s Cholan Township to commemorate the Hunan warriors during the Sino French War], *ibid.*, 11:1 (1983): 89.

people. Entrepreneur Feng Zhutang (馮著唐, 1908–2008) was one of the Hebei visitors from Taipei. He wrote about this experience in *Hebei pingjin wenxian*:

When we came face to face with the local representatives, the courtesy and respect they afforded us, like they were hosting their own elders, really touched our hearts and souls. We could not help but feel that they were like our own natives and old friends back home [in China].<sup>136</sup>

In the following paragraph, Feng continued:

[F]or latecomers like us to know that so many of our fellow natives came to Taiwan in earlier times, we will no longer feel alone from this point on. We no longer feel like we are drifting in an alien land or wandering overseas. Regardless of the mainland or Taiwan; whether one came earlier or later, geography and blood bind us together as brotherly compatriots. Both the mainland and Taiwan are our country's territories. They are our first home and our second home.<sup>137</sup>

The political undertone of Feng's statement is obvious. In fact, many of the first-generation migrants who actively sought local roots via fabricated kinship relations expressed deep concerns about something they called "Taiwan independence fallacy" (台獨謬論). These mainlanders were apparently disturbed by the rising tension between their communities and *benshengren* as the latter began to articulate an anti-KMT/anti-*waishengren* sentiment during this time. The leading advocate of finding roots in Taiwan, Xu Bingyan, was one of the people disturbed by this.<sup>138</sup> No longer just bent on going home, the former exiles of 1949 had also become settlers by this time. They had a stake on the island, and they saw the nascent Taiwanese nationalism in the 1980s as hostile and exclusionary toward that stake. Unfortunately, what happened in the subsequent decades would further exacerbate their sense of exclusion.

### **Nostalgic Memories of Native-Place and Generational Difference**

Before their disappointing and heartbreaking return, the civil war migrants identified with their home provinces and counties in China. They also tried to pass the native-place memories and identities on to

<sup>136</sup> Feng Zhutang, "Changhua Chutangxiang Hebei zaoqi yimin fangwenji" [A record of visiting early Hebei migrants in Changhua's Chutang Township], *Hebei pingjin wenxian* 6 (1980): 164.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 165 166.

<sup>138</sup> See Xu Bingyan, "Wo xiezhu 'tongxiang' xun 'gen' xiaoji" [My efforts to help "fellow natives" search for "roots"], *Shaanxi wenxian* 46 (1981): 61 62.

their children via *tongxianghui* projects. The chief editor of *Huaxian wenxian* aptly summed up the view:

After living in Taiwan for ten years, people began to settle down. On the one hand, we formed new families in Taiwan. On the other hand, we still missed our relatives in China, as well as the mountains and the rivers there. The conflict between the old and the new has continued to stir our minds. In the midst of war, separation, and chaos, we raised the next generation . . . The founding of a literary forum for Huaxian's past is grounded in the importance of connecting the new generation youth psychologically with the rivers and mountains back home, linking the past with the future, and setting up a conduit for building mutual affections among fellow natives.<sup>139</sup>

Despite the efforts made by the exiled generation, Taiwan-born *waisheng-ren* showed very little enthusiasm for native-place projects. The editors of several *wenxian* magazines admitted that *tongxianghui* had trouble attracting members under the age of forty in their respective communities. They described the reaction of young people toward local references as “indifferent” (冷淡) and “totally uninterested” (漠不关心).<sup>140</sup>

The age of membership and the reasons for joining the associations are illustrative. The Henan *tongxianghui* and the Ningbo *tongxianghui* were two of the largest mainland native-place associations in Taipei in the 1970s. Each had close to 3,000 members. According to the figures provided by Li Xiaoling in 1979, about 80 percent of Henan and 72 percent of Ningbo members were over the age of fifty during this time. Members under the age of thirty (the Taiwan-born cohort) accounted for only about 10 percent and 9 percent of the members in these two associations respectively.<sup>141</sup> Interestingly enough, the youngest mainland-born age cohort (30–39) had even lower numbers (2.9 percent for Henan and 6.5 percent for Ningbo). Li suggested that these people left China when they were small children. Their memory and emotional attachment to their mainland hometowns were presumably weak. The Taiwan-born age cohort (20–29) exhibited higher numbers in comparison because many parents registered their children in *tongxianghui* in the hope of getting them involved. The academic scholarships offered by *tongxianghui* also attracted young students to join these associations.<sup>142</sup>

Li herself was a young member of the Taipei Henan *tongxianghui* in 1979. Her survey on the fellow Henan natives at the time showed that a majority of the Henan members over forty years of age joined the association voluntarily while those below forty were often inducted by their parents, relatives, and schools. A higher percentage of members

<sup>139</sup> Zhongguo, *Zhongguo difang wenxian*, 359. <sup>140</sup> Ibid., 505, 535, 553.

<sup>141</sup> Li Xiaoling, “Minjian shetuan,” 41–42. <sup>142</sup> Ibid., 43.

under age forty were members only in name. These people had never participated in any of the association's activities. Over 60 percent of the Henan members had a positive view of their native-place magazine. Yet, it was obvious from Li's figures that most of the avid readers were people over the age of forty.<sup>143</sup> The inability to attract young people contributed to the decline and ossification of most *waisheng tongxianghui* in the decades that followed.

A lukewarm response from Taiwan-born *waishengren* toward their elders' native-place memories and identities foreshadows what is to come. For those raised in Taiwan, the much vaunted "home" in China remained romantic, symbolic, abstract, and somewhat unrealistic. Group identities are malleable social constructs, but they are nevertheless constructed from real lived experiences. Unlike their nostalgic forebears, the younger mainlanders grew up in Taiwan, not China. They felt less emotionally attached to mnemonic projects fixated upon distant native places that none of them had ever seen. Chapter 4 will show that, though the social trauma of the homecoming in China affected both the civil war migrants and their offspring, the shock felt by the latter was less severe. Taiwan-born mainlanders would later replace their parents and grandparents as the main social agents of memory production in the wake of the island's democratization. They would become the driving force behind the mnemonic regime and identity formation centering on the great exodus.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 69–70.

## 4      The Long Road Home

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Leaving home young and only to return when I am old./My accent  
remains yet my sideburns wane./Children do not know who I am./  
They laugh and ask, ‘Guest, where are you from?’

He Zhizhang, 744 AD

Native place, alien place, foreign place, where is home?

Jiang Sizhang, *Xiangzhou* [Nostalgia]

### The Social Trauma of the Homecoming in China

Jiang Sizhang (姜思章, 1936–) was born in a small fishing village on Daishan Island (岱山島) roughly one year before the great novelist Pai Hsien-yung.<sup>1</sup> Daishan is the second largest island among some 1,390 islets and rocks that form the Zhoushan Islands. The collection of islands lies just off the northern coast of Zhejiang Province, outside of Hangzhou Bay and the thriving port city of Ningbo. Straddling the southern sea route of the lower Yangtze River Delta, these islands had for centuries been an important hub for seafaring merchants, pirates, and fishermen on China’s vibrant and boisterous maritime frontiers. They are not only known for scenic views and abundant fisheries, but also rich cultural and spiritual heritage. Putuoshan (普陀山), a celebrated Buddhist sacred land for Guanyin, the Bodhisattva of Compassion, sits on the eastern end of the island chain.

Jiang grew up in a relatively peaceful and secure environment as the eldest son of a moderately successful fishing household. He had fond memories of his childhood on Daishan, even though his time there was spent living under Japanese occupation. When I interviewed him in 2014, the septuagenarian recalled the idyllic and carefree lifestyle in his hometown with considerable delight. He was perhaps too young to remember the Japanese invasion. In June 1939, a small Japanese naval task force

<sup>1</sup> Jiang Sizhang, interviewed by the author.

seized the Zhoushan Islands with ease. By then, the main battlefronts had moved much further inland into central China. The local islanders, as Timothy Brook has described ordinary people throughout most of the Lower Yangtze region, quickly settled into the peace brokered by Japanese civilian agents and local collaborators.<sup>2</sup> China's victory over Japan in August 1945 did not change life in Daishan all that much according to Jiang. The only thing Jiang could remember was that his school suddenly stopped teaching Japanese.<sup>3</sup> Daily occurrences during the raging civil war between the KMT and the CCP barely registered in the memory of this amicable and soft-spoken old man; that is, until the day of his abduction and brutalization by the Nationalist army.

In late 1949, swarms of the Generalissimo's defeated troops and mainland refugees from Nanjing, Shanghai, and Ningbo began pouring into the Zhoushan Islands.<sup>4</sup> Before the Nationalists left these islands for Taiwan in mid-May 1950, they press-ganged 13,521 male inhabitants (out of a total population of roughly half a million), both young and old, into military service.<sup>5</sup> Jiang was among this sea of human misery. His happy childhood collapsed as his homeland, the pastoral and tranquil land of Buddhist salvation, suddenly became hell on earth.

On May 15, 1950, teenage Jiang and his two classmates were kidnapped by KMT soldiers at gunpoint while they were walking home from their middle school. Horrified, the boys screamed, bawled, and begged to be released. Ruthless beatings and heavy blows from rifle butts quickly silenced them.<sup>6</sup> Shortly after their abduction, a middle-aged draftee in their group attempted a daring escape, running for the nearby woods. He was chased down and shot dead right in front of Jiang and his friends. Dumbfounded by the atrocity, the three boys huddled together and shivered in absolute horror. They followed every order given by the soldiers from then onward and did not dare to think otherwise.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For more, see Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Jiang Sizhang, interviewed by the author. Jiang does talk about his unpleasant memory of Japanese occupation in his memoir. See Jiang Sizhang, *Xiangzhou: Yige "waishengren" de liuli jiyi yu youshang* [Nostalgia: Diasporic displacement, memory, and grief of a "mainlander"] (Taipei: Wenjintang, 2008), 301.

<sup>4</sup> For the social disruptions created by the Nationalist soldiers/refugees on the Zhoushan Islands, see Chen Ling, *Zhoushan chetui*, 41–46.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 95. For an estimate of the Zhoushan population during the 1950s, see Zhang Xingzhou ed., *Yinghai tongzhou* [In the same boat at sea] (Taipei: Minzhu chubanshe, 1972), 33.

<sup>6</sup> Jiang and his friends were kidnapped by two different groups of KMT soldiers. The commanding officer of the first group actually released them and even sent them to hide in a local nunnery. Jiang, *Xiangzhou*, 186–187.

<sup>7</sup> Jiang Sizhang, interviewed by the author.

After a brief detention, the army marched Jiang, his friends, and hundreds of abductees to Daishan's main wharf to be shipped off to Taiwan. Some distressed relatives of these captured men somehow got the bad news and rushed to the scene. Cordoned off by several companies of heavily armed troops, the local folks could only watch as soldiers with rifles and fixed bayonets herded their flesh and blood onto boats like livestock. Some women knelt on the side of the road, wailing and pleading loudly. Other village folks wrestled with the soldiers. They cussed and shouted, trying to push through the line to their family members in the midst of absolute pandemonium. The dreadful scene left an indelible mark on Jiang's young mind. From the departing vessel, he and his friends trembled and wept helplessly. Jiang did not see familiar faces on the shore that day, but decades later, after being reunited with his parents in Daishan, he would learn that his mother, who was then several months pregnant with his younger sister, was among the frantic crowd.<sup>8</sup>

After reaching Taiwan, Jiang made getting back home his sole mission in life (see Figure 4.1). He saw his involuntary service in the KMT army as



Figure 4.1 Teenage Jiang Sizhang in cotton military uniform, 1951. This photo was taken in Taiwan shortly after Jiang was abducted by the Nationalist army in China. Source: Image courtesy of Jiang Sizhang.

<sup>8</sup> Jiang, *Xiangzhou*, 4 5, 185.



Figure 4.2 In August 1982, Jiang Sizhang sneaked back to China and reunited with his parents in his home village on Daishan Island. Source: Image courtesy of Jiang Sizhang.

a form of slavery.<sup>9</sup> The Nationalist military court sentenced him to three years in prison for insubordination and an attempt to escape in the 1950s.<sup>10</sup> Decades later, when Deng Xiaoping's reform finally opened up the PRC, Jiang immediately seized the opportunity. On August 11, 1982, after overcoming great obstacles, he forged a fake identity with the help of a friend in Hong Kong and entered the mainland via the British colony (see Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3).<sup>11</sup> Not only was Jiang able to see his family again, the former abductee also returned to Taiwan to help many others

<sup>9</sup> Jiang's decision to break the law and sneak back to China in 1982 was inspired by African American TV drama *Roots*. See Dominic Meng Hsuan Yang, "One Man's Quest: Chiang Ssu chang, *Roots*, and the Mainlander Homebound Movement in Taiwan," in *Reconsidering Roots: Race, Politics, and Memory*, ed. Erica L. Ball and Kellie Carter Jackson (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2017), 182–201.

<sup>10</sup> Jiang, *Xiangzhou*, 6.   <sup>11</sup> Ibid., 7–12.



Figure 4.3 Jiang Sizhang celebrated with his parents and family members during the 1982 trip. Source: Image courtesy of Jiang Sizhang.

who had been in the same situation. In early 1987, he and a small band of retired veterans forged an alliance with the newly formed political opposition to the KMT, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Taking advantage of the growing public sympathy for disenfranchised army retirees at the time, they launched what came to be known as the Veterans' Homebound Movement (老兵返鄉運動, VHM).<sup>12</sup> The VHM quickly gained momentum. It put tremendous pressure on the Generalissimo's eldest son and successor, Chiang Ching-kuo, who was seriously ill and nearing the end of his life. By late 1987, the younger Chiang gave in to the VHM activists' demands. He lifted the ban on residents in "Free China" traveling to the "communist bandit territory" of mainland China. This historical decision marks the starting point of contemporary cross-strait relations.

After nearly four decades, the civil war migrants and their offspring born in Taiwan were finally allowed to visit their hometowns and separated families in China. For Jiang and the hundreds of thousands who followed

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 216–218.

in his footsteps, the road home was long – not only diachronically (waiting for nearly forty years) but also synchronically. Nothing could prepare the former exiles for the emotional roller-coaster of a belated homecoming. Many experienced what can be best described as “an elongation of temporality.” Every minute spent preparing for the trip felt like an hour. Every hour spent traveling back home felt like a day. Every day spent searching for familiar sites from childhood memories, which were now nowhere to be found, and every day interacting with relatives and townsfolk, who now behaved like total strangers, felt like an eternity. Rather than finding closure after decades of displacement and nostalgia, surviving members of the great exodus – elderly men and women – came to a devastating realization upon the moment of actual physical return: the native places and the family members in China they had longed to see for decades now only lived in their memories. The former exiles had become outsiders to the communities they once called “home.”

I call this emotionally devastating experience “the social trauma of the homecoming in China.” The reverse culture shock and its accompanying sense of disillusionment was so great that only a very small number of former exiles actually migrated back to the mainland to spend the remainder of their lives with their Chinese kin. Some would never go back again. A majority continued to live in Taiwan. They visited the PRC periodically to see friends and relatives, pay respects to ancestral graves, and tour China’s famous cultural and historical sites.

*Waishengren* born and bred in Taiwan had never actually seen “home.” Those who left China as small children had only vague memories. These individuals nonetheless grew up bombarded with a wide array of information about their native provinces, counties, and hometowns on the mainland. Setting foot on “home soil” for the first time, they too were baffled and estranged by the things they saw and the relatives they met. Their general shock and mood swings, however, were often less severe than their parents’ or grandparents’. With no experience of living in China or only limited experience, it was easier for them to dissociate themselves from their disappointing mainland kin and native places. The increasing number of second- and third-generation *waishengren* working or doing business in the PRC in recent decades did little to change this situation. In the previous chapter, we learned that children of the exodus population were not as emotionally invested in native-place memories as their forebears, despite the latter’s endeavor to cultivate these attachments. In the next chapter, we will see that in the second half of the 1970s, many young, second-generation *waishengren* had actually begun to explore the grassroots history of their communities in Taiwan. This development ran contemporaneously with the localization process of the exiled generation.

Chapter 3 demonstrated that first-generation mainlanders were becoming “localized” prior to their long road home. The traces of this localization can be observed in some of the *waisheng tongxianghui*’s cultural projects. In this chapter, I argue that the social trauma of the homecoming in China shattered *waishengren*’s mainland-centered nostalgia and provincial identities. Most returnees simply did not feel “at home” while physically visiting their “home” on the mainland. In a strange twist of fate, *waishengren* suddenly began to develop a newfound appreciation for Taiwan – the island that had been their actual place of residence for decades. The road home for *waishengren* was long and tortuous. The much-anticipated return to China did not bring a teleological end to that journey. Instead, it prompted the start of a new search for belonging. This new road home will be firmly rooted in Taiwan, and the great exodus will become its starting point.

### Prelude to the Road Home

During the 1960s and 1970s, many civil war migrants thought they would probably never see home again. This gave rise to the nostalgic memory projects and community-rebuilding efforts uncovered by the previous chapter. Unbeknownst to most *waishengren*, however, political and socioeconomic transformations on both sides of the Taiwan Strait were gradually paving the way for their return. The first major shift came on the PRC side with the emergence of Deng Xiaoping as the undisputed leader of the CCP several years after Mao’s death in 1976. Supported by party oligarchs returning to power who had survived the horrors of the Cultural Revolution, Deng ushered in a new era of “reform and opening-up.”<sup>13</sup> Under the new policy, visitors and investors from the “capitalist” and “imperialist” blocs who were previously barred from entering China under Mao were henceforth welcomed. These included former “bandits,” “traitors,” and “counterrevolutionaries” who escaped to Taiwan with “the running dog of American imperialism,” Chiang Kai-shek.<sup>14</sup> In a remarkable reversal of its Cold War propaganda rhetoric, the CCP recast the exiles of 1949 as part of the “Taiwanese compatriots” (*Taiwan tongbao* 台湾同胞). In the earlier Maoist language, this term

<sup>13</sup> For more on Deng’s rise and his reform, see Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), chapters 12–16.

<sup>14</sup> These ideologically driven terms were common in the PRC’s rhetorical attacks on Taiwan under Mao.

applied only to the local people in Taiwan whom the mainlanders had enslaved and trampled upon.<sup>15</sup>

*Tongbao* literally means “born of the same womb.” In this new ideological construction, the mainlanders in Taiwan were no longer enemies of the people and minions of Chiang Kai-shek. Instead, they were wandering sons and daughters like other Chinese overseas. The motherland would welcome them back with open arms to visit their rehabilitated relatives, who had previously been condemned due to their Taiwan connections. Ironically, even with the intended language of inclusion, *waishengren* disliked the label *Taiwan tongbao* and its abbreviation *taibao* (台胞). Singling them out as returnees from Taiwan heightened their sense of being outsiders in China, and of being strangers in their native villages and communities.

A clear sign of change came on January 1, 1979, when Marshal Xu Xiangqian (徐向前, 1901–1990), the minister of national defense of the PRC, declared that the PLA would stop shelling Quemoy, Matsu, and other offshore islands held by the Nationalists.<sup>16</sup> Ever since the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1958, the PLA artillery had pounded these islands regularly, usually on odd-numbered days of the month. The Nationalist guns usually retaliated in return. After the initial military conflict had subsided, both sides fired shells loaded with propaganda leaflets instead of high explosives.<sup>17</sup> China’s declaration of a ceasefire happened on the same day as Washington and Beijing announced the establishment of formal diplomatic relations at the expense of Taipei. In late October 1971, the ROC lost its seat in the UN to the PRC as the government representing China, a preamble to Nixon’s historic visit and the Sino-American rapprochement several months later. In the years that followed, Taiwan faced growing international isolation as country after country embraced Beijing over Taipei.<sup>18</sup> When Washington itself finally came to the recognition of Beijing in January 1979, Deng, who was preparing for

<sup>15</sup> See “Taiwan huigui zuguo tishang juti richeng” [Proposing a specific schedule for Taiwan’s return to the ancestral land], *Renmin ribao*, January 2, 1979, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Xu Xiangqian, “Guofangbuzhang Xu Xiangqian shengming tingzhi paoji da xiao jinmen deng daoyu” [The minister of national defense Xu Xiangqian announces the end of shelling on Quemoy and the offshore islands], *Renmin ribao*, January 1, 1979, 1.

<sup>17</sup> This low intensity conflict was later dubbed *danda shuangbuda* (單打雙不打). For disruptions and damages to the local communities over the years, see Szonyi, *Cold War Island*, 76.

<sup>18</sup> In 1971 alone, eleven countries ended formal diplomatic relations with the ROC. From 1971 to 1990, over fifty countries switched recognition. Hou Ruqi, *Shuangxiang zhijian: Taiwan waisheng xiaoshuojia de lisian yu xushi* (1950 1987) [Between two homes: Diasporic narratives of the mainland novelist in Taiwan, 1950 1987] (Taipei: Lianjing, 2014), 298.

his highly publicized tour of the United States, felt confident that the forsaken KMT would be forced to negotiate.

Along with the cessation of hostilities on the offshore islands, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), the main legislative body in the PRC, issued "a letter to Taiwanese compatriots" (告台湾同胞书). The letter called for building substantive links across the Taiwan Strait in order to facilitate a peaceful unification. These links included postal service, direct travel and trade, as well as cultural, academic, athletic, and technological exchanges.<sup>19</sup> On the PRC's national day in 1981, the chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, Marshal Ye Jianying (叶剑英, 1897–1986), announced specific guidelines (the "nine-point proposal") to incorporate Taiwan into China by granting the island a high degree of autonomy.<sup>20</sup> These guidelines later became a basis for Deng's famous "one country, two systems" policy proclamation in 1983. The policy would later be applied to the retrocession of Hong Kong and Macao.

Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國 1910–1988, CCK), who took over the helm in Taiwan after the death of his father in 1975, rejected the overture from the PRC.<sup>21</sup> Haunted by memories of ruinous peace negotiations with the CCP in China, CCK had serious doubts about the sincerity of Beijing's reconciliatory gestures. Officially, the Nationalist regime responded with what came to be known as the "three noes policy" (三不政策) – "no contact, no negotiation, and no compromise" (不接觸、不談判、不妥協).<sup>22</sup>

In actuality, according to both Jay Taylor and Ezra Vogel, CCK and Deng, who were former classmates at Moscow Sun Yat-sen University in the 1920s, communicated in secret via an emissary who acted as

<sup>19</sup> See "Zhonghua renmin gongheguo quanguo renda changweihui gao Taiwan tong baoshu" [A letter to Taiwanese compatriots from the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China], *Renmin ribao*, January 1, 1979, 1.

<sup>20</sup> "Ye Jianying weiyuanzhang jinyibu chanming Taiwan huigui zuguo shixian heping tongyi de fangzhen zhengce . . ." [Chairman of the Committee Ye Jianying expounded further on the guidelines for Taiwan's return to the ancestral land for the realization of peaceful unification . . .], *ibid.*, October 1, 1981, 1; Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping*, 483.

<sup>21</sup> The younger Chiang took over gradually, starting in the late 1960s, when his father's health began to deteriorate. He became chairman of the KMT when the Generalissimo died in April 1975. The exiled National Assembly elected Chiang as the President of the ROC in 1978. He held office until he died in early 1988.

<sup>22</sup> For the KMT response, see Chen Zuhua, "Cong lishi cantong jiaoxun chuoquan gongfei hetan yinmou" [Exposing the conspiracy of the peace talks proposed by the Chinese Communist bandits from bitter lessons in history], *Lianhe bao*, January 12, 1979, 2; "Buyu gongfei tampan jiechu jiben lichang buyi gaibian" [We should not alter the position of not negotiating or communicating with the communist bandits], *ibid.*, December 12, 1980, 2.

a go-between: the prime minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew (1923–2015).<sup>23</sup> Taylor in particular suggests that the Generalissimo's son had had plans to open up to China since the early 1980s.<sup>24</sup> He argues that CCK and Lee, through their private discussions, agreed “that a growing engagement between the mainland and the prosperous and open societies of Taiwan and Singapore would lead China to evolve in a similar direction.”<sup>25</sup>

Taylor's argument is part of the mainstream interpretation of CCK's legacy in facilitating democracy and cross-strait interaction. This is an interpretation based mostly on the recollections of foreign diplomats and the KMT elites close to the Generalissimo's son who held favorable views of the man. The story presented in this chapter questions this positive image of CCK. Rather than demonstrating how he prudently and magnanimously allowed for unofficial civilian contacts across the Taiwan Strait to pave the way for future opening and negotiations, this chapter illuminates the larger transnational socioeconomic and political forces at play. More importantly, it brings to the fore the lesser-known story of a protest movement organized by retired veterans in Taiwan that eventually forced his hand.

Notwithstanding the “three noes,” the fact of the matter is that KMT authorities had no effective way of stemming a steady stream of their citizens trickling into the PRC surreptitiously via foreign locations when Deng opened the door. After relocating to Taiwan, the Nationalists implemented a restrictive border-control policy in the early 1950s to guard against CCP infiltration and to prevent those who possessed financial means and overseas connections from exiting “Free China” en masse.<sup>26</sup> However, as the cloud of war in the Taiwan Strait cleared and the island's export-oriented industrialization began to take off in the second half of the 1960s, it became increasingly impossible to restrict transnational mobility. Tremendous growth in trade, as well as technical, educational, and cultural exchanges between Taiwan and the United States, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the rest of the world made border-policy reform necessary. The priority of the Nationalist state shifted from limiting international travels to policing the movement of a small number of political dissidents (i.e. Taiwan independence activists residing overseas). The KMT authorities blacklisted individuals and barred them

<sup>23</sup> Taylor, *Generalissimo's Son*, 382–383; Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping*, 487.

<sup>24</sup> Taylor, *Generalissimo's Son*, 344, 370. <sup>25</sup> Ibid., 384.

<sup>26</sup> “Zhengchi gangji suqing tanwu dujue guanmin chuguo taobi” [Maintain discipline, eliminate corruption, and put an end to officials and people escaping to foreign countries], *Zhongyang ribao*, February 10, 1950, 1.

from entering or returning to the island.<sup>27</sup> A combined lobbying effort by Taiwan's leading manufacturers, technical experts, and tourist industry representatives to participate in the Osaka World Exposition in Japan in 1970 prompted the government to issue "tourist passports" (觀光護照) to those who were attending the event.<sup>28</sup> In late 1978, after nearly a decade of repeated petitions from the business community and a protracted discussion among party officials, the government finally extended the privilege to all citizens over thirty years of age.<sup>29</sup> The new policy went into effect in January 1979.

The Nationalists soon discovered that many of their citizens were taking advantage of this newfound freedom of movement to enter the PRC clandestinely under the guise of visiting other countries.<sup>30</sup> But a reversal of policy was inconceivable at this point. Curbing international travels would be detrimental to the booming export economy and substantive exchanges with other nations, which had become the lifeline of the Nationalist regime in the face of growing diplomatic isolation during this time. For officials in Taiwan, once their citizens reached the shores of other nations, it was virtually impossible to police their movement.

The exact number of *waishengren* entering China secretly before the official travel ban was finally lifted in early November 1987 remains unclear. Rumors in Taiwan speculated that the clandestine returnees could be as high as 50,000 – or even 100,000 per year. The figure acknowledged by the Nationalist authorities was over 10,000 annually.<sup>31</sup> By the mid-1980s, these illegal visits increased in both size and frequency. They became an open secret.

Hong Kong became the most popular point of entry and departure due to its geographic proximity to both Taiwan and China. A thriving tourist industry emerged there catering specifically to sightseeing and family visitation trips to the mainland. At their end, the PRC authorities

<sup>27</sup> For more on the "blacklist" and the US based Taiwan independence activists' attempts to breach the KMT border control by entering Taiwan, see Chen Jiahong, *Taiwan dili yundong shi* [A history of the Taiwan independence movement] (Taipei: Yushanshe, 2006), 364–373.

<sup>28</sup> "Mingnian wangguo bolan huiqi youguan dangwei jueding qianfa guanguang huzhao" [The authorities will issue tourist passports for those who are attending the Osaka Exposition next year], *Lianhe bao*, August 26, 1969, 2.

<sup>29</sup> "Zhengfu kaifang guanguang huzhao de zhongda yi" [The significant meaning behind the government's granting of tourist passports], *ibid.*, November 3, 1978, 2.

<sup>30</sup> "Guoren qianhui dalu tanqin guanguang yingyu yange jinzhi" [Citizens sneaking back to the mainland to visit relatives or sightseeing should be strictly prohibited], *Zhongyang ribao*, June 8, 1984, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Yin Ping, "Guixiang jie" [Return home complex], *Yuanjian zazhi* 12 (1987): 16; Ding Tingyu et al., *Dalu tanqin ji fangwen de yingxiang* [The influence of visiting relatives on the mainland] (Taipei: Caituanfaren Zhang Rongfa jijinhui, 1989), 12.

certainly made it easy for returnees from Taiwan. When the “Taiwanese compatriots” entered, the Chinese customs officials would not stamp their ROC passports. Instead, an entry slip was attached. When the returnees left China, they simply tore off and tossed out the paper, leaving no trace of the trip.<sup>32</sup>

During this time, the government in Taiwan also found it difficult to curb the thriving underground economy developed between China and Taiwan. Hong Kong served as the main conduit for this trade, which the Nationalists could neither contain nor track. Besides Hong Kong, the PRC set up a “reception center” on Pingtan Island (平潭岛), near the coastal city of Fuzhou, directly across the Taiwan Strait. Merchant ships and fishing boats from Taiwan could dock and trade in Pingtan at will.<sup>33</sup>

On May 3, 1986, commercial pilot Wang Xijue (王錫爵, 1929–??) shocked the world by hijacking a freight aircraft he captained. The plane (Taiwan-based China Airlines Flight 334) took off from Singapore. It was bound for Thailand, Hong Kong, and then Taipei. Approaching the end of the first leg, Wang subdued his two copilots and landed the plane in Guangzhou, China.<sup>34</sup> He abandoned his wife and children in Taiwan in order to see his elderly father and family on the mainland.<sup>35</sup> Wang received a hero’s welcome in the PRC. The episode deeply embarrassed the Nationalists. Wang was not just any pilot, he was a former member of Taiwan’s elite US-trained Black Cat Squadron who had flown classified U-2 reconnaissance missions into China during the 1960s. The ensuing negotiations to retrieve Wang’s crew and the aircraft practically broke CCK’s vow not to have any official contact with the PRC. Even so, the Generalissimo’s son held fast to the “three noes policy” until the events in 1987 changed his mind.

### Fighting for the Road Home: Veterans’ Homebound Movement, 1987

By the second half of the 1980s, Taiwan, with unprecedented prosperity propelled by its export-driven economy, was on its way to become what Linda Chao and Ramon Myers term “the first Chinese democracy.”<sup>36</sup> Its streets became sites for a wide variety of social protests. Diverse groups came forward to demand change and defend their rights: peasants,

<sup>32</sup> Jiang, *Xiangzhou*, 14; Fan, *China’s Homeless Generation*, 115. <sup>33</sup> Roy, *Taiwan*, 149.

<sup>34</sup> “Huahang queren Wang Xijue xuyi baoli jieji Dong Guangxing Qiu Mingzhi liang jiyuan lijie guilai” [China Airlines confirmed that Wang Xijue’s hijack was premeditated; two crew members Dong Guangxing and Qiu Mingzhi returned after the ordeal], *Lianhe bao*, May 24, 1986, 1.

<sup>35</sup> Roy, *Taiwan*, 149. <sup>36</sup> Chao and Myers, *First Chinese Democracy*.

workers, aborigines, women, veterans, and consumers, among others. Public awareness on issues such as industrial pollution, environmental protection, and nuclear waste management was on the rise.<sup>37</sup> This vibrant civic activism was galvanized in part by the political opposition's open demonstrations for democracy and Taiwanese nationalism in occurrences such as the Chungli Incident (1977) and the Kaohsiung Incident (1979).<sup>38</sup> All of this put tremendous pressure on the authoritarian Nationalist government to carry out reforms. In late September 1986, these events gave birth to the island state's first genuine opposition party, the DPP. Then, in mid-July of the following year, the ailing CCK finally announced the end of martial law in Taiwan. The law was declared in May 1949 in the name of fighting communism. On January 1, 1988, two weeks before CCK passed away, state censorship on newspapers, media, and publication was also rescinded.

CCK's decision to lift the decades' ban on traveling to China in late 1987, several months after the end of martial law, is often considered a logical corollary to the larger democratization process. In this now familiar narrative, the savvy and benevolent son of the Generalissimo looms large as a farsighted and cautious reformer. With an even hand, he guided the conservative KMT bureaucracy/military and the agitating Taiwanese society toward a teleological endpoint of Sun Yat-sen's revolution for nationalism, democracy, and socialism – a revolution that had begun in China in 1911. Viewed in this light, the activism of disenfranchised "old soldiers" (*laobing* 老兵) in the late 1980s was a mere sideshow to the momentous decision made by a great man. The established story line is that the veterans' protest touched CCK's heart deeply. The younger Chiang had served as chairman of the Veterans Affairs Council (VAC) from 1956 to 1964. He had supposedly forged "a special bond" with the discharged rank and file. CCK always felt deeply indebted to the aging mainland soldiers who had fought for the KMT and his father.<sup>39</sup> Thus, with his health deteriorating rapidly and the initiatives for democratic reform already set in motion, CCK decided to overturn the "three noes policy" and allow *laobing* to go back to China to see their families after nearly four decades of separation.

This feel-good story of a second-generation dictator who, at the end of his life, finally found compassion for the dispossessed soldiers – many of

<sup>37</sup> For more on the social movements in the 1980s, see Xu Zhengguang and Song Wenli eds., *Taiwan xinxing shehui yundong* [New social movements in Taiwan] (Taipei: Juliu tushu, 1990).

<sup>38</sup> Roy, *Taiwan*, 165–170. The Kaohsiung Incident is also known as the Meilidao Incident or the Formosa (Magazine) Incident.

<sup>39</sup> Fan, *China's Homeless Generation*, 111.

whom his father's army had press-ganged and kidnapped – significantly downplays two important contributing factors to that decision. The first factor, as we have seen previously, is the rapidly growing volume of surreptitious visitations and illicit trade. The extent of these underground activities and the regime's inability to curtail them further eroded the public's already wobbly confidence in the Nationalist authorities. The second is the activism of the veterans in forcing CCK's hand. On the latter point, I underscore the role played by the downtrodden in pushing the wheel of change. My interpretation makes evident the need to reconsider CCK's historical legacy in Taiwan. Scholars such as Wu Nai-teh and J. Bruce Jacobs have maintained that CCK was not a reformer who believed in democracy. Rather, he was a shrewd autocrat who suppressed, maneuvered, and compromised to keep his party in power.<sup>40</sup> Similarly, Nancy Tucker opines, "Chiang acted because he saw reform as critical to the survival of his government, not because he had experienced a democratic epiphany."<sup>41</sup> In the same vein, I argue that CCK revoked the mainland travel ban in late 1987 because he understood that the KMT could not afford to lose the support of *waishengren*, especially hundreds of thousands of retired soldiers, when the island state democratized.

When hundreds of retired soldiers staged the first demonstration against the KMT and the VAC at the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall in late October 1986, the event came as a shock to the Nationalist leadership. The younger Chiang and his top advisors had, up to this point in time, considered *laobing* among the regime's most loyal supporters.<sup>42</sup> Most of the veterans who took to the streets were single and destitute individuals; angry and frustrated. Commonly referred to as the "self-sustaining old soldiers" (自謀生活老兵), they rose up against decades of neglect by the state. The main cause was the KMT army's inadequate pension and retirement program before a more comprehensive system was introduced in June 1961. Tens of thousands of common soldiers and noncommissioned officers – many of whom were dragooned into service in China before 1949 – were given a meager three months' pay, some clothes, a bamboo mat, and a mosquito net. They were then released into an unfamiliar society with no education, no vocational training, and minimal support systems to help them adjust and survive.<sup>43</sup> As Chapter

<sup>40</sup> Wu Nai teh, "Rende jingshen linian zai lishi biange zhong de zuoyong: Meilidao shijian he Taiwan minzhuhua" [The role of moral value in political change: Explaining democratic transition in Taiwan], *Taiwan zhengzhi xuekan* 4 (2000): 57–103; J. Bruce Jacobs, *Democratizing Taiwan* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 59–68.

<sup>41</sup> Tucker, *Strait Talk*, 167.

<sup>42</sup> See Hu Tai li's chapter in Xu and Song, *Taiwan xinxing shehui yundong*, 157.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 164–165.

1 has shown, these people became part of a floating population that continued to cause trouble for some time. Over the years, some were fortunate enough to find jobs in the civil service, schools, and in the private sectors. In some cases, jobs were found through the native-place networks discussed in the previous chapter. The rest struggled to eke out a living on the fringes of society. There were also military personnel who were forced into early retirement due to the government's streamlining policy in the late 1950s and early 1960s. As a result, they were not eligible for the pension, medical care, single dormitory, and other benefits the state provided via the VAC. These veterans felt that they really got the short end of the stick compared to their peers.<sup>44</sup> This resentful army of military retirees suffered in silence until they were emboldened by the island's surging popular movements in the 1980s to organize and take collective action. When *laobing* demonstrated at the recently completed Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall in the heart of Taipei City, they vented decades of repressed anger against the main patriarchal figure of the KMT, the ultimate symbol of the Nationalist political authority in Taiwan.

The protest launched by the veterans quickly gained momentum. The disgruntled *laobing* who signed up to demand better treatment from the government had reached tens of thousands by early 1987. The movement later split into two factions due to infighting over goals, finances, and leadership.<sup>45</sup> Nonetheless, the hitherto despised and powerless old soldiers had shown that they were a force to be reckoned with. Two of the KMT's electoral candidates donated a large sum of money to support the veterans' campaign against their own party in order to solicit votes.<sup>46</sup> In the Legislative Yuan, representatives condemned the VAC's poor retirement program.<sup>47</sup> The protesting *laobing* eventually won some key concessions from the Nationalist authorities after rounds of intense negotiations and some violent street confrontations with the police. The government introduced a universal pension plan, albeit in modest amounts. It also promised to provide monetary compensation for the "fighters' farmland certificates" (戰士授田證), and to extend some of the VAC housing and medical benefits to the protestors.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 166.   <sup>45</sup> Ibid., 160 161.   <sup>46</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>47</sup> "Duowei liwei zuo yaoqiu zhengfu jiejue zhanshi shoutian zheng wenti . . ." [Yesterday, members of Legislative Yuan asked the government to solve the problem of fighters' farmland certificates . . .], *Lianhe bao*, July 5, 1987, 2.

<sup>48</sup> In the 1950s, the KMT issued "fighters' farmland certificates" to mainland soldiers to boost troop morale. These certificates promised land to the holders when the Nationalist regime returned to China. Since the Nationalists did not retake the mainland, the certificates became worthless.

CCK avoided heavy-handed suppression of the veterans. He still saw them as staunch supporters of the KMT and a crucial constituency for his party after democratization. Moreover, such a move would likely create a serious backlash in an already agitated society. There was actually widespread support and empathy for the disenfranchised soldiers in Taiwan at this time. This is in stark contrast to the prevailing notion during the 1950s that mainland soldiers and male vagabonds were a scourge of society. In the next chapter, I will discuss in greater detail the growing public concern about the plight of *laobing* starting in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

It was under these circumstances that the success of the Veterans' Homebound Movement in 1987 should be understood. The VHM took place concurrently with the larger protest for retirement security. It compelled CCK to finally lift the travel ban not only because he witnessed an outpouring of popular support for these *laobing*, but also because the now ailing and bedridden Chiang worried that many of the disgruntled veterans would be drawn toward his party's newly formed political rival: the DPP. The DPP had been fighting for some time for the homecoming of overseas Taiwanese dissidents on the humanitarian grounds of reuniting families. In late February 1987, a group of DPP activists issued a "Freedom to Return Home Movement Manifesto" (自由返鄉運動宣言).<sup>49</sup> A small band of *laobing* who had been advocating for *waishengren*'s rights to return home to China on the same humanitarian grounds joined the group. Together, they decided to focus first on ending the official ban on mainland travel in order to facilitate the lifting of other travel restrictions.<sup>50</sup> In mid-April, old soldiers working with the DPP formed the "Mainlander Homebound and Visiting Relatives Promotion Society" (外省人返鄉探親促進會). Accordingly, the VHM is also known as the "Mainlander Homebound Movement."<sup>51</sup> Jiang Sizhang, whose story I began this chapter with, was a leading figure in this small band of veterans.<sup>52</sup>

Unlike his comrades in arms who were fighting for their rights to go home, Jiang had already sneaked back to China and seen his family on Daishan Island in the summer of 1982.<sup>53</sup> Different from most clandestine returnees who wisely kept a low profile, he actively encouraged many of his fellow Zhoushan natives to take the trip; even offering to help some of them. Being one of the first to return to Daishan from Taiwan, Jiang was swamped by hundreds of village folks who perched outside of his family

<sup>49</sup> Jiang, *Xiangzhou*, 216. <sup>50</sup> Jiang Sizhang, interviewed by the author.

<sup>51</sup> D. Yang, "One Man's Quest," 182.

<sup>52</sup> Other *laobing* leaders include He Wende, Xia Zixun, and Zhu Wengui.

<sup>53</sup> Jiang, *Xiangzhou*, 12–17.

home for days on end. These people had relatives who were also taken away by the Nationalists in 1950. They were hoping that Jiang could shed light on the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones or help pass on messages and private letters when he returned to Taiwan. Overwhelmed by all the requests, Jiang nonetheless promised his hometown people in Daishan that he would do his best.<sup>54</sup>

Much to his dismay, most of his fellow Zhoushan natives in Taiwan refused his help. Some even feigned indifference in spite of really wanting to go home.<sup>55</sup> Many were afraid of being punished by the state. In hindsight, no one was ever imprisoned for these clandestine visits. Upon actual discoveries, people only got their rights to overseas travel suspended for a period of time. However, as Joshua Fan has pointed out, “the fear of consequences was certainly real, especially for those whose livelihoods depended on the government.”<sup>56</sup> Though tens of thousands, perhaps even hundreds of thousands, had taken the trip before 1987, the fear of reprisals meant only a small minority of retired soldiers, teachers, and civil servants had returned before the ban was finally lifted. This silent and repressed majority were the ones Jiang and the VHM participants were fighting for. They demanded that the Nationalist authorities lift the travel ban immediately and unconditionally. There was a collective sense of urgency. The senior relatives of the civil war migrants on the mainland, especially their parents and grandparents, were already quite old. Many had already passed away. For the ones that remained, not much time was left. This simple and emotional appeal to filial piety and family reunion worked. It struck a chord with an overwhelming majority of the Taiwanese society formed mostly by *benshengren* who had no relatives in China.

On May 10, 1987, Mother’s Day, Jiang and his veteran comrades started demonstrating in front of the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall in Taipei, another sacred monument of the Nationalist legacy (see Figure 4.4). Watched closely by both uniformed police and plainclothes security agents, they distributed leaflets to passersby. They wore white T-shirts painted with the oversized characters of “missing home” (想家) on the front and with classical Chinese poems and songs of nostalgia on the back. They held up signboards printed with emotional messages, such as “Mother, I really miss you!” and “The army kidnapped me! Please send me home!”<sup>57</sup> Different from the protest for state benefits, the homebound movement was initially boycotted by other *laobing*. Many retired soldiers were loyal to the KMT. They saw an alliance with the DPP as an act of

<sup>54</sup> Jiang Sizhang, interviewed by the author. <sup>55</sup> Jiang, *Xiangzhou*, 17–18.  
<sup>56</sup> Fan, *China’s Homeless Generation*, 116. <sup>57</sup> Jiang, *Xiangzhou*, 19.



Figure 4.4 The 1987 Mother's Day demonstration in Taipei. Jiang Sizhang (on the far left wearing sunglasses) and several VHM participants protesting on a sidewalk. Jiang holds a sign that asks: "Do you miss home?" Source: Image courtesy of the Digital Archive for the Memories and Narratives of Mainlander Taiwanese, Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, Taipei.

betrayal. Thus, in addition to dealing with constant police harassment, Jiang and his fellow protestors were also condemned by fellow retirees at first. In a few instances, they were physical beaten by other veterans – the very people they were fighting for.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, the movement persevered and the demonstration went on. Benefiting from the public support for *laobing* that already existed, the composure and devotion of Jiang and his comrades in the face of repeated insults captured the hearts and minds of ordinary citizens in Taiwan.<sup>59</sup> The VHM soon began to attract a large army of retired teachers, civil servants, and finally, retired soldiers to their cause.

About a month and a half after the Mother's Day initiation, the VHM activists held a major rally in Taipei's Jinhua Junior High School (金華國中) in late June 1987. Tens of thousands of people showed up for this event.<sup>60</sup> Prominent intellectuals and DPP politicians

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 19.    <sup>59</sup> Ibid., 217 218.    <sup>60</sup> Ibid., 20.



Figure 4.5 Jinhua Junior High School rally, late June 1987. Jiang Sizhang and a female activist led the crowd in singing a song called "Mother, Where Are You?" Source: Image courtesy of Jiang Sizhang.

gave fiery speeches in support of the movement. Emotions ran high. As the gathering drew to a close, Jiang Sizhang went on stage to lead a sing-along. He chose a popular song in Shanghai during the 1930s called "Mother, Where Are You?" The song describes a person's deep affection and longing for his mother.<sup>61</sup> When the music played, the large crowd of mostly old and middle-aged men broke down, crying like babies (see Figure 4.5). Plainclothes agents in the field immediately reported back to the ailing CCK about what had happened. The news apparently shook him.<sup>62</sup> Earlier the same year, CCK had instructed his senior officials to discuss the possibility of ending the travel ban, but in the meantime, he and a majority of top party leaders had remained on the fence.<sup>63</sup> Now with news of the DPP attracting a sizable crowd of retired soldiers and civil servants to its rally, CCK saw that continuing to hold out on the issue could really hurt his party. With his deteriorating health and impending

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 161–162. <sup>62</sup> D. Yang, "One Man's Quest," 197–198.

<sup>63</sup> Ding et al., *Dalu tanqin*, 12–13.

death, the KMT would be vulnerable. The party could not afford to lose its most loyal supporters to the opposition.

Events moved quickly from that point onward. In July and August, as the VHM raged on, the media began to report that the Nationalist authorities were considering different options for people to see their relatives in the PRC.<sup>64</sup> On September 16, CCK instructed several top officials, including the vice president and his eventual successor, Lee Teng-hui, to reexamine the law prohibiting travel between Taiwan and China. Lee and his colleagues submitted a report to the Central Standing Committee of the KMT on October 14 suggesting that the law should be modified.<sup>65</sup> The following day, the government formally announced the lifting of the nearly four-decades-long travel ban. Any ROC citizen who had first-, second-, and third-degree relatives in the PRC, except for those currently employed by the government and the military, were allowed to visit the mainland via arrangements set up by Taiwan's Red Cross Society. The new law would take effect on November 2.<sup>66</sup> Over the next couple of years, Taiwan and China introduced both government and nongovernment institutions to manage the rapidly growing human traffic, trade, and investment across the Taiwan Strait.<sup>67</sup> The remaining restrictions would be relaxed swiftly, and by April 1993, all residents of Taiwan, excluding active military, police, and intelligence personnel, were allowed to visit China.<sup>68</sup>

Immediately following the government's announcement in late 1987, residents in Taiwan were struck by what the local media dubbed "visiting relatives fever" (探親熱) or "mainland fever" (大陸熱). Hundreds of thousands in Taiwan flocked to China to see their families, to tour famous historical sites, and to seek business opportunities. Travel agencies in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China worked around the clock to accommodate this massive flow of human beings. Direct mail, communication, and remittance services were also quickly

<sup>64</sup> Rong Futian, "Zhengfu maixiang kaifang de jiji zuofa" [The government's positive approach to opening], *Lianhe bao*, July 18, 1987, 2; "Zhengfu kaolü kaifang minzhong fu dalu tanqin" [The government considers whether to allow people to visit relatives on the mainland], *ibid.*, August 23, 1987, 1.

<sup>65</sup> Chao and Myers, *First Chinese Democracy*, 227.

<sup>66</sup> "Neizhengbu xuandu fu dalu tanqin banfa . . ." [Ministry of the Interior announces measures for visiting mainland relatives], *Zhongyang ribao*, October 16, 1987, 1.

<sup>67</sup> These were the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council (1988) and the nongovernmental Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (1991) on the China side and the Mainland Affairs Council of the Executive Yuan (1991) and the nongovernmental Straits Exchange Foundation (1990) on the Taiwan side.

<sup>68</sup> Fawubu diaochaju ed., *Guoren fu dalu tanqin liyou wenti mianmianguan* [Different aspects of our citizens visiting relatives and sightseeing on the mainland] (Hsintien: Gongdang wenti yanjiu zhongxin, 1995), 2.

established.<sup>69</sup> Due to Taiwan's security concerns and a face-saving effort to maintain some semblance of the "three noes policy," people still needed to go through Hong Kong or a third country when traveling to China. Ferry services linking Taiwan's offshore islands to the mainland were not opened until 2001. Direct flights between China and Taiwan only started in 2008 under Ma Ying-jeou's presidency.

### The Long Road Home: Elongated Temporality and Reverse Culture Shock

With the travel ban coming to an end, first-generation *waishengren*'s lifelong dream finally came true. The government's announcement on October 15 released decades of pent-up emotions. The aging civil war migrants responded to the news with mixed feelings of elation, anticipation, hesitation, and anxiety.<sup>70</sup> Most had had no contact with the parents, siblings, spouses, and children they had left behind in China for decades. Were they still alive? How could one get in touch? What should one bring for them? After such a long separation, what should one say or do? These vexing questions tormented countless former exiles. Some said that the waiting period between the official announcement and the actual lifting of the ban seemed "harder to endure than the lengthy thirty-eight years that had gone by."<sup>71</sup> This protracted sense of time would later become the hallmark of *waishengren*'s homecoming experiences in China.

The returnees from Taiwan did get some early warnings from those who had slipped back home illegally. They also had access to many published accounts written by homebound travelers from other overseas locations. Still, most were never fully prepared for what was to come. As one Henan Province native puts it, "[B]efore we went back, the things we heard were difficult to swallow, so inconceivable that we treated them as mere hearsay. We still had certain longing (for the home in China) – things couldn't possibly be that bad, right?"<sup>72</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Hsu Hsueh chi, "Dibazhang: Liang'an guanxi" [Chapter eight: cross strait relations], in *Zhonghuaminguo hongshizihui bainian huishi: 1904 nian 2003 nian* [One hundred year history of the Red Cross Society of the ROC], ed. Zhang Yufa (Taipei: Zhonghuaminguo hongshizi zonghui, 2004), 712–715.

<sup>70</sup> For a good article on these emotions, see "Laobing laojia tanqin? Tanqin? ... hebi zuo shengdan laoren" [Old soldiers visiting hometown relatives? Having a sigh because of these relatives? ... why play Santa Claus?], *Lianhe bao*, October 15, 1987, 3.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>72</sup> Fan Jingzhou, "Suojian suowen wosi woxiang (si)" [What I see, hear, and think (4)], *Henan tongxiang* 77 (1993): 7.

Not long after Deng unlocked China's gate, travelogues by visitors began to appear in Taiwan's newspapers.<sup>73</sup> Many were produced by ROC citizens living abroad in Hong Kong and the United States. In 1982, a book recounting a three-week journey in China titled *Eight Thousand Li Road of Cloud and Moon* (八千里路雲和月) caused a small sensation.<sup>74</sup> The author Zhuang Yin (莊因, 1933–??) was born in Beijing. His father Zhuang Yan (莊嚴, 1899–1980), a famous calligrapher, archaeologist, and art historian, worked as one of the custodians for China's ancient and imperial treasures housed in the Forbidden City. The Zhuangs relocated with these priceless historical artifacts first to Shanghai and Nanjing, and then to southwest China during the Japanese invasion. When the mainland fell to the CCP, the KMT arranged for the family to go to Taiwan along with the finest pieces in the entire trove. Zhuang Yin migrated to Australia in the 1960s, and later settled in the United States. He taught Chinese language and literature at Stanford University. In 1981, Zhuang was among some of the first Chinese-American scholars to visit the PRC following the normalization of China–U.S. relations. He had anticipated a joyful homecoming. But much to his own surprise, Zhuang was plagued by bouts of depression and insomnia, both during the trip and after he arrived back in California. He had never felt something quite like this before in his life. The Chinese literature professor was compelled to write about this experience, but found that he was unable to do so for two full months. He attributed this powerful writer's block to "forces of impact and rupture" (衝擊扯裂的力量) caused by a severe case of reverse culture shock.<sup>75</sup> The mainlanders in Taiwan would later experience what Zhuang had experienced when they left the island for China.

Naturally, people wanted to travel back home as soon as possible once the ban was removed. Unfortunately, they soon discovered that the road home was not an easy one. There were various roadblocks. These contributed to an elongated sense of time. First, potential returnees faced long queues at the office. As part of its façade to uphold the "three noes policy" initially, the ROC government refused to have any official communication with the PRC. The Nationalists asked Taiwan's Red Cross Society (RCS), a civil and humanitarian aid organization, to act as

<sup>73</sup> For two examples, see Liu Xiaomei, "Qiting xianggangren de 'fanxiang qitan'" [Listening to the "bizarre return home stories" of Hong Kong people], *Lianhe bao*, June 15, 1980, 3; "Dalu tanqin qitian guilai gankai wanqian!" [After seven days of visiting relatives in China, my heart is filled with tens of thousands of emotions!], *ibid.*, November 7, 1980, 3.

<sup>74</sup> Zhuang Yin, *Balianlilu yun he yue* [Eight thousand *li* road of cloud and moon] (Taipei: Chunwenxue chubanshe, 1982). One *li* equals 0.5 km.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 161–162.

a surrogate and manage the cross-strait trips together with the Chinese authorities. The RCS served as the main functionary on the Taiwan side from November 1987 to June 1991, before the government felt confident enough to take over.<sup>76</sup>

In hindsight, the RCS did a fairly good job overall despite being woefully unprepared for the task initially. The Nationalist authorities did not contact the RCS about their role until the end of September 1987.<sup>77</sup> As a result, the RCS had very little time to muster the manpower and resources needed to handle and assist a large number of applicants who were eagerly trying to hit the road home. This is another clear indication that CCK's decision to lift the ban was rushed and coerced.

The night before November 2, thousands camped outside the RCS headquarters in Taipei. When the doors opened in the morning, all the people rushed in at once – shoving, fighting, and yelling. In the ensuing chaos and confusion, the RCS staff and volunteers managed to process roughly 1,300 applications on the first day.<sup>78</sup> Tired and exasperated, those who did not get their applications submitted lined up outside again to wait for the next day. By the end of 1987, more than 30,000 homebound travelers had been registered, screened, and approved. This was a commendable performance given the RCS's limited capability to begin with.<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately, this was still just a small drop in the large bucket of the hundreds of thousands who remained waiting anxiously.

Frustrated by the situation, impatient returnees resorted to the earlier practice of clandestine visits. As time went by, people simply bypassed the government-mandated application and registration with the RCS. According to Joshua Fan, this phenomenon is clearly illustrated by the much lower return figures recorded by the RCS on the Taiwan side, in contrast to the high figures reported by the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) on the PRC side. During the first full year of legal travel in 1988, the RCS counted 236,839 mainland trips while the CNTA showed 437,700 admitted from Taiwan. The total from 1988 to 1991 on the Taiwan side was 534,332. This was dwarfed by more than five times the number the China side had tabulated at 2,873,332. Tracing the figures on both sides until 2004, Fan concludes that only 20 percent of

<sup>76</sup> Hsu, "Dibazhang," 710–711.

<sup>77</sup> "Neizhengbu yu hongshizihui jiechu jiu zhongjie tanqin shi jiaohuan yijian" [Ministry of the Interior contacted the Red Cross to exchange views on intermediating visiting relatives], *Zhongyang ribao*, September 30, 1987, 2.

<sup>78</sup> "Dalu tanqin kaishi shouli dengji beigao liangdi tongshi jiman renchao" [The application for visiting relatives on the mainland has begun. Huge crowds showed up in Taipei and Kaohsiung simultaneously.], *ibid.*, November 3, 1987, 3.

<sup>79</sup> Hsu, "Dibazhang," 711.

Taiwan's travelers had even bothered to register with their government when visiting China.<sup>80</sup>

There were other roadblocks besides the mandatory application and registration. Notwithstanding the resumption of postal and telephone services across the Taiwan Strait, reestablishing contact with relatives in China after decades of radio silence was not an easy task.<sup>81</sup> People died. Families moved. Provincial borders and administrative units were redrawn. Names of places changed. All over China, entire villages and towns were razed for Mao's grandiose dam and irrigation projects.<sup>82</sup> Memories of the aging *waishengren* had also faded.

Even after jumping through these hurdles to make initial contact, some had to go through the hassle of changing their names back to prove they did have relatives in China.<sup>83</sup> In the midst of chaos and turmoil during the Resistance War and the ensuing civil war, individuals took other people's names or assumed fake identities. They did so to survive, to escape persecution, or to get on boats to Taiwan. Jiang Sizhang was a case in point. His real name was Jiang Wenbiao (姜文標). When Jiang absconded from the machine gun company that kidnapped him in Daishan to join an air force unit, he provided that unit with a false identity (i.e. Jiang Sizhang). The false identity became the one Jiang was legally registered under in Taiwan.<sup>84</sup> It became his real name. The problem is that Jiang Sizhang had no living family members in China because it was a fake identity; ergo, the need to change one's name back before submitting the travel application. The bureaucratic procedure for a name change could take several months.

Another form of delay dredged up traumatic memories from the past. Thousands of old soldiers needed to undergo laser tattoo removal treatment before they could travel back home. Grudgingly and impatiently, these elderly men waited months for the procedure at hospitals and clinics inundated with similar requests.<sup>85</sup> These people had slogans like "oppose

<sup>80</sup> Fan, *China's Homeless Generation*, 122–123.

<sup>81</sup> *Waisheng tongxianghui* played an important role in reconnecting families. For the major issues, see Rao Yunying, "Chezhi zagan" [Random talks and feelings], *Henan tongxiang* 66 (1990): 22–23.

<sup>82</sup> Long Yingtai's hometown Chun'an was submerged by a dam project. See Long, *Dajiang dahai*, 33–37.

<sup>83</sup> "Dalu laitai biangeng xingming fanxiang tanqin juzheng wuping" [Not being able to provide proof of identity due to one changing names when moving from China to Taiwan], *Zhongyang ribao*, December 27, 1987, 7.

<sup>84</sup> Jiang, *Xiangzhou*, 294.

<sup>85</sup> Wei Xinxin, "Laorongmin xiandangnian buci shazhu bamao daobuliao Taiwan ... tuifuhui bian yusuan mibu yihan" [Old veterans could not come to Taiwan without tattooing slogans such as "kill Zhu and pluck Mao" at the time ... The VAC allocated funds to compensate their misfortune], *Lianhe bao*, April 23, 1999, 5.

communism and resist Russia” (反共抗俄) or “slay Zhu and pluck Mao” (殺朱拔毛) chiseled on their arms, chests, backs, and other body parts. Most were Chinese prisoners of war (POWs) captured by US armed forces during the Korean War. The official KMT line glorified these individuals as “righteous anti-communist fighters.” They chose “Free China” rather than returning home to enslavement in Communist China. In reality, that choice might have been forced upon many. Recent research shows that pro-Nationalist elements among the POWs browbeat many fellow detainees in Korea into tattooing themselves so these people could never return to the PRC and had to go to Taiwan instead.<sup>86</sup> Decades later, the same group of people had to remove these bodily engravings of coercion to avoid embarrassment and potential troubles during their homebound journeys. Removing the physical marks is easy. The mental scars are lifelong and almost impossible to expunge (see Figure 4.6).

False names and tattoos affected only a portion of the former exiles who took the long road home. Anger and resentment from one’s Taiwan family was a more common and a more trying roadblock. Visiting relatives in China produced intense domestic quarrels in Taiwan, so much so that in some cases it divided families permanently.<sup>87</sup> The age-sex pyramid of the civil war migrants in Chapter 1 (Figure 1.2) indicated that a considerable number of men in the nonmilitary population left their families in China. By 1987, many had remarried and formed new households in Taiwan. Some did not tell their Taiwanese wife and children about the existence of previous wedlock and offspring in China, or lied about them having passed away already. Diana Lary remarks that for these individuals, “the pain of having left China and their families was so great that they forced the memories of those who had been left behind into a dark, secret place.”<sup>88</sup> Legally, these men had to lie about their marital status so they could remarry in Taiwan.<sup>89</sup>

The opening of mainland travel not only created messy legal issues regarding bigamy and inheritance, it also presented a guilt-ridden dilemma for the elderly first-generation *waishengren*.<sup>90</sup> On the one hand, they were driven by the need to reconcile with and compensate the families they had left behind in China for decades of neglect and suffering. As we shall see later, this contributed to the unhealthy “Santa Claus phenomenon” that actually ended up splitting many reunited families. On the other hand, these

<sup>86</sup> For more, see Shen Xingyi, *Yiwan siqian ge zhengren*, 166–183.

<sup>87</sup> Yan Lin, “Yuanle xiangmeng suile jiating: ‘Taiqi’ gai ruhe chuli dalu tanqin houyizheng” [Fulfilling the dream of return at the expense of family: How should “Taiwan wives” deal with the consequences of visiting relatives on the mainland], *Jiating* 148 (1989): 53–54.

<sup>88</sup> Lary, *China’s Civil War*, 223. <sup>89</sup> Fan, *China’s Homeless Generation*, 122.

<sup>90</sup> Yan, “Yuanle xiangmeng,” 56.



Figure 4.6 Jin Feng. Jin Feng was a native of Heilongjiang Province. He returned home and saw his mother in 1990 after forty years of separation. Jin was born to a landlord family under the Japanese puppet regime of Manchukuo. To improve his family's class status after the CCP victory, he joined the Chinese People's Volunteer Army and served as a stretcher bearer in the Korean War. Jin was later captured by the US forces. He was among the 14,000 Chinese POWs that were transported to Taiwan in 1954. Source: Image courtesy of the Digital Archive for the Memories and Narratives of Mainlander Taiwanese, Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, Taipei.

men did not know how to face their wives and children in Taiwan. In particular, those who had kept their mainland families a secret felt extremely guilty.<sup>91</sup> Some Taiwanese wives and children did empathize with their tormented husbands and fathers, but predictably, many others felt insecure, betrayed, and bitter, especially those who had been lied to. Intense emotional quarrels erupted when Taiwanese family members tried to dissuade the men in their households from visiting China, and from offering gifts and financial assistance to destitute mainland relatives. In another situation

<sup>91</sup> These situations are depicted masterly by two popular fictional accounts in Taiwan: “My Relatives in Hong Kong” and “Spring Hope.” See Chi and Wang, *Last of the Whampoa Breed*, 151–214. For an overview of “visiting relatives novels” (探親小說), see Hou Ruqi, *Shuangxiang zhijian*, 342–347.

a widowed father brought a young mainland wife back from his rural hometown in China to the anger and dismay of his children in Taiwan.<sup>92</sup>

While propitiating upset family members in Taiwan was a difficult enough task, one's career presented another possible roadblock. Military personnel and government employees were still not allowed to visit the PRC during the first few years of cross-strait exchange. As a result, people had to sacrifice their jobs and pensions. They retired early so they could leave Taiwan for China and see their aging relatives as soon as possible.<sup>93</sup> One of Mahlon Meyer's interviewees was the deputy chief of a police station in Taipei. He not only cut short a promising official career, but also turned down a lucrative offer in the private sector. One of his coworkers confronted him: "Are you crazy? Do you know how hard it is to get a job like that?" His reply was simple: "There's no other choice I can make. My mother is waiting for me."<sup>94</sup>

In March 1988, the first major survey on mainland travel conducted by Taiwan's Ministry of the Interior showed that close to 70 percent of the returnees spent more than 60,000 NTD on a trip. About a quarter of them spent more than 150,000 NTD.<sup>95</sup> A majority of the homebound visitors from Taiwan were retired soldiers, teachers, and civil servants living on moderate government pensions. Even the lower figure of 60,000 NTD constituted a considerable financial burden for these people. Many *laobing* had to clear their bank accounts or borrow money so that they could embark on the road home. The public fundraising campaigns held to benefit the destitute soldiers fell short of assisting many in need.<sup>96</sup> For this reason, some veterans decided not to go back at all.<sup>97</sup> For these individuals, the high cost became a roadblock they could not or were unwilling to push through. Many of these folks had joined the Nationalist army because their villages or hometowns were completely destroyed during the Resistance War or the Chinese civil war. Presumably, they had no one close still living in China. None of them felt the urge to play "Santa Claus" and squander their meager life savings and hard-won pensions on showering distant mainland kin with undue extravagance.<sup>98</sup>

There are several contributing factors to the Santa Claus phenomenon. Anthropologist Charles Stafford argues that Chinese culture places great

<sup>92</sup> Meyer, *Remembering China*, 109 115, 199 210.

<sup>93</sup> Fan, *China's Homeless Generation*, 119. <sup>94</sup> Meyer, *Remembering China*, 101.

<sup>95</sup> "Bufangbian buxiguan hen luohou zhu bujiu . . ." [Not convenient, can't get used to it, very backward, can't live there long . . .], *Zhongyang ribao*, March 15, 1988, 11.

<sup>96</sup> "Buzhu tanqi mukuan yijing bufu fenpei" [The money raised to subsidize visiting relatives is insufficient for the distribution], *ibid.*, January 21, 1988, 11; Fan, *China's Homeless Generation*, 118 119.

<sup>97</sup> Li, *Li yu ku*, 57. <sup>98</sup> "Laobing laojia tanqin," 3.

emphasis on family separation and reunion, perhaps to the point of obsession.<sup>99</sup> For returnees coming home from afar, there are certain ways to show identification with their native-place communities. These include showering hometown kin with money and gifts; performing tomb-sweeping and ancestor worship; sponsoring lavish banquets and religious festivals to honor local deities. Beyond the overarching cultural factor, political and economic factors specific to the Taiwan–China divide also had an effect. According to mainlander writer and radio host Luo Lan (羅蘭, 1919–2015), many visitors from Taiwan flaunted their wealth brazenly during the home-bound trips. They dished out cash and presents lavishly in a self-gratifying manner. She suggested that decades of anti-communist indoctrination by the KMT and the ROC’s remarkable economic growth in contrast to the PRC’s miserable stagnation had combined to produce a condescending attitude on the part of Taiwan’s residents toward people in China. Many *waishengren* pitied and even ridiculed their indigent mainland relatives. Luo thought this patronizing behavior would end up destroying family bonds.<sup>100</sup>

Luo is right about money and condescension destroying family bonds, but her critique reveals only part of the larger picture. It glosses over a crucial factor explaining the over-the-top generosity of many returnees from Taiwan – guilt. A majority of *waishengren*’s mainland kin, regardless of their social status before 1949, suffered tremendously in Mao’s China because they were tainted with “overseas connections” (海外关系).<sup>101</sup> Having a close relative who escaped to Taiwan with Chiang Kai-shek’s traitorous regime meant the entire family would be placed in the “black five categories” (黑五类), in league with landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, criminals, and rightists. Members from these households were usually the first ones to be targeted during mass campaigns and the last ones to receive food and social benefits. The state education and employment system discriminated children from these families so they could not rise above their station.<sup>102</sup> Thus, for the returnees from Taiwan, providing compensation to loved ones who had suffered a great deal helped to alleviate their own sense of guilt (see Figure 4.7).

<sup>99</sup> Charles Stafford, *Separation and Reunion in Modern China* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 174.

<sup>100</sup> Luo Lan, “Kaifang tanqin de ‘pingchangxin’” [“Normal mindset” when visiting mainland relatives], *Tianxia zazhi* 77 (1987): 68–69.

<sup>101</sup> There are many published stories on this subject in Taiwan told mostly by the returnees. See the personal narratives in *Waisheng Taiwanren xiehui*, *Liuli jiyi*; Xue Jiguang et al., *Xiangguan chuchu: Waishengren fanxiang tanqin zhaopian gushishu* [Home everywhere: A pictorial storybook of the mainlanders returning home and visiting relatives] (Chungho: INK, 2008).

<sup>102</sup> For more, see Meyer, *Remembering China*, chapter 4.



Figure 4.7 Xu Pingdao. Xu held his eighty three year old father's hand and cried. This photo was taken in 1988 forty years after Xu had left his rural village in Henan Province to serve as a Nationalist army cadet. Initially, Xu's family did not suffer because the CCP classified them as "poor peasants." However, during the Cultural Revolution, his father was brutally beaten for having a son who escaped to Taiwan with the KMT. Source: Image courtesy of the Digital Archive for the Memories and Narratives of Mainlander Taiwanese, Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, Taipei.

Sadly, the Santa Claus phenomenon drove a wedge between the “Taiwanese compatriots” and their PRC relatives rather than bringing them closer together. Nothing upset the returnees more than when they came face to face with greedy kin who just kept on asking for more, and who fought tooth and nail over the largesse. After all the family troubles and career sacrifices the civil war migrants in Taiwan went through to embark on these trips, and after decades of cultural nostalgia about their native places in China, meeting money-grubbing relatives was indeed heartbreakingly. When seeing their mainland families again, *waishengren* sought to rekindle old feelings of home: warmth, affection, and a sense of belonging. Most were sorely disappointed.

There is no shortage of horror stories when it comes to disturbing family reunions. People’s guilt and sympathy for their mainland relatives quickly turned into revulsion and estrangement. In a journal article titled “Is it better not to meet after all?” a female civil servant talks about meeting her elder brother and sister in Hong Kong for the first time in forty years. Despite the initial hugs and cries, the reunion was beset by a strange tension and awkward moments. Her siblings, upon receiving two large trunks of clothes and gifts, made further demands for televisions, refrigerators, cameras, and even the ring she was wearing. “Before I boarded the plane, I gave them everything I had with me: US dollars, Hong Kong dollars, the camera, and that ring. However, at that point, all my yearning before the meeting and the intense emotions I felt when I first saw them had all but dissipated.”<sup>103</sup>

Xun Zhi arrived back in his hometown near Zhengzhou (郑州) in Henan Province only to find that the wife he had left behind during the Resistance War had married another man a long time ago. Xun’s young nephews had lied to him in their letters. They feared that, with their grandparents (Xun’s parents) passing away and Xun’s wife remarried, their uncle in Taiwan would not want to return. During his entire stay, the nephews and his other distant kin fought tooth and nail over the money and gifts he brought.<sup>104</sup> Xun’s request to see his former spouse was initially rebuffed. His young kinsmen simply did not want an additional person to share the spoils with. Xun kept on insisting, so the reluctant nephews finally took him to see the old woman. The two were placed in a small room alone. After sharing rounds of tears and sad stories, Xun put

<sup>103</sup> Bianjibu, “Xiangjian buru bujian?” [Is it better not to meet after all?], *Yuanjian zazhi* 12 (1987): 27.

<sup>104</sup> Xun Zhi, “Shangxin leijin hua tanqin” [Talking about visiting relatives with a broken heart and dried tears], *Henan tongxiang* 62 (1989): 17.

US\$200 in his former wife's hands before departing. "How could you give me so little [money]!" Her words shocked Xun to the core. He could not believe his ears. Were all those tears fake ones? Dumbfounded, he thought about the exchange over and over again on his way back.<sup>105</sup> Xun only felt better when he boarded the plane back to Taiwan. "The dark cloud over my mind is finally cleared," Xun muttered while breathing a sigh of relief. Mr. Liu, a fellow returnee from Taiwan sitting next to him also had a miserable family reunion. Liu declared, "Even if they give me two thousand taels of gold, I would not come back here again!"<sup>106</sup>

A single, seventy-five-year-old KMT veteran named Zhang Tiezheng received a letter from Chongqing in Sichuan Province. He learned that his only son was still alive. The son had a family and ran a small but successful furniture business. Zhang took his 60,000 NTD life savings and migrated back to live out the remainder of his days with his son's family. Zhang's son embraced him at first, along with the local CCP cadres. Unfortunately, as soon as his mainland family discovered that 60,000 NTD was all he had, they started treating him terribly. Instead of a comfortable retirement surrounded by grandchildren, Zhang's life in China became a living nightmare.<sup>107</sup> As Joshua Fan states, "Overall, the family reunion that the Homeless Generation had pined for often did not happen as expected. There were plenty of chances for disappointment: parents had died, wives had remarried, and children had become strangers."<sup>108</sup>

Despite the proliferation of these horror stories, not every *waishengren* met ravenous kinsfolk. Not everyone was so devastated by these encounters that they vowed never to return. The aforementioned Ministry of the Interior survey in March 1988 showed that although close to 78 percent of the returnees from Taiwan felt uncomfortable traveling and living in China, nearly 47 percent of them still wanted to go back and see their relatives again.<sup>109</sup> Later the same year, a major study by a public think tank in Taiwan suggested that approximately 68 percent of the returnees wanted to travel to China again. Among these people, about 85 percent said visiting their friends and relatives was the main reason.<sup>110</sup>

My own interviewees reveal different situations. Many of them refrained from talking about their relatives in China. This is usually a sign of unpleasant reunions that strained or even severed family relations. Yet, there is Liu Chenghui, who never had a money problem with her hometown folks back in Debao (德寶), Guangxi Province. Liu

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 16. <sup>106</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>107</sup> Cheng Chuankang, "Liangan tianlun" [Family unions from two shores], *Chuankangyu wenwuguan niankan* 7 (1988): 157.

<sup>108</sup> Fan, *China's Homeless Generation*, 129. <sup>109</sup> "Bufangbian buxiguan," 11.

<sup>110</sup> Ding, *Dalu tanqin*, 48–49.

maintained a close relationship with them.<sup>111</sup> There are also individuals such as Long Wanxiang and Lu Yixin. When the husband and wife first made contact with their mainland kin, the latter's money-grubbing propensity shocked and abhorred them. Even so, the couple kept sending cash back to the husband's destitute hometown in southwest Yunnan Province. Commenting on their Chinese relatives during the interview, the wife said, "Their lives used to be very difficult, you know. With the adults killed and our family land confiscated by the CCP, they were reduced to begging on the street. They had no proper education."<sup>112</sup> For the couple, the disgraceful acts of their kin were understandable and forgivable. These people were still family, and family members helped each other out. Others, such as Ma Hui from Shanghai, are selective in terms of which family members they decided to rebuild ties with. In 1988, the sexagenarian Ma got the first phone call from China. She was so thrilled to hear her younger brother's voice again, but she was also devastated when her brother told her that both their beloved father and the eldest brother had passed away (Ma's mother died of tuberculosis before 1949). Shocked but also sad and elated at the same time, Ma could not utter a single word for several minutes. On the other end of the line, her brother was crying and yelling, "Older sister! Please say something! Please! Quickly! This call is so expensive!" Not long after the call, Ma rushed back to see her two surviving brothers and their families. Like many guilt-ridden Santa Clauses, she showered her two younger siblings and their wives and children, whom she had never met, with cash, gold rings, TVs, and other goodies. Ma soon discovered that while one brother kept demanding more money and things, the brother who had called her in the first place only really wanted her love as a sister. Ma cut all ties with the demanding brother but built a cordial relationship with the other brother and his family.<sup>113</sup>

Despite dissimilar encounters with their relatives, there was one prevalent and undeniable condition experienced by all returnees from Taiwan – they no longer felt "at home" while being physically "at home" in China. As mentioned, the Ministry of the Interior survey in March 1988 showed that close to 78 percent of those who came back from these trips felt uncomfortable living and traveling on the mainland.<sup>114</sup> Many compared this unexpected and profound sense of reverse culture shock to a situation described by famous poet He Zhizhang (賀知章, 659–744), a Tang dynasty (618–907) official. In 744, He retired at the

<sup>111</sup> Liu Chenghui, interviewed by the author.

<sup>112</sup> Long Wanxiang (pseudonym) and Lu Xinyi (pseudonym), interviewed by the author, Ta'an District, Taipei, August 7, 2010.

<sup>113</sup> Ma Hui, interviewed by the author. <sup>114</sup> "Bufangbian buxiguan," 11.

age of 85 and left the imperial capital in the north to travel back to his native province in the south. After being away for more than fifty years, the octogenarian could hardly recognize his hometown. The townsfolk also did not know who he was as they treated him like a complete stranger. With mixed emotions, He authored an elegant poem that has been recited in China ever since, “Leaving home young and only to return when I am old./My accent remains yet my sideburns wane./Children do not know who I am./They laugh and ask, ‘Guest, where are you from?’” This homecoming experience struck a chord with many civil war migrants. Like He, first-generation *waishengren* left home young. They arrived back as old-timers decades later only to find that the places they once called home had become foreign lands.

Unpleasant travel experiences were part of this reverse culture shock. They contributed to a prolonged sense of time. First, returnees from Taiwan met unscrupulous travel agents in Hong Kong and crooked CCP border officials who skimmed and extorted money from them by demanding surcharges and bribes.<sup>115</sup> Things got even worse when *waishengren* entered the PRC. Besides shady middlemen and corrupt cadres, the home-bound travelers faced a relatively underdeveloped and impoverished China. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, people in China were still struggling to adjust after decades of anti-capitalist campaigns under Mao. Even with the officially instructed preferential treatment for the “Taiwanese compatriots,” in the eyes of the visitors the services in the PRC were horrible. The airplanes did not take off on schedule and were often delayed, sometimes for days. The buses, trains, and streetcars were always breaking down and late. They were also congested, dirty, and virtually nonexistent in the countryside. Medical facilities were poorly staffed and managed, and also nonexistent outside major cities. Hotels were rundown and filthy; public latrines were soiled and putrid. The returnees also met what they thought were indifferent or rude attendants at every turn. In addition, they needed to deal with currency scalpers and swindlers, as well as constantly watch out for pickpockets and armed robbers who targeted cash-rich Santa Clauses.<sup>116</sup> All of these stood in stark contrast to the comfort, convenience, and safety the returnees had come to enjoy – and even taken for granted – in Taiwan. These unsavory and sometimes appalling experiences served as a constant reminder to the weary passengers that China, a country they had once called home, was now a foreign place. Many elderly mainlanders experienced considerable

<sup>115</sup> For more, see Deng Haibo, *Dalu tanqin jishi* [Records of visiting relatives on the main land] (Taipei: Jiuyang chubanshe, 1987), 29–49.

<sup>116</sup> Fawubu, *Guoren fu dalu*, 117–126.

weight loss during their trips; getting sick from infectious diseases, tainted food and drinks, rapid climate swings, and from a profound sense of displacement.<sup>117</sup> In 1988, during the first year of legal travel, nearly 200 elderly *waishengren* died on the mainland from exhaustion and illnesses.<sup>118</sup>

Physical discomforts on the road were nothing compared to the shock and mental anguish the “Taiwanese compatriots” felt when they came face to face with the disappointing realities of their native places. Things had inevitably changed after forty years; however, *waishengren*’s impressions of their childhood homes and families were locked away in a time capsule. What the returnees witnessed and experienced in the PRC was drastically different from what they had remembered and had tried to document throughout the decades of cultural nostalgia in Taiwan. The physical homecoming shattered *waishengren*’s precious memories. Most came to a painful realization that the “home” they had reminisced about for decades now lived only in their memories. A shared feeling among the heartbreaking civil war migrants was that before the homebound journey, they “had a home but could not return to it” (有家歸不得). After the journey, most thought they had truly become “homeless” (無家可歸).<sup>119</sup>

A housewife I interviewed left Shanghai in 1949 with her parents at the age of ten. She returned in 1989 after four decades. The highly anticipated homecoming was a huge letdown. “My native city had become a ghost town. It was dark and bleak . . . the old Shanghai used to be a city of glittering lights!” Not long after, she and her siblings located the house they grew up in. They found the building had become old and dingy – no longer the warm and fuzzy haven of lights and cheer they once remembered. Worse still, it was occupied by more than a dozen families, none of whom they knew.<sup>120</sup>

Acclaimed poet Xin Yu (辛鬱, 1933–2015) went to school in Shanghai.<sup>121</sup> In 1988, when he returned to the city to see his brothers and pay respects to his deceased parents, he saw an alien metropolis he could barely recognize. What Xin felt in Shanghai was relatively mild

<sup>117</sup> “Fu dalu tanqin xiaoxin lihuan ‘dalubing zhenghouqun’” [Watch out for the “mainland disease syndrome” when visiting relatives on the mainland], *Zhongyang ribao*, August 24, 1990, 11.

<sup>118</sup> “Qunian tanqin lushang binggu duo jin liangbairen duo jiudi huohua” [Last year, many got sick and died when visiting relatives on the mainland. Nearly 200 individuals were mostly cremated on the spot.], *ibid.*, March 24, 1989, 14.

<sup>119</sup> Guanzhongren, “Guxiang guiqu lai” [The hometown is gone (and I’m) coming (back to Taiwan)], *Shaanxi wenxian* 80 (1990): 53.

<sup>120</sup> Zhu Ani (pseudonym), interviewed by the author, Hsintien, August 19, 2008.

<sup>121</sup> Xin Yu is the pen name of Mi Shisen (宓世森).

compared to the shock he received later at his childhood home, Cixi (慈谿), just north of the city of Ningbo:

I tried to look for traces of my childhood. I could only find fragments and had trouble piecing together a picture from the old days. I panicked. I thought I was suffering from a dreadful amnesia. I bawled uncontrollably. My older brother became worried.

Actually, I knew it wasn't amnesia. I simply refused to match what I remembered with what I saw in front of me ... Facing the decrepit old house, the physical structure I spent seven years living in, I gazed upon a small broken window thinking that it could no longer satisfy my somber visit. I thought, "Why couldn't the damn thing have just collapsed earlier?"<sup>122</sup>

At this point, Xin became so tired and emotionally drained that his older brother had to help him walk physically. No words were exchanged.

Silence is the ultimate sign of a broken heart ... I kept my mouth shut for the rest of the day. On our way back, my brother stared at fast moving scenery outside the taxi car window and whispered gently in a rather profound way: "It's been forty years. How could you expect no change?"<sup>123</sup>

The hometown trip upset Xin so much that he was still feeling depressed and fatigued two weeks later when he flew north to tour Beijing (see Figure 4.8).

On the long ride back to his native village in south Anhui Province, writer Zhang Tuowu (張拓蕪, 1928–2018) gawked blankly at the strange towns and countryside outside the window. Time seemed to come to a standstill. For him, the sights looked weird and out of place. They were nothing like the same familiar road home he had traveled so many times in his mind, even in dreams. Zhang writes, "I ask myself: Am I in the wrong place? Did I just enter a foreign country?" During Zhang's three-day stay in his native village, he asked his hometown kin repeatedly, "Where is my home? Where is the home in which I spent my childhood years, my native place?"<sup>124</sup> Not knowing how to respond, his brothers remained silent. Zhang felt extremely miserable. He could not even remember how he later got back to Taiwan.

Yang Tao (楊濤, 1927–2020) was also a writer who hailed from Anhui's impoverished countryside. Yang could barely identify his village when his taxi approached it. At first, the villagers did not know who he was and why he had come all this way for a visit. Finally, a haggard old woman in the

<sup>122</sup> Feng Deping ed., *Sishinian lai jiaguo: Fanxiang tanqin sanwen* [Home and country in the past forty years: Essays on returning home and visiting relatives] (Taipei: Wenxun zazhishe, 1989), 58.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>124</sup> Zhang Tuowu, *Wojia youge hunxiaozhi* [My home has a spoiled kid], Rev. ed. (Taipei: Jiuge, 2010), 186.



Figure 4.8 Elation, disorientation, and melancholy: mixed feelings of the return experience. Meng Xinghua was born and raised in the countryside of central Shaanxi Province. In 1937, at the age of twelve, he left home to join a local anti Japanese guerrilla band. Fifty five years had passed before he returned from Taiwan in 1992. The entire village came out to greet him. Meng was overwhelmed. His elder brother held his hand and guided him toward the family's old house. Source: Image courtesy of the Digital Archive for the Memories and Narratives of Mainlander Taiwanese, Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, Taipei.

gathering crowd, someone who used to know Yang when he was a child, recognized him. As it turned out, Yang's parents died when the CCP took over. Most of his relatives, save for some distant cousins, all starved to death during the Great Leap Forward. In the end, the only thing he could do was take a small scoop of soil from his father's grave and bring it back to Taiwan with him. Yang wrote about the experience:

The fact that my native village is still poor, backward, and filthy does not bother me at all. The only thing I really cannot stand is that it has become a totally different place. The trip completely shattered my memory of home. Not even a gleam of that memory remains intact! . . . I wanted to cry my heart out, but I couldn't even shed one teardrop. Instead, I feel my heart is constantly dripping blood!<sup>125</sup>

<sup>125</sup> Feng, *Sishinian lai jiaguo*, 110.

Not everyone was as unfortunate as Yang Tao. In his native town of Yuqian (於潛), west Zhejiang, journalist Ji Fu (疾夫, 1931–??) was greeted warmly by his mother, brothers, his former wife whom he had left behind, and a coterie of enthusiastic kinsfolk.<sup>126</sup> Ji also got to feast on something he had craved for nearly half a century: his mother's scrumptious home cooking. Still, all this hospitality did not make him feel less out of place. For Ji, his hometown was no longer the same, as the things he associated most with his childhood memory had all fallen victim to Mao's socialist campaigns. The old family mansion, the lively temples, and the town's only Catholic chapel were either abandoned or demolished. Recounting his visit, Ji lamented, "I lingered aimlessly on the physical remains and reflected on various things about my childhood. I couldn't help shedding tears."<sup>127</sup> Novelist Guo Sifen's (郭嗣汾, 1919–2014) mainland relatives also embraced him and his wife with open arms. They made no egregious demands for money and gifts. Even so, due to all the changes in his hometown, Guo felt displaced. Upon returning to Taiwan, he wrote, "[I]t's like I traveled to a place that was familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. Is this really where I grew up, my native place? Honestly, I could never go back home. There was really no home to go back to [in China]."<sup>128</sup>

For the homebound visitors, reconnecting with deceased parents, grandparents, and ancestors via graveside rituals was just as important as reconnecting with living relatives. This place-based and roots-seeking Chinese custom is best illustrated by the Qingming Festival and the practice of tomb-sweeping.<sup>129</sup> As Diana Lary has argued, one of the deepest regrets for the exiles of 1949 was not being able to perform these rites when they were stranded overseas.<sup>130</sup> The Great Leap Forward and the campaign against the "Four Olds" during the Cultural Revolution contributed to widespread destruction of family graves in China. When the returning mainlanders learned from traumatized kin about the tragic demise of their parents and senior relatives, they were beset with tremendous grief and guilt. Not being able to locate the burial sites or to perform the proper rituals added to *waishengren*'s sense of alienation from the localities and communities with which they sought to reestablish intimate ties (see Figure 4.9).

After learning of the destruction of the graves in his hometown in Zhejiang, a fuming elderly mainlander railed at a local CCP cadre who came to receive him. "The main purpose of my trip is to seek roots! The

<sup>126</sup> Ji's real name is Yu Yunping (俞允平). <sup>127</sup> Feng, *Sishinian lai jiaguo*, 76.

<sup>128</sup> Guo Sifen, "Jiayuanqing" [Affections for home], *Chuankangyu wenwuguan niankan* 12 (1993): 190.

<sup>129</sup> Fan, *China's Homeless Generation*, 134. <sup>130</sup> Lary, *China's Civil War*, 225.



Figure 4.9 Graveside rituals. Paying respects to deceased parents and ancestors was an important way for the returnees from Taiwan to reconnect with their native places and surviving relatives in China. Unfortunately, a considerable number of the family graves had been destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. Source: Image courtesy of the Digital Archive for the Memories and Narratives of Mainlander Taiwanese, Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, Taipei.

graves of my ancestors are all gone. What is left for me to return to? You communists didn't want the ancestors, but we do!”<sup>131</sup>

In March 1990, retired KMT colonel Sun Zhesan returned to his family village in the rural hinterland of the Shandong Peninsula. Sun had not been home for fifty years.<sup>132</sup> Instead of a joyous reunion, what greeted him was news from his weeping younger sister about the awful death of their father during the land reform, as well as the passing of their mother and one of their older brothers during the Cultural Revolution. The story tore his heart out. Sun's sorrow turned into rage the next day when local village folks led him to a recently dug mound on the edge of a wheat field. They said it was where his parents were buried. Shocked, Sun lashed out at his

<sup>131</sup> Zhang Yijun, “Taqin de ‘liwu’” [The “gift” of visiting relatives], *Guanghua* 13:3 (1988): 16.

<sup>132</sup> Xue Jiguang et al., *Xiangguan chuchu*, 112.

mainland relatives, “What kind of tomb is this? It’s worse than burying dogs and cats!” A young nephew quickly rushed to his side. He whispered in Sun’s ear, telling the retired colonel that what they did for him was already against government regulations. With other villagers watching, Sun did not want to cause trouble for his kin. He calmed down and finished the rituals. Deep down inside, he was absolutely devastated.<sup>133</sup>

The aforementioned Xun Zhi visited his hometown near Zhengzhou, Henan. Xun talked to one of his greedy nephews about honoring deceased parents and siblings at their graves. The nephew frowned upon the proposal and said, “These practices were the products of feudalistic thinking and obsolete superstition.” The comment upset Xun tremendously. Ignoring him, Xun went ahead and arranged for a ceremony. To his amazement, as he kowtowed, burned incense sticks, and cried his eyes out in front of the tombstones, his nephew and the nephew’s family members wandered about indifferently. They acted like nothing was happening in spite of the ceremony being dedicated to their own parents and grandparents. “That’s when I decided to leave as soon as possible. It’s pointless to spend even a minute longer in this miserable place.”<sup>134</sup>

Another thing that alienated many mainlanders from their native communities in China was the PRC’s official label *taibao*, or “Taiwanese compatriots.” By returning, *waishengren* sought to reconnect with the people and the places they once considered home. Instead, they were made to feel like outsiders when their own kinsfolk addressed them as “Taiwanese compatriots.”<sup>135</sup>

Zhu Xiang had quite a dramatic reunion with his father in his hometown of Jiangjin (江津), Sichuan. The senile and stubborn family patriarch first refused to believe his runaway son had returned miraculously after forty-three years. The old man’s emotional floodgates burst open only after the son confronted him with a childhood incident. Notwithstanding the joy of this uneasy homecoming, Zhu was confused. He wrote:

Prior to this trip, my [native Taiwanese] wife often said to me,  
 “You mainlanders are this and that.”  
 During the trip, my father told me, “You Taiwanese compatriots should do this and that.”  
 My wife calls me “a mainlander?”  
 My father calls me, his son, “a Taiwanese compatriot?”  
 Who am I[?] This is a question I need to think about quietly and seriously.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 113.    <sup>134</sup> Xun Zhi, “Shangxin lejin,” 17.

<sup>135</sup> Li Shuying, “Fanxiang tanqinji” [Notes on returning home and visiting relatives], *Yunnan wenxian* 18 (1988): 166.

<sup>136</sup> Zhu Xiang, “Taqin zhilu” [Journey to visit relatives], *Chuankangyu wenwuguan nian kan* 10 (1991): 297.

The question would be contemplated seriously by many disappointed and heartbroken civil war migrants as they staggered back across the Taiwan Strait physically exhausted and emotionally drained – many of whom traveled only with the clothes on their backs. It was *déjà vu* all over again à la 1949. In a seemingly bizarre historical coincidence, elderly former exiles arrived back in Taiwan not too differently from how they first set foot on the island nearly half a century ago. Only this time they were pretty certain of one thing: the home in China had been lost to them, forever.

### **The Road Home for Younger *Waishengren***

Children and grandchildren of the civil war migrants also took the long road home, including Taiwan-born *waishengren* and *waishengren* who were born in China but raised in Taiwan. The younger mainlanders usually accompanied their parents or senior relatives on these hometown visits (see Figure 4.10). Some of them also took trips to tour the famous historical and cultural sites they had learned about from decades of irredentist Nationalist education. Taiwan-born *waishengren* had never seen “home.” Those who had left China as young children had little or no recollection of their time spent on the mainland. Like the exiled generation, they were also put off by the things they saw and the kinsfolk they met. That said, because most had spent little or no time living on the mainland, the social trauma of the homecoming felt by the younger mainlanders was vicarious and less intense compared to the social trauma felt by their parents and grandparents.

A young lady helped her father haul 20 kg of luggage back to her hometown. Like some of the unlucky returnees described earlier in this chapter, the two met ravenous kinsfolk. The daughter reflected back on the unpleasant family reunion. “They wanted everything. They demanded the things they saw in your hands. They asked around to see what others had received and then confronted you, ‘How come I didn’t get those?’” Summing up the trip, she confided, “That was truly a nightmare. I will never go back again.”<sup>137</sup> Upon returning to Taiwan from her mainland trip, literary scholar Lu Yilu (鹿憶鹿, 1960–) described China as “a dream she can never go back to.” For Lu, her sense of loss was vicarious and symbolic, born of her parents’ nostalgic memories and her own education – not from real, lived experience. China was a beautiful abstraction, an ideal place that

<sup>137</sup> Ma Zhongtian, “Xin zhongguo ‘jie’” [Taiwan’s new “mainland complex”], *Guanghua* 13:3 (1988): 26.



Figure 4.10 The “homecoming” in China for Taiwan born *waishengren*: the end of a journey or the beginning of a new one? Source: Image courtesy of the Digital Archive for the Memories and Narratives of Mainlander Taiwanese, Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, Taipei.

no visit could truly live up to. She wrote with a tinge of sadness, “What I had traveled back to was not China. China is a place I can never return to.”<sup>138</sup>

Novelist and movie scriptwriter Zhu Tianwen (朱天文, 1956–) accompanied her father, the famous army writer Zhu Xining (朱西甯 1928–1998), back to the native town she had never set foot in. Getting in touch with her mainland family and roots was a delightful experience for Zhu overall. She felt displaced nonetheless. The homecoming in China made Zhu realize where her heart truly was:

I began to miss everything about Taiwan. From the viewpoint of the second generation [mainlanders], we did have relatives here. But in terms of shared sentiment in life, we were so different from each other. When I squeezed into a large swarm of people waiting for buses like a stock of fish, everything about China seemed like a foreign country.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>138</sup> Feng, *Sishinian lai jiaguo*, 158.

<sup>139</sup> Zhu Tianwen, Zhu Tianxin, and Zhu Tianyi, *Xiaowucha huati* [Afternoon tea discussions] (Taipei: Maitian, 1992), 67.

Taiwan-born *waishengren* such as Zhu Tianwen had expected to see and feel something familiar when they visited their mainland hometowns. What many felt instead was estrangement, even when their trips brought pleasant experiences.

Ku Ling (苦苓, 1955–) was a popular writer and radio/television host in Taiwan during the 1980s and 1990s who was known for his penetrating commentaries and acerbic wit.<sup>140</sup> Ku's father was an ethnic Manchu from the former Rehe Province. His mother was a native Taiwanese born in Yilan County. In 1994, he produced a poignant and humorous book based on his miserable journey in China titled *My Home Country Oh My Mother* (我的祖國我的媽).<sup>141</sup> Different from Zhuang Yin's sentimental *Eight Thousand Li Road of Cloud and Moon*, Ku's writing lampoons various aspects of PRC society and the behaviors of his fellow returnees. Embittered and cynical, Ku describes his tour group's trials and tribulations on their way back from China as "an escape from the iron curtain."<sup>142</sup> *My Home Country* appeared in the wake of the notorious "Thousand-Island Lake Incident" (千島湖事件). In late March 1994, twenty-four visitors from Taiwan who were aboard a small cruiser were robbed, slaughtered, and reduced to charred corpses at a lake resort in western Zhejiang Province. They were killed alongside eight crew members. The local Chinese authorities first tried to downplay the event. They then mistreated grieving Taiwanese families on-site during the investigation. The mistreatment provoked a serious backlash among people in Taiwan against further cross-strait interactions.<sup>143</sup> Ku's book resonated deeply with an angry and irritated Taiwanese public fed up with many obnoxious people and preposterous things they had to cope with while visiting China. In the preface to *My Home Country*, Ku asks his fellow Taiwanese countrymen if they would still want to be Chinese, given all of the ugly things they have witnessed in the PRC, which stands in glaring contrast to the majestic and refined China they grew up learning about.<sup>144</sup>

The same process of alienation also occurred later among many of the third-generation *waishengren* born after the 1970s. Li Jiayu's parents are second-generation mainlanders. Because of her upbringing, Li used to have a certain romantic idea of China. Her romanticism quickly

<sup>140</sup> Ku Ling is the pen name of Wang Yuren (王裕仁). Though Ku remains a notable writer and commentator in Taiwan today, his career and popularity took a major hit in the early 2000s during a nasty divorce from his first wife.

<sup>141</sup> Ku Ling, *Wode zuguo wodema* [My home country oh my mother] (Taipei: Zili wanbao, 1994).

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>143</sup> For more on the Incident and the Taiwanese reaction, see Fawubu, *Guoren fu dalu*, 64 65, 70 72.

<sup>144</sup> Ku, *Wode zuguo*, 5.

dissipated when she became a political science student at Beijing University in 2000.

At first, I thought Beijing would be a city that exuded culture and elegance. I realized that was not the case when I started living there. People were rude. They spat in the street and quarreled constantly. The air quality was also bad. Your demeanor changes after living there for a while. You inevitably become an ill tempered person.<sup>145</sup>

Li had been a staunch supporter of Taiwan and China's eventual unification, but her view changed drastically after she began living in the PRC. "Now that I come to think of it: I don't understand why we have to unite with the mainland. The ROC has been an independent country all along. The difference between people on both sides of the strait is too great. Unification is utterly pointless."<sup>146</sup>

In recent times, after the year 2000, some Taiwan-born *waishengren* not only visit the PRC and/or go to school there, an increasing number of them also find business and seek out employment opportunities in a rapidly rising China.<sup>147</sup> In addition to seeking greener pastures economically, the moves made by mainlander Taiwanese are also motivated by their family legacies, and by the disheartening political development on their home island. I describe the latter as "the social trauma of the homecoming in Taiwan" in the next chapter. Sociologist Lin Ping has conducted in-depth interviews with *waishengren* of different generations who have migrated to the PRC in recent decades. He concludes, "No matter how much they had aspired to leave Taiwan, few enjoyed life in China."<sup>148</sup> Lin's qualitative research is supported by quantitative data. A survey published in the PRC in 2014 showed that over 75 percent of young Taiwanese professionals working on the mainland favored their previous lives back in Taiwan. Less than 4 percent said they felt more comfortable living in China. Furthermore, only about 7 percent wanted to spend traditional family holidays in China. An overwhelming majority, approximately 75 percent, wanted to spend these holidays back in Taiwan.<sup>149</sup> One of Lin's

<sup>145</sup> Tong Yining, "Waisheng disandai de guojia rentong" [The national identity of third generation mainlanders] (master's thesis, National Taiwan University, Graduate Institute of Journalism, 2005), 52.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>147</sup> It is estimated that 1.5 to 2 million Taiwanese people reside in China nowadays, but it remains unclear how many of these people are *waishengren*. Chiu Kuei fen, Dafydd Fell and Lin Ping eds., *Migration to and from Taiwan* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 1.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>149</sup> Ren Dagang, "200 wan zai dalu de Taiwanren shi ezhi taidu de zhongyao liliang" [The two million Taiwanese on the mainland are an important force to check Taiwan independence], *Xinlang xinwen*, October 31, 2016. [http://news.sina.com.cn/pl/201610\\_31/doc\\_ifxxuff7298645.shtml](http://news.sina.com.cn/pl/201610_31/doc_ifxxuff7298645.shtml) [accessed January 30, 2018].

informants, a second-generation female mainlander who was working in Shanghai, told Lin that she has not visited her local relative (an aunt) in the city for a long time. “I don’t know what to say to her.” Talking about her sense of distance from her Chinese coworkers, the informant said, “I think we are different. We even joke differently.”<sup>150</sup> Sociologist Tseng Yen-fen had interviewed skilled Taiwanese migrant workers in Shanghai from 2008 to 2011. She maintains that, despite their ethnic and political differences, the Taiwanese rarely formed friendships or interacted socially with local Chinese outside of their workplaces.<sup>151</sup> In Shanghai, many migrants from Taiwan (both *waishengren* and *benshengren*) lived in the same enclaves. They watched Taiwanese TV programs, associated mainly with other folks from Taiwan, and sent their children to the same schools. It was as if they were still living in Taipei. According to Tseng, second-generation mainlanders found it more difficult to integrate into Chinese society compared to their parents.<sup>152</sup>

### The New Road Home

Despite Tseng Yen-fen’s point, not many aging first-generation *waishengren* actually moved back to spend their twilight years with relatives in China. Comprehensive data on the return migration does not exist. Figures recorded by Taiwan’s Veterans Affairs Council (VAC) are nevertheless indicative. In the early 1990s, the ROC and the PRC, in spite of their many differences, worked together to facilitate the resettlement of retired KMT veterans back to the mainland. On the Taiwanese side, the VAC was put in charge of the task. The Council’s figures illustrate that by the end of March 1998, a total of 5,488 veterans had relocated back to China with full ROC government pension. This accounts for only 1.46 percent of the 376,447 retired first-generation mainlander military personnel on record that year.<sup>153</sup> The number of permanent returnees reached its peak at 6,101 in 2001. It then gradually declined to 3,163 by the end of that decade due to people dying of old age and a small number of reverse migrations back to Taiwan.<sup>154</sup> Examining the same set of data, Joshua Fan concludes that the return migration to the PRC never

<sup>150</sup> See Lin Ping’s chapter in Chang, *Guojia yu rentong*, 318.

<sup>151</sup> See Tseng’s chapter in Chiu, Fell, and Lin, *Migration to and from Taiwan*, 51

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>153</sup> Tuifuhui ed., *Zhonghuaminguo taimin diqu rongmin zhongyao tongji zhibiao* [Important statistics for the veterans in the ROC] (Taipei: Tuifuhui, 1998), 9, 32.

<sup>154</sup> See the table in Lin Zhiqiang, “Juanniao guichao? Rongmin haixia liangan dingju jingyan zhi yanjiu” [Tired birds coming back to their nests? Research on veterans’ settlement experiences on both sides of the strait] (master’s thesis, National Sun Yat sen University, Executive Master of Public Policy Program, 2011), 4.

exceeded 2 percent of the total pool of elderly mainlander veterans in Taiwan at any given time.<sup>155</sup>

Several key factors explain such a low rate of return for the former exiles, who, for the longest time, had dreamed about the homecoming in China. Before visiting the mainland, many civil war migrants had already formed new families in Taiwan. They had Taiwan-born children or even grandchildren. Some of them also hung out with fellow natives and participated in *tongxianghui* activities regularly. For these senior *waishengren*, their lives were intimately tied to the intricate social web of families, friends, and fellow provincials in Taiwan. Moreover, a majority of the exiled generation were in their 50s, 60s, or older by the early 1990s. Many were former military personnel or state employees who enjoyed government housing and a well-run public health care system in Taiwan. Retiring to a “homeland” that offered a much lower standard of living and inferior medical services was not something that the elderly mainlanders looked forward to. Single and socially marginalized old soldiers also did not have much of an incentive to move back. Instead, they helped facilitate a form of cross-strait migration in the exact opposite direction. Even with their advanced age and measly pension, young women in their impoverished rural home villages were more than happy to marry these “Taiwanese compatriots” in order to leave China in the 1990s. Many of these marriages of convenience later turned sour and became a social problem in Taiwan.<sup>156</sup>

Notwithstanding these reasons, which are certainly critical, the single most important factor for the low rate of return migration among first-generation *waishengren* is, beyond any doubt, the social trauma of the homecoming in China. The reverse culture shock for the returnees was so great that, even among the small minority of people who did move back, many chose to live with other KMT veterans or *waishengren* instead of their own Chinese kin. Lin Ping found that destitute *laobing* who retired to the PRC did so not for the traditional idea of “falling leaves returning to their roots” (落葉歸根), but for a more practical reason: their meager pension from Taiwan allowed them to live rather comfortably in China. These “Taiwanese

<sup>155</sup> Fan, *China’s Homeless Generation*, 145.

<sup>156</sup> For more, see Zhao Yanning (Antonia Chao), “Qinmi guanxi zuowei fansi guozuzhuyi de changyu: Lao rongmin de liangan hunyin chongtu” [Rethinking nationalism through intimate relationships: Conflicts in cross strait marriages], *Taiwan shehuixue* 16 (2008): 97–148.

compatriots” often stayed together with other “Taiwanese compatriots.” Few had settled back to their native towns or villages.<sup>157</sup>

Reflecting back on things in 2002, Jiang Sizhang, the former army abductee whose courage and determination helped reunite countless families across the Taiwan Strait, wrote:

When I first landed in Taiwan as a draftee, I missed home day and night. I cried myself to sleep all the time. With the passing of time, many had given up hope, but I had always been confident about being able to go back one day . . .

Yet, after the cross strait contact started, despite being born on the mainland, I feel that our lifestyle and thinking have grown very much apart. Sometimes even family relationships are based only on money. Perhaps I could still be buried in my hometown after I die like “falling leaves returning to their roots.” But I cannot muster up the courage to live there while I am alive!<sup>158</sup>

Divorced and living by himself, Jiang has chosen to reside in Taiwan for the remainder of his life. This is in spite of repeated invitations to live together from both his relatives in Daishan and his devoted daughter’s family in America. He took periodic trips to China and the United States to visit loved ones. During my interview with him in 2014, Jiang told me that his heart was in Taiwan. Even with the rest of Taiwan turning against his people after democratization, the island remained the only place in the world where he could truly feel comfortable living – a place in which he could truly feel at home.<sup>159</sup> The majority of his fellow returnees, together with their children and grandchildren born in Taiwan, apparently also think this way for they have voted with their feet. The social trauma of the homecoming in China made mainlanders of different generations realize that the “home” they spent decades longing and searching for was with them all along.

Waishengren’s long road home did not come to an end point here, however. In the 1990s and early 2000s, democratized Taiwan turned into a place the mainlanders could hardly recognize. In 2002, Jiang concluded one of his articles with a somber and forlorn question: “Native place, alien place, foreign place, where is home?”<sup>160</sup> Here, he connects the social trauma of the homecoming in China with the social trauma of the homecoming in Taiwan. These two social traumas would combine to produce a new search for belonging that placed the repressed memories of the great exodus front and center. Behind the seemingly diasporic narratives is a collective effort to build a shared identity rooted firmly in Taiwan. This story will be the focus of next chapter.

<sup>157</sup> See Lin’s chapter in Chang, *Guojia yu rentong*, 310 311, 315 316.

<sup>158</sup> Jiang, *Xiangzhou*, 383. <sup>159</sup> Jiang Sizhang, interviewed by the author.

<sup>160</sup> Jiang, *Xiangzhou*, 384.

## 5      Narrating the Exodus

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An important task for the future is to see the dividing line between the authoritarian state and the people and, with pieces of brick and tile, reconstruct grassroots memories of the mainlander ethnic group.

Fan Yun, *Liuli jiyi* [Diasporic memories/affections]

### The Return of the *Pacific*

On January 27, 1949, the day before Chinese New Year's Eve, the midsize ocean liner *Pacific* (太平輪), which departed Shanghai for Keelung, was sailing through the cold murky waters of the East China Sea. None of those aboard knew this would be their last journey. *Pacific* was one among a large fleet of privately owned steamships that took regular cruises between China and Taiwan, after the latter's retrocession from Japan in 1945.<sup>1</sup> By early 1949, the war to defeat communism on the mainland had gone south for the Nationalists, both literally and figuratively. The CCP won Manchuria and most of northern and central China. The KMT divisions were either disintegrating or reeling back. Rumors of an imminent and massive PLA assault on major cities in the lower Yangtze Delta – traditionally the heartland of Nationalist political support – triggered a panic flight. A scheduled liner between Shanghai and the port city of Keelung in northern Taiwan like *Pacific* became extremely busy transporting people, precious metals, historical artifacts, government files, and military equipment across the sea.

Aboard the overcrowded *Pacific* on that fateful night were approximately 1,000 weary passengers plus 124 seamen. The ship's company, the Shanghai-based Central United Shipping Corporation, had sold 508 tickets for the trip, which was the 2,500-ton liner's legal capacity. Others bribed the gatekeepers or simply sneaked aboard in the midst of chaos and

<sup>1</sup> For a comprehensive list of the ship types and tonnage, see Lin Tongfa, *1949 dachetui*, 262 272.

confusion at the dockside.<sup>2</sup> The overloading of human cargo was compounded by excess freight; the Nationalist government had consigned to *Pacific* a large shipment of silver dollars from the vault of the ROC Central Bank. The old liner also took on heavy machine parts, 600 tons of steel, heaps of official documents, and an assortment of commercial goods for the Chinese New Year.<sup>3</sup> The ship was so dangerously overfilled that it was forced to cruise at a snail's pace in order to avoid capsizing. It was a catastrophe in the making.

*Pacific* never reached Keelung. Approaching midnight, roughly seven hours after departing from Shanghai, it collided with a cargo ship while meandering laboriously through a few northern islets of the Zhoushan Islands. The smaller cargo ship sank immediately. Seventy or so lives from that unlucky steamer were lost at sea. About thirty survivors managed to climb onto their victimizer, but to no avail.<sup>4</sup> Though still afloat and sailing forward, the hull of the *Pacific* was severely damaged. Third-class passengers fought their way up the ladders as seawater began to flood the lower decks. The captain and the crew, still trying to snap out of their inebriated stupor from an onboard drinking party, steered the leaking vessel toward a nearby island in a last-ditch effort to save the day.<sup>5</sup> Sadly, they did not make it. The ship was far too heavy, and the water was rising too quickly.

On the upper deck, panic-stricken passengers – men, women, and children – fought over limited life jackets and lifeboats that would not launch.<sup>6</sup> *Pacific* went under water by 12:30 am, dragged down to the ocean's depths by excess weight. In the pitch-dark night, intermittent screams and cries from hundreds of human heads bobbing up and down with the waves mixed with the creaking sounds of grinding metal as seawater devoured *Pacific* and compressed its hull. Soon everything quieted down save for the dull thumps of floating objects hitting one another as the ice-cold ocean mercilessly exterminated the remaining survivors. In the end, only three dozen people, including a few crew members, were rescued. *Warramunga*, the Australian naval destroyer, had been en route from Japan to evacuate its nationals in Shanghai before

<sup>2</sup> It is impossible to ascertain the exact number of undocumented passengers. For different figures, see Lin Tongfa, 1949 *dachetui*, 294–297; Zhang Dianwan, *Taipinglun*, 24–26.

<sup>3</sup> For more, see Lin Tongfa, 1949 *dachetui*, 303–304, and Zhang Dianwan, *Taipinglun*, 24.

<sup>4</sup> Lin Tongfa, 1949 *dachetui*, 292.

<sup>5</sup> One of the main causes for the disaster was drinking, gambling, and negligence of duty on the part of the crew members. See Changtian chuanbo, Ding Wenjing, and Chen Yuting eds., *Jingtao Taipinglun jishi* [Records of the *Pacific* on stormy waves] (Taipei: Shizhou wenhua, 2012), 244–248; Zhang Dianwan, *Taipinglun*, 28–29.

<sup>6</sup> Lin Tongfa, 1949 *dachetui*, 298.

the anticipated CCP offensive.<sup>7</sup> The rest of the *Pacific* passengers either drowned or died of hypothermia in freezing water of the cold winter sea. Among the victims were some of the country's political, commercial, and cultural elites who had outbid others for the precious tickets out of China. These wealthy passengers brought aboard valuables such as gold bars, silver dollars, jewelry, and priceless family heirlooms. The ensuing lawsuit for reparations bankrupted the Central United Shipping Corporation.

The *Pacific* disaster caught the attention of the Nationalist authorities and the Chinese national media in early 1949, because a number of prominent statesmen, entrepreneurs, and celebrities died in this tragic accident.<sup>8</sup> The surviving families' meteoric falls from grace and their collective litigation against Central United made prime fodder for tabloid journalism.<sup>9</sup> The media spotlight was short-lived, though. Like the mighty ocean that plunged *Pacific* and its passengers to the bottom of the ocean, a tidal wave of bad news from the Nationalist debacle soon swept away public attention and relegated the story to the depths of historical oblivion. In 1951, at the behest of bereaved families, the expelled Nationalist government erected a moderate cenotaph at Keelung's wharf to commemorate the victims. Yet, due to state reclamation and construction projects along the coastline, the monument later became enclosed in a naval base surrounded by tall walls, which restricted civilian access.<sup>10</sup> Outside the small circle of surviving relatives and their descendants, not many remembered the tragedy; the ship was simply forgotten.

In recent times, however, *Pacific* has made quite the comeback, thanks to an outpouring of great exodus memories in democratized Taiwan. In early 2005, a made-for-TV documentary film on the liner's tragic final voyage was produced jointly by the DPP in Taiwan and Phoenix Satellite Television in Hong Kong. The film won a prestigious award for journalism in Taiwan and gained enthusiastic feedback from audiences in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and China.<sup>11</sup> The story's popularity grew to such an extent that in 2009, several media conglomerates in China appointed world-renowned director and filmmaker John Woo to helm

<sup>7</sup> Contemporary accounts suggest that several passengers were also pulled out of the water by local fishermen. See Zhang Dianwan, *Taipinglun*, 35; Changtian, Ding, and Chen, *Jingtao Taipinglun*, 207–208.

<sup>8</sup> Zhang Dianwan, *Taipinglun*, 32–33.

<sup>9</sup> See “Hunxi guilai: Taipinglun nanshu weihui jin juxing zhuisi dahui” [Returning souls: The victims' families of the *Pacific* held a commemorative ceremony today], *Zhongyang ribao*, January 27, 1950, 4; “Taipinglun an jin bianlun” [The *Pacific* case goes on trial today], *ibid.*, February 6, 1950, 4.

<sup>10</sup> Changtian, Ding, and Chen, *Jingtao Taipinglun*, 341–345.

<sup>11</sup> Zhang Dianwan, *Taipinglun*, 224–228.

an epic, big-budget romance based on the *Pacific* disaster. The movie was supposed to be the Chinese equivalent of James Cameron's 1997 blockbuster *Titanic*. Titled *The Crossing*, this mega production featured an impressive cast of movie stars from Taiwan, China, Japan, and South Korea. The two-part film hit theaters in late 2014 and in the summer of 2015 during busy holiday seasons. Unfortunately, the Chinese *Titanic* "sank" at the box office on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. The silver screen adaptation flopped because of a poorly written script and a poorly executed promotional campaign, despite all the money spent on hiring megastars and creating special effects.<sup>12</sup> Nonetheless, the publicity surrounding the shipwreck bolstered the lobbying efforts by the victims' families in Taiwan. After reaching an agreement with the naval authorities, the Keelung city government finally demolished the tall walls around the cenotaph in late 2017.<sup>13</sup> The surviving families and ordinary citizens alike could henceforth pay respects to the deceased and commemorate the tragic event.

The return of the *Pacific* from the deep ocean of oblivion, more than half a century after it was lost at sea, serves as both a metaphor and a conspicuous example for the resurrection of great exodus memories in contemporary Taiwan. Long Yingtai's *Big River Big Sea 1949* (2009), with which I began this book, is another example. Chapter 4 showed that the long road home shattered decades of mainland-centered nostalgia for *waishengren* and reoriented their sense of belonging to Taiwan. Life, however, is filled with unexpected twists and turns, as well as ironies. As the mainlanders returned from their disappointing hometown visits to China and began to see Taiwan in a different light, they faced another shocking and unsettling reality. People found themselves being vilified as foreign colonizers associated with Chiang Kai-shek's brutal regime in the island state's postliberalization politics. I call this phenomenon "the social trauma of the homecoming in Taiwan." Voicing the suffering and displacement caused by the great exodus, which had been taboo before the end of the Nationalist dictatorship, became a way to mitigate this social trauma and deflect blanket stigmatization. Narrating the exodus separates the exiled people from the exiled regime. It repositions first-generation mainlanders as refugees escaping war, turmoil, and political

<sup>12</sup> "Shangxia liangbu dianying zong piaofang buman sanyi 'Taipinglun' weihe 'chenle'?" [The two part movie grossed less than 300 million (yuan). Why did the *Pacific* "sink"?], *Fenghuang Jiangsu*, August 11, 2015, [http://js.ifeng.com/humanity/detail\\_2015\\_08/11/214185\\_0.shtml](http://js.ifeng.com/humanity/detail_2015_08/11/214185_0.shtml) [accessed April 11, 2018].

<sup>13</sup> Li Qihua, "Taipinglun jinianbei gaoqiang zhongyu chaile" [The high wall enclosing the *Pacific* cenotaph was finally removed], *Zhongguo shibao*, January 28, 2018, [www.chinatimes.com/newspapers/20180128000564\\_260115?chdtv](http://www.chinatimes.com/newspapers/20180128000564_260115?chdtv) [accessed September 7, 2019].

persecution in China – people whose descendants later found a home in Taiwan. The 1949 exodus thus emerges as a shared cultural trauma for all civil war migrants and their descendants residing on the island.

With regard to the exodus, I use the word “narrating” instead of “recalling” or “remembering” to underscore the storytelling and meaning-making aspect of *waishengren*’s current social memory production/mnemonic regime. If there is a collectivity of people or even an “ethnic group” in Taiwan called *Waishengren*, their history did not begin in China – neither during the Resistance War nor in the provincial native places – but with the traumatic displacement produced by the Chinese civil war and the expulsion from the mainland. The great exodus is the founding trauma that unites *waishengren* across different social statuses, native places, family backgrounds, political orientations, and generations. It is what makes the mainlander Taiwanese different from the native Taiwanese and the aboriginal Taiwanese, and also different from their estranged relatives in the PRC. Behind the exilic/diasporic narratives is an autochthonous claim to a Taiwan-based identity, an identity that resists, negotiates, and at the same time, adapts to the rising trend of Taiwanization and Taiwanese nationalism following democratization.

Children of the civil war migrants, namely second-generation mainlanders, played a crucial role in the proliferation of great exodus memories. They are both the pioneers and the primary social agents behind their communities’ memory production in contemporary Taiwan. Though *waishengren*’s twin social traumas of the homecomings were crucial in prompting this phenomenon, there had been key memory threads that contributed to the present development a decade before democratization and the heartbreaking road home. The late 1970s and the entire 1980s was a pivotal incubation period. Many young mainlander writers, intellectuals, and cultural workers began their careers during this time by creating both works of fiction and nonfiction on “old soldiers” and “military families’ villages.” These works became important precursors to narrating the exodus.

### The Social Trauma of the Homecoming in Taiwan

The end of the Nationalist authoritarianism in Taiwan produced momentous and wide-ranging political and social changes. It gave rise to emotionally charged elections, troubling “ethnic tensions” (mainly between *waishengren* and *benshengren*), and a complicated relationship with the PRC.<sup>14</sup> The single-party system was discredited, along with much of its

<sup>14</sup> For a good overview of these complicated developments, see Dafydd Fell, *Government and Politics in Taiwan* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

historical legacy, though certain constitutional, institutional, and symbolic vestiges of the KMT dictatorship have remained and continue to persist to the present day.<sup>15</sup> Under the two native Taiwanese presidents who succeeded CCK, Lee Teng-hui (1988–2000) and Chen Shui-bian (2000–2008), groups and individuals victimized by the father–son regime of Chiang Kai-shek and CCK began to demand recognition and compensation for their losses and injuries. People also sought to promote or recover their once suppressed political aspirations, languages, histories, and cultures. These social and cultural movements were closely connected to the emergence of different ethnic identities in Taiwan.<sup>16</sup> In the island's political, cultural, and pedagogical realms, a new “Taiwan-centered” paradigm emerged to overshadow the “China-centered” paradigm that previously existed under the KMT dictatorship. Commonly referred to as *bentuhua*, or what I prefer to call “Taiwanization,” these developments went hand in hand with the growing preponderance of Taiwanese nationalism, Taiwanese identity, and Taiwan-centered history.<sup>17</sup> As discussed in the Introduction, the concept of “four major ethnic groups” was a corollary of *bentuhua* thinking and the Taiwan-centered paradigm.

Many mainlanders, including both the elderly civil war migrants and their Taiwan-born offspring, observed *bentuhua* with a heavy heart. Being a minority and a people displaced by the Chinese civil war, whose history in Taiwan was closely tied to the expelled ROC and the KMT, the crescendo of “Taiwan-centered” tenor made them feel uneasy, uncertain, and even outraged. For the island’s native Taiwanese majority, especially the Hokkien-speaking (*Minnanhua* 閩南話) Hoklo group, *bentuhua* represented a semblance of restorative justice after nearly half a century of Nationalist/mainlander domination in politics, media, education, and cultural policy. For *waishengren*, it became a smear campaign, a wholesale negation of their history, memory, and subjectivity. The mainlanders felt this strongly when certain versions of *bentuhua* history labeled them indiscriminately as foreigners or depicted them as mere instruments of Chiang Kai-shek’s “colonial rule” in Taiwan – or, worse still, as fifth

<sup>15</sup> For more, see Jeremy Taylor’s article on the mixed results of the DPP’s effort to purge the remnants of Chiang Kai-shek from Taiwan’s landscape. Jeremy E. Taylor, “QuJianghua: Disposing of and Reappraising the Remnants of Chiang Kai-shek’s Reign on Taiwan,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 45:1 (2010): 181–196.

<sup>16</sup> The examples included the Hakka language and cultural movement, the aboriginal rights movement, and the commemoration of the 228 Incident.

<sup>17</sup> For more, see the essays in Makeham and Hsiao, *Cultural, Ethnic, and Political Nationalism* and Corcuff, *Memories of the Future*. Also see Lu Jianrong, *Fenlie de guozu rentong, 1975 1997* [The ambivalence of national identity in Taiwan, 1975 1997] (Taipei: Maitian, 1999).

columnists for the PRC's sinister scheme to annex Taiwan.<sup>18</sup> This blanket vilification and stigmatization – or, as some would call it, “the original sin of the mainlanders” (外省人的原罪) – is the main reason why there has been considerable resistance on the part of some mainlanders toward accepting the ethnic label of *Waishengren*, and by extension, the Hoklo-centered perspective of Taiwanization. Even among a small minority of the mainlanders actively supporting Taiwan independence – individuals who have wholeheartedly embraced *bentuhua* – about one-third refused to self-identify ethnically as *Waishengren*.<sup>19</sup>

Scholars conducting personal interviews and social surveys with the mainlanders during the 1990s and early 2000s have all suggested, in one way or the other, that their subjects were experiencing some “adjustment problems” in post-authoritarian Taiwan. Among various mainlander circles, in different households and communities, there was growing anxiety and insecurity. Faced with the rising and irreversible tide of Taiwanization, *waishengren* exhibited a mixture of negative feelings: ambivalence, disorientation, depression, shame, indignation, and resentment. Mahlon Meyer’s book offers some of the most poignant testimonies from bitter and angst-ridden *waishengren* caught up in the whirlwind of Taiwanization, especially during Chen Shui-bian’s eight-year presidency.<sup>20</sup> As discussed in the Introduction, Stéphane Corcuff and Li Kuang-chün deem the situation as a case of “identity crisis” or “identity dilemma.”<sup>21</sup> For scholars such as Zhao Yanning and Scott Simon, the mainlanders in Taiwan either have been or are becoming a “diaspora.” They feel increasingly out of place in a rapidly changing state and society, one that they can hardly recognize anymore.<sup>22</sup>

In this chapter, I describe *waishengren*’s adjustment problems in the wake of democratization as “the social trauma of the homecoming in Taiwan.” My aim is to underscore their collective shock and confusion – the abruptness and the unexpected nature of the island state’s earth-shattering changes that turned their world upside down. Many did see Taiwanization on the horizon a decade or so prior to democratization. Some young mainlanders were even part of the movement to explore Taiwan-based social reality and history of their own communities. As we will see later in this chapter, second-generation mainlander writers,

<sup>18</sup> See the discussion provided by D. Yang and Chang, “Understanding the Nuances,” 113–114.

<sup>19</sup> See Zheng Kaizhong’s essay in Chang, *Guojia yu rentong*, 87–88.

<sup>20</sup> Meyer, *Remembering China*.

<sup>21</sup> Li Kuang chün, “Mirrors and Masks” and Stéphane Corcuff, “Taiwan’s ‘Mainlanders’,” in Corcuff, *Memories of the Future*, 102–122, 163–195.

<sup>22</sup> Zhao, “Daizhe caomao”; Simon, “Taiwan’s Mainlanders.”

intellectuals, journalists, and cultural activists coming of age during the late 1970s and early 1980s turned their attention to social issues concerning “old soldiers” and “military families’ villages.” Even so, most *waishengren*, regardless of age and generation, certainly had not anticipated that this Taiwanization trend would later become their main source for displacement after the 1990s. And this shock happened shortly after, or it took place simultaneously, during their disappointing hometown visits in China. In a sense, the mainlanders came home to both ends of the Taiwan Strait only to find out that neither place was really home.

In the second half of Chapter 3, I argued that by the 1970s, first-generation *waishengren* had settled down and begun to “localize” in Taiwan. Some reacted strongly and negatively to the Taiwan independence movement.<sup>23</sup> Wang Fu-chang’s research reveals that, during the same period, a minority of second-generation mainland elites had started to consider their group as a vulnerable minority compared to the island’s majority population. This was due to CCK’s policy of coopting native Taiwanese elites into the KMT ruling apparatus.<sup>24</sup> However, before the second half of the 1980s, before the long road home and the crumbling of Nationalist dictatorship and ideology, *waishengren* never felt pressure to confront or conform to the native Taiwanese’s brand of Taiwanization. The idea that they were “Chinese” from the mainland was neither in doubt nor was it a cause of embarrassment or shame. Prior to democratization, *waishengren*’s main subnational identities were based on their home provinces and native places in China. The idea of a collective “Mainlander” identity based in Taiwan did not exist. Things became radically different from the early 1990s onward.

Following the island state’s democratization, the Nationalist Party split into two different factions. The “mainstream faction,” led by CCK’s successor Lee Teng-hui, was dominated by *benshengren*. In the postliberalization power struggle, it effectively sidelined the “nonmainstream faction” supported by the mainland old guards. Partly as a result of this, the senescent members of the exiled ROC parliament (National Assembly and Legislative Yuan) elected in China in the late 1940s were finally forced to retire. The fledgling DPP gained a strong foothold in the

<sup>23</sup> Also see Lu Jianrong’s take on Sima Zhongyuan’s novel. Lu, *Fenlie de*, 27–44.

<sup>24</sup> Wang Fu chang, “You ‘diyu yishi’ dao ‘zuqun yishi’: Lun Taiwan waishengren zuqun yishi de neihan yu yuanqi, 1970–1989” [From “provincialism” to “ethnic consciousness”: A thesis on the content and origin of ethnic consciousness among Taiwan’s mainlanders, 1970–1989], in *Zuqun minzu yu xiandai guojia: Jingyan yu lilun de fansi* [Ethnicity, nation, and the modern state: Rethinking theory and experience in Taiwan and China], ed. Hsiao A chin and Wang Horng luen (Taipei: Zhongyangyuanjiuyuan shehuixue yanjiusuo, 2016), 181–256.

1989 local elections and in the newly elected parliament in the early 1990s.<sup>25</sup> At the time, political commentators in Taiwan summarized these seismic shifts in politics with a pithy phrase: “the rise of Taiwanese power” (台灣人出頭天). Predictably, these developments alienated and incensed a considerable number of Nationalist Party members and constituents. Among those who felt deprived and left out were second-generation mainland elites. These groomed-to-be-leaders KMT cadres saw their rightful place in the corridors of power taken over by the native Taiwanese.<sup>26</sup> They criticized Lee Teng-hui and his followers for corruption and for stirring up ethnic hatred for political gains. They accused Lee himself of secretly working with the DPP to push for Taiwan independence, which went against both the Nationalist ideology and the ROC Constitution.<sup>27</sup>

In August 1993, some of these disgruntled elites left the KMT to form the New Party (新黨, NP).<sup>28</sup> In the following year, Lee Teng-hui’s “infamous” interview with famous Japanese writer Shiba Ryotaro (司馬遼太郎), titled “The Sorrow of Being Born Taiwanese” (生為台灣人的悲哀), placed him in the center of a great controversy. The president and chairman of the KMT confided openly that he was brought up as a Japanese person and that the displaced ROC government was like a foreign colonial regime to the native Taiwanese like him. Lee’s comment satisfied and motivated many Taiwanese, but upset and angered most *waishengren*. The provincial and municipal elections later the same year saw an open display of hostility between *waishengren* and *benshengren*.<sup>29</sup>

In late September 1994, some NP candidates were campaigning in Kaohsiung, in southern Taiwan. The DPP supporters in that city greeted

<sup>25</sup> For more on these developments, see Chao and Myers, *First Chinese Democracy*, 188–191; Roy, *Taiwan*, 184–187; Rigger, *Politics in Taiwan*, chapter 7.

<sup>26</sup> Wang Fu chang, *Dangdai Taiwan*, 151–152.

<sup>27</sup> Fan Zhiming, “Wenzheng shuominghui xin Kuomintang lianxian: Taiwan shengcun mianlin erda weiji” [A policy forum of the New KMT alliance: Taiwan faces two existential crises], *Lianhe bao*, July 18, 1990, 4.

<sup>28</sup> Wang Zhenhuan, “Xindang xianxiang de zhengzhi shehui yihan” [The political and social implications of the New Party phenomenon], *Lianhe bao*, December 5, 1994, 11. For a good overview on the rise and fall of the New Party and the multiparty system in 1990s Taiwan, see Fell, *Party Politics in Taiwan*, 12–15.

<sup>29</sup> The KMT, the DPP, and the NP were all accusing each other of using the communal division to their own ends. For examples, see Luo Xiaohe, “Liang zaiyedang zhi Lee Teng hui tiaoqi shengji maodun” [Two opposition parties accused Lee Teng hui of stoking up provincial contradiction], *Lianhe bao*, November 25, 1994, 2; He Mingguo, “Shei tiaoqi shengji qingjie? San xuanjiang jibian” [Who has stoked up the provincial sentiment? A heated debate among three candidates], ibid., November 29, 1994, 15.

them with a huge banner that said, “Chinese pigs go back to China!”<sup>30</sup> Stéphane Corcuff was in Taiwan during this time. He recalled that this was the moment when many *waishengren* started to feel anxious about their status in Taiwan.<sup>31</sup> Living with a heightened awareness of their vulnerability as a minority group against an unfriendly majority, some mainlanders started to act cautiously when interacting socially with strangers.<sup>32</sup>

Spoken language became a major identity marker.<sup>33</sup> The Nationalists had suppressed Taiwan’s local languages (i.e. Hokkien, Hakka, and aboriginal languages) before democratization in favor of Mandarin. In contemporary Taiwan, Mandarin is still the official language and the lingua franca for all social groups. Yet, due to the numerical predominance of Hokkien speakers and the frequency with which the dialect is used in daily conversations, not being able to speak fluent Hokkien could become a mark of shame – a sign of not identifying with Taiwan or Taiwanese.

A retired school teacher speaking with a heavy Shandong accent would not ride in a taxi alone. Instead, he took his Taiwanese wife and asked her to speak with the cabbie. “I try my best not to talk. I cannot make myself very clear to the driver, nor can I understand the driver. I had very few experiences of social contact.”<sup>34</sup>

A forty-three-year-old second-generation *waishengren* got lost in a town near Taipei. He stopped the car and asked an elderly gentleman passing by for directions. Rather than telling him where to go, the old man scolded him for not being able to carry on the conversation in Hokkien. The mainland driver was livid. “It is not that we do not identify with this place. It is they [the native Taiwanese] who are excluding us.”<sup>35</sup>

Mini Hu, a third-generation mainland Meyer interviewed at the University of Washington in Seattle, wrote in a personal essay, “[T]he only difference between me and other students [in Taiwan] was that I couldn’t speak Taiwanese. That’s all. Does that mean I can’t be Taiwanese?”<sup>36</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that language-based discrimination was systematic. Corcuff’s survey data actually shows that this

<sup>30</sup> Lei Ming, *Waishengren meide hunle?* [Are the mainlanders finished?] (Taipei: Hansi chubanshe, 1995), 186.

<sup>31</sup> Gao, *Fenghe rinuan*, 95.

<sup>32</sup> See the comments in Zhu Tianxin, “‘Dahéjie?’ Huiying zhi er” [Response to “the great reconciliation?” no. 2], *Taiwan shehui yanjiu jikan* 43 (2001): 119–120.

<sup>33</sup> See the discussion in Fan, *China’s Homeless Generation*, 150–151.

<sup>34</sup> Li Kuang chün, “Mirrors and Masks,” in Corcuff, *Memories of the Future*, 117.

<sup>35</sup> See Sun Hongye’s essay in Chang, *Guojia yu rentong*, 63.

<sup>36</sup> Meyer, *Remembering China*, 169.

was not the case.<sup>37</sup> Still, there were enough personal anecdotes about these unpleasant encounters to keep many *waishengren* on their toes.

It was under these circumstances that some mainlanders began to perform what Li Kuang-chün terms “impression management” to mask their family backgrounds in public.<sup>38</sup> Li suggests that the second-generation *waishengren* from endogamous families (mainlander–mainlander marriages) might feel more threatened and displaced than those from exogamous families (mainlander–Taiwanese or mainlander–aboriginal marriages). The former usually could not speak Taiwanese and lacked knowledge of local cultures.<sup>39</sup> Wang Fu-chang’s research on interethnic marriages largely supports this view. Wang shows that children from mixed marriages adjusted better to Taiwanization.<sup>40</sup> Location and upbringing also matter. Some of the Taiwan-born *waishengren* from southern cities and regions not only have native Taiwanese mothers and relatives, they also grew up in Hokkien-speaking environments. It is thus easier for these individuals to adapt or to disguise themselves.<sup>41</sup>

Claiming maternal identity could also be an effective strategy. Ko Meishu, the other third-generation mainlander Meyer interviewed, “found her identity as an aborigine a solace in the climate of anti-mainlander propaganda.”<sup>42</sup> *Bentuhua* has turned the most suppressed, despised, and denigrated peoples on the island into a paragon of Taiwanese beauty and essence. The irony is that this elevated status discursively has done so little to improve their position of marginality substantively. When asked about her paternal side of the family, Meishu’s reaction was, “A mainlander? I don’t even really know what a mainlander is. Who cares? I know my mother is an aborigine. That’s what I am. Why does it really matter?”<sup>43</sup>

During one of my early research visits to Taiwan in 2010, a good friend of mine, a third-generation mainlander like Meishu, got very angry with me. We were just sitting in his living room having a routine conversation. I said to him casually, “You *Waishengren* always keep thinking about this and that. You *Waishengren* are actually doing this and that . . .” My friend listened for a while. Then he snapped:

Why do you keep calling me a *Waishengren*? My mother is a Hakka. Did you know? My grandfather was from China’s Hebei Province. My father was a colonel in the Nationalist military. They are *Waishengren*. I don’t consider myself one. You

<sup>37</sup> Gao, *Fenghe rimuan*, 108–109.

<sup>38</sup> Li Kuang chün, “Mirrors and Masks,” in Corcuff, *Memories of the Future*, 116.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 120; Sun Hongye in Chang, *Guojia yu rentong*, 56–59.

<sup>40</sup> Wang Fu chang, “Taiwan de zuqun tonghun,” 417–420.

<sup>41</sup> Tong, “Waisheng disandai,” 45–46. <sup>42</sup> Meyer, *Remembering China*, 176.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 177.

might as well call me a Hakka person. And by the way, I really hate China. It bullies Taiwan all the time.<sup>44</sup>

I apologized sincerely and he forgave me, but it was through this exchange that I observed, on a personal level and for the first time, the effect of social stigmatization on a person of mainlander descent in democratized Taiwan. It was also after this unhappy incident that I started to contemplate on issues pertaining to trauma, displacement (diaspora), memory, and identity formation in the mainland story. My dear friend claimed to be a Hakka; he refused the ethnic label of *Waishengren*. What is interesting is that through all my years of being friends with him up to this point in time, this person had never shown any interest in Hakka history, language, or culture. Instead, he had been quite enthusiastic about my project. He not only provided generous assistance with my library work, he also introduced me to his grandfather whom I later interviewed.<sup>45</sup> This strange incongruity – between a rejection of *Waishengren* ethnicity and an interest in exploring and preserving one's mainland-related family history – encapsulates the nature and intricacies of the mainland identity dilemma/formation in contemporary Taiwan.

The 1994 election was only the beginning of a downward spiral for *waishengren*. Events in the rest of the 1990s and throughout the early 2000s disturbed and upset them even more. First, there was pro-independence Lee Teng-hui's visit to the United States in 1995 to give a speech at his alma mater Cornell University. Seeing Lee's act as a serious provocation, Beijing responded with missile launches and military exercises in the Taiwan Strait. The PRC's intimidation tactic culminated the following year during Lee's bid for presidency in the island's very first direct presidential election. Washington intervened by putting on a show of force. President Bill Clinton dispatched two carrier battle groups to the international waters near Taiwan and forced China to stand down. This chain of events, which came to be known as the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis, terrified and perturbed *waishengren*.<sup>46</sup> Many blamed Lee for pushing China and Taiwan to the brink of war. Naturally, everyone on the island was concerned about an escalation. As former refugees and descendants of refugees, the mainlanders were much more sensitive to the looming danger of a destructive military conflict with the CCP than the rest of Taiwan was.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> This was a casual chat that happened spontaneously between two close friends. It was not a taped interview. I left my friend's name out in accordance with the confidentiality agreement I signed with his grandfather for the interview.

<sup>45</sup> Yuan Yifang (pseudonym), interviewed by the author.

<sup>46</sup> For more on the 1995–1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis, see Tucker, *Strait Talk*, chapter 12.

<sup>47</sup> Zhu Tianxin, “‘Dahejie?’ Huiying,” 120.

The 1996 crisis was followed by the textbook controversy in the summer of 1997. For two months, the entire island became embroiled in a heated debate over a new version of a middle-school textbook called *Knowing Taiwan* (認識台灣), which Lee's administration had brought out. For *waishengren*, *Knowing Taiwan* was anti-China, pro-Japan, and pro-independence. It was an attack on their history and sensibility. It was totally unacceptable.<sup>48</sup> An NP Legislative Yuan member and a group of scholars, most of whom were mainlanders, led a vehement protest campaign. Even so, after much fanfare, the textbook in question was still adopted with only minor revisions.<sup>49</sup> The outcome of this public debate suggests that the new Taiwan-centered history has begun to overshadow the previously dominant China-centered history. Those who disapproved found themselves among an uncomfortable minority.

The KMT's defeat in the 2000 election finally forced Lee and his supporters out of the Nationalist Party.<sup>50</sup> While this was certainly good news from *waishengren*'s perspective, they had to come to terms with an even more disheartening reality – the DPP presidency under the native Taiwanese rabble-rouser Chen Shui-bian. Chen's triumph was a milestone in Taiwan's democracy as an opposition party candidate won the presidency for the first time. But because the DPP's margins of victory were slim for both the 2000 and 2004 campaigns, and because the Nationalists still held the majority in the Legislative Yuan, Chen's administration was susceptible to challenges. According to Chu Yun-han, Larry Diamond, and Kharis Templeman:

<sup>48</sup> Wang Fu chang, "Minzu xiangxiang zuqun yishi yu lishi: 'Renshi Taiwan' jiaokeshu zhengyi fengbo de neirong yu mailuo fenxi" [National imagination, ethnic consciousness, and history: Content and context analysis of the "*Knowing Taiwan*" textbook dispute], *Taiwanshi yanjiu* 8:2 (2001): 188–194.

<sup>49</sup> For more on the textbook controversy, also see Corcuff, *Memories of the Future*, 83–92; Lu, *Fenlie de*, 273–283.

<sup>50</sup> The KMT lost the 2000 presidential election to the DPP because of split voters. A considerable number of Nationalist constituents did not support their party's nominee, Lien Chan (連戰, 1936), who was handpicked by Lee Teng hui. Instead, many voted for James Soong (宋楚瑜, 1942). Soong withdrew from the KMT to run as an independent. The division handed the victory to the DPP's candidate Chen Shui bian. Chen won the presidency with less than 40 percent of the popular vote. Soong's supporters later formed the People First Party (親民黨, PFP). In the meantime, Lee's ousted supporters from the KMT became a basis for the Taiwan Solidarity Union (台聯, TSU).

[M]edia coverage of politics and public discourse in Taiwan became more polarized, frenzied, and scandal driven than ever . . . President Chen resorted to ethnic and identity appeals to try to shore up his support, and the KMT and its splinter parties repeatedly challenged the political legitimacy of the DPP administration and its policies.<sup>51</sup>

Many *waishengren* thought the KMT was cheated out of sure wins in both 2000 and 2004. This shared feeling of deprivation was especially strong for the 2004 campaign. A bizarre assassination attempt on Chen and Vice President Annette Lu (呂秀蓮, 1944–) in south Taiwan a day before voting had swung the election in the DPP's favor.

By 2006, corruption and nepotism scandals had crippled Chen's second term; the native Taiwanese president had lost a bulk of his support base. A massive popular demonstration (Red Shirt Army) rose up against Chen and later contributed to his conviction and imprisonment under the administration of his political foe and successor, Ma Ying-jeou, who is a mainlander.<sup>52</sup> Sadly for *waishengren*, Chen's downfall and the KMT's return to power with a vengeance in 2008 did not reverse Taiwanization.<sup>53</sup> Ma's presidency did little to assuage the disorientation, besmirchment, and marginalization felt by many.<sup>54</sup> One could not turn back the clock. People who felt socially traumatized and out of place needed to find a way to mitigate their shock and resentment. As their forebears had done in the previous decades, the mainlanders turned to the past. They turned to memory. The children of the civil war migrants played an instrumental role in the rising salience of this new mnemonic regime.

Earlier in 1991, second-generation mainlander writer Zhu Tianxin (朱天心, 1958–) wrote in her semi-autobiographical essay “Thinking about My Brothers in the Military Families’ Village” (想我眷村的兄弟們), “Your ethnic group is diminishing. You have to recognize this and make adjustments.”<sup>55</sup> The essay is widely regarded as part of the mainlander literary canon, and rightly so. Facing *bentuhua*, Taiwan-born *waishengren*

<sup>51</sup> Yun han Chu, Larry Diamond, and Kharis Templeman eds., *Taiwan’s Democracy Challenged: The Chen Shui bian Years* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2016), 10–11.

<sup>52</sup> Chen has been released on medical parole since early 2015.

<sup>53</sup> For the surveys on Taiwanese identity vs. Chinese identity, see Syaru Shirley Lin, *Taiwan’s China Dilemma: Contested Identities and Multiple Interests in Taiwan’s Cross Strait Economic Policy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016), 127–130, 164–167.

<sup>54</sup> For example, see the reflections in Yang Yuting, *Shangxiao de erzi: Waishengren, niyao qu naer?* [A colonel’s son: Mainlanders, where are you going?] (Taipei: Huayan, 2008), 98–103.

<sup>55</sup> Zhu Tianxin, *Xiangwo juancun de xiongdimen* [Thinking about my brothers in the military families’ village] (Chung-ho: INK, 2002), 79. Zhu’s essay was first published in *China Times* (中國時報) in September 1991.

like Zhu were compelled to engage in some serious soul-searching. They needed to figure out who they were and with whom they could identify. In her 1997 fiction story “Ancient Capital” (古都), Zhu began with a plea: “Can it be that your memory counts for nothing?”<sup>56</sup> The rhetorical question demands others to acknowledge *waishengren*’s history and perspective as an integral part of Taiwan’s new imagined community.<sup>57</sup> As Chang Mau-kuei and Wu Hsin-yi have maintained, “respect and acknowledgment” for their past is what the majority of the mainlanders (or people of mainlander descent who reject the ethnic label of *Waishengren*) are seeking from the rest of Taiwan.<sup>58</sup> I would argue that this is not just any past, but a past in which the great exodus emerges as a shared cultural trauma for all *waishengren* in Taiwan.

### **Political Suppression of Memory: Five Hundred Martyrs versus Orphan Army**

Before taking a closer look at *waishengren*’s contemporary social memory production, it serves our purpose to go back in time and examine how the great exodus had been remembered and portrayed in Taiwan before democratization. Mnemonic practices are contemporaneous and instrumentalist. Yet, a salient mnemonic regime, especially one that became the common denominator of a collectivity, is always shaped by the past. Cultural traumas and group identities are social constructions, but they are not constructed out of thin air. The texts selected for discussion in this segment and the next are by no means comprehensive. They nevertheless draw attention to important historical developments that contributed to both the initial latency and the deluge of great exodus memories in present-day Taiwan. The KMT’s suppression of grassroots memories associated with the defeat in 1949 before democratization was certainly an important factor. Even so, there were still memory threads pertaining to the great exodus in Taiwan’s published texts before democratization. The following discussion explains why so little was written and said publically about the exodus, especially during the 1950s and 1960s. It sheds light on second-generation *waishengren*’s growing concern about

<sup>56</sup> Zhu Tianxin, *Gudu* [Ancient capital] (Taipei: Maitian, 1997), 151.

<sup>57</sup> Zhu Tianxin, “‘Dahejie?’ Huiying,” 121; Rosemary Haddon, “Being/Not Being at Home in the Writing of Zhu Tianxin,” in Makeham and Hsiao, *Cultural, Ethnic, and Political Nationalism*, 118. Also see an alternative reading on Zhu provided by David Der wei Wang, “Post Loyalism,” in Shih, Tsai, and Bernards, *Sinophone Studies*, 105–106.

<sup>58</sup> See Chang Mau kuei and Wu Hsin yi’s essay in Lin Jialong and Zheng Yongnian eds., *Minzu zhuyi yu liangan guanxi: Hafo daxue dong xi fang xuezhe de duihua* [Ethnic nation alism and cross strait relations: The dialogues among Eastern and Western scholars at Harvard University] (Taipei: Xin ziran zhuyi, 2001), 147–180.

two main social issues affecting their communities in the late 1970s and 1980s: “old soldiers” and “military families’ villages.” Both became important precursors to *waishengren*’s contemporary cultural trauma centering on the great exodus.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, scholars hold different views on the writings produced in Taiwan in the 1950s during the heyday of state-sponsored “anti-communist literature.” When the Nationalist authoritarian rule ended, native Taiwanese writers and critics such as Ye Shitao and Peng Ruijin denounced the entire 1950s as a barren cultural wasteland.<sup>59</sup> They deemed the majority of the works created during this period to be artificial, monotonous, and lifeless. Literary scholars such as Chi Pang-yuan, David Der-wei Wang, and Hou Ruqi disagree. They argue that the anti-communist literature, despite being influenced strongly by the Nationalist political agenda, had reflected expelled writers’ real feelings of loss and displacement.<sup>60</sup> Others such as Chiu Kuei-fen, Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang, and Ying Fenghuang call attention to the rise of female authors in Taiwan during the 1950s. They also shed light on the importance of urban popular taste (the market) and peer evaluation in shaping the decade’s artistic expressions and genres, which were anything but monotonous or lifeless.<sup>61</sup>

Notwithstanding the surprising richness and vitality of the literary scene in Taiwan even during the harshest years of the KMT dictatorship, a reading of famous anti-communist novels created during this time reveals one simple fact: The traumatic events of 1949 – the shocking defeat and the chaotic mass departure – are relatively unimportant in the plots of these novels. The examples include Chen Jiying’s (陳紀瀅, 1908–1997) *Fool in the Reeds* (荻村傳, 1951) and *Red Land* (赤地, 1955); Zhu Xining’s (朱西甯, 1927–1998) *The Love of Big Torch* (大火炬的愛, 1952); Pan Lei’s (潘壘, 1927–2017) *The Red River Trilogy* (紅河三部曲, 1952); Pan Renmu’s (潘人木, 1919–2005) *Cousin Lianyi* (漣漪表妹, 1952); Peng Ge’s (彭歌, 1926–) *Fallen Moon* (落月, 1956); Jiang Gui’s (姜貴, 1908–1980) *Whirlwind* (旋風, 1957); Wang Lan’s (王藍, 1922–2003) *Blue and Black* (藍與黑, 1958); and Sima Zhongyuan’s (司馬中原, 1933–) *Barren Land* (荒原, 1961). These stories take place

<sup>59</sup> Ye, *Taiwan wenxue shigang*, 88 89; Peng Ruijin, *Taiwan xinwenxue yundong shishidian* [Forty years of new literature movement in Taiwan] (Taipei: Zili wanbao, 1991), 75 77.

<sup>60</sup> Chi Pang yuan, *Qiannian zhilei* [Tears of 1,000 years] (Taipei: Erya chubanshe, 1990), 29 48; Wang Dewei, *Ruhe xiandai*, 141 156; D. Wang, *The Monster That Is History*, 168 182, chapter 6; Hou Ruqi, *Shuangxiang zhijian*, 139 202.

<sup>61</sup> Chiu Kuei fen, “Cong zhanhou chuqi nuzuoja de chuangzuo tan Taiwan wenxue shi de xushu” [Taiwan’s literary history and women’s literature in the early postwar period], *Zhongwai wenxue* 29:2 (2000): 313 335; Chang, *Literary Culture in Taiwan*; Ying, *Wuling mändai Taiwan*.

during the Resistance War, the period following Japan's surrender, or shortly after the Chinese Communist takeover. In fact, when I surveyed prominent literary and cultural texts produced in Taiwan during the second half of the twentieth century, one thing really struck me: how little was written on the great exodus before democratization.

The history of *waishengren*'s social traumas and mnemonic regimes presented in the preceding chapters has provided the main pieces of the puzzle to make sense of this absence. In the 1950s, the mainlanders were sojourners living through the longue durée of wartime displacement that had not yet ended. The forced relocation from China to Taiwan, while being a traumatic episode for many, held very little meaning at the time. For first-generation *waishengren*, the move across the Taiwan Strait was no different than their previous flight to other peripheral regions of China when Japan had invaded. Memories of the displacement during the Resistance War became prominent because they provided the exiled population with a sense of optimism. Things were pretty bad back then, but people still managed to go home in the end. At first, the KMT had everyone prepared for a final showdown with the CCP: a war that never came. As time went by, the initial hope for return began to fade by the 1960s. Reluctant sojourners became reluctant migrants. To ease their sense of permanent loss, people rebuilt communities via shared recollections about their mainland provinces/native places. This went on for a while until the actual homecoming in China shattered these nostalgic memories into pieces in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Besides the story already told, there was another important reason for the latency of great exodus memories in Taiwan. This was the KMT's effort to dictate how the embarrassing fiasco of 1949 was remembered. When what was left of Chiang Kai-shek's government reestablished in Taiwan, the Generalissimo's propagandists developed something called "restorative nationalist ideology" (中興復國思想), which centered on the displaced regime's sacred mission of "retaking the mainland." According to this ideology, seeking future triumphs was more important than mulling over past failures. The demoralizing defeat and the humiliating expulsion from the mainland were therefore whitewashed. They were neutralized in military terms such as "withdrawal" (撤退) and "rotate and advance" (轉進), or else euphemized in bureaucratic language such as "relocation of central government to Taiwan" (中央政府播遷來台). The possibility of seeing 1949 as a traumatic event of mass suffering and social dislocation was henceforth precluded.

What the Generalissimo and his propagandists wanted people in Taiwan to remember about 1949 was neither a shocking collapse nor a traumatic escape. Rather, the more preferable narrative to push was

this: a valiant last stand where individuals martyred themselves for the KMT cause. For this, the Nationalists found their perfect heroes in “Taiyuan’s five hundred martyrs” (太原五百完人). In fact, Chiang’s regime did such a good job promoting this tale that the heroics in Taiyuan became a well-known episode in the standard history of the Chinese civil war. So much so that it warrants a mention in Jonathan Spence’s *The Search for Modern China*, a widely adopted textbook for teaching China’s recent past at the collegiate level. In the book, Spence describes what took place in the city of Taiyuan in 1949 as “a bizarre act of supreme sacrifice.”<sup>62</sup> Bizarre, yes, because the story was a fabrication.

“Taiyuan’s five hundred martyrs” refers to some 500 civil servants, policemen, and their family members who perished in the besieged provincial capital of Shanxi Province. They supposedly had fought the CCP encirclement to the bitter end and committed suicide when Taiyuan fell on April 24, 1949.<sup>63</sup> The original story came from Marshal Yan Xishan (閻錫山, 1883–1960). Yan was a powerful warlord who dominated Shanxi and north-central China during most of the Republican era.

Shanxi flew the Nationalist flag, but submitted to Nationalist authority only nominally. The relationship between Chiang Kai-shek’s central government in Nanjing and Yan’s provincial fiefdom was an uneasy partnership beset by tension, rivalry, and mutual suspicion. When the Chinese Communist forces laid siege to his capital in the second half of 1948, the sixty-five-year-old marshal vowed to fight to the last man, to take his own life along with 500 loyal followers, and to have underlings burn their bodies after their martyrdom.<sup>64</sup>

Unfortunately, Yan broke his vow. About a month before the fall of Taiyuan, the lord of Shanxi boarded a plane to safety in Nanjing with his immediate family members, personal entourage, and most of Shanxi’s gold reserves. In Nanjing, he provided the rest of the KMT leadership with an emotional account, based on dubious sources, of how 500 loyal followers he left behind met their gruesome ends with incredible courage, dignity, and composure. Little evidence exists to tell us of Yan’s motive for telling such a story. In an earlier article, I surmised that it could be a combination of survivor’s guilt and a crafty move to forestall attacks

<sup>62</sup> Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013), 459.

<sup>63</sup> For individual biographies of the martyrs, see Shanxi wenxian she ed., *Taiyuan wubai wanren chengren sanshi zhounian jinian* [Commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of Taiyuan’s five hundred martyrs] (Taipei: Shanxi wenxian she, 1979), 127–166.

<sup>64</sup> The battle for the heavily fortified city of Taiyuan lasted over nine months, from mid July 1948 to late April 1949. Both sides suffered tremendous casualties as a result. It was one of the longest sieges in the Chinese civil war.

from other Nationalist leaders who were seeking scapegoats for the loss of northern China.<sup>65</sup>

Like most of the Generalissimo's previous rivals, Yan retired from politics after reaching Taiwan. However, in stark contrast to his exit from politics, the tale he fabricated gained the national spotlight. Chiang's exiled government picked up the story, and promoted Taiyuan's martyrdom earnestly as a role model for its citizens to emulate in the struggle against communism.<sup>66</sup> This is a strange twist given the long-standing tension between Nanjing and Taiyuan, and the fact that many who died defending Shanxi's capital city fought to preserve Marshal Yan's provincial regime instead of the Nanjing government.<sup>67</sup> For the Generalissimo and his spinmeisters, none of this mattered. In their eyes, the five hundred martyrs were great for propaganda purposes. Their demise embodied the spirit of resistance even in the face of ineluctable destruction. The martyrdom at Taiyuan turned misery, devastation, and despair – dismal things associated with a humiliating defeat and a traumatic expulsion – into an uplifting prophecy for future victory.<sup>68</sup> This perverted discursive ploy of recasting extreme suffering and violence as transcendence, grandeur, or purity finds an eerie parallel across the Taiwan Strait. Ban Wang refers to it as “the official aesthetic of the sublime” in the PRC that “reached a climax in the Cultural Revolution.”<sup>69</sup> A similar occurrence had taken place a century earlier, in the aftermath of the Taiping Civil War. As Tobie Meyer-Fong states, “The public focus on the righteousness and heroism of the martyred dead facilitated erasure of wartime mayhem and brutality from historical memory.”<sup>70</sup>

With the full weight of the state propaganda machine behind them, the ghosts of Taiyuan became national heroes in Taiwan. Though they were not the only figures the Nationalist regime inducted into the “National Revolutionary Martyrs’ Shrine” (國民革命忠烈祠) in Taipei, their suicide and immolation were given a special place in the annals of the Nationalist hagiography.<sup>71</sup> In the official KMT lexicon, the term for “martyrs” is *lieshi* (烈士). Rather than using this, the Generalissimo’s propagandists chose another word just for them: *wanren* (完人). *Wanren*

<sup>65</sup> Dominic Yang, “Noble Ghosts, Empty Graves, and Suppressed Traumas: The Heroic Tale of ‘Taiyuan’s Five Hundred Martyrs’ in the Chinese Civil War,” *Historical Reflections* 41: 3 (2015): 114.

<sup>66</sup> Shanxi wenxian she, *Taiyuan wubai wanren*, 137. <sup>67</sup> D. Yang, “Noble Ghosts,” 114.

<sup>68</sup> Li Geng, “Diao Taiyuan wubai wanren zhong” [A eulogy for the tomb of Taiyuan’s five hundred martyrs], *Zhongyang ribao*, February 15, 1951, 3.

<sup>69</sup> Ban Wang, *The Sublime Figure of History: Aesthetics and Politics in Twentieth Century China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 5 6.

<sup>70</sup> Meyer Fong, *What Remains*, 4. <sup>71</sup> The temple was constructed in 1969.



Figure 5.1 The memorial tablet of the Taiyuan's Five Hundred Martyrs Cenotaph, Yuanshan, Taipei. The state memorial service for the martyrs ended in the 1990s. The site was abandoned, but the area is still maintained as part of the park and trails that surround the Taipei Grand Hotel. Source: Photograph by the author.

literally means “perfect person(s)” – exemplary human beings to be emulated by everyone.

Starting in the early 1950s, the Nationalists built an entire mnemonic and pedagogic enterprise based on these perfect beings. The state held a memorial service for them every year on Taipei’s scenic northern hills. A splendid cenotaph and a temple were constructed in their honor there (see Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2). The commemorative ceremony began in 1951 and lasted into the 1990s. The martyrs’ cult was also propagated via books, public exhibitions, a movie, and most important of all, public education.<sup>72</sup> Taiyuan’s heroes were written into both elementary and middle school textbooks. Children in Taiwan were told never to forget

<sup>72</sup> See Zhang Shiying’s chapter in He Zhilin ed., *Yijiusiji nian: Zhongguo de guanjian niandai xueshu taolunhui lunwenji* [Symposium on the crucial year of China (1949)] (Hsintien: Guoshiguan, 2000), 627–633.



Figure 5.2 The main temple of the Taiyuan's Five Hundred Martyrs Cenotaph. Source: Photograph by the author.

the example set by these extraordinary individuals; they need to fight communism with the same dedication, determination, and self-sacrifice.<sup>73</sup>

Democratization eventually put an end to both the Nationalist curriculum and the state memorial services held at the cenotaph. The façade of the martyrs' heroic edifice had begun to crumble even earlier. In 1983, a PRC historian named Liu Cunshan (刘存善) came across a commemorative volume for the five hundred martyrs while visiting Hong Kong. The book was originally published in Taipei by the Shanxi native-place association. Growing up in Shanxi Province after 1949, Liu had never heard of anything resembling the tale. Intrigued, he embarked on a fact-finding mission. After five years of exhaustive archival research and personal interviews, Liu reached the following conclusions. First, only forty-six people from the entire Shanxi provincial staff had committed suicide when Taiyuan fell. Second, among the forty-six, only a few were Yan's close relatives and aides. The rest were members of the old

<sup>73</sup> D. Yang, "Noble Ghosts," 114–116.

marshal's notorious special police force. These security officers were responsible for torturing and executing suspected communist agents and sympathizers in the city before the CCP victory.<sup>74</sup> Third, among these forty-six, less than twenty people were actually enshrined in Taipei. Moreover, Liu discovered that at least seven of the “martyrs” worshipped by the Nationalists in Taiwan were still alive and well in China during the 1980s.<sup>75</sup> He went on to interview these “living martyrs,” who were actual survivors of the Taiyuan siege. They told Liu a very different story from the one given by Yan after the marshal had fled the city. Rather than turning the guns on themselves or burning bodies, most of the provincial staff simply surrendered. The noble sacrifice of Taiyuan’s martyrs turned out to be nothing more than a figment of Marshal Yan’s own imagination.

There was another possible source of the story. According to Jay Taylor, mass suicide did take place when Taiyuan fell. Taylor suggests that the alleged “martyrdom” was the act of General Imamura Hosaku and his men.<sup>76</sup> Imamura led a group of fervently anti-communist Japanese army officers in China. Instead of returning to Japan after WWII, they accepted Marshal Yan’s generous offer to stay and work as military advisors in Shanxi to fight the CCP. Many were never seen again after the fall of Taiyuan.

Whether the five hundred martyrs were Japanese mercenaries or Yan’s loyal supporters is really beside the point here; the point is the Nationalist regime attempted to manipulate the memory of 1949 for political gain. What happened was a disaster for both the displaced regime and its displaced people; nevertheless, drowning in the agony of defeat and forced relocation would do little to advance the common goal of returning to the mainland. Furthermore, any serious public discussion of the Chinese civil war would inevitably touch upon top Nationalist officials’ responsibility for the embarrassing collapse, particularly Chiang Kai-shek’s responsibility. This was why the noble ghosts of Taiyuan’s martyrs had to be summoned from their empty graves to defend the political legitimacy of the KMT. This was why the debacle in 1949 became a taboo in Taiwan before the Nationalist dictatorship came to an end.

Although many Taiwan-born *waishengren* grew up listening to their parents’ and grandparents’ refugee stories at home, prior to Taiwan’s democratization, government censorship made it difficult to publicly discuss the grassroots memories of 1949. There were exceptions nonetheless. The salience of any mnemonic regime, official or popular, does

<sup>74</sup> Liu Cunshan, “‘Taiyuan wubai wanren’ diaocha baogao” [An investigative report of “Taiyuan’s five hundred martyrs”], *Shanxi wenshi ziliao* 60 (1988): 123–126.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 129–132. <sup>76</sup> Taylor, *Generalissimo*, 406–407.

not preclude the existence of different memory threads contemporaneously, even in an authoritarian state. A noticeable example was Bo Yang's popular war novel *Alien Land* (異域, 1961).<sup>77</sup> The novel is remarkable for two reasons. The first is its commercial success as an anti-communist work that was not sponsored by the state. The second is the novel's emphasis on the tremendous suffering of low-ranking KMT personnel and their families during the course of the great exodus. For this reason, the book can be considered a noteworthy precursor and an important memory thread to *waishengren*'s contemporary cultural trauma. Bo paid a heavy price for producing the novel. The Nationalist authorities locked him up for nearly a decade.

Bo Yang (柏楊, 1920–2008) is the pen name of Guo Yidong (郭衣洞).<sup>78</sup> He was a prolific writer known for producing penetrating political and social commentaries and best-selling history books for popular audiences. Due to his imprisonment by the KMT regime from 1968 to 1977, Bo also became an internationally renowned speaker for human rights in Taiwan. His 1985 book, *The Ugly Chinese* (醜陋的中國人), provided a scathing criticism of Chinese people and culture. Read by tens of millions in Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and the Chinese overseas, the book famously coined a new term in the Sinophone language: "sauce jar culture" (醬缸文化).<sup>79</sup>

Bo was born into a modest merchant family in northern Henan Province. He had a really unhappy childhood with an aloof father and an abusive stepmother, both of whom were opium addicts. This upbringing nurtured his cynical attitude and rebellious tendencies. Troubles at home and patriotic fervor to fight the Japanese prompted Bo to join a Nationalist military cadre school at a young age. He got into trouble repeatedly with the school and the party authorities in China because of his penchant for breaking the rules. Shortly after reaching Taiwan in 1949, Bo's waywardness finally caught up with him. He was wrongfully accused of spying for the CCP and spent seven months in a military prison.<sup>80</sup> After being released, his luck changed briefly when the KMT discovered his outstanding literary talent. A serial work of his titled *Locusts*

<sup>77</sup> Deng Kebao (Bo Yang), *Yiyu* [Alien land], Rev. ed. (Taipei: Xingguang chubanshe, 1977). The first edition was published by Pingyuan chubanshe in 1961.

<sup>78</sup> Bo's birth name was Guo Dingsheng (郭定生). For the life and career of Bo Yang, see Shen Chaoqun, "Bo Yang shengping yu xiezuo sixiang: Bo Yang shishi zhounian jinian" [The career and writing of Bo Yang: Commemorating the one year anniversary of Bo Yang's passing], *Zhuanji wenxue* 94:6 (2009): 27–42.

<sup>79</sup> Bo uses aged sauce in a jar thick and stinky liquid as a metaphor for what he considers to be the shortcomings of Chinese people and culture.

<sup>80</sup> Bo Yang and Zhou Bise, *Bo Yang huiyilu* [The memoir of Bo Yang] (Taipei: Yuanliu, 1996), 195–198.

*Flying Southeast* (蝗蟲東南飛) was awarded a coveted state prize in 1953, and was lauded as one of the best anti-communist novels that year.<sup>81</sup> Consequently, despite a questionable past and a history of disruptive behavior, Bo was given a position in the literary division of the “China Youth Anti-Communist National Salvation Corps” (中國青年反共救國團) in 1954. Founded in 1952 and headed personally by Chiang Ching-kuo, the organization was the main vehicle for the KMT to recruit party cadres among young students in Taiwan.

Notwithstanding the brief honeymoon period between the gifted writer and the KMT, Bo left the party in 1959. He had a highly publicized extramarital affair with a young female student in the Salvation Corps. The episode led to his first divorce. It also embarrassed the KMT and infuriated Chiang Ching-kuo.<sup>82</sup> After antagonizing the second most powerful man in Taiwan, the still intractable Bo found sanctuary working as an editor and a columnist for the *Independence Evening Post* (自立晚報). The *Post* was a small and privately owned newspaper run jointly by mainlander and native Taiwanese elites. It had a reputation for obliquely criticizing the authoritarian government. On a number of occasions, the Nationalists shut it down temporarily for publishing materials they deemed questionable.<sup>83</sup>

*Alien Land* started in 1961 as a serial “coverage” in the social news section of the *Post*. The focal point of the story was on the “orphan army” (孤軍) – a Nationalist guerrilla group formed mostly by the exiles from southwest China operating in the China–Burma–Thailand border region.<sup>84</sup> These “news stories” about the “orphan army” quickly gained public interest; therefore, they were published collectively as a book in the same year.<sup>85</sup>

*Alien Land* later contributed to Bo’s incarceration. In March 1968, state security agents detained Bo’s wife and then Bo. The agents turned Bo’s wife against him, tortured him for a false confession, and accused him of working secretly for the CCP to topple the Nationalist regime in Taiwan. The state’s case against Bo was based entirely on trumped-up

<sup>81</sup> *Locusts Flying Southeast* chronicles the excess of Soviet occupation forces in Manchuria following Japan’s surrender. See Ying Fenghuang, “Cóng ‘Huāngchóng dōngnánfēi’ dào ‘Yíyu’: Xunzhao Guo Yidong de wénxueshi weizhi” [From *Locusts Fly Southeast* to *Alien Land*: Seeking Guo Yidong’s position in literary history], *Quanguo xinshu zixun yuekan* 113 (2008): 10–14.

<sup>82</sup> Shen Chaoqun, “Bo Yang shengping,” 35.

<sup>83</sup> For more on *Independence Evening Post*, see Wang Tianbin, *Taiwan baoyeshi* [The history of newspapers in Taiwan] (Taipei: Yatai tushu, 2003), 292–296.

<sup>84</sup> There have been a number of studies looking into the KMT paramilitary group in north Burma. They focus on the international politics during the Cold War and the CIA’s involvement in the development of drug production/trade in the Golden Triangle.

<sup>85</sup> Deng Kebao, *Yíyu*, 197.

charges.<sup>86</sup> Apparently, the KMT authorities had wanted to put him behind bars for some time. His affair and divorce had humiliated the Salvation Corps and insulted CCK personally. Then, there was *Alien Land*, his most popular work up to that point in time. According to Bo's memoir, when the serial reportage on the "orphan army" first started in the *Post*, a former classmate from the Nationalist cadre school, who had by then risen to the rank of head commissar in the KMT military police, invited him for "a chat" in the military police's headquarters. The former classmate told him to drop the project immediately. "You are in big trouble. We cannot just blatantly shut down the newspaper, but we can definitely shut you down."<sup>87</sup> Being defiant and intractable as ever, Bo was unfazed by the threat. Not only that, he continued to publish social commentaries that irritated the government. It took the Nationalists several years to finally arrest him after *Alien Land*'s publication.

Since it first appeared in 1961, *Alien Land* has become one of the best-selling war novels in Taiwan. When Bo was released in 1977, his friends told him that approximately 600,000 copies of the book had been sold.<sup>88</sup> The official ban on the book and its author's imprisonment actually made *Alien Land* even more popular, and bootleggers took full advantage of the situation. In total, it is estimated that over one million copies of the book, most of them pirated, had been sold by the end of the 1970s.<sup>89</sup> With this kind of reach, the book etches the dolorous story of the "orphan army" into Taiwan's popular memory. In 1990, a film based on the novel with the same Chinese title was made.<sup>90</sup> The movie enjoyed great success at the box office in both Taiwan and Hong Kong, but it failed to win any critical acclaim. As Ying Fenghuang points out, despite *Alien Land*'s lasting appeal and wide circulation, the novel has received little attention from literary scholars and critics even after democratization. This stands in stark contrast to the discussions of Bo's other works.<sup>91</sup>

Part of this disregard stems from the confusion over genre; that is, whether *Alien Land* should be considered a work of fiction or journalism, even when it falls under the rubric of anti-communist literature. As stated, the novel was first published in the *Independence Evening Post* as "news." Bo got most of the information from a coworker, a journalist employed by the *Post*. The journalist had interviewed many of the repatriated guerrilla

<sup>86</sup> The Nationalists accused him of mocking Chiang Kai shek and his son with his translation of an American comic strip (Popeye the Sailor Man) in a local newspaper. Shen Chaoqun, "Bo Yang shengping," 36–37.

<sup>87</sup> Bo and Zhou, *Bo Yang huayilu*, 246–247. <sup>88</sup> Deng Kebao, *Yiyu*, 197.

<sup>89</sup> Ying, "Cong 'Huangchong dongnanfei,'" 18.

<sup>90</sup> The English title of the film was "A Home Too Far."

<sup>91</sup> Ying, "Cong 'Huangchong dongnanfei,'" 18.

fighters from northern Burma in the mid-1950s.<sup>92</sup> Bo wrote *Alien Land* in the first person, posing as a middle-ranking KMT army staff officer under the assumed name “Deng Kebao” (鄧克保). The book portrays the wretched and perilous existence of ordinary men, women, and children expelled from southwest China living in the China–Burma–Thailand border region. These anti-communist exiles were abandoned by their superiors and by the government in Taiwan. They were left to fend for themselves against the mighty CCP army, the murderous Burmese troops, and the belligerent local tribes; hence the idea of an “orphan army.” The book is thus critical of both the Nationalist regime and its military.

When we juxtapose tales of the five hundred martyrs and the orphan army, the reason why the Nationalist authorities considered the latter problematic becomes apparent. Both stories describe horrific deaths and violence in the late stage of the Chinese civil war. Yet different from the epic story in Taiyuan, *Alien Land* contains graphic depictions of the incredible ordeal suffered by low-ranking KMT personnel and their families as they left China. This was actually rare in Taiwan’s 1950s anti-communist literature because it went directly against the effort by the Nationalists to expunge the bad memories of defeat and replace them with narratives that could inspire future victory. Many of these miserable accounts can be found in the novel’s first chapter, titled “The Debacle of the Grand Army in the Yuanjiang Dead End” (元江絕地大軍潰敗).<sup>93</sup> The word “debacle” (潰敗) certainly raised a red flag for the KMT censors. Speaking as Deng Kebao, Bo writes:

We followed unnamed footpaths into unknown mountains. Like lambs being chased by wolves, we lowered our heads and scurried. It was not walking but running . . . Our families were the most wretched creatures. When we caught up with them, I held Anguo [Deng’s son] in my arm and used the other arm to drag Zhengfen [Deng’s wife] along. She sobbed and begged for a break constantly. I said to her: “No.” She screamed: “Just let me die here!”<sup>94</sup>

This lachrymose scene, like other similar ones in *Alien Land*, exposes what the official line of a strategic “withdrawal” or a “relocation of central government” has glossed over and concealed. It portrays the events in 1949 as a brutal war and a heartrending refugee experience in which ordinary people were scarred both mentally and physically.

*Alien Land* is an anti-communist novel, but it does not regurgitate the official line. Rather, the book’s narrative largely focuses on family losses and the agony of being homeless. It connects personal tragedies with an

<sup>92</sup> Bo and Zhou, *Bo Yang huiyilu*, 246.    <sup>93</sup> Deng Kebao, *Yiyu*, 1 49.    <sup>94</sup> Ibid., 46.

unrelenting drive to fight one's way back to China even as the top officials and generals had abandoned the mission. Published in the early 1960s, when a temporary sojourn had turned into a prolonged exile, the story provided catharsis for *waishengren*'s frustrated desire to return. It helped mitigate their social trauma of the diminishing hope discussed in Chapter 3. David Der-wei Wang's comment underscores this point:

The book [*Alien Land*] remains a perennial best seller long after the anti communist genre has faded. Other than the captivating battle scenes and exotic locations, the main reason for its lasting appeal is that the book really touches upon the unspeakable and hidden pain of an entire generation of readers.<sup>95</sup>

In the decades that followed, this unspeakable and hidden pain would gradually come to the fore when political and social circumstances changed in Taiwan, and when the social trauma of the homecomings on both sides of the Taiwan Strait compelled *waishengren* to reconsider home and belonging.

### **Precursors: Old Soldiers and Military Families' Villages**

The 1970s is widely regarded as an important decade in fomenting Taiwan's *bentuhua* trend and democracy movement in the 1980s and beyond. During this time, a new cohort of *waishengren* and *benshengren* writers and intellectuals who were born on the island after World War II came of age. Annoyed and unsettled by the ROC's growing international isolation and the KMT's sterile anti-communist rhetoric, these young literary and social critics, for whom sociologist Hsiao A-chin coins the terms "return-to-reality generation" or "generation for-itself," started to question the older mainland elites' perspectives. Rather than continuing to look toward China, they began to turn their attention to the local social reality in Taiwan.<sup>96</sup>

The story I present in this book complicates that picture. In Chapter 3, I demonstrated that even the supposedly ossified and mainland-centered first-generation *waishengren* underwent a localization process manifested by their native-place cultural projects, and the origin of that process could be traced back to the early 1960s. In this chapter, I draw attention to the second-generation *waishengren*'s growing concern about the main social issues affecting their communities in Taiwan during the 1970s and 1980s. This shared concern later segued into narrating the exodus when the wall of government censorship finally came down. In the second

<sup>95</sup> Wang Dewei, *Ruhe xiandai*, 149.

<sup>96</sup> Hsiao, *Huigui xianshi*; Hsiao, "A 'Generation In Itself'."

half of the 1970s and throughout the 1980s, the emergence of two specific mainlander memory threads was historically significant in particular for the contemporary development. These were the literary and cultural productions focusing on two groups of *waishengren*: “old soldiers” (*laobing* 老兵) and the residents of “military families’ villages” (*juancun* 眷村).

The discussion of the Veterans’ Homebound Movement in Chapter 4 has alluded to the widespread public sympathy for *laobing* in Taiwan in the mid-1980s. This growing awareness of the old soldiers’ plight actually started in the second half of the 1970s, when the island’s rapid economic growth led to social polarization between the rich and the poor. An inadequate military pension system condemned many army retirees to perpetual poverty. Mandatory military service for all able-bodied males, which brought a considerable number of the younger postwar generation in close contact with the impoverished and unmarried mainland veterans, also played an important role. Zhang Tuowu’s wildly successful five-volume memoir about life in the KMT army and Li Shike’s bank heist in 1982, which sent shock waves through Taiwanese society, were among the important catalysts for the rise of this prevailing sentiment.

The birth name of Zhang Tuowu (張拓蕪, 1928–2018) was Zhang Shixiong (張時雄). Zhang hailed from Jing County (涇縣) in the countryside of southern Anhui Province.<sup>97</sup> Like Bo Yang, he was born into a merchant family. This afforded Zhang with a combined six years of schooling that would ultimately set the foundation for a writing career later in his life.<sup>98</sup> The Japanese invasion and bombing destroyed much of his family’s farm and business. Thus, at the tender age of twelve, Zhang was forced to leave home and school. He took up an apprenticeship at a local oil mill run by his distant relatives, where he was subjected to harsh working conditions and constant beatings. He left the mill in disgust after four years of virtual slavery.<sup>99</sup> Sick and tired of being exploited and bullied, Zhang joined a local anti-Japanese militia in early 1944. When the militia disbanded in the same year, his squad leader took Zhang and those who had no place to go to enlist as KMT army regulars. From that point onward, Zhang began a long career in the Nationalist military that spanned almost three decades in China and Taiwan until his retirement in 1973.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>97</sup> For more on Zhang’s name, family background, and upbringing, see the interview in Zhang Tuowu, *Daima shuzu shouji* [Notes of a foot soldier, Vol. 1] (Taipei: Erya chubanshe, 1976), 3 4.

<sup>98</sup> Zhang Tuowu, *Daima shuzu buji* [Notes of a foot soldier, Vol. 4] (Taipei: Erya chubanshe, 1979), 105 111.

<sup>99</sup> Zhang, *Daima shuzu shouji*, 165 174; *Daima shuzu buji*, 133 135.

<sup>100</sup> Zhang Tuowu, *Daima shuzu yuji* [Notes of a foot soldier, Vol. 3] (Taipei: Erya chubanshe, 1978), 99 110.

Although Zhang had won some awards for his poems and radio broadcast editing, he remained an unknown figure in Taiwan's literary scene until the first volume of his memoir *Notes of a Foot Soldier* (代馬輸卒手記) took the island by storm in 1975.<sup>101</sup> There was so much demand for his work that Zhang went on to write four more volumes from 1978 to 1981. There has not been a clear estimate of how many copies of *Notes* were sold over the years, but the popularity of the memoir series can be gauged by the number of reprints. Volume 1 was reprinted as many as twenty times. Volume 2 was reprinted thirteen times. Volume 3 and 4 went through seven and four editions respectively.<sup>102</sup> In a 2007 interview, Zhang told a graduate student in Taiwan that a total of twenty-eight editions have been issued for the first volume alone since 1976.<sup>103</sup>

What made *Notes* so appealing and refreshingly different for both literary critics and the general public in Taiwan was its candid, humorous, and sardonic portrayal of life in the Nationalist army – with an emphasis on the enlisted men. Zhang spent the better half of his twenty-nine years in service bouncing around different units either as a lowly foot soldier or a noncommissioned officer. He rubbed shoulders with some of the lowest and least respected characters in the KMT military. *Daima shuzu* (代馬輸卒), the key phrase in the memoir's Chinese title, translates literally as “porters in substitution for horses.” The term came from Zhang's time in a KMT field artillery battalion in southern Jiangsu Province. The troops in that battalion, as Zhang recalled bitterly, were treated literally as livestock.<sup>104</sup> Long years spent in the rank and file afforded Zhang with intimate knowledge of the hardship, trauma, and displacement experienced by common soldiers. Many were country folks compelled by grim wartime circumstances to join the Nationalist army and then ended up in Taiwan like him.

For an audience bombarded with decades of state-sponsored myth about anti-communist martyrdom, the characters in the memoir, including Zhang himself, seemed so palpable, so relatable, and so endearing. Acclaimed second-generation mainlander writer Echo's (三毛, 1943–1991) praise and commentary played a crucial role in propelling *Notes* to fame in Taiwan. Echo argued that Zhang's work unveiled a world that no one had ever written about before.<sup>105</sup> The memoir, despite its

<sup>101</sup> The memoir was first published in an army literary magazine in 1975. For a list of Zhang's awards, see Xu Zhangji, “Zhang Tuowu de sanwen yanjiu” [Research on Zhang Tuowu's essays] (master's thesis, Nanhua University, Department of Literature, 2008), 36–37.

<sup>102</sup> Zhang Tuowu, *Daima shuzu waiji* [Notes of a foot soldier, Vol. 5] (Taipei: Erya chubanshe, 1981), 10.

<sup>103</sup> Xu Zhangji, “Zhang Tuowu,” 135. <sup>104</sup> Zhang, *Daima shuzu shouji*, 15–18.

<sup>105</sup> Echo's real name was Chen Maoping (陳懋平). She was born in Chongqing but grew up in Taipei. Echo wrote essays based on her sojourns in Europe and Africa. Her accounts

humor, nonchalance, and self-effacement, spoke of shattered lives and wounded souls. It touched her heart deeply while making her laugh and cry at the same time.<sup>106</sup>

Interestingly, Zhang did not initially intend to write about his experience in the KMT military, nor did he anticipate the overwhelmingly positive response the book would receive. Though state censorship showed signs of loosening up in the mid-1970s, publishing on sensitive topics could still land a person in jail.<sup>107</sup> He started working on the memoir out of a desperate need for money. Shortly after retiring from the army in 1973, Zhang, still in his mid-forties, had suffered a major stroke that paralyzed the entire left side of his body permanently. The hospital and rehabilitation bills depleted his savings and the measly army pension. Finding a new job was difficult because of his disability.<sup>108</sup>

*Notes* received unanimous praise, not only from the general public and younger mainlander authors like Echo, but also from fellow first-generation writers, most of whom had written anti-communist works for the government and the military in the preceding decades. This is a clear indication of the changing time and sociopolitical circumstances in Taiwan. Facing both the diplomatic setbacks and the rise of domestic political and social movements discussed in the previous chapter, the circle of the Nationalist tolerance had apparently widened.

In *Notes*, Zhang's account of his journey across the Taiwan Strait goes directly against the state's narrative. His writing also constitutes a radical break from Bo Yang's anti-communist fighters bent on returning to China. Instead of heroes, martyrs, or an orphan army, what the readers see are deserters, opportunists, and survivors. In three separate vignettes, Zhang describes how he and another wily veteran named "Old Pan" (老潘) absconded from their mainland army unit in search of greener pastures in Taiwan in the middle of the Chinese civil war.<sup>109</sup> Even after landing in Taiwan, he deserted a number of times. According to Zhang, this was common practice in the early 1950s. The soldiers called it "slipping away" (開小差). The commercial success of *Notes* and, more importantly, Zhang's impunity for publishing these accounts paved the

of daily life in the Sahara with her Spanish husband were extremely popular with readers in Taiwan during the 1970s and 1980s.

<sup>106</sup> Zhang, *Daima shuzu yuji*, 192.

<sup>107</sup> In the 2007 interview, Zhang said the editor took a risk publishing his work, and someone had warned him not to be too critical of the military. Xu Zhangji, "Zhang Tuowu," 135.

<sup>108</sup> Zhang Tuowu, *Daima shuzu xuji* [Notes of a foot soldier, Vol. 2] (Taipei: Erya chubanshe, 1978), 261 264.

<sup>109</sup> Zhang, *Daima shuzu shouji*, 82 89; *Daima shuzu xuji*, 83 92; *Daima shuzu yuji*, 118 120.

way for a growing number of personal memoirs, oral history books, and fictional works based on the broken and displaced lives of KMT veterans in the decades that followed.

On April 14, 1982, roughly a year after the last volume of *Notes* appeared, a retired Nationalist soldier named Li Shike (李師科, 1927–1982) robbed one of the largest government banks in downtown Taipei. The daring heist stunned Taiwanese society because there had not been such a bold attempt to take down a major state bank in the general public's memory. What also troubled everyone was the perpetrator's advanced age and strange motive. Li's action left police investigators, scholars, and pundits searching for answers. It propelled the *laobing* issue to the forefront of public attention.<sup>110</sup>

Li Shike grew up on a small farm in central Shandong Province. Like Zhang Tuowu, he joined a homegrown guerrilla group as a young teenager when the Japanese invasion destroyed his home and community. A KMT army division later absorbed this group. Li survived both the carnage of the Resistance War and the Nationalist collapse. He was among those evacuated from the beaches of Hainan Island in 1950. Decades later, the farm boy from northern China became one of the “self-sustaining old soldiers” in Taiwan. Like the tens of thousands of mainland veterans discharged before an adequate pension system and a proper vocational training program were introduced in the early 1960s, he eked out a living on the fringes of society, doing odd jobs and driving a taxi. Destitute, unmarried, aging, and with no relatives in Taiwan, Li was frustrated and miserable. He held a grudge against the KMT, which had failed to deliver on its promise of returning everyone back to China. Forsaken by an increasingly affluent society indulged in pursuit of wealth and mundane pleasures, the depressed veteran thought he had nothing to live for. The crime was premeditated and meticulously planned for two years. It started with Li murdering a policeman in early 1980 to obtain the revolver he would later use for the robbery. The heist could even be seen as a suicide attempt, one that aimed to strike back against the party-state and the larger society that slighted and ostracized people like him.<sup>111</sup>

Under tremendous public pressure to apprehend the perpetrator, the Taipei city police rushed the investigation, ultimately botching it. They focused on the wrong suspect, another taxi driver from Shandong, who

<sup>110</sup> Tang Jinglan and Lin Jingjing, “Beiju renwu bingtai xinli sharen qiangjie dongji chengmi . . .” [A tragic figure, a sick mindset, motive unclear for the murder and robbery . . .], *Lianhe bao*, May 9, 1982, 3; “Li Shike an suo pulu de wenti” [The problems exposed by Li Shike's case], *Zhongguo luntan* 162 (1982): 8–26.

<sup>111</sup> See Li Ao's famous essay on Li Shike in Li Ao, *Kuomintang yanjiu* [Research on the KMT] (Taipei: Li Ao chubanshe, 1995), 235–252.

was tortured into making a false confession. The poor fellow committed suicide when he could not produce the physical evidence (the money) for the investigators.<sup>112</sup> Li nonetheless exposed himself and sealed his own fate. He gave most of the cash away to his former landlord and host family. The family had a young daughter he was particularly fond of. Not being able to have children, he wanted the little girl to have this money for a decent education. The girl's parents vexed over the hard choices, between knowingly abetting a felon and spilling the beans, which would condemn the generous Li to a certain death. In the end they went to the police.

Greatly embarrassed by this entire episode, including the clumsy police work that cost the life of an innocent man, the authorities trialed and executed Li swiftly, hoping that this unpleasant occurrence would soon fade from public memory.<sup>113</sup> This was not the case: the larger personal tragedy behind the making of this bold heist captivated the common citizens in Taiwan. It also dawned on the general public that there were tens of thousands of other disadvantaged *laobing* living in Taiwan who wrestled with the same set of issues that plagued Li – aging, poverty, solitude, homesickness, sexual repression, depression, and social marginalization. These individuals could also be ticking time bombs. Responding to a growing public concern, Legislative Yuan members demanded that the VAC start improving its counseling and welfare programs for single and elderly army retirees.<sup>114</sup> The improvements were piecemeal, however, before the veterans themselves rose up to protest in 1986.

The fascination with Li's story inspired fictional works and movies based on the event. One of the most well-known of these is the short story “Uncle Ke Sili” (柯思里伯伯) written by second-generation mainlander Ku Ling (苦苓, 1955–) in 1987.<sup>115</sup> Ku’s work was followed by two direct film adaptations in 1988: *Great Robber Li Shike* (大盜李師科) and *The Last Autumn of Old Ke* (老科的最後一個秋天). Before these, in 1984, just two years after Li was put to death, another film provided a sympathetic portrayal of an old soldier and the young aboriginal wife he acquired with money. Titled *The Second Spring of Old Mo* (老莫的第二個春天), the movie received an enthusiastic audience response as well as

<sup>112</sup> This hapless driver was Wang Yingxian (王迎先). Wang's tragic death actually led to an important legislative reform that secured the suspect's rights to legal counsel in Taiwan.

<sup>113</sup> “Li Shike fufa” [Li Shike was executed], *Zhongyang ribao*, May 27, 1982, 3.

<sup>114</sup> “Liwei zuo yaqiu fudaohui dui wujuan tuiwuzhe jiaqiang xinlifudao” [Members of the Legislative Yuan demanded the VAC to strengthen its counseling program for the single retirees], *Lianhe bao*, May 9, 1982, 3.

<sup>115</sup> Hou Ruqi, *Shuangxiang zhijian*, 448 450.

critical acclaim. Li Youning (李祐寧, 1951–), a second-generation mainlander and a rising star in Taiwan's filmmaking industry, directed both *The Second* and *The Last*.

The growing compassion in Taiwan for *laobing* in the late 1970s and 1980s was not limited to the mainlander communities. In fact, many native Taiwanese novelists, essayists, and screenwriters also produced or helped to produce works illustrating the plight of retired KMT veterans during this time.<sup>116</sup> This is something that divisive ethnic politics in contemporary Taiwan has obfuscated and forgotten. In the same vein, the majority of people living at this particular historical juncture seemed to have already forgotten that many of the old soldiers were once deemed an abomination to society when they first arrived as young men in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Taiwan's compulsory military service for all able-bodied males over eighteen years of age had contributed to the general public's empathy for *laobing*, especially among young males born on the island after World War II. On their tour of duty (usually two to three years), new recruits lived in the same barracks with many of these cocky, abrasive, and at times abusive senior staff sergeants from China. Native Taiwanese inductees had a pejorative term for them: "old taro" (老芋仔).<sup>117</sup> Though on the receiving end of the mainland veterans' bullying from time to time, some of the struggling rookies forged intimate bonds and friendships with these old-timers. They came to understand, through firsthand knowledge, the lasting influence of war, political repression, family separation, and social isolation on these individuals. The encounters between the female half of the population (and some of the small boys) and *laobing* in Taiwan were less pervasive than the grown men's side of the story. They were nevertheless confusing and traumatic. Many of the young, the mentally handicapped, and the impoverished became targets of the old soldiers' sexual advances and molestation.<sup>118</sup> Yet, the depictions of these despicable acts in literary and cultural texts produced during this time and later on were sympathetic not only toward the victims but also toward the perpetrators.<sup>119</sup> Overall, second-generation mainlanders, because of their family backgrounds, were often more compassionate toward the KMT veterans.

The children of the great exodus thus played a significant role in inscribing *laobing* as a normative subject of trauma, displacement, and

<sup>116</sup> See Zeng Shuhui's essay in Li Kuang chün, *Li yu ku*, 207 244.

<sup>117</sup> On the use of the term, see Hu, "Yuzai yu fanshu," 109 110.

<sup>118</sup> For examples, see Zhu Tianxin, *Xiangwo juancun*, 70 73, Ku Ling, *Waisheng guxiang* [Homeland outside of the province] (Taipei: Xidai, 1988), 50 59.

<sup>119</sup> See Zeng's essay in Li Kuang chün, *Li yu ku*, 226 230.

marginalization in both Taiwan's popular imagination and their own communal memory. Many prominent second-generation mainlander writers launched their careers in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Publishing concurrently with Zhang Tuowu's memoir, just to give a few examples, were Sun Weimang's (孫瑋芒, 1955-) "Faces, Bronze Faces" (一張張古銅色的容顏, 1976); Ding Yamin's (丁亞民, 1958-) "Winter Sacrifice" (冬祭, 1976); Zhang Dachun's (張大春, 1957-) "Painting of Chicken Plumage" (雞翎圖, 1978); and Wang Youhua's (王幼華, 1956-) "A Chronicle of Heavenly Stars and Grassroots Heroes" (天魁草莽錄, 1980), "The Legend of South Mountain Village," (南山村傳奇, 1980), "Two Brothers" (兄弟倆, 1981), and "The Divine and Responsive Deity Please Have Mercy" (有應公殿下慈悲, 1981). Among these, Zhang Dachun's award-winning short story constituted the most poignant tale. "Painting of Chicken Plumage" depicts a mainland soldier who had gone insane due to prolonged conditions of loneliness and homesickness in Taiwan. The old soldier treated the chickens he raised for the army as imaginary family members. When his platoon decided to sell the entire flock to a vender, he went mad and killed all the birds with his bare hands.<sup>120</sup> Zhang's writing along with others listed in this paragraph represented a growing body of literature exposing the miserable and dishonorable existence of the disenfranchised veterans, whom the Nationalist state has perversely called "honored citizens" (榮民).<sup>121</sup>

Besides works of fiction, real-life stories of disenfranchised old soldiers also started to emerge and proliferate in Taiwan. Toward the second half of the 1980s, amidst the veterans' protest against the state and the country on the cusp of democratization, anthropologist Hu Tai-li (胡台麗, 1950-), whose parents came from Shanghai and Jiangxi Province respectively, pioneered ethnographic fieldwork on *laobing*. Hu focused on the Nationalist veterans who settled in eastern Taiwan because of the VAC road and infrastructure projects. These single and underprivileged soldiers formed households with local aboriginal women.<sup>122</sup> Hu's interview-based research became an important forerunner. It later inspired a considerable number of similar studies and oral history publications in democratized Taiwan, most of which were produced by descendants of the civil war migrants like Hu. The latter publications not only focused on *laobing*, but on other mainlander groups as well. These included the exiled students from Shandong, repatriated soldiers and refugees from Vietnam

<sup>120</sup> Zhang Dachun, *Zhang Dachun ji* [The collected works of Zhang Dachun] (Taipei: Qianwei chubanshe, 1992), 17 34.

<sup>121</sup> For more discussion of these works, Chi and Wang, *Last of the Whampoa Breed*; Hou Ruqi, *Shuangxiang zhijian*, 429 471.

<sup>122</sup> Hu, "Ethnic Identity and Social Condition"; Hu, "Yuzai yu fanshu."

and Burma, POWs from Korea, and evacuees from the Dachen Islands.<sup>123</sup>

Another key memory thread that second-generation *waishengren* began to weave in a decade or so before democratization concentrated on “military families’ villages” or *juancun*. These residential communities occupy an important place in mainlander history and culture – so much so that, as Chang Mau-kuei rightly points out, there has been a conflation between *juancun* and the larger and more diverse *waishengren* communities. The two are often considered synonymous, and that *juancun* history/culture represents mainlander history/culture. This assumption is in fact incorrect. Available social data from the late 1980s showed that only about one-third of the mainlander population in northern Taiwan had lived in *juancun*.<sup>124</sup> Gong Yijun’s research, which I discussed in Chapter 2, suggests that the overall figure for the entirety of Taiwan should be lower.<sup>125</sup> The villages were also diverse historically. There were many native Taiwanese and some aboriginal women who married into these “mainlander enclaves.”<sup>126</sup>

The conflation stems from the fact that so many of the mainlander cultural celebrities in our time (e.g. Long Yingtai, Zhu Tianxin, and several of the second-generation *waishengren* writers mentioned previously) were born and raised in these villages. Since the late 1970s and early 1980s, much has been produced on *juancun*, including fictional works, social commentaries, memoirs, newspaper articles, films, plays, oral history books, graduate student theses, and heritage site preservation projects.<sup>127</sup> This cultural phenomenon, which revolved around military families’ villages, was closely tied to the Nationalist regime’s policy to tear down these communities for urban renewal roughly a decade before democratization.

I have brought up *juancun* in passing in the Introduction, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2. These villages were residential enclaves established by the KMT army for its married personnel in Taiwan. Some of Chiang Kai-shek’s military officers liked to keep their wives and children close when their units were on the move in China. The origins of *juancun* could thus be traced back to the mobile groups trailing some of the KMT divisions during the campaigns against the Jiangxi Soviet in the 1930s and

<sup>123</sup> For more, see D. Yang and Chang, “Understanding the Nuances,” 116–118.

<sup>124</sup> See Chang Mau kuei’s essay in Zhang Hanbi, *Fusanghua yu jiayuan*, 280.

<sup>125</sup> Gong estimates that the KMT absorbed about one third of the mainlander population into the various state run apparatuses in Taiwan. *Juancun* constituted only one of these apparatuses.

<sup>126</sup> Zhang Hanbi, *Fusanghua yu jiayuan*, 281.

<sup>127</sup> For an overview on literary and cultural productions on *juancun*, see Wu Hsin yi’s essay in *ibid.*, 3–33.

throughout the Resistance War.<sup>128</sup> After landing in Taiwan, the Nationalist military put their families and dependents in the general vicinity of their units, particularly in houses, dormitories, factories, and warehouses vacated by the Japanese. These residential clusters located in different parts of the island constituted some of the first and oldest military families' villages in Taiwan. There were also "illegal *juancun*" erected by army deserters and destitute refugees. Some of these shantytowns were built right next to officially maintained villages. Others formed over time in separate locations.<sup>129</sup> They both contributed to the social problems created by the great exodus that I have highlighted in Chapter 1.

Little effort was put into establishing long-term accommodations for government employees at first due to the exiled regime's goal of returning to China. As we have seen in Chapter 1, some of the troops were billeted in public schools well into the second half of the 1950s. But by then, change was already coming. In May 1956, Madame Chiang Kai-shek led a charity campaign to collect public donations for building *juancun*. Despite its outward appearance as a nongovernmental initiative, the Nationalist party-state played a central role in the creation and governance of these newly constructed communities. The KMT exercised effective control over *juancun*'s self-governing committees. It gained the loyalty and support of the residents by providing long-term benefits: food, daily necessities, welfare services, and educational subsidies.<sup>130</sup> A good portion of the nearly 900 military families' villages in Taiwan were constructed in the ten years between 1957 and 1967 under the auspices of the "Chinese Women's Anti-Communist and Resist Russia League" (中華婦女反共抗俄聯合會) headed by Madame Chiang.<sup>131</sup>

Due to the ad hoc nature of design and construction, *juancun* established during the late 1940s and early 1950s showed serious signs of wear and tear by the early 1970s. Many of the structures were no longer safe for people to live in. Dwarfed by the thriving urban expansions surrounding them, these dilapidated neighborhoods blighted the city landscapes. They became dangerous fire hazards and serious obstacles to sound municipal planning. In 1970, in lieu of the League's charity drive, which had been petering out by the late 1960s, the government introduced a low-interest

<sup>128</sup> Guo Guanlin ed., *Cong zhuliba dao gaoloudaxia de gushi: Guojun juancun fazhanshi* [From bamboo fences to high rises: A developmental history of military families' villages] (Taipei: Guofangbu shizheng bianyishi, 2005), 2 3.

<sup>129</sup> See Ke Linsi's essay in Zhang Hanbi, *Fusanghua yu jiayuan*, 255 257.

<sup>130</sup> See Shang Daoming's essay in Chang, *Guojia yu rentong*, 16 22.

<sup>131</sup> Usually called by its abbreviation "Women's League" (婦聯), the association is now called "National Women's League of the ROC" (中華民國婦女聯合會).

loan program backed by the state banks for military households to erect new properties or renovate their existing ones. This loan program was the beginning of a state-led effort to privatize *juancun* so the occupants could purchase and own their dwellings. The scheme was ineffective; the pace of renewal was simply too slow.<sup>132</sup> Thus, in the late 1970s, Chiang Ching-kuo gave instructions for the KMT military to work with civilian authorities. The objective was to raze all the old *juancun* and replace them with high-rise apartments. These modern apartments could then be sold back to the original tenants at affordable prices while releasing the surplus units to the general public, an initiative that would satisfy the growing demand for public housing. The new plan went into effect in 1980.<sup>133</sup>

The demolition and reconstruction of military families' villages in Taiwan was a contentious, convoluted, and long-drawn-out process that spanned over three decades from the early 1980s to the 2010s. Protests from the tenants over a long list of issues started right from the get-go. Among the residents' concerns were the lack of fiscal transparency, tardy and shabby reconstruction, inadequate loan programs, and unfair distribution of the proceeds generated. There were also the more serious problems associated with corruption and fraud, which excluded and displaced some of the most vulnerable and indigent tenants in the process.<sup>134</sup>

Democratization intensified and complicated these matters. New legislation in 1996 required all *juancun* to be knocked down and rebuilt in approximately a decade (see Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4).<sup>135</sup> In the midst of the vitriolic public debate influenced by antagonistic ethnic politics, the former tenants of these rundown villages were vilified as undue receivers of state benefits. The benefits were said to have shaped their undue loyalty and servitude toward the KMT, even after democratization. Rising in response to this attack on *juancun* residents and the state's bulldozers were efforts by a coalition of social activists, civil servants, journalists, teachers, scholars, and cultural workers who wished to preserve some of these old residential enclaves as heritage sites. Not all *juancun* advocates were *waishengren*. There were native Taiwanese and even keen foreign activists. Nonetheless, the second-generation mainlanders who grew up in these villages have played a leading role in this movement to preserve and promote *juancun* culture.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>132</sup> See Luo Yuling's essay in Zhang Hanbi, *Fusanghua yu jiayuan*, 204.

<sup>133</sup> Guo, *Cong zhuliba*, 10 11.

<sup>134</sup> Luo in Zhang Hanbi, *Fusanghua yu jiayuan*, 208 212.

<sup>135</sup> Guo, *Cong zhuliba*, 17 19.

<sup>136</sup> For heritage preservation projects, see Gao Youzhi's chapter in Zhang Hanbi, *Fusanghua yu jiayuan*, 289 320.



Figure 5.3 Sisinan Military Families' Village (四四南村) near the Taipei 101 building. Sisinan was one of the first military families' villages in Taipei. The compound is now a historical museum and a cultural heritage site for the mainland communities in Taiwan. Source: Photograph by the author.

The main reason was the strong sense of displacement felt by this group roughly two decades before narrating the exodus began. In the 1970s and 1980s, the second-generation *waishengren* raised in *juancun* started to



Figure 5.4 A corner of the Sisinan Village. At one point, there were close to 900 military families' villages at different localities in Taiwan. By the late 2000s, most of these enclaves were knocked down. Their former residents were relocated to the high rise apartments nearby. Source: Photograph by the author.

leave home for college, employment, and military service. Unlike other young mainlanders who had more social contacts with the larger Taiwanese society, the sons and daughters of *juancun* had lived in the protective cocoons of these mainlander-dominated enclaves since they were born.<sup>137</sup> Being thrust suddenly into a different social reality outside of the villages, many felt perturbed and dislocated. To alleviate this profound sense of being deracinated, they began to reminisce about their happy childhood days back in these crowded, untidy, smelly, and rowdy mainland ghettos. As a result, fictional and reflective writings associated with *juancun* started to appear in large numbers.<sup>138</sup> Though

<sup>137</sup> Zhu Tianxin, *Xiangwo juancun*, 77–78.

<sup>138</sup> For in depth discussions of the nuances of *juancun* writings, see Chi Pang yuan's two essays in *Wu jianjian san de shihou* [The fog is clearing up] (Taipei: Jiuge, 1998), 153–196 and Su Weizhen ed., *Taiwan juancun xiaoshuo xuan* [Selected novels on the military families' villages in Taiwan] (Taipei: Eryu wenhua, 2004), 7–13.

being told repeatedly by their parents and elders that these dwellings were only temporary lodgings and that everyone would eventually return to China, the ramshackle villages became, in every sense of the word, a real “home” for the second-generation mainlanders who grew up in them.<sup>139</sup> This *juancun*-based nostalgia emerged in response to the state’s demolition projects. For nostalgic former residents, removing *juancun* physically was like removing their family and communal histories from the face of the island.<sup>140</sup>

Starting in the late 1980s and early 1990s, this collective sense of erasure was exacerbated and transformed by the twin social traumas of the homecomings in China and in Taiwan. The literary and cultural productions on *juancun* not only continued, but also expanded in democratized Taiwan as part of *waishengren*'s search for local belonging. For the mainlanders born in these villages, preserving *juancun* memories and culture is about building an identity. This identity is not only firmly rooted in Taiwan; it is also closely tied to the great exodus, which brought strangers and dissimilar families from various parts of China together as one people who shared the same fate and the same history.

Starting with the publication of early pieces, such as Sun Weimang's 1975 short story *Tree Cutting* (斫), creative works relating to *juancun* by notable second-generation mainland writer include Zhu Tianxin's *Never-ending* (未了, 1981); Zhu Tianxin's older sister Zhu Tianwen's (朱天文, 1956–) *The Story of Little Bi* (小畢的故事, 1982); Su Weizhen's (蘇偉貞, 1954–) *Leaving Tongfang* (離開同方, 1990); and Zhang Qijiang's (張啟疆, 1961–) *The Vanishing Ball* (消失的球, 1992). These are of course only a few examples from a very large pool of similar literature published contemporaneously. Despite diverse plots, which include a dispute among neighbors in *Tree Cutting*, a brawl between mainlander and Taiwanese children playing baseball in *The Vanishing Ball*, and love affairs and family troubles in *Never-ending*, *The Story of Little Bi*, and *Leaving Tongfang*, a common theme can be observed in all these stories: remembering one's village via a coming-of-age story.

Zhu Tianxin's 1991 semi-autobiographical essay “Thinking about My Brothers in the Military Families’ Village,” which was introduced earlier, is perhaps the best-known piece of writing on *juancun* touting a coming-of-age theme. Interestingly, it has a title and construction similar to Ku Ling's 1985 short story *Thinking about My Buddies in the Military Families'*

<sup>139</sup> This is the reason why I prefer the translation of “military families’ villages” over the more commonly used “military dependents’ villages” or other variants.

<sup>140</sup> See Zeng Yijing's essay in Zhang Hanbi, *Fusanghua yu jiayuan*, 48.

*Village.*<sup>141</sup> Both Zhu's and Ku's texts bring to life the sights, sounds, and smells of *juancun* – children playing games or listening to war stories from a retired veteran, military wives/mothers gossiping in various mainland dialects, and the aromas of diverse provincial cuisines competing with each other during mealtimes. They bring back childhood memories of the escapades one had undertaken, the bittersweet first crush one had experienced, and the misdeeds one had committed with a group of bosom friends in the same village.

Since the early 1980s, there have been popular and critically acclaimed movies, television programs, and plays in Taiwan that featured *juancun* prominently in their story lines. Some examples of motion pictures include *Growing Up* (小畢的故事, 1983), *Spring Outside of Bamboo Fences* (竹籬笆外的春天, 1985), and *A Brighter Summer Day* (牯嶺街少年殺人事件, 1991).<sup>142</sup> In the early 2000s, two TV shows portraying everyday life in military families' villages, *A Story of Soldiers* (再見, 忠貞二村, 2005) and *Time Story* (光陰的故事, 2008–2009), gained a wide following. The latter was the brainchild of Wang Weizhong (王偉忠, 1957–), a renowned television producer in Taiwan. Wang was born in a military families' village in Chiayi (嘉義). He has been a vocal advocate for the *juancun* preservation projects, and a famous connoisseur and promoter of delicious *juancun* cuisines.<sup>143</sup> In the late 2000s, Wang teamed up with another second-generation mainlander cultural celebrity, the acclaimed playwright Stan Lai (賴聲川, 1954–). Together they created a stage play based on Wang's own recollections and interviews he did with family members, friends, and old neighbors. Called *Formosa Village Number One* (寶島一村), the show opened to a sold-out crowd in Taipei's National Theater in December 2008.<sup>144</sup> The performance was a hit, and the troupe has since done over 200 shows in Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, Macao, Singapore, and the United States. Wang, Lai, and their crew recently celebrated the play's ten-year anniversary in late 2018.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>141</sup> I translate 兄弟 in Zhu's essay as "brothers" and 弟兄 in Ku's short story as "buddies" on account of the subtle difference of how they position the narrator in their respective writings.

<sup>142</sup> *Growing Up* is an adaptation of Zhu Tianwen's novel *The Story of Little Bi*.

<sup>143</sup> See Gao's essay in Zhang Hanbi, *Fusanghua yu jiayuan*, 317–320. Wang directed two documentary films on *juancun* wives in the 2000s. One was based on the story of his own mother. He also opened up a restaurant to promote *juancun* style cooking.

<sup>144</sup> The English title of the play is "The Village." I opt for a different translation here to better represent the meaning of the original Chinese title.

<sup>145</sup> Biaoyan gongzuofang, *Baodao yicun* [Formosa village number one], [http://www.pwshop.com/show\\_cht/the\\_village\\_2/](http://www.pwshop.com/show_cht/the_village_2/) [accessed June 28, 2018].

### Narrating the Exodus as the Cultural Trauma for Contemporary Mainlander Identity Formation

Literary and cultural productions on *laobing* and *juancun* commenced a decade and a half before the Nationalist authoritarianism ended. Second-generation *waishengren* came of age during this time and began to reflect on the history of their communities in Taiwan. Influenced by the larger sociopolitical development on the island, the children of the civil war migrants turned their attention to marginalized veterans and vanishing military families' villages. The former were the people suppressed and silenced by the Nationalist regime. The latter represented their communal histories in Taiwan that had been sidelined by their parents' mainland-centered native-place projects. The two memory threads that second-generation mainlander cultural elites had started to weave in the 1970s and 1980s later played an instrumental role in the rising salience of a new mnemonic regime that centered on the great exodus. When democratization finally lifted the restriction on what could be said about 1949, and when the twin social traumas of the homecomings impacted *waishengren*, the existing discourses of *laobing* and *juancun* expanded and segued into something larger and more powerful – something that could encapsulate the misery, dislocation, and marginalization of all civil war migrants and their descendants in Taiwan.

In September 1987, two months before Chiang Ching-kuo lifted the ban on visiting the PRC, an oral history anthology entitled *The Day We Left the Mainland* (離開大陸的那一天) appeared.<sup>146</sup> The anthology contained the great exodus stories of twenty-one former exiles. Most of the narrators were senior *waishengren* elites affiliated with the KMT: writers, intellectuals, artists, and journalists. These individuals had served as custodians of the official line for decades. They had never published or talked openly about their traumatic departures from China until this point in time. The publication of *The Day* thus indicated a shift in *waishengren*'s mnemonic regime as the wall of Nationalist censorship crumbled after democratization. The elderly civil war migrants looked back on their journeys across the Taiwan Strait four decades earlier while preparing for their long road home.

Following their disappointing hometown visits, the aging and dwindling first-generation mainlanders showed little desire to resettle back in China. Instead, they opted to take periodic trips to visit relatives and family graves there. The majority, such as former army abductee Jiang Sizhang who appeared in the previous chapter, came to see Taiwan as

<sup>146</sup> Wang Dakong et al., *Likai dahu*. The copy I cite in this book is the second edition published in 1989.

their true home – a place where they would spend the rest of their lives. A fair number of the exiled generation hoped that a peaceful unification between the PRC and the ROC sometime in the distant future would finally end the Chinese civil war and the standoff in the Taiwan Strait. For that reason, the elderly and still-surviving civil war migrants in Taiwan were often anxious and hostile toward the rise of Taiwanese nationalism, which, in their eyes, could provoke Beijing into taking unilateral military actions to conquer the island.

The former exiles were even more dismayed, disturbed, and offended by the wholesale negation of their entire history by the rest of Taiwan after the island's political liberalization. Narrating the exodus, having their repressed memories and refugee experiences of 1949 recorded, published, and recognized, helped ease the feeling of being slandered as foreign colonizers. It allowed the aging civil war migrants to find bearings in a rapidly changing state and society, when their views and belief systems increasingly came under attack, and their prior associations with the authoritarian KMT regime became a mark of shame or even criminality.

The children and grandchildren of the civil war migrants, the majority of them born and raised in Taiwan, did not actually experience the great exodus. More than anyone else, they felt the need to produce and promote the great exodus memories of their forebears in democratized Taiwan. This drive to uncover the neglected grassroots histories of their communities was without doubt prompted by the island state's postliberalization politics elucidated previously. But the drive also had its origins in the literary and cultural productions on *laobing* and *juancun* in the 1970s and 1980s. Returning from their disappointing hometown visits in the PRC, and being stigmatized as descendants of foreign colonizers, second- and third-generation mainland elites built on their memory work in the previous decades. Both *laobing* and *juancun* residents were displaced communities, and the source of this displacement was the traumatic expulsion from the mainland in the wake of the Chinese civil war. No longer just trying to give a voice to the voiceless, the offspring of the great exodus aimed at constructing a new Taiwan-based *Waishengren* identity. The refugee stories of 1949, which many second- and third-generation mainlanders grew up hearing at home (but had previously been inhibited by the Nationalist censorship in the public realm), came to the fore as a shared cultural trauma for all people of mainland descent in Taiwan.

The words of sociologist Fan Yun (范雲, 1968–) illustrate this point. Fan's father is a *laobing* and her mother a native Taiwanese. Today Fan is a widely recognized public intellectual, social activist, feminist, and politician in Taiwan. In a postscript to a mainland oral history anthology

she helped put together for the “Mainlander Taiwanese Association” in 2006, Fan writes:

If the mainlander ethnic group hopes to construct a self identity in the democratic society today, they have to look back on the fog of history. An important task for the future is to see the dividing line between the authoritarian state and the people and, with pieces of brick and tile, reconstruct grassroots memories of the mainlander ethnic group.<sup>147</sup>

The “grassroots memories of the mainlander ethnic group” Fan talks about here begin with the great exodus. We see this in the return of the *Pacific*, a forgotten shipwreck that has resurfaced from the deep ocean of historical oblivion; we see this in Long Yingtai’s best-selling *Big River Big Sea 1949*. We also see this in a surfeit of personal memoirs, oral history books, movies, TV shows, and other cultural texts that have been produced in Taiwan by different *waishengren* groups and individuals during the past three decades. This conspicuous memory boom – the mnemonic regime centering on the great exodus – constitutes a basis for the mainlander identity formation in contemporary Taiwan. The process is still ongoing.

Whereas Chiang Kai-shek’s expelled government had turned the trauma of 1949 into a supreme sacrifice for his party-state, which was epitomized by the anti-communist martyrdom at Taiyuan, descendants of the civil war migrants in contemporary Taiwan have reinterpreted it to position themselves as victims of the vicious KMT–CCP struggle. Narrating the exodus deflects the vilification of *waishengren* collectively as foreigners and colonizers who migrated to Taiwan with Chiang’s military dictatorship. It separates the exiled people from the exiled regime. It recasts the civil war migrants as political refugees who were escaping the brutal warfare and harrowing economic and social conditions in China. These refugees later found a home in Taiwan together with their children and grandchildren born on the island.

The “Mainlander Taiwanese Association” (外省台灣人協會) is a nonprofit organization that was founded in 2004 by a group of second- and third-generation mainlander intellectuals, social activists, journalists, writers, and filmmakers in the aftermath of Chen Shui-bian’s disputed reelection.<sup>148</sup> The Association’s main goals have been to combat wholesale stigmatization of *waishengren* and to promote interethnic understanding and reconciliation via oral history projects, documentary

<sup>147</sup> Waisheng Taiwanren xiehui, *Liuli jiyi*, 244.

<sup>148</sup> Waisheng Taiwanren xiehui, “Shetuanfaren waisheng Taiwanren xiehui” [The Mainlander Taiwanese Association], <http://amtorg.blogspot.com/> [accessed July 22, 2018].

filmmaking, *juancun* preservation, and other related activities.<sup>149</sup> The Association tries to present *waishengren* to the rest of Taiwan as worthy members of the island state's imagined community. In this new discourse, the mainlanders are quintessentially "Taiwanese." They are "mainlander Taiwanese": a people who have a history different from the "native Taiwanese" and the "aboriginal Taiwanese."<sup>150</sup>

Not every person of mainlander descent can proudly and comfortably claim the ethnic label of "*Waishengren*" because of the stigma it entails. This is why I suggested at the beginning of this book that the mainlander identity formation is only "partially successful." Neither would the fast-dwindling first-generation migrants and their descendants reject altogether their identification with the broader Chinese identity and cultural heritage – even though most now see themselves first and foremost as Taiwanese. Taiwan-born *waishengren* who grew up on the island before democratization continue to have strong emotional attachments to the Nationalist Party, as well as the historical legacy and the political symbols of the ROC for the simple reason that these had been an integral part of their upbringing.<sup>151</sup> The attachments have persisted even with a collective effort to dissociate themselves from the exiled regime's now discredited authoritarian past – a testament to the selectivity of social memory production and the internal contradictions that exist in all forms of mnemonic practices. Because of the duality of first-generation *waishengren*, both as displaced war refugees and as a politically and culturally dominated migrant group to the semi-Japanized Taiwanese, the writing of mainlander history requires some ethical considerations beyond their descendants' chosen memories and self-identification at the present time. I will conclude this book with a discussion of these considerations in the Epilogue.

<sup>149</sup> This book has benefited from a number of oral history volumes produced by the Association. These include Waisheng Taiwanren xiehui, *Liuli jiyi*; Xue Jiguang et al., *Xiangguan chuchu*; Chang, *Guojia yu rentong*; Li Kuang chün, *Li yu ku*; Zhang Hanbi, *Fusanghua yu jiayuan*.

<sup>150</sup> The Association's website shows that its publications and cultural activities have died down since early 2016.

<sup>151</sup> This love hate relationship is aptly described by Zhu Tianxin in "Thinking about My Brothers in the Military Families' Village." Zhu, *Xiangwo juancun*, 77–79.

## Epilogue

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There has been so much, so much injustice. Sixty years have passed. There was not one single “apology.” Regardless of what battlefield you fought on, which country you served, to whom you pledged your allegiance to or turned your back on; no matter if you joined the winning side or the losing side, and no matter how you’ve come to define justice or injustice; could I say that all who have been trampled on, defiled, and scarred by this era are my brothers and sisters?

Long Yingtai, *Daijiang dahai*

The historian must work out a subject position in negotiating transfer ence and coming to terms with his or her implication in the tragic grid of participant positions.

Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz*

### Mainlander History, Memory, and Identity

Writing about the pain of a displaced people who have also displaced other peoples is ethically dubious. An empathetic interpretation made on behalf of the former, regardless of the quality of the empirical research, could be deemed morally wrong. That said, I trust the preceding chapters have demonstrated sufficiently the following points. First, the great exodus from China to Taiwan in the mid-twentieth century – a subject that has thus far received very little scholarly attention – provides a new vantage point for professional historians to reconsider the historiography of the Chinese civil war and to question the significance that has been placed on the watershed year of 1949. Second, the *waishengren*’s mnemonic history that this book has uncovered validates the need to think beyond the “single event” model in the two prominent approaches to trauma in the humanities and social sciences disciplines that has mostly grown out of research on Western societies. The narrative I constructed illustrates a multiple-event trajectory of repeated social traumatizations with recurring processes of recuperation via shared memory production that link together three theoretical pillars of this book – trauma, memory,

and diaspora. This research further establishes the need to ponder upon the two contradictory versions of diaspora in Chinese migration studies, which have ironically marginalized the discussion of refugees and exiles. The temporal displacement of diasporic subjects and the politics of claiming diaspora are two issues that the scholars of diaspora need to explore and reflect on seriously. Third, the empirical research presented in this book challenge two conventional views on *waishengren* – the civil war migrants in Taiwan were a monolithic group of Nationalist bureaucratic elites and military personnel beset by an unchanging condition of nostalgia for China; and now their children and grandchildren are becoming a diasporic minority who reject Taiwanization and long for unification with the PRC. The foregoing chapters showed that the former exiles and their Taiwan-born descendants, despite some apparent “diasporic traits,” have localized or Taiwanized in their own ways. Thus, *waishengren’s* current memory boom centering on the great exodus should not be taken literally and reified as articulating a sentiment of perpetual rootlessness, or even a diasporic identification with their homeland in China. On the contrary, the mnemonic phenomenon should be read as a conscious effort to assert a local identity, a way to counter and deflect the native Taiwanese majority’s vilification of all mainlanders as foreign colonizers. By claiming diaspora; that is, underscoring the elements of involuntary dispersion, political victimization, and social marginalization in their family and community histories, the children and grandchildren of the great exodus try to ease their traumatic sense of dislocation in democratized Taiwan. Doing so helps them gain a moral high ground and a sense of political legitimacy as equal and deserving members of the island state’s new imagined community.

Presently in Taiwan, one of the most common misconceptions about *waishengren*, or people of mainlander descent, is that they are naturally drawn toward China or unification with the PRC. Mahlon Meyer in particular has reinforced this idea in his book *Remembering China from Taiwan*.<sup>1</sup> There is no denying that some elderly former exiles and their children, such as the individuals Meyer interviewed, have developed some identification with the PRC since 1987. This is mainly due to their profound sense of social traumatization and their absolute detestation of Taiwanese ascendancy and nationalism in post-authoritarian Taiwan. These perturbed individuals, despite some of them being vocal and visible in politics, are a very small minority among the mainlander population. In addition, notwithstanding their self-proclaimed identification with the PRC, most still choose to reside in Taiwan. Melissa Brown

<sup>1</sup> Meyer, *Remembering China*, 2.

argues that identity formation is a historical process based on genuine social experience and not timeless cultural ideas or ancestry.<sup>2</sup> If we accept this argument, then the Chinese cultural identity, heritage, and history, which *waishengren* seek to safeguard against the ethnocentric Taiwanese nationalist ideology, are associated with the ROC in Taiwan, not the PRC in China. Even as the scions of the great exodus try to distant themselves from the excess of Chiang Kai-shek's military dictatorship, many Taiwan-born mainlanders could never completely disown the KMT. The Nationalist Party had been an integral part of their parents' and grandparents' lives/careers on the island, and part of their childhood memories as well. The past relationship between the KMT and *waishengren*, as we have seen, was multifaceted, complicated, and beset by various tensions. Still, the bond forged historically between the two is as real as it is emotional. Different from Meyer, Joshua Fan points to the Taiwanization of younger mainlanders. His view is informed by the recent surveys in Taiwan, which Meyer did not consult. Fan nonetheless suggests that the identification of the aging and diminishing "Homeless Generation" with China has remained relatively unchanged.<sup>3</sup> The historical trajectory presented in this book has painted a more complicated picture.

*Waishengren's* Taiwanization after democratization is clearly documented by the island's contemporary statistics. Political scientists Shen Shiau-Chi and Wu Nai-teh have studied multiple sets of longitudinal survey data collected by academic institutions in Taiwan since the early 1990s. These data show that the national identity of *waishengren* has undergone a drastic change. The mainlanders identifying themselves as "Chinese only" dropped precipitously from 74 percent in 1992 to a mere 9.7 percent in 2005. In the meantime, those seeing themselves as both Chinese and Taiwanese increased from 24 percent to 74.5 percent.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the percentage of "Taiwanese nationalists" among the mainlanders – people who would still reject unification even in a scenario where China democratizes and becomes somewhat similar to Taiwan – rose from 3.2 percent in 1992 to 23.1 percent in 2005. This still constituted a minority among *waishengren*, and was roughly half of their native Taiwanese counterparts at 41.2 percent. At the other end of the spectrum are the "Chinese nationalists" among *waishengren*, who have plunged from 77.2 percent to 41.6 percent in the same years. This group would not support independence, even if the threat of invasion from the PRC were to be removed. The drop for the native Taiwanese in the same

<sup>2</sup> Brown, *Is Taiwan Chinese*, xi.   <sup>3</sup> Fan, *China's Homeless Generation*, 152.

<sup>4</sup> Shen and Wu's chapter in Chow, "One China" Dilemma, 127.

category during the same period was also fairly large, going from 48.2 percent to 15.1 percent.<sup>5</sup> Shen and Wu suggest that a considerable number of Taiwan's current residents, both *waishengren* and *benshengren*, are actually "pragmatists" who support the status quo and prefer to leave the issue of independence or unification an open choice. They nevertheless argue that Taiwan's two major ethnic groups – despite the apparent differences that still exist – are "converging in Taiwanese identity." Both have exhibited "high consensus in demanding autonomy to decide their own future."<sup>6</sup>

Shen and Wu's argument seems to confirm Stéphane Corcuff's botanically inspired theory of *waishengren*'s "Taiwanese tropism" proposed in 2002.<sup>7</sup> Corcuff later made important modifications to his original tropism thesis in 2011. Behind his reason was a discovery he made from his 2007 survey, which showed the persistence of Taiwan-born *waishengren*'s strong attachments to both Chinese culture and the historical symbols of the KMT.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, Corcuff reconceptualized the mainlander identity formation in contemporary Taiwan as a process of "creolization" in response to the growing preponderance of Taiwan-centered ideology.<sup>9</sup> He saw *waishengren*'s Taiwanization or "Taiwanese tropism" as incomplete. This put them in a liminal state that produced a creole identity, which was constantly at odds with the mainstream Taiwanese national identity.

Different from political scientists such as Corcuff, Shen, and Wu, I would argue that the Taiwanization of the mainlanders, or *waishengren*'s "Taiwanese tropism" in Corcuff's terminology, should not only be measured by mainlander acceptance or rejection of the native Taiwanese version of history and identity – especially in terms of numbers and statistics collected at the present time. Rather, it should be understood as a long-term historical process in the ruptured and intricate trajectory of trauma and memory production described in this book. For most *waishengren*, being Chinese and being Taiwanese are not mutually exclusive, and the history of the ROC/KMT in Taiwan is an important legacy of their lived experiences on the island.

From the perspective of ethnic-label identification, the mainlander identity formation in democratized Taiwan has not been too successful. Sociologist Li Kuang-chün, who has observed *waishengren*'s "masking" phenomenon, suggests that many of the individuals he interviewed "have rarely called themselves a Mainlander."<sup>10</sup> Stéphane Corcuff's figures

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 125.      <sup>6</sup> Ibid., 117.      <sup>7</sup> See Corcuff, *Memories of the Future*, 188.

<sup>8</sup> Gao, *Zhonghua linguo*, 163 166.      <sup>9</sup> Ibid., 180 181.

<sup>10</sup> See Li's chapter in Corcuff, *Memories of the Future*, 118.

show that only half of his research subjects self-identify with the label *Waishengren*. The percentage of people rejecting the ethnic marker increases as their age decreases.<sup>11</sup> In the youngest age cohort (born between 1979 and 1992), whom Corcuff surveyed in 2007, the number of people who saw themselves as *Waishengren* fell to only 38 percent.<sup>12</sup> As the previous chapter has indicated, Mahlon Meyer and I both met individuals who have rejected their paternal mainlander ethnic label and taken up their respective maternal ethnic labels. Of course, as I have made clear, a rejection of the Mainlander ethnicity is not the same as rejecting one's family history. This means that even with the decreasing number of young people who claim an ethnic *Waishengren* identity, the political and social tensions generated by conflicting historical memories in Taiwan will not go away easily.

In the final analysis, it is the negative connotations associated with the *Waishengren* ethnic label that have prevented many young Taiwanese of mainlander descent from openly associating with it. Narrating the mass suffering and social dislocation produced by the Nationalist collapse in 1949 cannot negate the fact that, when they first arrived in Taiwan with the KMT, the mainland exiles were a politically and culturally dominant migrant group in relation to the local peoples. Scott Simon has cogently elucidated a duality that had existed in first-generation *waishengren*: both as displaced refugees from a brutal civil war and overbearing colonizers to the semi-Japanized islanders. This duality threatens the integrity of the victim narrative lying at the heart of the mainlander cultural trauma.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the most relevant question concerning the future of *waishengren* identity and ethnic strife in post-authoritarian Taiwan is this: How can we bring people with dissimilar pasts and incompatible historical memories together?

I now end this book with reflections on my own subject position and research experience in order to discuss the writing of historical trauma with regard to the possibility of facilitating reconciliation between the different communities and nations that are implicated in each other's pain. This discussion has broader implications beyond Taiwan and the relationship between Taiwan and China.

### My Subject Position

At the very beginning of *Remembering China from Taiwan*, Mahlon Meyer describes falling out with a good friend in Taiwan from whom he had

<sup>11</sup> Corcuff's chapter in *ibid.*, 169.   <sup>12</sup> Gao, *Zhonghua linguo*, 153–154.

<sup>13</sup> Simon, "Taiwan's Mainlanders."

sought advice for his book. The friend in question was a respected local journalist. She was also a daughter of mainland refugees who had joined the native Taiwanese camp. After hearing Meyer's proposal for a book that would describe her parents' generation as traumatized survivors of a brutal war in China – as opposed to them being evil colonizers who came to the island to subjugate the innocent locals – she grew quite upset. Meyer stood aghast as his friend stormed out of the meeting, knocking chairs out of the way and vowing never to contact him again. He ended up trekking the streets of Taipei for hours in a deep and soul-searching frame-of-mind, trying to sort out his feelings about his friend, the book, and himself.<sup>14</sup> Still, Meyer considered the project worthwhile because he believed that it could pave the way for Taiwan and China's political integration by reconciling and connecting people with dissimilar backgrounds and memories.

My take on the mainland identity formation and how this identity could facilitate cross-strait unification is very different from Meyer's. From the personal interviews he conducted, Meyer observed in *waishengren* "the beginning of a new sense of being Chinese that would ultimately result in the closer integration of Taiwan and China."<sup>15</sup> Seeing the obvious Taiwanization in the young people of mainland descent, Joshua Fan has refrained from making such a claim. The long-term Taiwanization trend I have illustrated for both the civil war migrants and their Taiwan-born descendants in this book fundamentally challenges this idea. It is true that most *waishengren* still consider themselves "Chinese." But so do many of the native Taiwanese and even some of the aborigines, given the right context. The context being that this identification with China, Chineseness, or Chinese cultural heritage does not require a pledge of political loyalty to the CCP or the PRC. Even if Meyer's position is pushed to the extreme, say, in a scenario where all mainlanders have developed a strong identification with Communist China as a rising superpower (because they feel as if they are constantly being discriminated against in Taiwan), *waishengren* still constitute a minority population (roughly 13 percent) on the island. They are a small constituency in Taiwan's current democratic politics. Their voice alone is not enough to sway the rest of the island.

Despite my disagreement with Meyer over the nature of the mainland identity, the subject he raises, of reconciling people and communities with conflicting memories, is an important one. Memory is not a physical thing to be passed along by people or passed down through generations. It is a social construct shaped by a particular historical trajectory and

<sup>14</sup> Meyer, *Remembering China*, 1–2.   <sup>15</sup> Ibid., 2.

generated by individuals and communities living in a complex web of political circumstances and societal relations. Yet, once generated, certain mnemonic strands – traumatic memories in particular – have tremendous effects on people and societies; sometimes for generations. The intense and unanticipated human emotions Meyer felt when he investigated *waishengren's* history, including his own, which many academics nowadays would prefer to call “affect,” was both real and powerful. Scholars writing about historical traumas face the difficult task of appropriately representing what the late feminist activist and writer Susan Sontag termed “the pain of others.”<sup>16</sup> It becomes especially poignant in the case of narrating mainlander trauma and memory because of first-generation *waishengren's* duality both as refugees and colonizers. This book, which has developed out of my PhD dissertation, has been a very difficult book to write for one important reason: the traumatic experiences I am writing about are not my grandparents' or parents' experiences; rather, they belong to people who had wronged and injured my family.

I was born into a native Taiwanese family of Hoklo and Hakka union in Taichung City, central Taiwan. My parents grew up in households deeply scarred by the 228 Incident. They had, however, chosen to forget what happened and look toward the future. My mom and dad worked hard, saved money, and emigrated to Canada in the 1990s. I left Taichung for Toronto as a young teenager during a time when Taiwan had embarked on its momentous political, social, and cultural transformations under Lee Teng-hui's presidency. None of these earth-shattering changes really meant anything to me back then. Like most young boys, sports and computer games were all I cared about. I had returned to visit family and friends on a few occasions in the years since I left, but my life was in Canada. I paid little attention to what was going on in Taiwan socially, politically, and academically until I returned to the island in 2004 as a history MA student from the University of British Columbia (UBC).

My 2004 trip was a real eye-opener. I was struck hard by culture shock; albeit a much less severe and different version compared to the *waishengren's* long road home. Everything in Taiwan looked so familiar, and yet so foreign. I felt disoriented but strangely exhilarated as the cacophony and exuberance of a young democracy captivated me. Even so, I was also deeply disturbed by the persistently escalating political and ethnic tensions. Conducting research on my MA thesis, which focused on the 228 Incident, I had a crash course on Taiwan's multilayered history of colonialism and migration. My study led to some shocking personal

<sup>16</sup> Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003).

discoveries. I found that my granduncle was among the native Taiwanese elites whom Chiang Kai-shek's armed forces had executed in Yilan County during the 228 massacre. Furthermore, I learned that the Nationalist regime also imprisoned my mother's father on Green Island (綠島) for years in the aftermath of the 228. My maternal grandfather had been a member of the Imperial Japanese Army. He had fought in the Philippines during the Pacific War. The Nationalist authorities arrested him along with many other former Taiwanese veterans in the emperor's army, accusing them of taking up arms against the government during the 228 uprising – something that my *agong* certainly did not do.<sup>17</sup>

These revelations shocked me. I was angry and upset. I confronted my parents about keeping all of this from me. My parents told me that they had done so for the benefit of my sister and me. “You can’t change what happened,” my father said, “and mulling over it won’t help. It’s best to just forget and let go of everything.”

I know I can never blame my parents, my aunts and uncles, or even my grandparents and other senior relatives for not telling me. Decades of enforced silence, even among the dearest ones, attests to the fear – as well as the shame and ignominy – that the political victims’ surviving families had to endure under the Nationalist dictatorship. Even after democratization, my relatives continued to form a wall of reticence to shelter their offspring from this painful past. They only wanted peace, not revenge, and they alone would shoulder the burden – out of love for their children and grandchildren. I respect that tremendously.

Consequently, I directed all of my anger toward the KMT, and toward *waishengren*. This research project was partly driven by a mission to uncover all of the terrible things the mainlanders had done to the native Taiwanese population upon their arrival. Nonetheless, as I learned more about the great exodus and more about the Chinese civil war and the history of Taiwan overall, I began to develop a strong empathy for *waishengren*. Being an immigrant and a “1.5-generation” Taiwanese Canadian who now works in the United States, I know what it feels like to be an outsider, a diasporic subject. I also came to appreciate the fact that my distant ancestors, who had migrated from China to Taiwan during the Qing dynasty, were rapacious colonizers to the island’s original inhabitants. My people, who many now call the “native Taiwanese,” had decimated the local Austronesian communities and cultures via land grab, intermarriage, genocide, and forced assimilation. This learning process was by no means easy; it was gradual, convoluted, ambivalent,

<sup>17</sup> *Agong* is the most commonly used word in Taiwanese Hokkien (*Minnanhua*) to call one’s grandfather.

and unsettling. I was troubled by conflicting emotions and even the occasional bout of depression – things that contributed to several spells of writer’s block. I also became uncertain about the larger meaning of this intellectual project.

Upon completing my PhD degree at UBC, I took up a one-year post-doctoral fellowship in the Institute for Historical Studies at the University of Texas at Austin from 2013 to 2014. The main theme for the Institute that year was trauma. With no teaching and administrative responsibilities, I was able to research broadly on the copious literature concerning trauma and memory from various humanities and social sciences disciplines. Conversations with research fellows there who were working on different traumas in world history also helped me rethink and refocus. My Austin experience contributed greatly to the making of this book. It allowed me not only to envision the theoretical contributions my research could make to the larger transnational scholarships on trauma, memory, and diaspora, but also to contemplate the difficult task of mending fences between mnemonic communities wrapped in the aggrieved, self-righteous, or sublime ambience of their own historical wounds.

### **Writing the Exodus, Writing Trauma: Empathy, Reconciliation, and Justice**

Notwithstanding the divide between the psychoanalytic approach and the sociological approach to historical trauma discussed at the beginning of the book, most scholars agree that bearing witness to human suffering might produce strong reactions/feelings or “affect” in the receiving audience – emotions that have profound political and social consequences. When done repeatedly, monotonically, and ritualistically, trauma witnessing could also desensitize people to violence, turn commemoration into tourism and kitsch, or even create voyeuristic fetishism toward the pain of others. Jeffrey Alexander is right in stating that “The trauma process is a dangerous game. It can lead to utopian heights or to depths of despair,” and that “trauma narratives can trigger significant repairs in the civil fabric. They can also instigate new rounds of social suffering.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, narrating and representing human misery is not something that anyone should take lightly without serious introspection and ethical considerations.

An idea made popular by Cathy Caruth’s psychoanalytic hermeneutics is that trauma has the transcendental power to connect dissimilar individuals, communities, and nations because of its ability to generate empathy and moral conduct; hence cross-cultural understanding, recognition,

<sup>18</sup> Alexander, *Trauma*, 5, 2.

and reconciliation.<sup>19</sup> Even postcolonial critics of Caruth such as Michael Rothberg and Stef Craps, scholars from whom I have drawn theoretical inspiration, do not fundamentally disagree with this idea. What Rothberg and Craps argue against instead, and quite justifiably so in my opinion, is the centrality that has been placed on the Holocaust to serve as either a unique “limit event” that defies normal historical understanding or as a universal symbol of the global human-rights/memory culture.<sup>20</sup> Rothberg in particular proposes that traumatic memories are not necessarily competing for preeminence or recognition, locking in “a zero-sum struggle.” Rather, they could be considered as “multidirectional: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing” among different communities through generations.<sup>21</sup> Rothberg’s empirical work positions France’s post–World War II colonial violence in Algeria and its suppressed memories of the wartime persecution of the Jews in a dialectical and mutually reinforcing relationship. While his case study is meticulously investigated and largely convincing, other efforts to bring together divergent memories of trauma through literature (both literary criticism and creative writing) might not be as successful, particularly works that lack a solid grounding in critical history like Rothberg’s.

One such example is Long Yingtai’s *Big River Big Sea 1949*, the book I start this monograph with. In *Big River*, Long juxtaposes *waishengren*’s great exodus memories with the recollections of the native Taiwanese, Taiwanese aborigines, Germans, Soviets, Americans, Britons, and Australians who had fought on distant battlefields in the mid-twentieth century. What the readers get is a panoramic vista displaying a sea of atrocities and devastations – a view/interpretation devoid of any historical context and analysis. Long ends her book with an emotional plea for historical justice and for cross-cultural empathy. She asks rhetorically: “[C]ould I say that all who have been trampled on, defiled, and scarred by this era are my brothers and sisters?”<sup>22</sup> While the stories she tells are certainly heartrending and her plea is as noble as it is compassionate, what Long has managed to create in *Big River* is an empty universe of human misery in which history itself was the sole culprit, and being born into the wrong time was the main cause of suffering. As a result, despite its popularity and commercial success in Taiwan, *Big River* has provoked a lot of negative responses, especially from the native Taiwanese political and intellectual circles.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Caruth makes this point by analyzing the 1959 French film *Hiroshima mon amour*. Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, chapter 2.

<sup>20</sup> Craps, *Postcolonial Witnessing*, chapter 6. <sup>21</sup> Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Long, *Dajiang dahai*, 355.

<sup>23</sup> One of Long Yingtai’s most vocal critics is Peng Ming min (彭明敏, 1923 ), a highly respected scholar, politician, and Taiwan independence activist. Peng was persecuted by

One could perhaps argue that when the native Taiwanese began to openly voice their shared cultural trauma of the 228 Incident and the White Terror following democratization, it created a fertile ground for the mainlanders, the aborigines, and other suppressed social groups to also articulate their historical injuries. However, the ability to speak out about past grievances does not mean that these mnemonic communities of pain could easily find resonance, inspiration, and solace in one another's experiences. On the contrary, since the end of the Nationalist dictatorship, Taiwan has struggled to come to terms with what cultural studies critic Chen Kuan-Hsing describes as "emotional structures of sentiment." Expanding on the "structures of feeling" thesis proposed by Raymond Williams, Chen argues that the island's entangled pasts have created the "affective material basis" for its contemporary ethnic conflicts.<sup>24</sup> Individuals and groups came forward to express their grief, or what Taiwan locals described as "sadness" (*beiqing* 悲情), in pursuit of identity, self-affirmation, and recognition by others. The process has not resulted in constructive dialogues. People's hearts never truly met, and the stories they told never really resonated with each other, even with the common lingo of trauma. Two major cultural traumas separating two prominent mnemonic communities in democratized Taiwan have been the 228 Incident/White Terror for the descendants of the semi-Japanized native Taiwanese and the great exodus for the descendants of the Chinese civil war exiles.

The ethnic group called "*Waishengren*" might disappear in the future due to the scions of the great exodus's lack of identification with the label. Recently in 2014, the emergence of the "third-force" (第三勢力) political parties, which followed the anti-PRC Sunflower Student Movement and the electoral victory of nonpartisan Taipei mayoral candidate Dr. Ko Wen-je (柯文哲, 1959–), seemed to signal the beginning of a break from the prevailing mainland-Taiwanese divide and the KMT-DPP rivalry.<sup>25</sup> But the incompatible traumatic memories and the victim

the KMT and forced into exile for more than two decades before democratization facilitated his return to Taiwan in the early 1990s. From Peng's perspective, *Big River* did little to repair the historical injuries that the mainlanders had inflicted upon the native Taiwanese. See Peng Ming min, "Cong Long Yingtai zhu 'Dajiang dahai yijiusiji' shuoqi: Taiwan guandian" [Talking about Long Yingtai's *Big River Big Sea 1949*: From Taiwan's viewpoint], *Zizou shibao*, November 8, 2009. <http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/world/paper/349207> [accessed October 28, 2018].

<sup>24</sup> Kuan Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 124.

<sup>25</sup> The Sunflower Student Movement (SSM) was a massive demonstration and an occupy movement launched by a coalition of university students and civil groups in Taiwan on March 18, 2014. The protest aimed to forestall the ratification of the Cross Strait Service Trade Agreement (CSSTA) by the Taiwanese parliament under KMT president Ma

consciousness that permeated the island's "structures of sentiment" will not easily go away without a proper "working through" process. Without such, they could latch on to opposing political and social forces in different shapes and forms, and continue to serve as a basis for electoral mobilization, crude populism, and toxic group politics, particularly in this day and age when internet-based social media have become powerful tools for information production and dissemination, including mnemonic discourses. Serving as a case in point is the political hullabaloo and the vicious interpersonal attacks online between supporters and detractors of Kaohsiung's newly elected KMT mayor Han Kuo-yu (韓國瑜, 1957-) in 2019.

What post-authoritarian Taiwan has experienced is by no means unique. Victim consciousness based on some sort of historical grievances – real or imagined – has become salient in both national and transnational politics since the second half of the twentieth century. Nation states and ethnic groups that once took pride in the triumphs and glories of "the good old days," now immerse in their victimization at the hands of others, or they are compelled to apologize repeatedly and ceremoniously for past transgressions in what Jeffrey Olick calls "the politics of regret."<sup>26</sup> The traumatized subjects, once scorned and pathologized, have gained the unassailable moral high ground and political legitimacy in what Didier Fassin and Richard Rechtman term "the moral economy of trauma" and what Ran Zwigenberg describes as the sanctified "victim-witness ethos" of the current global memory culture.<sup>27</sup>

In most cases, narrating historical trauma leads to a competing victimization that Michael Rothberg argues against. Generated by traumatic memories, negative emotions in people often become a catalyst for inflicting even more trauma. Reflecting on Holocaust memory in the context of contemporary Israeli–Palestinian conflict, Jeffrey Alexander writes:

Ying jeu. The goal of the CSSTA was to further integrate the economies of Taiwan and China. Its ratification incited fear among the general public in Taiwan of China's growing clout in shaping the island's political future. The Sunflower thus gained popular support. It effectively stalled the CSSTA and later that same year influenced the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong. The SSM also changed Taiwan's political landscape, contributing to the rise of influential third force parties such as New Power Party (時代力量) and Social Democratic Party (社會民主黨), as well as the electoral victory of Dr. Ko Wen je, a self professed speaker for the nonpartisan "white power" (白色力量) constituency. For more on these developments, see Kou Mijiang (J. Michael Cole), *Daoyu wu zhanshi: Buyuan miandui de heping jiaxiang* [The convenient illusion of peace: Convergence or conflict in the Taiwan Strait?] (Taipei: Shangzhou, 2016).

<sup>26</sup> Olick, *Politics of Regret*, 13–16.

<sup>27</sup> Fassin and Rechtman, *Empire of Trauma*, 275; Ran Zwigenberg, *Hiroshima: The Origins of Global Memory Culture* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 303.

The tragic trauma drama produces catharsis, but it is not the enlightening pity that Aristotle once described . . . Rather than a universalizing love for the other, what emerges from such trauma work is a more restrictive self love, a feeling that cuts imaginative experience short, encouraging emotional splitting and moral scapegoating.<sup>28</sup>

Scholars taking the sociological approach to trauma like Alexander have thus engaged in the task of debunking these shared memories/identities of pain – exposing them as constructive, selective, instrumentalist, and susceptible to the manipulations of nation states, institutions, and certain interest groups that control the means to media, education, and content production.<sup>29</sup> This task is necessary and important, as some historical grievances are overblown or even fabricated for menacing political purposes. On the flip side, however, debunking does little to facilitate cross-cultural empathy and understanding. Furthermore, treating traumatic social memories mainly as a utilitarian power game can obfuscate, deprecate, or even repudiate the substantive and diachronic conditions of suffering and displacement that had contributed to the making of these human recollections and victim consciousness historically.

In this book, I have drawn attention to *waishengren's* “social traumas” that did not become part of their cultural trauma today. Without an understanding of this ruptured, diasporic, and anachronistic historical trajectory, we cannot fully appreciate why the great exodus memories have become salient for the mainlanders in contemporary Taiwan as opposed to other kinds of their shared recollections. We cannot fathom what narrating the exodus really means for both the elderly exiles and their Taiwan-born descendants. More importantly, although *waishengren's* social memory production has been selective and instrumentalist, each of their three mnemonic regimes has also been a compulsive and therapeutic response to a substantive social trauma. The point is, if we continue to treat social memories only as instrumentalist discourses constructed by nations, social groups, and institutions to be exposed and condemned contemporaneously, but not as genuine products of people's lived experiences through time, we miss the larger and much more complicated human story – the human story that could generate historically informed empathy while maintaining critical distance. The latter is arguably more desirable not only as a basis for passing on judgments or assessing responsibilities in the process of transitional justice, but also for reconciling different communities and nations implicated in each other's pain. Nations, institutions, memorial structures, images, and

<sup>28</sup> Alexander, *Trauma*, 101.

<sup>29</sup> Alexander calls all of these “carrier groups.” Alexander et al., *Cultural Trauma*, 11.

even words themselves do not remember. It is people who remember. Their shared memories could be selective, ahistorical, or even fictitious, but the complex diachronic development that makes people think what they reflect on is true or significant at a certain moment in time is nonetheless real. It is the latter that we need to attempt to understand fully. And when the social memories we try to unravel historically are traumatic memories, we need to proceed with care.

In the course of putting this monograph together, I came across intellectual historian Dominick LaCapra's books on writing and representing the Holocaust. I immediately found resonance in his emphasis on one thing: historians need to be critically reflexive of their own subject positions and emotional transference in relation to the historical traumas they study and write about. This type of self-reflection, rarely performed in traditional historiography, is required to exercise what LaCapra calls "empathic unsettlement." The unsettlement negotiates the polar extremes between detached objectivity and full identification with the traumatized historical subjects. It also problematizes an easy closure or a spiritually uplifting account of traumatic events.<sup>30</sup> Inspired by psychoanalysis but critical of the Caruthian obsession with the unclaimed experience/aporia, LaCapra tries to find the middle ground between two opposing models of academic history: the positivist "documentary/research model" that still constitutes the cornerstone of traditional historiography and the relativist "radical constructivist model" associated with postmodernism.<sup>31</sup> He writes:

[T]he challenge is not to dwell obsessively on trauma as an unclaimed experience that occasions the paradoxical witnessing of the breakdown of witnessing but rather to elaborate a mutually informative, critically questioning relation between memory and reconstruction that keeps one sensitive to the problematics of trauma.<sup>32</sup>

For LaCapra, the key is to distinguish between two modes of narrating historical trauma: the cathartic and repetitive mode of "acting out" and the critical, reflexive, and productive mode of "working through."<sup>33</sup>

Before I read LaCapra, I thought my inner struggle – between continued attachment to my family trauma and growing empathy for an exiled and devastated people who had a hand in producing

<sup>30</sup> For more on "empathic unsettlement," see LaCapra, *Writing History*, xi, 39–42.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>32</sup> Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 183.

<sup>33</sup> For a detailed discussion of the distinction between the two, see LaCapra, *Writing History*, 141–153.

that family trauma – was a conundrum or even a liability. After reading LaCapra, I began to see things in a different light. My subject position and my decision to study “those who wronged us” had serendipitously allowed for an “empathic unsettlement” that went in two different directions – something I would venture to call “multidirectional empathicunsettlements” with reference to both LaCapra and Michael Rothberg. First, instead of being bogged down by the emotional weight of great exodus memories and becoming a surrogate speaker for the mainlanders – hence operating in a cathartic and unmodulated “acting out” mode – I began my investigation being rather unsympathetic and skeptical of *waishengren*’s trauma. This is understandable, given my personal background stated earlier. Rather than documenting and promoting their sad stories told at the present time, I went into the archives trying to understand what exactly happened in the past. After nearly a decade of research and internal conflict, I gradually developed a mediated and historically informed empathy for *waishengren*. Second, moving in the opposite direction, the knowledge and perspective I gained helped moderate my feelings of resentment, and slowly but surely created some kind of critical distance from the fidelity to my own family trauma. When all is said and done, researching *waishengren* and writing this book have constituted a personal “working through” process in these two complementary directions.

“Working through” is not about reaching a happy ending or finding transcendence. It is not about bestowing some redemptive, sublime, or ultimate meanings to trauma so one can finally put everything behind oneself. There is no sense of a definite closure, no enlightening epiphany. Neither is there much about the universality of human suffering that would automatically bring aggrieved peoples, nations, and cultures together. For me, having intimate knowledge of *waishengren*’s traumatic and diasporic history does not change the fact that their forced migration victimized and displaced my forebears. That said, the “multidirectional empathicunsettlements” I experienced do afford me with a strong countervailing perspective against the powerful affect of vicarious traumatization. They do allow me to develop a certain degree of compassion for the people who had once done great harm to my family.

Intellectuals in Taiwan, such as the aforementioned Chen Kuan-Hsing, have called for recognizing divergent experiences of pain in order to bridge the gaps among incompatible mnemonic communities.<sup>34</sup> Sociologist

<sup>34</sup> Chen, *Asia as Method*, 156.

Wang Horng-luen argues that juxtaposing and acknowledging different ordeals in history – a strategy he calls “com-passion” – can promote “love” for the others.<sup>35</sup> While these propositions are laudable ethically, they continue to put too much faith in the emotive and transcendental power of trauma to unite.

Human emotional responses to witnessing trauma are hard to predict. Narrating and representing traumatic memories, either directly via graphic portrayals of human suffering or indirectly via the Caruthian aporia, does not always generate the sentiment conducive to transcultural compassion and understanding. Mnemonic communities of resentment cannot simply identify with the pain of others, especially when their own perceived pain is caused by these others, such as the case of the native Taiwanese toward the mainlanders. In the final analysis, I argue that a boundary-crossing “working through” process grounded in critical historiography that could elicit the “multidirectional empathicunsettlements” I have experienced will provide a viable modality of facilitating genuine and long-lasting reconciliations among aggrieved parties with an entangled history of pain.

In proposing this modality, my intention is not to valorize the magnanimity of my boundary-crossing experience as a descendant of political victims holding out an olive branch to the perpetrators and their descendants. Being related to the victims does not give one an air of sanctity, or a special right to speak for them and to speak on any matter concerning trauma. By the same token, being related to the perpetrators does not mean one has to live with an original sin and spend one’s life apologizing or making amends. Rather, I see the boundary-crossing modality I propose as an ethical responsibility that is fundamental to the studying and writing of historical traumas, particularly for those who did not actually experience them. As LaCapra opines, those of us who have the good fortune to be “born later” in better times are subjected to a different ethical demand compared to our predecessors who did live through atrocity, persecution, and displacement.<sup>36</sup> We have to realize that even the ordeals suffered by our dearest are never our own. The affect created by secondary witnessing and vicarious traumatization can be powerful, upsetting, and sometimes enraging, but it will never be as powerful as the real traumatic events.<sup>37</sup> Thus, for scholars, writers, artists, filmmakers,

<sup>35</sup> Horng luen Wang, “Comparison for *Com passion*: Exploring the Structures of Feeling in East Asia,” in *Comparatizing Taiwan*, ed. Shu mei Shih and Ping hui Liao (New York: Routledge, 2015), 72–74.

<sup>36</sup> LaCapra, *Writing History*, 146.

<sup>37</sup> My idea here has something in common with Marianne Hirsch’s concept of the “post memory generation” trying “to find the delicate balance between identification and distance.” Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 20.

and online content creators engaging in researching and recreating historical traumas, there is a moral obligation not to wallow perpetually in their own miseries and to transcend the existing lines of division. History is not a panacea for curing historical traumas. Yet, the possibility of finding empathy, reconciliation, and an approach to transitional justice agreeable to communities and nations torn apart by painful memories arises from a historically informed understanding that puts these memories in proper perspective.

Multidirectional empathic unsettlements have universal applications beyond just Taiwan and China; could this modality lead to some form of reconciliation or political settlement between the two? It could, but only in theory. It remains theoretical because the PRC continues to be a single-party dictatorship that suppresses free speech. The kind of critical historiography and boundary-crossing dialogues I propose simply cannot be carried out in China. The “War of Liberation” historiography and Taiwan have both been highly politicized issues in the mainland. The interpretation of the Chinese civil war and the great divide in 1949 is closely tied to the political legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party at its core. This ensures that the range of research, writing, and public conversations allowed on the subject is rather limited. Diana Lary writes, “How to handle the history of the Civil War is sensitive, so much so that at an official level it remains a dark hole. The war brought the CCP to power, where it remains, after 65 years, but it had little glory about it.”<sup>38</sup> Also in China, the self-inflicted pain, or Chinese-on-Chinese violence – something that Michael Berry describes as the “centrifugal trauma” – has been very difficult to acknowledge, let alone being worked through compared to the “centripetal trauma” caused by foreign imperialists.<sup>39</sup> Lary suggests that two particular periods of China’s modern history are often “passed over” by individuals and families in silence: “the Civil War and the Cultural Revolution.”<sup>40</sup>

One important reason for the inability of average PRC citizens to reflect critically on the traumas produced by their own government and the traumas they had inflicted on one another is how the Chinese state manipulated historical memory to bolster its political legitimacy. Taiwan lies at the heart of this manipulation. As Zheng Wang has demonstrated, the Beijing authorities made political unification with the island a vital component of the country’s patriotic education in the wake of the Tiananmen Square Massacre.<sup>41</sup> This nationalistic pedagogy is based on

<sup>38</sup> Lary, *China’s Civil War*, 245.   <sup>39</sup> Berry, *History of Pain*, 5–7, 20.

<sup>40</sup> Lary, *China’s Civil War*, 15.

<sup>41</sup> Zheng Wang, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 131–132.

the centripetal cultural trauma of colonialism. Like the retrocessions of Hong Kong and Macao, the drive to incorporate Taiwan is an integral part of the PRC's powerful victim consciousness. The consciousness is encapsulated in a well-known phrase called the “century of humiliation” (百年国耻), which refers to a century's worth of time from roughly 1839 to 1949 when China was invaded and carved up like a melon by foreign powers. Reclaiming Taiwan, a breakaway province, due to the sinister machinations of the Japanese and American imperialists, is a sacred mission to right the past wrongs in defense of China's national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The state-sponsored mnemonic community of pain in contemporary China that aspires to aggressive irredentism has thus developed alongside the divergent mnemonic communities of pain in democratized Taiwan that seek local identity, self-affirmation, and self-determination. This is despite the booming cross-strait trade and exchange during the past three decades. Syaru Shirley Lin argues, “In fact, the more Taiwan has integrated with China socially and economically, the more consolidated Taiwanese identity has become.”<sup>42</sup> The mainlander identity centered on the great exodus memories that I have examined in this book is an integral part of this Taiwanese identity. While incompatible social memories held by different communities in Taiwan could continue to produce ethnic, political, and social tensions on the island, the conflicting memories between Taiwan and China could be a potential source for war. This war could mean a direct confrontation between the PRC and the United States, the main guarantor of peace in the region. With its vast industrial power and rapidly expanding global reach via state-sponsored programs, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the Belt and Road Initiative, China is fast becoming a titan – not only economically and technologically but also militarily. Under its current leader President Xi Jinping, the country has exhibited an alarmingly expansionist tendency fueled by a determination to wash off its historical shame, a tendency that is emphatically articulated by Xi's grandiose vision of the “Chinese Dream” (中国梦).

Since economic integration has not been able to bring people in Taiwan closer to China or to make the Chinese side more agreeable to Taiwan independence, multidirectional empathicunsettlements could perhaps create a basis for some meaningful dialogues. Regrettably, this kind of cross-strait exchange exists only in theory, or I should say, in a land of fantasy. In 2009, when I started this project, the CCP authorities banned Long Yingtai's *Big River Big Sea 1949* as they commemorated the sixtieth

<sup>42</sup> Syaru Shirley Lin, *Taiwan's China Dilemma*, 210.

anniversary of their predecessors' glorious victory. A decade later, as I was anxiously following the protests in Hong Kong and completing the revisions for this book, just weeks before the massive military parade in Beijing on October 1, 2019, to celebrate the PRC's seventieth birthday, it remains difficult to speak or write freely about the Chinese civil war in China.

President Xi and his officials will certainly continue to assert China's rightful claim to Taiwan regardless of what people living on the island actually think or want. For most of the PRC citizens, decades of state indoctrination has turned unification with Taiwan into a highly emotional issue, so much so that going back on it will seriously undermine the ruling legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party. The CCP has thus constructed an ideological iron cage that it cannot escape from. Consequently, besides dangling economic incentives, the Chinese authorities will continue to employ coercive means to bring Taiwan into the fold on China's terms. These include the threat of military invasion, diplomatic isolation, and election meddling via sponsoring pro-China candidates. These strategies have recently been combined with the spreading of fake news via social media to shape public opinions and undermine the island's democratic system. China's aggressive measures have thus far been counterproductive, though. They caused suspicion, anxiety, and fear in a majority of people in Taiwan, who, despite their emotional dispute over memory and history, are determined to safeguard their country and their democracy against the PRC.

Trauma begets more trauma. It is a vicious cycle. In a sense, the people in contemporary Taiwan, who have done absolutely nothing to injure the present population of China, are paying for the sins of Western and Japanese colonizers from a distant past; so are the Uighurs, the Tibetans, the Hong Kongese, and other suppressed groups in the PRC who have suffered in grimmer fashions – all in the name of “making China great again.” Only nations, communities, and individuals that can break out of their own aggrieved and self-righteous cocoons can end the cycle and come to know the true meanings of empathy, reconciliation, and justice. Only when “the rivers and the seas of 1949” are allowed to flow freely in China, can the “Chinese Dream” be truly great.

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