

# Why Taiwan Matters

## Small Island, Global Powerhouse

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(2011)

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS, INC.  
*Lanham • Boulder • New York • Toronto • Plymouth, UK*

that Taipei and Beijing are destined to fight. Taiwan's people have shown themselves willing to accept a diminished status if doing so will allow them to continue to enjoy de facto independence—including a democratic political system. It is not their first choice, but it is a compromise most can live with, so long as they can be, for themselves, the end, and not the means.

A harder question to answer is whether the People's Republic of China will make a similar compromise by relinquishing its demand for effective sovereignty over Taiwan in exchange for a peaceful, stable, and cooperative relationship between the two sides—including a promise that Taiwan will not challenge China's ultimate claim. If the two sides can build such a relationship and avoid conflict, their economic and political systems might someday converge, creating an opportunity for mutually acceptable political integration. But that is a process that cannot be rushed. In the meantime, it is enough to "preserve the way things are now."

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# Building Taiwan

Cold, misty rain is falling but the ground is boiling under the feet of twenty third graders milling around a platform on Seven Stars Mountain. They are less than an hour's drive from their elementary school on the opposite slope of the basin cradling Taipei City, but they might imagine they are on another planet. Above them, peaks cloaked in head-high grasses disappear into the clouds; at 2,624 feet above sea level, the children are above the tree line, but the mountain towers over them. They hold their noses and squint into billows of sulfurous steam hissing out of yellowed crevasses in the heat-softened mountainside. Squatting to warm their hands at the edge of the massive fumarole—a volcanic vent that releases heat, gas, and minerals from deep within the earth—these Taiwanese schoolchildren can feel their island home exhaling.

Taiwan is a link in the chain of volcanic islands known as the Pacific Ring of Fire, and here at the fumarole that geologic fact impresses itself on all five senses. Volcanic eruptions and their aftereffects built an island of fourteen thousand square miles (thirty-six thousand square km), about the size of Maryland and Delaware combined. Shaped like a leaf, Taiwan is dominated by high, rugged mountains. Its tallest peak, Mount Jade, towers more than thirteen thousand feet above sea level. The earth's restless activity continues to reshape the landscape. An earthquake in September 1999 sliced the tops off some mountains and thrust others up. The summit of Mount Jade vaulted several meters in the 1999 quake.

Except for the Taipei basin and neighboring alluvial plains, mountainous terrain dominates the island's north, east, and center. The rugged mountains create countless distinct ecological zones, giving Taiwan extraordinary biodiversity, including 338 bird species and more than 400 butterfly species.

In sections of the northeast coast, stone cliffs fall more than three thousand feet, their descent from mountain peaks to the Pacific Ocean broken only by a narrow notch where engineers blasted a road into the rock face in the 1920s. Southeastern Taiwan has a narrow rift valley, beautiful and fertile, but remote from population centers. That leaves the island's broad western plain as the homeland for almost 90 percent of Taiwan's 23 million people, making it one of the world's most densely populated places.

The Tropic of Cancer cuts through Taiwan, and the climate and vegetation are just what one would expect on a tropical island. Despite the dense human settlement, with endless apartment blocks, miles of asphalt highways, and massive landfills full of plastic refuse, nature is rarely far away. Urban neighborhoods end abruptly at near-vertical mountainsides thick with forests; trees grow from rooftops and sprouts erupt from cracked pavement. Debris left along the roads—including wrecked cars and motorcycles—quickly disappears under tangles of vines. On Roosevelt Road in downtown Taipei, a house has been built around an enormous tree. The tree begins in the sidewalk, grows through the house, and spreads its canopy over a rooftop terrace. At Kaohsiung City's Sun Yat-sen University, students must lock their dorm room windows to keep food-stealing monkeys from the nearby jungle from breaking in.

Given this verdant land, it is no surprise that agriculture has thrived in Taiwan for centuries. As early as the 1600s, Taiwan was exporting rice, sugar, and indigo-dyed cloth to mainland China. According to early nineteenth-century reports, Xiamen (Amoy), Fujian province's largest city, depended on Taiwanese rice for most of its food supply. The island is less well-endowed when it comes to the natural resources needed for modern industry. In the seventeenth century, explorers from China collected sulfur from the Taipei basin fumaroles to manufacture gunpowder, and the Japanese colonial government that ruled Taiwan in the early twentieth century placed a high value on its massive camphor trees, but the island's lack of fossil fuel and ore deposits forces Taiwanese to rely on imports for industrial raw materials.

Water can be a problem, too. Taiwan has ample rainfall, but much of it comes in heavy storms and the sharp changes in elevation make flash floods, runoff, and erosion a challenge. Visitors often puzzle over the tiny streams trickling through wide, rocky riverbeds. During a summer afternoon storm or one of Taiwan's violent typhoons, these waterways become dangerous torrents; in 2009, Typhoon Morakot dumped more than one hundred inches of rain on parts of Taiwan in just four days. Even with hundreds of dams channeling water into reservoirs, hydroelectric plants, and irrigation facilities, maintaining a consistent flow is a constant challenge. Summer water shortages have become the norm, especially in southern Taiwan.

In addition to the main island, which lies about 75 miles (120 kilometers) off mainland China's southeastern coast, Taiwan's political jurisdiction extends to numerous smaller islands. The largest island group is the Penghu Islands (Pescadores), halfway between western Taiwan and the mainland. Off the east coast lie Orchid Island and Green Island, which once sported a prison where political dissidents were locked away. Nested near the mainland coast are two heavily militarized "frontline islands," Jinmen (Quemoy) and Mazu (Matsu). In the 1950s, Taiwanese forces on Jinmen and Mazu exchanged fire with their counterparts on the mainland; eventually the Chinese Communist troops settled into a pattern of shell-launch propaganda messages encouraging resistance to the Communist Party; they blasted away with loudspeakers and lofted balloons laden with anti-Communist messages into westbound winds. But relations have improved in recent years. In 2001, Taiwan opened direct travel links between Jinmen and Mazu and mainland China, making the frontline islands the first Taiwanese in half a century to travel directly from one side to the other. The north-south mountain spine and shortage of navigable east-west rivers make overland transportation difficult, and the island's population is clustered near its coasts, so Taiwan's culture has a strong maritime flavor. Most of the island's major cities—past (Tainan, Lukang, Tamsui) and present (Kaohsiung, Taichung, Keelung, Hualien)—are ports. Taiwan's position on the trade routes connecting Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia gives it a critical role in global shipping and it is an important player in the international fishing industry and its regulatory organizations. Taiwanese boats take about 1.3 percent of the global tuna catch, for example. Even religion reveals this maritime orientation: Taiwan's largest popular religious sect is the cult of Mazu, the patron deity of seafarers. Mazu was born in Fujian province in 960; she became a deity when she was credited with miraculous rescues at sea.

## EARLY SETTLEMENT

The sea also brought Taiwan its human inhabitants, beginning with the ancestors of the island's Austronesian people. Today's Austronesians can be traced to Austronesian-speaking settlers who began living in Taiwan about four thousand years ago. Over the centuries, these early islanders developed distinct languages and cultures. Taiwan's government recognizes twelve groups: Atayal, Amis, Bunun, Kavalan, Paiwan, Pingpu, Puyuma, Rukai, Saisiyat, Tao, Thao, and Tsou. The earliest Austronesian settlements were located in the coastal plains, but some Austronesian groups adapted to life in the high mountains. The arts and culture of the different groups reflect

their economic and social conditions. The east-coast Bunun and Amis communities are famous for polyphonic choral singing to celebrate harvests, while the mountain-dwelling Paiwan are known for carving wild boars and "thousand pacer" snakes into slate and wood ("thousand paces" because if one bites you, you can walk a thousand paces before you die). The Atayals are famous for hunting and warfare; their distinctive facial tattoos celebrated success killing animals—and men. The Tao, the Austronesian occupants of Orchid Island, carve magnificent seagoing canoes to catch flying fish. Approximately 450,000 Austronesian people live in Taiwan today, most in urban areas. The tribal groups continue to struggle for legal recognition, environmental protection, and the restoration of their ancestral lands.

Austronesian individuals often face discrimination and prejudice. In 1544, a Portuguese vessel passed by Taiwan, and one of its passengers called it "Ilha Formosa," beautiful island. The sailors recorded the remark in their ship's log, giving the island the name by which the West has known it ever since. As exploration gave way to trade and colonization, Europeans took note of Formosa's location on trade routes, near (but not yet occupied by) China and Japan. In 1623, Dutch traders established a settlement at Anping, near present-day Tainan, on the southwest coast. Under the protection of Fort Zeelandia and Fort Provintia, the Dutch East India Company set about building a commercial colony in southern Taiwan, exporting deer meat and skins bartered from Austronesian hunters as well as rice and sugar—arcane raised by migrants from the Chinese mainland.

Three years later, Spanish settlers took up residence in the northern part of the island, establishing Fort San Salvador at Keelung in 1626 and Fort San Domingo at Tamsui in 1628. (The Chinese called San Domingo the Red Hair Fort in honor of the Europeans' exotic appearance. At least it wasn't Fort Big Nose, another Chinese slang term for Europeans.) The European settlements coexisted for over a decade. In 1638 the Spanish abandoned the Red Hair Fort; the Dutch later built their own fort on the site. Four years later, Dutch forces teamed up with Austronesian fighters to drive the Spanish out of Keelung, leaving the Dutch East India Company as the sole authority on Taiwan.

A major challenge for Taiwan's European and Chinese residents was the extreme difficulty of north-south navigation. Taiwan's west coast has only two natural harbors, Kaohsiung in the far south and Tamsui in the far north. The Taiwan Strait is shallow and stormy. Approaches to the island from the west are difficult, with innumerable constantly shifting shoals and islands. The island's rivers are impossible to navigate except in very small boats. Chinese plied coastal waters in small flat-bottomed junks with retractable rudders, but even these craft ran aground frequently, leaving seagoing bamboo rafts with extremely shallow draft to ferry cargo to shore while the junks moored outside the hazardous shoals.

Prior to the Europeans' arrival, a few Chinese already were using Taiwan as a base for fishing, smuggling, and piracy. When the Dutch and Spanish constructed forts and began-trading with local hunters and farmers the pace of Chinese settlement accelerated. Under the protection of the European settlements, Taiwan began to look like a good option for poor farmers in crowded Fujian. The Dutch opened farmland and provided some education and order. They retained ownership of the land but allowed Chinese farmers considerable autonomy and local self-government. Although most early migrants probably did not intend to settle permanently on the island—few brought wives with them—it was not long before permanent settlements sprang up.

By the mid-1600s, Taiwan had several significant Chinese towns populated by three distinct groups. Most settlers were Hokkien-speakers from the Quanzhou and Zhangzhou regions of Fujian. Their origins and dialects were similar, but not similar enough to keep the two groups from seeing one another as competitors, at times even enemies. More different yet were the Hakka, a Chinese minority scattered throughout southern China. Hakka, many of whom had been forcibly transported from Guangzhou province to Taiwan, tended to settle in fortified villages in hard-to-reach areas near the mountains; they frequently clashed with Hokkien and Austronesian neighbors.

Hokkien-Austronesian relations were tense as well. Over time, Chinese settlements displaced or absorbed many of the Austronesian communities in the western plain. Some Austronesian people moved into the mountains to avoid extinction, and communities in the far south and east retained more of their traditional cultures and identities. The Dutch encouraged these interethnic conflicts; in particular, they used Austronesian people as fighters to put down Hokkien revolts. The casualty count in the largest of these, a rebellion in Tainan in 1650, was eight thousand.

The sources of conflict were many. Dutch and Spanish divide-and-conquer tactics, economic competition, ethnic rivalry, and land disputes. Over time, some of these disputes ripened into full-on feuds, with adjacent villages carrying on vendettas for generations, long after the original causes were forgotten. In one coastal city, clan rivalries played out in a bloody—but all-in-good-fun—annual ritual: the Lukang Rock Fight. Every year until the mid-twentieth century, the men of Lukang would gather outside town on a spring day, line up with their kinsmen and throw rocks at the other clans. When the supply of rocks dwindled, the combatants closed in for hand-to-hand fighting with sticks and fists. Women, children, and the aged stood around the fringes of the mayhem cheering their favorites and snacking on street food. An anthropologist who visited Lukang inquired about the motivation for the fight, only to learn that townspeople were "superstitious" in the old days. They thought a little bloodshed around the

New Year would bring good luck. And anyway, no one ever died, so what was the harm?

The seventeenth-century European demand for labor and export goods attracted Chinese migrants to Taiwan's shores. At the same time, deteriorating conditions on the mainland propelled Chinese out of Fujian. When severe famine hit the province in the 1620s, the warlord Zheng Zhilong suggested to the governor that he pay farmers to migrate to Taiwan. Zheng was the boss of a pirate fleet whose ships patrolled the sea from Japan to Vietnam. When the Dutch expelled him from his base in Taiwan, Zheng put his pirate armada in the service of the Ming empire, earning the title "Admiral of the Coastal Sea." Zheng Zhilong's son Zheng Chenggong also earned an honorary surname from the Ming emperor, leading to his nickname "Guoxingye" or "the old man with the national surname." Rendered as "Koxinga," that nickname provided the moniker under which Zheng Chenggong is known to Western historians.

Zheng Zhilong, perhaps revealing his pirate instincts, betrayed his Ming patron during the Manchu invasion that overthrew the Ming Dynasty in 1644. He allowed the Manchus to enter his territory without resistance. His son, however, remained loyal to the Ming. In 1659, Zheng Chenggong led troops on the mainland against the young Qing Dynasty. When the venture failed, he withdrew to Taiwan, and in 1661 drove the Dutch off the island. He vowed to fight on and restore the Ming.

Zheng's actions made him a hero to Chinese nationalists three centuries later. Some credit him with leading an anti-imperialist struggle, while others lionize Zheng for holding out against what he saw as an illegitimate government. Others view him as an opportunist. In any case, the two decades when Zheng and his descendants governed Taiwan was a period of relative prosperity. The Zhengs promoted agricultural development and continued the Dutch policy of keeping most farmland in government hands. Between battles they kept their soldiers busy opening new areas to farming. They also promoted education and Confucian ritual—the first concentrated effort to bring Chinese elite culture to Taiwan. The Zheng family's effort to keep the Ming Dynasty alive was long remembered but short-lived: in 1683, the Qing admiral Shi Lang defeated Ming-loyalist forces led by Zheng Chenggong's grandson. For the first time in history, a government seated in the mainland capital had secured effective control over Taiwan.

## THE QING DYNASTY

The Qing empire incorporated Taiwan as a prefecture within Fujian Province. The island's lowly status reflected its marginal position in the empire, as a "place beyond civilization." Inhabited by Austronesians and rough-

and-ready Chinese of questionable loyalty and limited economic value, Taiwan received little attention from the Manchu court—except when there was trouble. But trouble was frequent: a Qing-era proverb says of Taiwan, "There is a major rebellion every five years, a minor rebellion every three." Conflict among the various groups on the island continued, and as the Chinese population grew, new sources of antagonism—such as competition between clans and lineages—emerged. The Qing tried to restrict migration to the island, but the Chinese population grew steadily. Trade was also controlled—for much of the Qing period, the law permitted vessels to cross at only one location, Xiamen to Tainan—but enforcing this restriction was difficult.

As one Taiwanese historian has written, the Qing governed Taiwan "pre-ventively, indirectly and incompletely." Its main concern was not to direct the course of Taiwan's development or provide administrative benefits comparable to those on the mainland, but simply to suppress rebellions before they could threaten Qing control, and even this was difficult. In one illustrative (but not unique) example, a loosely organized group calling itself the Heaven and Earth Society carried out a series of violent revolts in central Taiwan in the 1700s and 1800s. The group slaughtered one city's entire cadre of Qing officials in 1787, then murdered their replacements eight years later. In the 1860s, a new Heaven and Earth Society was killing officials in the same region.

Taiwan's economy flourished under the Qing's light hand. By the mid-1700s, the island was exporting rice and sugar in quantity. In 1719, a huge water works project sponsored by a Quanzhou merchant began carrying water from the Choshui River to irrigate a massive section of central Taiwan. Irrigation opened the Changhua plain for intensive rice cultivation, making the region a key source of rice imports to Fujian. Rice, sugar and tea, indigo-dyed cloth, preserved fish and timber—all these products flowed west to the mainland. More complex manufactures made the return trip. As exports increased and prosperity grew, Taiwan became home to merchants, tradespeople and guilds, but the society remained predominantly agricultural, structured around a chain of relatively isolated settlements that often enjoyed stronger links to the mainland than to their northern and southern neighbors on the island.

The nineteenth century again brought Europeans to China's shores, but these visitors were different from the Spanish and Dutch traders two centuries earlier. They were not satisfied to perch on unwanted spits of land, conducting small-scale trade with willing partners. The foreigners who came to China in the 1800s—Britons, Americans, Germans, French, even Japanese—were more assertive in their demands. When the Qing court rejected their requests to trade, the British forced their way in, bartering opium grown in their South Asian colonies for Chinese tea and porcelain.

In the 1840s and 1850s, Great Britain and China fought two wars over trade. In defeat, China was forced to open its markets and turn over territory—including Hong Kong—to the British. In a practice called “most favored nation status,” other foreign powers were guaranteed the same access to the Chinese market that Britain enjoyed. Britain also demanded reparations—cash payments to compensate its losses in the war. To ensure they would be paid, the British took over tariff collection from the Qing. Perched on a high cliff above the mouth of the Kaohsiung harbor is a graceful brick building: the British consulate. The building (the last in a series of increasingly grand structures housing the consulate) has a commanding view of the harbor. The good views allowed a succession of late-nineteenth-century British officials to track maritime traffic and assess taxes on trade. As in the rest of China, the British first paid themselves their reparations then forwarded what was left to the Qing court. Today the consulate houses a popular teahouse; its terraces are perfect for watching container ships steaming off into splendid sunsets. Another popular feature is the dungeon—a maze of rooms and passages just high enough for children to wander upright. Today the basement rooms are dry and well lit, but they carry whispers of a harder time when Taiwanese and Chinese traders who ran afoul of the British were locked away in a dank, cramped labyrinth. A similar building—with a similar coffee shop and a similar history—stands above downtown Tamsui, nineteenth-century Taiwan’s major northern port.

The influx of Western economic and military power exacerbated domestic problems brewing in Qing China. Rebellions devastated large sections of the country. The worst of these was the Taiping Rebellion. It scorched China’s Yangtze River region in the 1850s and 1860s and caused between 20 and 30 million deaths as well as massive economic destruction. To defend the empire against these threats, the Qing court was forced to give local military leaders unprecedented power and autonomy—including the right to collect taxes. Liberated from the central government’s fiscal control, some became warlords, laws unto themselves in vast regions of what was nominally Qing territory. The court’s hold on power grew ever more tenuous, even as it upgraded Taiwan’s status to a province in 1885 in the hope of promoting modernization and a more effective defense.

Just outside its borders, the Qing faced threats from Japan and on the Korean peninsula. Korea had long been under Chinese influence, but Japan’s newly installed Meiji government was bent on modernizing that country, including its military forces, and expanding its influence. Korea was the venue for a series of skirmishes between the declining Qing and rising Meiji in the 1870s and 1880s; in 1894, the smoldering conflict erupted into a full-scale war. China’s military was fragmented and exhausted; it proved no match for Japan’s modern forces. Among the spoils Japan demanded to end

the war were cash reparations, access to trade, the Liaodong Peninsula—and the island of Taiwan.

## THE EMPIRE OF JAPAN

On April 17, 1895, Chinese representatives signed the Treaty of Shimonoseki, ceding Taiwan to the empire of Japan. Acquiring colonies was a crucial element in Meiji Japan’s strategy of defensive modernization. Japan was desperate to prove to the West that it was a modern state—a colonizer, not a territory eligible for colonization by others. Taiwan was not Japan’s only colony, but it had a special purpose in the empire. It was to be a model colony, a massive demonstration project where the Meiji state would show off its military, economic, and administrative prowess. It also gave Japan unprecedented access to mainland China.

For Taiwanese, colonization brought a mixture of benefits and losses. Its model colony status made it a target for all sorts of development projects. To make Taiwan a more efficient and productive source of agricultural exports, the Japanese built an extensive transportation infrastructure, including a railroad along the western plain that connected the island from north to south for the first time. The island’s first modern industries were agricultural processing businesses developed under Japanese rule. The Japanese also built roads, power plants, an electric power grid, irrigation projects, and dams. By the end of the colonial era, 58 percent of the adult population was literate in Japanese, and three-fourths of school-aged children attended school. Colonial authorities implemented detailed city plans for Kaohsiung and Taipei. To this day, the broad, tree-lined avenues, majestic traffic circles and charming parks in the two cities’ old downtowns are a welcome contrast to the cramped, narrow streets of Taiwan’s other cities—towns where Japanese urban planners never ventured.

One of the toughest challenges for the colonial government was subduing the Austronesian peoples. The Qing had never asserted its authority beyond the western plain, but the Japanese were determined to bring the entire island under central authority. Some of Taiwan’s most valuable resources—including camphor trees, which supply a chemical used in medicine and other products—were found in the high-altitude forests where the least assimilated Austronesian groups lived. Japanese historical records document a long and violent struggle between Austronesian fighters and Japanese soldiers and police. The Japanese used warships, poison gas, and aircraft as well as conventional military methods (including divide-and-rule political tactics) to bring the groups under government control. They drew a boundary around the Austronesian areas and forbade non-Austronesian Taiwanese to enter. Japanese troops were dispatched into this “reservation”

to subdue Austronesian communities—especially Atayal and Bunun—and resettle them in villages near police stations where they could be monitored and controlled.

Resettlement profoundly disrupted the Austronesian people's economic, social, and religious life. It tore them away from villages, hunting grounds, and sacred sites. They were often forced to labor for Japanese firms for meager wages, and when the police confiscated their hunting rifles, life became even grimmer. Some Austronesian communities fought back; in 1930, a group of Atayal killed 134 Japanese at an athletic meet. The Japanese responded with a force of more than 2,000 men. The Atayal rebels and their families were wiped out; those who survived the Japanese reprisals committed mass suicide. Their leader, Mona Rudao, a sophisticated man who had visited Japan in 1911, went deep into the forest to die, hoping to prevent the Japanese from taking his head as a trophy. Three years later, Japanese stumbled across what they believed was his skeleton. As he had feared, the remains were displayed before the public; it was not until 1974 that Mona Rudao's bones were returned to the Atayal people.

Managing the Chinese-speaking population posed a different set of challenges. As Japan and China were preparing to sign the Treaty of Shimonoseki, a handful of Taiwanese tried to fend off Japanese colonial rule by setting up a "Republic of Formosa"—a Taiwanese state independent of both China and Japan. They failed, but their failure did not end local resistance to Japanese control. The familiar pattern of rebellions, uprisings, and local conflicts continued. The Japanese borrowed the Qing strategy (called the *baojia* system) of grouping ten or so households into a ward (*bao*), and every ten or so wards into a larger administrative unit (*jia*). Each ward was responsible for the actions of its member households, and households were responsible for the individuals within them. Goto Shimpei, a deputy governor who designed many Japanese colonial institutions, took his cues from the *Complete Book on Benevolence*, a Chinese classic describing the operation of the *baojia* system. He had the book translated into Japanese and its principles written into legislation. The *baojia* system handled civic education, law enforcement, surveillance, and even militia functions for the Japanese colonial administration. Unlike their Qing-era counterparts, Japanese officials made sure not to let local elites gain control of the system for their own purposes. By 1902, Taiwanese resistance to Japanese control had evaporated.

The heads of *bao* and *jia* were elected. Over time, Taiwanese participation in local governance increased; by the 1930s, property-owning Taiwanese were electing representatives to local councils whose powers, while limited, were real: they reviewed local budgets and kept an eye on local administrators. In 1920, the colonial administration set up assemblies throughout Taiwan to advise local executives. Although the members were appointed—

and most were Japanese colonists—the assemblies did give Taiwanese some voice in local decision making. In 1921, the governor appointed nine Taiwanese to his own personal consultative council.

A decade later the Japanese government decided to allow Taiwanese to partially elect the advisory assemblies. The electoral process used a single-vote system in multimember districts, so that in a six-seat district, each voter would choose one candidate, and the top six vote-getters would be elected. These rules are still used in Taiwanese local council elections today. The purpose of the reforms was political: they were designed to encourage Taiwanese to identify with Japan and give up any residual loyalty to China—a goal made more urgent by Japan's decision to invade China in the early 1930s. There was never any question that real power belonged to the governor-general, who answered only to Tokyo. Whatever rights the Taiwanese enjoyed were subject to his approval and could be revoked at any time.

As of 1935, there were 172 members in Taiwan's assemblies: 109 Japanese (49 of them elected) and 63 Taiwanese (37 elected). Although the franchise was limited (fewer than 5 percent of Taiwanese were eligible to vote above the *baojia* level) and elected officials had only advisory authority, Taiwan's early elections were meaningful. They helped quell the demand for self-government among Taiwanese, they focused attention on local issues, and they encouraged local elites to emphasize electoral competition rather than banding together against the Japanese. In the long run, they also built a foundation of political participation among Taiwanese. By 1939, almost 300,000 Taiwanese were registered to vote, and more than 3,000 had been elected to public office. The American diplomat George Kerr later wrote, "The Formosans . . . were becoming familiar with all the devices of political campaigns and electioneering . . . elements of training and experience that ultimately were to form a frame of reference for future (post-Surrender) demands and expectations."

The colonial regime's social and cultural policies toward the island's Chinese-speaking majority reflected Japan's ambivalent attitude toward its new territories. On the one hand, Japanese leaders believed it was necessary to inculcate a Japanese identity in their subject peoples. At the same time, Japanese in the home islands resisted the integration of people they saw as non-Japanese. Taiwanese became, in the words of historian Wu Ruei-chen "Japanese that were not Japanese." They received a Japanese education (although many wealthy families continued to give their sons a traditional Confucian education at home in addition to their modern Japanese schooling), and they were encouraged to dress, eat, and live as Japanese—even to adopt Japanese surnames. The elite could send sons to universities in Japan for higher education—but once they were there, their options were limited. Taiwanese students were steered toward "practical" disciplines, such as

medicine and engineering, and away from "dangerous" areas of knowledge like philosophy.

The government's caution on this point was well-placed. Even after decades of Japanese rule, many Taiwanese still resented their colonial status and by the 1920s, a self-conscious Taiwanese identity was emerging. While Taiwan itself was tightly controlled, Taiwanese students in Japan enjoyed considerable freedom. It was among this group that a movement for home rule for Taiwan began. Proponents were inspired by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson's post-World War I campaign promoting national self-determination and human rights. Many Japanese politicians, too, used these ideas to promote their country's status in the world. In 1921, a group of Taiwanese living in Japan founded the Taiwan Culture Society. They called for a Taiwanese parliament to balance the colonial governor and they asked for a Taiwanese representation in Japan's national legislature, the Diet. Thousands of Taiwanese signed petitions in support of their cause. The Taiwan Culture Society activists saw the creation of elected assemblies in the mid-1930s as a partial success for their cause, and some members even became candidates in local elections.

Forty years into the colonial experiment, it was clear that while the Japanese were proud to claim Taiwan, they had not yet fully integrated Taiwanese into Japan. The effort to assimilate Taiwanese accelerated after Japan invaded China in 1931. To ensure the loyalty of colonial populations—whose men were needed as soldiers—Japan redoubled its efforts to "Japanize" its colonies. This was especially important in Taiwan, where most people still recognized China as their ancestral homeland. In 1940, the colonial government decreed that all Taiwanese must take Japanese names. As the war continued, the Japanese Imperial Army even exploited the Austronesian peoples for their fighting spirit and knowledge of mountainous terrain. Japan recruited as many as eight thousand Austronesian men for guerrilla fighting in the jungles of Southeast Asia. Several thousand Taiwanese—both Austronesian and Chinese—are honored at the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, the controversial shrine to Japan's war dead. Had Japan's efforts continued longer, the war-era fast-track to "Japanization" might have succeeded. Instead, the war ended, and Taiwanese found themselves facing a new identity crisis. The "Orphan of Asia" was once again adrift.

### "RETROCESSION"

Seventeen years after it ceded Taiwan to the Japanese empire, the Qing Dynasty collapsed under the combined weight of foreign pressure, economic crisis, domestic rebellion, and internal rot. The immediate cause was an uprising that had its first success on October 10, 1911: rebels seized a muni-

tions depot in Wuchang, a city in central China. When the Chinese political activist Sun Yat-sen, who was on a fund-raising trip in the United States, heard the news he rushed back to China to help set up a new Chinese state based on democratic principles. On January 1, 1912, Sun declared the founding of the Republic of China, or ROC. A month later, the Qing emperor abdicated the throne, although it was decades before the ROC managed to bring all the former Qing territories under its effective control. Sun was interested in both sides of the nation-building process, ideology and institutions. His ideology centered on a reinterpretation of Abraham Lincoln's "government of the people, by the people and for the people." In Sun's "Three Principles of the People" "of the people" was rendered as nationalism (*minzhu*), "by the people" as democracy (*minquan*), and "for the people" as livelihood, or socialism (*minsheng*). Institutionally, Sun promoted a Chinese reinterpretation of the American system in which five branches of government, or *yuan*, would check and balance one another. In addition to the American executive, legislative, and judicial branches, Sun added two traditional Chinese government functions: control (to supervise and impeach officials) and examination (to manage civil service examinations).

Implementing these ideas in a divided and chaotic nation proved nearly impossible. The ROC was deeply fragmented; cutthroat political combat was the norm; assassinations were common. Nonetheless, the ROC state gradually consolidated its authority and extended its reach. In the 1920s, the Chinese Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang (KMT) headed by Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi) became the leading force in ROC politics. In June 1928 the KMT captured the capital, Beijing. While the Northeast still was only nominally attached, Chiang declared military unification complete and the ROC ready to advance to a new stage in its development: political tutelage. Once the Chinese people had been schooled in the ways of democracy, the KMT leader said, the nation would advance to a third and final stage: constitutional democracy.

Tragically, mainland unification was short-lived. In 1931, Japan invaded northeastern China, the region known as Manchuria. The following year, Japan set up a puppet state in the region and installed the deposed Qing emperor as its nominal head. In 1937, it invaded the rest of China and drove the young ROC out of its own heartland. With the fall of the ROC capital at Nanjing imminent, the KMT and its forces fled up the Yangtze River to Chongqing, in Sichuan province. It was there, bombarded from the air but unreachable by land, that the Republic of China government (sometimes called the Nationalist government) survived eight horrifying years of siege warfare.

Japan's surrender in 1945 brought new hope to China. In November 1943, Chiang Kai-shek met with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill

and U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt in Cairo to discuss the Allied nations' plans for a postwar settlement in Asia. Their joint declaration promised to strip Japan of all territories seized since 1914, and it specified that "all the territories Japan has stolen from the Chinese, such as Manchuria, Formosa and the Pescadores (Penghu Islands), shall be restored to the Republic of China." To Korea, they promised independence. The Cairo Declaration was a simple statement of intent, but its provisions gained legal weight when they were referenced in more formal documents, including the Japanese Instrument of Surrender. When the Japanese emperor accepted the terms of surrender on August 15, 1945, Taiwan officially became part of the Republic of China.

For Taiwanese, the return to Chinese control was simultaneously a very natural event—after all, with the exception of the Austronesian people, they were Chinese in language, culture, and ancestry—and a worrisome change. Very few could remember the Qing era that had ended fifty years earlier. Japanese colonial administration was the only government they had ever known. Also, Taiwan and mainland China had grown very far apart during those five decades of separation. Until the war brought privation and military regimentation, Taiwan had flourished under a stable and largely benevolent colonial regime. Meanwhile, the Chinese mainland was being torn apart by revolution, foreign invasion, and war.

In Taiwan, "nationalism" was a vague notion: a half-finished project half-heartedly undertaken in the waning years of the colonial era. In mainland China, nationalism was the fuel powering half a century of suffering and resistance. National unification, national defense, national liberation, national development—these were the guiding passions of generations of Chinese patriots. Taiwanese were about to become Chinese again, but they were Chinese Rip van Winkles: they had missed the cataclysmic process that forged the modern Chinese nation they were about to join.

The ROC government officially took the reins on October 25, a date that is celebrated today as "Retrocession Day." The Chinese term—*Guangfu Jie*—is not as dry as the English. In Chinese, the phrase evokes the glory of restoring lost territory, and that was how the ROC government and the KMT politicians who led it viewed the day. Taiwanese, too, welcomed the event. According to observers, some three hundred thousand people turned out to greet troops entering Taipei, although the "lonely" atmosphere in which the first contingent of Chinese troops arrived at Keelung on October 17 revealed a degree of ambivalence—even anxiety—among Taiwanese.

Retrocession introduced a new social division to Taiwan. There were now "Taiwanese," those whose families had been living on the island anywhere between fifty and three hundred years (known in Chinese as *benshengren*, people of this province) and "Mainlanders," people who arrived in the wake of Retrocession (*waishengren*, people from outside provinces). The

two groups held very different visions of how Taiwan should be incorporated into the Republic.

Taiwanese believed their island was more advanced and cosmopolitan than most areas of China, and they did not want to be drawn into the economic and political miseries plaguing the mainland. Taiwanese elites, in particular, thought Taiwan should be allowed to govern itself; at the very least, the ROC should permit Taiwanese the same role in government that the Japanese colonial administration had allowed. Mainlanders took the opposite view. ROC leaders thought Taiwan was less suited to self-government than other provinces. They felt it was tainted by long association with the Japanese empire; everywhere they looked they saw evidence of collaborationism and disloyalty. In their view, what Taiwan needed was comprehensive reeducation and indoctrination in Chinese nationalism—not self-government.

Debates over Taiwan's political future attracted elites, but for ordinary Taiwanese, Retrocession brought more immediate problems. The island's economy had suffered heavy damage during the war, including destruction wrought by U.S. bombers targeting its industrial and transportation infrastructure. Japanese colonists (including some who had been born and raised in Taiwan) were repatriated, leaving Taiwanese to repair the damage by themselves. Shortages of food and other goods were widespread. Unemployment skyrocketed, especially after thousands of men began returning from deployments overseas. Economic conditions in the mainland were even worse, but Taiwan's KMT governor, Chen Yi, encouraged economic integration between the two sides of the Strait. Taiwan was soon infected with the same uncontrolled inflation and corruption that were sapping the mainland economy.

Chen Yi favored nationalization for ideological reasons, but his policies became a cover for ROC officials to confiscate property from departing Japanese, and from Taiwanese owners and claimants. While Taiwanese had once complained of Japan's iron-fisted approach to law enforcement, the new government's failure to stem the explosion in bribery, corruption, theft of public (and private) property, arbitrary law enforcement, and other abuses produced nostalgia for the Japanese era. As a popular saying put it, "The dogs are gone; the pigs have arrived."

On February 27, 1947, a police officer in Taipei City struck a woman he was arresting for selling cigarettes illegally (tobacco was a state monopoly). A crowd gathered to confront the police; one officer fired his weapon, killing a bystander. The next day Taiwanese held protests at the Monopoly Bureau Headquarters and the governor's office. Another killing late in the day sparked a wave of violent uprisings that swept through the island. In city after city, Taiwanese attacked police stations, military installations, and government offices. They met surprisingly weak resistance; mainland

troops and officials mostly folded in the face of the angry mobs. They hid at home, or took refuge in military outposts. After a few days, the fighting subsided. Taiwanese had effectively taken over the island.

With ROC officials unable to assert their authority, Taiwanese elites stepped in. Within days, they had restored order and restarted basic transport and communications services. Their larger goal was to craft a resolution to the crisis, but they were stymied by the lack of consensus among Taiwanese about goals and strategy. Some Taiwanese simply wanted the ROC government to admit its mistakes and promise to do a better job in the future. Others were looking for more local self-government. The most extreme demand, articulated by only a small minority, was for an independent Taiwan separated from the Chinese Republic. At first, ROC officials including Governor Chen Yi tried to work with Taiwan's de facto leaders to resolve the crisis. As the list of Taiwanese demands lengthened, the ROC government became impatient. The Nationalists had not expected to need an occupation force in Taiwan, but that did not mean they were incapable of mounting one. They had dealt with similar situations on the mainland, and their response to the crisis on Taiwan was boilerplate.

On March 8, 9, and 10, the ROC landed troops in Keelung and Kaohsiung. They used deadly force to cow the population, and quickly restored ROC government control. On March 10, the governor declared the groups helping to resolve the crisis illegal; negotiations were over, and the ROC government was dictating terms. ROC forces used the uprising as a justification to round up political dissidents and local elites of all stripes. Many were murdered on the spot; others were executed after cursory trials. Historians believed close to twenty thousand Taiwanese were killed and an even larger number injured as the military reestablished control. Knowing exactly how many died is difficult, but as the historian Steven Phillips writes, "Knowing who was killed helps make clear the incident's effect on later political activity. As soldiers spread terror through the island, they crushed the Taiwanese as a political force able to advocate change outside the Nationalist state or [KMT] party structure."

The events of February and March 1947, which are known today as the 2-28 (February 28) Incident, set the course of Taiwan's history for decades to come. After Retrocession, Taiwanese and Mainlanders needed to negotiate a way of living together as equals. The 2-28 Incident aborted that process. The ROC government saw those weeks' events as proof that Taiwanese were disloyal, a threat to the nation. Beset by civil war, besieged on all sides, the KMT leadership decided to crush the one threat it could. The crackdown continued in a less virulent form for decades, and came to be known as the White Terror. The 2-28 Incident and the White Terror that followed convinced Taiwanese that the Mainlanders were determined to occupy Taiwan and impose their will—by force if necessary. There was to be

no negotiation, no coexistence, no marriage of equals, only the Republic of China government ruling Taiwan from its capital, Nanjing.

## THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TAIWAN

From 1945 to 1949, Taiwan was a sideshow for the KMT politicians leading the Republic of China. Their overwhelming preoccupation was to avoid losing power in mainland China. The ink on the KMT leadership had long since dried when a new threat—one the KMT leadership had long anticipated—arose: Communism. Within a few months of the Japanese surrender, troops loyal to the KMT were fighting Communist Party forces for control of ever-larger chunks of Chinese territory. The Nationalists had been at war for decades; their troops were exhausted. Economic crisis and social unrest gripped KMT-controlled areas of China. The Communists, for their part, were winning converts with aggressive land reform and other economic policies that seemed to offer relief from the spiraling inflation and other economic hardships plaguing KMT-ruled areas.

By 1948, both momentum and morale favored the Communists, and in early 1949, Communist troops crossed the Yangtze River. Nationalist forces lost more and more ground until only Taiwan and its outlying islands remained in KMT hands. On October 1, Communist Party leader Mao Zedong declared the birth of the People's Republic of China. As far as the PRC was concerned, the Republic of China ceased to exist; the PRC had superseded it, and all of its territories—including Taiwan—now belonged to the new state.

The Nationalists' defeat transformed Taiwan's status. Suddenly, the marginal territory had become the last refuge of a state that had lost its nation. In an uncanny twist of history, Taiwan was once again—as it had been under Zheng Chenggong—the holdout against a new mainland regime. Like Zheng trying to restore the Ming Dynasty, Chiang Kai-shek spent the rest of his life trying to win back the mainland for the Republic of China. For Chiang, the Republic of China, despite its limited jurisdiction, still defined "real" China.

In 1949, the most immediate challenge facing Taiwan was to absorb one-and-a-half-million Mainlander refugees. The island's economic recovery was progressing slowly and the sudden addition of so many mouths to feed and hands to employ made the task even harder. Taiwan's existing population was about 6 million, so the influx of Mainlanders prompted a significant jump in competition for resources of every kind, from jobs to food to housing. Economic competition was not the only source of tension between Mainlanders and Taiwanese. Cultural, social, and political differences also existed.

The vast majority of Mainlanders who came to Taiwan between 1945 and 1949 were both Chinese nationalists and Chinese Nationalists, members of the Nationalist Party, or KMT. They believed the Chinese mainland was trapped under the boot heel of un-Chinese, tyrannical outlaws, and it was the sacred responsibility of all Chinese, including the Chinese on Taiwan, to rescue their motherland from Communism. Their vision for Taiwan was clear: it must be built into a bastion of Chinese nationalism from which the campaign to recover the mainland could be mounted. To accomplish that vision they believed it was necessary to enforce political conformity, inculcate nationalist zeal, rebuild economic prosperity, and acquire military might. Those four tasks were the pillars on which the Republic of China on Taiwan was built.

### CREATING A COMMUNITY OF SHARED FATE

Taiwan's history made it a melting pot shared by Austronesian peoples, Hokkien-speaking migrants arriving from various regions of Fujian at various times, Hakkas driven out of southern China, and Mainlanders from all corners of China who became Taiwanese by accident. The island's modern history began with a tragic collision of these groups. But Taiwan's recent history is a chronicle of reconciliation, as these different groups have grown together, become intertwined, and gradually come to recognize their shared fate as citizens of a thriving but imperiled country.

This reconciliation took place against a background of profound political change. In the early decades after Retrocession, the KMT operated a single-party authoritarian state with few individual or civil rights, but over the course of the 1980s and 1990s, the system was transformed into a fully democratic state. We record the story of that metamorphosis in another chapter; it is enough for now to know that Taiwan's ethnic rapprochement took place in an era of political rebirth.

The first marker of membership in one of Taiwan's ethnic communities is language. Almost 90 percent of Taiwan's 6 million occupants at the end of World War II spoke Hokkien. Their ancestors had come to Taiwan from Fujian, and while they carried the accents of northern and southern Fujian, their language was the same. Hokkien, like all Chinese dialects, is written using Chinese characters. Characters convey ideas, not sounds, so words are written identically, no matter how differently they may be pronounced from one place to another. The two characters that form the word "China," for example, mean "middle" and "kingdom." In Hokkien, they are pronounced "tióng-kok." In Mandarin, the northern Chinese dialect chosen as the ROC's official medium of spoken communication, the two characters are pronounced "zhōngguó." A Hokkien speaker and a Mandarin speaker

cannot understand one another when they talk, but they can read the same newspapers and books. Hakka is also a dialect of Chinese; Hakka speech is unintelligible to Hokkien and Mandarin speakers, but Hakka people, too, write their language using Chinese characters.

During the Japanese colonial period, Taiwanese were educated in Japanese (which also uses Chinese characters, as well as alphabetic symbols unique to Japan), but they continued to speak their mother tongues—Hokkien, Hakka, and Austronesian languages—in everyday life. After the Japanese surrender, one of the ways Taiwanese prepared themselves for the new regime was to study Mandarin. One of the surprises Retrocession delivered was the profusion of dialects spoken by the new arrivals. Most Mainlanders were not officials, but soldiers. Many were conscripts with little or no education; their hometown dialects were as different from Mandarin as Hokkien and Hakka. In the early years of the ROC, Taiwan was like Babel, with dozens of different dialect and language groups communicating in broken Mandarin. Language was a source of tension and an important marker of group identity. In *Cities of Sadness*, Hou Hsiao-hsien's classic 1989 film about the 2-28 Incident, a deaf Taiwanese is nearly killed by an anti-Mainlander mob because his deafness prevents him from speaking Taiwanese fluently.

Language was a top concern for the ROC government. After Retrocession, officials on Taiwan were preoccupied with integrating Taiwan into the Chinese nation. Making Mandarin the lingua franca for the island was an important step in replacing Japanese, Hokkien, Hakka, and Austronesian identities with a unified Chinese identity. It was also important because the island needed a common language to facilitate communication among the different ethnic communities. Even though Hokkien was the mother tongue for the great majority of Taiwan's people, the ROC leadership never considered making it the island's official language. Taiwan was a province of the Republic of China; the ROC's official language was Mandarin. Joining the Chinese nation meant shedding other identities. Taiwanese would learn Mandarin, which the Nationalists called *guoyu*, the national language.

Language policy did not change when the mainland fell to the Communists—far from it. The mainland was in the hands of a Communist Party the Nationalists believed would wipe out traditional Chinese culture. To fulfill its role as the launching pad for mainland recovery, Taiwan would need to be fully dedicated to rescuing the Chinese nation—including its cultural heritage. (In some cases, this "rescue" was literal: the most precious treasures of China's imperial past were boxed up and transported to Taiwan where they are stored inside a mountain. The stars of the collection are displayed in Taipei's National Palace Museum.) In the eyes of its leaders, Taiwan had a historic mission, to save China from Communism. All other goals, including the parochial demands of Taiwan's Hokkien and Hakka communities, were subordinated to this grand destiny.

To carry out its cultural project, the KMT government turned to education and mass media. Radio (and, later, television) programming in Hokkien was limited to a few hours a day. Most programming was in Mandarin, and the proportion of Mandarin grew over time. Mandarin replaced Japanese as the language of instruction in public schools, and because few Taiwanese children or parents spoke Mandarin, elementary school became a sink-or-swim immersion in a strange language. Many Taiwanese have bitter memories of sitting in first-grade classrooms in which they understood little and were fined for speaking their mother tongues. For some Taiwanese, the language barrier compounded other problems and caused them to cut their education short. Others mastered Mandarin, even as they continued to speak Hokkien or Hakka at home. In the 1980s, local government offices had signs on the walls urging employees (with little apparent effect) to "Speak Mandarin on the Telephone!" Mandarin spread, but Hokkien persisted, and Taiwan today is a multilingual society, with Hokkien, Hakka, and some Austronesian languages spoken alongside Mandarin.

For Mainlanders, especially those who had Mandarin as their mother tongue, the government's decision to make Mandarin the national language conferred significant benefits. They entered nearly every realm of life at an instant advantage. They learned more quickly in school because they were being taught in a language they understood, and by the time their Taiwanese classmates had mastered the language, they already were ahead in their studies. The government reinforced this advantage by making Mandarin proficiency a criterion for educational and career advancement. The state-owned companies that dominated major industries were led by Mandarin-speaking executives, while Taiwanese military conscripts were commanded by an overwhelmingly Mainlander officer corps. Informal factors like personal connections and formal perks such as civil service quotas (the law said provincial representation in national government offices should be proportional to provincial population) added to the Mainlanders' linguistic and educational advantages. The combined effect of these "neutral" policies was to severely limit Taiwanese people's employment opportunities, especially in the public sector.

As one would expect, these policy decisions deepened the social divide between Taiwanese and Mainlanders. Taiwanese felt like second-class citizens in their own homeland. It was not only language; other aspects of traditional Taiwanese life were also targets of discrimination. The state defined the cultural practices of ordinary Taiwanese as inferior to those of the Mandarin-speaking, Confucian-spouting elite. Taiwanese religious practices, which centered on an eclectic mélange of local cults, Mazu worship, Buddhist orthodoxy, and Taoist mysticism, were dismissed as low-class superstitions unworthy of a modern Chinese nation. At school, Taiwanese memorized endless minutiae about Chinese history and geography,

but learned next to nothing about Taiwan itself. The government hoped to mold Taiwanese into the kind of Chinese Mainlander elites imagined themselves to be: modern, rational, cosmopolitan, and nationalistic. But by defining "Chineseness" in a way that marginalized and denigrated Taiwan's indigenous social and cultural practices, the ROC's cultural policies had the perverse effect of making many Taiwanese doubt whether they were Chinese at all.

From the perspective of Hokkien Taiwanese, the system seemed rigged in favor of the Mainlanders. Mandarin speakers who had arrived in the 1940s enjoyed special treatment in politics, education, culture, and government. They lived in subsidized housing called "military dependents' villages" (*juiyuan*), often in former Japanese quarters; they were favored for admission to the military and civil service; when they got old or sick, they were cared for in veterans' homes the Chinese called "Homes for Men of Honor" (*rongmin zhi jia*).

To Mainlanders, the picture looked quite different. For the elite, their material life in Taiwan was good, but they longed to return home. For the majority of Mainlanders—those in more humble stations—material comforts were few. The military dependents' villages were more like isolated ghettos than exclusive enclaves. While government jobs provided a steady income, wages were modest. Private business offered better returns, but it was not easy for Mainlanders to work in Taiwan's Hokkien-dominated private economy. All too often, the veterans' homes were little more than grim warehouses where friendless old men, their health ruined by years of soldiering and physical labor, lived out their lives in lonely confinement. Hokkien residents of Hualien City used to complain about Mainlanders being given houses where Japanese officers had lived before the war. Their street even had its own private bomb shelter! But for the Mainlander families living in those houses, the experience was isolating and sad. Their homes were owned by the state, and they were never renovated, not least because renovations might betray a lack of faith in Chiang's promise that they would soon "return home." Forty years after Retrocession, the houses were crumbling and primitive, but still a source of envy and ill among Hokkien.

For ordinary Mainlander soldiers and low-level civil servants, life in Taiwan was difficult. In most cases, their families were gone, including mothers and fathers, but often wives and children as well. A few had managed to bring their families to Taiwan before the Communist victory cut off travel between the two sides. The lucky ones married (or remarried) in Taiwan, but many Hokkien families refused to marry their daughters to Mainlanders. Nor did ordinary Mainlanders enjoy more freedom than their Taiwanese neighbors. The KMT's deepest fear was that Communist subversion would bring down the ROC in its last redoubt. Communist infiltration

was likeiest among Mainlanders, many of whom had worked side by side with Communists on the mainland and had relatives still living there. As a result the KMT kept Mainlanders under constant surveillance. In the 1970s, one old soldier disappeared without warning. After a long delay, his family learned he had been arrested on political charges, but they never were told what he was alleged to have done. On this flimsy premise, he spent eleven years in prison. In the 1990s, when democracy was taking hold in Taiwan, the prisoner's daughter went to work for Chen Chu, a Taiwanese political prisoner and human rights activist. Across the ethnic divide, two victims of the White Terror worked together for justice.

Mainlander life was also hierarchical, reflecting the influence of the military. A young Taiwanese diplomat officer tells the story of his grandparents, a low-ranking Mainlander officer and his wife. They worshipped the Chiang family, and Madame Chiang Kai-shek's pet project, the Grand Hotel, was their temple. The Grand Hotel is a massive imperial-style building with a gold-tiled roof nestled into a verdant mountainside overlooking downtown Taipei. The diplomat was raised on tales of its magnificent rooms and five-star restaurants, and, above all, Madame Chiang's favorite delicacy, fancy red bean cakes. His grandparents never actually ate the cakes; they only dreamed of them. But times have changed. Although their grandson finds the Grand Hotel stuffy and threadbare, and its restaurants overpriced, he likes to order Madame Chiang's cakes from time to time, because, unlike his grandparents, he can.

For Hakka and Austronesian Taiwanese, ethnic politics after Retrocession were tricky. They were ineligible for the benefits provided to Mainlanders, but Retrocession did not put an end to the long-simmering tensions between them and the Hokkien majority. In many cases, they cast their lot with the KMT and the Mainlanders, whom they viewed as less threatening than their Hokkien neighbors. Given the poverty and isolation of most Austronesian and many Hakka communities, the KMT was able to win their support at a pitifully low price. For Austronesian communities driven into the high mountains or confined to guarded villages during the Japanese colonial period, a cluster of concrete houses a few hours' walk from a paved road was a huge boon. Keeping Hokkien visitors out of Austronesian villages not only helped prevent exploitation and conflict but also minimized political resistance. Both the Austronesian and Hakka peoples became fierce supporters of the KMT—even today, Austronesian and Hakka voters are among the KMT's most loyal constituents.

In the decades after the 2-28 Incident, few Taiwanese dared to voice their resentments about how Retrocession had changed their lives. The KMT made it clear that Taiwanese were expected to throw themselves wholeheartedly into the campaign to recover the mainland. Those who suggested Taiwan might be an end in itself, with a history worth learning and a cul-

ture worth celebrating, were excoriated for their failure to embrace the national project. Reveling in Taiwanese identity marked an islander as either embarrassingly uncouth or downright subversive. And under Chiang's rule, being labeled "subversive" could bring harassment, arrest, or worse.

In the 1970s, things began to change. Taiwanese began standing up for their culture and demanding recognition. The transformation began with a literary movement known as "Hometown Literature." In novels and short stories, Taiwanese authors explored everyday life in Taiwan. The social milieu their work described was uniquely Taiwanese; it could not be separated from the island's physical and social landscape. The Hometown writers tried to capture their mother tongues' syntax and word choice in their writing, using Chinese characters to directly transcribe the local idiom, rather than "translating" Hokkien and Hakka thoughts into Mandarin. Before long, visual artists and musicians were introducing ideas from Hometown Literature into their work.

Hometown Literature and art transformed Taiwan's view of itself. They awakened a sense of pride in Taiwanese traditions. They also helped bring into the open an idea that had been hidden since 1947, that Taiwan's own aspirations need not be subjugated to Chinese nationalism. Taiwan was valuable in its own right, with or without the Chinese mainland. These revolutionary ideas brought a new willingness to practice a specifically Taiwanese way of life, to speak Hokkien without shame, to worship Mazu without apology, to eat the foods that flourished in Taiwan's rich volcanic soil without embarrassment. The political atmosphere was changing at the same time, and the two trends reinforced one another.

By the late 1980s, the Taiwan culture movement had developed into a craze for all things Taiwanese. Restaurants specializing in home-style favorites like salted-turnip omelets and three-cups frog appeared in Taipei's toniest neighborhoods. Publishers churned out thousands of books on Taiwan history, geography, and folkways. Traditional art forms such as puppet theater and Hokkien operas—art forms that had once seemed on the verge of dying out—were revived. Even the Austronesian peoples became fashionable (at least in the abstract) as a symbol of Taiwan's pre-Chinese roots. Taiwanese began to integrate Austronesian art, literature, and history into their understanding of Taiwan's culture and history. Eventually the term "Original Inhabitants" (*yuanzhumin*) replaced the derogatory and inaccurate words others had long used to name the Austronesian peoples. After 2000, Taiwanese youth even took on one of the most painful images of the past, the "*Taike*" or Taiwanese bumpkin stereotype. "*Taike*" was a taunt that captured stereotypes of Taiwanese as backward and *déclassé*, something like the American term "redneck." According to the stereotype, the garishly dressed *Taike* cruised the main streets of small towns on a cheap, tricked-out motorbike, intensifying his ridiculousness by imagining

himself stylish and *soigné*, too clueless to recognize his own cluelessness. Young Taiwanese erased Taike's power to hurt by embracing the slur and turning it into a source of fun. Taike parties became popular on university campuses. A young woman quoted in the book *Call Me Taike!* captured the new spirit: "I think *Taike* is a born-here, raised-here Taiwan thing; you can't see it anywhere else in the world. It's an important part of what makes Taiwanese culture so rich and riotous."

In the 1990s, activists introduced the terms "Taiwan subjectivity" (*Taiwan zhuxixing*) and "Taiwan centric consciousness" (*Taiwan zhuti yishi*). The new phrases expressed the idea that Taiwan should be the subject of its own story, not the object of others' desires, and that it should determine its own fate in accordance with its interests, not allow itself to become a sideshow in someone else's history. Taiwan-centric consciousness does not deny that Taiwan's culture and heritage include Chinese elements, but, to use Dan Lynch's clever formulation, it views China as part of Taiwan, rather than Taiwan as part of China. It also highlights unique cultural influences that differentiate Taiwan from the Chinese mainland.

For Mainlanders—and many Hakka and Austronesian people as well—the flowering of Hokkien pride was a troubling trend. Pride easily slipped into chauvinism, and chauvinism was used to justify prejudice. Speaking "*Taiwanese*," which really meant Hokkien, became a marker of belonging, and Mainlanders and even some Hakkas began to doubt whether they were welcome in Taiwan. Many Mainlanders—including those born in Taiwan to Mainlander parents—felt tainted by their family origins. Suddenly, it was Mainlanders who felt they were second-class citizens. In 1990, a young Mainlander told the Taiwanese newspaper *Liberty Times*, "Overseas, no one thought we were Chinese; they said we were Taiwanese. In Taiwan, no one thought we were Taiwanese; they said we were Mainlanders. In the mainland, no one thought we were part of them; they said we were Taiwan compatriots [*Taibao*]. We wandered around through all these different statuses and titles in all these different regions and places, and felt we were always at a crossroads. We were like homeless orphans; we ourselves didn't know what we were."

In the mid-1990s, Lee Teng-hui, Taiwan's Japanese-educated, Hokkien-speaking president, began to mend the rift between Taiwan's different ethnic groups. He used the term "New Taiwanese" to redefine Mainlanders as belonging to and in Taiwan. After fifty years of living together, he argued, it was time for islanders to look past the different paths they had traveled to reach the island, and recognize that all were members of a "community of shared fate." Taiwan, he said, would survive and flourish only if all her people stood together. In 1999, Lee outlined his ideas in an article in *Foreign Policy* magazine: "To convey a sense of the popular will on Taiwan today, I now refer to my fellow citizens as 'New Taiwanese,' meaning those who are

willing to fight for the prosperity and survival of their country, regardless of when they or their forebears arrived on Taiwan and regardless of their provincial heritage or native language. This fresh national identity based on the New Taiwanese consciousness, holding that Taiwan's interests should be foremost and that the people of Taiwan all share a common destiny, has gradually harmonized the populace and provided a stable middle ground for Taiwan's political development."

Lee used the bully pulpit of his presidency to introduce the "New Taiwanese" concept, but the idea did not immediately take hold. For many Hokkien people, the scars left by the White Terror and decades of China-centric cultural policies were too fresh. They weren't ready to merge their newfound Hokkien pride into a post-ethnic identity, and they didn't trust the KMT to put Taiwan's interests ahead of Chinese nationalism—whatever Lee Teng-hui said. The cultural policies advocated by Lee's successor, President Chen Shui-bian, reflected this skepticism. The Chen administration pressed for cultural and educational reforms that critics said were aimed at "de-Sinicization," or gouging out Chinese elements from Taiwanese life—from revising textbooks to de-emphasize Taiwan's Chinese origins to removing the word "China" from the names of public utilities.

For eight years, the Chen administration worked to inculcate the notion that Taiwan is a Creole society in which Austronesian, Chinese, Hokkien, Hakka, Japanese—even Spanish and Portuguese—elements are melded together. It placed enormous emphasis on the Austronesian peoples' contributions to Taiwanese culture. Chen renamed the street in front of Taiwan's presidential office "Ketagalan Boulevard" after an early Austronesian group. In 2004, his Democratic Progressive Party produced a calendar entitled "The Twelve Months of President A-bian and the Austronesian Peoples" ("A-bian" is Chen's nickname). Each month was illustrated with a photo of the president garbed in a different Austronesian outfit. On the cover, he wrote a message to the Austronesian people: "People of the Southern Isle, let's come together with diligence and enthusiasm. Set out with A-bian, with Ketagalan Boulevard as our stepping off point, to find our roots, and the beauty of our homeland. Let's return to the land bestowed upon us by the spirits of our ancestors to shout and sing: We are the masters of Taiwan!"

Where Lee Teng-hui's concept of Taiwanese identity was essentially political—he argued for a separate, independent Taiwanese state—Chen Shui-bian's concept was cultural—it posited Taiwan as a *nation*. In the lingo of political science, Lee was advocating civic nationalism—nationalism based on the shared experience of democratic self-government—while Chen promoted *ethno-nationalism*—nationalism based on an ethnic bond. Promoters of ethno-nationalism in Taiwan claim that Taiwan is not only politically separate from mainland China, but it is also ethnically different, with a culture, history—even bloodlines—all its own.

Ethno-nationalism, it turns out, is a hard sell on Taiwan. With the exception of the Austronesian people, who make up less than 2 percent of Taiwan's population, all Taiwanese are of Chinese ancestry, and many of them would prefer not to choose between the Taiwanese and Chinese elements of their identity. For almost twenty years, pollsters have been asking Taiwanese "Do you think of yourself as Taiwanese, Chinese or both?" Back in the early 1990s, when education and mass media were still pushing the Chinese nationalist agenda, about a quarter of the people said "Chinese," and about 45 percent said "both." Since then, the proportion of people who call themselves "Chinese" has plummeted to about 5 percent, and the share of those who say they are "Taiwanese" has risen from the high teens to more than 40 percent. The percentage claiming to be "both Taiwanese and Chinese" remained remarkably consistent, at around 45 percent, although in some of the most recent polls, "Taiwanese" has surpassed 50 percent.

In late 2005, more than a thousand university students took an informal survey in their classes. The poll asked what the students were thinking about when they answered the "Chinese, Taiwanese or Both?" question. There was a strong connection between how they interpreted the question, and the answers they gave. Those who thought the question was asking about "where I was born and raised" tended to choose "Taiwanese," while those who interpreted the question to refer to "my historical and cultural background" tended to choose "both Taiwanese and Chinese." That finding suggests that while many Taiwanese recognize their Chinese cultural heritage, their geographical (and by extension political) connection is to Taiwan. Meanwhile, the PRC's rising prominence—both internationally and in Taiwan's economic life—has strengthened the association between "China" and "People's Republic of China" and made it even less likely that Taiwanese will claim a "Chinese" identity.

During the Chen years, the government worked hard to persuade citizens to adopt its ethno-national view of Taiwanese identity. Lin Chia-lung, one of Chen Shui-bian's close advisors, told me: "I think we should try to persuade people of our values, to influence them to agree with us, not just follow behind the voters. You need to have values and ideals. At the same time, if we are not able to persuade people, we need to respect their decisions. This is democracy." Ultimately, it was democracy that ended both parties' practice of using the powers of government to promote ethno-nationalism.

In 2008, President Chen's Democratic Progressive Party suffered two huge electoral setbacks. In January, legislative elections left the KMT with more than 70 percent of the seats; in March, the KMT recaptured the presidency. The new president, Ma Ying-jeou, is the KMT politician for whom Lee Teng-hui invented the term "New Taiwanese." Ma is a Mainlander, born

in Hong Kong in 1949, who has lived his entire life in Taiwan. He embraces the idea of Taiwan-centric consciousness, but he is not a Taiwanese ethno-nationalist. His 58 percent vote share proved that ethnicity is not the driving factor for mainstream Taiwanese voters.

The ethnic fault lines in Taiwan's society still are visible. Older people, in particular, still care about whether someone is Hokkien, Mainlander, Hakka, or Austronesian. But for younger Taiwanese, these categories mean little. Sixty years ago, many Taiwanese vehemently opposed intermarriage between Taiwanese and Mainlanders. As one woman quoted in a documentary film put it, in the 1950s, if a Hokkien woman married a Mainlander, her family would want to "chop her up and feed her to the pigs." Even in the 1980s, marrying across ethnic lines was controversial, although attitudes were changing fast. By 1991, only 7.5 percent of college students said they would consider ethnic background in choosing a marriage partner. Today, with as many as a quarter of all marriages in Taiwan involving a spouse born *outside Taiwan*, "intermarriage" has an entirely new meaning.

Language still matters—people worry that Hokkien, Hakka, and Austronesian languages may be dying out—but Mandarin is accepted as a tool of communication shared by all. Much like British and American English, the mainland's *putonghua* and Taiwan's "Taiwanese Mandarin" (*Taiwan guoyu*) are similar, but not identical. Taiwanese have a distinct accent (one that fashionable young people in mainland China sometimes copy), and their choice of words is different. Young Taiwanese mix Hokkien and Mandarin (sometimes in the same sentence)—often with an English word or two thrown in—and they choose different languages for different purposes—Mandarin for school, Hokkien for hanging out with friends. Some young Taiwanese even see a gender difference—Mandarin for girls, Hokkien for boys.

Young people chafe at the suggestion that their affection for and loyalty to Taiwan are revealed in their language choices. To them, language is a tool for communication, not a marker of ethnic solidarity. A college student expressed his generation's cynicism about the language wars when he said, "Even my dad says Hokkien has become a political commodity. It's just a device politicians use to get votes." One of the newest languages in Taiwan is "Martian"—a user-friendly shorthand to use in text messaging. Martian relies on roman letters to convey a mélange of Chinese and English words: 3Q (pronounced "san Q") means "thank you"; 88 (*ba ba*) means "bye bye." Refusing to be dragged into their grandparents' culture wars doesn't mean young Taiwanese don't love their country. On the contrary, claiming a Taiwanese identity is natural for them. At the same time, their Taiwanese identity does not come at the expense of a growing interest in China. They see the mainland as not only a different country—young Taiwanese routinely use the phrase "going abroad" (*chuguo*) to describe trips to China—but also a special one. Unlike their elders, who grew up hating and fearing

the mainland, young Taiwanese cannot remember a time when people did not travel freely back and forth for business and pleasure. Taiwan once was dominated by a single social cleavage: Mainlanders versus Taiwanese. While those categories still matter, they matter less than they once did. At the same time, new categories and identities are coming to the fore. Hakka people are demanding that their unique culture and heritage be recognized and celebrated alongside Hokkien culture; they refuse to be absorbed into a Hokkien identity that monopolizes "Taiwaneness." Austronesian people, too, are demanding recognition of their distinct cultures—and protection of their land. Taiwan has a long history of feminist organizations promoting identification among women. In the 1990s, the island brought forth a thriving gay culture, complete with annual gay pride parades since 2003. Taiwan's gay and lesbian people have chosen an ironic nickname for themselves: "comrades" (*tongzhi*). The term is borrowed from Chinese Communist parlance, and its use in the new context is at once apt, humorous, playful, and subversive.

The journey from White Terror to gay pride parade has been long and difficult. In traveling that distance, Taiwan has melted what began as diverse and hostile groups into a society that disagrees on many things, but is united around one fact: Taiwan is their home, and they will chart her course together.

## SOURCES

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# 4

## From "Free China" to Democratic Taiwan

To their political supporters they have little in common beyond wide smiles set in round faces. One is a Hokkien-speaking Taiwanese who has devoted her life to bringing Taiwan out of China's shadow. A political outsider, she fought her way into leadership with courage, hard work, and charisma. The other is a Mainlander, born into the Republic of China's political elite. The party he has served all his life calls itself the Chinese Nationalist Party, and its aspiration has always been to merge Taiwan and the Chinese mainland. But from a distance, these two politicians—Kaohsiung Mayor Chen Chu and Taichung Mayor Jason Hu—bear a surprising resemblance. Both are politicians whose deepest joy comes from being among the people. Both are workaholics who have suffered strokes while in office—but refused to resign—and fully recovered. Both have pressed through great personal hardship—Chen Chu early in her career, when she went to prison for her political views, Hu late in his, when he stayed in politics after profound personal losses.

Chen and Hu have something else in common, too: They are the ambitious mayors of large, complex communities whose interests and needs cannot be captured in a partisan sound bite. The mayors struggle every day with the practical challenges of governing; their careers span a time when adjusting to the changing environment has required tremendous flexibility. For Hu, that has meant accommodating the popular preference for a Taiwan separate from China; for Chen, it has meant learning to live with—and even promote—a degree of integration between Taiwan and China far beyond her expectations only a decade ago. Their histories, including those adjustments, track the development of Taiwan's democratic politics,

a process so rapid, comprehensive, and peaceful that it has earned the label "political miracle."

In August 1947, a few months after the bloody 2-28 Incident, General Albert C. Wedemeyer submitted a sobering report to U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall. A recent fact-finding mission had found the situation in China grim, and nowhere more so than in Taiwan:

The Administration of the former Governor Chen Yi has alienated the people from the Central Government. . . . The Central Government lost a fine opportunity to indicate to the Chinese people and to the world at large its capability to provide honest and efficient administration. They cannot attribute their failure to the activities of the Communists or of dissident elements. The people anticipated sincerely and enthusiastically deliverance from the Japanese yoke. However, Chen Yi and his henchmen ruthlessly, corruptly, and avariciously imposed their regime upon a happy and amenable population. The Army conducted themselves as conquerors. Secret police operated freely to intimidate and to facilitate exploitation by Central Government officials. . . . There were indications that Formosans would be receptive toward United States guardianship and United Nations trusteeship. They fear that the Central Government contemplates bleeding their island to support the tottering and corrupt Nanjing machine, and I think their fears well founded.

It is hard to imagine a less promising beginning. The 2-28 Incident and the tensions that sparked it marred the Republic of China government's early days in Taiwan. Then, less than two years after Wedemeyer delivered his dreary report, Mao Zedong's Red Army drove the ROC off the mainland, leaving Taiwan's poisoned political landscape as its only refuge. The psychological and social consequences of those disastrous early encounters—distrust, anger, fear—lingered for decades, reinforced by the ROC's institutions and practices. An authoritarian mentality pervaded nearly every realm, from popular culture and education to high politics. It was only in the 1970s that Taiwanese began to resist the state in significant numbers, to demand their freedom. But when they did, they discovered an unlikely resource to support their claims: the ROC Constitution.

Although it didn't look that way in the 1950s and 1960s, the ROC state was not built on an authoritarian foundation. The constitution adopted in 1947 is a democratic document; it rests on the ideas of Sun Yat-sen, a man whose impulses—if not always his actions—leaned toward democracy. Sun's political philosophy was rooted in his "Three Principles of the People": nationalism, democracy, and well-being. His Chinese approximation of Lincoln's "government of the people, by the people and for the people" carried the same democratic promise that Lincoln had in mind when he spoke those memorable words.

Although the ROC state incorporated many compromises aimed at accommodating the political realities of early twentieth-century China, it took the three principles as the basis of its legitimacy. But democracy was not its only value—or even its primary one—for the ROC also was a nationalistic state. For the ROC government, the survival of the Chinese nation was a precondition for democratization. Achieving that goal was a daunting task in a China wracked by internal division and foreign aggression. To reconcile democracy and nationalism, Sun prescribed a three-stage process. In the first phase, a military government would unite China, fulfilling the nationalist mission and establishing a foundation for democracy. During the second phase—which Sun called “political tutelage”—a provisional government would rule the nation while the Chinese people learned the skills of democratic citizenship through local self-government. Only after these two phases were completed would China enter the third and final phase—constitutional government.

Sun Yat-sen imagined the first two phases might take ten years, but as it turned out, uniting China and repelling Japanese invaders took more than three decades. In 1947 the ROC at last was able to implement the final phase. A new constitution came into effect, followed by elections throughout China that staffed local governments and two national representative bodies, the National Assembly and Legislative Yuan. The Legislative Yuan made ROC law; the National Assembly's responsibilities included naming a president, and in 1948 its members elected Chiang Kai-shek.

As the ROC entered the era of constitutional government, its political system was shot through with contradictions. It was based on democratic concepts, but rarely lived up to its founders' lofty promises. The Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang (KMT), had squeezed out nearly all of its political competitors, and Chinese politics had hardened into a violent competition between the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party. Their hot war ended when the Nationalists fled to Taiwan, but the animosity lasted for decades, and distrust between the two sides is palpable even today.

Stranded on Taiwan in 1949, the ROC government and its ruling party faced conditions as dire as any they had encountered on the mainland. Any liberal impulses they might have had were swamped by a torrent of crises, and the political institutions they set up on Taiwan overrode and invalidated most of the constitution's democratic precepts. Martial law provisions imposed in the wake of the 2-28 uprising criminalized most political debate. They empowered a military agency—the Taiwan Garrison Command—to enforce a ban on any activity that challenged the KMT's dominance. Other measures effectively suspended ROC citizens' political rights, walling off the national government from popular participation. Despite these limitations, the constitution remained the source of the ROC state's legitimacy. Under the logic of the Cold War, the ROC carried

the sobriquet "Free China." The label seemed a cruel joke to many Taiwanese, but its designation as part of the "Free World" forced the KMT-led government to justify the glaring discrepancies between its democratic promises and authoritarian practices.

The Cold War itself provided the most potent rationale for the ROC's retreat from constitutional government: rescuing mainland China from the clutches of the "Communist bandits" (*gongfei*) who had seized the motherland. From the moment he set foot on Taiwan, Chiang's battle cry was "Fight back to the mainland!" For the 2 million Chinese soldiers, officials, and refugees who moved to Taiwan from the mainland, recovering the mainland was a personal mission as well as a political mandate. They had left behind their homeland, their families, their property, their ancestors' bones. Recovering the mainland was a matter of desperate urgency.

The newcomers were mostly men, including thousands of soldiers, but there were women and children, too. One tiny refugee, born in Beijing less than a year before the Communist victory, was Jason Hu. The second son of a mid-ranking military officer, Hu grew up in Taichung. A shy boy with a slight stammer, he was one of thousands of Mainlander youths who grew up surrounded by reminders that the mainland—not Taiwan—was their true home. Theirs was a life of privileged isolation that brought many opportunities, but also cut them off from the everyday life around them.

The logic of segregation was rooted in history. The wave of Mainlanders arriving in Taiwan in 1945 came not to settle, but to reincorporate the island into the Chinese nation. They were soldiers and administrators—agents of a government headquartered on the mainland. Their job was to rule the local people, not to integrate with them. When the mainland fell, a second wave of Mainlanders arrived who were no more interested in becoming "Taiwanese" than were the first. Mainlanders were planning to go home; relationships with Taiwanese would only complicate their eventual departure. Nor were many Taiwanese enthusiastic about assimilating the Mainlanders. Both groups saw the other as far too alien to be absorbed.

Growing up on the Taiwanese side of this social divide was a little girl named Chen Chu, born in 1950 to a large farming family in Ilan County. Ilan is on Taiwan's northeast coast; as the crow flies, it is not far from Taipei, but until recently it was remote and rural. High mountains cut Ilan off from Taipei and the broad western plain where most Taiwanese live; it would take a very high-altitude crow to make that direct flight. Ilan's remoteness preserved its wild natural beauty and rich Hokkien culture. Few Mainlanders ventured over the mountains to live there, and the young Chen Chu grew up immersed in her Hokkien heritage with its unique language, stories, beliefs, music, aromas, flavors, and outlook. Her grandfather was a traditional Taiwanese patriarch who maintained a household of up to forty people, but when Chen Chu was ready for school, he took a progres-

sive view: Chen Chu was the first girl in her family to attend high school, and she graduated from a technical college in 1968.

Even in an era when it was dangerous to speak against the government, Ilan sheltered an abiding resentment of the KMT and the ROC government, whom many in the county saw as outsiders who had imposed themselves on Taiwan by force. Chen Chu's clan shared that tradition: one biographer calls the family "pioneers of the democratic movement." Her older brothers kept Chen Chu supplied with dissident literature from the big city while she was in school, stoking her passion for justice. When she was nineteen years old, Chen Chu went to work as a secretary to Ilan's most famous independent politician, Kuo Yu-hsin. Her life in politics had begun.

As far as the ROC government was concerned, segregating Mainlanders from Taiwanese was a matter of national destiny. The government that moved to Taiwan in 1949 never accepted defeat; it planned to continue the civil war until the ROC battled back to power in the mainland. It might be cut off from most of its territory, but the state itself was intact: the National Assembly and Legislative Yuan were meeting in Taipei, the ROC's bureaucratic agencies had set up shop in offices built for Japan's colonial officials, the armed forces were fortifying their defenses—and President Chiang Kai-shek oversaw it all from the grand Presidential Office at the west end of Hsinyi Road. As long as those institutions were operating, the Republic of China was alive, and Mainlanders were its leading citizens.

Taiwanese were citizens of the ROC too, of course, but in the regime's eyes, they were citizens of a single, Johnny-come-lately province. Mainlanders, in contrast, were a microcosm of Chinese society, including people from China's many provinces and ethnic minorities. They regarded themselves as the representatives of a past and future Chinese nation; they felt obligated to their compatriots in the mainland to preserve the diversity of China's population within the ROC state. To fulfill their duties to the Chinese nation, they held themselves apart, resisted the temptation to settle down in Taiwan, and took upon themselves the job of governing the nation.

What did these duties mean in practice? To begin with, ROC citizens were required to be vigilant about protecting their Chinese identity. The province of one's birth became a key demographic datum, recorded in household registries and on identity cards. Children born in Taiwan inherited their fathers' provincial origins, allowing diversity to survive through time and intermarriage. Even if they had never visited their erstwhile hometowns, Mainlander children were raised to think of themselves as "Hunanese" or "Shanghaiese" who shared their parents' responsibility to rescue the motherland from Communism. Their duty to govern the nation meant Mainlanders trained themselves and their children for government service. Preparing for government service was exactly how Jason Hu spent his youth. He attended National Chengchi University, a training ground for future KMT leaders, and

graduated from its School of Diplomacy. From there he moved to England where he earned a PhD in international relations at Oxford. After teaching for a few years in Britain and Taiwan, Hu entered the ROC government. For Taiwanese, the ROC government's efforts to reinforce Mainlanders' Chinese identity and sense of mission looked less like the selfless humanitarianism the Mainlanders imagined it to be and more like a cynical rationalization of the newcomers' power and privilege. It is not hard to see how the demographic category "provincial origin" could look to Taiwanese like a tool for entrenching discrimination. The expectation that Mainlander youth would take government positions meant Taiwanese were expected not to take them, while a quota system guaranteeing all provinces a share of state jobs limited the number of Taiwanese who could serve.

Nor did the state limit its nationalistic indoctrination to Mainlanders. The ROC government used education and popular culture to encourage all Taiwan residents to identify with China. At first, its efforts were directed to wiping out Japanese cultural influences, but over time the focus shifted to replacing Taiwanese identities—Hakka, and Austronesian—with a homogenized Chinese identity. Even though more than three-quarters of the people living in Taiwan in 1950 spoke Hokkien, the ROC government imposed Mandarin as the national language. School curricula stressed Chinese history and mainland geography; students learned exactly as much about Taiwan—the only "province" most would ever visit—as they did about each of the ROC's thirty-five other provinces.

The most consequential of all the measures the ROC government took to preserve its legitimacy as a government for all of China was to freeze the national representative bodies. In 1948, citizens throughout China elected representatives to the Legislative Yuan and National Assembly. By 1950, about half of those elected members had found their way to Taiwan, where they took their seats in parliamentary bodies representing their constituents on the mainland. When the time came for new elections a year later, the Judicial Yuan made a fateful decision: the legislators elected in 1948 would retain their seats until new elections could be held in the mainland. Electing new members from among the residents of Taiwan, the logic went, would disenfranchise voters in the rest of China and overbalance the parliamentary bodies in favor of a single province. Of course, holding new elections in the mainland was never possible. As years—then decades—passed and the prospects of mainland recovery dimmed, freezing the legislature increasingly seemed like a stratagem for denying democratic representation to the people who actually lived under the ROC state: the people of Taiwan.

harsh violations of civil and human rights. At first, the government concentrated on consolidating support and rooting out Communist sympathizers in the Mainlander community, but crushing the legacy of the 2-28 rebellion was also a high priority. In particular, the regime sought to wipe out any thought that Taiwan might seek its destiny independent of China. Thousands of Taiwanese and Mainlanders were swept up by the White Terror, suffering imprisonment, torture, even execution.

Three high-profile White Terror cases, those of Peng Ming-min, Bo Yang, and Lei Chen, illustrate the regime's preoccupations. Peng was a Kaohsiung-born professor at National Taiwan University in the 1950s. Although he was Taiwanese and his father had narrowly escaped execution during the 2-28 Incident, Peng had good relations with the government. But the more he learned, the more he doubted the regime. In 1964 Peng and two colleagues composed a manifesto criticizing the ROC's authoritarianism and calling for reform—including rights for Taiwanese. The government viewed the document as an attack on its authority and despite pressure from the United States to be lenient, it convicted Peng and his confederates of inciting others to overthrow the ROC government. Recognizing the damage the case had done to Taipei's international reputation, Peng was soon released, but he left Taiwan in 1970 and became a leading figure in Taiwan's overseas dissident movement. Twenty-five years later he returned to Taiwan as a presidential candidate—and the standard-bearer for Taiwan independence.

Bo Yang and Lei Chen were Mainlander intellectuals who had come to Taiwan with the ROC government; both ended up in prison after publishing work critical of ROC leaders. Theirs were among the writings Chen Chu's young relatives brought home to Ilan. Bo Yang had already established himself as a leading ROC literary light—with a strong anti-Communist bent—under his real name, Guo Yidong, when he began publishing satirical essays under the name "Bo Yang." Satirical essays were a popular genre in the early decades of the ROC; social critics conducted important debates in the fleet-footed, sharp-tongued format. Bo Yang was one of the best, and his mordant criticisms of KMT politicians earned him powerful enemies. But it was Popeye, the spinach-loving cartoon character, who put Bo Yang behind bars.

One of Bo Yang's jobs was to receive the Popeye comic strip from its syndicator in New York and translate it for publication in a Taipei newspaper. In a series of strips Bo translated in early 1968, Popeye and his son were celebrating their newly acquired power as owners of an island. Bo's translation had them bragging about their status as president and crown prince of the island, and fighting over who would be elected president in this nation of two voters. Bo's enemies claimed Bo Yang was using the cartoon to make seditious fun of President Chiang Kai-shek and his son (and political heir apparent) Chiang Ching-kuo. The accusations mushroomed, and Bo eventually wrote an absurd, implausible confession. Although he later re-

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was pardoned after seven years in the Green Island Prison, and returned to writing. In the 1990s, Guo Yidong (alias Bo Yang) founded Taiwan's chapter of Amnesty International; after he died in 2008 his ashes were scattered on Green Island. A third White Terror victim, Lei Chen, posed a genuine threat—not to the survival of the ROC, but to the KMT's political interests. Lei edited an important journal called *Free China Fortnightly*. The magazine took the word "Free" in "Free China" seriously; its founding principles, printed in every issue, were to promote democracy and democratic values, fight Communist expansion, and bring freedom to Chinese living under Communist rule. Although it received funding from the government and its publisher Hu Shih was the ROC's leading intellectual, the magazine frequently took positions that put it on the wrong side of the KMT. Lei attracted strong criticism in 1957 when *Free China* published an editorial that dared suggest the ROC was unlikely to return to China and advised the regime to set aside this unrealistic goal to focus on improving life in Taiwan. Before long, Lei's activism moved beyond rhetoric. He began looking for ways to press forward his program of democratization. One idea was to join forces with Taiwanese politicians who were using local elections as a forum to promote reform.

Local elections were a unique feature of KMT authoritarianism. Japan's colonial government had introduced limited elections in the 1920s, and the KMT deepened and expanded Taiwan's local democracy after 1945. By the 1950s, Taiwanese were going to the polls regularly to elect leaders in villages, townships, counties, and cities, as well as representatives to Taiwan's Provincial Assembly. Local elections carried risks for the ruling party, but their benefits outweighed those risks. To begin with, the ROC's claim to be "Free China" required at least a veneer of democracy to be persuasive to audiences at home and abroad. Local elections provided sound bites and photo-ops to make that case, from newspaper articles about hot contests in remote counties to grainy photos of candidates pressing the flesh in rural marketplaces.

Good propaganda was not local elections' only virtue. The 2-28 Incident taught KMT leaders that controlling Taiwan by force would be terribly costly. The loss of the mainland two years later reinforced that lesson: the ROC could not rebuild and regroup in a hostile land. Recovering the mainland would require enlisting all ROC citizens in a common project of national unification; to do that, the regime needed to assimilate Taiwanese into the ROC—including its ruling party and government. Local elections thus became a vehicle for enticing Taiwanese into the system. Most Taiwanese politicians began their careers as independents; the KMT recruited the successful ones into the party. Once enrolled, they received many benefits, including electoral support, help with local governance, and opportunities to enhance their status.

Local elections also reduced the national government's administrative burden. Governing every little town and village in Taiwan would have required an enormous commitment of manpower, and expecting Hokkien, Hakka, and Austronesian communities to accept Mandarin-speaking administrators dispatched from the center was unrealistic. A far more promising approach would be to identify authentic local leaders and co-opt them into the KMT-led state. And what better way to identify those leaders than competitive elections?

Taiwan's local elections were flawed in many ways. Under martial law, new political parties were prohibited, allowing the KMT to monopolize the electoral process. Non-KMT candidates could—and did—participate, but without the ruling party's vast financial and organizational resources, their chances were slim. Access to money was especially important because islanders expected their votes to confer concrete benefits. An incumbent might point to new construction or an economic development project in the village as proof of his competence, but the easiest way to reach voters was to hand them something of value. In the 1950s, these gifts were most often simple household items—a towel, a box of soap powder, a packet of cigarettes—but before long, cash payments to voters were the norm. Vote buying made political campaigns expensive and lengthened the KMT candidates' head start. On the rare occasion that its financial and organizational advantages fell short, the KMT sometimes intervened in the vote counting process to deny election to independent candidates. To protect its power further, the KMT made sure to limit elected local officials' influence. The important decisions—including decisions about money—were made in Taipei.

Despite their flaws, local elections inspired enthusiastic participation. They were a stage on which Taiwanese acted out conflicts and pursued ambitions. The personal stakes were high and the competition was often heated. Assembly and council elections took place in multimember constituencies that easily devolved into unpredictable free-for-alls in which all the top vote-getters—sometimes a half dozen or more—were winners. The complexity of multimember elections increased their excitement and uncertainty.

In most counties and cities, KMT-linked politicians formed factions within the party to help them manage the complicated electoral rules; before long, a pseudo-partisan competition evolved in which faction labels (White versus Red; Mountain versus Ocean; Lin versus Chen) supplanted the KMT party brand. The fact that all the candidates were members of the same party gave the KMT leadership some leverage, but factions could be feisty. Factionalism allowed groups in society to compete for resources and power within a system of rules and institutions defined by the central government.

It was this lively crowd of grassroots politicians sparring in a complex and competitive arena that *Free China* publisher Lei Chen hoped to harness to the cause of democratic reform. In 1957, several independent politicians joined forces to contest local and provincial elections. Under the name "Dangwai (Non-Party) Candidates' Alliance" they endorsed candidates in local races, sponsored public meetings and openly criticized the KMT's unfair election practices. Six of their recommended candidates were elected to the Provincial Assembly, where they advocated for democratic reform. *Free China* staffers met with Alliance leaders to discuss ways they could work together to advance a pro-democracy agenda. In 1960, Lei Chen's magazine published an article calling for a new political party, to be called the China Democratic Party.

The notion of popular, electable Taiwanese politicians joining forces with Mainlander reformers was a fearsome prospect for KMT leaders. The Taiwan Garrison Command—the military unit responsible for enforcing martial law—arrested Lei and accused him of spreading Communist propaganda. Efforts by well-placed Mainlanders to free him failed. When a KMT legislator questioned the government's actions on the floor of the Legislative Yuan, the party suspended his membership. Lei's collaborators tried to press forward with the new party, but it never got off the ground. Lei Chen spent ten years in prison.

One of the men who worked with Lei Chen to bridge the gap between Mainlander and Taiwanese reformers was Kao Yu-shu. Kao was one of the most successful independent politicians of his day; in 1954, he was elected mayor of Taipei City, Taiwan's largest municipality. When he sought a second term in 1957, the story made international headlines. A *Time* magazine article published in May described Kao as "no Kuomintang . . . party stalwart, but a hard-campaigning islander":

Overruling the advice of old-line ward bosses (who wanted to gerrymander Taipei into an independent city and make its mayor a political appointee), Kuomintang reform politicians set out to defeat Independent Kao in the next election on his own terms. . . . Candidates toured their constituencies in open cars, sound trucks blared, backs were slapped, babies kissed. Nearly all Kuomintang candidates were Taiwanese. The new tactics paid off. In Taipei, where 82% of 376,870 voters cast their ballots in a hotly argued and cleanly fought campaign, the Kuomintang candidate, Formosa-born Huang Chi-jui, roundly trounced Independent Kao, despite the fact that Kao piled up 9,000 more votes than in 1954. Government party candidates, all native Taiwanese, took 46 of the Provincial Assembly's 66 seats, four of the island's five mayoralties and all 16 magistrate posts.

Kao's political career did not end in 1957. He was elected mayor twice more, beating KMT candidates both times. Finally, the "old-line ward bosses" got

their way: to avoid yet another embarrassment, the regime elevated Taipei City to "special municipality status" with an appointed mayor in 1967. Cleverly, though, the central government gave Kao the position; later he was appointed to a cabinet post.

Arresting Lei and muzzling Kao broke up the collaboration between Mainlander intellectuals and Taiwanese politicians, but it did not silence the nascent opposition movement. Local politicians continued to use electoral campaign events as occasions for criticizing the regime; those who were successful took their message into municipal and provincial government chambers. And the size of their platform was about to expand. The ROC government had been designed for the whole of China, so when its jurisdiction contracted to include only Taiwan and a few tiny islands, its institutions were an awkward fit. To cope, the regime walled off the national government, sharply limiting Taiwanese people's access to it. Provincial and local politics flourished, but national politics became ever more frozen and crabbed. Factions battled behind the scenes for power and favor within the ruling party while the national representative bodies apathized. Fewer than half the members of the Legislative Yuan and National Assembly elected on the mainland in 1948 were still attending sessions a decade later. Many had never come to the island; many of those who did make the move were growing old and infirm. By the mid-1960s, the government faced a crisis.

In 1966 the National Assembly approved "supplementary" elections to replenish the national bodies' dwindling ranks. Three years later, Taiwanese elected fifteen new representatives to the National Assembly and eleven to the Legislative Yuan. All of the National Assembly members and eight of the new legislators were KMT members, and they represented a tiny portion—less than 3 percent—of all national representatives, so the elections posed no threat to the KMT's power. Nonetheless, the change was significant. All twenty-six new representatives were Taiwanese, and they won their seats in competitive elections. For the first time, the Taiwanese people had a voice in national institutions. The regime's decision to hold supplementary elections also represented a tacit acknowledgment that stabilizing the ROC's political future could not wait until the mainland was recovered.

As the 1970s dawned, the island seemed headed toward a political breakdown, but instead the decade saw a democratic breakthrough. The supplementary elections had not reversed the national institutions' decline, and Chiang Kai-shek's advancing age made the question of succession increasingly urgent. Taiwan's economy stumbled due to disrupted energy supplies and flagging global markets. At the same time, the People's Republic of China was recovering from its chaotic Cultural Revolution and establishing diplomatic ties with countries around the world, undercutting the KMT's hopes for mainland recovery and undermining Taiwan's international status. Worst of

all, from the KMT's point of view, the United States, Taiwan's longtime ally, opened a dialogue with Beijing in 1971.

It was a perfect storm: political decline, economic troubles, and international isolation. Taiwan's leaders could have responded by tightening their grip and staying the course. But that is not what they did. Chiang Kai-shek's impending death was a taboo subject in public, but behind the scenes KMT leaders were smoothing the way for his son, Chiang Ching-kuo, to take his place. In 1972, the younger Chiang—known in the West by his initials, CCK—was appointed premier. After his father died in April 1975, CCK took over the all-important position of KMT party chair. He became president in 1978.

Chiang Ching-kuo's biography held little promise for his future as a reformer. From age fifteen to twenty-seven he lived in the Soviet Union, first as a student, then as a political hostage. He was allowed to return to China only after his father revived his alliance with the Chinese Communist Party when Japan invaded China. As an officer of the ROC government, CCK played many roles, but his image in Taiwan was shaped by his fifteen years heading the secret police. To many Taiwanese, his was the hand behind the widespread human rights abuses of the White Terror era.

As CCK ascended toward the presidency, however, he chose a different approach. As premier, he opened new opportunities for Taiwanese in government. While Mainlanders retained a disproportionate share of national bureaucratic positions, CCK promoted Taiwanese for provincial and local posts. He appointed the first Taiwanese provincial governor and vice premier. He also spearheaded efforts to increase Taiwanese participation in the KMT, both at the grassroots level and in the leadership: between 1973 and 1979, Taiwanese representation on the KMT central standing committee more than doubled. In 1982 Chiang surprised observers by naming Lee Teng-hui—a Taiwanese—to be his vice president (and, given CCK's failing health, his likely successor). The officials CCK patronized—Taiwanese and Mainlander alike—shared his reformist ideology. Under his leadership they worked to revitalize and rejuvenate the KMT, and to make elections an integral component of the KMT's legitimacy formula.

Chiang's reformist inclinations were real, but limited. His goal was to reinvigorate the regime; he had no interest in toppling it. As the American Taiwan-watcher Gerald McBeath wrote in early 1977, "The regime has clearly expressed the limitations on dissent. Those criticizing high officials, demanding the termination of martial law, or suggesting negotiations with China will be jailed, and electoral procedures will be bent to deny office to opposition candidates with a strong base of support." Opposing the KMT was a grueling proposition. In 1977, Chen Chui's boss, the dissident politician Kuo Yuhsin, left Taiwan for good after years of surveillance and harassment.

Under Chiang Ching-kuo, the KMT cultivated a more professional, public-spirited image. In the 1960s, most political candidates were driven by ambition and opportunities for personal gain. Money flowed freely between the central government and elected officials; the temptation to redirect some of that cash into private hands was sometimes irresistible. To make matters worse, KMT leaders tended to use party resources to manipulate the KMT factions that dominated local politics, reinforcing the pervasive corruption.

CCK sought to change those dynamics by nominating well-qualified candidates in place of well-connected politicians in the 1972 municipal elections. Money kept mainstream politicians tethered to the ruling party to ensure their access to the spoils of office; the threat of losing important nominations kept them obedient. CCK's reforms angered many local politicians, who felt the party had violated its deal with the factions. The breach created an opportunity for Taiwan's growing opposition movement. Provincial and municipal elections scheduled for December 1977 brought these trends to a head. Dissident politicians Huang Hsin-chieh and Kang Ning-hsiang organized candidates to contest the elections under the banner of a new Dangwai movement. Huang had dropped out of the KMT years earlier and had a successful career as an independent. He supported Taipei City mayor Kao Yu-shu and he won seats in the Taipei City Council and the Legislative Yuan. In 1969, Kang Ning-hsiang had acted as Huang's campaign manager during his successful legislative bid. The coordinated Dangwai strategy these two activists engineered threw a wild card into the electoral process.

The KMT's reform-minded leadership decided to repeat its strategy from 1972 and denied nominations to many candidates linked to local factions. This time, the local factions fought back. Rather than mobilize their networks of supporters behind the KMT nominees who had displaced them, factions in several localities provided tacit support to Dangwai candidates challenging KMT nominees. Dangwai politicians captured four municipal executive positions and fourteen Provincial Assembly seats—other non-KMT candidates captured another seven, leaving the KMT with less than three-quarters of a chamber it had once monopolized. In one locality, rioting broke out when Dangwai supporters suspected a fraudulent vote count was underway. The incident revealed the depth of public distrust toward the KMT—and the importance of elections to the ROC's legitimacy.

After the 1977 fiasco the KMT abandoned its plans to replace local factions with higher-brow politicians, but the change came too late to arrest the Dangwai's growing momentum. The next round of elections was scheduled for December 1978, and the opposition again coordinated a slate of candidates, this time under the banner of the Dangwai Campaign Assistance Group. Huang Hsin-chieh headed the group, with help from the

activists Shih Ming-teh and Chen Chu. The Dangwai group spent months preparing for the elections, but just days before the balloting was to take place the U.S. government announced its intention to normalize relations with the People's Republic of China—and to break off diplomatic ties with Taiwan. Although Taiwanese leaders knew the move was coming, the announcement's stark finality traumatized Taipei. Fearing chaos, the government called off the elections.

Dangwai politicians and activists were divided over how to respond. Moderates believed the regime was justified in postponing the balloting, but the militants saw the move as an excuse to derail the Dangwai's growth. The disagreement reflected an underlying difference of opinion within the Dangwai group. Despite their successful collaboration, the Dangwai legislators Huang Hsin-chieh and Kang Ning-hsiang did not see eye to eye on every issue. Kang advocated "political kungfu," turning a stronger opponent's strength against him rather than trying to overpower him. Huang believed in using strong words and actions to win democratic reform. Their relationship characterized a pattern in Taiwan's opposition movement: moderate and militant groups working together despite tactical disagreements.

Another important Dangwai politician was Yu Teng-fa, father of a long-lasting political dynasty. Yu was elected Kaohsiung County executive in 1977 under the Dangwai umbrella. His political career had begun in the KMT, where Yu was affiliated with his county's Black faction. The Black faction existed to do battle with the White and Red factions, all of which got their start under the KMT banner. For Yu, joining the KMT was a pragmatic act, not a sign of ideological commitment. But as time passed, Yu found the KMT less supportive of his undertakings—and himself more at odds with its goals—so when the Dangwai came into being he attached himself and his faction—a small army of vote bosses and ward heelers—to the upstart political force. Yu Teng-fa called the government's decision to postpone the 1978 elections an unconstitutional act that exposed the KMT's "martial law mentality," and for that he was arrested. The arrest sparked protests in his home county. The authorities removed the Dangwai-linked Taoyuan County executive Hsu Hsin-liang from office after he joined demonstrations in support of Yu. The conflict between the regime and the militants was escalating.

Yu's arrest marked the beginning of a year of rising activism. Huang Hsin-chieh pulled together key players from the Dangwai Campaign Assistance Group for a new enterprise, a dissident magazine called *Formosa*. The magazine's staff included high-profile Dangwai politicians such as Hsu Hsin-liang and provincial assembly members Chang Chun-hung and Lin Yi-hsiung as well as full-time activists like Chen Chu, Shih Ming-teh, and women's rights crusader Annette Lu. *Formosa* was the militants' answer to Kang Ning-hsiang's moderate publication, *The Eighties*. Both magazines

criticized the regime and called for democratic reforms, but while *The Eighties* advocated working within the system, *Formosa* called for direct action against the government. The *Formosa* group announced plans to open "service centers" around the island, creating a network of locally based activist headquarters. With publications, coordinated electoral campaigns, and plans for local branches, the Dangwai was fast becoming a political party in all but name.

The *Formosa* group decided to sponsor a rally in Kaohsiung City on December 10, 1979, to recognize International Human Rights Day. As demonstrators gathered outside the *Formosa* service center in Kaohsiung, police surrounded the group. According to the activists, riot police trapped the demonstrators, then advanced on them with tear gas, shields, and truncheons. Photos of the incident show demonstrators using their placards to fight the heavily armored officers; Dangwai activists insist the police sent agents provocateurs to start the violence. Some police and demonstrators were injured, none seriously.

The regime seized on the Kaohsiung Incident as an excuse to round up the opposition. Chen Chu was arrested on December 13 at the *Formosa Magazine* office in Taipei. The office was in an upper story of Dangwai provincial assembly member Lin Yi-hsiung's home. Chen Chu loved working and living at the Lins' house; she was especially fond of their twin daughters. They were too young for school, so even though they lived in the heart of Taipei, their Hokkien speech bore their parents' distinctive Ilan inflection. Listening to their childish chatter in her own local accent was a tonic to the hardworking young activist.

Chen Chu was seized in her pajamas—in their race to round up the Dangwai, the police would not pause even to let her dress. She and seven other members of the *Formosa* staff were tried in military courts on charges of subversion. Thirty-seven others faced civilian trials. Even though Hsu Hsin-liang was out of the country when the demonstration occurred, prosecutors blamed him for the violence and he took political asylum in Sweden. Fearing a "fatal accident" if he were captured, Shih Ming-teh slipped through the police dragnet and sought refuge with Reverend Kao Chun-ning, head of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. Kao eventually arranged for Shih's safe arrest, only to find himself facing a seven-year prison sentence for harboring a fugitive. Shih was given a life sentence. Chen Chu was sentenced to twelve years. The entire militant group, it seemed, was in prison or exile. With the militants decimated, the moderates stepped up. Kang Ning-hsiang assembled a team of first-rate attorneys to defend his Dangwai comrades. Taking the case carried enormous risks for the lawyers. For Huang Hsin-chieh's defense, Kang called on Chen Shui-bian—a southerner who had overcome enormous odds to become one of Taiwan's leading young attorneys. In his autobiography, Chen wrote that when he was very young, his

mother would put him in a hole near the fields where she worked as a tenant farmer so he would not wander off. From this poor-man's playpen, Chen worked his way to Taiwan's top university. He qualified as a lawyer three years into the standard five-year law course, joined the commercial practice at a top law firm and married into Taiwan's Hokkien elite. Chen had heard Huang Hsin-chieh speak years earlier, and the firebrand's bold oratory left him "impressed from the bottom of my heart." But when the call came, the up-and-coming young lawyer with everything to lose hesitated. It was only when his wife urged him to take the case that Chen agreed.

The Kaohsiung defendants' legal team included top talent, but few expected to win. The regime was determined, as the Chinese saying goes, to "kill children to scare monkeys." In making the Kaohsiung defendants pay a terrible price for challenging the regime, the state planned to silence them and cow their would-be supporters. But no one was prepared for just how far the nightmare would go.

On February 27, 1980, defendant Lin Yi-hsiung's wife visited him in jail. Lin, along with several other defendants, had been beaten. His wife saw his injuries and asked if he was being tortured. Lin, who says his captors had threatened to harm his family if he spoke of his treatment, did not deny her suspicions. The next day, while police had Lin's home under twenty-four-hour surveillance, someone broke in and stabbed his mother and seven-year-old twin daughters to death. His older daughter survived with terrible injuries. Chen Chu got the news in her prison cell: the sweet vivacious girls with their adorable Ilan accents were dead. It was the lowest moment of her six-year ordeal.

The crime—which has never been solved—horrified Taiwanese. Lin Yi-hsiung had played no role in the Human Rights Day demonstration; he had not even planned to attend, but was called to the rally late in the day to help calm the crowd. Yet he was in prison, his family slaughtered. The brutality of the attack was unprecedented, beyond comprehension, and there was no way the regime could escape blame. A political show trial designed to silence the Dangwai instead exposed the regime's merciless determination to crush the opposition.

The Kaohsiung Incident and its bloody aftermath marred the KMT's reputation. Even within the government, there were stirrings of resistance. In 1982 the Provincial Assembly defied the ruling party and passed a resolution seeking clemency for their colleague, Lin Yi-hsiung. In the three years following the trial, Taiwanese showed their sympathy for the defendants—and their outrage at the regime—by turning out in droves to support their wives and attorneys, several of whom ran for office. Electoral campaigns gave the dissidents a platform on which to speak, and their passion moved the nation. Members of the "wives and lawyers club" finished first in a number of districts in the 1983 legislative elections. Lin Yi-hsiung's wife—

the murdered children's mother—received the third largest vote total of any candidate in the country.

The Kaohsiung Incident also damaged the KMT's reputation abroad. For decades, Washington had overlooked its anti-Communist ally's human rights abuses, but by 1979, the United States had switched its allegiance to Beijing. Taipei had lost its privileged position and with it, protection against scrutiny. The heightened attention to human rights issues under President Jimmy Carter created a welcoming environment for Taiwanese activists in the United States. On International Human Rights Day in 1982 Senator Edward Kennedy held a press conference to commemorate the Kaohsiung Incident. He said, "Political repression on Taiwan blights our mutual interests and undermines ties between our two peoples. I have spoken out against serious human rights abuses in the People's Republic of China, with which we are building an important new relationship, and I believe that the American people cannot stand aloof from capricious imprisonment and persecution in Taiwan." Pressure from the United States was yet another factor complicating the KMT's efforts to stay the course on political reform.

In short, the KMT-led government faced intense pressure to reform in the early 1980s. Taiwan's economy was strong, but, paradoxically, economic success seemed only to encourage the opposition—and increase its funding. Mainlanders dominated the central government, but in business—especially the small and medium-sized manufacturing firms driving Taiwan's explosive export growth—Taiwanese ruled. As the PRC recovered from its disastrous "Cultural Revolution," the ROC's chances of recovering the mainland appeared more remote than ever; meanwhile, the ROC was losing international recognition. Squabbling between Dangwai militants and moderates continued, but the opposition pulled itself together to post impressive electoral gains. A succession of scandals early in the decade only reinforced the gloomy prognosis facing the KMT-led authoritarian regime. The early release of the Kaohsiung Incident defendants—Lin Yi-hsiung in 1984; Annette Lu in 1985; Chen Chu in 1986; Huang Hsin-chieh and others in 1987, "ringleader" Shih Ming-teh in 1990—represented a tacit admission that the case against them was unjust.

Since the days of Lei Chen, the Dangwai's ultimate goal had been to found a new political party. Both strands within the movement shared this objective. For a new generation of militants organizing in the 1980s, founding a party was another way to challenge the KMT's monopoly on power. For the moderates, it was a tool for more effective electoral combat. In 1985, Dangwai candidates joined local elections under the slogan, "New Party, New Atmosphere and Self-Determination will Save Taiwan." A year later, Kang Ning-hsiang joined militant activist Lin Cheng-chieh to found the Committee for Organizing a Party and Carrying Out Its Construction.

Dangwai activists took encouragement from signs the reform faction was gaining ground in the KMT. In early 1986, President Chiang Ching-kuo made an important speech to the KMT Central Committee. The speech suggested CCK was ready to begin lifting the remaining restrictions on full constitutional government, including martial law, the ban on new political parties, the suspension of national-level elections, and measures limiting local autonomy. The list included all of the issues Dangwai activists cared most about, although the president did not address the activists' intangible concerns, mainly equality for Taiwanese and Mainlanders and the increasingly popular idea that Taiwan should think of itself as a self-determining entity.

On September 28, 1986, Dangwai activists gathered at Taipei's Grand Hotel to finalize their candidate list for elections three months later. As a pet project of Chiang Kai-shek's wife, the Grand Hotel seems an odd choice for the opposition's meeting, but the grandeur of the setting suited the historic business they had come to conduct.

If their business was historic, it was risky, too. Only a few days earlier, the minister of justice had reminded Taiwanese that forming new parties remained illegal and punishable by law. To avoid trouble, the Dangwai activists reserved their meeting room in the Grand Hotel under the guise of a local Rotary Club—although with Dangwai celebrities like the newly released political prisoner Chen Chu in the room, no one was fooled. The participants had a full agenda, and it was late in the day when a proposal to found a political party came to the floor. The activists debated the measure—would a new party give the KMT a pretext to exclude their candidates from the December election? Would it be better to form a committee to study founding a new party?—but when the chair called the vote, the answer was unequivocal. Moderates and militants stood united behind the banner of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).

The opposition's move sparked a vigorous debate within the KMT. Conservatives believed failing to enforce the law against the new party would invite chaos. Reformers feared the regime's shaky legitimacy might not survive another crackdown. In the end, President Chiang and his pro-reform team prevailed. Following behind-the-scenes assurances from DPP moderates that the new party would stay away from the KMT's chief taboos—Communism and Taiwan independence—the regime did nothing. A week later, CCK told the *Washington Post* he intended to lift martial law as soon as a national security law was in place, a promise he delivered in July 1987.

Ending martial law enabled massive changes in Taiwan's political scene. Martial law provisions had restricted far more than dissident political activity and new political organizations. To begin with, it sharply limited the media. Prior to 1987, only thirty-one newspaper licenses existed in Taiwan. For decades, publishers had traded those licenses within a narrow circle of

KMT-linked organizations and firms. The end of martial law opened the industry to anyone with the capital and ambition to publish a newspaper. Among the first new licenses was one issued to Kang Ning-hsiang's *Capital Daily*. Like most of the papers born in that heady moment of possibility, the paper failed. But the new papers failed for financial reasons, not because their political views threatened the KMT. The government did not issue new television broadcasting licenses, so the three existing stations—all closely tied to the regime—kept their monopoly, but it did open new radio frequencies. Hokkien and Hakka-language broadcasters were the main beneficiaries.

Ironically, the DPP was not the first opposition party to gain official recognition when martial law ended. Technically, it was still illegal, while several other parties applied for and attained legal status as soon as martial law was gone. However, none of those parties had the DPP's political weight; a significant third party was not born until 1993, when the Chinese New Party split from the KMT. The DPP proved too important to ignore, and within a few months, the Democratic Progressives had achieved formal recognition. Taiwan was now officially a multiparty state.

President Chiang Ching-kuo accomplished these critical changes just in time. On January 18, 1988, barely six months after ending martial law, he died. His reformist agenda lived on, however, in his successor, Lee Teng-hui. Lee was born in 1923, a subject of the Japanese empire. It was not until he was a grown man that Lee became a Chinese citizen. He studied in Kyoto during World War II and served in the civil defense forces. A decade later, he was in the United States, studying at Iowa State University. He worked as an economist in Taiwan for several years then returned to the United States, earning a PhD in agricultural economics at Cornell University in 1968.

One element missing from Lee Teng-hui's varied background was any relationship with China or its ruling party. Still, when Lee returned to his homeland after graduate school, the KMT was an obvious affiliation for the brilliant, ambitious, globally savvy young Taiwanese. He joined the KMT in 1971 and was put in charge of agricultural policy. In 1978 he was appointed mayor of Taipei City. Three years later he became governor of Taiwan province. From there, he moved into position as CCK's vice president.

During his years as a KMT member and ROC government official, Lee stuck close to the party's official ideology, including its insistence on recovering the mainland. He made hundreds of speeches paying homage to the KMT's dream of mainland recovery. As president, he instituted the Guidelines for National Unification, a blueprint for uniting Taiwan with mainland China. It was only after he stepped down, after twelve years as president of the Republic of China that Lee was free to speak his mind. And what was in his mind was surprising indeed: he soon became the world's most prominent Taiwan independence advocate.

When he assumed the presidency in 1988, those stunning revelations were far in the future. At the time, the big news was that Taiwan's leadership at last was in the hands of a Hokkien-speaking Taiwanese, not a Mainlander transplant. The fact that Lee was also a KMT-affiliated technocrat did little to dampen his compatriots' enthusiasm. Taiwanese rejoiced—even the opposition recognized that the elevation of one of their own to the top position was a big step forward. At the same time, though, Taiwanese worried that Lee might have a hard time winning support from his KMT colleagues. He would need to be confirmed as party head, and then, in 1990, he would need to win reelection in a National Assembly vote. Many observers wondered whether Lee had the political dexterity to overcome conservatives' objections and secure his position.

In the early months of Lee's presidency, observers focused their attention on the hard-core conservatives pressing him from the right. This faction had dominated ROC politics for decades; without his mentor, CCK, Lee seemed vulnerable. What resources could he muster to counterbalance the conservatives' political weight? Lee Teng-hui's response was pure genius: instead of trying to pacify the conservatives, Lee harnessed the popularity of democratization to strengthen his own position. He became a leading reform advocate; in the process, he increased popular support for the KMT and marginalized the conservatives.

In December 1989, county and city executiveships, provincial assembly seats, and supplementary positions in the Legislative Yuan were all up for election. In its campaign, the DPP hammered the KMT on the slow pace of reform. In particular, the Democratic Progressives demanded the "senior representatives" (whom opposition supporters called "old bandits") elected in 1948 yield their seats to new representatives elected from among Taiwan's population. The issue worked well for the DPP, because the KMT—despite Lee's efforts—had not been able to persuade the senior representatives to vote themselves out of a job. While the KMT won the vast majority of seats in 1989, the DPP made significant progress. Lee used the election results as evidence that the KMT must push forward with reform to remain electorally viable.

A few months after the election, Lee's strategy faced a critical test. The presidential term Lee had inherited from CCK was ending and he needed the National Assembly—overwhelmingly populated by senior representatives—to confirm his bid for another term. The conservatives put forward a team of their own, and it took Lee and the reform faction months to persuade his opponents to withdraw. To recapture his momentum, Lee used another bold, creative move: he convened a National Affairs Conference. The idea was to gather representatives of all political stripes with scholars, business leaders, and other VIPs to build consensus on how Taiwan could realize the democracy promised in the ROC Constitution.

Some critical issues were resolved even before the conference began. Taiwan's supreme court, the Council of Grand Justices, ruled the senior representatives must step down. Then Lee announced a plan to abolish the martial-law era statute that gave the president extra-constitutional powers. Delegates to the National Affairs Conference continued the reform trend, agreeing to pull down the remaining obstacles to democratization. Among their recommendations were direct election of the provincial governor, Taipei mayor, and Kaohsiung mayor—even the president. As the architect of the conference, Lee Teng-hui earned praise for bringing the island to consensus on completing its democratic transition.

The early 1990s saw a cascade of democratic "firsts": the first election of all-new National Assembly members in 1991, the first election of an all-new Legislative Yuan in 1992, the reintroduction of directly elected Kaohsiung City and Taipei City mayors in 1994, the first direct election of the provincial governor in 1994, and, in 1996, the first popular presidential election—which made Lee Teng-hui the first person in history to be directly elected to lead an ethnic Chinese nation.

Jason Hu left teaching in 1990 to become an aide to President Lee, joining an ROC government far different from the one his father had served in the 1940s and 1950s. In a succession of positions in the "new Taiwan," including government spokesman and representative to the United States, Hu understood that his primary duty was to the people of Taiwan. As a diplomat, his job was not to rehash the Cold War, but to cultivate support for a democratic pro-Western Taiwan.

Lee Teng-hui was a prodigious force in Taiwan's modern history. He presided over the transformation of its domestic politics while deftly managing its fast-moving relations with the mainland. He fended off unwelcome initiatives and refused to back down in the face of military intimidation. In doing so, Lee signaled to Beijing that unification in any form would require lengthy and sensitive negotiation. He made it clear that whether Beijing's plan was to absorb Taiwan into the PRC or unite with the ROC in a marriage of equals, Taiwan would hold out for its own interests. He was wildly popular, so much so that the media coined the pseudo-psychological term "Lee Teng-hui Complex" to describe Taiwan people's attachment to him.

Inevitably, the retirement of this towering figure left a yawning hole in Taiwan's political scene, so the approaching 2000 presidential election brought Taiwan voters' excitement and uncertainty to new levels. Few observers believed a Democratic Progressive candidate could win the presidency. The party's vote share in national and municipal elections hovered around 40 percent, a respectable showing, but not enough to win a presidential contest—and its 1996 presidential candidate had done only half that well. Still, the party united behind its best hope, Chen Shui-bian.

In 1994 Chen—often called by the Hokkien nickname A-Bian—had exploited a split in the KMT's vote base to win the most valuable prize in Taiwan's local politics: the Taipei City mayorship. Elected with only 44 percent of the vote, Chen set aside ideological issues to address the city's practical needs. In his four-year term, the DPP mayor managed to win over much of Taipei's heavily Mainlander population; his approval ratings climbed to over 70 percent. Chen sought a second term in 1998, but this time the KMT was ready. It nominated its most popular politician—the charismatic Ma Ying-jeou—and made sure there would be no challenger from the conservative side. Although Chen's share of the vote improved in both number and percentage, Ma won the election. DPP supporters saw the outcome as proof that Mainlanders were unwilling to support a Taiwanese—even one as successful as Chen. The 1998 setback had at least one benefit, though: it freed Chen to run for president in 2000. And incredibly, he found himself once again facing a divided KMT. Lee Teng-hui had several would-be successors, men waiting with disguised impatience for him to step down. The 2000 presidential race was their chance. Despite party leaders' heroic efforts to defuse intra-party competition, two KMT politicians insisted on running. The first was Lee's vice president and heir apparent Lien Chan. When Lien was named the KMT's official nominee, another presidential hopeful, James Soong, announced he would run as an independent. In 1994, Soong had been elected governor of Taiwan province, which included all of the ROC's territory except Taipei City and Kaohsiung City, making him the only KMT politician other than Lee to have experience winning a large-scale election. As governor (the position was eliminated along with most provincial governing bodies in 1998), Soong forged tight alliances with local politicians across the island. He used those relationships to challenge the KMT party apparatus and its standard-bearer, Lien Chan, in the 2000 election.

#### THE CHEN SHUI-BIAN ERA

When the votes were counted, the 2000 election turned out to be a replay of the 1994 Taipei mayor's race. Chen picked up the usual DPP vote share, while Soong and Lien split the KMT vote. Party leaders insisted to the end that Lien would win, and refused to transfer their support to Soong. Lien and Soong both tried last-ditch "dump-save" appeals—a popular Taiwanese electoral strategy of urging voters to "dump" a failing first-choice candidate in order to "save" their second choice—but if their appeals worked at all, they merely traded votes. In the end, the KMT won its traditional vote share, but divided in such a way that neither candidate was successful. Chen won with 39 percent. Soong followed with 37 percent, and Lien took up the rear with 23 percent of the vote.

The 2000 election was truly historic: an opposition party candidate had captured the top office in the Republic of China. Chen Shui-bian had completed his journey from poverty to presidency. After decades of struggle, Taiwan's democratic activists and politicians took enormous pride and satisfaction in Chen's victory. But they were not naïve about its implications. They knew a president elected by a plurality of the vote, facing a legislature dominated by KMT politicians who had long assumed governing was their party's birthright, would face daunting challenges. As one of Chen's young aides told me a few weeks after the election, "For about the first three hours we were ecstatic. And then the truth began to set in, and I thought, 'what have we gotten into now?'"

Some observers feared the KMT might not accept defeat, but KMT activists directed their ire inward. Some blamed Soong for splitting the vote; others blamed Lee Teng-hui, whom they said had rammed through an unpopular nominee but not done enough to secure his victory. Before long, a conspiracy theory was circulating: Lee secretly preferred Chen, and chose Lien precisely because he knew he couldn't win. The rancor within the party was too great to overcome, and before long, Lee quit the KMT. Soong founded a party of his own, the People First Party (PFP). During the Chen presidency, the KMT and PFP cooperated in what they called the "Pan-Blue Camp." Soong's fortunes declined and most PFP politicians eventually were reabsorbed into the KMT.

The Blue Camp didn't try to overturn the election results, but they had no interest in helping Chen govern, either. The Blues held a large majority in the Legislative Yuan, and they used that power to block Chen's initiatives—including some that were consistent with past KMT policy. When Chen selected a respected KMT official to be his premier, the poor man was pilloried by his former colleagues for accepting the post. Chen's high-level appointees were a mix of KMT members, Democratic Progressives, and independents; for the non-KMT administrators, this was their first taste of high-level service. Chen Chu, who had headed the labor affairs department in Kaohsiung City, was tapped to head the Council of Labor Affairs, a cabinet-level post. Losing the presidential office forced many KMT bureaucrats to look for new work. In 2001, Jason Hu left the protection of the civil service and entered the political fray as a candidate for the mayoralship of Taichung City, his hometown. He won the post.

PRC policy toward the Chen administration mirrored the Blue Camp's obstructionism, denying Chen any accomplishments in cross-Strait relations. During the campaign, Chen promised to push for direct transportation links between Taiwan and China. Taiwanese businesspeople were losing a fortune in time and money by flying indirectly, typically on flights that connected through Hong Kong. What should have been a few hours' flying time from Taipei to Shanghai or Beijing became an expensive, full-day

ordeal. But without Beijing's cooperation, Chen could not deliver on his promise, and the PRC was not about to hand him a political victory. The diversions to Hong Kong continued, costing Taiwanese businesses millions. With little to show for his moderation, Chen found himself under increasing pressure from hardliners in his own party. Those who had questioned the wisdom of the moderate strategy felt vindicated: obviously, they argued, neither the PRC nor the KMT was interested in real negotiation or compromise. Trying to cooperate with them was futile; if the Chen presidency was to mean anything, they said, Chen must take whatever power he possessed and use it to advance cherished DPP goals.

The showdown came in October. When the legislature appropriated funds to complete a fourth nuclear plant, Chen refused to release the money. Opposing nuclear power was a defining principle for the DPP, but KMT legislators were so furious at what they considered an abuse of executive power that they launched a petition to recall him from office. It was the first of many recall attempts that would be made during Chen Shui-bian's eight years in office.

Chen's outreach to Beijing lasted longer, but when the first two years of his presidency passed with little sign that the PRC's position might change, Chen finally tacked in a new direction. In August 2002, Chen infuriated Beijing when he described Taiwan and China as "one country on each side of the Strait." He followed the statement with a series of policies that enraged the Beijing leadership even more—including endorsing a long-simmering campaign to institute a national referendum process. Chen argued that ballot measures could be used to signal societal consensus or resolve controversial policy issues, but the truth was, he also hoped to find a way around the legislative resistance that stymied his efforts.

Beyond these practical benefits, Chen and his party saw political advantage in the referendum plan. The idea of a referendum process made conservatives nervous, not least because the first people to mention the idea were activists in exile who hoped to use a plebiscite to bring about Taiwan independence. Still, conservatives were wary of coming out too strongly against the idea for fear they would be pilloried for trying to limit Taiwan's democracy. The DPP was more comfortable fighting on ideological ground, especially when its position could be construed as standing up for Taiwan's democracy and freedom.

If referendum in general was a winning issue for the DPP, specific referendum proposals could be even more advantageous. DPP activists believed they could design no-lose propositions—a proposal supporting Taiwan's participation in international organizations, for example—that would mobilize the party's base and appeal to centrist voters. If the referendum were held on the same day as other elections, it could have a "coattails effect" that would sweep DPP candidates into office. The timing seemed perfect

for Chen Shui-bian's reelection in March 2004. The only thing lacking was legislation establishing a referendum process.

The battle to pass that legislation dominated Taiwan politics in 2002 and 2003. PRC leaders were convinced the referendum process was aimed at advancing the independence cause, and the way the DPP designed its referendum-enabling law gave credence to those fears. To make it harder for the KMT to oppose, the DPP proposal made it very difficult to call for a referendum—except in one circumstance: if Taiwan were threatened militarily, it could use a so-called defensive referendum to rally the people. To the PRC, this looked like an escape clause justifying an independence vote. To Taiwanese voters, it looked entirely reasonable. The KMT fell back on its general distrust of the DPP as its argument against the referendum proposal—a weak position.

For months, the KMT used its legislative majority to block the DPP's referendum proposal, but in October 2003, Chen Shui-bian experienced an unexpected windfall thanks to an unlikely benefactor: the United States. For George W. Bush, support for Taiwan was an ideological reflex. Early in his presidency he made a number of gestures that suggested he would be more pro-Taiwan than any recent predecessor, including, at one point saying the United States would do "whatever it takes" to help Taiwan defend itself. America's basic policy did not change, but U.S. foreign policy officials sent mixed messages and Taiwanese officials interpreted them according to their own preferences. When it came to the referendum project, American officials were troubled by Chen's lackadaisical attitude toward Beijing's objections, but they were reluctant to go on record opposing a democratic right for the Taiwanese people.

The issue took on new urgency in September 2003 when Chen announced his intention to create a new constitution for Taiwan, to be ratified by a popular referendum in 2006 and put into effect in 2008. While Chen argued that Taiwan needed a new constitution to address inefficiencies in existing political institutions, he also said the new document would make Taiwan "a normal, complete, great state." In Beijing, these were incendiary statements; Chinese leaders convinced themselves that a new constitution would mark the beginning of an independent Taiwan. Washington was not happy with the idea either, nor was it pleased that Chen announced it without first warning U.S. officials. Nonetheless, Chen was allowed to make a transit stop in the United States a month later. American officials tried to keep the trip low key, but the Chen administration and the Taiwan media trumpeted it as proof that the Bush administration supported Chen's approach. When the White House appointee responsible for the visit, Therese Shaheen, described President Bush as Chen's "secret guardian angel" the Democratic Progressives were ecstatic. Back in Taiwan, Chen's opponents panicked. With the United States now apparently on record supporting Chen, there seemed little point in continuing

to resist his agenda. Within days the legislature passed a bill enabling referendum votes in Taiwan. KMT legislators thought the restrictions built into the legislation would make it impossible for the DPP to introduce a referendum alongside the March presidential election, but Chen quickly put forth two proposals under the "defensive referendum" rubric. With the presidential election barely four months away, the KMT was outfoxed.

Chen's first term in office did not please Beijing or the KMT, but it was not the catastrophe many had predicted. Chen delivered few of his campaign promises, but many voters blamed those disappointments on obstructionist legislators and hostile Chinese officials. Democratic Progressive strategists knew it would be hard to beat a well-prepared opponent, but with the plenty-of-blame-to-go-around logic in play and the referendum energizing their grassroots supporters, they thought luck and determination might just get Chen a second term.

The KMT and PFP united behind what looked to be a very strong Blue ticket: Lien Chan as the presidential candidate with James Soong in the vice presidential spot. The ordering of the candidates was curious: Soong had won 50 percent more votes than Lien just four years earlier. But the KMT was determined not to reward Soong for his maverick action, and Soong's grassroots connections were stale. The KMT began the electoral season with a reasonable expectation: Lien and Soong had proven they could win 60 percent of the vote running separately. Running together they could easily pass 50 percent.

Or could they? Lien Chan had never been a popular politician. Lien's clan had been on Taiwan for generations, but in the early twentieth century his family moved to the mainland. In Taiwan's complex ethnic landscape, this kind of family was known as "half-mountain"—and the term is not a compliment. Although Lien claimed to be a Taiwanese, his half-mountain status counted against him. An even stronger strike against Lien was his reputation as a silver-spoon baby. Chen Shui-bian was born to a poor farming family; his success was due entirely to his brilliance and hard work. Lien was born into wealth and privilege. Chen's wife was a democratic martyr, paralyzed when a truck plowed into her during a political rally in the 1980s. Lien's wife was a former beauty queen. Finally, Lien lacked the charisma needed to campaign effectively—a quality Chen possessed in abundance.

The campaign was intense, even more rancorous than in 2000. In that year, the KMT had been confident the Soong challenge was annoying but a DPP victory seemed implausible. In 2004, the Blues had learned their lesson. They were not about to lose again.

But lose they did, for many reasons. One was Lien's weakness; another was the sharp decline in enthusiasm for Soong. The DPP's crowing about the "Secret Guardian Angel" remark influenced some voters. The DPP also

worked hard to avoid a repeat of the 1998 Taipei mayoral election. Chen's supporters hammered away at Blue Camp obstructionism and they appealed to Hokkien-speaking Taiwanese to show solidarity with one of their own. Their core argument was simple: the KMT never accepted the verdict we, the people, delivered in 2000, so Chen deserves another chance to show what he can do.

And then, on March 19, the night before the election, the election took a bizarre twist. Chen and his running mate, vice president Annette Lu, were standing in an open jeep, driving through the streets of Tainan, waving to voters. As the parade wound down, Chen and Lu both realized they were injured and bleeding. When they looked more closely, they discovered they'd been shot, he across the abdomen (the bullet lodged in his jacket after gashing his skin), she in the knee. Taiwan's army of talk-show hosts jumped into action. On the DPP side, pundits stirred up pity for the injured president, recalling the bad old days of KMT violence against political opponents. In contrast, KMT-leaning talk show hosts were skeptical. Sisy Chen, a former DPP activist who had morphed into Chen's most strident TV critic, used her show to propose a theory: the shooting was a setup, staged by the Chen campaign to win sympathy votes.

Sisy Chen's accusations drove the DPP's supporters to a fever of outrage. That she would jump to the conclusion, before any medical, forensic, or police evidence was available, that Chen had faked the shooting confirmed everything the "Deep Greens" believed about the mass media and Chen's detractors. It seemed there was no limit to KMT pundits' hatred of Chen, and by extension, of all those who opposed the KMT's political domination. No one knows what effect the events of March 19 had on the outcome of the election. The race was close coming into the final week, but whether Chen would have won without the "Two Bullet Incident" is unknowable. Many KMT analysts and foreign scholars are convinced the shooting boosted turnout among Chen's supporters and won him a significant number of sympathy votes. I spent March 20 visiting polling stations in a rural part of central Taiwan, and my conversations there left me convinced that the fury at Sisy Chen's accusations was even more powerful a factor than the shooting itself. Whatever the dynamics, when the votes were counted, Chen had won by a tiny margin, less than twenty-three thousand votes, or two-tenths of 1 percent.

In 2000, the Blues had turned their frustration and disappointment inward, but in 2004, they lashed out. When the Central Election Commission declared Chen the winner, Lien Chan appeared on television, his face a white, frozen rictus of fury. Instead of the concession speech viewers were expecting he said, "This election is void. I demand a recount."

For weeks, Taiwan's democracy teetered on the brink of crisis. Angry demonstrators mobbed the streets outside the presidential office building.

The president's name was painted on pavement next to the words "spit here." KMT officials attacked Chen in increasingly provocative terms. A PFP legislator told the *Financial Times*, "We need to storm the fortifications. You cannot conduct a revolution if you think about your public image. Only with open conflict will we be able to scare Chen Shui-bian." Conspiracy theories abounded, and rumors that the PRC might use the turmoil as a pretext to "intervene" in Taiwan spread. There were even whispers that the Blue Camp might *invite* the PRC to overthrow Chen. The DPP dared not celebrate Chen's victory for fear of further inflaming the demonstrators. As one campaign worker said, "When we lose, we can't cry; when we win, we can't cheer."

At the heart of the upheaval were two mysteries: How could a united Lien-Soong ticket lose to Chen? How could two people be shot and not know it?

The first question is answered above: A combination of factors convinced a tiny majority of Taiwan's voters that Chen was a better choice. The second question requires a little up-close-and-personal description of Taiwanese elections. Taiwanese political candidates do many things an American would recognize: they make speeches, they buy TV ads, they hang posters, they stand in shopping centers and shake hands with people. They also do a few less familiar things: they wear sashes like beauty pageant contestants, they sing karaoke, they burn a lot of incense in temples (sometimes they swear oaths there, too, inviting the gods to smite them on the spot if they're lying). They also "sweep the streets."

Street sweeping is mandatory for political candidates in Taiwan. The candidate assembles a parade of supporters, some walking, others riding on sound trucks (pickups outfitted with stages and loudspeakers) who scour the streets of the district singing the candidate's praises. The idea is to cover every street, so the parade doubles back again and again, east to west, north to south, until every inch of the district is covered. Voters come out to watch, and the candidate, his wife, lieutenants, and surrogates press the flesh on all sides. To make sure no one misses the show, campaign assistants let off fireworks at every corner. I've seen men teetering atop moving sound trucks with cartons of bottle rockets balanced above their heads on one hand while they light the fuses with the other. The din is spectacular, the smoke is overwhelming, and the fireworks are a menace. This is what Taiwanese enjoy most about elections: what they call *renao*, the hot and noisy.

Chen and Lu were street sweeping in Tainan City when they were shot. According to foreign TV cameramen following in a second open jeep, the air was thick with smoke from firecrackers, and bottle rockets were bouncing off cars, people, cameras—everything. One said he could smell his hair smoldering as ash and half-burned paper from the fireworks drifted

into it. Chen and Lu reported that they initially assumed the shots that hit them were ordnance raining down from their supporters—as it turns out, Taiwanese political candidates get used to being hit by hot, fast-moving debris. And as for someone hearing the shots fired, there was no chance of that at all.

A third mystery of the 2004 election—who shot Chen and Lu?—has never been solved. The case was investigated repeatedly, but no one has determined to the satisfaction of all whether it was a setup, an assassination attempt, or something even stranger. KMT efforts to unearth a conspiracy continued well into Chen's second term, but the crisis over whether he would assume office settled down more quickly. Chen helped that process by agreeing to a recount, although the KMT blocked it in the legislature. He also used his second inaugural address to calm both his supporters and his opponents.

### CHEN SHUI-BIAN'S SECOND TERM—AND BEYOND

Chen's second inaugural speech focused on reuniting a society fractured by conflicts over politics, language, ancestry, and collective memory. He addressed the postelection crisis head-on, acknowledging that his victory was narrow and political trust had been damaged. "The ultimate challenge of this past election lay not as much in garnering a mandate as in the post-election hurdle of how to scale the wall of antagonism, and in finding ways to reconcile the deep divide caused by distrust," said Chen. "We must not allow the narrow margin of victory to become a source of greater conflict in society."

In the speech, Chen reiterated his determination to make constitutional reform a top priority in his second term: "In our face-off with increasingly fierce and vigorous competition on the international front... we must bear in mind that historic and political circumstances confine us to an existing constitutional framework that now poses the most direct impediment to effective governance." Chen delivered on a number of important constitutional reforms during his second term. In 2005, the National Assembly ratified amendments that halved the number of legislators and changed the rules for electing them. It also transferred its own powers to others, effectively voting itself out of existence. With the most popular ideas implemented, the constitutional reform process lost momentum. President Chen continued to advocate further change, but most Taiwanese preferred to wait for the previous wave of reforms to take effect before implementing more.

President Chen Shui-bian had a tough ride in his first term, and his second term began under a massive cloud. Although the Blues eventually dropped their efforts to invalidate the election result, they continued to

resist Chen's every proposal, and without a legislative majority, the DPP was powerless to stop them. But those challenges paled in comparison to the cascading scandals that wracked his presidency from 2005 to 2008. The trouble began when construction workers brought from Thailand to build a subway in Kaohsiung City protested their working conditions. That led to an investigation of one of President Chen's close advisors, which in turn unearthed evidence the aide was involved not only in labor exploitation, but in misappropriation of public funds as well. The scandal forced two high-profile DPP politicians to resign: Kaohsiung's acting mayor, Chen Chi-mai—a rising DPP star who happened to be the disgraced aide's son—and the labor minister, Chen Chu.

From its founding, the DPP had made corruption fighting one of its top goals. Its reputation for cleanliness was one of the few advantages it enjoyed over the KMT. Public opinion polling consistently found voters favored the KMT on measures like competence and responsibility, while the DPP got high marks for its incorruptibility. The Chen scandals undermined that reputation. To reverse the trend a group of young politicians proposed a "New DPP Movement" aimed at returning their party to its anticorruption roots. They called on their comrades to reflect on how the party had gone astray and seek correction from the public. Instead of seizing this as an opportunity for political damage control, senior party leaders—including Chen—crushed the New DPP Movement.

The number of presidential associates in trouble with the law ballooned in 2006, and prosecutors turned their attention to Chen's family. In May, his son-in-law was arrested amid a swirl of rumors that Chen's wife, Wu Shu-jen, was involved in insider trading and influence peddling. In June, the Blue Camp tried another recall petition in the legislature. Although they could not meet the two-thirds vote threshold to send the recall to the voters, they kept up the political pressure. Before long, prosecutors were interviewing Chen himself. In November, they indicted Wu Shu-jen.

The scandals undermined Chen's effectiveness and eroded his popular support. A wave of disgust and disappointment was rising, even among DPP activists. The recall efforts united DPP supporters briefly, but the mounting evidence of malfeasance in the presidential office battered their morale. In July, a group of "Green Academics"—mainly veterans of pro-democracy student activism in the late 1980s and early 1990s—circulated a petition calling on Chen to resign. On the heels of that effort, Shih Ming-teh—who had spent twenty-five years in prison for his pro-democracy activism—led a sit-in outside the Taipei train station aimed at the same goal. Shih's supporters wore red, earning them the name "Red Shirt Army" and they occupied the square for weeks. They were an eclectic mix, but most were longtime Chen Shui-bian detractors. For the many Mainlanders in the group, standing elbow-to-elbow with Shih was an education. One rushed home to tell

his daughter—a former student activist with strong ties to the DPP—some shocking news: back in the day, the KMT kept political dissidents like Shih Ming-teh *locked up!*

The rest of Chen's second term passed in a blur of corruption allegations, indictments, trials, and recriminations. During the 2008 presidential race, DPP candidate Frank Hsieh so despaired over the state of affairs that he cancelled his public appearances and went into seclusion for two weeks. The KMT's candidate was the popular Ma Ying-jeou. The nomination was salt on the DPP's wound, since Ma stood out among KMT politicians in having a reputation for incorruptibility. During a stint as justice minister in the 1990s, Ma had taken on political corruption so aggressively that the targets of his efforts persuaded Lee Teng-hui to fire him. Against most KMT candidates, the DPP could say, "Our guy hasn't done anything their guy hasn't done." Against Ma it could say nothing. Ma Ying-jeou won the 2008 election with 58 percent of the vote.

When Ma Ying-jeou won back the presidency for the KMT, Democratic Progressives felt crushed. The DPP had lost most of its legislative seats in December, thanks largely to new electoral rules that the party had championed but that worked against the party in practice. Their standard-bearer, Chen Shui-bian, had barely moved out of the presidential office when he was moved into another government building: a Taipei City jail. To many of Taiwan's democracy activists and advocates, those setbacks seemed insurmountable. Grief hung over the party headquarters; scores of dedicated party workers found themselves unemployed. Some observers wondered whether Taiwan had reached the end of its democratic journey and was circling back toward KMT-dominated single-party politics.

Those fears turned out to be overblown, for it wasn't long before democracy was showing its strength anew. Neither a huge public electoral mandate nor a massive KMT legislative majority could protect President Ma from democracy. From the very beginning of his term, he faced challenges from all sides—protests from the DPP, lack of disciplined support from his own party, and low approval ratings from the public. The public's expectations for Ma were high, but he took office at the height of a global recession, and the nation's problems soon cut him down to a more realistic size. Voters began treating Ma like any other president.

And that, in the end, is what democratic politics is all about: treating every president as a fallible individual whose authority to govern comes from the voters. Ma's first two years in office frustrated his supporters—even when the economy began to revive, his popularity remained low—but they can be read as evidence that Taiwan's political miracle has stabilized.

In 2009, Taiwan's legislature decided to consolidate some of the island's municipal governments, creating four new "megacities," including an enlarged Taichung and a massive new Kaohsiung. In December 2010, the two

mayors whose stories began this chapter, Jason Hu and Chen Chu, were elected mayors of the new Taichung and Kaohsiung respectively. Conversations with the mayors in early 2010 underscored the degree to which Taiwan's democracy has become routine. Chen and Hu have strong ideas about how Taiwan should develop, but ideology does not drive their day-to-day decision making; they are preoccupied with the practical problems of governance. As Mayor Chen put it,

I'm constantly thinking about what we can produce, what industries we can have in the future. I was talking to Hsu Wen-lung [the head of the Chi Mei Corporation, one of Taiwan's leading chemical companies] recently and he asked me, "What kind of mayor do you want to be? The kind who develops industry at all costs, or the one who, fifty years from now, people will look back on and say 'She preserved and protected our community'?" He's thinking about philosophy. Given the pressures on me, I don't really have much chance to think about that, but he makes a good point. When it comes to economic development, we don't have a lot of people thinking about how to balance these goals. We need to think about what *kind* of economic development we want.

Mayor Hu speaks in similar terms about the importance of a long-term vision. Asked what he learned from leaving the bureaucratic posts for which he had been groomed to enter electoral politics he answers, "I was reborn." He describes the months following the KMT's presidential defeat in 2000 as "a time of shock for us. We needed to take off our leather shoes and put on sports shoes." Taichung City was a special challenge for the Oxford-educated Mainlander who had built his career in the diplomatic corps. The city was known for organized crime, local factionalism, inadequate infrastructure, and industrial pollution. As Hu puts it, "When I started going to Taichung there were people who said 'he's a ballet dancer; he doesn't have what it takes to be a mud wrestler.'"

"I think the experience of running for election changed me," says Hu. "I believe all politicians should go through elections first, and should serve locally first, before they move to the national level." Serving the city forced Hu to prioritize local needs; like Mayor Chen, Hu is determined to find an economic niche for his city:

I decided a city should have a face. Paris, London, Kyoto, maybe Shanghai—all of these cities have a face. Other than these few, most cities look about the same. That face defines the character of a city. Eight years ago I decided that Taichung must have a cultural face. We can't compete with Taipei and Kaohsiung—the center of government, the port city—we needed to do something different to distinguish our city.

Turning Taichung into a cultural center was not easy. Hu learned a painful lesson about the limits of executive power when he was courting

the Guggenheim Foundation to build a major art museum in the city. "I lost the Guggenheim museum after they had made the decision to come because I couldn't get it through the city council. There was a lack of local and central support. After that I got smarter." He learned to operate more effectively within the city council and to focus on projects with wide appeal—a baseball stadium (baseball is Taiwan's most popular spectator sport), a multipurpose amphitheater, public concerts. "When we started, each citizen attended an average of four cultural events a year. Last year [2009] we averaged 33 attendances per citizen."

Mayors of major cities inevitably emphasize economic development, but Hu and Chen resemble one another in less predictable ways, too. If we look only at their backgrounds—the Mainlander bureaucrat steeped in Chinese nationalist ideology, the Hokkien dissident grounded in Taiwanese identity politics—we would expect to find them on opposite sides of Taiwan's hottest political issue. In fact, though, their views about how Taiwan should interact with the People's Republic of China are surprisingly similar, although far from identical.

Mayor Hu is famous for his humor, and one of his best lines came in a 1996 interview with *New York Times* columnist (and Hu's Oxford classmate) Thomas Friedman. Speaking about missile tests Beijing was using to intimidate Taiwanese in the run-up to the first direct presidential election, Friedman referred to China as an 800-pound gorilla in Taiwan's living room. Hu replied, "Tom, it's worse than that. Not only do I have an 800-pound gorilla in my living room, that gorilla happens to think that he's my brother!"

The quip captures Hu's outlook on cross-Strait relations. Asked how he developed such a flexible view, given his long association with the KMT he replied:

If there ever was an "old KMT" that KMT taught me to be Chinese, but not to be pro-unification. Even CCK said, toward the end of his life, that he was both Chinese and Taiwanese. We don't have to dichotomize these things. China is our father; Taiwan is our mother, or the other way around. Can we deny either one of them? I don't have to disbelieve what the old KMT has taught us to be a politician close to the people. I grew up knowing I was a Taiwanese, despite having Mainlander parents. When I was small I was puzzled: The teacher, and other people, said "Speak Mandarin," but when it was time for elections, all the politicians spoke Taiwanese. So I couldn't understand: What's wrong with speaking dialect?

Hu's attitude comes through in his actions as mayor. In 2009 Taichung hosted talks between Chen Yunlin, Beijing's top Taiwan-affairs official, and Chiang Pin-kung, his Taiwanese counterpart. The talks attracted a host of protesters to the city. Says Hu, "We did not treat the protesters as the other

side. The Chinese are the other side. We Taiwanese are all on the same side." He sums up the KMT's approach to cross-Strait relations this way, "We don't want to sail any closer to China, but I think we have a better course than the previous government. We still have extremes on both sides, but they are a tiny minority."

If Jason Hu resists the die-hard unificationist stereotype of a career KMT politician, Chen Chu, too, defies easy labeling. She has been a leading proponent of Taiwanese identity, but she also advocates a moderate China policy for the DPP. In May 2009 Chen Chu traveled to the mainland to talk to officials about the World Games Kaohsiung was to host two months later. Some DPP colleagues criticized her for reaching out to the mainland, but Chen defends her decision:

China is a very important country in the World Games, and the Olympics, which they'd just finished. To make our World Games successful I needed their cooperation. They needed to buy into the idea that the World Games is about peace among nations. Sport is never free of politics, but we wanted to minimize the politics. So we went to China. We talked to them privately, to make sure the games would be peaceful. Some people here criticized us. They said we shouldn't go, that we were giving up our ideals, but this World Games was really important for Taiwan's international recognition and reputation. We couldn't afford to let it fail. So I had to go over there and tell them this was not political, but an occasion for peace.

I had a big job to do pacifying the Taiwan independence people here. I told them it's important to understand the difference between your personal goals and the responsibility you have if you're organizing a global event. If the World Games had gone badly that really would have hurt Taiwan's international image, and that's something we had to avoid. The DPP needs to understand China. China has enormous influence over Taiwan's development. China is huge—it can easily eat us up. If we in the DPP have a China policy that isn't rooted in a good understanding of China, that is really dangerous. The Chinese shouldn't just talk to the KMT. Taiwan has many people who are not in the KMT, and they need to hear what we have to say, too. They may not like my opinions, but they need to hear them.

Mayor Chen's trip was an important moment in cross-Strait relations. It not only showed the DPP's willingness to engage the PRC, but it also called attention to the range of opinion within Taiwan. Unlike some KMT leaders who had visited the mainland, Chen Chu did not bend over backward to accommodate her hosts. She was not intentionally provocative, but she did not censor herself, either.

There was a headline that said "Beijing Mayor versus Kaohsiung Mayor" when I met the mayor of Beijing. That was a good headline, because it made us equals. We felt huge pressure while we were there. We had to be so careful

with everything we said. We didn't know what they were thinking, what they would say. Every night my shoulders were so sore from the tension. But at the very least, we went to Beijing and we went to Shanghai. And while we were there the mayor of Beijing was talking about getting funding from the central government for the Olympics and I said "President Ma Ying-jeou of our central government" and that was reported, quoted. People were really happy about that. Our government was happy. They wouldn't dare to use that language themselves [that is, to refer to Ma as "president"] and the ROC authorities as a "central government," but I didn't care about making the Beijing people happy, so I just said it.

Not all Taiwanese politicians are as wise, sensible, charismatic, and effective as Chen Chu and Jason Hu. Still, the two mayors' success and popularity bode well for Taiwan's democracy. From a distance, Taiwan politics can appear polarized and dysfunctional, but when we zoom in closer, the system looks much healthier. Compared to the corrupt and authoritarian single-party government of forty years ago, Taiwan's democracy—with all its flaws—is an infinitely more humane and sustainable form of government.

## SOURCES

This chapter relies heavily on formal interviews and informal conversations. I am especially grateful to Chen Chu and Jason Hu, both of whom have agreed to be interviewed many times over the past twenty years. Chen Chu was the first Taiwanese political figure I met in Taiwan, and she has been unflagging in her support for my efforts to understand and tell Taiwan's story. Jason Hu and Ma Ying-jeou have been particularly generous with their time and encouragement, as have many other politicians of all political colorations.

The chapter also draws on the extensive literature on Taiwan's democratization. Path-breaking works in this category include early articles by Edwin Winckler, "Institutionalization and Participation on Taiwan: From Hard to Soft Authoritarianism?" and Tun-jen Cheng, "Democratizing the Quasi-Leninist Regime in Taiwan," as well as Hung-mao Tien's book *The Great Transition: Political and Social Change in Taiwan*. More recent works include *The Kuomintang and the Democratization of Taiwan* (Steven J. Hood); *Democracy: Political Life in the Republic of China on Taiwan* (Bruce J. Dickson); *The First Chinese Ramon H. Myers); *Political Change on Taiwan: A Study of Ruling Party Adaptability* (Peter Moody); *Crafting Democracy in Taiwan* (Yun-han Chu); *Taiwan's Democratization: Forces behind the New Momentum* (Joseph Lauhsieh Wu); *Taiwan: National Identity and Democratization* (Alan Wachman); *Taiwan and**