

INTRODUCTION

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Taiwan is a province of China. This is a principle agreed to by the Guomindang authorities in Taipei, by the government of the People's Republic of China, and more recently by the United States. Yet any discussion of the "Taiwan question" and its resolution should recognize that the divergent paths toward economic development and the variations in social institutions and values emerging over the past three decades make Taiwan very different from the other provinces of China. Indeed, if one is intent upon offering comparisons, Taiwan might be usefully compared to Hong Kong, or better yet, South Korea. It resembles both of these in providing competitively inexpensive labor for export industries heavily underwritten by foreign capital. Like both, it reflects changes wrought by the spread of Western pop culture. Like South Korea, it owes its continued, separate existence to the presence of American military forces and military and economic aid; it owes its "stability" to American backing of a dictatorial, repressive government that allows no dissent and coopts its intellectuals with the promise of study and employment in America as the reward for conformity and support of the status quo.

Taiwan's separate course was set even before 1949; in the previous half-century as a Japanese colony (another experience shared with Korea) Taiwan modernized sufficiently to advance

beyond the rest of China in scientific agriculture, industrial development, public health, education, transport, and communications. Some historians would take the "split" even further back in time, pointing to the late settlement of Taiwan as a frontier area with abundant land, chances for upward mobility, and the relative lack of control from Beijing during the nineteenth century.

Despite all this, Taiwan remains undeniably Chinese in many ways. The language, the foods, the festivals, religious practices, family forms and associated role behaviors, and many of the values by which people try to organize their everyday lives are all part of the cultural heritage brought from southeastern China, particularly from the Zhangzhou and Quanzhou districts of Fujian. These elements, aside from their intrinsic meanings and functions, served as ethnic markers to distinguish Han settlers from the mountain aborigines, Chinese from their Japanese overlords, and most recently Taiwanese from Mainlanders. Over the past two decades, anthropologists have found Taiwan's villages, small towns, and older urban neighborhoods to be a mine of information about the practices and beliefs of an older, more traditional society. Despite industrialization, urbanization, and depopulation of the countryside in recent years, some cultural features, particularly in the area of religion, have persisted and flourished.

In other ways, Taiwan has become Westernized. The first exposure came via the modern education system instituted by the Japanese and related colonial policies. The second group of carriers of Westernization were the Guomintang supporters arriving in the late 1940s, many of them shaped by life in Shanghai and other treaty ports. They brought with them the emergent lifestyle of the comprador and new bureaucratic-capitalist class, heavily influenced by exposure to Euro-American missionaries, teachers, and businessmen. Some found Taiwan quaint, but most thought it old-fashioned (in dress, diet, housing, recreation, social relations, business organizations), superstitious (in the persistence of folk Buddhism, Taoism, and lineage-connected ceremonials), backward, and boring. It did not

take them long to transform Taibei into a reasonable facsimile of Shanghai, and, as members of the ruling group, to persuade some Taiwanese to emulate them. The American connection accelerated and facilitated the process of acculturation. The presence of a variety of foreigners, the diplomatic corps, thousands of U.S. military personnel and their dependents, hundreds of missionary families (once spread all over China but now concentrated on this one small province), businessmen, representatives of AID, USIS, JCRR, and a host of other acronyms, plus teachers, researchers, and language students provided the living, breathing, walking models for emulation, not only for their formal counterparts and elite urban clientele but eventually for the society at large. Thousands of students went to American universities each year, bringing back the latest in fashion, pop music and modern ways while the television channels and the movie houses, dominated by American productions, relayed the message to those who never left home.

Hence, the articles in this journal will not shed much light on developments in China over the past few decades. If anything, they underscore the differences between Taiwan and the rest of China, and the potential difficulties that will come with reunification. They may be of more value in examining Third World development outside of the socialist sphere or as a warning of what all of China might have become had the Guomindang been able to retain power. The articles explore Taiwan itself, in the contemporary world. Despite the differences in approach, the articles are linked together by some common concerns, namely changes in social stratification, examination of social classes, and the social and political advantages and costs of Taiwan's road toward modernization and development.

The articles by anthropologists DeGlopper, Diamond, and Gates are a breakaway from the usual concerns of that discipline as it has been operating in the China field. For a change, we are not talking about lineage organization, religious cults, or the implications of adopted sister marriages. The article by Donald DeGlopper most closely approaches the interests of traditional anthropologists; the recruitment, living patterns, values, and

relations within an artisan class that has thus far resisted proletarianization. He reminds us that a substantial proportion of production and commerce is still carried out in small scale units, in a milieu where relationships are personalized and the reputation of a shop and its individual craftsmen still counts. Yet it is clear that these craftsmen are not simply "survivals" from a more pleasant precapitalist era. Their numbers have been sustained and increased by the prosperity of the export boom which, for the time being, gives them an expanded clientele.

My own article deals with a segment of the new working class, the adolescent female factory workers. Foreign investors have been drawn to Taiwan by the promise of cheap labor; in the special Export Zones they operate tax-free, and bring in their equipment duty-free. Taiwan's beleaguered local entrepreneurs pay heavy taxes and outrageous import duties on equipment and material and struggle to gain advantage in the overseas market by keeping the cost of labor as low as possible. Whereas DeGlopper's carpenter-artisans work with joy and commitment, work in the factories is temporary, transitory, and alienating. The artisans take pride in what they are and what they do. The factory women find little reward in their wages or their work; they comfort themselves with the social gratifications of the workplace and the knowledge that they are helping their families. They fantasize escape through marriage into the new middle class, denying or rejecting their peasant and petit-bourgeois origins and the realities of their proletarian status.

Gates' article sheds light on the confusion of class identity by examining the complexities of social stratification and social mobility in Taiwan and by pointing out the relationship between the peasant petit-bourgeois sector and the industrial work force. She argues that many of the young workers in Taiwan's new industries are drawn from a reserve labor pool, and after a few years in the factories return for permanent employment to the family farms and small family businesses. The emergence of a class-conscious proletariat is thus aborted.

Her article also highlights the intersection of social class and ethnicity: the ways in which the Taiwanese-Mainlander

distinction affects opportunity, mobility, and class relationships. No matter that in the final analysis the Taiwanese are culturally Chinese, the ethnic distinction that exists in the minds of many, and which is reflected in the social order, must be accorded reality. Ethnicity too blurs class perception. Although members of both ethnic blocs are present in almost all social classes, there is a correlation between ethnicity and the source and degree of one's wealth and power. Workers, peasants, and soldiers (excepting the retired remnants of the original Guomindang army) are almost exclusively Taiwanese, as are those in the small business sector. Top government officials, civil service employees, military officers, controllers of the media, and managers of state-owned enterprises are almost exclusively Mainlanders. Intellectuals, professionals, and technicians are drawn from both groups, though Mainlanders seem to be over-represented given their number in the general population.

The ethnic differences, usually denied by the Guomindang authorities, are sometimes made use of by Mainlander elites to further confuse the issue. In an ironic inversion of social reality, the handful of Taiwanese entrepreneurs whose wealth gives them undeniable claim to upper-class status are pointed to as evidence that the Taiwanese dominate business and monopolize the wealth. The Taiwanese shopkeeper families, who live and work in cramped storefronts and whose children move in and out of low-paid factory jobs as necessity dictates are officially registered as "businessmen" and encouraged to think of themselves as middle class. Meantime, the Guomindang ex-generals and the treaty-port compradores who followed them to Taiwan, run the banks, the state monopolies, and corporations, and modestly describe themselves as salaried civil servants and dispossessed refugees.

While Gates' article discusses distortions of development, Amsden's focus is on Taiwan's "economic miracle," i.e., the rapid growth rate of the economy. Her article points to the role played by the State, by which she means not just the Guomindang but also the Japanese colonial rule. She reminds us that Taiwan's "green revolution" predates the arrival of the Guomin-

dang, as does the growth of local industry and the modern infrastructure. She reminds us also of the role of the United States as a patron, pushing for a moderate land reform program to appease the peasantry, funneling in aid monies and advisors, footing the military bills, and helping to keep unemployment at the minimum.

Although her data lead her to different conclusions, Amsden's discussion of cartels, public corporations, and other manifestations of bureaucratic capitalism strengthen Gates' analysis of the power structure and the loci of control over banking, heavy industry, transport, communication, and the marketing of cash crops. And although she is positive in her evaluation of the impact of foreign investment and trade and the role played by the State in economic development, she makes it clear that the circumstances are such as to make Taiwan a "special case" rather than a model for development for the rest of the Third World.

Moreover, her conclusions point to contradictions within the system, which may lead to new polarizations in the years ahead. Taiwan, until recently, has been an example of a happy marriage between State capitalism and neocolonialism. In the past year or two, there have been stirrings of discontent. With normalized relations between the United States and China in the offing, new political coalitions have emerged in challenge to the Guomindang monopoly of power, and to its claim to be the government of all China. The preemptive cancellation of elections in December 1978, the harrassment and jailing of oppositionist candidates (both Taiwanese and Mainlander), the strengthening of martial law, the closure or buying out of oppositionist or non-Guomindang newspapers and magazines, and the recent increase in political arrests are indicators of the internal shakiness of the system and panic by the Guomindang authorities that they may not last long enough to be the one to negotiate the inevitable reunification. For all their strident attacks on communism, the present ruling elites know that they have more to fear (and more to lose) at the hands of a broad-based coalition of Tai-

wanese peasantry, working class, and middle class, joined by some of their own disillusioned sons and daughters. For the time being, the Guomintang seems to have sold its self-image to Beijing: they present themselves as patriotic Chinese who fought against the Japanese and are now struggling against bourgeois nationalists who, aided by certain Japanese and American interests, seek to sever Taiwan from the motherland. In their propaganda aimed at representatives of the People's Republic of China they present all the anti-Guomintang opposition as supporters of Taiwan independence. Many of Taiwan's people look forward to the day when Beijing recognizes what the anti-Guomintang opposition groups are really saying, lays to rest the myth of continuing Guomintang "Patriotism," and negotiates the reunification of the province with those who are truly representative of Taiwan's people.