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**Cultural Change and Identity Shift  
in Relation to Cultural Policy  
in Post-war Taiwan,  
with Particular Reference to Theatre**

by

Bi-yu Chang

This thesis is submitted to the City University as part of the requirements for  
the award of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the Department of Arts Policy and Management

June 2002

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## **Declaration**

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# **ABSTRACT**

Bi-yu Chang

**Cultural Change and Identity Shift**  
**in Relation to Cultural Policy in Post-war Taiwan,**  
**with Particular Reference to Theatre**

The issue of identity has become increasingly important in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Facing the dilemma of being torn between globalisation and indigenisation, our sense of identity is constantly changing and in turmoil. This dissertation engages with several questions: How does our sense of belonging come about? In what ways and to what extent can the state construct culture, regulate our behaviour, and formulate a sense of belonging through cultural policy? And, why cultural policy might fail?

Because the politics of cultural policy has either been overlooked or considered only in general terms without thorough examination on a long-term basis, this thesis examines the relationship between cultural policy and cultural identity by exploring the case of post-war Taiwan.

The development and dramatic change of cultural identity in post-war Taiwan provides a good testing ground to examine the relationship between cultural policy and identity construction, especially during the volatile identity crisis in the 1990s. There are two parts in this dissertation. Part I focuses on textual research of a half-century of Taiwanese cultural policy, alongside the island's historical development; Part II records and analyses the fieldwork I carried out on Taiwanese theatre to substantiate the textual analysis in Part I.

This thesis deals with issues in two areas that no other research has explored before, and tries to indicate the universal implications of the analysis of Taiwanese identity construction and cultural policy.

Firstly, through the analysis of the politics of culture in Taiwan, this research demonstrates how a stable and deeply rooted China-centric identity was overturned within only two years. Furthermore, it highlights the politics of culture by displaying how an authoritarian regime was challenged, and how cultural hegemony could be won in order to grasp political power.

Secondly, the case study provides evidence manifesting the changing nature of contemporary cultural policy, and its hidden politics. Under the name of 'supporting the arts', the state uses cultural policy to maintain its cultural hegemony. Although Taiwan has carried out a process of democratisation since the 1980s, the state has not loosened its control on culture, but has rather changed its strategy of how to control. A new alliance between regulation and market forces has formed, and becomes the nexus of modern cultural policy.



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACCLA	--	Awarding Committee for Chinese Literature and Arts ( <i>zhonghua wenyi jiangjin weiyuanhui</i> ) 中華文藝獎金委員會
ACLA	--	Association of Chinese Literature and Arts ( <i>zhongguo wenyi xiehui</i> ) 中國文藝協會
CCPD	--	Council for Cultural Affairs, Executive Yuan (old name for the CCA, was used until 1995) 文建會
CCA	--	Council for Cultural Affairs 文化建設委員會
CCP	--	Chinese Communist Party 中國共產黨
CCRC	--	Chinese Cultural Restoration Committee 中華文化復興委員會
CTS	--	Chinese Television System 中華電視台
CTV	--	China Television Company 中國電視公司
CYC	--	China Youth Corps 中國反共青年救國團
DPP	--	Democratic Progress Party 民進黨
GIO	--	Government Information Office 新聞局
KMT	--	Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) 國民黨
MAC	--	Mainland Affairs Council 大陸事務委員會
MFA	--	Ministry of Foreign Affairs 外交部
MND	--	Ministry of National Defence 國防部
MOE	--	Ministry of Education 教育部
MOI	--	Ministry of Interior 內政部
NCA	--	National Cultural Association 文化總會
NCAF	--	National Culture and Arts Foundation 財團法人 國家文化藝術基金會
NIA	--	National Institute of Arts, Taiwan 台灣國立藝專
NICT	--	National Institute for Compilation and Translation 國立編譯館
NTU	--	National Taiwan University 國立台灣大學
NTJCPA	--	National Taiwan Junior College of Performing Arts 國立台灣戲曲專科學校
PLA	--	People's Liberation Army 人民解放軍
PRC	--	People's Republic of China 中華人民共和國
ROC	--	Republic of China 中華民國
TTV	--	Taiwan Television Enterprise 台灣電視公司
WUFI	--	World United Formosans for Independence 台獨聯盟

# INTRODUCTION

*The love for the motherland where I have never been, although only an idea, is subtle and wonderful. It grips me so tight, like gravity to the earth. The longing is so strong, just like orphans imagining their unseen parents. In terms of what kind of parents they would be, it does not at all matter. In a kind of instinctive sentiment, I love and long for my motherland. (Wu Cho-liu, *Wuhua guo*, 1988: 40)<sup>1</sup>*

*眼不能見的祖國愛，固然只是觀念，但是卻非常微妙，經常像引力一樣吸引著我的心。正如離開了父母的孤兒思慕並不認識的父母一樣，那父母是怎樣的父母是不去計較的...以一種近似本能的感情，愛慕著祖國、思慕著祖國。(吳濁流, *無花果* 1988: 40)*

Since martial law was lifted in 1987, people in Taiwan have gone through volatile social changes, political reform, and most of all, as I argue in this thesis, an identity crisis.<sup>2</sup> In 1992, a survey commissioned by the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) concerning Taiwanese identity (see Appendix 1), showed that 16.7% of the interviewees identified themselves as 'Taiwanese', 44% as 'Chinese' and 36.5% as 'both (Taiwanese and Chinese)'.

This perception of one's identity was seriously challenged between 1994 and 1996 when mainland China conducted a series of missile tests in waters near Taiwan. Since then, the figures for people who considered themselves 'Chinese' had fallen consistently from 21.7% in 1994, 20.5% in 1996, and 16.3% in 1998. In February 2000, a similar survey showed that Taiwanese identity had changed dramatically: 45% of interviewees perceived themselves as 'Taiwanese', 39.4% as 'both', and only 13.9% as 'Chinese'. (SHIH CHÊNG-FÊNG, 2000)

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<sup>1</sup> Wu Cho-liu (1900-1976) is a Taiwanese writer, who was educated under Japanese rule and wrote mostly in Japanese. His novels described the awkward identity and colonial humiliation of Taiwanese, and the misplaced longing for the motherland - China. In recent years, his novels -- *Asian Orphans* (亞細亞的孤兒) and *Wuhua guo* (無花果) -- are regarded as the first indigenous literature dealing with Taiwanese identity, and often being quoted to describe the helplessness and sadness of Taiwanese (being abandoned by the motherland and crushed by colonial rule).

<sup>2</sup> Indeed, there are many sub-identities (e.g. Hakka, aborigines, and gay) in Taiwan other than just Chinese and Taiwanese. However, I concentrate on these two because this thesis focuses on Taiwanese cultural policy as a whole, and these two identities are the major players in Taiwan's hegemonic struggle. Besides, the term 'Taiwanese identity' now is regarded as a multi-cultural mixture, including indigenous, Chinese, and global (mainly



In the past decade, the debate on Taiwanese identity has gradually constructed a new identity, which has reversed old China-centric ideologies. When I started this research in 1996, it was at the height of this identity crisis. The identity change and its related conflicts in the last decade demonstrated a volatile scene of identity struggle in Taiwan's political, social and cultural sphere. This struggle has been severe, becoming one of the most important factors influencing Taiwan's development in the last decade. Having personally experienced drastic changes and self-doubt, my initial interest on starting this research was to find out how the Kuomintang (KMT)<sup>3</sup> had constructed culture in Taiwan that had made me as 'me'. In other words, I wanted to see how our sense of identity was formed and how much of it was influenced by cultural policy.

During the process of research, a number of other issues began to emerge, such as in what ways that policy responded to social change and demands, how and why identities changed, what unintended and unforeseeable effects of cultural policy emerged and the reasons for this. Eventually, I realised that my quest was not only to find out how cultural identity was formed and the influence of cultural policy, but cultural change in Taiwan. I started with asking the basic questions: 'what is culture', and 'what is cultural policy'.

Traditionally, economics and politics have been allocated a position superior to

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American and Japanese) influences.

<sup>3</sup> The Kuomintang 國民黨 (KMT) is the Chinese Nationalist Party. Its predecessor Tongmenghui 同盟會 (the United League of China) overthrew the Manchu Qing dynasty (1644 -1911) and established the Republic of China (ROC) in 1911. Since then, China had gone through 15 years of chaotic warlord regime. In 1927, the KMT finally became the party in government. In 1949, the KMT government was defeated by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the civil war and fled to Taiwan.

culture within the hierarchy of the social sciences. It seemed that economic and political processes provided the hard evidence to understand the world, while cultural process dealt with less tangible things. (HALL, 1997a) However, in recent years, the significance of culture has finally been recognised by social scientists. Instead of being viewed as merely reflective of other processes -- economic or political -- culture is now regarded as equally important and constitutive of the social world. (DU GAY, HALL, et al. 1997) Consequently, cultural policy is comparatively new in policy studies<sup>4</sup>, and discourse<sup>5</sup> on cultural policy is less well developed than discourse on social and economic policy. In general, the term 'cultural policy' is used to denote 'arts policy', or described as 'a policy dealing with cultural affairs' by the professional discourse of arts management. (DIMAGGIO, 1983; LEWIS, 1994:42)

The European Council gave a detailed definition of 'cultural policy' at the 1976 Oslo Conference that showed a typical official view. The resolution issued by the conference listed eight principles for cultural policy, and stated its general nature. As the guideline for cultural policy, the EC emphasised: "Policy for society as a whole should have a cultural dimension stressing the development of human values, equality, democracy, and the improvement of the human condition, in particular by guaranteeing freedom of expression and creating real possibilities for making use of this freedom." (LANGSTED, 1990: 69-70)

The EC also asserted that cultural policy should be an indispensable part of

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<sup>4</sup> The idea of having a policy to deal with cultural affairs is a European one. It first became policy after the Second World War, and cultural apparatuses were set up to deal with cultural affairs. For example, the UK set up the Arts Council in 1946; France set up the Ministry of Culture in 1959.

<sup>5</sup> According to Hall (1997a), 'discourse' is a group of statements which provide a language to talk about a particular topic at a particular historical moment, and the production of knowledge through language.



governmental responsibility. Cultural policy should work in conjunction with policies for education, leisure, recreation and sport, the environment, social affairs, and town planning. Therefore, for the members of the EC, cultural affairs no longer limited itself exclusively to the arts, but had a wider scope. This included the need to recognise the plurality of societies and to respect individual dignity, spiritual values, the rights of minorities and their cultural expressions. (LANGSTED, 1990)

This view tries to connect cultural policy with the maintenance of human values and freedom. However, even with these idealistic statements about human values, democracy, and respect for multi-cultural expression, the problem remains how to define what constitutes the 'culture' to which policy should be applied. Many in the arts management trade have taken it as something straightforward that everybody knows about. Therefore, it seems that there is no need for explanation or discussion about what cultural policy is. It has been taken to be simply the kind of policy dealing with culture. But what is culture? Here lies the problematic question.

According to Raymond Williams (1976a: 87), the immediate forerunner of the word 'culture' was the Latin word *cultura*, being passed into English around the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. The primary meaning was in husbandry, the tending of natural growth. Later, the meaning extended to 'a process of human development' from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there had been complicated development of the meaning and usage of this word, which made it even more difficult to define.

From a 19<sup>th</sup> century point of view, Matthew Arnold (1869) saw culture as 'high culture' (that associated with the best that had been thought and said in the world), involving

characteristics such as beauty, intelligence and perfection. This classical way of framing the debate about 'culture' carried a strong evaluative charge, which became engrained so deeply in society that even today it still carries strong connections with 'high arts' in people's minds.

However, in recent years, the emphasis in social and human sciences has taken on a 'cultural turn'. (HALL, 1997a) The new focus on defining culture has moved to its importance in 'producing meaning'. The idea that 'culture was everything' became popular. (WILLIAMS, 1958) Clifford Geertz, with an anthropological perspective, emphasised the symbolic significance of culture. He said, "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning." (GEERTZ, 1973: 5) Accordingly, whatever was distinctive about the 'way of life' of a people, community, nation or social group could be seen as 'culture'.

Cultural studies took a similar position, using 'culture' to describe the shared values of a group or of society, and taking it primarily as "the production and the exchange of meanings". (HALL, 1997a: 2) People in a society/group will not only interpret and perceive the world in ways that are roughly similar, but will also make sense of the world and communicate with each other meaningfully in similar ways.

The reference to 'culture' can be primarily to symbolic systems (from the perspective of cultural studies), or to material connections (from the perspective of cultural anthropology and archaeology). (WILLIAMS, 1976a) The confusion arises from the blurring and overlapping of different definitions from various intellectual positions.



There are so many different ways of looking at and interpreting this word 'culture', that both Williams (1976a: 87) and Hall (1997a) agree that it is one of the most complicated words in the English language and the most difficult concept in social sciences. Williams puts forward the three most common categories of usage:

(i) the independent and abstract noun which describes a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development, from C18; (ii) the independent noun... indicates a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period, a group, or humanity in general... (iii) the independent and abstract noun which describes the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity. This seems often now the most widespread use: culture is music, literature, painting and sculpture, theatre and film. A Ministry of Culture refers to these specific activities, sometimes with the addition of philosophy, scholarship, history. (WILLIAMS, 1976a: 90)

It is exactly the complexity and the flexibility of the word 'culture' that makes defining 'cultural policy' intricate and difficult. Moreover, the issues of how to define 'cultural policy' and which categories should be included become problematic.

In comparison with the official view of 'cultural policy', social scientists provide a critical view taking cultural policy as state control of the process of meaning construction. For example, Winckler (1994:23) described cultural policy as "any state effort directly to manage or indirectly to affect any cultural process", Lewis (1994: 51) stressed the means of state intervention, through the regulatory powers of government and subsidy, to craft a cultural policy. Dimaggio (1983) defined cultural policies in a wider sense as: "those that regulate what has been called the marketplace of ideas". (1983:242)

According to Dimaggio, direct cultural policies were sometimes the 'government programmes' that created, mandated, or forbade the production or distribution of materials embodying specified values or ideas. Sometimes, it was 'a set of

mechanisms' that provided contracts, grants, fellowship to individuals, or distributed funds to organisations. (DIMAGGIO, 1983:242-243) In addition, indirect policy could also be influential. Both Dimaggio (1983) and Winckler (1994) noticed that cultural policy 'worked indirectly by affecting the market for cultural products', especially those policies operating indirectly in political, economic and social spheres.

Apart from the confusion caused by the word 'culture', there were other reasons for the problematic tendency of the term 'cultural policy'. Dominquez (1992) found the idea of 'cultural policy' fundamentally flawed from a sociological perspective. He believed that the existence of cultural policy was a result of government using culture as 'symbolic capital'. Calling something 'cultural policy' seemed to imply "the objectification of 'the cultural'... [and also] that there is an arena of life to which it refers that is separable from other arenas for which there might be other types of policies. " (DOMINGUEZ, 1992: 23) McGuigan even considered the whole concept of 'cultural policy' absurd: "the very idea of cultural policy, which seems to imply something so fragile and indeterminate as a 'realised signifying system' can be consciously regulated, is ... problematical." (1996:6)

Pick & Anderton claimed that artists considered themselves to be 'Dionysian in spirit', making them the enemy of orderly government. Therefore, there was an ancient 'fear of the mob' within the government to constrain artistic activities. (1996: 64) McGuigan held similar views, and saw the problem arising from the etymological connection between 'policy' and 'policing'. He writes, " 'Cultural policy' has deeply entrenched connotations of 'policing culture', of treating culture as though it were a dangerous lawbreaker or, perhaps, a lost child." (MCGUIGAN, 1996: 6) Because of this typical governmental attitude of taking culture as 'dangerous and unruly', the idea of 'cultural



policy-making' was made even more controversial and confusing.

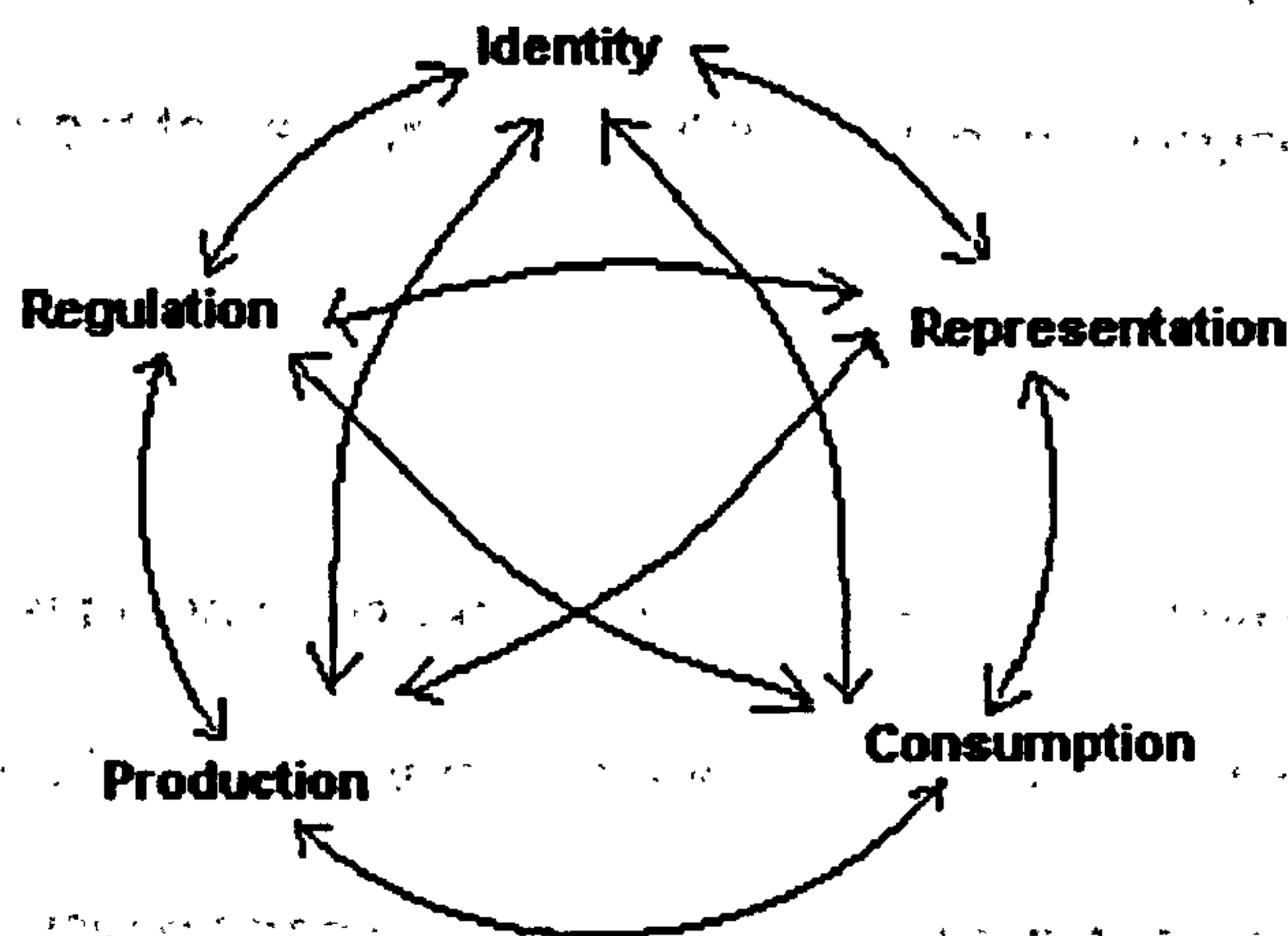
On the one hand, many sociologists have deep scepticism towards cultural policy.

Because meanings regulate and organise people's conduct and practices, cultural policy helps the state to set the rules, norms and conventions by which social life is governed. (THOMPSON, 1997) However, there has never been a thorough examination or case study to substantiate their suspicion. On the other hand, the professional discourse of arts management has usually taken cultural policy to be straightforward as a policy dealing with cultural affairs, and overlooked its significance and possible influence. It is indeed a waste to ignore the possibility of what cultural policy can do in the culture building process. This mentality limits the critical dimension of the arts management field and hides the politics of cultural policy. Furthermore, because the result of cultural policy cannot be quantified nor precisely measured, it is difficult to identify its effect without evaluating on a long-term basis.

However difficult it is to define 'cultural policy' precisely, its existence is a reality. In this thesis, I take Williams' (1976a: 90) third sense of 'culture' --artistic and intellectual activities -- as the main content of official 'cultural policy' since it has always been the case in official cultural policy. However, my examination will also include areas where meanings are produced and exchanged by official policy, both directly and indirectly.

In order to examine the identity changes in Taiwan without leaving out any important factors and influences, I adopted du Gay and Hall's (1997:3) analysis of the 'circuit of culture' (see next page). They described the whole process of producing culture as a 'circuit', including five major processes: representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation. According to Hall (1997a), these five processes form

the basis of the circuit and complete the production of culture at any key moment. In other words, culture is always fluid and changing; any change of the process in the circuit would influence and alter the outcome of culture as a whole. An examination of culture would not be complete if any of these five processes was neglected.



**The circuit of culture**

Since meaning is what gives us a sense of identity, of who we are and to whom we belong, the issue of how meaning is constructed will be closely linked to the question of how culture is used to maintain identity within groups, and mark out difference between groups. (WOODWARD, 1997) I am not suggesting that shared meanings within a group/society are always unitary, nor that cultural regulation can definitely formulate cultural identity. However, I see cultural policy as an official indicator of the state's intention to produce meaning purposefully. It is especially the case when forceful implementation and official promotion is imposed. Cultural regulation is an important factor in meaning production and identity formulation.

Because of the identity crisis I have experienced since the 1980s, when I started this research in 1996, my original interest was to solve my personal confusion by asking: "who are the Taiwanese", "how are we, ordinary people, culturally constructed", and



"what influences our sense of belonging": Drawing inspiration from Stuart Hall's theory of cultural identity (1990), I realised that cultural identity is not merely 'common historical experiences and shared cultural codes'. More importantly, it is a matter of both 'being' and 'becoming'. As Hall comments, "Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power... identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past." (HALL, 1990: 225)

In taking this approach I have to consider how a sense of being is manipulated through the play of history, culture and power. In other words, there is a need to look at the politics of culture, and how a history is told in a certain way, and why. My interest is to examine the politics of culture through the case of Taiwan, and therefore, neither pure policy analysis nor an arts management model is my concern.

Choosing Taiwan as the case study indeed reflects my personal interests. However, Taiwan entered the international spotlight after the 1996 Presidential Election and Chinese missile aggression. Apart from being seen as an economic powerhouse and diplomatic dilemma<sup>6</sup>, Taiwan's democratic struggle and indigenisation has attracted increasing international interest. Shambaugh (1996b) claims this change has brought two new dimensions to the Taiwan issue: politics and security. Seemingly, political change and social reform have occupied the centre stage of Taiwan's development since the 1980s. In reality, these changes were also cultural.

<sup>6</sup> Although small (36,000 square kilometres), Taiwan was the world's 14<sup>th</sup> largest trading entity and the 6<sup>th</sup> largest outbound investor in 1996, and possessed the world's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest foreign reserves. (YAHUDA, 1996) The relationship between America, China, and Taiwan was a delicate and difficult one, which was essential for the security in the Asia-Pacific region. (ROBINSON, 1996)

In order to explore the relationships between cultural policy and identity, I have divided my dissertation into two parts including textual analysis and empirical research. Part I consists of four chapters, analysing Taiwan's post-war development and cultural change. An understanding of how culture is regulated and governed is crucial in reading the underlying significance of cultural policy. I concentrate on the development of post-war Taiwan's cultural policy, and explore what meaning was intended to be produced through cultural policy, and how meaning was exchanged and shifted.

The examination of official cultural policies in Part I provides me with the base to understand political intention and cultural change. Apart from direct cultural policy, I also pay attention to political and economic changes, the post-war education system, language policy, and indirect policies (e.g. the change of public holidays, academic funding, census, renaming of streets).

Following the textual research on cultural policies and the analysis of the socio-political background of post-war Taiwan, the fieldwork that I carried out in 1999 is the main content of Part II. Here, I concentrate on the development of the theatre in Taiwan, and examine how the theatre responded to, and challenged, the official line. There are several reasons that I chose the (both traditional and contemporary) theatre as the case studies. It is partly because that the theatre is an area that I am most familiar with because of my work as a journalist covering theatre news for many years. More importantly, theatre is a politically sensitive art form. The traditional theatre has always had a close connection with the masses and brought a sense of continuity and historical memory. The contemporary theatre has been considered subversive and politically critical in Chinese/Taiwanese modern history. My fieldwork on Taiwan's theatre provides a good testing ground to examine the actual effect of cultural policy.



The fieldwork was carried out between November 7<sup>th</sup> and December 17<sup>th</sup> 1999. In addition to 20 formal interviews (see Appendix 2), many informal conversations with people from the theatre, policy-makers and theatre critics were carried out. I also kept in touch with the interviewees during the writing process through emails and phone calls to update materials.

Through the case studies on the development of Taiwanese theatre, I look at the following questions: who and what determines cultural policy, what is overtly stated but not achieved, how the theatre responded to official policy, how policy and identity can influence artistic expression, and vice versa. The case studies provide me not only with a picture of the actual situation in Taiwan's post-war theatre, but also a spectrum of opinion alternative to an official perspective, with which to understand Taiwan's cultural change.

Identity crisis still haunts people in Taiwan today. The conflict between various camps of different identities intensifies whenever an election is held<sup>7</sup>. In order to understand the cultural change and identity shift in Taiwan, I draw upon from Gramsci's theory of 'hegemony'<sup>8</sup> to not only understand the struggle between different discourses and political camps, but also to comprehend the nature of Taiwan's identity struggle.

In contrast to Lenin's notion of hegemony as a strategy of revolution, Gramsci sees hegemony as a 'relation' between classes and other social forces, which can be

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<sup>7</sup> Since there is always some form of election (for mayors, legislators, councillors...) every year, Taiwan seems to be in a constant state of political debate. Issues of 'unification or independence' and Taiwanese identity are highly charged during election campaigns.

<sup>8</sup> I have tried to avoid making a colonialist mistake and have considered whether Gramsci's theory is suitable for analysis of the situation in Taiwan. After the fieldwork I carried out in Taiwan, I feel that the general principle of Gramsci's theory of 'hegemony' fits in Taiwan's situation perfectly. It also provides me a good grounding to approach the relation of forces, to understand how 'intellectual and moral reform' functioned in a different light, and to identify how 'hegemony' is formed through making alliance and compromise (not by coercion) in the course of Taiwanese history. Also, I admit that I have omitted the 'class' dimension when I apply Gramsci, because the class issue in Taiwan is not in the same sense as in Gramsci's analysis.

gained by means of a combination of coercion and persuasion. A hegemonic social group is the one who gains the consent of others through making and maintaining alliances by ideological and political struggle. In its simplest use, it is a notion of political predominance from relations between states to relations between social classes. (GRAMSCI, 1971; WILLIAMS, 1976a; SIMON, 1982) The concept of 'hegemony' has a national-popular dimension and provides a strategy of building up a broad bloc of varied social groups.

Apart from political and economic struggles, Gramsci asserts that the waging of ideological struggle to transform popular consciousness is crucial for gaining hegemony. He proposes that there is "a cultural-social unity through which a multiplicity of dispersed wills with heterogeneous aims, are welded together with a single aim, as the basis of an equal and common conception of the world". (1971:349) In order to win ideological struggle -- which Gramsci terms as 'a war of position' (1971: 238) -- he believes that a process of 'intellectual and moral reform' is necessary to forge a collective will and create a common concept of the world.

Gramsci's theory of how hegemony can be maintained and challenged is inspiring, and is especially important for my analysis of Taiwan's drastic change of political regime and identity. Gramsci writes, "A social group can, indeed must, already exercise 'leadership' before winning governmental power... it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to 'lead' as well." (GRAMSCI, 1971: 57-68) His concept of hegemony explains the fluid and ever-changing condition between competing camps striving to gain hegemony. The process always involves compromises and making alliances.



In addition, Hall and Williams' ideas of 'culture', 'cultural identity', and 'cultural regulation' also allow me to consider those ideas within a broader frame. Their concepts relating to 'culture' provide me with a good foundation to analyse the meaning production process and its influence in every aspect of ordinary life. I see cultural policy as a way of formulating and disseminating official discourse. Du Gay and Hall 's analysis of 'cultural circuit' is especially useful in terms of examining the production of meaning. It enables me to look at various elements in the cultural circuit rather than focus only on policy change.

Moreover, Hall's analysis on different forms of 'regulation by culture' is also helpful for examining the implication and influence of cultural policy. He proposes that there are three forms of 'regulation by culture': normative, cultural, and subjective regulations. (HALL, 1997b) By giving norms and direction to social practices, 'normative regulations' make our actions predictable and regular, and create an orderly world. 'Cultural regulations' define the limits between sameness and difference, acceptable and unacceptable, normal and abnormal. These two forms of regulations are often used to make out 'the otherness', which is the key element of identity construction. As to subjective regulations, they try to produce or make up new subjects in order to regulate what sorts of 'subjects' we are. Instead of constraining the behaviour by imposing social control, this mode of regulations endeavours to get the members of a group/society to regulate themselves subjectively. Such regulations are implemented through the medium of 'culture change' and a shift of the 'regime of meanings'. Through Hall's analysis, I come to have a better understanding about how we are governed by culture, and how culture is regulated.

Aside from theoretical analysis, there have been many scholars of Taiwan Studies concerned

with cultural issues in Taiwan<sup>9</sup> in recent years. They have engaged in debates about the issues of Taiwan's subjectivity, Taiwan's untold history, and national identity. Most have examined political and historical arguments, concentrated on the issues of Taiwanese identity and Taiwan's subjectivity, and have advocated total indigenisation. However, rarely has anyone paid attention to Taiwan's recent cultural development, especially not from a prospect of national-culture-construction and cultural policy-making.

Among a limited number of scholars who have concerned themselves with issues of culture building in Taiwan, only a few have undertaken research on the change of Taiwanese identity through the angle of official culture construction. Winckler (1994) published a short paper relating to cultural policy in post-war Taiwan, but this is only a schematic description. Li Yih-yuan (1996a, 1996b, 2000) published several short essays concerning Taiwan's cultural development. Although these articles have been referred to frequently, they are basically simple descriptions or general analyses of Taiwan's cultural development.

Tu Wei-ming (1994, 1996) is concerned with Taiwan's cultural identity, nonetheless, he views the issue from a China-centric position that does not concern Taiwan's subjectivity, or pay attention to cultural policies. The researches of Allen Chun (1996), Yang Ts'ung-jung (1992) and Hsiao A-ch'in (1991, 2000) note the importance of culture and the politics of cultural policy. They analyse the characteristics of KMT ideologies, focusing on the KMT strategy on cultural affairs and its moral-oriented discourse in the early post-war years, but do not extend their interests further to the most volatile period after martial law was lifted.

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<sup>9</sup> Many scholars work in this area, including Wachman, Ralph Clough, Ramon Myers, Chang Mao-kui, Chao Kang, Chên Chao-ying, Dai Kuo-hui, Hsü Chieh-lin, Li Ch'in-an, Liao



Generally speaking, the politics of Taiwan's cultural policy, its unforeseeable effects, and the interactions between different processes in the circuit of culture are rarely explored, especially within the context of the drastic cultural changes and severe identity crisis of the last decade. In this limited body of work, the political intention of constructing cultural identity and cultural discourse through cultural policy has been overlooked. My research focuses on fifty years of Taiwanese cultural development with literature research and case studies, in order to examine the complex cultural change in post-war Taiwan.

Because my research is based on official documents and case studies, there are many Chinese terms and names used in this thesis. I apply the Romanisation principle -- *pinyin* system (without tone/diacritical marks) -- as the norm for translating Chinese characters. However, the Wade-Giles system is used when referring to names of people and places outside of mainland China<sup>10</sup>. In order to reduce confusion, English translations and original Chinese characters for particular terms will be also added on the first occurrence of each Romanisation.

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Ch'ao-yang, Liao Hsien-hao, Chang Mao-kuei, Shih Chêng-fêng, Wang Ming-k'o.

<sup>10</sup> In general, Taiwan uses the Wade-Giles system, but has never used it systematically and constantly. Therefore, many people have special translations of their own names, for example, Wu Jing Jyi 吳靜吉 (should be Wu Ching-chi in Wade-Giles), Chiu Hei-yuan 瞿海源 (should be Ch'ü Hai-yüan in Wade-Giles), or Liu Chiwai 劉其偉 (should be Liu Ch'i-wei). In cases like this, I respect their own choice and use their translation. The same rule will also apply to names of organisations, books, or productions. If they provide an English title (for example, Gang-a Tsui 江之翠 Theatre provided its title in Minnan yu pronunciation), I will use this rather than translate them directly from Chinese.

## **PART I     CULTURAL POLICY IN TAIWAN**

There are 4 chapters in this part, covering official cultural policies in post-war Taiwan at different stages. I concentrate on Taiwan's cultural development and its socio-political and economical changes, in order to examine the meaning that the government intended to produce and the interaction between cultural policy and post-war social changes. According to the historical changes in Taiwan, the chapters are roughly divided into: anti-Communist period (1949 -1967); Cultural Renaissance Movement period (1967-1977); the awakening of Taiwanese awareness (the late 1970s to late 1980s); and the indigenisation trend (the 1990s to date).

Chapter 1 begins with Taiwan's historical development in the 1950s and 60s, and explores the strategy on cultural control, which was promoted as psychological reinforcement in the battle against communism at the height of the Cold War.

Chapter 2 describes the implementation and significance of the Cultural Renaissance Movement, which was promoted by the KMT government as a cultural battle against the Cultural Revolution in mainland China. In general, these two chapters focus on the foundations that the KMT government laid for culture construction in post-war Taiwan.

The 1970s was a crucial period for Taiwan. On the one hand, rapid economic growth gave the Taiwanese confidence. On the other hand, Taiwanese society was disturbed by diplomatic defeat and started to question the KMT ideology. Chapter 3 focuses on the awakening process of Taiwanese awareness and the beginning of the challenge to the KMT's authority. After martial law was lifted in 1987, Taiwan's society has stepped into a new era. Chapter 4 looks at the severe cultural struggles that



Taiwan has gone through since the late 1980s. The longing for Taiwanese identity in the 1990s has become an overwhelming cultural phenomenon. There was an identity struggle between two different camps, each striving to win public support by influencing and re-writing the narratives of the past. Therefore, as well as the examination of Taiwanese cultural policy and historical development after the mid-1980s, Chapter 4 depicts a general picture of competing discourses fighting to construct consensus.

# **Chapter 1    Anti-communist Combat**

During the 1950s and 60s, Sinification and anti-communism were the ultimate goals of state policy in Taiwan. Furthermore, cultural policy was taken as part of national defence and anti-communist warfare. In this chapter, I will examine what was imposed for national security under such circumstances, and how culture communities coped and strove to express themselves under stringent censorship and strict thought control.

## **1.1. Historical background**

### **1.1.1. Taiwan's colonial past**

Taiwan is an island located off the eastern coast of China in the Western Pacific between Japan and the Philippines. The total area is about 36,000 sq. km. The island was originally populated by Malayo-Polyaesian aborigines. At the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, not only did Chinese emigration from the mainland increase, but around the same time, foreign powers also wanted to occupy the island.

At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, the Spanish and Dutch came. The former occupied the northern part of Taiwan for 16 years (1627-1642); the latter the south from 1624. In 1642, the Dutch East India Company defeated the Spanish and colonised Taiwan. During 38 years of fierce Dutch rule, there were over twenty rebellions. The most severe happened in 1652, when over 40,000 Taiwanese were killed. (KUO ZHAOLIE, 1999:37-39)

In 1662, the Ming dynasty supporter Cheng Ch'eng-kung 鄭成功 defeated the Dutch and took Taiwan as his base to overturn the Qing dynasty<sup>1</sup>. In 1683, however, the Qing court finally took over Taiwan. As the Qing's purpose of taking Taiwan was to put down the Ming rebels, a closed-door policy was imposed to restrain any further rebellions. (KIYASU SACHIO, 1999: 61-67)

It was not until two hundred years later that the Qing court finally realised Taiwan's strategic importance as holding the key to the seas of Eastern Asia and its economic value as an exporter of sugar and tea. Hence, Taiwan was granted provincial status in 1885. However, ten years later, Taiwan was ceded to Japan for China's defeat in the Jiawu 甲午 War (the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95). From then until 1945, Taiwan went through another phase of colonialism.

During the anti-Japanese war (1937-1945), President Chiang Kai-shek of the Republic of China (ROC)<sup>2</sup> claimed the sovereignty of Taiwan. (VAN KEMENADE, 1998: 144) At the Cairo Conference of 1943, and also at the Potsdam Conference of 1945, Allied leaders agreed that Taiwan would be returned to the ROC after the war. On October 25<sup>th</sup> 1945, the Japanese surrendered, and Taiwan's population of around 7 million was then subjected to Chinese rule. The first governor was Ch'ên I. (KIYASU SACHIO, 1999; WACHMAN, 1994)

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<sup>1</sup> The Ming Dynasty was overthrown by the Manchus, who established the Qing dynasty in 1644. Cheng led Ming supporters to Taiwan and waited for chance to overturn the Qing court.

<sup>2</sup> After ten attempts between 1894 and 1911, a Chinese revolution, led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen (the founding father of Tongmenghui 同盟會—the United League of China, the predecessor of the KMT), finally succeeded. In 1911, the Qing dynasty (1644 -1911) was overthrown and the Republic of China - the first republic in Asia - was established. After Sun died in 1925, his followers set up a Nationalist government in Canton in 1926 and launched the northern expedition (1926 - 27) to combat warlords. Chiang Kai-shek was the Commander-in-chief and became the leader of the KMT.



Tension between local Taiwanese and their new rulers came to a head in the 228 Incident<sup>3</sup> in 1947. The outburst of hostilities between local Taiwanese and people from mainland, at this stage mainly officers and civil servants, brought the tension to the boiling point. Many Taiwanese had become dissatisfied with the Ch'ên I Administration, because of corruption, discrimination against the Taiwanese, and stringent and unfair economic restrictions. (KERR, 1966) After the rebellions were under military control, measures of brutal repression and mass executions were underway. Because the documents relating to these events were locked away or destroyed, the exact number of deaths in this massacre is not known for sure<sup>4</sup>.

Following this, inflamed by the 228 Incident, the conflict and distrust between Taiwanese and people from the mainland deepened. When the Nationalist government fled to Taiwan after their defeat in the civil war<sup>5</sup> in 1949, they brought with them two million people from mainland China. Original residents in Taiwan called themselves 'Taiwanese', and categorised those arriving as 'mainlanders', even though most of their own ancestors also came from China, and even though they

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<sup>3</sup> On February 27<sup>th</sup> 1947, six Chinese inspectors and policemen bullied a female vendor and accused her of selling smuggled cigarettes. During the dispute, the crowd of onlookers were annoyed by officers' brutal treatment and joined in the argument. During the conflict, one passer-by was shot and killed, and the female vendor was wounded. The next morning, more than 2,000 people encircled the police station and demanded justice. The Chinese armed forces tried to suppress the protesting crowds. Dispute between armed soldiers and unarmed civilians broke out, and many people were killed. Ch'ên I Administration proclaimed martial law that evening and reported the incident as 'being instigated by Communists' to the central government. On March 8<sup>th</sup>, Chiang Kai-shek sent armies to Taiwan to suppress the rebellion. The incident lasted until mid-March and finally the situation was stabilised. (KERR, 1966; WORLD UNITED FORMOSANS FOR INDEPENDENCE, 2001; HSÜ CHIEH-LIN, 1997)

<sup>4</sup> General Pai Ch'ung-hsi 白崇禧 was sent to investigate the incident. His report claimed that the casualties were not as serious as thought. There were 1,860 civilian casualties and 440 military casualties. However, according to Taiwanese dissidents, over 10,000 Taiwanese died in the incident. (KERR, 1966)

<sup>5</sup> After the Second World War, a four-year civil war broke out between the KMT and Chinese Communists. After President Chiang Kai-shek resigned in January 1949, negotiations between the two parties failed. The Communist forces pushed across the Yellow and Yangzi Rivers. Beijing and Nanjing fell into Communist hands in April. The KMT government lost control of many areas, and fled to Taiwan. Chiang resumed as the ROC President in Taipei by December 1949.

themselves spoke Chinese dialects<sup>6</sup>. Because of the discrimination against the Taiwanese, the hostility between people of different *shengji* (省籍, the province of one's birthplace or origin) deepened. (*Shengji* conflicts are discussed further in Chapter 4.)

According to the research of Lin Chung-chêng and Lin Hê-ling (1993), the socio-economic status of the Taiwanese and mainlanders differed greatly. In general, the minority mainlanders dominated the civil services and had better opportunities in education. In contrast, the Taiwanese were socially disadvantaged, and politically and economically excluded. Because of the discrimination against the Taiwanese, the hostility between people of different *shengji* (省籍, the province of one's birthplace or origin) deepened. (*Shengji* conflicts are discussed further in Chapter 4.)

Looking at four centuries' of Taiwanese history, the fate of the island constantly changing hands from one regime to another had haunted the Taiwanese. It had ingrained a deep shame and sense of insecurity in its people. The anxiety of being powerless to determine one's fate and the sense of injustice of unfair exclusion and degradation provoked conflicts again and again in the course of Taiwanese history.

### 1.1.2. Military threat after 1949

Defeated in the civil war, the KMT government and army fled to Taiwan in 1948 and 1949. The Nationalist government-in-exile was established in Taiwan, while the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)<sup>7</sup> established the People's Republic of China (PRC)

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<sup>6</sup> Apart from small proportion of aborigines, the ancestors of most Taiwanese residents of this time came from southern China, namely Fujian and Canton provinces. Therefore, most Taiwanese spoke Minnan yu 閩南語 (a dialect of south Fujian Province, the mother-tongue for the majority of Taiwanese residents) and the Hakka 客家 dialect (dialect of the Hakkas).

<sup>7</sup> The CCP was established in 1921 with help from Russia. In 1927, it incited revolt in Nanjing, Canton and Changsha. Its forces grew during the anti-Japanese war. In 1945, the membership of the CCP increased to around 1.2 million and its armed forces increased from 92,000 in 1937 to 910,000 in 1945. (GIO, 1993b: 36) Because of the corruption within the KMT, the CCP prevailed in the civil war with Russian support.



on October 1<sup>st</sup> 1949. Two governments coexisted, each claiming to be the only legitimate government of China. (KIYASU SACHIO 1999:192-93; KEMENADE, 1998: 141-45)

By the beginning of the 1950s, the military threat posed by the CCP put Taiwan in imminent danger. Both in 1949 and 1950, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) attempted to invade Quemoy<sup>8</sup>. It seemed that Taiwan would be taken at any moment. (HSÜ CHIEH-LIN, 1997)

It was the opinion of the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) that the Chinese Communists would 'liberate' Taiwan within a year. (KIYASU SACHIO 1999:207) In January 1950, the US President Truman declared a 'hands-off' policy regarding the China problem, and indicated America's non-involvement. However, this policy was reversed abruptly because of the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950. America feared that a Chinese Communist invasion of Taiwan would open a 'second front' in the Korean War. (HSIAO A-CH'IN, 1991; HSÜ CHIEH-LIN, 1997) Hence, the 'hands-off' policy was reversed, and President Truman ordered the American Seventh Fleet to patrol the Taiwan Strait, as part of American defence.

Even so, the military confrontations across the Taiwan Strait never ceased until the late 1970s. In 1954, the PRC launched an artillery bombardment in an attempt to prevent Taiwan being included in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). (HSÜ CHIEH-LIN, 1997) On August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1958, the PRC launched a forty-four day non-stop bombardment of Quemoy. China launched smaller scale

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<sup>8</sup> Quemoy(金門, also Chinmen) is a small frontier island off the coast of China. It is actually nearer to the mainland than to Taiwan. To attack Taiwan, Quemoy would be the first

bombardments twice in June 1960. (HSÜ CHIEH-LIN, 1997) Later, instead of bombing Quemoy continuously, China adopted a new strategy - *danda shuang buda* 單打, 雙不打 (bombing on the odd dates, and ceasing fire on the even dates). The bombing lasted for eighteen years.

Threatened by constant bombardment and possible invasion, post-war Taiwan was under great strain and constant military threat. To tackle the threat, the KMT government imposed martial law, censorship, and a stringent education system to not only secure national stability but also make sure that the construction of ideology was under control. As a whole, the KMT's cultural policy was considered 'extensive and effective'. (WINCKLER, 1994: 22) The main theme of this period was 'anti-communist ideology'. Therefore, culture was considered part of the national security combat forces.

### **1.1.3. KMT's early cultural policy model**

To understand the essence of KMT cultural policy in early post-war Taiwan, it is necessary to look at previous policies on cultural affairs. As early as 1938, the KMT proposed its first party policy concerning culture and the arts. It was at a time when the influence of left-wing writers was growing strong (LI LI-LING, 1995) and the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) had just started. The KMT sensed the threat of Communist influence on the younger generation, and acknowledged the importance of controlling and policing culture.

The provisional KMT Standing Committee held a meeting on March 28<sup>th</sup> 1938 and

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beachhead the PRC needed to seize.



passed the motion *Proposal of Setting Tasks for Cultural Policy* (*queding wenhua zhengce an* 確定文化政策案), proposed by Chiang Kai-shek's left-hand man, Ch'ên Kuo-fu 陳果夫. In this motion, there were six important clauses concerning culture and the arts:

- 1, Composing music which can carry *minzu jingshen* 民族精神 (national spirit, nationalist awareness) forward and provide clam, healthy, and decent feelings to match civil life.
- 2, Building up the theoretical system of Sanminzhuyi<sup>9</sup> that combined philosophy, literature, and social sciences.
- 3, Setting up awards to encourage improvements in all areas (such as: literature, social sciences, natural sciences, education and social services).
- 4, Drawing up regulations to encourage publications and protect copyright, enhancing publishers' sense of morality and improving cultural standards. Outlawing any publication that harmed the national consciousness or interests.
- 5, Organising all kinds of national societies and selecting talents in literature, arts and sciences to be the members, in order to encourage, award and further their academic expertise.
- 6, Popularising mass media, radio, films industries, and theatre, in order to carry national consciousness further. (CH'IN HSIAO-I, 1978a: 366-369)

Apart from some statements and regulations that imposed throughout the 1930s, it was the first time that the KMT clearly stated its overall cultural policy and its official attitude towards culture. These guidelines remained important for KMT cultural policy, and were used extensively until the 1970s. On the whole, all these measures -- imposing censorship, managing cultural expression, rewarding the 'righteous' and 'correct' art works -- aimed at achieving the goal of "forming a theoretical base of Sanminzhuyi through culture construction". (LI LI-LING, 1995) By encouraging and rewarding the favoured ideologies, the official view on a healthy *wenyi* 文藝 (literature and the arts) was tightly linked with national spirit, morality, and Sanminzhuyi.

Sanminzhuyi was a modified socialist theory, developed by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, aiming to modernise and democratise China. The theory was developed to deal with the

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<sup>9</sup> Sanminzhuyi 三民主義 means 'three principles of the people' -- a socialist theory proposed by Dr. Sun Yat-sen as the blueprint for building the nation.



severe problems that China had suffered since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and consisted of three parts: nationalism (*minzu zhuyi* 民族主義, principle of the people), civil liberty (*minquan zhuyi* 民權主義, principle of democracy), and social welfare and economic development (*minsheng zhuyi* 民生主義, principle of people's livelihood).

Sanminzhuyi became the base of KMT ideology and the blueprint for its state-building process. However, Sanminzhuyi was promoted selectively in Taiwan. It was deliberately moralised and tailored to feed the KMT's need to fight the anti-communist war. This will be discussed further in later sections, and we can see that the principle of democracy was deliberately ignored, and emphasis was placed on the other two principles to divert attention from democratic demands and reinforce social control.

#### 1.1.4. The impact of the May Fourth

After fleeing to Taiwan, the KMT concluded that its defeat was due to its failure in the arena of culture. The fatal downfall, according to Chiang Kai-shek's own analysis (1984b; 1984c), was the result of the KMT's inability to carry out party-based education<sup>10</sup>. Although party-based education had been in operation since 1929<sup>11</sup>, Chiang Kai-shek (1984b: 209) believed that the problem was that it had never been

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<sup>10</sup> The KMT started its party-based education in the 1920s. In 1927, the Education Committee of the KMT first used the phrase *danghua jiaoyu* (黨化教育 party-ised, KMT-ised education) in a draft of its education policy. (OU YUNG-SHÊNG, 1990: 212) In 1929, the motion to base education policy on Sanminzhuyi ideology was passed by the KMT, and the Ministry of Education (MOE) started to implement a course called *dangyi* (黨義 party ideology). (ALLEN CHUN, 1996; MOE, 1991: 34-54; OU YUNG-SHÊNG, 1990: 213)

<sup>11</sup> Fostering political culture had always been key to the KMT's education policy. According to Ou Yung-shêng, (1990) fostering political culture and exercising social control were two focuses of the KMT education policy. Apart from Sanminzhuyi, similar subjects (linked to social control) included: Social Studies (*shehui* 社會), Citizenship (*gongmin* 公民), Common Sense (*changshi* 常識), Health Education (*jiankang jiaoyu* 健康教育), and Life and Ethics

imposed nation-wide. Therefore, the goal of instilling the 'core ideas of Sanminzhuyi' through schooling was unsuccessful.

The KMT believed that their political hegemony was lost because literary and artistic communities opposed the party, preferring instead to support the CCP. Chiang Kai-shek asserted:

"Communists ... were very good at embedding thought and inciting class struggle through literature and drama. People were instilled with this kind of thinking without knowing it. As a result, people were either harmed by yellow [sexual] content, or poisoned by red [communist] ideologies [in literature and arts]." (1984k: 245)

Most of all, Chiang placed blame on the influence of the May Fourth Movement, which introduced Communism and individualism into the minds of young people. (HSIAO A-CH'IN, 1991:79)

The May Fourth Movement began as a student demonstration held on May 4<sup>th</sup> 1919<sup>12</sup>. Later, it developed into an anti-imperialist, anti-feudalist and anti-traditional movement. (TU WEI-MING, 1994, 1996; WANG & YI, 1990: 6)

This was a time when the Chinese felt ashamed of the country's semi-colonial status and were anxious about how China could be rebuilt. A sense of shame regarding this status had haunted the Chinese since the Opium war (1840). There had been many proposals made by intellectuals to solve the problem, such as wholesale westernisation (*quanpan xihua* 全盤西化), grabism (*nalai zhuyi* 拿來主義), totalistic anti-traditionalism, and *zhongxue weiti, xixue weiyong* (中學爲體, 西學爲用 Chinese

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(*shenghuo yu lunli* 生活與倫理). (OU YUNG-SHENG, 1990: 71-72)

<sup>12</sup> On the May 4<sup>th</sup> 1919, over 3,000 students from 13 Beijing Universities protested the Treaty of Versailles, because the Allies decided to transfer the German privilege in Shandong Province (China) to Japan. This protest not only inflamed the anger nationwide and triggered strikes, but also pressurised Chinese government to refuse to sign the treaty.



learning for the essential principles, Western learning for the practical application).

(LIN YŪ-SHENG, 1996)

Because of this resentment towards tradition, old customs, and traditional values, Lin Yŭ-sheng (1996:176) described the May Fourth Movement as the manifestation of "totalistic anti-traditionalism". Its influence is immeasurable and has continued until this day.

Left-wing activists (such as Lu Xun 魯迅 and Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀<sup>13</sup>) in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century advocated acute revolutions to reform the people and the polity, an abandonment of old traditions and values, and a total westernisation of life style. Many intellectuals believed that total reform and complete revolution was the only way to achieve modernisation. (CHIANG PAO-CH'AI, 1994, Chapter 2.1) The movement inspired many students to follow and aroused self-criticism and dissatisfaction with old traditions, values and regimes.

This general dissatisfaction had increased the aversion to the warlords and helped the KMT to accomplish the mission of the Northern Expedition<sup>14</sup>. Ironically, the KMT government later became the target of protest for obstructing progress. According to the famous scholar Chiang Mêng-lin (1971: 487), the same kind of discontent was aroused to pave the way for the Chinese communists to drive the KMT out of the mainland in 1949. Little surprise, therefore, that Chiang Kai-shek (1984b) believed that "the anti-communist battle was a cultural struggle". (CHIANG KAI-SHEK, 1984a)

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<sup>13</sup> They were regarded 'the tutors of the youth' and 'the standard-bearers of the May Fourth Movement'. (HUANG YING-CHE, 1994)

<sup>14</sup> The Northern Expedition (*beifa* 北伐, 1926-1927) was the first civil war since the Republic was established in 1911. The Nationalist government created a seemingly unified government



This century-long argument (on how to modernise China) entwined with the development of Chinese modern history, and divided intellectuals into different camps. Even today, issues such as how to catch up with the advanced West, and how to modernise China are still the main concerns of Chinese intellectuals, at home and overseas alike. (LIU LYDIA, 1995; TU, 1994, 1996; HUANG, R., 1995, 1996)

Two different political systems straddling the Taiwan Strait embodied two different camps of thinking. (LIU LYDIA H., 1995) Two cultural developments manifested two typical approaches - the KMT insisted on a pro-tradition and selective-westernisation approach, whereas, the CCP proposed anti-tradition and total-revolution. Although the two approaches were contradictory to each other, the two sides shared the same concern of modernisation.

## **1.2. Early post-war cultural policy**

### **1.2.1. Learning to be Chinese again**

After the Second World War, Taiwan was officially handed over to the ROC government on October 25<sup>th</sup> 1945. Before the first governor Ch'ên I and his administration arrived in Taiwan, the Ministry of Education (MOE) had already decided on an education policy for Taiwan. In September 1945, a national education conference on the return of peacetime conditions (*quanguo jiaoyu shanhou fuyuan huiyi* 全國教育善後復員會議) was held to plan for post-war education policy.

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in Nanjing after the expedition had been accomplished.

At that conference, the most important principle concerning Taiwan was made.

Huang Yen-p'ei proposed a motion - Education Policy in Taiwan After Take-over (*guangfu hou zhi taiwan jiaoyu an* 光復後之台灣教育案). (YANG TS'UNG-JUNG, 1992: 34) He believed that the main task in Taiwanese education was *zuguohua* 祖國化. Literally, *zugu* means 'motherland'; *hua* is a suffixed compound borrowed from Modern Japanese, meaning '-isation' (to make ... become...). (LIU LYDIA H., 1995: 345) For Chinese officials, *zuguohua* means 'Sinification'.

Huang Yen-p'ei proposed a motion in an education conference in 1945 to deal with post-war education policy in Taiwan. He asserted that: "In order to make Taiwan the ROC's Taiwan, the priority of education in Taiwan was to educate the Taiwanese to know their motherland and inspire their affection towards China. Hence, two subjects -- Chinese (language and literature), and *shidi* (史地 history and geography) -- are most important." (HUANG YEN-P'EI, 1991:393) This motion was passed and handed to Ch'ên I Administration to put into practice.

This principle -- Sinification (making the Taiwanese 'Chinese') -- laid the foundations for education in Taiwan and remained a priority throughout the post-war period until the 1990s. For example, Kê Ching-ên, then secretary-general of the Ch'ên I Administration, emphasised 'psychological construction' in his report to the first Taiwan Provincial Commission in 1946. He believed that the way to make the Taiwanese Chinese was to foster nationalism, and the key vehicles were propaganda and education. He said, "both should work hand in hand, in order to achieve the mission of enhancing and strengthening the national spirit." (KÊ CHING-ÊN, 1989: 228-230)



In a speech that Ch'ên I gave on New Year's Eve 1946, this principle was clearly stated: "The task of psychological building could be materialised by enhancing national spirit (*minzu jingshen*) ... Education, at all levels, should place emphasis on subjects such as *guoyu* (national spoken language, Mandarin), *guowen*<sup>15</sup> (Chinese language and literature), Sanminzhuyi, and Chinese history." (TAIWANSHENG WENXIAN WEIYUANHUI, 1979: 2)

Apparently, because of Taiwan's colonial past, and the language barrier<sup>16</sup>, the selection of appropriate textbooks for Taiwanese students was difficult in the early stages. According to Ou Yung-shêng (1990:173), several tactics were adopted to tackle the problem. Firstly, textbooks of four important subjects (Chinese, Mandarin, Chinese history and Sanminzhuyi) were taken directly from the mainland, while the rest were a mixture of rewriting and a compilation of old materials used in Chinese textbooks, and suitable translated materials from old Japanese textbooks.

Militarist and (Japanese) nationalist ideology in Japanese textbooks were regarded as 'poison' by the Chinese government. Therefore, one of the tasks of education in early post-war Taiwan was the 'sterilisation' of widespread Japanese militarist

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<sup>15</sup> For the ROC, Mandarin was the national (spoken) language(*guoyu*). It is identical to *putonghua* 普通話, the common language, in the PRC. *Guowen* 國文 refers to written Chinese. Within Chinese territories, there are around 56 different ethnic groups, 85 different spoken languages, and around 27 written languages (only 23 are still in use). In Chinese history, Mandarin became the common (spoken) language in the Yuan dynasty (around 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century). For the majority Han Chinese, there are 7 major dialects, although they can communicate with the same written Chinese (*guowen*). The dialects that were used in Taiwan belong to Hakka and Min dialects. (WANG & YI, 1990: 644-647)

<sup>16</sup> Under Japanese rule, the daily spoken languages used in Taiwan were Japanese, Minnan yu, and Hakka dialect. In 1932, only 22.7% of Taiwanese could speak Japanese. However, the *Kominka* Movement 皇民化運動 (the movement to make Taiwanese subjects of the Japanese Emperor) was imposed after the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937. Japanese authorities in Taiwan not only reinforced Japanese learning, but also banned Chinese learning and usage. After this, the figure of Japanese-fluent-speakers among the Taiwanese rose to 51% in 1940, and increased rapidly to 71% in 1944. (HUANG HSÜAN-FAN, 1993: 93)



ideologies and culture<sup>17</sup>: (OU YUNG-SHÊNG ; 1990:170-172; 1979) The education in Taiwan was chaotic during the first few years, because the compilation of the huge amount of material used in the texts, and the intense scrutiny it underwent before publication both had to be carried out within short period of time.

Beside that, Ch'ên I believed, the other priority of Sinification was to unify 'language'. Soon after he was appointed as Governor of Taiwan, he expressed his view on Taiwan's language policy in an interview with *Dagong bao* 大公報 (September 2, 1945). He claimed that the very first thing he would do when he arrived at Taiwan was to promote Chinese. (HSÛ HSÛEH-CHI, 1991).

Although schools were the best agent to carry out Sinification tasks, it was almost impossible however for teachers who had been educated under Japanese rule to teach Chinese and Mandarin fluently. The process of promoting Mandarin was difficult. According to Ch'ên Mei-ju's research (1996: 123 ~124), many teachers at that time had to rely on a Mandarin teaching programme broadcast on the radio at night to be able to teach the subject the next day.

Soon after Taiwan was handed over to the ROC in 1945, the Committee for Mandarin Promotion (*guoyu tuixing weiyuanhui* 國語推行委員會) was set up. Its members understood the difficulties involved and suggested "recovering the local dialects to assist Mandarin teaching". (CH'ÊN MEI-JU, 1995: 89, 109) Therefore, local dialects - Minnan yu and Hakka - were permitted in lessons. Sometimes, the teachers' newly

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<sup>17</sup> The Japanese took education as the vehicle to instil Japanese nationalism and ideology in the population. Hence, elementary education was intensively promoted to build consensus. Before the KMT took over in 1945, 71% of Taiwanese children were educated to elementary level. (TAIWANSHENG JIAOYUTING, 1955: 1)

learnt Mandarin was so elementary that written Japanese was also used during lessons to support teaching.

### 1.2.2. Stringent language policy

It was no surprise that the general picture in Taiwan's classrooms at this time was chaotic. Ironically, the only way to carry out Sinification in schools was by heavy reliance on local dialects and Japanese. In 1946, the Ch'ên I Administration promulgated a new regulation --Measures for Promoting National Language in Counties and Cities of Taiwan (*Taiwansheng ge xianshi tuixing guoyu shishi banfa* 台灣省各縣市推行國語實施辦法) -- to tighten up language control and get rid of the remains of 'Japanese-ness'. Ch'ên I emphasised his determination and said: "I hope that we promote Chinese with a *gangxing* 剛性 (harsh and tough) implementation. There should be no softness ... in order to improve the efficiency." (CH'ÊN MEI-JU, 1996: 88)

In October 1946, exactly one year after Taiwan was taken over, all newspapers and magazines in Japanese were abolished. All governmental documents and decrees were promulgated only in Chinese (Japanese and Chinese were juxtaposed before then). Japanese music was banned from the radio, and Taiwanese writers were also forbidden to write in Japanese for publications. (LI CH'IN-AN, 1997; CH'ÊN MEI-JU, 1996: 88,196-197) As Ch'ên I claimed, the language policy in Taiwan started to tighten up.

When the war had just ended, many Taiwanese welcomed the Chinese government and held high expectations of 'returning to the motherland'. Initially, learning



Mandarin was fashionable among intellectuals, and many Mandarin courses were run by private tutors. (HSŪ HSŪEH- CHI, 1991: 309, 320) Although the trend towards Sinification and a pro-China attitude was not unilaterally promoted by the authorities, it was favoured by some intellectuals.

However, this harmonious situation soon deteriorated. Many Taiwanese became disillusioned with Chinese rule because of the corruption of the Ch'ên I Administration, its stringent financial restrictions, and most importantly, the financial, political and cultural discrimination against Taiwanese. (KERR, 1966) The outbreak of the 228 incident was a direct response to the harsh and unjust rule of the Ch'ên I Administration. (WORLD UNITED FORMOSANS FOR INDEPENDENCE, 2001) Furthermore, accounts were settled following the incident and the punishment of the 'unruly Taiwanese' lasted for a long time. Many were arrested, imprisoned, and executed, and in particular intellectuals. The fear generated by the incident was referred to as 'White Terror'. (LIN SHU-YANG, 1992; LAN PO-CHOU, 1998)

After the 228 Incident, both written and spoken Japanese were totally banned. Many books written in Japanese were banned, and it was forbidden to even speak Japanese in schools. Many measures were taken to remove traces of Japanese influence and tighten thought control. (CH'ÊN MEI-JU, 1996: 87-92)

During the period between 1945 and 1949, de-Japanisation (in other words, the promotion of Sinification) was the highest principle of the ROC's rule in Taiwan. Apart from language policy, the Ch'ên I administration also paid great attention to reducing the influence and traces of Japanese culture. Japanese *jinja* 神社 (Shinto shrines)



were refurbished and changed into *zhonglie ci* 忠烈祠 (memorial halls for anti-Japanese martyrs). Japanese street names were abolished and renamed after Chinese traditional moralities, political leaders, heroes, or places in China. (YANG TS'UNG-JUNG, 1992)

Most Taiwanese who grew up under Japanese rule, especially intellectuals and writers, who had used Japanese as their tool to express and create, felt out of place and inferior. (YEH SHIH-TAO, 1990; LIU CHIEH, 1994; CHANG CHIN-CH'ANG, 1997; SHIH CHÊNG-FÊNG, 1999) Worst of all, many intellectuals were killed or imprisoned following the 228 incident.

### 1.2.3. Chiang Kai-shek's involvement

Early post-war cultural policy in Taiwan (which had been set up by the Ch'ên I Administration) was modified as soon as the KMT government fled to Taiwan in 1949. The emphasis of Sinification gave way to the nation's most urgent needs: *fangong fuguo* 反攻復國 (counterattack [against the Communists] and recovery of the mainland), and *fangong kange* 反共抗俄 (anti-communism and resistance to the USSR). (TSÊNG CHING-YÜEH, 1995; OU YUNG-SHÊNG, 1990; YANG TS'UNG-JUNG, 1992).

Chiang Kai-shek felt bitter about the KMT's downfall. He contemplated the defeat and tried to draw conclusions in order to avoid making the same mistakes again. He believed that the KMT's defeat was a cultural and educational failure. (CHIANG KAI-SHEK, 1984b: 208; 1984e: 35) On several occasions, he expressed this view: "The anti- communist and anti-Russian war today... is a cultural war." (1984a: 354)

"To win the battle of recovering the mainland is an ideological, intellectual...war, in other words, a war of [refining] education." (1984e: 37) "Education is the most important and fundamental mission for our party." (1984c: 266) "Whether we have a successful education or not will determine the future of our country." (1984b: 209)

In an important speech given by Chiang in 1951 entitled *The relationship between education, revolution, and state-building* (*Jiaoyu yu geming jianguo de guanxi* 教育與革命建國的關係), he concluded: " Our defeat came from the failure in education and culture... Not like the failure in other areas, such as: politics, military, or economy, which would be easily identified and mended ... The fall in education was difficult to identify... Its effect extended to the whole nation, and could not be put right in a short time." (1984b: 208)

He believed that left-wing and liberal academics had a bad influence on the youth. According to Chiang Kai-shek (1984b: 210-211), in the name of 'academic liberalism and neutrality', many party members did not provide the younger generation with stable spiritual guidance and strong moral values. This gave Chinese Communists the opportunity to grow.

In 1952, the *KMT Political Guideline* (*zhongguo guomindang zhengzhi gangling* 中國國民黨政治綱領) was passed in the 7<sup>th</sup> Standing Committee. It clearly asserted that the KMT should "strengthen Sanminzhuyi thought in education, bring traditional morality forward, preserve cultural heritage, promote modern science, and foster in students a democratic and law-abiding concepts, in order to consolidate the confidence to counterattack Communism." (OU YUNG-SHENG, 1990: 180-181) It was the first KMT post-war policy concerning cultural affairs. Apparently, the KMT



valued the importance of education, which was the starting point for the KMT to reform Taiwan and regain hegemony.

Chiang Kai-shek acknowledged the importance of culture and education and influenced education policy. His ideas about Sanminzhuyi education expressed in writing and speeches were not only compiled and published, (WU CHI-P'ING, 1969; CH'IN HSIAO-I, 1975; CHIANG KAI-SHEK, 1984a~1984m) but also recited and elaborated by many pedagogic scholars. (CH'ENG TIEN-FANG, 1952; CHANG CH'I-YÜN, 1995; KUO WEI-FAN, 1975). His personal concept of education dominated the overall direction of education development. (OU YUNG-SHÊNG, 1990; YANG TS'UNG- JUNG, 1992; TSÊNG CHING-YÜEH, 1995) In general, there were three emphases in his educational guideline: Sanminzhuyi, traditional Chinese culture, and anti-communism. In order to achieve these goals, great emphasis was placed on *minzu jingshen* (national spirit)<sup>18</sup>.

*Minzu jingshen* was an important phrase, and frequently employed in KMT propaganda. Chiang Kai-shek took it as the primary weapon to counterattack Communism. He (1984b: 212) said that the Communists used two modern concepts - democracy and science - as tools to lure the younger generation into their camp. However, he believed that to promote science and democracy without a spiritual base - *minzu jingshen* - was disastrous. He accused the CCP of betraying the nation and selling it out to Russia by abandoning Chinese traditions and values. In other words, it was an act of giving up *minzu jingshen*.

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<sup>18</sup> When Allen Chun (1996:129) mentions the similar term *minzu yishi* 民族意識, he translates it as 'societal consciousness'. However, according to Chiang Kai-shek's own words, I believe that in his conception, *minzu jingshen* had a strong nationalist approach, but with an emphasis on traditional moralities and values.



Chiang Kai-shek tried to make connections between *minzu jingshen* and morality, traditional culture, anti-communist position, and patriotism. (1984c:267; 1984c:266; 1984b:210-211) Most of all, however, it was embodied in Sanminzhuyi. In order to suit the KMT's own ends, Sanminzhuyi was interpreted differently in post-war Taiwan. In order to stress its anti-communist essence, Sanminzhuyi had been gradually altered during the 1950s and 1960s from the three state-building principles of nationalism, of democracy, and of the people's livelihood, into "ethics, democracy, and science". (CHIANG KAI-SHEK, 1984g: 67-68)

This anti-Communist theme was not only reflected in education policy and the content of textbooks (TSËNG CHING-YŪEH, 1995), it also politicised the moral concepts and knowledge taught in schools. (OU YUNG-SHËNG, 1990: 146) This emphasis was especially placed on *minzu jingshen* and dominated the direction of Taiwanese education in the 1950s. (KUO WEI-FAN, 1975) It was modified and presented more straightforwardly as 'nationalism' in the 1960s. (CHIANG KAI-SHEK, 1984e: 34-36) It is fair to say that post-war education policy in Taiwan was drawn up totally according to Chiang's vision, which came to dominate every aspect of Taiwanese students' school life<sup>19</sup>.

#### 1.2.4. Education and culture

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<sup>19</sup> For example, political slogans and banners -- *shixing Sanminzhuyi* 實行三民主義 (carry out Sanminzhuyi); *xiaomie wane gongfei* 消滅萬惡共匪 (wipe out the extremely evil communists) -- were displayed everywhere, not only in schools and assembly halls, but also in work places, cinemas, and buildings. The production of short propaganda films, anti-communist radio and TV programmes was encouraged, and anti-communist exhibitions were arranged regularly. (OU YUNG-SHËNG, 1990)

According to Chiang's speeches and the KMT's party statement, it is clear that there is an overlap between definitions of 'culture' and 'education', a way of thinking that is deeply rooted in Chinese culture.

The term 'culture' in Chinese -- *wenhua* 文化-- is a *kanji* term derived from classical Chinese<sup>20</sup>. (LIU, LYDIA, 1995:312) *Wen* in Chinese has many meanings, mostly to do with literature and cultivation: language (n.), phenomena (n.), articles (n.), or the character of being civilised and gentle (adj.). (CIHAI, 1995, 1990) This particular term *wenhua* first appeared in the Han dynasty classic *Shuoyuan* 說苑. It said: "Whenever there is an armed rebellion, there is refusal to comply. The punishment should only be imposed after the attempt to cultivate them by civil administration fails (*fan wu zhi xin wei bufu ye, wenhua bugai, ranhou jiazhu* 凡武之興，爲不服也。文化不改，然後加誅)." (CH'U PO-SSU, 1981; WANG & YI, 1990)

Many philosophers have agreed that the term *wenhua* is actually short for the phrase '*wenzhi jiaohua*' 文治教化 -- enlightening the people with civil management. (LI TUNG-FANG, 1968; CH'ËN CH'I-NËNG, 1982) According to Lao Ssu-kwang (1992), the concept of *jiaohua* 教化(enlightenment by education) was fundamental in Chinese philosophy. It included two levels of transformation - individual and social. Therefore, it was important for Chinese, both in Taoist and Confucian ideas, to have discipline and order -- in another words, duty -- in order to achieve *jiaohua*. Li Tung-fang (1968:1) even refers *wenhua* directly to *dezhi* 德治(rule of virtue and morality) because the concept of *jiaohua* was a top-down enlightenment. Therefore,

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<sup>20</sup> According to Lydia Liu (1995:302), these kinds of *kanji* terms were classical Chinese-character compounds that were used by the Japanese to translate modern European words, and reintroduced into modern Chinese. According to Li Tung-fang (1968: 2), Chinese borrowed the term and turned it into a modern usage (translating the English word: 'culture') after the Opium War in the first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century.



*wenhua* referred to the civil and moral way of ruling.

According to anthropologist Ch'ên Ch'i-nan (1986a: 53-58), the focus of its original meaning was on *wen*. The word *wen* could be used not only to describe language and writing, but also the enlightenment of literature, morality, good manners and *dao*<sup>21</sup>. Eventually, the term *wenhua* indicated "the proper way of human life... The links between culture, the nature, the *dao*, and *wen*, interlock with each other, and form the theme of Chinese civilisation." (CH'ÊN CH'I-NAN, 1986a: 58)

Since the earlier usage of *wenhua* meant "the state managed the people with a civilised manner, and cultivated them with literature", this kind of enlightenment could only be achieved through education and the demonstration of good examples of virtue by the ruling classes. Hence, education was important in the process of enlightenment. The Chinese phrase *jiaoyu* 教育<sup>22</sup> was seen as the means to enhance the quality of the people. The close relationship between 'education' and 'culture' in traditional Chinese society was inseparable. Sometimes, they were regarded as the same thing.

Overall, the idea of *wenhua* meant enlightenment by education, and indicated a top-down cultivating process. The enlightenment was conducted between parents and children, teachers and students, and the ruling classes and the masses, through education and demonstrating ethical behaviour. Within a Confucian perspective, *wenhua* was the *dao*. Because of this rooted connection between education and

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<sup>21</sup> According to Ch'ên Ch'i-nan (1986a), *dao* refers to both intellectual discourses and the course of nature.

<sup>22</sup> *Jiaoyu* means education. Literally, *jiao* means teaching, and *yu* means fostering. Both parts are equally important in education for Chinese.



culture, it becomes clear why the KMT's emphasis on culture was mainly placed on education.

The post-war education policy in Taiwan was effective, not only because of its harsh implementation, but also because of the traditional Chinese nature of obeying the authorities and shying away from confrontation. (STAFFORD, 1995) Furthermore, because of the *jiaohua* 教化(enlightenment by education) mentality, cultural policy in Taiwan held a strong sense of top-down guidance' and a moral context.

This particular nature also made cultural policy in Taiwan more education-oriented, and gave cultural apparatus a role of cultural guardian. Therefore, education was the core of Taiwan's early cultural policy. As a result, it was not surprising to find that there was no cultural apparatus set up within the government until 1967. Even when the first, and short-lived, cultural apparatus -- *wenhua ju* 文化局(Cultural Bureau, 1967-1973) was set up, it was placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education (MOE)<sup>23</sup>. Moreover, early cultural policies were mostly embedded in education policies, and designed and implemented by the MOE. It is fair to say that cultural affairs were mainly managed under the education domain in early post-war Taiwan.

Even today, education is still weightier than cultural affairs for Taiwanese government. For example, even after 2 decades of promoting culture, the ROC government spent around only 1% of its annual budget (0.91% in 1995, 0.92% in 1996, 1.1% in 1997, 0.94% in 1998) on the Council for Cultural Affairs (CCA) -- the major cultural

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<sup>23</sup> The purpose of setting up this new apparatus was to support the Cultural Renaissance Movement that was launched in 1967. (CULTURAL BUREAU, 1968: 108) In other words, the Cultural Bureau was only a branch of the Cultural Renaissance mechanism placed within the education system.

apparatus in charge of national cultural planning and development in the central government. In contrast to this meagre proportion of the annual budget, the ROC government spent 10% on the MOE. (PERFORMING ARTS ALLIANCE, 1997; CCA<sup>24</sup>, 1997b)

### 1.2.5. China-centric colonisation

Although the first KMT official policy on cultural affairs was created in 1952, it was mainly focused on anti-communist principles, and the importance of Chinese morality and tradition. It gave no practical direction on how to develop culture, or set tasks to this end. Therefore, some have claimed that Taiwan did not have an obvious cultural policy until the Cultural Renaissance Movement was launched by the authorities in 1967. (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a) Some have even claimed that the first positive cultural policy was the implementation of the *Improvement Programme for Culture, Education and Entertainment* (*Jiaqiang wenhua yu yule fang'an* 加強文化與育樂方案) in 1979. (CHIU HEI-YUAN, 1985) The most common view has been that the KMT paid no attention to cultural development, and the only principle was an anti-communism that dominated every aspect of Taiwanese life. (LI YIH-YUAN, 1996a ; YANG CHAO, 1995a, 1995b; LI LI-LING, 1995) For example, Winckler noticed this ambiguity: "culture was quite important to the Nationalists, but in practice most central government funds went to defence and development." (1994:28)

As a matter of fact, these views are not entirely correct, because their definition of 'cultural policy' is limited to 'arts policy'. Furthermore, a policy can either be positive

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<sup>24</sup> In order to make it easy to read and refer to in the bibliography, I abbreviate many government organisations' names in the reference. Similar abbreviations include: GIO, MOE,



or negative, active or inactive. (ANDERSON, 1984: 3-4) The fact that indirect and negative policies were also part of governmental decisions has usually been overlooked. Hence, it is equally important, if not more so, to detect why the government decided not to take action, or to do nothing, on matters in the cultural sphere, when government involvement was sought.

There was indeed no positive or obvious arts policy, nor any policy encouraging arts development before the 1970s. In fact, most early post-war cultural policies were negative and inactive (such as: censorship of the arts; discouraging Taiwanese folk arts, suppressing local dialects, etc.). Even though there were some positive policies, they were mostly imposed to reward 'correct and healthy ideologies', or to reinforce social control through schooling.

Defining cultural policy as arts policy is quite common in the arts management field.

As a matter of fact, its meaning has long been narrowed down to 'arts policy' since the term became popular and widely adopted. Giving attention to cultural policy, and taking it as part of government policy first began in Europe after the Second World War<sup>25</sup>. It became a comprehensive field of politics at the beginning of the 1960s in many Western European countries. In general, the concept of cultural policy remains mainly at the administrative level and stresses the responsibility of the government to the arts. (LANGSTED, 1990: 70)

This concept of 'cultural policy' was adopted by many countries worldwide, especially

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KMT, etc.

<sup>25</sup> The Arts Council of Great Britain was first established in 1946. France established the Ministry of Culture in 1959. America established the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) in 1965 to deal with sponsorship in arts. (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a: 57-66)



those long-subjected to direct colonial domination by European powers. In the attempt to rebuild their unique identities, many countries imposed cultural policies forcefully. By celebrating and highlighting forms of creative expression that were thought to have been developed in the days before colonisation, cultural policy can be a good way of building confidence and constructing identity. (DOMINGUEZ, 1992: 25-37)

This also happened in Taiwan. The KMT tried to 'de-colonise' Japanese influence with this European tactic once it took over Taiwan, and imposed Chinese culture as the authentic tradition. Ironically, Chinese culture seemed somehow foreign to Taiwanese after 50 years of Japanese occupation. In other words, post-war cultural development in Taiwan was not only constructed under a European framework, but also re-colonised by an imagined motherland culture and identity.

### **1.3 Intensive education Reform**

#### **1.3.1. Unifying thoughts through curriculum**

Education in Taiwan had been geared up, after 1949, to prepare students to encounter the military threat from mainland China, and to reinforce solidarity and loyalty. In general, education policy was the most important cultural policy in Taiwan before the mid-1970s. It was not only because the word *wenhua* denoted 'education' in a traditional sense, but also because the goal of post-war Taiwanese education was to achieve social control in order to construct a pro-KMT political culture.

According to Apple (1979: 87), there were three dimensions to the influence of

education on the formation of ideologies: the design of national curriculum, the content of textbooks, and the hidden curriculum<sup>26</sup>. Countless measures were taken to unify thoughts, and the national curriculum was the starting point for the KMT.

Before martial law was lifted in 1987, Taiwan had undergone national curriculum revisions four times (1952, 1962, 1968 and 1975), which also meant textbooks were rewritten and modified four times. (OU YUNG-SHÈNG, 1990: 174-180) This constant revision indicated the KMT's wish to control ideological construction in education.

Above all, the most influential education policy was the 'unified editorial system of textbooks (*tongyi bianshen zhi* 統一編審制)'. It was imposed in 1968. It led to 21 years (1968 -1989) of unified knowledge transmission, which Shih Chih-shêng (1995:17) described as 'the darkest period' in Taiwanese education history.

Before 1968, there were two kinds of textbooks. The National Institute for Compilation and Translation (NICT)<sup>27</sup> compiled and edited the most important subjects, such as Chinese, mathematics, science, and Social Studies (*shehui*, also see footnote 11). The compilation of the other 'not-so-important' subjects (such as Music, Arts, Health Education) and other supplemental teaching materials, was undertaken by local governments and private publishers. However, this dual system

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<sup>26</sup> Hidden curriculum is a term in pedagogy, referring to hidden educational intention and design. It includes many aspects of school life apart from the 'official curriculum', such as school atmosphere, peer groups, school rules, daily routines, the selection of teaching materials, how the lessons are arranged, how the classroom is decorated and seated, how behaviour is classified as good or bad... (OU YUNG-SHÈNG, 1990; APPLE, 1979; VALLACE, 1974) By encouraging or discouraging behaviours and values, reinforcing or degrading certain ideologies, the hidden curriculum is a subtle form of social control and a good way to make students conform.

<sup>27</sup> Most textbooks were compiled and edited by the NICT from 1953. However, it was not until 1968 that the NICT took over all compilation and editorial work, and produced standard textbooks for elementary and junior high schools. (OU YUNG-SHÈNG, 1990:87-89)

was changed, and replaced by a unified editorial system in 1968 in order to tighten up ideology construction. (OU YUNG-SHÊNG, 1990: 87-88)

This system was designed to work hand in hand with nine-year compulsory education that began in 1968. This combination of two systems tried to build a unified national consensus within a longer timescale and confined environment. It was not until the 1980s that the system was challenged, and then finally abolished in 1989.

What kind of knowledge was it that was organised, compiled, and uniformly transmitted to generations of Taiwanese that suited the KMT's ideology and political needs? The research of Ou Yung-shêng (1990), Ch'ên Po-chang (1991) and Shih Chih-shêng (1995) sheds some light on this issue. Ou Yung-shêng looked at the hidden curriculum embedded in Social Studies textbooks in the national curriculum, and found that six themes constantly appeared: 1) pro-tradition orientation; 2) anti-communism; 3) nation first; 4) leader worship; 5) Han-centric ideology; 6) male-chauvinism. (OU YUNG-SHÊNG, 1990:141)

Ch'ên Po-chang (1991:191-195) concluded that Taiwan's national curriculum was over-politicised, over-moralised, and showed an overwhelming male chauvinist mentality. Shih Chih-shêng (1995: 20-21) argued that three characteristics dominated education in Taiwan in this period: centralisation (education totally controlled by the MOE and NICT), monopolisation (unified knowledge and standardised school schedule), and instrumentalisation (using textbooks to deliver political ideology).

As Apple (1979: 26 -30) rightly said, schools could be seen as 'mechanisms of cultural distribution'. The control of the knowledge was "a critical element in



enhancing the ideological dominance of certain classes... Thus, the 'reality' that schools and other cultural institutions select, preserve and distribute... can be seen as a particular 'social construction'." (APPLE, 1979: 26-27) The action to unify textbooks was trying to achieve exactly this goal – a total control of ideological construction. By imposing both new systems, education after 1968 provided only one version of 'the truth'.

### 1.3.2. Military training

According to the record of the MOE (JUNXUN CHU, 2000), *junxun* 軍訓 (military training) lessons were first advocated by scholar, then Minister of Education, Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 in 1912, soon after the Republic was established. At a time of foreign imperialist threat, Cai advocated the idea of *jun guomin zhuyi* 軍國主義 (the theory of militarising the people). He believed that military training not only strengthened the nation, but also enabled the people to fight against any military dictatorship. The focus of this assertion was to 'develop a strong and healthy constitution through physical training'. In 1928, military training became compulsory. Since then, military training has been taught in junior and senior high schools, colleges, and universities. Apart from field training and target practice, emphasis was also placed on nationalism, military history and strategy, and nursing (for girls).

Military training was forced to stop in the civil war. It was not until 1952 that school military training was resumed because Chiang Kai-shek (1984c) believed that military training was the key in fostering *wenwu heyi* 文武合一 (combining the skills of both pen and sword).

Chiang regarded military training as the preparatory foundation for anti-communist battle, which involved matters other than simply giving lessons. Thus, the MOE was not the appropriate body to design military courses and organise activities. A new organisation, the China Youth Corps (CYC, *zhongguo qingnian fangong jiuguo tuan* 中國青年反共救國團), was established by the Central Reform Committee, KMT (中央改造委員會) to cultivate KMT ideologies among the youth. (HSÜ CHIEH-LIN, 1997, chapter 29)

Chiang Ching-kuo<sup>28</sup>, Chiang Kai-shek's eldest son, was the first director of the CYC. He was chosen to forge a militarised younger generation. Before 1949, Chiang Ching-kuo was already in charge of fostering young KMT officers, first in Jiangxi province, later chairing the Central College of KMT Officers (*zhongyang ganbu xuexiao* 中央幹部學校) and the youth corps in the General Politics Department. (HSÜ CHIEH-LIN, 1997) Because of his experience and expertise in organising and fostering young KMT members in the past, he became useful in Chiang Kai-shek's education reform.

The CYC was not merely an organisation that delivered military training in schools, but a youth organisation with a military and political mission. (HSÜ CHIEH-LIN, 1997) In other words, it was a political vehicle disseminating KMT ideology to young people with the support of the party-state. It was clear that the purpose of military training was not merely to build up 'physical strength' for actual battle, but to forge KMT

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<sup>28</sup> Chiang Ching-kuo was famous for his tolerance towards the opposition and his initiative preparing Taiwan for democratisation and liberalisation in his later life. (KEMENADE, 1998:152) However, his working experience and close connection with secret intelligence made him a controversial figure. (HSÜ CHIEH-LIN, 1997) He was sent to Moscow at the age of 16, and was educated in a communist environment. Many of his fellow students were later Chinese Communist leaders, including Deng Xiaoping. When the United Front between the KMT and CCP broke up, he was put under house arrest. Later on, he was released and came

ideology. It was not until 1960 that responsibility for military training was handed back to the MOE, because the national safety had been improved. (JUNXUN CHU, 1978, 2000)

### 1.3.3. Language unification

Apart from the standardisation of textbooks, another way for the KMT to unite the Taiwanese was to unify the language. The extensive promotion of Mandarin had already begun in 1945. In 1956, a new language policy -- the Mandarin-speaking movement (*shuo guoyu yundong* 說國語運動) -- was imposed. (CH'ËN MEI-JU, 1996) According to a Provincial Report (TAIWANSHENG GONGBAO, 1956), the provincial government officially promoted this movement both in campus and government institutions, and advised using Mandarin and avoiding local dialects. It persuaded people to comply, in the name of 'national security' -- un-unified language would affect the solidarity of the nation (*yuyan bu tongyi, yingxiang minzu tuanjie* 語言不統一, 影響民族團結).

In 1963, the Education Department (Taiwan Provincial Government) demanded elementary and junior high schools take up a more aggressive role in promoting Mandarin. (TAIWANSHENG JIAOYUTING, 1987) Schools were asked to supervise students, and to encourage parents to use Mandarin to set an example. It was demanded of headmasters that they not only demonstrated themselves to be good Mandarin speakers, but also oversaw the teachers and staff to improve their Mandarin ability.

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back to China in 1935, and was re-educated by his father. (KEMENADE, 1998:105)



To further language unification, a complete ban on using dialects in public was implemented in 1966. The Provincial Government announced the *Reinforcement Programme on Mandarin Promotion* (*jiaqiang tuixing guoyu jihua* 加強推行國語計畫), which outlawed the usage of local dialects in public places. (TAIWANSHENG GONGBAO, 1966) Those found using local dialects in school, even in private conversation, were humiliated and fined. Although local dialects were still used privately or at home, this promotion plan had created a sense of shame and degradation for Taiwanese using their own languages. Ch'ên Mei-ju (1996:93-99) calls this period an era of Mandarin monopoly. The restriction was finally lifted in 1987.

The tightening up of language policy in the mid-1960s was partly due to increasing international isolation. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, more and more countries severed diplomatic relations with the ROC, and national morale and unity was in crisis. At the same time, in order to counterattack and make a distinction from the Cultural Revolution in the mainland, the KMT set up the Chinese Culture Restoration Committee (CCRC) in 1967. Taiwanese government endeavoured to construct an image of 'orthodox China', hence, the whole island was mobilised to dedicate itself to the Cultural Renaissance Movement. Speaking Mandarin was one of the movement's emphases, and speaking Mandarin became a manifestation of patriotism. (CH'ÊN MEI-JU, 1996)

#### **1.3.4. Invisible Taiwan**

The absence of Taiwan in Taiwanese textbooks was another problem in education. Even with a better-revised national curriculum and the abolition of unified textbooks

in 1989, textbooks were still dominated by a China-centric and male chauvinist mentality. (SHIH CHIH-SHÊNG, 1995)

According to Liu Hsiao-fên's research, (1991:107) the average appearance of Taiwan in 'Chinese History' (*benguoshi* 本國史, 1983 edition) textbooks was less than 5% (4.03% at junior high level, 4.77% at senior high level) throughout the six-year period of secondary education. The focus of this brief coverage was mostly placed on Taiwan's 'development', especially 'official achievements after 1945'<sup>29</sup>. Periods deliberately excluded in history textbooks were pre-history, Dutch rule and Japanese occupation in Taiwan.

For many years, young Taiwanese students did not learn about the place they lived in, and were not taught about Taiwanese history. Many of the historical events that happened less than fifty years ago were unknown to many. It was especially the case in terms of the political dissent and rebellion, such as the 228 incident (1947), the Lei Chên 雷震 Incident (1960), the P'êng Ming-min 彭明敏 Incident (1964), and Taiwan's independence movement (details will be discussed later). As a result, a whole generation of young Taiwanese were educated so that they knew 5000 years of Chinese history, but nothing about the Taiwanese past. There was only a motherland (China), but no hometown (Taiwan). It produced a generation with no past, no memory, and no affection towards the land they were actually living in.

Because of the educational guidelines and editorial principles set up by the KMT government, the textbooks demonstrated a China-centric, Han-superior attitude. Any

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<sup>29</sup> The main coverage of Taiwan in the 'Domestic History' textbooks that were used for six-year of secondary education focused mostly on post-war development. Such content took up



historical reference to Taiwan in textbooks indicated its status as secondary, primitive, and marginal. Not only was Taiwan always inferior to China, but also other ethnic groups were taken to be inferior to the Hans, women inferior to men. (OU YUNG-SHÊNG, 1990)

History education was one of the most effective tools creating a brand new 'collective memory', either by enforcing, inventing, editing, or forgetting. In contrast to the long and glorious history of China, the humble appearance of Taiwan made it seem marginal and insignificant. On the one hand, the emphasis on Chinese history reinforced national spirit, and created a collective memory; on the other hand, the deliberate omission of important Taiwanese history was a way to achieve the goal of 'structural amnesia'. (WANG MING-K'O, 1994a) Taiwanese history was retold both by making up false narratives about Taiwan's history (such as the story of Wu Feng<sup>30</sup>), and emphasising its inferior relationship to the mainland. This version of Taiwanese history was plainly the KMT's Taiwan, voiced from a China-centric position.

The main intention behind trivialising Taiwan's history, according to Shih Chi-shêng (1995: 85-87), was to create an impression that the Chinese tradition (both cultural and political) was more important than Taiwanese tradition. Furthermore, the ROC on Taiwan represented not just a local power or a government in-exile, but an orthodox

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83.08% of all coverage about Taiwan at junior high level, and 80.88% at senior high.

<sup>30</sup> The story of Wu Feng 吳鳳 circulated in Han society since the Qing dynasty. Wu was a Han interpreter who communicated with the aborigines for the Qing court. This story of self-sacrifice (for the peace between the Hans and aborigines) was actually a modified version by Japanese to suit their need for colonial rule. (CH'ËN CH'I-NAN, 1986a:113-131) This story appeared both in 'Life and Ethics' (Vol. 1) and 'shehui 社會 (Social Studies)' (Vol. 1) textbooks for more than twenty years. The story emphasised Wu's sacrifice for racial harmony, though it created a false barbaric image of the aborigines as head-hunters. Over the years, there were debates and protests. In the 1980s, aboriginal activists demanded that the MOE take the Wu Feng story out of textbooks and apologise. After serious debates, this story finally disappeared from textbooks in 1988. (OU YUNG-SHÊNG, 1990:2, 154, 228-229)



government representing the whole China. Therefore, the absence of Taiwan in history textbooks was a deliberate decision, not only to concentrate on building up a Chinese orthodoxy, but also to re-invent Taiwanese history and contain it within a Chinese historical framework.

Since the 1990s, there has been acute criticism of the imbalance in content and teaching hours concerning Chinese and Taiwanese history education. The view was widely accepted that Taiwanese history should be greatly increased in textbooks to fill the forty-year gap. (LIU HSIAO-FÊN , 1991; CHANG YEN-HSIEN, 1988; HSÜ HSÜEH-CHI, 1990) Finally, in the mid-1990s, the MOE started to deal with the imbalance between Chinese history and Taiwanese history in order to comply with current needs.

### **1.3.5. Value reproduction**

In the social sciences, it has generally been accepted that knowledge is socially constructed and that schooling reproduces selected values. (BOURDIEU, 1976, 1984; BOURDIEU & PASSERON, 1977; APPLE, 1979, 1976) In the 1950s and 60s, Taiwanese education policy and development clearly demonstrated the intention of 'social control' and value reproduction. Partly, this was because of Chiang Kai-shek's interest (1984b, 1984c) in constructing a new generation of modern Chinese; partly, it was because cultural defeat alerted the KMT to place emphasis on education; and also, it was because the military threat across the Strait alarmed the KMT to reinforce political ideology. In other words, education in Taiwan was designed to carry out culture construction to fight against Communism.

Education is taken by social scientists as a powerful tool in the construction of meaning. Raymond Williams (1976b) asserts that the effect of education is profound, and reminds us of the danger of overlooking the fact that education presents a selected partial truth as the only reality: "The selective tradition at an intellectual and theoretical level: all these forces are involved in a continual making and remaking of an effective dominant culture, and on them, as experienced, as built into our living, reality depends." (1976b: 205)

The fact that selected knowledge and hidden values in education are not so easy to identify means that both students and teachers are usually unaware of its influence. As an educator, Michael Apple (1979) raises the question about what kind of knowledge is chosen to be taught in school.

Whose knowledge is it? Who selected it? Why is it organised and taught in this way? ... Social and economic values, hence, are already embedded in the design of the institutions we work in, in the 'formal corpus of school knowledge' we preserve in our curricula, in our modes of teaching, and in our principles, standards, and forms of evaluation. Since these values now work through us, often unconsciously, the issue is not how to stand above the choice. Rather, it is in what values I must ultimately choose. (APPLE, 1979: 7~9)

Apple's soul-searching quest for his role as a teacher and his doubt about the selected values he was going to transmit, indicated that education was not neutral or scientific as it seemed. The fact is that schools not only 'process people', but also 'process knowledge'. Educational institutions are not only able to disseminate knowledge systematically, but are also the main agents in the selection, preservation and distribution of knowledge and values of the dominant. They are the agent of cultural and ideological hegemony. Most importantly, as Apple (1979: 6) pointed out, it is the only institution among all elements of the ideological state apparatuses which can create people who see no other serious possibility to the economic and cultural



assemblage now extant.

The effect of education is not only fundamental, but it also reproduces a value system that the dominant class may benefit from. It was, and perhaps still is, difficult for ordinary people to question mass produced and accepted ideologies.

Pierre Bourdieu (1976, 1977, 1984) views cultural capital as the currency through which domination is purchased. He believes, 'culture' is used to ensure the ruling power's social reproduction, and to support class distinction. Most of all, cultural capital is produced mainly by the education system. Like economic capital, cultural capital is a means to domination and secures the profits of distinction. Taiwan's stringent education control supported the KMT exactly in this way. Through education, the KMT cashed in popular support, secured its political legitimacy, and reproduced its values.

The tightly designed education system and curriculum in Taiwan exercised extensive control over people. Not only was the curriculum carefully designed and implemented, the ideology that textbooks transmitted was also standardised for over 20 years (from 1968 to 1989). It was common that students expected there to be 'standard answers' for every question, and accepted and took what was taught as the only reality. This lack of option and the impossibility of thinking otherwise became a real problem.

Because of the determination to popularise education and standardise ideology, the number of schools, and consequently the educated population, increased drastically. In the academic year 1951-52, there were only 1,504 schools (of all levels) in Taiwan. This figure had increased to 6,940 by 1989. (MOE, 1990:8) Because of that, the



illiteracy rate for people over 6 years old decreased sharply during the 1950s. It dropped from 42.1% in 1952 to 15.3% in 1969, and 5.8% in 1994. (MOE, 1990:8; HUANG CHŪN-CHIEH, 1998; GIO, 1993:47)

#### **1.4. Hidden curriculum**

##### **1.4.1. Political socialisation**

Chiang Kai-shek's deep involvement and support strengthened the power of the education system. (CHUN, 1996: 140) According to the anthropologist Richard Wilson (1970: 144-146), the KMT successfully stabilised its power and set up the authority of political leaders through education. The KMT's way of achieving this 'effect' was to control the process of political socialisation.

Social scientists term the way that children are introduced to the values and attitudes of their society and what is expected of their adult roles as 'socialisation'. (ALMOND, 1974) The process of shaping, transmitting, maintaining, or even creating specific political values and forming the expectation of how each member is expected to participate in the political system, is called 'political socialisation'. The result of the political socialisation process, for the individual, is the formation of one's political ideology<sup>31</sup>; for a political entity, it is the formation of its political culture<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> 'Political ideology' is a political worldview, and includes a set of political beliefs, political values, political ideals, and the value-judging attitude toward political systems and the role that government should play. Therefore, it covers "generalisations about how people and governments do behave and how they should behave". (SARGENT, 1990: 3) In other words, political ideology is 'the political beliefs of a group'. (FUNDERBURK, C & THOBABEN, 1994)

<sup>32</sup> According to Almond and Verba (1963: 13), political culture "refers to specific political orientations - attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward

Education has always played an important role in the construction of a desirable political ideology (in order to create favoured political culture). (YEN CH'ING-HSIANG, 1997: 35) Many researches (e.g. YANG TS'U-HSIANG, 1992; YEN CH'ING-HSIANG, 1997) in recent years have touched on this issue -- i.e. what kind of 'political culture' the KMT government tried to construct. Yang Ts'u-hsiang (1992: 121-141) found a high percentage of political content in textbooks - averagely 22.63% (18.24% in elementary school, 26.91% at junior high level).

Yen Ch'ing-hsiang compared the political ideologies that the two Chinese governments across the Taiwan Strait wanted to foster in history textbooks and found interesting differences. The most important political themes in Taiwan's textbooks were 'cultural and scientific achievement' (17.2%), 'political leaders' (16.1%) and 'hostility towards China' (9.9%). On the other hand, textbooks on the mainland also showed a high percentage of political content: 'hostility towards Taiwan' (14.7%), 'achievement in culture and economy' (12.8%) and 'political leaders' (12.1%). (YEN CH'ING-HSIANG, 1997: 118-121)

It was evident that the goal to set up national pride in Chinese history was the same, and so was the hostility toward each other. However, Taiwan's textbooks focused mostly on the respect and obedience given to the authorities, especially political leaders. This emphasis on obedience was a reinforcement of prioritising *dawo* 大我 (big self, collective self). This logic -- every policy was for the sake of collective good and national need -- had been meticulously elaborated in textbooks.

The development of education in post-war Taiwan demonstrated the KMT's intention

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the role of the self in the system."

of total control. It not only tried to interfere in every aspect of the socialisation process, but also controlled the power to write history and culture, produce selected knowledge and values. Worst of all, as Yang Chao (1995c) said, was the impossibility for ordinary people to have a critical view transcending the limitation of *dawo* discourse<sup>33</sup>. Since the way of thinking was confined within the domain of 'collective good', there was no discourse, nor language to conduct discussion outside the existing framework.

#### 1.4.2. Formal and informal education

Of course, education outside of school was largely informal. The opportunities for informal learning were everywhere, through pervasive, physical, unconscious, or non-verbal transmissions of knowledge in all aspects of life. Informal education could not be totally organised, nor could the result be achieved totally as planned. Because of the highly politicised and moralised content of Taiwanese education system, contradictions between formal and informal learning often appeared, and the gap between reality and theory deepened.

This is well illustrated in the example of moral education. The moral tendency in Taiwanese education was overwhelming. Martin (1975) noticed that the Taiwanese government was "promoting a revitalisation of the traditional Confucian system of social behaviour and personal mores" (such as filial piety, patriotism, academic

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<sup>33</sup> Yang Chao (1995c) found this ideological limitation even in the debates between two prominent Chinese philosophers -Yin Hai-kuang and Lin Yü-sheng (in *Yin Hai-kuang, Lin Yü-sheng shuxin ji* 殷海光 林毓生書信集). He believed that the lack of alternative thinking –a more individualist point of view – prevented the Chinese of thinking beyond the limitations of *dawo*. All the debates were based on aiming to achieve the collective good, a better and strong nation. In other words, the nation's need comes first, and the individual's sacrifice is always tolerable.



achievement and a sense of propriety in interpersonal relations), in order to foster a new generation of modern citizens through education reform. (MARTIN, 1975: 260)

However, the moral emphasis that the KMT government tried to instil in education, as Charles Stafford (1995) found out, did not always work: "The content of the moral lessons which are so heavily transmitted in schools almost seems to be made redundant by the pragmatic concerns of a family-based morality which is 'not transmitted' (i.e. not explicitly) in the township." (1995:6)

Stafford argued, Taiwanese children learnt about morality and traditional values in other ways. For example, parents rarely discussed moral issues with children, but often asked them to study. Both the parents' instruction and the child's compliance depended not just on the idea that academic achievement was taken as the most "important path to success", but they could also be seen "as a product of the traditional morality or filial obedience". (STAFFORD, 1995: 5-6) In other words, the learning of values and morality can be implicit and unconscious from daily life.

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977: 46-47) identified that both formal and informal education were ways of transmitting knowledge. One was transmitted through the unconscious inculcation of principles; the other through organised education of "articulated and even formalised principle". Learning was irreversible, and the unconscious learning that took place during childhood and in a family situation would shape the understanding of everything that followed, including 'explicit pedagogy'. These two modes of learning and the shaping of one's mind overlapped, intertwined, and sometimes contradicted each other but co-existed in the same place at the same time. Hence, it was hard to pin down exactly what was learnt in school, what

was not.

There has been much research analysing the political ideology of textbooks, the design of curriculum, and the education system in Taiwan. However, it was difficult, if not impossible, to evaluate the effect or quantify the influence of formal education. For example, political socialisation was accomplished through many institutions and agencies outside of school, such as the family, peer groups, mass media, and occupation. (ALMOND, 1974: 47-49; DAWNSON & PREWITT, 1969:100)

Even though the early influence of family life was undeniable, many scholars have asserted that school is the core and the most important agent in carrying out political socialisation, because schools transmit the values and attitudes of a society in their manner of centralisation, unification, and systematisation. (HESS & TORNEY, 1969: 219; DAWNSON & PREWITT, 1969:100) Also, it was the most accessible arena for government to control. Small wonder then that the KMT endeavoured to make sure that all Taiwanese should be educated. The number of people who were educated above high school level in post-war Taiwan rose dramatically from 8.8% in 1952 to 52.6% in 1994. (MOE, 1990: 8)

From an anthropological perspective, Wilson's research (1970) on political socialisation in Taiwanese education provides an in-depth view of how it went on. He found the 'group pressure' in Taiwan was a crucial factor for 'compliance' during the socialisation process. Considerable emphasis was also put on 'correct' behaviour in education. Once disobeyed, the price of disobeying was losing-face or facing hostility within the group.

The most intriguing situation he found was how group pressure and the reinforcement of 'correct behaviour' in education had been internalised. His description aptly depicted how effectively and efficiently the state-run education mechanism functioned:

...considerable effort has successfully been expended ... to reinforce a congruence between styles of authority in primary groups and those that exist between citizens and political leaders... the patterns of authority ... have been conducive to political stability. Inter-societal cleavage has been minimized, and there is little display of excessively overt forms of control... a great mass of teachers cooperating effectively in inculcating in children support of the government. Avoidance of under group pressure is sanctioned in accordance with traditional norms. (WILSON, 1970: 146)

It was not surprising that in a society that believed in academic achievement as a symbol of a 'better future', students wanted (or at least, were urged) to do well in school. Consequently, the desire to do well in school, in the hope of achieving better socio-political and economic status, brought deeper socialisation and compliance in children.

#### **1.4.3. Anti-communism**

*Sanminzhuyi hua* 三民主義化 (Sanminzhuyi-isation) was the editorial principle for all textbooks, and the most important guideline for post-war Taiwanese education. (OU YUNG-SHÊNG 1990:199) In order to realise a Sanminzhuyi education, emphasis on anti-communism was taken as the vehicle to achieve the goal and fight the war to defend Sanminzhuyi. (OU YUNG-SHÊNG, 1990: 180-181; CHIANG KAI-SHEK, 1984b; 1984c: 266;1984g: 67-68) In other words, the KMT took party-dominated education as a moral crusade protecting Sanminzhuyi against evil Communism.

The hostility towards communism was not limited to textbooks, but was to be found



everywhere. The official term for Chinese communists was '*gongfei* 共匪 (communist bandits)', who were characteristically portrayed as 'inhumane', 'cruel', 'evil'. For example, the common description of Chinese people under communist rule was: '*shuishen huore* 水深火熱 (in deep water and scorching fire, which meant that people were in an abyss of suffering)'. (TSÊNG CHING-YÜEH, 1995) The comparison made between Taiwan and the mainland was that of 'heaven and hell'.

The anti-communist theme was also embedded in the hidden curriculum and extracurricular activities, such as assemblies, competitions, exhibitions, school clubs, campus decoration, festivals, sports days, and national celebrations. (TSÊNG CHING-YÜEH, 1995; OU YUNG-SHÊNG, 1990) For example, anti-communist topics were constantly discussed in school assemblies, and also featured as *the* theme in competitions and events (e.g. recovering mainland China; unifying China with Sanminzhuyi). The slogan -- "It is our duty to keep national secrets and look out for spies (*baomi fangdie, renren you ze* 保密防諜, 人人有責)" -- was painted in big red letters in assembly halls, in classrooms and offices, and on the outside walls of many public buildings. Special exhibitions and documentaries (usually named as *feiqing ziliao* 匪情資料- *Communist Today*) toured around campuses with their frightening images of the mainland. (TSÊNG CHING-YÜEH, 1995) Security measures were taken as part of the anti-communist battle inside the campus and government offices<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> There was a stringent system to prevent communist spies or anyone else disseminating communist ideologies. Security investigations were conducted by four different organisations: the KMT, the police, *jingbei zongbu* 警備總部 (garrison headquarters), and *diaocha ju* 調查局 (Investigation Bureau). (TSÊNG CHING-YÜEH, 1995: 126) The personnel department within all institutions also had the responsibility of collecting personal information monitoring political opinion, and of conducting 'security checks'.

Above all, the establishment of Mainland Studies Clubs (*dalü wenti yanjiu she* 大陸問題研究社) and Sanminzhuyi Clubs was encouraged by the MOE in universities and high schools. (TSÊNG CHING-YÜEH, 1995:105) The first club of this sort was established in Mid-Taiwan Medical College in 1967. According to Jui Hê-chêng (1982), there were 111 such clubs established between 1967 and 1981, in order to "reinforce students' patriotism and consolidate Sanminzhuyi belief".

Another important action was the establishment of the CYC. All students at high school level and above automatically became its members, and had to receive political and military training and study Sanminzhuyi. (JUNXUN CHU, 1978) Apart from students, any young people between the age of 16 and 25 years old were also required to join. Wei Ting-ch'ao 魏廷朝, a Chenggong High School student, refused. Consequently, he was forced to quit school under school authority pressure. (HSÜ CHIEH-LIN, 1997, Chapter 29) It is not surprising, therefore, that the CYC was criticised and mocked as Chiang Ching-kuo's "brain-washed youth troops". (HSÜ CHIEH-LIN, 1997)

Wilson (1970) could easily identify the hostility towards the communists when he did fieldwork in Taiwan in the late 1960s. However, he did not regard the anti-communist atmosphere as a purely political reaction. He noticed that powerful group pressure suppressed the expression of disagreement within society, and suspected that the emphasis on hostility was not merely a reaction against Chinese military threat. From a psychological perspective, he believed that it was an outlet for certain feelings, which could not be expressed, within the group.

Setting up a role of 'others' as targets was justifiable because the 'others' did not

understand the 'proper' order of things. "Enemies fill an extremely important role in Chinese political culture... if there were no such despised group, they would have to be invented in order for any emotional balance to be maintained... The control of tension in Chinese society in Taiwan is related to the level of deviance which seems to be tolerated within group life." (WILSON, 1970:138)

Whether it was a true picture of Taiwan in the late 1960s, or an observation from a view of the 'other', who was foreign and alienated from the society, is not my interest. However, using hostility against the 'other' was apparently an important way to reinforce loyalty and strengthen control of the group. At the same time, as Wilson stressed, it was also an instrument used to release the suppressed emotion within: it was the need to release suppressed feelings under the authoritarian regime of Chiang Kai-shek.

## **1.5. Struggle for cultural hegemony**

### **1.5.1. Party-supported apparatus**

The danger of military invasion and economic blockade continued through the 1950s to the 1970s. Therefore, self-sufficiency was absolutely essential. In the first few decades of post-war Taiwan, developing the economy and improving people's livelihood and reinforcing national security were the national priorities. Nonetheless, cultural affairs were not forgotten, because they were taken as part of national defence and the vehicle to build Taiwan as an anti-communist fortress. Therefore, it was not surprising to see that Taiwan's cultural scene in the 1950s and 1960s was full of anti-communist works, described as "Sanminzhuyi arts" by many historians. (LI



LI-LING, 1995; CHÊNG MING-LI, 1994)

On the one hand, because of the 228 incident and the language barrier, most Taiwanese scholars were either afraid to express their opinions or unable to write in Chinese adequately, and therefore, withdrew from Taiwan's literary scene. (LI LI-LING, 1995) On the other hand, the KMT deliberately discouraged the literary tradition inherited from the May Fourth Movement. (HSIAO A-CH'IN, 1991) The literary community was in a state that was not only cut off from all traditions (both from the Chinese and Taiwanese), but also dominated by pro-KMT, rightwing writers from the mainland. Post-war Taiwanese culture was harshly removed from its historical foundations, and divorced from reality. (LÜ CHÊNG-HUI, 1988).

In 1950, two organisations -- the Awarding Committee for Chinese Literature and Arts (ACCLA, *Zhonghua wenyi jiangjin weiyuanhui* 中華文藝獎金委員會) and the Association of Chinese Literature and Arts (ACLA, *zhongguo wenyi xiehui* 中國文藝協會) -- were established by the KMT<sup>35</sup> to encourage Sanminzhuyi artistic works.

The ACCLA published *Creative Literature* (*Wenyi chuangzuo* 文藝創作) Monthly, and provided the highest rate of remuneration in Taiwan for writers. Within less than three years, it attracted more than 2,000 writers submitting over five million words of Sanminzhuyi literary works. (CHANG TAO-FAN, 1953:1) It became the most powerful literary magazine in the 1950s. (YIN HSÜEH-MAN, 1982: 149; LI LI-LING, 1995)

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<sup>35</sup> These two were funded and initiated by the KMT. Their administration reports were presented to the central committee, as part of party administration. (HSIAO A-CH'IN, 1991:109)

The establishment of the ACLA<sup>36</sup> was especially unusual. Its opening ceremony was chaired by the Premier Chang Dao-fan 張道藩, and attended by many prominent writers. This institution became the locomotive of the anti-communist movement in culture communities. Although it claimed that nine out of ten writers in Taiwan were its members, Taiwanese members were rare. The balance between mainlanders and the Taiwanese population in Taiwan was roughly 1 to 7<sup>37</sup>, yet, there were only 58 Taiwanese among its 1,290 members. (ZHONGGUO WENYI XIEHUI, 1960:3, 248)

This kind of inequality was commonplace, not only in non-governmental organisations, but also within the government. (LIN & LIN, 1993)

Similar organisations were set up by the CYC to support the dissemination of party ideology - Association of Young Chinese Writing (*zhongguo qingnian xiezuoxiehui* 中國青年寫作協會) in 1953, and the Association of Taiwanese Women Writing (*Taiwansheng funü xiezuoxiehui* 台灣省婦女寫作協會) in 1955. (LI LI-LING, 1995)

Any artistic expression that did not promote anti-communist ideologies was not encouraged, nor would be awarded with honour or money. All in all, setting up ideological standards, organising cultural apparatus, and providing awards to attract artists were common and effective tactics at a time when resources were scarce.

### 1.5.2. Total control in culture

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<sup>36</sup> According to its official guidelines, (KU CHI-T'ANG, 1989: 151-152) its goal was to "enhance the establishment of Sanminzhuyi, accomplish the mission of anti-communism and the revival of the mainland".

<sup>37</sup> According to the census conducted in 1990, there were 87.11% Taiwanese, and 12.74% mainlanders among the 20,366,325 population. (WACHMAN, 1994: 7, 17) However, the KMT brought almost 2 million mainlanders to Taiwan. At that time, there were over 6 million people in Taiwan. The proportion changed over the years because the older generation of

On the surface, the military aggression from the mainland was the obvious reason for training students like soldiers and mobilising artists as military forces. In reality, it was the lessons the KMT learnt from the mainland (it believed that the loss of cultural hegemony was the cause of its loss of political hegemony) that informed cultural policy in post-war Taiwan.

The attempt to regain cultural hegemony was carried out simultaneously with the stabilisation of political construction and education reform. (CHIANG PAO-CH'AI, 1994) A new branch of the KMT -- Fourth Unit of the Central Reform Committee (中央改造委員會), later the Department of Cultural Affairs (文化工作會) -- was established in 1950 to deal with cultural affairs. It was responsible for "propaganda, promoting party theories, and initiating cultural movement". (CH'IN HSIAO-I, 1978b: 2-4) It proposed 'Guidelines for the Mobilisation of the Anti-communist Movement' in 1952, and initiated the 'Cultural Reform Movement' (文化改造運動). The goal was to promote 'reform in arts and literature' for the purpose of "revolution and state-building". (CH'IN HSIAO-I, 1978b: 35-39、51) Among all art forms it was literature -- the area that Chiang Kai-shek feared most and paid most attention to (LI LI-LING, 1995) -- that was on the top of the reform list.

Chiang Kai-shek believed that communists always worked through literature and the arts to disseminate communism. In order to tackle the problem, Chiang wrote *Two Amendments on Education and Leisure for the Principle of the People's Livelihood* (*minsheng zhuyi yule liangpian bushu* 民生主義育樂兩篇補述) in 1953, to set up guidelines for 'correct cultural expression and healthy activities'.



After the two amendments were published, a cultural cleansing movement was launched in 1954 to promote a cleaner cultural environment. It called for the support from the literary community to rid the bad influence of "the yellow harm (the negative thought and weakness of the society)", "the red poison (communist ideology)" and "the blackness (the sinfulness and darkness of the society)". (LI LI-LING, 1995)

The anti-communist theme reached its height when the *zhandou wenyi*<sup>38</sup> movement was mobilised in 1955. (HSIAO A-CH'IN, 1991:85-88) The KMT claimed, "good literary works must be militant, because artistic pursuit is also a battle... All works that strengthen spirits and consolidate anti-communist concepts are *zhandou wenyi*." (HSIAO A-CH'IN, 1991: 87)

For a while, not only all the governmental, party-owned magazines appeared to advocate anti-communist ideologies, but most literary magazines and newspapers supplements were also full of this kind of work. Anti-communism was the main theme in the 1950s. (LIU HSIN-HUANG, 1971: 46-65; CHIANG PAO-CH'AI, 1994)

A series of restrictions on freedom of speech was imposed in order to dictate what *zhandou wenyi* works should be like and what quality a 'good' art work had. (LI LI-LING, 1995) In 1949, the Regulations on the Capital Investment Limits of Taiwan's Newspapers and Magazines (*Taiwansheng xinwen zazhi ziben xianzhi banfa* 台灣省新聞雜誌資本限制辦法) was issued. In the name of economising natural resources, the scale of the media and the number of pages of the publications were restricted. In

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<sup>38</sup> Literally, *zhandou wenyi* 戰鬥文藝 means "militant literature and arts". This *zhandou wenyi* movement promoted by the KMT authorities was a way to encourage cultural and artistic

March 1950, the restrictions were tightened even further. Article 11 plainly restricted the freedom of assembly and organising associations. Holding parades and petitioning were also forbidden. Anything considered to be harmful to national safety in speeches, talks, publications, or on the banners, would be banned.

In 1951, the Executive Yuan restricted the establishment of new newspapers. In 1952, the Publication Law (出版法) was promulgated. In order to control national resources for its own usage and restrict free speech, the KMT government imposed censorship to legitimise thought control.

Consequently, most artistic expression before the 1970s had to serve anti-communist goals. Otherwise, there would be no opportunity for publication, no space for performance and exhibition, no voices being heard. By then, the KMT had constructed a cultural control structure, through education, censorship, media control, non-governmental cultural apparatus, and the domination of resources. (LI LI-LING, 1995)

### **1.5.3. Politicised folk arts**

This 'anti-communist' demand affected not only writers and artists, but also expanded to include popular entertainment. In the 1950s, the KMT considered how to 'reform' all art forms to fit its own political agenda, and gathered eleven governmental departments and non-governmental organisations to organise how to carry out this issue further. (LÜ SU-SHANG, 1961:270; LIU HUAN-YÜEH, 1990: 71) In this meeting, folk art forms were condemned as backward and superstitious. They considered

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expressions to play a role in taking up the cultural battle against communism.

imposing a ban on the most popular folk performance – Gezaixi (歌仔戲, Taiwanese opera).

In order to reverse the decision, Lū Su-shang, a Taiwanese theatre theorist, wrote a Gezaixi repertoire *Nū Feigan* (女匪幹, *A Woman Communist Bandit*) in 1951 to prove that folk performances could 'carry out propaganda tasks'. It saved the folk arts, but triggered an anti-communist trend. (CH'ËN LUNG-T'ING, 1998; CHIANG WU-CH'ANG, 1990:107)

To make folk artists more aware of their propaganda tasks, similar tactics were used -- official encouragement, grants, competitions and restrictions. For example, it was compulsory to put on a short propaganda repertoire (at least 20 minutes) before each performance; The famous puppet performer Li Tien-lu was appointed by the KMT as the captain of the folklore propaganda team, touring around Taiwan to advocate the anti-communist message. (LI T'ÏEN-LU, 1991: 145 -151)

Another influential policy to 'encourage' the correct performance was the Taiwanese traditional opera competition (*Taiwansheng difang xiju bisai* 台灣省地方戲劇比賽). In order to win, competitors had to satisfy the basic demand of "anti-communist principle", 'uplifting the morale", and "carrying national spirit further". (CH'ËN LUNG-T'ING, 1998)

However, the anti-communist theme was difficult to put into the traditional repertoire. Many groups were reluctant to attend because this kind of new, politicised repertoire lacked box office appeal. (CHIANG WU-CH'ANG, 1990: 107) Even though some attended the official competition, the most common way to 'deal with' the official



policy was to include political slogans in the final scene. Therefore, many absurd scenarios occurred. Ancient officials on the stage would cry out: "Long live the ROC!" Soldiers in a historical setting marched on stage waving the ROC national flag; characters of the Song or Ming dynasty would sing the anti-communist songs out loud: "*fangong fangong fangong dalu qu* 反攻, 反攻, 反攻大陸去(counterattack, counterattack, let's counterattack the mainland)". (CH'ÊN LUNG-T'ING, 1998:10) Finally, the result of the competition was decided by a group of adjudicators who came from the KMT or the military.

#### 1.5.4. Broken down *yiyaantang*<sup>39</sup>

Yet, the anti-communist trend in folk arts existed for a much shorter time and had less influence than in literature or theatre. Chiang Wu-ch'ang (1990:106-107) said that the anti-communist trend in folk arts was only a response to "deal with the government policy... for survival". In fact, all folk art forms were only affected when it came to the official level (such as competitions, official performance opportunities, titles, etc.).

The 'anti-communist' period lasted only a few years in folk arts. Ch'êng Lung-t'ing (1998: 3) believed that political intervention had actually indirectly boosted the folk arts and their popularity. Before the 1950s, most folk performances were held outdoors in Taiwan. The only commercially operated performances in theatre venues were played by Beijing opera groups from the mainland. Most folk performances

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<sup>39</sup> *Yiyaantang* 一言堂, literally, means 'a conference hall where one person has all the say'. In this period, because of the direct military threat, Chiang Kai-shek's authoritarian rule dominated Taiwan. The phrase was used to describe the condition where no one dared to challenge or criticise the regime.

were part of religious festivals, which were usually free to the public. After the 228 incident, the restriction on 'freedom of assembly' was imposed. In order to prevent public assembly causing trouble and provoking emotions, outdoor performances were banned for a year. (CH'ÊN LUNG-T'ING, 1998)

In 1952, the KMT started another policy – 'reforming folk arts, economising religious ceremonies (*gaishan minsu jieyue baibai* 改善民俗, 節約拜拜). (LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1998; LU FEI-I, 1998) Because of the restrictions on the frequencies and the scale of the religious celebrations, many folk artists had to move indoors and operated commercial performances. (CHIANG WU-CH'ANG, 1990; LÜ LI-CHÊNG, 1990)

According to Ch'êng Lung-t'ing's (1998) research, apart from Beijing opera, the earliest indoor performance took place in central Taiwan. He believed that this revolutionary change in folk arts was made possible because it started from the countryside, away from cities and the KMT control. Gezaixi reached its peak after the mid-1950s, and even under strict ideological restriction, became the most popular entertainment for the masses. (LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1998) There were 367 Gezaixi venues all over Taiwan in the 1950s. (MO KUANG-HUA, 1996: 75)

While the literature and arts communities went through stringent censorship and thought policing, the folk arts had a prosperous decade from the mid-1950s. (LÜ LI-CHÊNG, 1990; CHIANG WU-CH'ANG, 1990:118) The way that folk artists responded to anti-communist policy could be seen as a typical way in which ordinary people dealt with the political demands, 'muddling through' ideological scrutiny. It showed how 'flexible' people could be, yielding to temporary policy however absurd it might be.

Comparatively, it was much more difficult for writers and academics to react in the same way. Because of the total control of media and resources, writers had little choice but to conform, otherwise they lost out. The opportunities to publish pure literary works were limited, because the media were mostly controlled by the KMT. (LI LI-LING, 1995)

The anti-communist theme was officially promoted as the most 'rewarding' subject matter to work on<sup>40</sup>. But by the late 1950s, the *zhandou wenyi* movement had become a spent force, and the tide turned. (LI LI-LING, 1995) The famous scholar Hu Shih 胡適 gave acute criticism of *zhandou wenyi* to the ACLA in 1958: "We wish to have a free literary environment. Literature is not something that can be guided, nor coached by the government... I wish that we bear two goals in our mind: a literature of humanity, and a literature of free expression." (HU SHIH, 1958: 6-11)

Reacting to the repressive environment, private literary magazines emerged in the second half of the 1950s to provide space for alternative views and tastes. (YIN HSÜEH-MAN, 1975:88) They included *Genesis* (*chuang shiji* 創世紀) in 1954, *Modern Poems* 現代詩 (by Chi Hsüan 紀弦) in 1956, *Literature Magazine* 文學雜誌 (by Hsia Chi-an 夏濟安) in 1956 and *Wenxing* 文星 in 1957. Their appearance broke KMT domination and provided a literary oasis in Taiwan.

By the end of the 1950s, the urge for freedom of expression had grown stronger, and

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<sup>40</sup> As long as the subject matter was anti-communist and patriotic, the author would always find it easier to be published. In an environment with very limited resources, writers had to consider where to submit, and how to be accepted. The prospect of being published and awarded with high remuneration was immensely attractive. (CHIANG PAO-CH'AI, 1994; LI LI-LING, 1995)



Taiwan's literature community sought refuge in western theories and ahistorical subject matters. The best example was the literature periodical, *Xiandai wenxue* 現代文學. It was established in 1960 by students from the National Taiwan University (later to become famous novelists, including Pai Hsien-yung 白先勇, Wang Wen-hsing 王文興, and Ch'ên Johsi 陳若曦). *Xiandai wenxue* promoted western literary trends and encouraged 'pure' literary writing, which refused to deal with political topics and party propaganda.

According to Chiang Pao-ch'ai (1994), the significance of *Xiandai wenxue* was its crucial position in linking the past and future, and ushering in a modernised and non-political literary world. Because it was the first publication providing a haven for literary creation under the shelter of western theories, the space it occupied in Taiwanese literary history was not just that of a literary magazine, but also a vehicle to rebel against the mainstream *zhandou wenyi* tradition, risking the threat of 'White Terror'. However, because of strict thought control, their way to avoid trouble was to cut their work off from the link with troublesome reality, and hide within their ivory tower. This divorce from reality was later to become problematic in the 1970s.

By the 1960s, there were two main literary trends in Taiwan. (YANG CHAO, 1995a: 112-115) In either avoiding political persecution, or by trying to get into the mainstream, two styles co-existed: modernist literature (represented by *Xiandai wenxue* Magazine) and anti-communist literature (represented by the party-run *Creative Literature*).

Anti-communist literature used a hysterical, resounding, and positive tone to assure a morally superior final victory. In contrast, modernists explored a much more enclosed,

personal diaspora experience, divorced from tradition and the past. "They took refuge under the modernist shelter...did not believe in anything familiar and doubted the experience from the past... Familiarity, to them, represented an illusion of stability." (YANG CHAO, 1995a: 116-117) Modernist literature became the writers' sanctuary. In order to avoid trouble, western literary theories were transplanted to Taiwanese literature, but in a manner that deliberately ignored the critical and political aspects of modernism.

In fact, anti-communist and modernist literary styles were two sides of the same coin. (YANG CHAO, 1995a: 117) Although taking clearly different approaches, both trends were the direct responses to, and a way of coping with, the emotional turmoil -- uncertainty, anxiety, and the diaspora experience of many in Taiwan at that time. The atmosphere of Taiwan's literature in the 1950s and 60s was 'narcotic': full of memories and alienated from reality and locality. (LIAO PING-HUI, 1995: 129)

Modernist literature in Taiwan tended to yearn for the past and the motherland, but avoided the immediate past and contemporary reality of Taiwanese society. (LIAO PING-HUI, 1995:130) As a result, fragmentation, paleness, and self-indulgence were the common characteristics of Taiwanese literature by the end of 1960s. By the 1970s, the modernist style was gradually accepted by the authorities and became the mainstream. (TSÊNG HUI-CHIA, 1998; LIAO PING-HUI, 1995) Partly, this was because Taiwanese society had gradually industrialised and westernised, and the straightforward anti-communist literature seemed outdated; partly, it was because the KMT encouraged this sort of modernist approach, rejecting 'realist' paradigms and focusing on the world of the individual. (TSÊNG HUI-CHIA, 1998:149)

### 1.5.5. Striving for democracy

Even under the KMT's authoritarian rule, there had been a few political incidents relating to the demand for democracy and freedom of speech. Some appealed to the KMT to accept the international reality that the ROC was no longer recognised as the legitimate Chinese government, and that more effort should be placed on establishing Taiwan. Some demanded independence as well as democratic reform. Such opinions were expressed by incidents such as the Su Tung-ch'i Incident<sup>41</sup>; P'êng Ming-min Incident<sup>42</sup>... Perhaps most significant of all such incidents was the Lei Chên Incident in 1960.

Lei Chên was an active member of the KMT and was once a trusted friend of Chiang Kai-shek. After the KMT fled to Taiwan, he founded the fortnightly magazine *Free China* in 1949, which advocated freedom and called for democracy. At first, Lei's main interest was to persuade Chiang to allow the liberal leader Hu Shih to establish an opposition, and for the two groups to work together. (LIN HSIEN-CHÊNG, 2000) After the signing of the American-Taiwan Defence Treaty, and the incrimination of General Sun Li-jen 孫立人<sup>43</sup>, Lei Chên became disillusioned by Chiang's

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<sup>41</sup> Su Tung-ch'i 蘇東啓 was a councilor of Yunlin 雲林 County. He organised an armed uprising in 1961 and failed. There were over 300 people arrested.

<sup>42</sup> P'êng Ming-min was the head of the Department of Politics, NTU. In 1964, he proposed a Self-determination Declaration of Taiwan's People (*taiwan renmin ziji xuanyan* 台灣人民自救宣言) as the solution to the problem of Taiwan's international status. He was arrested for 'instigation' and jailed for over a year and finally granted a special amnesty in 1965. He left Taiwan in 1970 and advocated Taiwan's independence abroad.

<sup>43</sup> To win back American support after defeat in 1949, Chiang Kai-shek was forced to put two figures – Sun Li-jen and Wu Kuo-chên 吳國禎 – who were trusted by Washington in important positions. Sun was recommended by America to replace Chiang's left-hand man Ch'ên Ch'êng 陳誠 as governor of Taiwan. Eventually, under pressure from Washington, Wu Kuo-chên had replaced Ch'ên Ch'êng by the end of 1949 and Sun was appointed as the Commander in Chief of the Army in 1950. Wu left Taiwan in 1953 under threat of death, and went into exile in America; Sun was incriminated by the KMT for 'protecting his communist staff'. He was imprisoned for 33 years until 1988. (HSÛ CHIEH-LIN, 1997, chapter 30)



authoritarian style. The opinion of *Free China* was critical, and the issue of human rights gradually became its main concern.

In 1955, its criticism of the CYC irritated the authorities. The incident started with a reader's letter arguing that the establishment of the CYC would damage the education system. Following it, other discussions of the CYC condemned it as the extension of the KMT in schools. Because of this, Lei Chên was expelled from the KMT.

In 1957, Yin Hai-kuang 殷海光, professor of Philosophy at the National Taiwan University (NTU), frankly stated the impossibility of recovering mainland and the negative influence of this illusion in the editorial in *Free China*.

Many governmental policies are based on the assumption of *mashang jiuyao hui dalu* 馬上就要回大陸(going back to the mainland soon). It allowed many maladies and abuses to happen... This *mashang jiuyao hui dalu* mentality has formed a psychological status of tolerance and over-lenieny for temporariness. Therefore, people take many unreasonable and harsh policies as temporary measures, and hope things would get better after going back. (quoted from LI HSIAO-FENG, 1992)

This frank analysis of the 'impossibility of going back' irritated the KMT. In 1960, Lei Chên united Taiwanese politicians, and planned to form the opposition 'Chinese Democratic Party'. He was arrested for 'disseminating Communist ideas' and was jailed for ten years. *Free China* was then closed down. (LI HSIAO-FENG, 1994: 347-348)

In the 1950s, criticism like the articles in *Free China* was very rare. These were the opinions of an older generation of liberal activists. After Lei Chên was imprisoned and *Free China* shut down, the liberal camp suffered a heavy blow. However, a new

generation of liberal thinkers was emerging.

In 1961, an article "The elderly and the stick" was published in *Wenxing* 文星 Magazine (No. 49), written by a young PhD historian Lee Ao 李敖. This started a second generation demanding democracy and freedom of speech. Lee not only bluntly criticised Chinese tradition, but also named and shamed some celebrities both in politics and academia. Later another of his articles in *Wenxing* - "The Seed-sower, Hu Shih" aroused a further wave of debate about Chinese modernisation, a familiar struggle of discourses since the May Fourth Movement. (LEE AO, 1964)

In 1962, Lee became the chief editor of *Wenxing* and transformed the magazine into a political forum. (LEE AO, 2000) Because of its rare frankness and refreshing alternative thinking, it was popular among university students. (HONG HSING-FU, 1983) New books compiled and published by *Wenxing* would always attract many readers. Many of their banned publications could be found in bookshops near the NTU. (YANG CHAO, 1995a: 131-132)

Both *Free China* and *Wenxing* voiced alternative opinions opposed to orthodox official publications. They presented anti-traditional and liberal voices, pursuing democracy and freedom in a conservative and closed society. Although the 1950s was an age when freedom of speech did not exist, the desire for and the struggle for democracy and freedom had never been put down completely. Their radical thinking and criticism managed to pass stringent regulations and censorship. Although liberal ideas and radical thinking were in the minority, they inspired the younger generation and encouraged freethinking. (CH'ÊN CHIN-YÜ, 1996, chapter 2)



However, suppression did not cease, but became even more severe in the 1960s.

*Wenxing* was forced to stop publication for a year in 1966, which then turned into a twenty-year ban<sup>44</sup>. Lee Ao was not imprisoned, but was subjected to police surveillance for many years. He was finally arrested for treason in 1971. His books were banned constantly before the lift of martial law<sup>45</sup>.

Similar cases also happened among academics and writers in the attempt to silence dissent. For example, the NTU yielded to political pressure, and forced professor Yin Hai-kuang to stop teaching in 1966 because of his long-time criticism of political interference in academic freedom, and his belief in political democracy. (CHIU HEI-YUAN, 1999) Another case was writer Po Yang, who was put in jail for a bizarre reason in 1968<sup>46</sup>.

Although the culture communities could not resist this suppression directly, in contrast to the silenced 1950s, criticism became frequent, and dissent was voiced in every possible way by the 1960s. By then, the KMT realised that coercion did not always work and its wish for pure domination could not be fully materialised.

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<sup>44</sup> The editorial "Our stern protest about the legal system and party power (*Women dui guofa dangxian de yanzheng biaooshi* 我們對國法黨限的嚴正表示)" in *Wenxing* (No. 98) criticised the interference of the KMT in judicial judgement and military operation. It also protested against censorship. Because of it, *Wenxing* was forced to stop publication for a year. However, it was not allowed to resume publication until September 1986.

<sup>45</sup> According to Ts'ai Han-hsün(1995), at least 15 of Lee Ao's books were banned before he got out of prison in 1976. Between 1981 to 1987, Lee Ao ran two political magazines (*Qianqiu Review* 千秋評論, *Wansui Review* 萬歲評論), and 80 issues of them were banned.

<sup>46</sup> Po Yang 柏楊 was a journalist who worked in one of KMT party newspapers -- *Zhonghua Daily News* 中華日報. In 1968, he was prosecuted as a communist spy because of a small incident at work. The trouble was caused by a bad translation in the comic *Popeye*. He translated the word 'fellows' used by Popeye into -- *quanguo junmin tongbao men* 全國軍民同胞們(all the army and the people of the nation) -- a phrase usually used by Chiang Kai-shek to begin his speeches. This translation was accused of defaming the leader's image, and 'trying to attack the state leader'. He was at first sentenced to death, which was then changed to twelve years (later reduced to ten years).



## Summary

Cultural policy in early post-war Taiwan focused on education, language and literature, endeavouring "to make the Taiwanese Chinese again", and promoting traditional Chinese (especially Confucian) culture. Both the mentality of treating the Taiwanese as 'lost children raised by the enemy', and the effort of Sinification/de-Japanisation, remained unchanged throughout the post-war culture building process. However, the emphasis moved towards anti-communism and Sanminzhuyi after 1949. Most of all, it was a culture construction process to "nationalise Chinese culture". (CHUN, 1996:131)

In order to aggressively construct a new generation with unified ideologies, education was identified as the most important vehicle. I agree with Gellner (1983) that universal literacy, a result of mass education, was the essential element for constructing a national culture. The cultural policy (especially the education reform and language unification) imposed in post-war Taiwan was a typical example of the transition that Gellner described from an agrarian society to an industrial one. The decisions of what should be taught or excluded, and what should be encouraged or discouraged were all fundamentally political. The decisions were based on the interests of the KMT and their need to reproduce an imagined motherland and a glorious shared history (between Taiwan and China).

It was fair to say that 'education' was the key to Taiwan's culture construction at this period. Once the selected knowledge, values and political ideologies were taught and constantly reinforced in schools as the only universal truth, it was hard for children to think otherwise. Nevertheless, as Williams argues, "If what we learn were merely an

imposed ideology, or if it were only the isolable meanings and practices of the ruling class, or of a section of the ruling class, which ... occupying merely the top of our minds, it would be ... a very much easier thing to overthrow." (1976b: 205) Education is an ongoing process and the interaction between formal and informal education is far more complicated than it may at first seem. The formation of our world-view is shifting and changing all the time.

In early post-war Taiwan, people were still striving for bare survival, and the party-state controlled most resources, which meant that the KMT dominated most of the processes of meaning-production (which were written and determined by the government, and transmitted by schooling). In the cultural circuit, (DU GAY, 1997) the effect of 'cultural regulation' on producing 'representation' and constructing identity is overwhelming.

It was almost impossible to voice one's dissent or criticise the system in the early 1950s, since nearly all the resources were under state control. Those who strove for democracy in the 1950s and 60s, although laying foundations for later democratic development, were still in the minority. Most people in Taiwan were just trying to get by. In general, there were two typical responses that the Taiwanese made to deal with cultural control and ideological scrutiny in the first two decades of the post-war years. One was 'escapism', appearing among the elites; the other was '*fuyan* (敷衍)'-demonstrated mostly by folk artists and the masses.

When the military threat across the Taiwan Strait was at its height, the academics and writers faced a dilemma. The only way to express oneself safely was either ignoring the reality of life, or conforming to official demands. (YANG CHAO, 1995a, 1995b; LI

LI-LING, 1995; CHIANG PAO-CH'AI, 1994)

While the writers and artists tried to avoid tripping over ideological landmines, ordinary people used *fuyan* to get by. The phrase *fuyan* means 'acting in a perfunctory manner', or 'muddling through one's work or duty'. It showed the pragmatic attitude of going along with, and obeying the official policy, but with a perfunctory manner. Therefore, doing it badly or complying without believing was the way to achieve *fuyan*. Even the young Taiwanese girl in Stafford's case studies (1995: 3) adopted a similar attitude to deal with heavy school demands. She followed the rules and studied as told, but burnt all textbooks *after* the examinations.



## Chapter 2 Cultural Renaissance Movement

The most important cultural policy in Taiwan during the 1960s and early 1970s was the Cultural Renaissance Movement. In this chapter, I will concentrate on how the movement was implemented and how the KMT tried to construct the ROC on Taiwan as the legitimate Chinese government both domestically and internationally.

### 2.1. Rescuing tradition

#### 2.1.1. Counterattack of Cultural Revolution

In May 1966, the Cultural Revolution was mobilised in China. In response, the KMT decided to initiate an action to combat the destruction of traditional culture. On 12<sup>th</sup> November 1966, Chiang Kai-shek condemned the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for launching the Cultural Revolution, in the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Day ceremony, and used the opportunity to reassure people in Taiwan that they were on the 'right' side.

At that gathering, he urged the participants to wage a counterattack by protecting traditional culture. Responding to Chiang's call, 1,500 participants proposed to name that day (November 12<sup>th</sup>) 'Chinese Cultural Renaissance Day', and to launch the Cultural Renaissance Movement<sup>1</sup> to counter the Cultural Revolution.

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<sup>1</sup> November 12<sup>th</sup> was Sun Yat-sen's birthday. Naming the day as 'Cultural Renaissance Day' (*zhonghua wenhua fuxing jie* 中華文化復興節) was a way not only to commemorate him, but also to link his historical significance with Chinese culture and tradition. The Cultural Renaissance Movement (*zhonghua wenhua fuxing yundong* 中華文化復興運動) was also known as the Chinese Culture Restoration Movement.

On the surface, the movement was a bottom-up initiation. In reality, it was created on the instruction of Chiang Kai-shek and organised and supported by the KMT. Before the movement was formally launched in July 1967, its goals and tasks were already planned by the KMT at the 12<sup>th</sup> Party Affairs Meeting. The KMT even drew up 'Measures for Promoting and Reviving Chinese Culture at All Levels (*geji zuzhi tuixing zhonghua wenhua fuxing yundong banfa* 各級組織推行中華文化復興運動辦法)' as the national guideline. (CH'ËN LI-FU, 1989)

On July 28<sup>th</sup> 1967, the Chinese Culture Restoration Committee (CCRC, *zhonghua wenhua fuxing yundong tuixing weiyuanhui* 中華文化復興運動推行委員會)<sup>2</sup> was formally set up to implement the mission to revive traditional culture. At the inaugural ceremony, Chiang Kai-shek was elected as the chairman of the CCRC. The role of the CCRC was to be the 'designer, communicator, coordinator, and negotiator' of the whole movement. (KU FËNG-HSIANG, 1977: ii) Implementation was, however, the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (MOE). A cultural war was waged. The previous anti-communist emphasis in national policy was shifted to preserving traditional culture.

The structure of the CCRC included both administrative and promotional bodies. The Secretariat was in charge of administrative matters, including planning, operation, and supervision of departments. (CCRC, 1977: 2) Eight special committees were set up to promote areas that needed special attention. It was no surprise to see the Educational Reform and Promotion Committee (*jiaoyu gaige cujinhui* 教育改革促進會) was the first, since education had always been a KMT priority. Apart from education<sup>3</sup>,

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<sup>2</sup> The English title was given by the CCRC itself. (NCA, 1996)

<sup>3</sup> The other seven committees included the Academic Research Promotion Committee, the

focus was mainly placed on modernising life style and funding and publishing academic research. (CCRC, 1977, 1978)

On the surface, the CCRC was a non-governmental organisation. However, the fact that it had the state leader as its chairman and was funded directly by the party-state indicated it was something more than that. Its ambiguous status (whether it was a party machine, state apparatus, or neither) became problematic in the late 1980s. (See Chapter 4.1.)

Cultural policy had always been important for the KMT; nonetheless, it functioned mostly as social control or ideological instilment. Before the movement was launched, 'cultural struggle' across the Strait had already been regarded as part of combat. However, it was after 1967 that cultural affairs became the centrepiece of the political arena. In contrast to the two previous decades of suppression of Taiwanese cultural development, this movement was indeed the first cultural policy positively constructing culture (even though limited to certain selected content and categories). Furthermore, the 'New Literary and Artistic Movement in the Armed Forces (*guojun xinwenyi yundong* 國軍新文藝運動)<sup>4</sup> was also launched to support the movement.

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Citizen Welfare Improvement and Guidance Committee, the Compilation and Translation Committee of Chinese Science and Civilization, the Literature and Arts Research and Enhancement Committee, the Committee of Awarding Research on Chinese Science Technology and Inventions, the Chinese Opera Promotion Committee, and the Finance Committee. (CCRC, 1977:2-3)

<sup>4</sup> In 1965, the Ministry of National Defence (MND) invited 83 artists and writers to set up a guiding committee to help people within the Armed Forces to develop their artistic talents and interests. Nine groups (novel, prose, poem, music, theatre and film, broadcasting, fine arts, Chinese opera, and folk arts) of artists were invited to coach those who would take up artistic creation in the forces. Its purpose was to provide soldiers with artistic training for future cultural struggle. In 1968, the Literature and Arts Combat Team (*guojun zhandou wenyi gongzuodui* 國軍戰鬥文藝工作隊) was formed to promote not only *zhandou wenyi*, but also Cultural Renaissance in the Armed Forces.



### **2.1.2. Network building**

In order to materialise Cultural Renaissance ideas, the CCRC had to set up its own executive agents. According to Chiang's instruction that branches be set up at every level, three different branches were created within two years:

- (1) Local branches – Under the jurisdiction of the CCRC, there were branches at provincial, county, city, and village levels. In total, there were 410 local branches.
- (2) School branches – Every education unit was counted as one. There were 3,366 branches (2,346 elementary schools; 925 secondary schools; and 95 colleges and universities).
- (3) Overseas branches in America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Asian Pacific areas, of which there were 46. (CCRC, 1977: 10-12)

By building up a network with such a tight structure, the CCRC had the ability to initiate its activities and mobilise the movement throughout Taiwan. Amongst all the branches, the most effective agents were the schools.

Although all governmental organisations were mobilised to support the movement, the education system continued to be the most reliable, efficient and effective agent. The CCRC (1977:103-124) claimed that the implementation of nine-year compulsory education, and the success of education reform were crucial in achieving its goals. It acknowledged the effectiveness of constructing the foundation of political culture from childhood. Even when the movement started to provoke doubts and was severely criticised for being out of touch in the 1970s, schools remained its solid foundation.

Outside of schools, the CCRC had to rely on the help of local branches to implement its range of programmes. The local branches were active in the first few years, but their influence soon declined after the initial fever subsided.

As to overseas branches, they functioned as clubs for overseas Chinese providing traditional cultural resources such as Chinese books, touring performances and exhibitions, and organising Chinese language courses. These branches tried to set up relationships with overseas Chinese communities and promote the Cultural Renaissance Movement. However, it became difficult because of Taiwan's increasing international isolation in the 1970s. Their operation relied heavily on the political stance (pro-Communist or pro-KMT) of overseas Chinese communities and their host countries. Sometimes the CCRC even made use of existing community clubs or student unions abroad to operate its programmes. (CHINESE CULTURE RESTORATION MONTHLY, 1980:4-7)

Apart from these branches, an official organisation within the government was also needed to deal with the implementation in other areas, such as in literature, music, fine art, drama, dance, film and television. (HSIAO A-CH'IN, 1991: 105) In 1967, the Culture Bureau was formed to play a supporting role under the jurisdiction of the MOE. The Culture Bureau claimed to have two tasks: cultural renaissance, and cultural battle against communism. (CULTURE BUREAU, 1968: 108) There were four departments, one in charge of promoting the Cultural Renaissance Movement; one encouraging artistic activities; one managing broadcasting (radio and television); and another supervising the film industry.

However, the Culture Bureau was abolished in 1973. Its first and only head, Wang Hung-chün 王洪鈞 attributed its short-life to its low status in the government hierarchy. (CH'ËN MAN-LING, 1998) At that time, there were too many organisations dealing with cultural affairs within the government and the KMT – for example in publication,

the Ministry of Interior (MOI); in film, television and broadcasting, the Government Information Office (GIO) and the KMT; in performing arts, the General Political Warfare Department (of the MND) and the Department of Social Education (of the MOE).

Wang admitted that, as a low-ranking bureau organisation, it was powerless to coordinate ministries and party machines. The other organisations not only disagreed and contradicted each other, but also would not support the Culture Bureau's coordination or suggestions. Disputes and power struggles would occur during the negotiation process. In 1973, the Culture Bureau was finally closed down. It lasted less than six years.

### 2.1.3. Building up new *daotong*<sup>5</sup>

According to the CCRC (1977), their aims were the revival of Chinese culture (*fuxing zhonghua wenhua* 復興中華文化), and promoting traditional ethics and morality (*fayang lunli daode* 發揚倫理道德). However, the problem was how to set about achieving these two goals. Chiang Kai-shek's solution (CHIANG KAI-SHEK, 1984h) was Sanminzhuyi.

Sanminzhuyi is a modified socialist theory, which had as its aim the modernisation of China. (Also see Chapter 1.1.3.) According to Chiang's interpretation (1984f, 1984g,

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<sup>5</sup> *Dao* 道 means 'way' or 'discourse'; *tong* 統 means 'tradition' or 'interconnected and coherent system'. Generally speaking, *daotong* means the tradition of the correct discourse and proper ways of behaving. The ancient sage kings set up benevolent examples for later rulers to follow. Therefore, *daotong* particularly refers to Confucian orthodoxy, which always related to political legitimacy and orthodox status. In Confucian ideas, political legitimacy is morally correct. (CH'ËN CH'I-NAN, 1986a)



1984i, 1984l), the essential elements of Sanminzhuyi were "ethics, democracy and science"<sup>6</sup>. These three principles were chosen as the appropriated responses to three areas of concern in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century: nationalism (national self-esteem), democracy (the political reform), and people's livelihood.

In contrast, what the Chinese Communists had done on the mainland, according to Chiang, was immoral (abandoning national spirit), undemocratic, and unscientific (failing to manage people's livelihood). (CHIANG KAI-SHEK, 1984h: 68-69) In other words, the CCP was a regime that betrayed national interests and the ideal of Sanminzhuyi. In response to that, Chiang, through the Cultural Renaissance Movement, advocated the fight against Communism and the need to protect Chinese culture with these three essences (ethics, democracy and science).

Chiang Kai-shek emphasised that Sanminzhuyi was based on both western socialist ideas and Chinese thinking, and developed the ideas to his own end. He concluded that five thousand years of *daotong* had been passed on by all the sage kings and political saints, from Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen, Wu, Zhougong<sup>7</sup> to Confucius, and finally inherited by Sun Yat-sen. (CHIANG KAI-SHEK, 1984g: 546; 1984f: 270)

The KMT tried to link Sanminzhuyi with Chinese traditional culture and political orthodoxy, and emphasised that Chiang was Sun's true successor. At the same time, the KMT condemned the CCP as a foreign party, claiming that communist ideas were

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<sup>6</sup> Here, Chiang referred mainly to 'applied science', since this would directly improve people's livelihood.

<sup>7</sup> Yao 堯 and Shun 舜 were legendary sage kings in ancient China; Yu 禹 was the reputed founder of the Xia 夏 Dynasty (21<sup>st</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> century B.C.); Tang 湯 was the founding king of the Shang 商 Dynasty (16<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> century B.C.); Wen 文 and Wu 武 were the father-and-son-kings that established the Zhou Dynasty (11<sup>th</sup> century to 256 B.C.), and Zhougong 周公 was Wen's

not suitable for the Chinese. (CH'EN LI-FU, 1974: 14) By stressing the idea that the CCP was evil and the People's Republic of China (PRC) was a rebellious and unlawful polity, the issue of the ROC's legitimacy was addressed indirectly.

At first sight, advocating Sanminzhuyi in the Cultural Renaissance Movement seemed irrelevant. However, Chiang Kai-shek emphasised that traditional Chinese culture was embedded deeply in Sanminzhuyi. By advocating Sanminzhuyi (or more precisely, Chiang's interpretation of it) and linking it with selected Chinese culture and tradition in the movement, a newly constructed *daotong* – political legitimacy and orthodox tradition – was produced. Furthermore, it was clear that the focus of the movement was not on the revival of tradition, but on the selection of tradition. In the name of preserving traditional culture and history, the movement endeavoured to retell history and build a 'traditional culture' according to the KMT's vision.

#### **2.1.4. Political legitimacy built by culture**

An overall cultural and historical makeover was needed to create a new *daotong*. Glorifying Sanminzhuyi was the first step. After emphasising Sun Yat-sen's orthodox status in Chinese history, his relationship with Chiang Kai-shek and the KMT would also need to be tackled. Therefore, making connections between Sanminzhuyi and traditional culture, reinforcing the succeeding role of Chiang Kai-shek, and reinventing selected tradition became the most important issues in this movement. In other words, instead of promoting culture as a whole, the CCRC was promoting (selected) ethics and moralities. (HSIAO A-CH'IN, 1991)

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brother, who assisted Wu in governing the kingdom.

There were several ways to link Chinese traditional culture with Sanminzhuyi. (CCRC, 1977: i-iii, 1-4, 24-28) Most commonly, it was to construct academic foundations to link Sanminzhuyi with traditional Chinese political concepts. (CH'ËN LI-FU, 1988:28; CHIANG KAI-SHEK, 1984f: 271) Another tactic was to prove the legitimacy of the KMT and Chiang Kai-shek, and their political correctness. Hence, this movement accentuated the evil of the CCP and condemned it as the sinner of Chinese history. (CHIANG KAI-SHEK, 1984g, 1984h) The KMT claimed that communist ideas had never been part of Chinese *daotong*, whereas, the ROC on Taiwan was not only the politically legitimate government, but also the culturally orthodox inheritor of Chinese *daotong*. Chiang Kai-shek, successor to Sun Yat-sen and loyal pursuer of Sanminzhuyi, was the heir to this Chinese *daotong*.

To maintain this image as the inheritor and protector of orthodox Chinese culture, the CCRC's mission was to construct Taiwan as an "exemplary province of Sanminzhuyi", and "the base for reviving Chinese tradition" (CHIANG KAI-SHEK, 1984g). To support Taiwan as the embodiment of orthodox, traditional China, the National Palace Museum was opened in Taipei in 1965. 3,000 cases of national treasures containing the cream of Chinese arts from the Palace Museum in Beijing were on display.

The National Palace Museum soon became the centre for specialists in Chinese art, and attracted millions of tourists. However, it is worth noting the timing and the purpose of the KMT's careful shipment of these artefacts to Taiwan during the civil war (winter 1948), which took place even before the official retreat in 1949. Chiang Fu-ts'ung 蔣復璁(1977:78-83), the first director of National Palace Museum, shed some light on the reason why they were shipped prior to the armies and civil servants.



He explained, the take-over and preservation of cultural relics had always been of great importance during the change of dynasties in Chinese history. The symbolic meaning of tradition and continuity was significant. Therefore, the purpose of protecting these national treasures was exactly to maintain a political legitimacy and the sense of traditional continuity for the incoming rulers.

In order to build the image of Taiwan as the base of Chinese orthodoxy, the ROC sent Beijing opera troupes abroad. The first Beijing opera to tour abroad was performed by the Dapeng 大鵬 Beijing opera troupe in 1957. They toured around Europe for five months and put on 124 performances. Later, the Fuxing 復興 Beijing Opera School, under the direct jurisdiction of the MOE, regularly represented the ROC touring abroad. The biggest ever Beijing opera tours, performed by the ROC Chinese Opera Group<sup>8</sup>, under the organisation of the MOE, took place in the USA in 1973 and 1974 after the ROC was forced out of the UN. The tours acted as cultural ambassadors to sustain Taiwan's 'authentic Chinese' image. (MAO CHIA-HUA, 1995: 122) According to the group leader Yang Ch'i-hsien (1995), the whole experience of the tours formulated a model for future cultural exchange.

During ten years of Cultural Revolution in a China closed to the rest of the world, Taiwan successfully provided an alternative, and supplement, for people longing for traditional Chinese culture or who wanted to learn Chinese languages<sup>9</sup>. There were many courses designed especially for foreign students to learn Chinese. The earliest

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<sup>8</sup> It was constituted by the elite in this trade who teamed up temporarily for the tour. The troupe called itself 'Chinese Opera' to emphasise the association of cultural orthodoxy.

<sup>9</sup> According to the Government Information Office (GIO, 1993a: 133), there were nearly 6,000 foreign students from 73 countries around the world enrolled in ROC higher education and Chinese language studies during the academic year 1991-1992. According to the calculation of the MTC (MANDARIN TRAINING CENTRE, 2001), there have been at least 33,247 foreign students trained in its centre (according to average student numbers of 1000 to 1200 students

one was run by the Mandarin Training Centre in the National Taiwan Normal University in 1956. The other prominent ones included the Inter-university Program for Chinese Language Studies (the Stanford Centre) on the campus of the National Taiwan University (NTU), the Mandarin courses organised by the Mandarin Daily News, and many Mandarin Training (or Learning) Centres in universities<sup>10</sup>.  
(MANDARIN TRAINING CENTRE, 2001)

Taking the political opportunity afforded to him by the Cultural Revolution on the mainland, Chiang Kai-shek directly and indirectly indicated that the revival of traditional Chinese culture was equivalent to the recovery of the mainland. Therefore, this movement became the frontline of the anti-communist struggle.

## **2.2. KMT Strategy**

### **2.2.1. Degraded Taiwan**

The intensive activities of the Cultural Renaissance Movement were considered "enormously successful" (CCRC, 1977: 233-235) in its first decade. There were three major focuses: education reform, promotion of Chinese civilisation and scientific achievements (in order to enhance historical pride and encourage scientific development), and the modernisation of daily life.

Apart from imposing nine-year compulsory education and unifying textbooks,

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per term since 1956).

<sup>10</sup> They include Fu Jen 輔仁 Catholic University, Chengchi 政治 University, Fengchia 逢甲 University, Tanchiang 淡江 University, Chinese Culture University, Chingi 靜宜 University, T'unghai 東海 University.



language policy also became severe. Since the movement was launched, a complete ban on using dialects in schools had been imposed. (Also see Chapter 1.3.3.) Chên Mei-ju (1996) described the two decades of this movement as the worst period for local dialects. In 1973, the MOE even took *guoyu* 國語 (national spoken language, Mandarin) as an individual subject, and trained teachers specialising in Mandarin tuition. (LI CH'IN-AN, 1997)

Another influential language policy was the restriction on dialect programme broadcasting. In 1971, the Taiwan provincial government restricted TV programmes in local dialects to only an hour per day. (SUN HUI-MEI, 1997; LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1998) In 1976, the *Radio and Television Broadcasting Act* was promulgated. Article 20 of the Act stipulated that the proportion of Mandarin programmes should be more than 70 %. (CH'ËN MEI-JU, 1996; LI CH'IN-AN, 1997) It was not until 1993 that Article 20 was finally abolished.

The stringent language policy could be regarded as 'successful'. By 1991, the Mandarin-speaking population had reached 90%. (LI CH'IN-AN, 1997) Even after local dialects were introduced into the education system by some opposition county magistrates and mayors after the lift of martial law in 1987, the official attitude remained discouraging until the late 1990s.

Because of the aim to revive traditional Chinese culture, any unorthodox and unconventional culture was discouraged. The glorification of Chinese culture also meant the belittlement of Taiwanese culture. Culturally, China became the centre and Taiwan peripheral to it; Chinese culture was glorified as the best and grandest, while Taiwanese culture was considered parochial and secondary. The consequence of this



movement was profound.

For example, because of its connection with religious ceremony and local dialects, the business of folk arts was heavily hit. In the 1950s, folk performances survived by the support of the masses and transformed themselves from pure religious events into commercialised activities. However, the situation had changed since the movement was launched in the mid-1960s. There were several reasons for this.

Firstly, indigenous culture was degraded as 'vulgar' and 'tasteless', in contrast to 'classical', refined' Chinese arts from the mainland. Secondly, the tightened language policy not only punished dialect-users, but also debased the status of local dialects. Consequently, it degraded Taiwanese performing arts, because dialects were the essence and foundation for folk arts<sup>11</sup>.

Furthermore, the promotion of modernisation tarnished the reputation of religion as 'superstitious'. Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this trend of rationalism and scientism dominated Chinese thinking, showing the desire to change the old frail empire. (CH'ËN MEI-YEN, 1991) As a result of that, folk art performances were degraded as a cultural product related with superstition and backwardness. Even so, the most crucial element for its decline was the industrialisation of Taiwanese society in the 1970s, which will be looked at later. (LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1998; SUN HUI-MEI, 1997)

In contrast to their robust resistance towards stringent control in the 1950s, the folk

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<sup>11</sup> Local dialect was an important component in traditional performing art forms, especially for *xiqu* (traditional opera forms). The operatic tune (*shengqiang* 聲腔) of local *xiqu* has a fundamental connection with local dialects. Details of this nature are explained in Chapter 5.1.1.

arts were the biggest casualties in the 1970s. The contemptuous attitude toward all folk art forms impacted on both the 'identity' of performers (and also audiences) and its 'representation' as vulgar, backward, superstitious and parochial. In the process of meaning production, the movement created an image of folk arts such that only country bumpkins would appreciate them.

Apart from the degradation of the Cultural Renaissance Movement, Taiwan's industrialisation had changed the environment of folk arts and the taste of its audiences. As a result, the folk arts market shrank. In the 1950s and 60s, the influence of 'regulation' and 'representation' (which dominated by the authorities) were most important for constructing identity and meanings in Taiwan's enclosed and authoritarian society. However, the emphasis shifted, and the processes of 'production' and 'consumption' became more influential in the industrialised 1970s.

### **2.2.2. Academic incorporation**

In order to construct and select a KMT-favoured tradition, an overall culture-construction was necessary. The most common tactic was to use academic research and favoured discourses to build up moral bases. The CCRC systematically encouraged, funded, and organised academic research and publications. (CCRC, 1977: 45-83)

Ku Fêng-hsiang (1987), the first secretary-general of the CCRC, said, "Academic progress is the core of culture development ... academic research ... will inspire new research, uplift national self-esteem, and improve foreign understanding of Chinese culture." It was evident that the CCRC supported intellectuals with plentiful resources

(research projects, publications, facilities, fame, position, etc.), in order to select and rewrite the content of 'traditional culture' to meet its own needs.

According to the CCRC's own records (1977), many series of books and research papers were funded and published. These publication projects involved almost all the academics in the fields of history, Chinese literature and philosophy. Over two hundred scholars, professors and senior lecturers from the higher education sector were invited to produce over one hundred volumes of the Chinese Culture series.

(KU FÊNG-HSIANG, 1987)

The focuses of sponsorship were mainly on certain subjects, such as Sanminzhuyi, theories of ancient thinkers and philosophers, Chinese history, literary classics, and scientific achievement. This was because the main concerns of the CCRC were to organise discursive Chinese culture, select and glorify historical achievement in every aspect into a systematic tradition.

Most of all, the task was to popularise Sanminzhuyi and thereby build up the orthodox status of the KMT. Therefore, Sanminzhuyi was elaborated, compiled, published, and popularised nationwide. In order to create the sense of continuity of Chinese *daotong* and to imply that Chiang Kai-shek was the successor of Sun Yat-sen (since Chiang carried out Sun's ideals), academics were called in to select, compile and annotate both Sun and Chiang's writings, and to make connections to ancient classics. In addition, the establishment of Sanminzhuyi clubs on university campuses were encouraged to popularise Chiang's version of Sanminzhuyi. (JUI HÊ-CHÊNG, 1982) The recreation of 'Chinese *daotong*' (through a careful selection and interpretation of Sanminzhuyi) and the cultural connection between Chiang, Sun,



and Chinese culture were widely disseminated.

The promotion of the achievement of Chinese civilisation and scientific inventions was another focal point of academic publications. The idea was drawn from Joseph Needham's *Science and Civilisation in China*. The CCRC got in touch with Needham and decided to translate the voluminous work in 1969. The first volume of the Chinese edition was published in 1973. Following this, the CCRC also commissioned *The history of Chinese science and technology* series to introduce Chinese physics, mathematics, medicine, and astronomy. (CCRC, 1977:28-34)

Contemporary literature was also important. The same tactics of providing opportunities for publication and awarding grants were adopted. Not only did the CCRC have its own magazine *Chinese culture revival monthly* (*Zhonghua wenhua fuxing yuekan* 中華文化復興月刊) providing publication opportunities and commissioning books, but it also gave awards such as the Golden Pen award, the Editorial Award, and Fine Literary Magazine Award, to make sure that the "right kind" of literary work was encouraged and published. (CCRC, 1977)

### 2.2.3. Intellectual and moral reform

The CCRC was designed to 'restore' Chinese culture. In fact, the so-called 'traditional culture' that the CCRC endeavoured to promote was selected and elaborated carefully by academics.

This kind of incorporation was commonly used to create a desired discourse.

Academics were drawn in to build a framework that selected traditions, filtered and

moralised values, and retold history.

As Gramsci said, "A social group can... exercise 'leadership' before winning governmental power... it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to 'lead' as well." (1971: 57-68)

The whole operation that the KMT carried out in the Cultural Renaissance Movement was an attempt at a 'moral and intellectual reform', to use Gramsci's term (1971: 57-58). The dominant social groups can use 'moral and intellectual reform' to maintain and reinforce their hegemony.

In Gramsci's analysis, history is a process of conflicts and compromises where the dominant class leads the rest, both in economic, and in moral and intellectual terms. A dominant social group (or any social group intending to gain hegemony) needs to lead, not just to dominate, by making alliances and compromises. I agree with Simon (1982:63) that "a class advancing towards hegemony needs to build up an ideological system which can act as cement to bind together and unify a bloc of social forces." Therefore, forming consensus was truly essential for the goal of gaining hegemony. Since it could not be won by force, the key to gain consent and to lead the rest relied on how to make allies and include others' interests.

Gramsci's idea of hegemony was elaborated from Marx's assertion that social being determined social consciousness. He believed that consciousness was not spontaneously born but was structured in certain ways corresponding to the general structure of society. He said, "it is untrue that all individual opinions have 'exactly' equal weight. Ideas and opinions are not spontaneously 'born' in each individual brain: they have had a centre of formation, of irradiation, of dissemination, of

persuasion." (GRAMSCI, 1971: 192) For him, ideology did not descend 'from above', nor emerged 'from below'. It was structured between these two extremes by the intellectuals<sup>12</sup>.

By the help of moral and intellectual reform, a system of alliance and consensus could be built, and ideologies favoured by the dominant group(s) could be disseminated and become the norm. No wonder that Gramsci took intellectuals as "the dominant group's 'deputies' exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government". (GRAMSCI, 1971: 12) In this case, the ROC on Taiwan built consensus and strengthened its political hegemony through the operation of the movement, with the help of intellectuals to reinvent history and tradition.

After two decades of thought control and aggressive education policy, the KMT used this movement as the opportunity to disseminate favoured ideology further and regenerate its anti-communist messages. In order to ensure and strengthen political hegemony, the Cultural Renaissance Movement was operated as a political culture assimilation mechanism to build consensus. It was a conscious effort to forge popular beliefs, common sense<sup>13</sup>, and ideology aggressively, both inside and outside the education system.

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<sup>12</sup> Here, Gramsci extended the traditional meaning of 'intellectual', and called them 'organic intellectuals' (roughly including: managers, technicians, policy-makers, etc.): "By 'intellectuals' must be understood not those strata commonly described by this term, but in general the entire social stratum which exercises an organisational function in the wide sense - whether in the field of production, or in that of culture, or in that of political administration." (GRAMSCI, 1971: 97)

<sup>13</sup> In Gramsci's term, common sense denotes 'the uncritical and partly unconscious way in which people perceive the world'. To him, it is the site on which the dominant ideology is constructed. (SIMON, 1982:26-27) The KMT government had always stressed the importance of controlling the 'socialisation' process. Furthermore, the subject 'Common Sense' had always been important in primary education to influence how children sense the world.



#### 2.2.4. Moralisation and modernisation

Although compulsory education kept the political socialisation process tightly in control, the KMT felt the need to continue the same socialisation in family and society. Therefore, it was crucial to set up standards and norms in life forcefully to reinforce the socialisation experiences outside of schools. In the process of creating shared values and 'common sense' to pressurise people to conform, the KMT used academics to build theoretical foundations in two areas: modernisation and moralisation.

According to Yen Chia-kan (1988: 22-23), Chiang Kai-shek's vice president, the modernisation of daily life was most vital for the movement, and it should work hand in hand with school education. He emphasised that ethical and moral socialisation should be rooted in ordinary daily life. As a result, people could learn the proper manners of *shi yi zhu xing* 食衣住行<sup>14</sup>, the public moralities could be fostered naturally, and environmental hygiene could also be maintained.

In order to foster the 'proper way of life', the CCRC even gave guidelines on daily manners and behaviour, and designed all kinds of projects and programmes in order to "rationalise and modernise people's lifestyle". (CCRC, 1977: 7) First of all, the CCRC drew up *The necessary knowledge of the modern citizen's life* (*guomin shenghuo xuzhi* 國民生活需知) in 1968 and *Examples of proper manners of good*

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<sup>14</sup> Literally, *shi yi zhu xing* means four important areas in life: eating, clothing, dwelling, and behaviour. Here, Yen quoted from Sun Yat-sen's ideas. They were basically: dining manners, dressing codes, the living environment, and proper conduct. Generally speaking, it refers to the life style as a whole.

*citizenship (guomin liyi fanli 國民禮儀範例)* in 1970. They were widely distributed as manuals providing instruction on 'modern citizenship'. "By 1977, everyone in Taiwan has copies of those two booklets, which provide information and guidelines of model life-style for people to follow." (CCRC, 1977: 7)

Although they were just two small booklets, the amount of manpower, energy, and government funding put into their compilation was unimaginable. *The necessary knowledge of modern citizen's life* was drafted by eight government organisations and took a year to finish. Related organisations included the MOE, the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), General Political Warfare Department, the MND), Education Departments in the Taiwan Provincial Government and Taipei City Government, the CYC, the Revolutionary Institute (*geming shijian yanjiuyuan 革命實踐研究院*), and the Fourth and the Fifth Units within the KMT.

This booklet comprised six chapters covering general rules, eating, clothing, dwelling, behaviour, and *yu-le* 育樂(education and leisure). Principally, it was based on Chiang Kai-shek's concepts from the *Two Amendments on Education and Leisure for the Principle of the People's Livelihood*. (CCRC, 1977: 7-9) The final draft was checked and ratified by Chiang Kai-shek in 1968.

The compilation of *Examples of proper manners of good citizenship* was even more complicated. The MOI proposed the first draft in 1968, but was turned down because the Executive Yuan was dissatisfied with the content. In 1969, the CCRC was brought in to form a special team to revise the content. This draft was double-checked by the State Safety Committee.

Even so, Chiang Kai-shek was still dissatisfied and asked for a simplified version. In 1970, Chiang Kai-shek finally approved the last draft. The booklets were distributed to all institutions, schools, and non-governmental organisations nation-wide.

Trivial demands, such as "no spitting", "no urinating on the street" (from the *The necessary knowledge of modern citizen's life*) were described in great detail, in order to rid the Chinese of old bad habits. Although the content sometimes seemed trivial, the painstaking process of drawing it up, the constant modifications it had undergone, and the severe social pressure it generated, showed their political significance. That was to say, the KMT wanted not only to unify thoughts, but also desired a standardised behaviour.

This tactic of standardising and modernising behaviour had once been used by the New Life Movement<sup>15</sup> in 1934. This same tactic was used again: launching a movement advocating reforms that were to build a better and stronger nation. On the surface, it was a modernisation movement to rebuild the nation and deal with imperialist aggression. Nonetheless, it was also a cultural struggle tackling the domestic problems at that time, counterattacking an anti-tradition mentality and the wholesale adoption of western ideas inherited from the May Fourth Movement. (HSIAO A-CH'IN, 1991)

Judging from the difficulties the KMT faced in the 1960s, both from within and outside the island, the Cultural Renaissance Movement was a necessity. The purpose was

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<sup>15</sup> In order to achieve a 'new life style' of *li yi lian chi* 禮義廉恥 (good manners, justice, integrity, and a sense of honour), this movement promoted the habits of living a hygienic and simple lifestyle, and placed emphasis on accuracy and efficiency. (HSIAO A-CH'IN, 1991) The movement was inspired, at the time, by German and Italian fascism.



not only to build the KMT's legitimacy, politically and culturally, but also, to divert attention from international isolation and the domestic demands for democracy, and focusing it instead on the evils of the CCP and the destruction it caused. Setting up a new target meant drawing attention away from the unrealistic goal of the 'recovery of mainland' and declining international recognition. The KMT's intention behind the movement was to reconstruct domestic confidence and rebuild the international image of the ROC.

## **2.3. Decline and change**

### **2.3.1. International isolation**

After Washington decided to reverse its 'hands-off' China policy, Taiwan became "a foreign policy protectorate of the United States". (ROBINSON, 1996:1340) Thereafter, American aid was resumed<sup>16</sup>, and an American Military Advisory Group was set up in Taiwan in 1951 to provide further military support for the KMT regime. In total, the United States provided the ROC on Taiwan with almost US \$15 billion in economic aid (WANG TSO-JUNG, 1988: 17-18) and US \$ 25 billion military aid (JOCOPY, 1996: 118). From 1954 to 1979, the American-Taiwan Mutual Defence Treaty<sup>17</sup> guaranteed Taiwan's security. The maintenance of the KMT's legitimacy as the lawful successor and the legitimate polity of China also relied on the support of America. At the same time, it was also in American interests to consolidate its military ties in Asia in the

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<sup>16</sup> When the KMT was still the Chinese government in power, the US signed the Sino-American Economic Aid Agreement with the ROC in 1948. The aid was soon postponed because of the civil war between the KMT and the CCP in 1949. The aid was resumed when the Korean War broke out, and continued until 1965. (WANG TSO-JUNG, 1988)

<sup>17</sup> The treaty was replaced by the Taiwan Relations Act, which was passed by the US Congress and signed by President Jimmy Carter on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1979. It provided a new format for handling ROC-US ties.

Cold War by ensuring its relationship with Taiwan.

According to Michael Yahuda (1996), Taiwan was crucial for American power in this region, and had similar importance to Japan and Beijing. "It sits astride the major sea lanes linking North-East and South-East Asia and its destiny is therefore of interest to Japan... By the same token it has been seen by Beijing as an unsinkable 'aircraft-carrier' that hostile powers have used and could use again to threaten its eastern seaboard." (YAHUDA, 1996: 1320) Therefore, the Taiwan problem "in one form or another has been central to Sino-American relations since 1950". (YAHUDA, 1996: 1320)

However, more and more countries recognised the PRC as a sovereign state and the legitimate Chinese government, and severed diplomatic relations with the ROC. For example, the UK recognised the PRC in 1950, France did so in 1964, Canada in 1970, and Japan in 1975.

Although Washington was not very happy with Chiang's high-handed authoritarian style, it maintained its support for the ROC for the sake of its cold-war strategy in Asia. The decline of support from Washington started when J.F. Kennedy took up the presidency in 1961. The 'One China One Taiwan' (sometimes known as 'Two Chinas') principle<sup>18</sup> Kennedy pursued was the first sign of a threat to the legitimacy of the ROC. This 'One China One Taiwan' policy was postponed because of Kennedy's

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<sup>18</sup> Both sides of the Taiwan Strait agreed that there was only "one China", although each disagreed which was the legitimate one. During the early 1980s, Deng Xiaoping offered a "one country, two systems" model to Taiwan. It allowed Taiwan to retain the KMT rule, its own capitalist economic system and defence forces, in return for acknowledging the sovereignty of the PRC. It was also known as 'one China, one Taiwan'. (SHAMBAUGH, 1996a; YAHUDA, 1996)

death and the interruption of the Vietnam War. (YANG TS'UNG-JUNG, 1992: 25)

In 1967, the launch of the Cultural Revolution was an extraordinary opportunity for the ROC to resume its legitimacy. The Cultural Renaissance Movement distinguished the KMT from the CCP, justified its legitimacy, and won sympathy internationally. The aim was to prove 'free China' under the KMT rule was morally correct and politically legitimate.

Nonetheless, when Richard Nixon visited China in 1971, Taiwan's international status was at stake. The ROC was replaced at the United Nations by the PRC the same year. Consequently, the majority of member states of the UN shifted their recognition from Taipei to Beijing. Furthermore, the ROC found itself replaced in many leading international governmental organisations by the PRC in the 1970s. Finally, Washington recognised Beijing in 1979. American's de-recognition damaged the ROC's "remaining faint credibility to represent China as a whole". (YAHUDA, M. 1996:1321)

Within such a context, fortifying spiritual defence seemed reasonable, and modifying domestic policy inevitable, in order to solve the problem of international isolation and domestic doubt about the ROC's political status and future.

### **2.3.2. Short-lived Taiwan spring**

Doubts were raised questioning the twenty-year illusion the KMT created, that the ROC on Taiwan represented the legitimate Chinese government. The 1970s was a period of uncertainty and self-doubt, a time when the KMT worked mostly on



self-reassurance, and manoeuvred to strengthen its position on Taiwan. Therefore, in reaction, Taiwanese awareness and liberal assertions of Taiwan's own rights grew.

Under immense domestic pressure demanding for change, Chiang Kai-shek felt the need to reform the party and to rid it of some senior members. At the 10<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the KMT in 1969, the principle of *quanmian gexin* 全面革新 (total renewal) was decided. He attributed the situation to senior statesmen's reluctance to retire, which blocked the channel for party regeneration. (CHIANG KAI- SHEK, 1984m: 405) Again, he appointed his eldest son, Chiang Ching-kuo, to be the man in charge of party reform, and as the vice Premier, preparing for future power-succession.

In order to secure the success of reform, Chiang Ching-kuo drew support from the mass media and intellectuals. In 1970, he openly encouraged the younger generation to be frank in expressing their opinions. (CHINA TIMES, 1970) The purpose was not only to encourage different opinions to be heard, but more importantly, exerted pressure on the party reactionaries. This period was called the "Taiwan Spring" (HSÜ CHIEH-LIN, 1997), a period ushering in a liberal atmosphere and allowing the rise of the opposition.

At the same time, Chiang Ching-kuo started to foster the young Taiwanese elite to build up his own influence. (LI HSIAO-FENG, 1987: 103-104; HSÜ CHIEH-LIN, 1997) Many of the Taiwanese elite were promoted by him and became the major figures in Taiwanese politics today, such as Wu Po-hsiung 吳伯雄, Hsü Li-tê 徐立德, and Hsü Shui-tê 許水德. This strategy was executed by Chiang Ching-kuo's right-hand man Li

Huan 李煥. Later, it was generally termed *cui taiqing* 催台青<sup>19</sup>. (HSÜ CHIEH-LIN, 1997; WANG MO-LIN, 1999)

In 1970, the KMT initiated a meeting to discuss national affairs with young people and advocated 'free speech'. Encouraged by the new found freedom, many young academics started to express their criticisms and demands for democratic reform in *Daxue* 大學(Great Learning) Magazine<sup>20</sup>. It offered a public forum allowing discussion and criticism. Their main assertion was *gexin baotai* 革新保台(reform and save Taiwan) and this affirmed the significance of Taiwan's existence. (LI YIH-YUAN, 1996a: 28) These participants included many young academics, who were educated in America and held teaching jobs in universities. Later, they became the main force behind both the KMT (such as: Li Chung-kuei 李鍾桂, Kuan Chung 關中, Yang Kuo-shu 楊國樞, Sun Chên 孫震, etc.) and the opposition party (such as: Chang Chün-hung 張俊宏, Ch'ên Ku-ying 陳鼓應, Hsü Hsin-liang 許信良, etc.).

In October 1971, fifteen scholars from both camps issued a statement in *Daxue*, entitled "A Forthright Admonition of National Affairs" (*guoshi zhengyan* 國是諍言) criticising the undemocratic political system and the old mainlander representatives who were reluctant to retire<sup>21</sup>. (CHANG CHÜN-HUNG, 1977: 32) In January 1972,

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<sup>19</sup> 'Cui' means 'push', 'urge', or 'speed up', and 'taiqing' means 'Taiwanese youth'. The phrase described the principle of promoting young Taiwanese and putting them into the bureaucratic system and the party. (HSÜ CHIEH-LIN, 1997, chapter 43) However, the term *cuitaiqing* also borrowed the same sound from a famous female singer's name – Ts'ui Tai-ch'ing 崔苔菁.

<sup>20</sup> *Daxue* was a liberal magazine established in 1968. Originally, it introduced western theories and thoughts, rarely touching political issues. After the participants joined the magazine, *Daxue* became a political forum. It closed down in 1973 because of internal disputes on different political stands.

<sup>21</sup> When the KMT fled to Taiwan in 1949, it brought the constitution of 1946 under which it had been formed. In order to sustain the KMT's legitimacy to "represent the whole of China", all the mainland elected representatives (Legislators and members of National Assembly) remained in their seats as a symbol representing the whole China. The symbolic meaning of re-electing the whole parliament was that the KMT admitted losing its legitimate status over China. It was not until 1992 that the parliament was totally replaced by Taiwanese elected



another joint statement, "Nine Demands of National Affairs" (*guoshi jiulun* 國是九論), was published raising many important issues, including human rights, bureaucratic reform, the democratic and economic future, social welfare and local politics. (LI HSIAO-FENG, 1989:234)

The political atmosphere suddenly opened up, not only because of the boom of liberal development, but also due to the inspiration of the Diaoyutai 釣魚台 Incident. The Diaoyutai islands<sup>22</sup> are a group of eight uninhabited islands located 120 miles northeast of Taiwan on the continental shelf, and which are separated from the Liu Ch'iu 琉球 Islands (Ryukyu). They were first recorded in Chinese history in 1403 A.D. For centuries, they had been administered as part of the Taiwan region, and used by Chinese fishermen before the Second World War.

In 1968, when a UN geological survey revealed this area might hold rich oil reserves, the Japanese claimed that they had the sovereignty over the islands, ejected Chinese fishermen from the area, and mutilated the Nationalist Chinese flag on the islands.

One reason why the Japanese had a claim to Diaoyutai was due to an American mistake. After the Second World War, Diaoyutai was supposed to be returned to the Chinese government along with all the islands in the Taiwan region. However, it was not returned because the Americans kept Diaoyutai for bombing practice for their Liu Ch'iu based Air Force. (LIU CH'UNG, 1996) In 1970, when the Okinawa (Liu Ch'iu) Reversion Treaty was discussed between the US and Japan, America included the

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representatives. (TIEN & CHU, 1996)

<sup>22</sup> Japanese call them Senkaku 尖閣島. The name was actually translated from the British



Diaoyutai Islands within the Okinawa region, thereby, signing them over to Japan.

This development enraged Chinese all over the world. Chinese students in America started to protest the violation of territorial integrity and sovereignty in December 1970. In January and February 1971, Chinese students in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago and Hong Kong held demonstrations. On April 9<sup>th</sup>, 25,000 Chinese demonstrated in Washington D.C. to protest against the way America had handled the Diaoyutai issue. (HUNG SAN-HSIUNG, 1993)

Nevertheless, it was not until then that people in Taiwan started to sense the event's seriousness and significance. Four months into this dispute, the issue finally inflamed Taiwanese opinion. The first protest poster was put up in the campus of the NTU on April 12<sup>th</sup>. Within two days, posters and banners filled the campus protesting the injustice. The resentment towards Japan and the USA spread quickly among university students. They gathered outside of Japanese and American Embassies and protested vigorously.

The United States did not want to get involved in the dispute and stated: "in transferring its rights of administration to Japan it does not specifically constitute a transfer of underlying sovereignty nor can it affect the underlying claims of any of the disputants." (Congressional Record, November 9, 1971, Proceedings and Debates of the 92nd Congress, First Session)

At the beginning, the Diaoyutai Incident provoked nationalist protests expressing frustration about international injustice. Eventually, it also reflected the anxiety of the

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name, Pinnacle Rocks. (HE ANDA, 1996; HUNG SAN-HSIUNG, 1993)

baby-boomer generation searching for their 'place in the world', and asking for international recognition. (TSÊNG HUI-CHIA, 1998:137) It was the first time that the post-war generation of Taiwanese had tried to take action to solve their identity crisis. It was a response to the increasing isolation of Taiwan within the international community. This incident prompted not only the very first social movement in Taiwan, but also kindled the flames of a decade-long search for identity.

Since the protests were regarded as 'patriotic', these students were tacitly encouraged by the KMT, despite of the fact that public assembly was subject to restriction. (HUNG SAN-HSIUNG, 1993) The Diaoyutai dispute has not yet been resolved. However, it demonstrated what protests could do and what impact they could have, thus, becoming an inspiration and model for young Taiwanese demanding democracy. In the end, this once encouraged student movement became problematic for the KMT. (HUNG SAN-HSIUNG, 1993)

By the end of 1971, domestic pressure for democracy became severe. In a seminar held at the NTU, hosted by philosophy professor Chên Ku-ying 陳鼓應, unprecedented frank discussions were held. Participants demanded that the KMT authorities should re-elect the whole Parliament. Encouraged by the seemingly liberal atmosphere, 336 university academics issued a joint statement and demanded re-election (see footnote 21). Because of this outburst of free speech, fuelled by the Diaoyutai Incident, the KMT suddenly realised the seriousness of student movement and the increasingly liberal atmosphere. It soon tightened its cultural control again, and considered the Philosophy Department of the NTU to be the root of the trouble. (HSÛ CHIEH-LIN, 1997)

In April 1972, the KMT launched counterattacks on liberal forces by releasing a series of articles in the *Central Daily News* (the KMT mouthpiece) entitled "Voices of ordinary citizens". They condemned Chên Ku-ying's speech as inciting the student movement and endangering national security. In 1973, the whole faculty of the Philosophy Department (NTU) was fired and a new head, Sun Chih-yen 孫智彥, put in place. The contracts of 13 staff were unlawfully discontinued because of the political stands they had taken. (HUANG JUNG-TS'UN, 1995)

Witnessing the incident, Huang Jung-ts'un 黃榮村, professor of the NTU Psychology Department, recalled, "The whole incident was a continuity of controlling speech and suppressing academic freedom from the Yin Hai-kuang incident<sup>23</sup>. It caused a chilling effect in Taiwanese academia... All the liberal enthusiasm and exciting atmosphere in the NTU was gone. What was left in social sciences was self-censorship." (1995)

Although this liberal atmosphere was short-lived, the inspiration of 'Taiwan Spring' not only demonstrated the power of free speech and public protest, but also triggered a trend of localisation.

### 2.3.3. Losing power and influence

In order to emphasise the cultural legitimacy of the KMT, the Cultural Renaissance Movement endeavoured to promote tradition and moralities. To establish its 'authenticity', it forbade any alterations of tradition. As a result, its principle of 'holding on to the past' forced Taiwanese culture to 'return to the ancients (*fugu* 復古)'.

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<sup>23</sup> He was forced to stop teaching in 1966 by the NTU because of his radical criticism of the KMT.



After Taiwan was forced out of the UN in 1971, the realisation of the impossibility of recovering China had dawned on the general public. Once the goal of 'recovering China' faded, the mission to revive Chinese culture became irrelevant. By the mid-1970s, both the anti-communist claims and cultural renaissance missions became absurd. The KMT needed to create something new to rebuild confidence to consolidate the people.

After his death in 1975, Chiang Kai-shek was succeeded as President by vice President Yen Chia-kan (1975 - 1978). Following the precedent set up by Chiang, Yen also concurrently held the post of the president of the CCRC. However, when Chiang Ching-kuo was elected as the sixth constitutional president in 1978, he declined to accept the presidency of the CCRC. Instead, he insisted that Yen should stay. According to official explanations, Chiang Ching-kuo wanted to show his respect to Yen, so "modestly declined the position". (UNITED DAILY NEWS, 1990a) Yen remained in this post for fifteen years (even after Lee Teng-hui<sup>24</sup> succeeded to the presidency) until he resigned in 1990 because of ill health. In fact, Chiang Ching-kuo's decision not to chair the CCRC signalled its decline.

Consequently, its work could go no further than the schools. The decline of this movement was not just caused by its obsolescence: losing its firm supporter, when Chiang Kai-shek died in 1975, affected its once unshakable place. More importantly, losing its enemy with the end of Cultural Revolution had cut off its lifeline. The cultural

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<sup>24</sup> Lee Teng-hui is a native-born Taiwanese. He was educated in Japan and the United States. He worked for the United States-Taiwan Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction. He later became the mayor of Taipei, provincial governor, and vice-president in 1984. He succeeded to the presidency after Chiang died in 1988.

battle between 'reviving the tradition and abandoning the old' ended. How to cope with change and create a new era was now the most urgent issue.

In 1977, then Premier Chiang Ching-kuo included 'cultural construction' in the *Twelve National Construction Projects*. For the first time, cultural affairs were listed as a major national project, as important as economic development. Chiang Ching-kuo explained in his policy statement: "A modernised nation not only provides the people with an abundant material life, but also renders them with healthy spiritual lifestyle." (GIO, 1983:809)

Nonetheless, the Cultural Renaissance Movement was never officially abolished. No matter how powerless it was, the CCRC managed to survive for another fifteen years after the Cultural Revolution ended. It still performed its routine works such as promoting Beijing opera, compiling modern versions of classical books, holding annual 'Good People Good Deed' events, and so on. But it could only operate within very limited areas, and had no significant impact on society. Over the years, the CCRC had become like a rest home accommodating the KMT's aging reactionaries. Since the KMT stopped talking about recovering mainland in the 1970s, this anti-communist institution had become increasingly embarrassing for the party.

The Council for Cultural Affairs (CCA) was established in 1981, with the support of Chiang Ching-kuo, to deal with national cultural affairs. All that was left for the CCRC to take care of were anti-communist, moral-oriented matters. In the 1980s, the annual budget of the CCRC had been cut down year by year. Its existence was under severe attack. Its development and transformation to a new cultural apparatus in the 1990s will be discussed in Chapter 4.



#### 2.3.4. Native-soil literature debate

Since the late 1960s, when diplomatic defeats started to hit Taiwan one after another, the sense of uncertainty increased and the identity crisis surfaced. Politically, indigenous politicians, such as Huang Hsin-chieh 黃信介, and K'ang Ning-hsiang 康寧祥, emerged. They became the core and founding members of the Opposition. Culturally, identity crisis urged artists to challenge the old ostrich attitude. A trend of searching for one's cultural roots appeared.

The first periodical dedicated to Taiwanese culture and folk arts, *Echo*, was published in 1971. It introduced both Chinese and Taiwanese indigenous culture in English. Although there were some articles about Chinese customs, the main focus was put on Taiwanese indigenous artists, cultural heritage and folk arts. It was praised for "starting the future cultural orientation – *wenhua xungen* 文化尋根 (searching for cultural roots) trend". (SU WEN-K'UEI, 1998)

Because everything Taiwanese had been categorised under the framework of Chinese culture, before the mid-1970s the distinction between the two cultures was not obvious. However, the native-soil literature debate 鄉土文學論戰 (*xiangtu wenxue lunzhan*) in the 1970s stimulated self-examination and accelerated the debate between these two subjectivities: Chinese/Taiwanese; official/unofficial; capitalist right/socialist left. (TSÊNG HUI-CHIA, 1998: 145-158)

In 1972 & 73, young poets Kuan Chieh-ming 關傑明 and T'ang Wen-piao (唐文標) criticised the obscure language used in modern poems, and sent a shock wave in



Taiwanese literature. Instead of seeing it as a debate merely of modern poems, Lin Wen-pao (2001) regarded it as a self-criticism and soul-searching quest for Taiwan's modern literature. After this incident, Taiwanese literature started to deal with issues of social change and the reality of Taiwanese life.

In May 1977, Yeh Shih-t'ao's 葉石濤 article "The introduction of Taiwanese indigenous literary history" in *Xiachao* 夏潮 Magazine touched off the whole debate between different views on literary creation and subject matters. (LIN WEN-PAO, et al, 2001; YANG CHAO, 1995b: 181; CHANG CHIN-CH'ANG, 1997) As Tu Weiming commented, this debate: "seriously challenged the legitimacy of imported Western categories in analysing local sensibilities... rejecting 'modern literature' with a distinctive American style as an authentic expression of Taiwanese consciousness." (TU WEIMING, 1996:1227)

This debate was a discourse struggle fought between two camps: one consisted of Western-trained writers and those with strong China-centric mentality (such as: Yu Kuang-chung 余光中, and P'êng Kê 彭歌); another consisted of native writers with strong Taiwanese consciousness (Wei T'ien-ts'ung 尉天驄, Wang T'o 王拓, Yeh Shih-t'ao 葉石濤, etc.). The former was the group of writers who were the mainstream and active in the 1950s and 60s; and the latter were mostly indigenous writers (some young Taiwanese academics, some old indigenous writers who were silenced in the post-war decades or only wrote in Japanese), who proposed to write in an honest realistic style. In general, their viewpoint was anti-westernisation, anti-KMT, and-Communism. In other words, they insisted on the establishment of Taiwanese awareness. (LIN WEN-PAO, et al, 2001)

The main concern of the debate was at first literary expression and writing style. Native writers criticised the modernist style as an act of worshiping and having blind faith in western culture. They were dissatisfied with its distant and unrealistic content, and advocated paying more attention to real people in Taiwan. On the other hand, modernists condemned native writers for making a separatist mistake, and putting too much emphasis on workers, peasants and soldiers.

The debate extended to the literature communities in the mid-1970s and finally generated a trend of 'searching for one's cultural roots' in Taiwanese society by the end of 1970s. As a result, it pushed the culture communities to contemplate their works and the relationship between literature and its locality. It soon developed beyond the literary community to the general public and into a debate between "modernism and nationalism". (LIAO PING-HUI, 1995:133)

### 2.3.5. Root-searching trend in culture<sup>25</sup>

The 1970s was a difficult era for the ROC on Taiwan. In this decade, the ROC lost half of its international allies<sup>26</sup>. Taiwan's international status became an unsolvable issue, because it was a political dispute rather than a legal one. Although the military tensions across the Taiwan Strait had lessened since the mid-1970s, the 817 Bulletin<sup>27</sup> signed between the USA and the PRC in 1982 had again caused chaos

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<sup>25</sup> This trend in the 1970s is generally called '*wenhua xungen* 文化尋根' — searching for cultural roots. (LI YIH-YUAN, 1996a: 28)

<sup>26</sup> After the ROC was replaced in the UN by the PRC in 1971, many countries shifted their recognition to Beijing. (YAHUDA, 1996) In 1972, there were 42 countries having official diplomatic relationship with the ROC (there were 147 countries in the world in 1972). When America built a relationship with the PRC in 1978, there were only 22 countries (out of 164) recognising the ROC. (YÜAN HÊ-LING, 1999: 504-505)

<sup>27</sup> In this Bulletin, the American government promised the PRC to limit the quantity and variety of arms sold to Taiwan. Hau Pei-ts'un 郝柏村, then Chief of General Staff of the

and insecurity in Taiwan.

By 1978, the native-soil debate ended with no particular conclusion or consensus. However, it had heated up many discussions not limited to literary issues. The concerns about indigenous culture and Taiwanese identity became more and more significant and relevant to the Taiwanese. A pursuit for identity and a longing for international recognition surfaced.

It was not just the defeat in diplomacy that made people in Taiwan long for recognition, it was really the uncertainty of one's identity that urged the Taiwanese to search for an answer: "if they (people in mainland) are the legitimate Chinese, who are we?" This uncertainty accelerated the need to find one's identity and the search for cultural roots.

The 'root-searching' trend inspired young artists to dedicate themselves to explore indigenous subjects and to express their feelings as young Taiwanese. (YANG MÊNG-YÜ, 1998) They looked for Taiwanese identity through artistic pursuit and individualised expression. Although the prospect of Taiwan's international status was bleak, Taiwan's economy did exceptionally well even during the oil crisis in the 1970s<sup>28</sup>, and the cultural scene was extremely active. An era of *wenhua xunjun* 文化尋根 (searching for cultural roots), using Li Yih-Yuan's phrase (1996a:25 - 29), had arrived. Many artistic groups emerged: Cloud Gate Dance Company 雲門舞集(est.

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Ministry of National Defence, admitted its immense influence on Taiwan's national security. Taiwan's armed forces had only old style weaponry because of the Bulletin. Therefore, Taiwan had tried to seek other sources outside of the USA. (HUANG TSU-CH'IAN, 2000)

<sup>28</sup> The Per capita GNP of the ROC rose drastically in the 1970s. According to Bureau of Statistics (Directorate-general of Budget, the Executive Yuan), the Per capita GNP was only US \$ 360 in 1970. However, the annual economic growth rate in the 1970s was averagely 10.23%. The Per capita GNP rose almost 6 times within ten years to US \$ 2,155 in 1980.



1973), Yayin Ensemble 雅音小集(est. 1979), New Aspect Arts Company 新象<sup>29</sup> (est. 1979), Lanling Theatre Workshop (est. 1980), and Contemporary Legend Theatre 當代傳奇劇場 (est. 1984). Many of them are still influential today. Their emergence was not only the result of a much looser cultural control and the booming economy, but also, demonstrated a general desire to express the uncertainty that troubled the Taiwanese.

After the ROC was forced out of the UN, composer Shi Wei-liang 史唯亮, then the head of the Taiwan Symphony Orchestra, called for artists to build a new culture for the next generation, which could boost Taiwanese confidence. He asserted: 'Chinese compose, choreograph, and dance for Chinese audiences'.

This description of artists in Taiwan as 'Chinese' was a deliberate tactic. It was a time when international society turned its back on Taiwan. After ten years of the Cultural Renaissance Movement reiterating that Taiwan was the centre of traditional Chinese culture, it was a shock for people in Taiwan to be denied their Chinese status in the international arena. Therefore, the emphasis on Taiwanese artists' 'Chinese-ness' was an act of self-assurance. The need for self-justification and reassurance pushed the search for 'cultural roots' further, looking for comfort in a nostalgic motherland culture.

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(DGBAS, 1997: 14-18)

<sup>29</sup> New Aspect was the first commercially run arts promoter and agency. It was established by composer Hsü P'o-yün 許博允. New Aspect was the first to organise foreign artists touring Taiwan. Later it also acted as the agent to promote Taiwanese artists abroad. At a time when the cultural environment was tightly controlled and dominated by the authorities, New Aspect not only introduced world-class performances, but also broke the governmental monopoly in cultural expression. Therefore, when it was first established, many university students wished to work in New Aspect. (LI HUI-NA, 2000)

His call had touched many artists, and its influence joined forces with the root-searching trend in literature. Cultural development in the second half of the 1970s was a process of the self-searching, torn between China and Taiwan, between tradition and the modern. The most influential figure in performing arts was the novelist and choreographer Lin Hwai-Min 林懷民. Lin joined in the Diaoyutai protests when he studied in the United States and "decided to go home to do something for the country". (YANG MÊNG-YÜ, 1998: 41-43) He was heartened by Shi's appeal and responded by forming the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre. Its debut in Taichung was described by critic Chan Hung-chih 詹宏志 as "a cultural revolution for Taiwanese society". (YANG MÊNG-YÜ, 1998: 59)

Cloud Gate received considerable acclaim in an environment where artistic activities were rare<sup>30</sup>. It was praised and supported by many writers and academics, including P'êng Kê, Yü Ta-kang 俞大綱, and Hsü Ch'ang-hui 許常惠. Its work during that period – for example *Qiyuan bao* 奇冤報, *Nezha* 哪吒, *Baishhe zhuan* 白蛇傳, and *Xinchuan* 薪傳 – drew inspiration from Chinese legends, and absorbed the body language of traditional *xiqu*<sup>31</sup> forms and Taiwanese folk arts.

In this 'root-searching' trend, artistic creations were usually melancholy, and full of sentimental yearning for Chinese cultural roots. Although they did not necessarily use

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<sup>30</sup> Because of the discouraging attitude towards the arts, artistic activities were not common. Most artistic performances for ordinary people in Taiwan before the 1970s were folk performances and religious activities. Artistic exhibitions and performances (of modern art forms) were few. The level of participation was low in the official festivals that started in the late 1970, even though official effort was put in to promote them. (CHIU HEI-YUAN, 1985)

<sup>31</sup> Traditional Chinese theatre is called *xiqu* 戲曲. *Xi* means play, and *qu* means music or a verse for singing. Chinese theatre consisted of literature (dialogue), music, singing, acting, dancing, and acrobatics. Around the turn of the 10<sup>th</sup> Century, the early form of *xiqu* had appeared. Records in 1962 showed, there were over 460 different kinds of local *xiqu* in China, and the most prominent one was Beijing opera. (TSÊNG YUNG-I, 1988:115) Thus, it was sometimes commonly called 'Chinese opera' in English. (Also see Chapter 5)



Chinese traditional art forms directly, they perceived the essence of 'Chinese-ness' as the origin of their works. Lin not only used many elements from traditional *xiqu* and folk music, but also introduced and promoted Beijing Opera.

This generation of young Taiwanese artists was different from the older generation in the 1950s and 60s. They were mostly baby-boomers who grew up and were educated under the KMT ideologies, as were their audiences. In contrast to the 'Chinese tradition' appeal that previously promoted by the Cultural Renaissance Movement, their search for Chinese-ness was mainly focused on its inspiration, which artists could draw upon and modernise.

Moreover, attention was also drawn to Taiwan, even though it was placed within the context of Taiwan as part of China. (CH'ËN CH'I-LU, 1989; YANG MËNG-YÛ, 1998; WU HSING-KUO, 1999) In the 'root-searching' trend, Taiwan's folklore began to revive. Indigenous *xiqu*, folk music, variety shows, religious events and traditional rituals gradually became acceptable again.

Although this 'root-searching' trend was initiated by artists themselves, it was encouraged by the authorities directly and indirectly. For example, because of the patriotism and longing for motherland in Lin Hwai-Min's works, Cloud Gate has always enjoyed privileges that other groups do not have. In the 1970s and early 80s, they could easily get permission to book performing halls (which were all under government control) when there were only 3 proper venues, in the days before the cultural centres were built (CCA, 1999: 100). Pêng Kê, one of the KMT literary standard-bearers, recommended Cloud Gate in the party-run newspaper, Diplomat Yeh Kung-chao 葉公超 volunteered to be its fund-raiser; The army-run Chinese



Television System (CTS) even produced its video programmes... (YANG MÊNG-YŪ, 1998) Although the sentimental approach of Cloud Gate's early works was a genuine expression of the longing for motherland culture, for the authorities, this could easily be transformed into a patriotic, nationalist appeal that could comfort in a time of uncertainty.

Take Cloud Gate's 1978 piece *Xinchuan*<sup>32</sup> as an example. This dance was about early Taiwanese settlers and their struggles. Cloud Gate chose to give its debut performance on the day when the US formally established diplomatic relations with the PRC. According to Yang Mêng-yü (1998: 135), the official biographer of Cloud Gate, *Xinchuan* could be seen as a remedy for the Taiwanese to relieve the pain of the shock of being 'abandoned' by the US. Its founder Lin Hwai-Min said, "no matter what kinds of difficulty our ancestors were facing, they had always had their fate tightly in their grip, and built their confidence with sweat and blood... I wish that our dancers, audiences and the society would be empowered (by their stories). We can regenerate our own strength by learning from them." (YANG MÊNG-YŪ 1998:130-131)

In the 1970s, the suppression of pop music and the support for *minge* 民歌<sup>33</sup> was another example of how the KMT selected and promoted 'useful artistic expressions' for its own ends. In order to differentiate their musical expression from the notorious

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<sup>32</sup> Literally, *xinchuan* means 'the torch of learning passes on from one generation to the next'. It refers to the continuity of history and a sense of cultural responsibility to future generations.

<sup>33</sup> *Minge*, known as 'campus songs (*xiaoyuan gequ* 校園歌曲)', was developed and created by university students. It emerged around the mid-1970s along with the rise of the search of cultural roots. Partly, it arose because the younger generation was dissatisfied by the domination of western pop music. Partly, it was because since the late 1960s Taiwanese pop music was regarded as corrupted and decadent. Many young people were eager to find a new style of song to express themselves. (TSÊNG HUI-CHIA, 1998: 138)

pop songs, university students used modern poetry to write lyrics, while searching for inspiration from folk songs. The most common theme in *minge* was the search for "who I am ". (TSÊNG HUI-CHIA, 1998:142-145) It included not only the quest for individual identity, but also the passion for nationalist sentiment.

Although the *minge* trend was initiated by university students, it was supported and promoted by the authorities. Not only did it have official support for concerts to be held in Zhongshan Hall (中山堂), but by the end of 1970s, it was even promoted and rewarded by the KMT. According to Tsêng Hui-chia (1998:), *minge* was taken as a cultural movement pursuing a modern version of national music, and a direct action challenging, and fighting against, foreign culture.

In anthropologist Li Yih-yuan's view (1996a), the root-searching trend in culture was a response by the anxious Taiwanese, who were trapped between the choice of modernity and tradition, confused by the gap between western and indigenous culture, and lost in the midst of identity crisis. The most comforting way was to return to the basic and the most familiar cultural roots. Alongside the development of this trend, Li believed that the gradually opening political atmosphere (Taiwan Spring) and the attempt to revive folk arts by academics all contributed to later cultural liberation at the mid-1980s.

## **Summary**

Without doubt, the most important cultural policy from the 1960s to 1970s was the Cultural Renaissance Movement. It was a cultural re-construction project mobilised by the cultural apparatus, in the attempt to promote selected traditional culture to

combat the Cultural Revolution.

The contrast between Cultural Renaissance and Cultural Revolution was a manifestation of the different viewpoints on Chinese modernisation held by the KMT and the CCP. This search for 'modernising' China and Chinese culture had haunted the Chinese over a century. The cultural struggle between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait embodied the struggle between two distinct assertions of how to modernise China. However, this concern was replaced in Taiwan by the 'search for cultural roots' in the mid-1970s.

Within the domestic sphere, alternative thinking emerged and challenged a seemingly unified society. Internationally, the increasing isolation pushed people in Taiwan to face reality and contemplate Taiwan's future and identity. Because of the inspiration of 'Taiwan Spring', the Diaoyutai Incident and the heated discussion of the native-soil debate, after two decades' of tight thought control, alternative opinions were finally heard, and things started to change.

This dissatisfaction and self-examination triggered an awakening trend in the search for cultural roots and the acknowledgment of one's native culture. Most of all, after losing their identity as 'Chinese', people in Taiwan embarked on a journey of searching for Taiwanese identity.

As to the Cultural Renaissance Movement, this subsided and withered. The illusion of 'we were going back to mainland soon' collapsed. Apart from the reasons of international isolation, emergence of dissidents and demands for democracy, Gramscian theory provides another angle to consider Taiwanese disillusion with the



myth that the KMT had constructed. Since hegemony has a national-popular dimension, it requires the unification of a variety of different social forces into a broad alliance expressing a national-popular collective will. The KMT could not maintain its cultural hegemony by 'imposing' motherland culture, or 'promoting' a Cultural Renaissance, since it had never built a broad bloc of various social forces, nor provided a broad-base ideology. The version of Chiang Kai-shek's Sanminzhuyi could not draw the conviction and loyalty of the majority of intellectuals, let alone school students and the rest of the population.

In this movement, the new ideological system that the KMT tried to construct was a tailor-made, top-down one. The whole cultural construction was instructed by Chiang Kai-shek, designed by conformist intellectuals, and served only the interests of the KMT. No compromise was made to include various social groups, but only exclusion by force. This *war of position*, as Gramsci put it, could not be won without national-popular support. Therefore, the effect of the Cultural Renaissance Movement did not last, because the KMT dominated Taiwanese with coercion, but failed to lead the people with public consensus.

Because of the collapse of the old values and orders, the 1970s was an era gearing up for change. Because of the severe impact of international isolation and the increasing confidence encouraged by Taiwan's economic growth, all the hidden social forces and once suppressed alternative thinking started to surface and made the impact. It was the best timing for constructing a new discourse and producing regenerated meanings for the decades to come. In the next two chapters, I will look at the KMT's cultural construction effort and the shift of focus in the 1980s and 90s.

## **Chapter 3 Root-searching Trend to Self-discovery**

In this chapter, I examine how the ROC re-established a valid 'national image' in an increasingly isolated international society. My interest lies in why, by what, and how a new 'national image' was constructed (different from the 'traditional Chinese' image that the KMT once claimed), in order to gain domestic support and international recognition.

### **3.1. New atmosphere**

#### **3.1.1. New cultural policy and apparatus**

After the turbulent 1970s, it was impossible for the KMT to remain claiming itself as the 'legitimate Chinese government' any more. Then Premier Chiang Ching-kuo realised that the times had changed, and hence the necessity to update cultural policy. In his annual administration report of September 1977, Chiang announced that 'culture construction' would be one of the *Twelve National Construction Projects*, and the first step was to build a culture centre in every county and city. (CHIU HEI-YUAN, 1985:5)

Chiang Ching-kuo explained his ideas to the Legislative Yuan in February 1978:

We should draw attention to cultural development and take it as one of the most important national constructions... Within five years ... all the culture centres should be finished. In order to provide people with opportunities to enjoy spiritual life, we will have to have a long-term and comprehensive culture construction plan. (GIO, 1983: 809; CHIU HEI-YUAN, 1985:5)

The whole concept of 'culture construction' was primitive and straightforward in the beginning. The project took the idea of 'culture construction' literally; hence, it

seemed to be only associated with 'buildings'. The policy to 'build culture centres' was the core of the construction plan, which also included a local library, an exhibition space and a performing hall for each city and county. (WANG CHÊN-HU, 1991:17)

Problems soon emerged. In research commissioned by the Executive Yuan, sociologist Chiu Hei-yuan (1985: 10 -12) pointed out, that many complicated problems emerged from the very beginning that the central government did not expect, mostly to do with the lack of funding and understanding at local level.

Before long, the inadequacy of this project showed. Chaos was caused by only building culture centres, and not providing the long-term planning needed to create a cultural framework and set of goals. To mend the problem, the Executive Yuan drew up the *Improvement Programme for Culture, Education and Entertainment* (*Jiaqiang wenhua yu yule fang'an* 加強文化與育樂方案), promulgated in February 1979, with firm political support from Chiang Ching-kuo and his successor, Premier Sun Yün-hsüan 孫運璿.

The programme targeted the improvement of the cultural environment, through measures such as revising legislation on copyright and antiquities preservation, preserving traditional arts and crafts, and encouraging non-government cultural organisations. (WANG CHÊN-HU, 1991:11) The most important task above all was to 'establish a special institution to deal with and plan for cultural development and policies'. As a result, the Council for Culture Affairs (CCA) was founded on November 11<sup>th</sup> 1981, and has been in charge of cultural affairs since then.



The official name of the CCA was *wenhua jianshe weiyuanhui* (文化建設委員會, literally meaning 'committee for culture construction'); its official English title was the Council for Cultural Planning and Development (CCPD). Both terms had strong indications of control, planning, and selection - taking cultural affairs as a subject that could be developed in the same way as the economy. However, its official English name was changed to the Council for Culture Affairs (CCA) in 1996<sup>1</sup>.

The decision to set up the CCA was not simply a top-down policy, but a governmental response to meet a newly emerging need for indigenous culture, and to deal with the 'root-searching' trend that had begun in the late 1970s. The CCA was established in order to 'modernise and develop modern Chinese culture in Taiwan'. Furthermore, Chiang Ching-kuo also used the establishment of the CCA to replace the Chinese Culture Restoration Committee (CCRC). It was an attempt not only to modernise culture, but also to localise the KMT regime and transform its old reactionary image.

Although the policy to 'revive tradition' seemed obsolete in the early 1980s, the supporters of the Cultural Renaissance Movement were still influential within the KMT. To them, the orthodox associations that the CCRC symbolised guaranteed the KMT regime's legitimacy. In order to reassure and pacify the reactionaries within the KMT after the CCA was established, the Executive Yuan made the CCA chairperson the secretary-general of the CCRC. This arrangement indicated the connection between the two, and also demonstrated a hierarchy between them (arranging the CCA

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<sup>1</sup> When Cheng Shu-Min 鄭淑敏 took up the chairwoman's post at the end of 1995, she felt that the name "gave the wrong implication and would damage Taiwan's international image". (LU CHIEN-YING, 1995a) To reduce the obvious suggestion of state-control, the English name was changed in 1996. (LU CHIEN-YING, 1995a) However, the Chinese name (*wenhua jianshe weiyuanhui*) remains the same. To avoid confusion, I will uniformly refer to it as the CCA (even concerning affairs before 1996).

chairperson as the second-in-command of the CCRC) in order to clear the doubts of the party reactionaries. This arrangement showed them that Chiang Ching-kuo had not abandoned the mission of 'restoring traditional culture' or 'recovering mainland'; hence, he did not fail to claim the political legitimacy of the ROC.

### 3.1.2. The framework

According to the *Organisational Rules of the CCA*<sup>2</sup>, the organisation has three central goals: (1) planning for overall cultural development; (2) carrying Chinese culture forward; and (3) enhancing people's spiritual life. In order to achieve smooth coordination, there are 15 to 19 members on its Board, which comprises Ministers and senior officers from related governmental organisations. Apart from the majority of official representatives, there are also a couple of representatives from culture communities.

Within the CCA, there are three departments, four supporting administrative units and three duty-organising units. (CCA, 2000b) Its main body is the three departments. The 1<sup>st</sup> department is in charge of cultural policy planning, heritage preservation, cultural legislation, training for talent and administrators. The 2<sup>nd</sup> department takes charge of literary development, museum, library, and cultural building projects. The 3<sup>rd</sup> department is responsible for visual arts and performing arts.

According to the nine missions listed in its Organisational Rule (Article 2), their responsibilities were less politically focused and more culturally oriented (compared

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<sup>2</sup> The *Organisation Rules of the CCA* (*xingzhengyuan wenhua jianshe weiyuanhui zuzhi tiaoli* 行政院文化建設委員會組織條例) were issued in 1981(CCA, 1981), and revised in 1994.



with the old CCRC). Furthermore, its focus shifted to Taiwan.

Traditionally, KMT cultural policy and its cultural apparatus had always been operated within the educational domain. The closest organisation (to the CCA) was the short-lived Cultural Bureau, under the Ministry of Education (MOE). When the CCA was set up, many issues surfaced and became political considerations, such as where to house it, what status within the government structure it was given so as to avoid the same difficulties that the Cultural Bureau encountered, and what administrative power it could exercise.

The CCA was expected to be the 'coordinator' between ministries, and the 'consultant' for making cultural policy, but not the 'executor'. It had to rely on other ministries or councils to put policy into practice. It was this nature that limited its development and influence. Moreover, because it had no power to implement policy, nor the rank within the political hierarchy to supervise or coordinate, this unclear 'distribution of labour' intensified the power struggle between ministries and councils.

There are several reasons for designating the CCA as a 'council'. Firstly, it was done to avoid disturbing the existing government framework, and overlapping with the duties of existing ministries. It seemed to be a good way for the Executive Yuan at that time to save an expensive reshuffle. (WU TS'UI-LIAN, 1987) Secondly, choosing 'council' as its organisational structure gave it the flexibility to play the role of a 'Chief-of-Staff' within the Executive Yuan, i.e. this model empowered the CCA to act like a Chief-of-Staff beside a General.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> According to Miao Ch'üan-chi 繆全吉, a professor in the Department of Politics at the NTU, this 'council' status would enable the CCA to mobilise and command other Ministries. (WU



As a matter of fact, in the late 1960s, the Cultural Bureau had a similar role coordinating between governmental organisations. Because of its low status within the government hierarchy (under the jurisdiction of the MOE), the Cultural Bureau was torn between Ministries. In the end, it was abolished in 1973 because it could not command, or control the other Ministries, let alone advise on matters related to culture. The CCA suffered similar problems of powerlessness, not only because of the low status of cultural apparatus within the political arena, but also because it had no actual administrative power.

There were at least five main ministries and councils in central government and two departments in Provincial government in charge of important cultural affairs. They included the MOE, in charge of antiques, folk art, art education, national theatre and music hall, museums, galleries and libraries; the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), in charge of preservation of cultural heritage, folklore and customs, publications and copy right; the Council of Agriculture, in charge of nature reserves; the GIO, in charge of the management of radio, Television, cable TV and the film industry; the MND, in charge of most Beijing opera troupes; the Civil Affairs Department in the Provincial Government, and Civil Affair Bureaus (*minzheng ju* 民政局) in local government, in charge of actual preservation and management of national heritage. (WU TS'UI-LIAN, 1987; CCA, 1998a; LI YIH-YUAN, 1996)

According to K'o Chi-liang (1999), a CCA veteran, the early confrontation with other ministries came mainly from the Department of Social Education of the MOE. It was the main administrative body dealing with cultural affairs before the CCA was

established. Traditionally, the KMT took cultural affairs as part of education, and called it 'social education'. Not only was the Department of Social Education in charge of cultural affairs before the CCA was set up, supervising the short-lived Cultural Bureau, but it also drew up the *Improvement Programme for Culture, Education and Entertainment* as the legal base of the CCA. Therefore, after the CCA was established, their duties overlapped greatly, and the Department of Social Education (MOE) took the CCA as its advisory organisation, holding a seemingly superior attitude towards it. (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999) Worst of all, it would not let go of certain administrative business, which now should belong to the CCA.

As to the other authorities, because of its role as a consultant and advisor, many felt uneasy about its involvement in *their* business. (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999) The lack of real power paralysed the CCA's work and morale, also making its existence a nuisance for other authorities. To them, suggestions from the CCA were like 'criticism'. The hostility between the Ministries and the CCA grew.

Instead of coordinating and supervising, the work of CCA could go nowhere because no other organisations would let it interfere. The suggestions that the CCA made were regarded as irritating, idealistic, and unrealistic. (WU TS'UI-LIAN, 1987; K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999) For example, the CCA had the responsibility to advise and give support, both financially and professionally, to all culture centres. Nonetheless, it was unable to act directly to reorganise a culture centre's internal structure or even provide support<sup>4</sup>, because culture centres belonged to the education department at

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<sup>4</sup> Culture centres were built before any substantial cultural policy or plan was drawn up. Hence, there was no framework, understanding, nor clear goals for them. The heads and staff of culture centres were mostly civil servants transferred from local government. Professional advice and vocational training were urgently needed.

local government level.

In the end, what the CCA could do was to either make suggestions, or explore new areas that came within nobody's jurisdiction. K'o Chi-liang (1999), a veteran of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Department (CCA) from 1982 to 1994, could remember vividly that Ch'ên Ch'i-lu 陳奇祿, the first chairman of the CCA, had reiterated in the internal meetings: "We should endeavour to do things that no one wants to do, on the other hand, we should not get involved in areas where other ministries already take charge." After a few years of this kind of dispute and power struggle, the CCA gradually developed a working pattern and an area of unwanted territories that it could lay its hands on. Even so, every now and then, similar confrontations happened, and disheartened Ch'ên Ch'i-lu.

### **3.2. Ch'ên Ch'i-lu period**

#### **3.2.1. The foundations laid**

The first Chairman of the CCA was the prominent anthropologist, Dr. Ch'ên Ch'i-lu, who chaired the CCA for six and half years and laid its foundations. It was the first time that a governmental organisation was set up to deal with culture construction positively, not merely for the purpose of cultural battle, and chaired by a prestigious scholar from a cultural background. The most important policy throughout his term of office was 'tradition & creation'.

As a young man, Ch'ên Ch'i-lu went to China for his first degree. He graduated from St. John's University in Shanghai (BA in Politics), and then he went to Japan to



further his studies in Cultural Anthropology and received his Ph.D. degree from Tokyo University. With an encompassing understanding of politics and culture, fluent language ability in Chinese (both Mandarin and Minnan yu<sup>5</sup>) and Japanese, his appointment was considered most appropriate, and welcomed by the culture communities. (HSÜ P'O-YÜN, 1985) It was not only because Ch'ên Ch'i-lu had a prominent academic reputation that he had been chosen, but also because he was a Taiwanese scholar with close Chinese links.

It was at this time a political convention to arrange for a Taiwanese to either serve as the second-in-command of an important organisation, or as the head of a lesser organisation<sup>6</sup>. Appointing Taiwanese Ch'ên Ch'i-lu as the chairman clearly indicated the secondary status of cultural affairs within the KMT political hierarchy.

The CCA under Ch'ên's lead played a transitional role, abandoning moral emphasis and cliché, and updating cultural policy in order to suit the needs of a fast-changing society. In contrast to the CCRC, the CCA promoted both high arts and folk arts, encouraged modern arts and artists, and preserved both Chinese and Taiwanese cultural heritage. After three decades of stringent cultural control, its establishment

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<sup>5</sup> Minnan yu 閩南語 is the most common dialect used by the Taiwanese majority.

<sup>6</sup> This political convention was an extension of Chiang Ching-kuo's *cuitalqing* 催台青 policy (see chapter 2.3.2), of having a mainlander in charge and a Taiwanese as the assistant. In 1978, when Chiang was elected president, he chose Taiwanese politician Hsieh Tung-min 謝東閔, as his vice-president. Following that precedent, the premier Sun Yun-hsüan chose Taiwanese Ch'iu Ch'uang-huan 邱創煥 as vice-premier in 1981. In 1984, native-born Lee Teng-hui was chosen as the vice-president of Chiang Ching-kuo. This 'half-half' pattern was criticised as 'political incorporation', and was reversed in 1990. Lee Teng-hui chose the mainlander Lee Yuan-cu (李元簇) as vice president when he assumed the presidency in 1990. However, after Lee was elected (by the people) as president in 1996, he chose another Taiwanese Lien Chan 連戰 as his vice-president. By then, the criterion for choosing candidates for less important positions was changed to 'female'. For example, the CCA has had 4 female chairs (Shên Hsüeh-yung 申學庸, Chêng Shu-min 鄭淑敏, Lin Ch'êng-chih 林澄枝, Ch'ên Yu-hsiu 陳郁秀) in the last nine years.

symbolised the beginning of cultural liberation and a conscious move to respond to people's needs. The culture communities had high expectations of the CCA, especially because they considered Ch'ên Ch'i-lu, as Hsü P'o-yün (1985) put it, "one of us".

### 3.2.2. Tradition and creation

In general, the basic framework and working focus of the CCA were built in the Ch'ên Ch'i-lu period. Therefore, his strength and character determined the direction of the CCA. Apart from his professional expertise in aboriginal culture, his interests in cultural heritages and folk arts, he also valued high arts, especially modern arts<sup>7</sup> that had been ignored for a long time because of the Cultural Renaissance Movement. Therefore, two important themes – 'tradition' and 'creation' – became the CCA's main concerns shaping or informing the major policies of the first decade. It strove both to preserve cultural heritage and encourage modern creation.

The focus on creativity was mainly realised through holding the 'National Festival of Culture and Arts'. It was the most prominent and noticeable work of the CCA. The festival consisted of performances, lectures, and exhibitions. Artists were commissioned to create new works to exhibit and perform. Not only were established artists invited, but young and local artists were also encouraged to take part. It was the first official occasion that artists were provided with money and opportunities to produce new works, without worrying about the official line or box office incomes. Consequently, the festival provided the most exciting programmes, not only

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<sup>7</sup> In Taiwan, the term 'modern arts' usually refers to western contemporary arts, such as modern dance, western theatre, classical music, fine art, etc.



encompassing all art forms, but also embracing innovation both in concept and format.

Before the CCA was established, Taiwan's artistic environment was quiet and rigid. There were very few arts performances<sup>8</sup>, or art festivals. The difficulties of holding artistic activities in Taiwan were a result of the tightly controlled and repressive environment, as well as a lack of resources (very few suitable theatres, limited market and a low level of funding). After the *Improvement Programme for Culture, Education and Entertainment* was promulgated (1979), and the opening of culture centres in the early 1980s, holding artistic events suddenly became an official 'policy'.

Consequently, the once silent cultural environment turned prosperous and bustling. After the first ever Taipei Music Festival was held and received acclaim in 1979, there were five official festivals and one private festival held in Taiwan within one year.<sup>9</sup> Taiwan's arts environment appeared to be booming.

These festivals were held mostly with the purpose of celebrating official cultural achievement and promoting well-established artists. In comparison, the National

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<sup>8</sup> Here, I refer mainly to performances of modern art forms (as previous footnote, western music, modern dance, ballet, and theatre). In other words, they are artistic performances that sell tickets and perform in theatre venues. As to the *xiqu* and folk performances, they were considered mostly as 'entertainment', and were completely driven out of theatre venues around the mid-1970s. (Details see Chapter 5) Since then, they were mainly performed in religious and festive occasions, in front of temples or in the village squares. They were part of religious ceremonies rather than artistic events. It was not until the mid-1980s that their social status was enhanced and taken as part of the Taiwanese arts scene. However, it was a common view at that time that only modern art forms should be promoted. (HSÜ P'O-YÜN, 1985)

<sup>9</sup> Art festivals suddenly became popular. Five festivals were held in 1980, including the Provincial Festival of Culture and Arts (February 1980), the Kaohsiung Festival of Culture and Arts (March 1980), the Festival of Culture and Arts held by the Ministry of Education (April - June 1980), the Taipei Music and Dance Festival (August 1980), the Taipei Drama Festival (October 1980), and the New Aspect International Festival. They were mostly organised by the government (apart from the New Aspect).



Festival of Culture and Arts aimed at encouraging creativity and fostering new blood. (CCA, 1991a) Hence, new dance works, works of fine art, plays, and contemporary music pieces were funded and produced. It indicated the change of culture within the cultural apparatus from a repressive and controlling approach to an encouraging and fostering one.

In the first few years, the festival had encouraged many artists to produce new works. As a result, the number of artists and artistic groups mushroomed after the CCA was established. (HSUEH MAO-SUNG, 1999; K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999) Most of all, the more open environment gave artists more freedom. The money, the venues, and the performing opportunities that the CCA provided allowed Taiwanese arts to grow and bloom in the late 1980s.

As well as encouraging creativity, the CCA also placed on equal emphasis on preserving 'tradition'. However, since the CCRC was the official organisation in charge of preserving traditional Chinese culture, the CCA needed to avoid overstepping its authority. As a result, the CCA's definition of 'tradition' shifted towards Taiwanese culture. This was partly because Taiwanese culture was a territory untouched and discouraged by the authorities before the 1980s. Partly, it was because Ch'ên Ch'i-lu, as a cultural anthropologist, understood the importance of common culture and encouraged 'indigenous culture'. The effort that the CCA placed on preserving Taiwanese tradition was the first serious attention paid by the cultural apparatus to indigenous culture officially and systematically.

Nonetheless, for sensitive political reasons, this shift was not easy, nor obvious at first. Because the emphasis on Taiwan was still quite controversial and sensitive, the

CCA had to be subtle in order to avoid criticism of being pro-independence.

### 3.2.3. Preserving Taiwanese heritage

The CCA's emphasis was placed on the 'here and now', especially on Taiwanese indigenous culture and heritage. It put much effort on establishing the legal basis on which to protect cultural heritage. *Regulations of Cultural Heritage Preservation* 文化資產保存法(*Wenhua zichan baocunfa*) was drawn up by the CCA within the first six months of its establishment, and then promulgated in 1982.

According to Article 3, the definition of 'cultural heritage' includes anything with historical, cultural and artistic values. The divisions include antiquities, historical buildings and sites, folk arts, folklore and folk relics, and natural reserves. The emphasis on cultural heritage could be seen as the realisation of Ch'ên Ch'i-lu's personal beliefs.

'Protecting and maintaining our cultural heritage is the most important task at the current stage of cultural planning and development... Having been charged with the work of cultural planning and development in recent years, I have come to the belief that such work must begin with the preservation of cultural heritage, which will in turn, have to rely on broader cultural education and communication of ideas about culture.' (CH'ÉN CH'I-LU, 1989)

It showed that the preservation of cultural heritage was the most essential task for him. In January 1983, the CCA was entrusted with listing and evaluating historical sites. It organised an ad hoc team of scholars and experts to investigate all the possible sites. A list of 460 sites was produced and given to the MOI. A twenty-seven-phase sequence of investigations was carried out over more than three years. Finally, 225 sites were listed and the ranks of these sites were assigned according to their historical and artistic values. (CCA, 1987, 1985)

The administration of these sites will be determined by their grade (from Grade I to III Listed). The Grade I Listed sites (18 in number) are managed by the Central government (the MIO). The responsibility for Grade II Listed (36 sites) is assigned to Provincial government<sup>10</sup>, and the care of the Grade III Listed (171 sites) is given to local (County/City) government.

Apart from investigating and listing historical sites, research and publications were also important. The CCA commissioned many scholars to research historical buildings and archaeological sites, survey them and make records of nearly-extinct folk arts and artists, and most importantly, draw up plans for, and put money into, many projects to encourage the passing on and learning of traditional skills.

#### **3.2.4. Belittlement reversed**

Even though Ch'ên Ch'i-lu emphasised the importance of indigenous culture, the mentality of belittling indigenous culture was still common in the 1980s. For example, the National Festival of Culture and Arts was the focus of the CCA's work in the 1980s, (CCA, 1998b: 246) and the organisation of the festival could be seen as the embodiment of policy emphases. The proportion and treatment of different art forms (such as Taiwan's indigenous, traditional Chinese, or Western art forms) in the festival indicated their weight for the cultural apparatus.

In the first National Festival of Culture and Arts, modern dance, new works of

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<sup>10</sup> Before the Taiwan Province was downsized and abolished in 1998, all the Grade II Listed sites were managed by the Civil Affairs Department (Taiwan Provincial Government). After



contemporary music and drama were arranged for performance in the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, the best and largest performing hall in the early 1980s in Taipei, with around 2000 seats. Beijing Opera<sup>11</sup> was performed in the Military Culture Centre, which had around 800 seats and was routinely used for Beijing opera performances. Mainland *xiqu*<sup>12</sup> was performed in the Taiwan Art House, small and poorly equipped and with around 500 seats. Finally, Taiwanese *xiqu* and other folk arts were performed at the open-air stage in the Folk Theatre Festival<sup>13</sup>.

The performing spaces assigned to different art forms showed a particular hierarchy: western and modern art forms were regarded highly, therefore, received higher funding and were staged at the best venue as the showcase for cultural achievement. Comparatively, Chinese traditional art forms were considered not so advanced, and did not need the best performing spaces to accommodate their needs. Among them, Beijing opera had special treatment in terms of being given its own specific venue, and being officially provided for since 1949. As for local *xiqu*, mainland *xiqu* was obviously maintained by official will for political needs<sup>14</sup>. The lack of professional performers made the standard low and it was necessary to rely on amateurs (who were usually members of provincial associations) or borrowed Beijing Opera performers. In contrast to the unprofessional mainland *xiqu* performers, the professional Taiwanese folk artists were at the bottom of the pile. They were still

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21<sup>st</sup> December 1998, this responsibility has been handed to the MOI.

<sup>11</sup> Beijing opera was promoted as the embodiment of Chinese performing arts (See Chapter 5). The KMT made use of its associations of cultural orthodoxy.

<sup>12</sup> *Xiqu* is traditional form of Chinese theatre (see Chapter 2 footnote 31). Every province or region had developed their own style of *xiqu*, using local dialects and folk music, therefore, local *xiqu* was considered an embodiment of local culture.

<sup>13</sup> Among all programmes in the National Festival of Culture and Arts, the 'Folk Theatre' (*minjian juchang* 民間劇場) was the most popular event. It was held in the Youth Park, and tried to bring traditional folk arts back to daily life through a fun-fair style event.

<sup>14</sup> The promotion of mainland *xiqu* was an effort to create the image that the KMT regime represented the whole of China culturally.

considered inferior to mainland *xiqu* amateurs; hence, they were unsuitable to enter the modern theatre.

The arrangement of locations for different art forms manifested an intriguing phenomenon of that time: western culture was considered superior to Chinese, and Chinese culture was regarded weightier than Taiwanese. It was a common mentality -- overtly westernised and having blind faith in things foreign (TSÊNG HUI-CHIA, 1998) – a result of wholesale westernisation influence.

In the following year 1983, things started to change in the National Festival of Culture and Arts, although slowly. One Gezaixi (Taiwanese *xiqu*) group was invited to perform at the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall, because of the recommendation of scholars Ch'iu K'un-liang and Wu Jing Jyi. By 1984, the popularity of folk arts and their influence had been widely acknowledged, and the proportion of folk art performances started to rise.

Among all programmes in the National Festival of Culture and Arts, the fun-fair-like 'Folk Theatre' was the star. It was designed to recreate the atmosphere of the old Temple Fair, but modernised by careful planning and selection in the hope of bringing traditional folk arts back to daily life. It was situated in the Taipei Youth Park. An open-air stage was constructed in the centre, surrounded by hundreds of folk arts stalls. On the stage, all sorts of Taiwanese *xiqu*, *shuochang* 說唱<sup>15</sup>, and folk songs were performed. Most stalls sold folk artefacts and local snacks, and some demonstrated traditional handicrafts.

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<sup>15</sup> *Shuochang* is a traditional genre of popular entertainment. It usually consists of talking, singing, and playing instruments to describe a story or sing a repertoire.



For the CCA and its producer, scholar Ch'iu K'un-liang, Folk Theatre was only an experiment to test the possibility of reviving the environment of folk arts, and bringing folk arts back to daily usage. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1983) Yet, to ordinary people, this occasion was fun and nostalgic, like a revival of childhood memories and an easy approach to folk activities and artefacts. It brought attention and interest to Taiwan's indigenous culture. Its success was echoing the growing *xiangtu* (鄉土, indigenous, native soil) trend.

Before the mid-1970s, folk arts and *xiqu* encountered great difficulties in surviving a gradually industrialised society. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1980) It was the native-soil literature debate and root-searching trend that triggered changes in folk arts. This, together with the assertions 'save our cultural heritage' and 'overturn the disastrous loss in folk arts' made by the intellectuals<sup>16</sup>, accelerated the 'indigenous fever' (*xiangtu re*) of the 1980s. Taiwanese consciousness gradually surfaced, and indigenous culture and folk arts became the symbol of such awareness. It made connections between folk arts, cultural awareness, and a nostalgic longing for a motherland. Although the 'motherland' culture still referred to Chinese culture, however, the focus had moved to its connection with Taiwanese culture.

The reversal of the lowly status of indigenous culture was the result of several factors: the native-soil debate, the surging cultural root-searching trend, and the promotion by academics, and the success of Folk Theatre. Folk arts and indigenous culture, once taken as vulgar and tasteless, became acceptable and even were officially funded

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<sup>16</sup> They included Ch'iu K'un-liang 邱坤良, Hsü Ch'ang-hui 許常惠, Lin Hêng-dao 林衡道, Tsêng Yung-i 曾永義.



and promoted.

The rise of indigenous fever was a result of not only intellectual effort, but also public support and market demand. (HAN PAO-THE, 1977) The trend spread to every aspect of life in the 1980s, and alongside the growing economy; the desire to consume Taiwanese cultural products also rose. By the late 1980s, Taiwanese culture had become a fashion statement, and indigenous cultural products became popular. Since then, the antiques, ancient relics, folk artefacts, and even ancient furniture and daily utensils became sought-after in the market as a symbol of culture and a touch of nostalgia.

Consequently, many forms of folklore were used in modern commodities<sup>17</sup>, such as furniture, interior designs, packaging for traditional food, commercial advertisements, decorations and crafts, etc. Lots of modern copies of traditional items were produced to satisfy the market. Even crafts from the mainland were sold in the late 1980s as a cheaper option to Taiwanese folk arts. (CHUANG PO-HO, 1990:126) Many teahouses were opened and decorated in a Taiwanese retro-style with bamboo screens, palm-bark rain capes and oilpaper umbrellas on the wall, Japanese low tables, and *tatami*, or wooden floors and bamboo table sets. (LIN & YEN, 1988)

The success of the Folk Theatre also became a cultural phenomenon, an annual event that everyone looked forward to and enjoyed. Most of all, it successfully formulated a new cultural model that created cultural associations linking cultural

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<sup>17</sup> Folk style became important in fashion, advertising and commercial commodities. For example, the advertisement of Kaixi Wulong Tea 開喜烏龍茶, emphasised Taiwanese-ness and implied the local taste was the *in* thing for the younger generation ; Yi-mei 義美 traditional snacks are decorated in traditional patterns. Its ice bar emphasised its traditional ingredients

consumption with cultural status: consuming folk culture was an act of loving one's motherland, and preserving Taiwanese culture was the way to rescue cultural heritage. This discourse, proposed by folk scholars, was used by the authorities and turned into part of cultural policy.

By 1987, responsibility for Folk Theatre was transferred from central to local government, to encourage local initiative and local artists. (CCA, 1991a: 29) Local governments took over and hosted their own festivals according to the local character and its produce. At the 'national level', the CCA had a bigger plan in mind - a Taiwan folk art theme park that operated like Folk Theatre all year round. After many revisions, the plan to establish the 'National Centre for Traditional Arts' was approved by the Executive Yuan in January 1996, and was opened in I-lan 宜蘭 in January 2002. (CCA, 2000b; CHI HUI-LING, 2002)

### **3.2.5. Pro-independent or China-centric?**

The emphasis on both tradition and creation in the early 1980s seemed more than appropriate. The all-embracing policy had incorporated various camps in the early 1980s. According to Ch'ên Ch'i-lu's official statement (1989), it was obvious that he was proud of being Chinese. On the one hand, he understood the importance of indigenous culture and respected aboriginal culture. On the other hand, he also adored Chinese culture and appreciated Chinese arts. During his tenure of office, he tried to construct strong cultural links between Chinese and Taiwanese culture. He stressed:

The presence of Chinese civilization in Taiwan dated back only a few hundred

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and flavour.



years, yet one can hardly deny that the achievement of the early settlers from Canton and Fukien, their palpable hard work and determination, represents the spirit of the Chinese at their best... These architectural remains... provide the means for a deeper understanding of the roots of Taiwan's cultural development. (CH'ËN CH'I-LU, 1989: 4)

However, this once 'appropriate' approach was caught in the cross fire of political struggle in the second half of the 1980s. Because of his emphasis on the importance of folk arts and Taiwan's own cultural heritage, the CCA was severely criticised. The reactionaries within the KMT accused the CCA of being too 'Taiwan-oriented' and having a tendency towards Taiwanese independence. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1983)

For example, the CCA organised the 'Hundred Years of Taiwan's Fine Arts' exhibition in 1984. This exhibition alarmed some conservative painters who believed that Taiwan's art scene was inferior to, and only a branch of, Chinese arts. (HUANG TS'AI-LANG, 1984) Ironically, a few years later, when the strengthening opposition gradually won a significant number of seats in the Legislative Yuan, Ch'ên Ch'i-lu was criticised for being too 'China-centric'<sup>18</sup>.

According to what he said and the work undertaken by the CCA during his office, it was evident that Ch'ên Ch'i-lu held a 'China-centric' mentality. For example, he stated on many occasions that "Chinese culture is the most extensive, profound and long-lived in the world today... we possess a rich fund of cultural heritage." (CH'ËN CH'I-LU, 1989) However, he was the first person within the post-war KMT government who really put effort into preserving and promoting Taiwan's local culture and paving the way for future indigenisation.

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<sup>18</sup> The organisation of the National Festival of Culture and Arts in his period meant that there was a high proportion of Beijing Opera, mainland *difang xi*, and Chinese folk art performances. At the end of his tenure, the opposition party had constantly criticised him for being 'China-centric' and old-fashioned.



### **3.3. Dark age with hope**

#### **3.3.1. Setback and slow-down**

This craze for indigenous culture was taken on widely for commercial purposes. However, the preservation of historical buildings and cultural heritage was much more difficult to carry out, exactly for the same reason –economic interests. Although many historical sites were generally accepted as 'cultural assets' and tourist attractions from the 1980s, objections rose among residents of historical areas and owners of listed buildings. They objected to being listed because of economic loss and inconvenience. These owners did not want to be deprived of their right to decide what to do with their properties, nor of their possible commercial benefits. It seemed reasonable that they should want either to convert the house to update their lifestyle, or to sell the land to a construction company for new developments. The disputes became unsolvable, and caused trouble and complaints.

The CCA tried to persuade the owners to take pride in having their properties listed. Once they realised that pride did not compensate their economic loss, the progress of conservation slowed down. By the late 1980s, an era of 'popular culture and consumerism' arrived. (LI YIH-YUAN, 1996a: 29-31; HSIAO HSIN-HUANG, 1990)

The value of historical glory and the sense of honour had been considered secondary to profits. The market for antiques became prosperous because of its commercial capacity; yet ironically old houses with fragile structures were regarded as worthless and obstructive to progress. Since the national priority was 'economic development', the idea of preserving the 'old' did not find much support either from private owners,

or from the Executive Yuan.

In the mid-1980s, Taiwan's national policy was basically 'economy first'. The new Premier Yü Kuo-hua 俞國華, who took over from Sun Yün-hsüan, emphasised economic growth and scorned the idea of cultural development. "Any cultural project proposed by the CCA was never supported nor passed during Yü's period", the CCA veteran K'o Chi-liang (1999) remembered well. There were several occasions that Yü deliberately embarrassed Ch'ên Ch'i-lu and belittled the work of the CCA<sup>19</sup>. In the four years of Yü's office, the CCA's annual budget had never increased<sup>20</sup>. Moreover, because of the lack of political support from the Premier and the Executive Yuan, the CCA could not have the full cooperation from other related Ministries to push preservation work further.

The private owners' objection was understandable since the Taiwanese mindset at that time considered that 'development and progress' were above everything else. The CCA wanted to provide compensation in some ways to make up for private owners' financial loss. However, there was no support within the government to provide compensation or tax deduction in any way. (JUAN WEI-MING, 1992) The only thing that the CCA could do was 'advise' and 'persuade' private owners, and to put off the go-ahead of any new development in those areas. Private owners were furious and resentful, and refused to have their properties listed. They criticised the

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<sup>19</sup> For example, Ch'ên found an important Chinese wash painting at a reasonable price, around NT\$ 1 million (approximately £20,000) in an auction abroad and wanted to buy it back. During the process of applying, he was refused because the Executive Yuan believed that it was 'unnecessary', even though the CCA had the budget. Ch'ên became disheartened and almost resigned. (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999) Another example was that Yü often acted as if that the CCA did not exist. Yü once visited the Department of Health; he did not bother to stop by the CCA, which was located in the same building. In fact, he had never visited the CCA during his four years tenure.

<sup>20</sup> It was not until Li Huan 李煥 took over as Premier in 1989 that the annual budget of CCA

CCA for being highbrow and over-idealistic.

The CCA had fought this battle single-handedly for more than 15 years. The debate about which was more important, new development or historical conservation, was finally resolved by the change of law in 1997. The Legislative Yuan finally added a new clause in November 1996 to the *Regulations of Cultural Heritage Preservation* in order to solve the problem. It enabled the private owners of the listed properties to claim compensation and tax exemption.

This struggle was a typical example of the difficulties that the CCA has always faced. Because this 'culture for culture's sake' approach had never been an issue for politicians, the work that the CCA set out to achieve was always going to be hard. All the problems and difficulties that the CCA faced were in fact caused by its old problem – it had no administrative power to execute its duties. They struggled within a bureaucratic system that prioritised political and economic concerns rather than cultural ones. After several incidents, Ch'ên Ch'i-lu felt humiliated and disheartened. (CHINA TIMES, 1987)

### **3.3.2. Powerless machine**

According to K'o Chi-liang (1999), the inferior status within the government damaged the development of the CCA, because most of its energy was spent avoiding overstepping other ministries' territory and working on matters with no administrative support. In the end, the CCA opted for the golden rule – "the less you do, the less trouble you will be in" (SU KUEI-CHIH, 1999) – in order to avoid offending other

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finally increased.



ministries.

Since there were only a handful of matters that the CCA could attend to, many staff in the CCA felt that they had become like "the *sancai tongzi*<sup>21</sup> for culture centres and artists". (WU TS'UI-LIAN, 1987) As to their main tasks of cultural development and planning, these were totally unachievable. Before the problem was widely identified around the second half of 1980s, the existence of the CCA was window dressing to create a more civilised facade for the KMT government. The problem of the CCA's inferiority was also rooted in KMT mentality that took culture as a political tool and a part of social education.

Basically, in a Chinese perspective, 'culture' related with a sense of top-down cultivation. Therefore, the focus of post-war cultural policy had been within the education domain. The Chinese idiom '*yu jiao yu le* 寓教於樂 (blending education in recreation)' was exactly the embodiment of this concept. There was no doubt that culture was regarded instrumental for the KMT, although cultural policy in the 1980s was not used purely for political or propaganda purposes as bluntly as before.

This way of thinking had also been used by the KMT as the justification for using culture for 'more important' purposes, such as national security, political stability, ideological construction, international image or economic development. The CCA's sense of powerlessness to fight its belittlement and its role as a political vehicle within the bureaucratic system in the 1980s was daunting. Ch'ên Ch'i-lu called for solutions to either upgrade the CCA or at least unify the responsibilities for cultural

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<sup>21</sup> *Sancai tongzi* 散財童子 means 'money-distributing lad', a fairy figure who brings fortune to the people in Chinese mythology.

affairs under one roof. (CHINA TIMES, 1987) Neither was done, and the problem remained. After few years of fighting without result, Ch'ên Ch'i-lu was demoralised. (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999; HSÜEH MAO-SUNG, 1999)

The CCA was often bullied within the Executive Yuan because of this problem of 'youzhi wuquan (有職無權, powerlessness but with duties attached to it)'. (WU TS'UI-LIAN, 1987; LIN & YEN, 1988) Once, Ch'ên Ch'i-lu was even sneered at by a lower officer in the Social Education Department in a dispute over 'which institution (the MOE or the CCA) should be in charge of culture centres'. He was so humiliated that he almost resigned.

Because of the discouragement from Yü's cabinet, the work of CCA had gradually slowed down and became more passive. During the second half of Ch'ên Chi-lu's tenure (1985 to mid-1988), what the CCA focused on was not as innovative or ambitious as his first half. The CCA followed the old routine, and was cautious about proposing any new plans or making changes. Its work had moved to merely holding activities, organising performances, and giving subsidies. Ch'ên Ch'i-lu was stuck and unable to reverse their inferior position<sup>22</sup>, and the CCA became increasingly cautious and conservative.

### 3.3.3. Political and social change

Anthropologist Li Yih-yuan (1996a: 22-23) noticed this conservative tendency and

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<sup>22</sup> When I worked as a reporter for the United Daily News (Taiwan), and was in charge of cultural news, the CCA was the most important institution that culture reporters visited almost daily. In those days, Ch'ên Ch'i-lu often complained to the media about the CCA's limitation and his powerlessness. However, he asked for this not to be revealed so as not to annoy the other authorities.

criticised the CCA for falling into the old pattern of the CCRC. Li said that the CCA put most of its energy on matters that were visible and practical, but not on long-term planning or value construction. He believed that the CCA suffered badly in the power struggle among ministries, and was forced to narrow down the scope of its works to avoid conflict. However, since the problem of overlapping responsibilities had always existed from the beginning, why would this change-of-direction happen at this particular time? Furthermore, the CCA had gradually won the support of the general public<sup>23</sup> and over the years had established some workable patterns between Ministries. Why did the conservative and politicised tendency appear around the second half of the 1980s? The reason for this setback was not totally clear. However, it seemed to me that it was to do with the ferocious change in Taiwan's political environment.

The 1980s was an era of upheaval and uncertainty. The political reform initiated by President Chiang Ching-kuo in March 1986 started a revolutionary change in Taiwan. He announced his intention of political reform in the Central Committee, KMT. Ten days later, a reform group was teamed up to take charge of drawing up plans and making timetables for ending martial law (the Emergency Decree), lifting the ban on the establishment of new political parties, and re-drafting election regulations to increase local autonomy. (LU JUI-CHUNG, 1998:24; MYERS, 1996)

Before martial law was officially lifted on 28 September 1986, the core members of

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<sup>23</sup> The general feeling among the public was that cultural affairs should be dealt with in a coherent manner. The CCA has never lacked the support of the public to be in charge of cultural affairs, although there were different opinions about how to achieve that goal. (LI YIH-YUAN, 1996a; CHINA TIMES, 1987; HAN PAO-THE, 1989; THE INDEPENDENT NEWS, 1993) The most accepted way was to upgrade the CCA to ministry level in order to coordinate all cultural affairs and draw up cultural policy in an overall perspective.



*dangwai* 黨外<sup>24</sup> formed the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) in Taipei when it was still illegal to do so. Instead of repressing this threat to the KMT's one-party dictatorship, Chiang Ching-kuo tolerated its existence.

Within six months, two reform proposals were presented to the KMT's Central Standing Committee; one was the lift of martial law, and the second was the lift of the ban on forming new political parties. Soon after the two bans were lifted, many other restrictions were also relaxed, such as foreign exchange control, the ban on going abroad or visiting Mainland China, and the restrictions on setting up new newspapers.

Although the political reform was initiated by Chiang Ching-kuo, the relaxation of political and social environment in the late 1980s was definitely not a result of the top-down efforts. In this struggle for political freedom and tolerance, 'culture' had played a key role and formed an overwhelming bottom-up pressure demanding freedom and democracy.

For example, the inspiration of Diaoyutai incident, the academic promotion of human rights, the native-soil debates, and the trend of searching for cultural roots had all contributed to the big change. The root-searching trend and the impact of the native-soil debate had worked as catalysts in Taiwanese society since the mid-1970s. The longing for cultural roots was at first expressed in a self-reassuring and China-centric tone. However, from the early 1980s, things started to change, and this root-searching trend developed into a conscious desire for indigenisation.

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<sup>24</sup> *Dangwai* literally means 'outside of the party'. Taiwan's opposition members used to call themselves *dangwai* in order to differentiate them from the KMT.

The focus of the root-searching trend shifted from the nostalgic, melancholic longing for a motherland to the yearning for an indigenous 'Taiwan'. Because the rejection of being recognised as Chinese in the international society began to dawn on people in Taiwan, an awakening self – Taiwanese identity – emerged. People in Taiwan were forced to face the reality that they did not represent China, and started to raise questions about their given status as second-class Chinese. The social changes were accelerated by the liberation in political restriction and freedom of expression.

Following the lift of the martial law, the society was disturbed and excited.

Once-forbidden public gatherings and social movements suddenly became active and frequent. There were only 173 protests and demonstrations in 1983. This figure grew rapidly during the mid-1980s (204 in 1984, 274 in 1985, 337 in 1986, 734 in 1987), and rose to 1,172 protests and demonstrations in 1988. (WU CHIEH-MIN, 1990: 45) It meant that there were at least three protests per day in 1988. These protests and demonstrations involved the student movement, peasant movement, workers' strike, environmental movement, and minority protests (aborigines, feminists, gay right, etc.). They targeted two kinds of domination: the patriarchal party-state and capitalism. (WU CHIEH-MIN, 1990: 55)

While the whole society was undergoing drastic changes, sociologist Hsiao Hsin-huang (1990) observed several worrying cultural phenomena in the second half of the 1980s: an overpowering capitalist influence; an increasing desire for sensual pleasure and entertainment; the desire to earn quick money (from the booming stock market and gambling); a culture of violence; and the trend of political spin. (1990:78-83) Apparently, the chaotic situation in Taiwan in the late 1980s was not

limited only to the political domain - the whole society was under great strain. From 1985 onwards, ideological challenges to old values had been voiced, and the calls for vigorous social betterment raised. Since the social changes were so great, and the demands for reform and social justice were targeted at every aspect of life, the whole society was shaken.

The second half of the 1980s was a turning point in Taiwan's development, a revolutionary era. However, it was also a terrifying time of uncertainty. (HSIAO HSIN-HUANG, 1990:73) In contrast to the uncertainty of the 1970s – an anxiety of identity relating to international isolation – the uncertainty in the late 1980s and early 1990s was caused by the collapse of the value system.

At a time like this, when the old order had tumbled, and new systems and order had yet to be established, the CCA did not involve itself in the cultural change, or make use of the opportunity to construct a new culture, nor get involved in the process of meaning production aggressively. Instead, they repeated routine works and were unresponsive to what was going on in society. The civil servants in the CCA, who stood in the frontline of the policy planning and the nation-building process, lost the sense of direction themselves. The CCA took the safe route by drifting with the political flow, and following routine. (LI YIH-YUAN, 1996: 23)

It seemed to me that the real reasons for Ch'ên's withdrawal, and for turning the CCA into a negative and conservative organisation in the mid-1980s, were not as simple as Li Yih-yuan put it. Partly, it was caused by a lack of support of the Executive Yuan. In part, it was Ch'ên's scholarly character that determined to the negative reaction towards the MOE's aggression. However, I believe that an important factor was the



unsettling political environment of the second half of the 1980s that had shaken the CCA and placed it in constant cross-fire. No matter what the CCA did, it was always taken to task. Hence, Ch'ên took withdrawal as the safest way to ride out a political storm and kept silent. Being the official head of cultural affairs and national cultural planning, Ch'ên failed to respond to the radical change that Taiwan was undergoing before his very eyes and took no action to cope with it.

#### **3.3.4. Cultural change**

Pressured by growing opposition and 'indigenous fever', the KMT started to localise the party. By hijacking the 'indigenisation' appeal, the KMT government assumed the air of the benefactor of Taiwanese arts. Moreover, because of continuous economic growth<sup>25</sup>, people in Taiwan had more money to spend on cultural products. All these elements helped a better cultural environment to develop.

In 1989, the pace of change in Taiwan reached a critical point. Among all the art forms, theatre seemed to be most active and enthusiastic in the upsurge of calls for political reform and social change. By then, almost all theatres had been drawn into the 'political theatre movement' pushing further for democracy. In addition, social activists also adopted theatrical tactics, and used theatre groups to bang the drum for them. (CHUNG MINGDER, 1992) From the late 1980s to the early 1990s, theatre activists worked hand in hand with political campaigners, joining social movements calling for change, and became the crucial element in Taiwan's political reform

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<sup>25</sup> According to Howe (1996: 1171-1172), Taiwan's economic growth from the mid-1950 to the mid-1980s was an archetypal Asian Newly Industrialising Economy (ANIE). It achieved rapid growth, marked structural change and exceptional export performance. Before 1990, Taiwan's national product grew within a range of 8 to 10 per cent per annum.

process. Their involvement will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Because of the encouragement of free expression and the exciting social changes taking place in Taiwan, Taiwanese culture was booming. Take the emergence of 'New Wave' in Taiwanese cinema as an example. Although the KMT government started to control the film industry and make propaganda films in the 1950s, it was not until the 1960s that the film industry was finally under its control<sup>26</sup>. Two main genres dominated the market: kung fu films, and romantic melodrama. Film reflected exactly the same characteristic as literature at this time: both were described as "being alienated from the reality of Taiwanese society". (CH'ËN JU-HSIU, 1993: 36)

During the 1970s, although a middle class in Taiwan started to emerge, and the output of film production also remained high (2150 films were produced in the 1970s), cinema attendance figures for Taiwanese films did not grow alongside the increased ability of the Taiwanese to consume. According to Ch'ên Ju-hsiu (1993), the decline in cinema-going was partly caused by the popularity of TV and partly the impact of popular Hong Kong films. But most of all, audiences were fed up with formulated films irrelevant to their own experiences of life.

The early 1980s was the gloomiest period for the once prosperous Taiwanese film industry. Hollywood and Hong Kong films dominated the Taiwanese film market. In this period of desperation, the 'New Wave' of Taiwanese film emerged. It began with

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<sup>26</sup> Due to vast market demand, all sorts of films could be found in Taiwan's cinemas in the early post-war years, such as Minnan yu films, Japanese films, Hollywood films, films from Hong Kong in Cantonese, and even illegal films from mainland China. This situation was gradually changed after a vast quantity of Taiwanese films was produced for the home market. The Taiwanese film industry reached its peak in the 1960s and had the third biggest film industry in Asia (second to India and Japan). (CH'ËN JU-HSIU, 1993) For example, there were 189 films made in Taiwan in 1968, while the Hong Kong film industry produced 160 films

two new films produced by the Central Film Company<sup>27</sup> in a move to encourage new blood: *The Story of Time* (光陰的故事 *guangyin de gushi*) in 1982 and *Son's Big Toy* 兒子的大玩偶 (*Erzi de da wan'ou*) in 1983. (CH'ËN JU-HSIU, 1993:38)

These two films comprised four short films by four young directors, the idea being to reduce production costs and increase the visibility of new directors. Many important Taiwanese film-makers emerged because of these two films, including Hou Hsiao-hsien 侯孝賢, Edward Yang 楊德昌, Chang I 張毅, Wan Jên 萬仁, and K'ê I-chêng 柯一正. Their films reflected Taiwanese life and people, and responded to the newly-found freedom in arts, displaying the same back-to-reality tendency of other cultural areas such as literature, drama, music, and dance.

At the same time, from the mid-1980s artistic groups and young artists sprang up at an unimaginable rate and speed. (HSÜEH MAO-SUNG, 1999) In part, this was encouraged by official policy, because many national resources were released and became publicly available. In some ways this was a practical need since so many culture centres had opened. They needed programmes and exhibitions to fill the spaces. In addition, people's consuming ability had increased, and they needed more spiritual and leisure activities. Since there was a market for it, artistic groups emerged.

Along with the gradually opening society, cultural affairs seemed to become a 'must' for a civilised government and its politicians. More and more politicians talked about cultural issues and the need to build culture. Legislators from the opposition became

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in the same year. (LU FEI-I, 1994)

<sup>27</sup> The Central Film Company (中央電影公司 *zhongyang dianying gongsi*) was a semi-official



especially concerned with cultural affairs. Some legislators, such as Lin Cho-shui 林濁水(DPP), Wang T'o 王拓(DPP), Chu hui-liang 朱惠良(New Party), Fan Hsün-lü 范巽綠(DPP), and Lin Chêng-tsê 林政則(DPP), earned themselves the reputation of "legislators of culture". (PERFORMING ARTS ALLIANCE, 1999)

However, the contrast between the lifeless CCA and Taiwan's surging modern art movement was astonishing. Facing the drastic changes in Taiwan, the CCA seemed paralysed and had lost touch with society. It indicated that, after almost a decade's dedication to heritage preservation and encouraging high culture, the direction and structure of the CCA had run into deadlock, changes needed to be made in order to catch up with the pace of the changing world.

### **3.4. Reinventing international image**

#### **3.4.1. New chair coping with change**

Early in 1988, Chiang Ching-kuo died, and was succeeded by Vice President Lee Teng-hui. In the cabinet reshuffle, Kuo Wei-fan was appointed to chair the CCA. At the same time, the Executive Yuan announced its infrastructure reform plan: four councils, including the CCA, would be upgraded to ministry-level. The future for the CCA suddenly became brighter.

Kuo Wei-fan came from a pedagogical background<sup>28</sup>. He had worked in the MOE and

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film company, which belonged to the KMT and was supported by the GIO.

<sup>28</sup> Kuo Wei-fan received his PhD in Pedagogy from Paris University, France. Before taking the office, he had been the Administrative Minister of the MOE, and the principal of the National Taiwan Normal University.

maintained good connections with it, which was considered a help in smoothing the difficult relationship between the MOE and the CCA. Kuo Wei-fan expressed exactly this intention in an interview after his appointment: "The CCA will focus on its planning and coordinating tasks in the future... and avoid direct involvement in actual policy execution." (LU CHIEN-YING, 1988) He also explained that his idea of the CCA's future role would be: "like the steering wheel of the fast changing society." (LU CHIEN-YING, 1988) He regarded himself as a steersman of culture construction and intended to build a better cultural environment.

Knowing the difficulties Ch'ên Ch'i-lu had encountered, Kuo Wei-fan clearly tried to avoid making the same mistakes, and wanted to find a new interpretation of 'cultural affairs'. According to him, there were five areas that CCA should emphasise: 1, improving the cultural environment; 2, promoting cultural life; 3, beautifying the public environment; 4, balancing cultural development between city and suburb; 5, promoting and carrying out international cultural exchanges. (CCA, 1991a: 2) Among them, the last two tasks were new and later proved to be successful and influential.

Compared with Ch'ên Ch'i-lu, Kuo Wei-fan was considered a layman in the arts. However, he proved himself as a chairman with modern ideas and flexible political skills. K'o Chi-liang remembered well how different his style was from Ch'ên Ch'i-lu's: "He was very young, only 46 or 47 at that time. He was not afraid of losing face and always ready to strive to win support and fight for resources he thought that the CCA needed." (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999) After he took up the office, the direction of the CCA changed.

At first, culture communities suspected that his policy would focus on a 'social

education' function. However, the fact that his pedagogical background actually prevented him from getting too involved in any artistic dispute, or from being too close to one particular faction, freed him from being influenced by any personal connection or bias. (HSÜEH MAO-SUNG, 1999)

Kuo Wei-fan's wish was to improve the cultural environment as a whole. Firstly, instead of fighting over administrative power with other ministries, he asked the CCA to put more energy into improving the legal basis of the culture industry. During his office, new regulations such as the *Regulations of Encouraging Culture and Arts*<sup>29</sup>, *Tax Reduction and Exemption for Cultural Industry*<sup>30</sup> were drawn and promulgated. For him, it was the base to protect and encourage the growth of culture.

Secondly, because the arts market was limited<sup>31</sup> even at the end of the 1980s, he wished to create an environment for a professional art industry. He wished to create a suitable environment and a market place to support the possible growth of a professional art market. In order to achieve that, on the one hand, he introduced the 'enterprise feedback scheme' to boost sponsorship and fund-raising opportunities and on the other, he tried to sort out the problem of tax-exemption and deduction regulations.

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<sup>29</sup> The *Regulations of Encouraging Culture and Arts* (*wenhua yishu jianzhu tiaoli* 文化藝術獎助條例) was issued in July 1992.

<sup>30</sup> This operating rule (*wenhua yishu shiye jianmian yingyeshui ji yuleshui banfa* 文化藝術事業減免營業稅及娛樂稅辦法) was issued in June 1993. It took decade-long struggle to break through the rigid tax regulation, beginning in the Ch'ên Ch'i-lu period. It was not until the late 1980s that the attitude of taxation on cultural industry changed, and tax exemption on arts was accepted.

<sup>31</sup> According to the *Cultural Statistics in 1992* (CCA), the rate of annual attendance in cultural events in Taiwan was low between 1989 and 1991. The figure showed poor attendance in arts. It showed that, on average, everyone in Taiwan went to an exhibition around 0.27 times a year; 0.02 times to music, drama and folk performances; and only 0.01 times to dance and seminars. (CCA, 1992) In other words, only 1 in 4 Taiwanese went to one exhibition each year; 1 in 50 to music, drama or folk performances; and 1 in 100 went to dance performances or



The CCA borrowed the management model from the Cloud Gate and the Performance Workshop<sup>32</sup>. Their successful management model inspired Kuo Wei-fan and was taken as the solution to modernise the arts environment. The CCA not only encouraged cooperation between the artists and big enterprise, but also started to construct a state funding system. Many CCA staff (e.g. Hsüeh Mao-sung, 1999; K'o Chi-liang, 1999; Su Kuei-chih, 1999) paid tribute to Kuo Wei-fan's endeavour to modernise the cultural environment. Kuo opened up a new battlefield to extend the international arena to promote Taiwan, rather than fighting the old war over 'administrative territories' within the bureaucratic system.

### 3.4.2. Representing China

The ROC on Taiwan had always emphasised its political legitimacy by promoting traditional culture. Robinson (1996: 1345-46) described the way the ROC "used its cultural assets to support its political, and hence its security, goal regarding the United States". Especially during the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, Taiwan 'capitalised' on the opportunity and promoted the ROC as the 'culture centre of China'.

The GIO was responsible for promoting a national image in international society. Its focus was basically to increase the ROC's international visibility. Over the years, the

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seminars.

<sup>32</sup> Through the 1970s, the Cloud Gate was the only artistic company in Taiwan to try to run a group professionally. It managed to sustain itself in an almost barren environment by a combination of box office income, subsidies, and private donations. The Performance Workshop emerged in the late 1980s. It carried out an aggressive publicity policy and paid great care to ensure their plays were popularly accepted. (See Chapter 5)

GIO sponsored and organised a large number of American groups to visit Taiwan, organised different trips and visits for foreign correspondents, and got in touch with foreign media. (ROBINSON, 1996) This kind of effort had double benefits, not only increasing Taiwan's visibility, but also, boosting domestic morale at a time when the Taiwanese felt abandoned in international society. Once articles or news about Taiwan was published, or programmes broadcast abroad, the GIO would release the news announcing Taiwan's international appearance as another wave of internal propaganda to prove Taiwan's existence.

The ROC on Taiwan capitalised on its claim to be the latter-day culture centre of China and the preserver of many artefacts of the culture. (ROBINSON, 1996) The frequent cultural exchanges between the ROC and the USA was a typical example: "Not a month was allowed to go by without some cultural troupe, sports team, film festival, art exhibit and the like visiting and travelling through the United States." (ROBINSON, 1996:1345)

Apart from inviting foreign tours to Taiwan, the ROC offered itself as the main and legitimate provider of Chinese cultural resources, providing programmes full with Chinese essence during the Cultural Revolution period. The GIO was in charge of providing cultural programmes and propaganda films to television stations in foreign countries. Many exhibitions, seminars, visits, performances and academic conferences held abroad were in fact arranged by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Education (MOE), and funded by the ROC government.

After the end of the Cultural Revolution, the need to promote the ROC was even greater in order to tackle the mounting isolation in international society. But this was

found to be increasingly difficult. Because of Taiwan's weak position in international society and the status of being without diplomatic relations, many Taiwanese cultural events touring abroad were held in local community centres, university halls, or local gatherings<sup>33</sup>. In other words, their influence was limited. Also, host countries were constantly under the pressure of the PRC's strong objections.

Until the late 1980s, cultural programmes were mostly Beijing opera performances. This kind of performance was particularly important, because of its association with orthodox culture - the implication being that the KMT was the legitimate heir of Chinese culture. The ROC government tried to build up a 'representational system' that could create a meaningful association between Chinese culture (Beijing opera) and political legitimacy (the ROC) in an international context. I agree with Woodward (1997) who comments that it is 'culture' that is used to mark out and maintain identity within and between groups. The cultural association that Beijing opera provided was crucial for the ROC on Taiwan to prove its authentic Chinese-ness. Through the promotion of Beijing opera, the ROC attempted to produce its desired meaning – Beijing opera was orthodox Chinese culture, and promoting Beijing opera was the duty of the legitimate Chinese government. Therefore, in contrast to the destruction that the PRC caused to traditional culture, Taiwan presented itself as the real culture centre and the ROC was the one and only legitimate Chinese government.

As Taylor (1992:32) stresses, the recognition of the 'significant others' is crucial for the formation of identity. "I negotiate it (my identity) through dialogue, partly overt,

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<sup>33</sup> These touring performances were mostly organised by the MFA, or sometimes, the overseas Chinese associations. However, there was one exception in the Cloud Gate Dance Company. It has been invited to tour around the world more than thirty times since 1975. It won its reputation without any diplomatic support.



partly internal, with others. That is why the development of an ideal of inwardly generated identity gives a new importance to recognition. My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others." (TAYLOR, 1992: 34) The cultural exchange was clearly taken as part of diplomatic work to create and articulate an 'ideal identity' to the significant others.

In this process, making sure that 'desired meanings' are produced in the representational system is crucial for its success. As Hall comments, "Representation functions less like the model of a one-way transmitter and more like the model of a dialogue - it is, as they say, *dialogic*." (1997a: 10) Since the desired 'ideal identity' can never be fixed, a constant opportunity to make dialogues with the significant others is important. For the ROC on Taiwan, creating as much dialogue as possible was the priority. Beijing opera was used as the cultural symbol to win the international recognition for Taiwan as the authentic China, even though the ROC on Taiwan was not diplomatically recognised.

Apart from Beijing opera, another common cultural exchange event was the 'goodwill mission troupe'. After Taiwan's expulsion from the UN, the 'Chinese Youth Goodwill Mission'<sup>34</sup> was set up to 'promote the total diplomacy'<sup>35</sup>. (LO HSIEN-FU, 2000) The purpose was to show off these energetic, lively and most talented young people who

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<sup>34</sup> Each year, talented students from universities would be selected to form a 'Youth Goodwill Mission Troupe' (*zhonghua minguo qingnian youhao fangwentuan* 中華民國青年友好訪問團). Its purpose was to show goodwill from Taiwan. However, the style of the programmes was mainly 'Chinese', stressing the authentic Chinese-ness of the younger generation. (LO HSIEN-FU, 2000) It was especially popular among young Taiwanese before the late 1980s, because it was their only chance to go abroad at a time when overseas travel was restricted.

<sup>35</sup> The policy (*quanmian* 全面 diplomacy, total diplomacy) was proposed by then Premier Chiang Ching-kuo after the ROC's expulsion from the UN in 1971. He outlined this strategy in 1973 to tackle the difficulties and deadlocks that the ROC faced in international society. He proposed mobilising all available resources (political, economic, scientific, technological, and cultural) to maintain diplomatic links with countries that had transferred recognition to Beijing.

represented "the future of Free China - the ROC on Taiwan". (LO HSIEN-FU, 2000)

This format has been operated and toured around the world (mostly the USA) for almost 30 years.

Most significantly, the old tactics – the academic influence that the KMT always employed – was also used extensively in the cultural exchange domain. Robinson noticed this policy had long-term and influential impact.

For many years, Taipei funded an important, and more recently an increasing, portion of the American study of China. Academic professorships and programmes were set up at many universities, not only those that historically had ties with Taiwan but increasing those at the top of the American China-studies community. The same was true of many American research institutes, and not just those traditionally 'right wing'. (ROBINSON, 1996:1346-1347)

As Gramsci suggested, using academics was a tactic to win or maintain hegemonic discourse: the ROC's representation as the orthodox Chinese government.

Compared with other cultural exchange schemes, this effort to incorporate intellectuals to form discourses about Taiwan indeed had a fundamental impact on Taiwan's international image. It was an attempt to produce knowledge and meaning through influencing the formation of discourses.

### **3.4.3. Globalisation**

The urge to be recognised in the international society was intensified when Taiwan became more open and the communication with outside world became more frequent. To make sense of one's being and belonging, the need for recognition was inevitable. The urge to reach out, being part of the world, and also the longing of

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(YAHUDA, 1996:1329-1330)

being known and heard accelerated the globalisation trend in Taiwan.

During the early post-war years, the only contact between Taiwan and the outside world came from economic activities. According to Chang and Hsü (2000), the 1960s was the crucial period when foreign investment came into Taiwan. It laid the foundations for Taiwanese economic development and included Taiwan within the global economic system. The Japanese company Takeda set up a factory in Taiwan in 1962, Pfizer in 1964. IBM established its International Purchasing Office in Taiwan in 1966. The same year, General Instrument, Texas Instruments, and Philips set up factories producing electronics in Taiwan. All the products made in Taiwan at this period were mostly 'original equipment manufacturing' (OEM). Two industries were the veterans of this area: electronic products, and the clothing industry (including garments, textile and footwear).

In the 1970s, even more trans-national companies set up factories in Taiwan, including Zenith, RCA, GE; or cooperated with local companies, e.g. Cyanamid and Taiwan Sugar Corporation, Sankyo and China Chemical Pharmaceutical Company. (CHANG & HSÜ, 2000)

Before the mid-1980s, the Taiwanese economy was described as an economy activated mostly by foreign investment and trans-national companies. (HSÜ WEI-CHIEH, 1999) Between 1982 and 1985, foreign direct investment (FDI) and purchase in Taiwan still dominated Taiwan's economy, making up 77% of Taiwan's gross national product (GNP). (CHANG & HSÜ, 2000)

The mid-1980s was an era of change and transition. Taiwan's prosperous economy



faced challenge, partly because of the difficulties of transforming from a labour to a more capital and skill-intensive economy, and partly because of the political and economic uncertainties. Because of the change, Taiwan's clothing industry moved overseas after the 1980s, and transformed its role to become a 'global broker'. With its foreign buyers and overseas factories, usually in Southeast Asia and mainland China, Taiwan has constructed a 'triangle manufacturing' framework, in which Taiwan takes the orders from abroad, designs the products, and produces them in cheaper overseas factories. (PAN, 1998)

According to Howe's analysis (1996), after the economic reform and the open door policy in China, the relationship between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits became both competitive and potentially beneficial. Although China took Taiwan's place in the labour intensive sectors, the two economies complemented each other in different sectors. Mutual growth and development were supported by Taiwanese investment.

The computer industry prospered after the mid-1980s and became one of Taiwan's specialisations. Because of the rapid growth of the domestic market for PCs, Taiwanese computer companies started to produce their own brands. (CHANG & HSÜ, 2000) By 1995, Taiwan held world market shares above 25% in nine major information technology (IT) products, and above 50% in four of nine<sup>36</sup>. (HOWE, 1996: 1195)

Overall, Taiwan's economic role has transformed from being a labour-intense producer, to 'broker', 'designer' and 'investor' actively involved in global economic

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<sup>36</sup> The nine major IT products include monitors, handheld and desktop scanners, PCs, network cards, mother-boards, power supplies, graphic cards, and keyboards.

activities. (CHÊNG, 1996; CHANG & HSÜ, 2000) Alongside Taiwan's increasingly globalised economy, the speed of cultural globalisation in Taiwanese society accelerated through vast quantities and varieties of information provided by internet, satellite and cable TV, books and magazines as well as from increasing overseas travel, personal communications and cultural contact. (Further discussions see Chapter 4.6.1.) As a matter of fact, the globalisation process in Taiwan took place quite early and played an important role in bringing new ideas into an enclosed and authoritarian society and pushing for transformation.

#### **3.4.4. Exporting Taiwan**

In the 1960s and 70s, the representational system that the KMT tried to create – the legitimate Chinese government promoted traditional Chinese culture – was sustainable because the PRC was occupied by its domestic struggle and was closed to the outside world. What better substitute for traditional Chinese culture could there be than the ROC on Taiwan? Many artistic tours were arranged by the MRA.

However, this representation was challenged after the Cultural Revolution ended. The creation of another meaningful representation was the issue that needed to be tackled. Furthermore, it was hard to explore any overseas arts market since Taiwanese artists were unable to represent Chinese culture any more because of international situation.

In the late 1980s, Taiwanese indigenous artists started to attract international attention. Taiwanese aboriginal musicians and folk artists (*Beiguan* and String Puppet performers) were invited to tour around Europe in 1989 (not arranged by the MFA).

International attention was drawn to Taiwan's native arts and the reviews were positive. (CCA, 1991a:50) Many Taiwanese artists became active in the international arena<sup>37</sup>. Successful arts events had won Taiwan unexpected visibility and praise abroad. Increasingly, it became clear to the ROC on Taiwan that it was their Taiwanese-ness that attracted the significant others in the international society, not a substituted Chinese-ness.

The CCA was encouraged by the result and decided to get more deeply involved in this area. Groups touring abroad would receive subsidies covering part of their travel and living expenses. However, the successful experience of funding the Contemporary Legend Theatre in the U.K. in 1990 totally changed the official approach to cultural exchange. In 1990, the prominent Japanese art promoter Tadao Nakane recommended a small Taiwanese group, the Contemporary Legend Theatre, to London's National Theatre. (ROYAL NATIONAL THEATRE, 1990:1) Its production, *The Kingdom of Desire*, gained an international acclaim that Taiwanese artists had never had before. "In any language, this is exciting theatre. But it is a bonus to see such a well conceived innovation that combines the dazzle of Peking opera with the strength of Western realism." (KENNETH REA, 1990) Its success was based on its own merits and did not rely on state 'promotion'.

This successful event was especially rare because the UK government had always had a close relationship with the PRC, and any cultural exchanges that the ROC held in the UK were protested and muffled. The CCA chairperson Kuo Wei-fan was with the group when the production was put on in London, and witnessed the experience.

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<sup>37</sup> Such groups included the Lanyang 蘭陽 Folkdance Group, the Xinhexing 新和興 Gezaixi Group, and the Yiwannan 亦宛然 Puppet Group. (CCA, 1991a: 50)



He decided to improve the cultural environment to encourage similar results elsewhere – that is, for work to be recognised on the merits of artistic achievement rather than diplomatic push. As a result, it became a CCA policy to invest more money and place greater emphasis on supporting a sustainable cultural environment. (CCA, 1991a)

When the ban on visiting the mainland was lifted, culture was again considered an appropriate form of contact between the two sides. Cultural exchange was used to improve the relationship between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. Hence, when the '*Guidelines for National Unification (guojia tongyi gangling 國家統一綱領)*' were announced in February 1991, the document stipulated in explicit terms that cultural and educational exchanges should be a first step in the process of re-building mutual understanding and friendship between the two sides. (CCA, 1998a: 263-269)

In the summer of 1990, the Minghuayuan 明華園 Gezaixi Group was invited to perform in the opening programme of the '1990 Asian Games Festival' in Beijing. It was the first official 'cultural contact' between two sides. Although it was a political gesture of goodwill from Beijing to invite Taiwanese *xiqu* - Gezaixi to open the festival, Minghuayuan did show its strength in adopting modern theatre tactics and using sumptuous costumes and scenery. It was a good beginning for cultural exchange.

Because of the increasing contact across the Strait, many regulations were drawn up to cope with increasing communications. (CCA, 1998a: 265) This cultural exchange also started a "China Craze" in Taiwan's performing arts, and the art market, beginning in the late 1980s. (LI YIH-YUAN, 1996a: 52-96) Apart from increasing

tourism<sup>38</sup>, all kinds of non-governmental activities were carried out. From 1987 to 1994, there were 7.25 million such activities taking place. (SIEW VINCENT C. 1995:

3) For example, academic visits and discussions were organised; musicians and performers from the two sides performed together; academic conferences were held; even Taiwan's Mazu<sup>39</sup> worshipers slipped through the blockade in the Taiwan Strait and went directly to Meizhou 湄洲 to offer incense.

According to the CCA (1998a: 267), there were 6,180 artists and intellectuals, 123 performing groups, and 25 exhibitions from China visiting Taiwan between 1987 and 1997. In recent years, the pattern of cultural exchange moved from purely visiting to further cooperation<sup>40</sup>. However, the 1994 Qiandao Lake 千島湖 incident<sup>41</sup>, and the missile threats of 1996 dampened this enthusiasm and interrupted the cultural exchanges abruptly. It will be looked at in Chapter 4.

### 3.4.5. Cultural windows opened to the world

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<sup>38</sup> According to Taiwan's official records, there were about 380,000 Taiwanese travelling to China to visit relatives in the first year after the ban was lifted. In addition, there were at least 20,000 Taiwanese tourists visiting China. (LI YIH-YUAN, 1996a) Li Yih-yuan interpreted the craze as curiosity of, and a longing for, motherland and traditional culture. (1996a: 72) Furthermore, the trading relationship also grew drastically. In 1994, the volume of indirect trade via Hong Kong amounted to \$18billion per annum, while Taiwanese investment in the PRC was between \$20 and \$30 billion. (SHAMBAUGH, D, 1996a:1285)

<sup>39</sup> Mazu is the goddess of the sea, usually worshiped by fishermen and people along the coast. In folklore, her hometown was on the southern coast of mainland - Meizhou 湄洲. In order to control illegal immigrants and justify its political stand, Taiwanese authorities outlawed direct travel between the mainland and Taiwan. Therefore, this sort of visit was illegal without going through a third area (usually Hong Kong or Macao).

<sup>40</sup> This kind of cooperation included the joint performance of the National Taiwan Experimental Chinese Orchestra and the Shanghai Traditional Instruments Orchestra; a joint performance of the Kuo Kuang Chinese Opera company and the China Beijing Opera Troupe.

<sup>41</sup> The Qiandao Lake incident took place on March 31<sup>st</sup> 1994, when 24 Taiwanese tourists were robbed and burnt to death when they travelled to Hangzhou 杭州, a famous tourist site in southern China. After the incident, Chinese police concealed the news and tried to cover up the truth from the victims' families. They claimed the whole incident was an accident caused by fire. The Chinese authorities not only refused to let the families take the victims' bodies back to Taiwan, but also refused to talk to the Straits Exchange Foundation -- the arms-length quasi-institution that was designed to deal with non-official matters concerning people across the Taiwan Strait. This incident aroused great resentment towards China among Taiwanese.



The diplomatic situation had been hard for the ROC since the 1970s, because of the problem of Taiwan's legal status. (YAHUDA, 1996) According to the official records of the GIO, the main diplomatic mission of the ROC is to "consolidate its cooperative relations with friendly countries". (GIO, 1993a: 57) Over the years, the MFA has tried to set up representative offices to replace the former embassies and to promote economic, trade, technological, and cultural ties with countries that do not have diplomatic relations with Taiwan. By 1992, there were around 88 representative offices in 60 countries, (GIO, 1993a: 58-59) although the number of countries that had formal diplomatic relations with the ROC had never exceeded 30. (YAHUDA, 1996) The ROC has struggled to make itself visible and heard in international society.

In 1989, President Lee Teng-hui asserted a new diplomatic line-- 'pragmatic diplomacy'<sup>42</sup>. 'Culture' became a useful tool to break the deadlock in international relations. The official attitude towards 'cultural exchange' was to take culture as a branch of the diplomatic instrument. Even the CCA held the same view: "Using cultural activities as the medium to increase the visibility and communication (in the international arena) could easily gain good response, and cause no antagonism."(CCA, 1998a: 244)

Performances and exhibitions that were full of 'Chinese essence' were used for 'export' to America and Europe. However, when Taiwanese artists started to bring international interest to Taiwan, the situation changed. Although the task of cultural

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After this incident, the peace talks between two sides were put on hold.

<sup>42</sup> Pragmatic diplomacy (*wushi diplomacy* 務實外交) was proposed by President Lee in 1988. It was a diplomatic principle based on realistic and pragmatic considerations, which did not stress ideology or traditional values. (WANG GAO-CH'ENG, 1998: 298)



exchange remained a part of foreign policy – "taking culture as the vanguard to improve international understanding about the ROC " (CCA, 1998a: 242) – the focus had shifted. The content of cultural exchange events not only relied mostly on the merits of artists, but most importantly, they focused on Taiwanese culture<sup>43</sup>. (CCA, 1998a) The cultural image of the ROC that the CCA tried to portray has also changed, especially in recent years, from an 'authentic' Chinese culture centre to a modern Taiwan.

Because of increasing praise, Taiwanese arts and artists believed that they had proven themselves to be "good enough" to represent contemporary Taiwanese culture. (WU HSING-KUO, 1999; LIAO CH'IUNG-CHIH, 1999) International recognition was won not because they were a good copy of 'traditional Chinese art', but for the first time, they were accepted as modern Taiwanese artists in their own right. Taiwanese artists had gradually built up confidence in the belief that Taiwanese indigenous arts were not secondary to Chinese culture, nor vulgar or shameful. (LIAO CH'IUNG-CHIH, 1999) At the same time, the increasing opportunity for cultural exchange boosted the confidence of Taiwanese artists. They became proud of themselves as a cultural product made-in-Taiwan.

The 'effect' of these cultural exchanges was a surprise to the MFA and GIO, because the cultural exchanges they organised were either thwarted by the constant protests from the PRC or ignored.

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<sup>43</sup> For example, the Chinese Information and Culture Center (the CCA office in New York), had arranged over 80 exhibitions and 400 performances over the years. Most of them were Taiwanese arts, including Hakka culture, Taiwan's tea culture, traditional Taiwanese prints, glassware, Taiwan's modern arts and folk arts... (CCA, 1998a: 244-245)

For politicians, it opened a new way-out, and a promising channel for building up Taiwan's restricted diplomatic relationship. In 1991, the Executive Yuan instructed the CCA to coordinate with related ministries to organise cultural exchanges, for the purpose of enhancing the 'national image (*guojia xingxiang* 國家形象)'. (CCA, 1991a: 51; 1998a: 244, 249) The CCA started to hold 'International Cultural Exchange Negotiation Meetings' regularly, in which the MFA, the MOE, and the GIO had to participate. In order to achieve the overall effect of 'cultural export', each sector learnt to cooperate and coordinate when the international cultural events were organised.

Therefore, inoffensive cultural activities seemed to be the most effective and fruitful way to construct Taiwan's national image and win recognition. Because of this, Kuo Wei-fan had the idea of opening 'Taiwan's cultural windows' in all international cosmopolitan cities. The first 'window' was opened in New York in 1991 - the Chinese Information and Culture centre (CICC). It was located in Manhattan's Rockefeller Centre and claimed to be "the largest public resource centre for Chinese culture and contemporary life in the ROC on Taiwan" (CCA, 2000c) and played the role of 'national window of Taiwanese culture' to America.

In 1994, the same format was adopted in Europe. 'The Taipei Culture and Information Centre, Paris' was opened, and functioned as a European base, operating cultural exchanges and liaising with European countries, such as the UK, Austria and Italy. Performances and exhibitions were arranged regularly in order to carry out 'international cultural exchange' further. In May 2000, the London Chinese Culture Centre, another window to Europe, was opened in the UK.

## Summary

As Taylor (1992:25) describes, "Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being." The disturbance of non- or mis-recognition of the ROC's international status since the 1970s was painful and degrading. People in Taiwan were denied the recognition of their identity. In order to cope with the frustration of feeling rejected, and to satisfy the longing to belong, the ROC government endeavoured to construct its desired image internationally.

By the end of the 1970s, the Cultural Revolution ended. On the one hand, the international society had turned its back on the ROC and recognised the PRC, and on the other, the domestic demand for political reform intensified. The trend of searching for cultural-roots emerged. All these changes pressured the Taiwanese to re-examine the issue of Taiwanese identity. As Eriksen (1993:68) comments, "social identity becomes most important the moment it seems threatened". This was exactly the case in Taiwan. Whenever there was a drastic change, either domestically or internationally, the need to either construct a new identity or maintain the old emerged.

Consequently, the establishment of the CCA was a deliberate action of the KMT regime to construct a new culture. The CCA had tailored its policy to accommodate indigenous needs. During the first half of the 1980s, the CCA had steadily altered the cultural focus away from the old cultural renaissance line to stressing the importance of Taiwanese culture and heritage - although the emphasis was still placed within the hierarchy of 'Chinese as the mother culture' and 'Taiwanese as the sub-culture'. It was not until the late-1980s when Taiwanese consciousness became stronger, that



the claim that 'Taiwan represented the authentic China' became increasingly embarrassing and unbearable.

The 1980s was a period full of political turmoil and uncertainty. Taiwan was undertaking vigorous political and social reform. Newfound freedom accelerated cultural change and awoke Taiwanese consciousness. Although international isolation did not cease, economic prosperity gave the Taiwanese confidence and high self-esteem. Instead of trying to be a copy or supplement of 'Chinese culture', and claiming to be the legitimate Free China, prosperous cultural development in Taiwan provided new possibilities for the country to present itself as 'ROC on Taiwan' to the 'significant others'.

From the 1970s, it was clear that the ROC government could no longer pretend to represent the legitimate Chinese government. Therefore, finding new ways to articulate and create another 'representation' of the ROC, and to influence the international view on Taiwan, became important tasks. Hence, the course of the culture-building process changed, from maintaining 'the continuity' and 'authenticity' of traditional Chinese culture, to creating and discovering Taiwanese culture. Within this decade, alongside the successful story of Taiwan's economic miracle, the image of the ROC on Taiwan changed. Taiwanese-ness, once taboo and suppressed, was officially promoted, even though it was still within a China-centric framework.

In order to differentiate itself from the PRC, culture was used to build up a new identity and national image, promoting the official discourses that the ROC on Taiwan wanted to construct. In other words, culture was treated as 'cultural capital' creating a national image within an international arena and sustaining domestic support.

## **Chapter 4      New Taiwanese**

In this chapter, my aim is to see the interaction between identity and social change since the late 1980s. I will look at what affected the formation of identity, how the political tide was reversed, why Taiwanese identity was drastically changed within a few years, and most of all, how the old discourse of Taiwanese identity was replaced and rebuilt.

### **4.1. Building up the Lee Teng-hui regime**

#### **4.1.1. Power transition**

The 'silent revolution' conducted by Chiang Ching-kuo in the 1980s re-routed Taiwan's political direction from that set by his father's authoritarian rule. He devoted the last years of his life to liberation and democratisation, and steered the KMT government toward "Taiwanisation". However, it was the rise of Lee Teng-hui that fundamentally reconstructed Taiwan's political ecology. (TU, 1996: 1129)

After Chiang's untimely death in 1988, Lee succeeded to the presidency. In contrast to the two Chiangs, he was a native Taiwanese and came from an academic background, and was considered untypical as a KMT politician. Under the shadow of party reactionaries, Lee Teng-hui contained himself and followed the regular party precedents during the first two years in office. It was not until he was elected as the president in 1990 (by the National Assembly, which is similar to the presidential electoral college in the USA) that his position stabilised and he gradually became his own man. Willem van Kemenade, a Dutch correspondent in Asia, described Lee's change: "The metamorphosis of President Lee ... began in 1990... After the

election... [he] immediately embarked on a subtle but revolutionary overhaul of the Nationalist political structure, pushing it in the direction of a new Taiwanese state. Lee dubbed his own tactics 'creative ambiguity'<sup>1</sup>." (KEMENADE, 1998:108)

Tension between an emerging Taiwanese force and the old conservative mainlander power split the KMT during the early 1990s. The KMT divided into two camps: the 'mainstream' (*zhuliu pai* 主流派, mainly Taiwanese or Taiwan-born politicians, representing the liberal force within the party, led by Lee Teng-hui) and the 'non-mainstream' (*fei zhuliu pai* 非主流派, mainly mainlander politicians, representing the conservative faction, led by Hau Pei-tsun 郝柏村). Lee's 'creative ambiguity' was a skill used to balance the factional struggle and to steer the party subtly towards Taiwanisation. At first, this division was not too obvious.

In May 1990, Lee Teng-hui appointed the senior mainlander General Hau Pei-tsun as the Premier, in order to stabilise his political position and control tension. However, it released a storm of protest against the prospect of a military government, because of Hau's influence and close connection within the armed forces. This appointment was a clear demonstration of Lee Teng-hui's technique of 'creative ambiguity'. He skilfully used this appointment to unnerve the right-wing reactionaries inside the KMT, at the same time containing Hau by arousing the suspicions of the opposition party - the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). With balanced containment from both forces, Lee's status was temporarily secured.

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<sup>1</sup> He described how he had contained himself during political struggle in an interview in 1994 with the Japanese writer Shima Ryutaro. (LEE TENG-HUI, 1994a: 469-483) He said, 'ambiguity' was the key to survival; otherwise, he would have been destroyed long before then. He also admitted that he had always contained himself during difficult situations, and not showed his true feeling. He used the old Japanese saying -- "when having the third bowl of rice, the guest has to do it quietly" -- to describe how he survived all the political storms after Chiang died.



Then, encouraged by the German unification in 1990 and the end of the Cold War, Lee Teng-hui proceeded to revoke all the repressive emergency legislation that had provided the constitutional basis for the existence of the ROC on Taiwan. The Temporary Articles were abolished, and the "Period of Mobilisation for the Suppression of Communist Rebellion" was terminated on April 30<sup>th</sup> 1991. Backed by a ruling of the Council of Grand Justices, all members of the National Assembly who had been given lifelong posts were forced to resign before the end of 1991.

This paved the way for a series of elections for a new representative apparatus that could no longer claim to be the extension of all China. It also laid the foundations for the process of Taiwan's democratisation. (TIEN & CHU, 1996; WACHMAN, 1994; KEMENADE, 1998) From then on, people in Taiwan could directly elect the members of the National Assembly, the Legislative Yuan (comparable to the House of Commons in the UK), the Control Yuan (an apparatus that supervises the proper exercise of power within the government) , and representatives in local government.

Democratic development was not just the result of Lee's political will, but rather the people's demand for change. From the second half of the 1980s, people from different social sectors took to the streets in protest and called for changes that the government seemed incapable of making. There was a huge increase in the number of street protests, both authorised and unauthorised, demanding reform and a redress of injustice. (GOLD, 1996; WU CHIEH-MIN, 1990: 45)

Gold believed the outburst of demonstrations showed "the emergence and consolidation of civil society". (1996: 1111) By then, the old KMT ideologies and

ideological apparatus were under great pressure to change.

It was at this period, when the first wave of factional strife had temporarily settled and Hau seemed to share power, that KMT reactionaries in the Chinese Culture Restoration Committee (CCRC) called for Lee Teng-hui's 'rescue'. The influence and power of the CCRC had reduced drastically since the end of the 1970s. Its budget (included in the Executive Yuan annual budget) was cut down year by year. In early 1990, its annual budget – NT\$1,440,000 (approx. £ 262,000 ) – was under severe attack from the opposition in the Legislative Yuan. After negotiation between parties, it was cut by 50%, and the opposition threatened 'no more money next year'. (CH'ËN PI-HUA, 1990a)

The reason for not funding the CCRC was clear. The newly elected Taiwanese legislators could not agree to subsidise this ancient institution for a purpose that no longer existed. In November 1990, a meeting of the standing committee of the CCRC was held, which called for Lee's help to take over its presidency. (CH'ËN PI-HUA, 1990a)

The CCRC was originally set up to counterattack the Cultural Revolution in the mainland, and its existence symbolised not only Chinese cultural orthodoxy, but also the KMT's political legitimacy over China. Hence, even the thought of abolishing it would risk the accusation that Taiwan was giving up political sovereignty of China, in other words, condoning Taiwanese independence. Lee Teng-hui was under pressure to declare his position.

At that time, he had just appointed Hau Pei-tsun as Premier to calm fictional strife,



and pacify doubt. Urging Lee to chair the CCRC was also a political test to sound him out about his political line – pro-independence or unification<sup>2</sup>? It was crucial for him to deal with this matter delicately, in order to alleviate suspicion within the party. Therefore, Lee could not decline.

#### **4.1.2. President's personal mouthpiece**

During the process of taking on the CCRC, Lee's staff found that it was in fact an illegal organisation. Originally, It was a special organisation set up for political purposes, and under the direct supervision of Chiang Kai-shek. After the Civic Organisation Law was promulgated in 1989, it suddenly became illegal, because it was not a non-governmental organisation, nor a quango, but categorised as a "social movement organisation". (CH'ËN PI-HUA, 1990b) It not only received government funding, but also had the privilege to mobilise government sectors. However, because of its special political mission and privileged status, no one had ever questioned its legal status.

Taking this as an excuse, Lee Teng-hui renamed and reconstructed the institution in compliance with the Civic Organisation Law. On March 28<sup>th</sup>, 1991, the National Cultural Association (NCA) was formed to replace the CCRC, and Lee Teng-hui was elected as NCA president.

According to an NCA official publication, the CCRC was replaced "to meet the

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<sup>2</sup> Lee had always been vague about his attitude towards 'Taiwanese independence'. Therefore, there was constant doubt about his support for independence. Many powerful CCRC members were still influential within the party, such as Ch'ên Li-fu 陳立夫 (the architect of the Cultural Renaissance movement) and Ch'in Hsiao-i 秦孝儀 (Chiang Kai-shek's personal



challenges of a new society and a new era". (NATIONAL CULTURAL ASSOCIATION, 1996: 2) In order not to alarm the reactionaries, it kept the CCRC's ultimate goal of 'recovering traditional Chinese culture'. Nonetheless, four new focuses were identified<sup>3</sup>. The NCA's tactic was to emphasise new tasks and ignore the old ones. All but one of the CCRC staff were made redundant, and the resources were put into three newly established committees and commissions – the Television-Culture Research Committee<sup>4</sup> (est. 1992), the Commission of Youth Community Development (est. 1997), and the Commission of Spiritual Reform Promotion (est. 1997). (CH'IN CHÊNG, 1998) These were chosen from a total number of fifteen.

Lee Teng-hui was enthusiastic about having the chance to reconstruct and take control of a new cultural apparatus. (HÊ HSÛ-CH'U, 1991) In the first year, he visited the NCA every Wednesday afternoon, attended meetings regularly, and was deeply involved in its work.

The emphasis of the NCA was to 'modernise the Taiwanese lifestyle' rather than preserve tradition. Nonetheless, the NCA and CCRC were fundamentally similar. They have quango status<sup>5</sup> and similar privileges, carry out the president's political

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secretary and long-term cultural advisor).

<sup>3</sup> They are: 1) encourage participation in cultural activities; 2) unite communities to foster moral and ethical values; 3) enhance etiquette, advocate modern lifestyles, and improve social atmosphere; 4) support cultural exchanges and establish a society in harmony. (NCA, 1996: 4)

<sup>4</sup> Although Shih Yung-kuei 石永貴 (the retired publisher of the KMT party mouthpiece, Central Daily News, and an experienced television broadcaster) was elected as the committee chairman, it was the Executive Secretary of the NCA – Lai Kuo-chou 賴國洲, Lee Teng-hui's son-in-law – who was really in charge. (CH'IN CHÊNG, 1998) Lai was also in charge of the Youth Community Development Committee.

<sup>5</sup> The annual budget that the NCA receives is from the Council for Cultural Affairs (CCA), and the Ministries of Education (MOE) and Interior (MOI). Apart from that, private donations are also important. (SU HSIEN-YA, 1992) When there was not enough money, the NCA asked money from the government. For example, its secretary-general Huang Shih-ch'êng 黃石城 asked the Executive Yuan in 1992 to draw on the governmental second reserve fund. (LIN YING-CHÊ, 1992)

message, and play a role of 'political mouthpiece'.

#### 4.1.3. Community of shared fate

In July 1992, Lee Teng-hui announced his first cultural slogan - ' *shengming gongtongti* (生命共同體 Community of shared fate )<sup>6</sup> in the NCA's central committee.

This slogan later became his official state-management policy. (KAO HUI-LIN, 1993)

Lee Teng-hui explained:

There are twenty-one million people in Taiwan. Apart from the aborigines, the ancestors of most people in Taiwan were migrants from the mainland, either fifty years ago, or hundreds of years ago. Every one of us has stuck together through thick and thin, and has created a civilised, and prosperous society here. For our future prosperity, we rely on one another. We are both Chinese and Taiwanese. There is no ethnic difference... We should be able to have an equal footing and equal opportunity... This is what '*shengming gongtongti* ' is all about. (LEE TENG-HUI, 1994b)

In order to construct such a community, which distinguished no ethnic difference, the first thing needing resolution were the *shengji* conflicts. *Shengji* 省籍 means 'the province of one's birthplace or origin'. In general, people in Taiwan categorised themselves, according to their *shengji*, as aborigines, Taiwanese or mainlanders. Ethnologically, Taiwan's Malayo-Polynesian population are the original dwellers and make up less than 1% of the population. (LIU CHI-WAI, 1981) As to Taiwanese and mainlanders, they are all Han Chinese. However, the 'Taiwanese' in this context

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<sup>6</sup> Literally, *shengming* means 'life'; *gongtong* means 'shared', or 'common'; and *gongtongti* is sometimes translated as the English word 'community'. According to many of Lee Teng-hui's speeches (1994a, 1994b, 1995, 1996), he wanted to build Taiwan as 'one community' and emphasised the shared fate and interests of Taiwan's future. I translate the slogan as: 'Community of shared fate' according to its meaning rather than the literal meaning. However, when I have to mention this slogan later as a policy, I will quote it as '*shengming gongtongti*'. This idea was suggested by the Taiwanese anthropologist Ch'ên Ch'i-nan 陳其南, then the head of the Anthropology Department of the Chinese University, Hong Kong. Ch'ên was recommended by Lai Kuo-chou, Lee's son-in-law, to advise Lee Teng-hui on cultural affairs. He proposed the whole ideological structure of *shengming gongtongti*, and wrote many of Lee's speeches on cultural issues. (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999)

refers to people who lived in Taiwan before 1945, whose ancestors migrated to Taiwan during a two hundred year period, starting around the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and ending with Japanese rule in 1895. The category 'mainlander' refers to Chinese who came to Taiwan after 1945. Therefore, the division of *shengji* in Taiwan refers not only to origins, but also to the period in which ancestors arrived on the island.

According to the 1990 census, there were 20,366,325 people in Taiwan, of which 87.11% were Taiwanese and 12.74% mainlanders. (WACHMAN, 1994: 17) Because intermarriage has been fairly common, Wachman describes this dichotomous notion of labelling people as "more meaningful when applied to the generation alive in the 1940s and 1950s than those born since... Not everyone ... fits into one of these two neat categories." (WACHMAN, 1994: 16)

In 1992, when the Census Registration Law was revised, *shengji* registration was changed. Before this date, the census registration recorded one's *zuji*<sup>7</sup>. Therefore, many Taiwan-born baby-boomers were classified as 'second-generation mainlanders' rather than Taiwanese, even though they were born and had lived in Taiwan all their lives, as is the case with myself. In order to create a less divided society, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) abolished the *shengji* record in the census, and replaced the entry with a record of one's 'birth place'. This change not only tried to reduce the gap between different *shengji*, but also demonstrated an official line defining 'Taiwanese' in order to cut out unnecessary division. As a result, the boundary between Taiwanese and mainlanders became blurred.

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<sup>7</sup> *Zuji* 祖籍 literally means the original family home or ancestral home. In the old census registration, *zuji* was recorded according to one's ancestral origin. For example, a mainlander who came from Shanghai would have his *zuji* recorded as 'Shanghai City, Jiangsu Province'. However, residents who lived in Taiwan before 1945, even though their ancestors mostly



For commentators such as: Tien & Chu (1996), Wang Chên-huan (2000), and Wachman (1994), the identity issue was the most unsettling factor in Taiwan's politics. It developed not only into a conflict of those holding different identities (Taiwanese or Chinese), but also between mainstream and non-mainstream factions, pro-unification and pro-independence groups. This conflict reached boiling point during the 1992 Legislative election. Tien and Chu (1996: 1144-45) described its significance thus: "a turning point for the evolution of the national identity crisis...all major policy debates were consumed by this underlying cleavage ... These trends set the stage for two subsequent developments: a split in the KMT and a transformation of the national identity crisis."

Therefore, the significance and the timing of the introduction of the slogan *shengming gongtongti* was political. It was an attempt to persuade people to live 'law-abidingly and peacefully' for the sake of a better future, at a time when factional strife was most severe, and a split within Taiwanese society was deepening.

This idea of *shengming gongtongti* was further proposed as Lee Teng-hui's state-managing policy after this wave of factional struggle ended in February 1993. Lee reiterated on many occasions that people in Taiwan "should work together" for their shared future and interests. (LEE TENG-HUI, 1994a, 1995, 1996) This concept was utilised to calm disagreements, remove misgivings, and maintain Lee's political hegemony.

As Lee's personal cultural mouthpiece, the NCA was the organ to elaborate this idea

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came from southern China, would have their *zuji* recorded as 'Taiwan'.

and initiate actions. The deputy secretary of the NCA, Ch'iu Juo-chū 邱榮舉, blended this concept into Lee's state-building idea:

According to President Lee, there are three crucial elements of *shengming gongtongti*: humanity, community, and state. The concept is crucial in the modernisation process... In the hope of building a modernised 'new China' of democracy, that is law-abiding, and with fair-distribution... it should be developed step by step: starting from personal life, then to community life, and finally settling under the framework of the state. (KAO HUI-LIN, 1993: 8-9)

Consequently, this principle was shifted to emphasise the importance of 'community'.

Lee Teng-hui claimed the goal of *shengming gongtongti* was to "consolidate the social structure and construct an identity consciousness", (1995: 106) and the starting point to materialise it was the 'community'. (1996:16) He asserted that 'community consciousness (社區意識 *shequ yishi*)' was the demonstration of 'the awareness of *shengming gongtongti*', and its ultimate goal was to build a state with consensus. (LEE TENG-HUI, 1995: 106- 107)

This whole idea of constructing a better and shared future, disregarding from where people had originated and precisely when they had arrived in Taiwan, was an attempt to create a new identity, a new belonging for people who lived in Taiwan. As Lee Teng-hui (1995:107) said: "It is an issue of building up a new idea, a new identity... and the whole building-up process starts from 'culture'."

#### 4.1.4. Competing views of identity

Initially, the two factions within the KMT were divided by different political interests and beliefs, holding opposing views on Taiwan's future. The 'mainstream' pressed for party reform and Taiwanisation; the 'non-mainstream' wanted to maintain the Chinese KMT tradition. However, because of the general constitution of their membership, the

two political alignments gradually became two different political assertions. Soon, the divisions were expanded to generalised political stands of different *shengji*: Taiwanese vs. mainlanders.

Wachman described the main characteristic of this period (1987 to 1993) as "the interplay between the determination to create a stable democracy and the contest between two competing views of national identity." (WACHMAN, 1994: 4)

After the mid-1990s, this division developed further, and the focus shifted to a *tong du zhi zheng* 統獨之爭 -- a struggle between two groups of people who were either pro-unification-with-China or pro-Taiwanese-independence. The non-mainstream faction accused Lee Teng-hui of encouraging separatism (SHIH CHIH-YU, 1998; CH'ËN KUEI-MIAO, 1998), and used populism to manipulate public opinion and promote independence. (HUANG KUANG-KUO, 1995) The mainstream faction criticised the non-mainstream for ignoring political reality, preserving the outworn, and not letting go of mainlanders' vested interests. (CHOU YANG-SHAN, 1998)

Lee's attitude towards Taiwanese independence was indeed ambiguous. He had never openly advocated independence, though, he always emphasised that the ROC on Taiwan was an independent sovereignty and fought vigorously for international recognition despite continuous objections from the PRC. Whenever being questioned, he would claim that Taiwanese independence was not a movement initiated unitarily within the island, but a response to the coercion and external pressure placed on them by the PRC. (SHIH CHIH-YU, 1998)

As early as in 1991, the DPP included in its manifesto its commitment "to build an



independent state". Although Lee Teng-hui preferred middle ground — 'no reunification and no independence' — and believed maintaining the *status quo* was the best solution, he tolerated the DPP's promotion of independence. (KEMENADE, 1998: 109) This annoyed the non-mainstream faction greatly. Because of his silent consent, many DPP members also supported him<sup>8</sup>.

These two camps were used to pigeonhole political beliefs into either pro-independence vs. pro-unification, or liberal vs. reactionary, and to classify various interest groups as privileged mainlanders or victimised Taiwanese. The divisions also incited emotion between different *shengji* in elections, when people were constantly forced to take sides. This conflict pervaded Taiwan and permeated every aspect of daily life.

Wachman's observation of Taiwan in the early 1990s vividly described how this uncertainty emerged, where it came from, and how it affected people's sense of security:

... underlying tensions related to national identity affected nearly every sphere of political and social interaction at the central level and guided the attitudes, decisions, and behaviour of the political elite. Residents of Taiwan have been impelled by changes in the political and social realms to re-examine their attitude toward China, toward Taiwan, and toward themselves. The simple truths to which they clung in the past no longer seem so simple and may not even be true. (WACHMAN, 1994:9)

Soul-searching questions such as: "who are the Taiwanese", "are the Taiwanese Chinese", "should people from mainland fifty years ago be included as Taiwanese",

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<sup>8</sup> Many DPP members sympathised with him, if not supporting him directly. This kind of sympathy was described as the 'Lee Teng-hui complex' (李登輝情結) within the DPP. Therefore, there was a rumour, during the 1996 presidential election, indicating that a strategy — "qi peng bao li" (棄彭保李, of abandoning the DPP's own candidate P'eng Ming-min) — was adopted in order to save votes for Lee Teng-hui to ensure his victory. (ASIA WEEKLY, 1996)

puzzled many people in Taiwan. (CH'ËN CHAO-YING, 1995b) This quest for identity was intensified especially during the election period. *The Economist* (1994) described the passionate pursuit of democracy in Taiwan during the 1994 elections: "Taiwan's voters were asked to consider the question of their national identity. Is Taiwan to remain formally a part of China, or should it declare itself an independent state, as in practice it is... Taiwanese have taken to democracy with a passion second only to ... gambling. Nearly 80% of the electorate turned out to vote." (THE ECONOMIST, 1994: 23-24) The division of *shengji* deepened and the conflicts were intensified in these passionate pursuits.

By the 1990s, many Taiwan politicians, in all parties, were Taiwanese. Because of the victory of the mainstream faction in the 1993 factional strife, the once suppressed independence line was no longer a taboo among the general public. At the same time, the New Party was formed and supported by many mainlanders who felt threatened and were uncertain about their 'place' in Taiwan.

The rise of the New Party could be seen as the direct response from pro-unification mainlanders. Therefore, the DPP described it as a 'mainlanders' party'. However, a survey conducted by the DPP in 1995, indicated a different and interesting reading. (LIANG CHIH-CHËNG, 1995) It showed that 40 % of New Party supporters were first and second generation mainlanders; while 60 % were local Taiwanese, Hakka, and aborigines. In the same survey, it also showed that 60 % of New Party supporters identified themselves as 'Chinese', and 30 % as 'both Taiwanese and Chinese'. Compared with the figures for other political parties' supporters<sup>9</sup>, the tendency of

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<sup>9</sup> According to the same survey, 40 % of KMT supporters and 18 % of DPP supporters identified themselves as 'Chinese' (LIANG CHIH-CHËNG, 1995)



New Party voters to identify themselves as Chinese was much higher.

Indeed, the New Party had always been criticised as a party with a strong China-centric ideology. (CHANG MAO-KUI, 1994) However, it was not 'a party of mainlanders', as the DPP once claimed, but 'a party of people who lived in Taiwan and identified themselves as Chinese'. It showed clearly that the difference between the three parties' supporters was not *shengji* but identity, i.e. how they identified themselves.

After two impressive years in the elections (1994-5), in which the New Party trebled its Legislator seats, its limitations began to show. After the Chinese launched the missile threat in 1995-6, the idea of unification with China became less attractive, and its support withered since. It finally lost all its seats in the 2001 election.

Competing views concerning Taiwanese identity also existed in the DPP. It divided the DPP into the New Tide (*xin chaoliu* 新潮流) and Formosa (*meili dao* 美麗島) factions. The former advocated the definite goal of Taiwanese independence; the latter had a much milder attitude to independence, and insisted on a pragmatic approach, concentrating on Taiwan's democratic progress. The gap between two factions<sup>10</sup> intensified after the mid-1990s. (WACHMAN, 1994:19-20)

The content and context of 'competing views' has changed over the years; however, they can still be roughly defined as a "pro-Taiwanese identity", and a "pro-Chinese

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<sup>10</sup> For example, the Formosa faction considered modifying its Party Principle on Taiwanese Independence after the 1994 election, because they suspected that assertion of independence had driven voters away. (CHANG MAO-KUI, 1994) In 1995, the New Tide faction protested the unfair method used within the DPP for the nomination of Legislator, since this had benefited the Formosa faction. (CHUANG SHÉNG-HUNG, 1995)



identity". At the beginning of the 1990s, when people mentioned competing views, most referred to the political opinions concerning Taiwan's future, i.e. either unification with China, or independence. It was a political struggle within the KMT, starting from different views on identity and power structure, which developed into an identity struggle among the general public. It was a process of acute hegemonic struggle in both political and cultural spheres. As a result, political hegemony was reversed.

In 2000, the opposition party (DPP) candidate Ch'ên Shui-bian 陳水扁 won the presidential election, and most Taiwanese (76.5%) felt that the PRC had become increasingly unfriendly towards Taiwan's government. At the same time, more and more Taiwanese (73.6% in 1998 August, 84% in 2000 August) believed that Taiwan should maintain its *status quo*. (MAINLAND AFFAIRS COUNCIL, 2000)

## **4.2. Changing atmosphere**

### **4.2.1. Shifting focus**

The emphasis on indigenous culture that appeared in the 1970s, came long before the conscious shift of official policy. However, it was not until the late 1980s that the Council for Cultural Affairs (CCA) responded actively. The new chairman Kuo Wei-fan saw the emergence of the indigenisation trend (LU CHIEN- YING, 1988, 1999) and responded promptly.

Kuo Wei-fan admitted openly to a reporter in 1990 that, "The direction of cultural policy and its tactics have to change drastically. The long-term direction of the CCA

would inevitably be affected by political environment and atmosphere." (CH'ËN CH'ANG-HUA, 1990) He believed that Taiwan's indigenous culture would be crucial for future development. Therefore, he modified the previous China-centric tendency and balanced policy focus between city and countryside, and between Taiwanese and Chinese culture.

During the severe factional strife, the CCA did encounter difficulties in satisfying the two sides and keeping their policy politically correct. For example, the drastic change of focus in the National Festival of Culture and Art in the late 1980s was obviously the result of trying to juggle competing views. In 1989, Beijing Opera was its theme, a response to 'China Fever'<sup>11</sup>. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1993) In 1990, Taiwanese *xiqu* (traditional opera form) became the focus. (CCA, 1991a)

In Contrast to the rise of 'China Fever', the sense of Taiwanese consciousness also strengthened, because of the comparison and the obvious difference between 'us' and 'them'. (HSIAO HSIN-HUANG, 1990) These seemingly contradictory trends of China Fever and Taiwanese consciousness developed alongside each other.

The "Arts Going to the Countryside (藝術下鄉 *yishu xiexiang*)"<sup>12</sup> scheme was

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<sup>11</sup> The term 'China Fever' was used to describe the popularity of Chinese culture after the ban on visits to and communication with the mainland was lifted after 1987. The fever showed itself especially in culture and the arts. Many mainland artists visited and performed in Taiwan. (HSIAO HSIN-HUANG, 1990:88-89)

<sup>12</sup> Although most *xiqu* performances were performed outdoors and were free to the public, they were regarded as religious activities. The Cloud Gate Dance Company was considered 'the first artistic group' to consciously perform outdoors for the public. The Cloud Gate initiated the event as a kind of 'feedback' to society. Their intention was to perform for people who could not afford to go to theatre as an educational and promotional work. (YANG MÉNG-YÜ, 1998: 167) They gave 16 performances all over Taiwan both on campuses and *pingjia shequ* 平價社區 (poor housing estates where poor people were accommodated, including Fumin 福民 Community of Shuangyuan 雙園 District, Ank'ang 安康 Community of Mucha 木柵 District, Futê 福德 Community of Sungshan 松山 District). (YANG MÉNG-YÜ, 1998: 153-167) That was the beginning of this trend and set up the format of 'Arts Going to the Countryside'.

implemented in 1990 to reduce the gap between urban and rural life-styles. In contrast to the conscious action initiated by the Cloud Gate, this wave of 'Arts Going to the Countryside' in the 1990s was conducted as an official policy.

Beginning in 1990, the CCA had arranged many tours, and sent artists around the countryside and university campuses to perform. In addition to this, similar schemes were also launched, including Weekend Cultural Square (*Jiari wenhua guangchang* 假日文化廣場, free performances in parks and museums); all sorts of arts clubs and courses (ranging from flower arranging, tea ceremony, and Chinese chess, to Beijing Opera, Gezaixi and other Taiwan *xiqu*, held by local culture centres and non-governmental organisations); 'Countryside Galleries' and 'Countryside Theatres' in local communities, etc..

This emphasis on local cultural activities fit in well with Lee Teng-hui's idea of '*shengming gongtongti*' (CHINA TIMES, 1994a), and heralded the next culture trend, 'Community Construction (社區總體營造 *shequ zongti yingzao*)'<sup>13</sup> which began in 1995.

As a result of official support and the increasing performing opportunities available, the number of artistic activities including performances and exhibitions increased dramatically from 6,051 events in 1989 to 10,705 in 1993. (CCA, 1991a, 1994: 36-37) However, did the sudden increase of artistic events really change cultural life in the countryside, or improve people's cultural life as a whole? Although the exact effect was difficult to calculate, looking at the figures of event attendance gives some

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<sup>13</sup> Literally, *shequ* means 'community', *yingzao* means 'management' and 'construction', and *zongti* means 'total' and 'overall'.



indication of success.

According to the Cultural Statistics of 1993 (CCA, 1994: 36), the average annual increase in artistic activities was 17.5% and the average annual attendance increased 20.56%. Performances, including music, dance, and theatre, did extremely well, and the average attendance at performing events increased 71.43% every year between 1989 and 1993. It was evident that the fast growing quantity of performances (3,569 events in 1989 to 6,321 events in 1993) had indeed increased the market demand and changed people's lifestyle.

#### 4.2.2. Figurehead

After the decisive battle between two factions ended in February 1993, Taiwanese politician Lien Chan 連戰 was chosen to replace Hau Pei-tsun as the Premier. During the reshuffle of the cabinet, Kuo Wei-fan was appointed Minister of Education and Soprano Shên Hsüeh-yung 申學庸 was chosen to chair the CCA.

Before her appointment, Shên Hsüeh-yung's previous administration experience was limited. She had never been recognised as a political figure<sup>14</sup>, nor had any strong ideology that could be categorised into any faction. Although the arts communities welcomed the appointment, questions about her lack of administrative ability and qualifications were asked. (KAO HUI-LIN, 1993:11) Some even suggested that she was appointed because of the influence of 'lady Lien'.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> She was a famous soprano and the head of the Music Department at Taiwan Arts College. The only civil service experience she had was in the early 1980s as the director of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Department of the CCA during Ch'ên Ch'i-lu period.

<sup>15</sup> Then newly appointed Premier Lien Chan's wife, Lien Fang Yü 連方瑀, took singing

It was not fair to judge Shên's appointment or ability merely by whom she befriended. However, not only had she no previous political experience or interests, but also she had almost reached her retirement age. It was an unusual appointment. Therefore, the speculation was that she was put in the post as a figurehead to carry out Lee's cultural policy, the Community Construction Movement, in a transition period. (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999; WU HSING-KUO, 1999; LU CHIEN-YING, 1999)

Community Construction, the most influential cultural policy in the 1990s, was implemented during Shên Hsüeh-yung's office. Nevertheless, in her first report to the Legislative Yuan in April 1993, there was no trace of any emphasis on community culture. It was not until October 1993 that this concept of 'Community Construction' was first raised in the CCA's administrative planning report to the Legislative Yuan, (CCA, 1998a: 84) which emphasised the "importance of community life" and the significance of re-building modern community culture. (SHÊN HSÜEH-YUNG, 1994)

Supported by Lee Teng-hui, a programme of *Enriching the Cultural Environment and Substantiating Cultural Facilities within the Community at Local Level (chongshi shengshi xianshi xiangzhen ji shequ wenhua ruanyingti sheshi* 充實省市, 縣市, 鄉鎮及社區文化軟硬體設施) was announced as one of Premier Lien Chan's Twelve National Constructions. (SHÊN HSÜEH-YUNG, 1994) The CCA drew up the *Development Programme for Promoting Community Culture (tuidong shequ wenhua fazhan fangan* 推動社區文化發展方案) to implement this policy, in March 1994. It

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lessons from Shên. It was said that many of Shên's amateur students were wives of high officials. Apart from Lien Fang Yü, the Governor James Soong's wife, Soong Ch'ên Wan-shui 宋陳萬水 was among them. Rumours said that Lien's cabinet appointments were heavily influenced by her. (LI YÜ-LING, 1999)

included three improvement plans: (1) enhancing cultural activities and facilities in every county and city, (2) improving cultural development in villages and towns, (3) reinforcing cultural heritage preservation. (SHÊN HSŪEH-YUNG, 1994)

It seemed that the whole idea of 'community culture' was proposed, promoted, and put into effect by the authorities within a very short period of time between 1993 and 1994. Shên Hsüeh-yung (1994: 18) reported to the Executive Yuan in 1994, and reiterated the concept of *shengming gongtongti*: "To establish community consciousness and construct community culture are equally important...[it] has been recognised as the correct direction for cultural development by the people." Apparently, this policy was raised as a "direct response to President Lee's state policy *shengming gongtongti*." (CCA, 1998a: 27)

#### 4.2.3. Cultural architect

Behind this grand cultural construction, there was an architect who drew the plans and was in charge of the operation - anthropologist Ch'ên Ch'i-nan. (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999) As a matter of fact, before the arrangement of the new cabinet was announced in 1993, Ch'ên Ch'i-nan was predicted as the possible candidate for chair of the CCA. He was a scholar who had been deeply involved in developing the goal-setting and policy-making process for Lee Teng-hui. He was said to be the man behind Lee Teng-hui's cultural policy, acting as his *wendan* (文膽, think tank in culture affairs) in the early 1990s. (TSÉNG CH'ING-YEN, 1993)

Soon after Shên Hsüeh-yung's appointment, Ch'ên Ch'i-nan was also appointed as the adviser of the CCA. In January 1994, in order to accommodate Ch'ên Ch'i-nan,



the CCA Organisational Rules were revised to create a new deputy chairman post for him. This appointment was regarded as the arrangement made from the highest level to carry out the cultural building process. (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999)

At the end of 1994, the Community Construction Movement was formally launched. On the surface, it was a CCA initiative. In reality, the movement was both mobilised and supported by Lee Teng-hui. Since then, local culture and Taiwan Studies have become the *xianxue* (顯學 the most influential and dominant discourse) in Taiwan in the 1990s. (CCA, 1998a: 84; LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999; CHUANG YUNG-MING, 1999) The movement was so popular that it was not just a cultural policy, but became the administrative emphasis in many government policies including those relating to medicine, education, the environment, and local industries. (CCA, 1998a: 93)

According to Ch'ên Ch'i-nan, an all-round and satisfying community life could enhance the local culture and reduce the cultural gap between city and countryside. (CH'ËN CH'I-NAN, 1986a, 1986b) For example, the traditional activities of *jinxiang* (進香, offering incense and worshiping in the temples) and *yingshen* (迎神, greeting the gods) were usually criticised as 'superstitious and ignorant' by modernists (CH'ËN MEI-YEN, 1991), and condemned as 'extravagant and wasteful' by the authorities. Ch'ên Ch'i-nan believed that they were actually the most practical way to provide a festive atmosphere and artistic events for people in the countryside:

By getting local people involved in local religious activities, the community consciousness can be uplifted, and the level of spiritual and material culture enhanced. That will be an important issue to contemplate in terms of cultural establishment for the people. No matter whether the goal is to develop or recover the culture (either high culture or popular culture), the focus should be especially put on the activities in the countryside and local communities. These activities should be supported and guided properly. (CH'ËN CH'I-NAN, 1986b: 14)

In Ch'ên's view, community was and still could be the solid spiritual base for people.

Hence, building up an active and lively community culture and community consciousness would be the way to build new culture and Taiwanese identity.

Undoubtedly, it must be exciting for academics to have the opportunity and power to realise what they believe in, and furthermore, to have the chance to execute it.

Unfortunately, Ch'ên Ch'i-nan's political career did not go as smoothly as he had expected, even with the support of Lee Teng-hui. I will look at the development of the movement and his disillusion later.

#### **4.2.4. Running big Taiwan, establishing new *zhongyuan***

Lee Teng-hui's book '*Jingying da taiwan* (經營大台灣 *Managing Big Taiwan*)' was published in 1994 - a collection of his important speeches made during his tenures as Taipei City Mayor and Provincial governor, demonstrating his managerial style. At the ceremony of donating the royalties of this book in January 1995, he advocated another slogan -- Running Big Taiwan, Establishing the New *Zhongyuan* (*jingying da taiwan, jianli xin zhongyuan* 經營大台灣 建立新中原) -- as the future blueprint for national development. (LEE TENG-HUI, 1995:5-11)

*Zhongyuan* literally means the 'Central Plains' in China, comprising the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River. Usually, the phrase *zhongyuan* indicates the 'homeland of Chinese', 'the central land of China', and 'the reign of the empire'. Symbolically, it was usually used to imply 'China' or 'Chinese regime'.

Lee Teng-hui (1995) explained, that Taiwan had not only been dominated by imperial



colonialism<sup>16</sup> for hundreds of years, but also was abandoned by its motherland - the Qing court in China in 1895. Historically, the Chinese in Taiwan had always been manipulated by foreign powers and could not decide their own destiny. He believed that a new *zhongyuan* culture was forming in Taiwan after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War.

Different elites from the mainland and overseas, along with Taiwan's local elite, had gathered on this island ... We have developed a new kind of cultural vitality in the last 50 years... The convergence of multi-cultural influences makes Taiwan leap to be the most advanced upsurging force in the course of Chinese culture development... and the new *zhongyuan* of Chinese culture. (LEE TENG-HUI, 1995:10)

The stress Lee placed on the possibilities for modern Taiwanese to develop a new *zhongyuan* (either Chinese culture or regime), had an underlying implication. The symbolic meaning of *zhongyuan* was not limited to a 'geographical notion', but had more to do with its central cultural position and its politically orthodox significance. Apparently, the emphasis of building the 'new *zhongyuan*', a new polity, was placed on culture. The slogan not only manifested Lee Teng-hui's intention to build Taiwan as the centre of a new culture, but also demonstrated his wish to build Taiwan as a spiritual homeland, to outgrow and divorce itself from the motherland that had previously been imposed on it. (LEE TENG-HUI, 1996:11-19)

When Lee Teng-hui raised the concept of *shengming gongtongti* (community of shared fate) in 1992, he pleaded that people from different ethnic groups and with different political beliefs should cooperate and work together for Taiwan's future. This time, the purpose was totally different. Lee Teng-hui shifted Taiwan to the 'central' position, and emphasised his future state policy would "reinforce the superior status of Taiwan as the centre of new *zhongyuan*." (LEE TENG-HUI, 1995:11)

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<sup>16</sup> Apart from Chinese rule (both the Qing and the ROC), people in Taiwan had gone through several stages of colonialism under the rule of the Spanish (1627 - 1642 A.D.), the Dutch (1624-1661A.D.), and the Japanese (1895 - 1945 A.D.). (KIYASU SACHIO, 1999)



This emphasis could be easily found in many cultural policies in the mid-1990s.

Amongst all policies, the Community Construction Movement was the most powerful and the largest in scale set to tackle the goal of taking contemporary Taiwan as the centre on which to build a national culture and modern lifestyle, rather than the old and remote Chinese culture.

### **4.3. The development of Community Construction**

#### **4.3.1. The launch**

If the slogan *shengming gongtongti* was raised for Lee Teng-hui's political survival, then the wish to establish a new *zhongyuan* in Taiwan was his dream of Taiwan's future. (LEE TENG-HUI, 1995: 5-11) In order to move Taiwan's position from being peripheral and secondary to the centre, a cultural movement to reconstruct a new Taiwanese culture was necessary. The Community Construction Movement was launched as the locomotive to promote the whole idea.

The Community Construction movement was officially launched in 1995. Its targets were to help each community create its own character, develop consensus among members and love for their hometown or community group. The ultimate goal was to encourage local people to care for their own environment, to make their own decisions, and to create community consciousness and a sense of belonging and pride, especially around urban areas where a sense of community did not exist.

(CCA, 1998a: 85)

Apparently, the movement was designed to be a process of building consciousness and shared values. In other words, it was a movement aiming to realise the concept of *shengming gongtongti* and create a new cultural *zhongyuan*. Ch'ên Ch'i-nan even described it as a process of building a "new homeland" (新故鄉 *xin guxiang*). (CH'ÊN CH'I-NAN, 1996a) This movement was an official gesture to cut off connections with the old Chinese-identity construction that the KMT had previously promoted.

In 1995, the movement was launched vigorously. The CCA drew up a massive budget to boost its introduction and promote it nationwide. The annual budget of the CCA in 1995 had risen 66.77% from the previous year. The increase was because of this new scheme to enhance cultural environment at local level. The CCA spent NT\$ 1,991,100,000 (around £39.82 millions) directly on 'Community Construction', which took up 58.34% of the CCA's 1995 annual budget ( NT\$ 3,413,025,000, approximately £68.26 millions). (CHÊNG SHU-MIN, 1996: 26-29) A vast amount of money was spent on local developments to encourage local culture and artists, and to improve local cultural facilities.

Before the 1990s, the CCA had a problem of over-centralisation, because state resources were distributed mostly to big cities, and especially concentrated on the capital city Taipei. Since state resources started to be redirected towards local development, artists and artistic groups were also encouraged to move out of Taipei and other big cities to apply for funding. The shortcoming of centralisation was being tackled. New groups and young artists were especially attracted to the new scheme. For the first time, there were more opportunities and subsidies at local level than in Taipei. (CHOU I-CH'ANG, 1999; LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999)

The first step was to encourage every community to develop their unique 'community culture'. In order to enable local culture to take root and grow, resources were poured in not only to help local people explore local history and culture, but also to empower local culture centres to take up the responsibility to participate in local culture development.

#### 4.3.2. Local agents

Within only one year, Taiwan's culture environment had changed dramatically. (CH'ËN CH'I-NAN, 1996b: 2; LIAO CH'IUNG-CHIH, 1999; CHOU I-CH'ANG, 1999; LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999) It was a change created by both the attraction of idealistic concepts and plentiful resources. Many people involved in the arts moved to the countryside, or went back to their hometown to join in local culture development schemes. The most popular response was to set up local workshops for cultural and historical research<sup>17</sup>. Within a few years, over 400 local workshops were set up all over Taiwan. (CCA, 2001b)

After the movement was launched, this sort of local workshop mushroomed. Their interests differ from one to another, but basically, they are concerned with local history, environmental issues, local culture, aboriginal conservation, heritage preservation, and nature reserves. Many were organised by young enthusiasts who gave up their jobs in big cities and went home, dedicating themselves to Community

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<sup>17</sup> The kind of *wenshi gongzuoshi* 文史工作室 can be traced back to 1957 when the Tainan Culture and History Association (*Tainan shi wenshi xiehui* 台南市文史協會) was formed by local historians and enthusiasts. However, this kind of organisation, which focused on Taiwanese cultural and historical research, had never been encouraged by the authorities. Therefore, its growth was limited. It was not until 1962 that a second one – *Zhongyuan Weekly* (中原周刊) – was formed, and in 1972 another similar workshop *Xindiao ju* (心雕居) was established. (CCA, 2001b)



Construction in their hometown. (CHOU I-CH'ANG, 1999) Some were set up by local gentry to concentrate on local affairs<sup>18</sup>. Some were voluntary organisations founded by local teachers, housewives, and enthusiasts concerned with different local issues<sup>19</sup>. Only a few of these workshops were organised by big enterprises and funded sufficiently<sup>20</sup>. (CCA, 2001b)

In order to execute the Community Construction Movement more effectively, apart from encouraging local workshops, local cultural apparatus played a crucial role. The CCA entrusted a new role to local culture centres, to act as the 'local CCA' for developing and supporting local culture. (SHÊN HSÜEH-YUNG, 1994: 8) Therefore, culture centres became the direct agents carrying out the promotion, and took up the direct responsibility to initiate and implement it locally.

To support them, the CCA tried to build up a working format for culture centres to follow. Financially, the CCA helped the culture centres to draw up their own annual budgets and provided them as much money as possible. The CCA offered them on-the-job management training. Furthermore, a team of experts was sent island-wide to provide tailor-made help and advice. By giving support, and guiding them on how to take initiative, the CCA planned to turn these culture centres into able agents. The CCA hoped that local cultural centres could act on their own. Ultimately, what the CCA needed to do was only to provide money and advice.

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<sup>18</sup> Such organisations include the Hsinkang Foundation(新港文教基金會) and the Lukang Foundation(鹿港文教基金會).

<sup>19</sup> They include the Tanshui Folk Workshop(淡水鄉土研究會), the Shênk'ung Culture and Heritage Workshop(深坑文化古蹟工作室) and the Yungk'ang Community(永康社區).

<sup>20</sup> This sort of organisations includes the Lin Pên-yuan Foundation (林本源中華文教基金會), the New Hope Foundation(財團法人新希望文教基金會), and the Taiyuan Arts Foundation(台原

### 4.3.3. Problems emerged

Ideally, everyone should care for their own hometown, make decisions for themselves, create an environment they like to be in, share responsibility, and be proud of local unique culture. In other words, the Community Construction Movement was a "new homeland construction", and a "zaoren 造人 (people reconstruction) project". (CH'ÉN CH'I-NAN, 1996a, 1996b: 3) Its aim was to recreate a beautiful new world through local people's own effort. Nevertheless, the reality was that the beautiful picture that the CCA tried to portray was not realistic without long-term investment and education. Essentially, problems occurred because of a high expectation of quick results in the political arena.

In order to 'mobilise local people to function by themselves', the CCA tried to empower the culture centres first, by giving them money, support and a sense of honour. However, enabling culture centres to act as the 'autonomous local CCA' was difficult in reality. (LI YÜ-LING, 1999) Because culture centres had low status within the local government structure, they had long been regarded as subordinate, and had always yielded to local politicians' demands. (LI YÜ-LING, 1999) Finding a way to make a clean break with localism became a problem.

It became even more complicated when it came to the issue of money. The CCA had poured as many resources as possible in at a local level since 1995. However, most of the money was spent on 'facilities' and buildings<sup>21</sup>, rather than long-term tasks of

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藝術文化基金會).

<sup>21</sup> There were 12 tasks in the scheme, including expanding and refurbishing culture centres in the counties and cities; providing professional support to help culture centres to develop their own unique themes according to local characteristics, and subsidising them to buy collections



fostering habits of autonomy and developing community culture organically.

Not only was the way in which the money was used problematic, the half-half funding pattern that the CCA offered also created troubles for local government<sup>22</sup>. When the local governments could not raise enough money from either local annual budgets or from other local resources, the Community Construction Movement became a burden, especially for poor and remote counties that were already in heavy debt.

In 1997, only one year after the movement was launched, the CCA annual budget decreased by 1/3 - almost NT\$ 600,000,000 (around £ 12 million). Then chairwoman Chêng Shu-min found herself under severe interrogation about the reduction in the Legislative Yuan. She explained that the decrease was a direct consequence of the fact that the local governments could not raise enough money for the half-half subsidy scheme. (NATIONAL CHIANG KAI-SHEK CULTURE CENTRE, 1997: 94)

Since then, the budget for the Community Construction has been reduced year after year. The status of this once most important cultural project slid sharply after 1997.

From almost 60% of the CCA annual budget in 1995, (CHÊNG SHU-MIN, 1996: 26-29) the Community Construction budget slipped to 11.98% in 1999 (NT\$ 432,807,000, approximately £ 8.66 millions) (CCA, 1998c) The drop in budget indicated the drastic slip of the importance of the Community Construction Movement

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from local artists or craftsmen; improving local culture and arts development; helping the local culture centres to plan and run their own festivals; giving culture centres guidance on how to organise small-scale international events; encouraging cultural activities in the community; improving performing spaces in towns and villages; preserving local traditional buildings; preserving traditional folk arts and running lessons to pass on traditional skills; and setting up the National Centre for Traditional Arts, the National Cultural Heritage Preservation and Research Centre, and the Traditional Music Centre. (CHÊNG SHU-MIN, 1996)

<sup>22</sup> In order to encourage the local government to take initiative, the CCA provided half of the budget of any related local cultural development project. The local government only needed to



in government policy.

The CCA blamed the difficulties mainly on two areas: impotent local governments and inexperienced local people. In addition, the inconsistency between related authorities was also problematic. (CCA, 1998a: 92-93) Many researches have come to similar conclusions, blaming local people for a lack of democratic habits and experience of self-government. (HUANG KUO-CHÊN, 1998; CHÊNG I-CHÛN, 1996) However, before the movement was officially launched, local issues (such as local culture, environment, and power structures) were not taken into account while the policy was drawn. According to Chêng Rom-shing<sup>23</sup>(1999), who has had life-long experience working in the Hakka community, and with folk musicians, the crucial problem of Community Construction came from arrogant 'outsiders' trying to coach local people how to live their lives. (CHÊNG ROM-SHING, 1999)

Chêng Rom-shing believes that the fatal weakness of this movement was that it did not pay enough attention to 'people'. "The movement has the best intentions. However, the method of approaching the local community is too arrogant. Every place has a different character, individual needs, a particular social relationship and power structure. The way to approach and regenerate each community should also be different." (CHÊNG ROM-SHING, 1999)

Many local workshops and clubs were set up by young enthusiasts, with the help of scholars and experts from outside the communities. According to the CCA's own

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raise the other half of the money.

<sup>23</sup> He is an active Hakka musician and famous folk music theorist who works closely with Hakka communities and people. He is now the president of the National Taiwan Junior College of Performing Arts.

research (CCA, 2001b), many of the workshops that were set up concentrated on getting governmental contracts: either gaining funding to research local history and culture, or being contracted to run local Festival and events.

Local people, who had worked in this area for many years and had strong local connections, were sometimes left out or ignored, because they did not know how to apply for funding, could not write 'attractive' proposals, nor make connection with Taipei-based scholars. Many of them were volunteers and did not have the managerial ability required. Before the arrival of these 'professional' community workshops, community affairs developed organically. After the movement was launched, the concept of building a shared community indeed became popular. (LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999; CHOU I-CH'ANG, 1999) However, many local decisions concerning public affairs fell to the hands of outsiders - experts and well-educated newcomers. (CHÊNG ROM-SHING, 1999; CHÊNG I-CHÛN, 1996)

Even people who came back to their hometown with ideals of rebuilding local culture, sometimes fell into a nostalgic and idealistic trap, and were criticised for "consuming the idea of 'hometown', and utilising romantic imagination and fantasy as cultural commodities". (CHÊNG I-CHÛN, 1996)

#### **4.3.4. Local factional strife**

In the traditional communities, there were *luzhu* 爐主<sup>24</sup> and village elders in charge. Therefore, it was common that local affairs were discussed and decided by local

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<sup>24</sup> *Luzhu* is the person who organises the temple celebrations. The person is chosen by the fellow villagers and has to get approval from the Gods through casting *Jiao* 筊 (a bamboo

gentries and elders, and supported by traditional religious organisations and local kinship networks. (CHÊNG ROM-SHING, 1999) The Community Construction Movement did not pay attention to local culture and failed to understand 'local power structures'.

Newly formed community organisations relied mostly on experts and the authorities to provide ideas, a working pattern, funding, connections, and even the content of the events. Many experts became the staple contractors supplying professional advice, producing research, reports, and even organising events and performances; or, sometimes, acting as a rubber stamp for the approval of cultural construction projects. (LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999)

Apparently, this social reform process needed time and education to change old habits, values and the over-all culture. Nevertheless, there were fundamental problems that the CCA did not touch on, or notice.

According to Chêng Rom-shing, (1999) local factional strife accelerated after the movement was launched. He said: "Without the understanding of the locality, or paying respect to the local tradition and the elders, this project has no 'foundation' to build upon; therefore, its effect becomes fragmented... Worst of all, it intensifies local factional strife... There are more factions and divisions now in the countryside than ever."

Sociologist Huang Kuang-kuo (1995) held a similar view, and pointed out that the fundamental flaw of this movement was that it ignored the influence of local

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divination tool). The chance to be a *luzhu* is an honour in village life. (LI FÊNG-MAO, 1992)



factions(*difang paixi* 地方派系). He believed that local factions actually used the movement to manipulate public opinion, take advantage of public resources, and expand their own local influence.

The 'community' concept was borrowed from English, and translated as '*shequ* 社區' or '*shequn* 社群'. The former indicates geographically confined locations, while the latter implies a set of collective groups based on similar interests, shared values, or common professions. Huang Kuang-kuo (1995: 58) believed that the meaning of 'community' in Western society was different from the meaning for Taiwanese. Western society emphasised and respected individualism, while Taiwanese and Chinese society stressed collectivity: "For people who live in Taiwan's countryside, they have already had strong sense of localism and local consciousness, which is based on kinship and geographical links...Put more clearly, 'community consciousness' in Taiwan is simply tantamount to 'localism (*difang yishi* 地方意識 local consciousness)'."

Unexpectedly, the movement actually enabled localism to grow stronger, and divided factions further. (HUANG KUANG-KUO, 1995:53-74) It is perhaps inevitable that wherever there is money involved, there is a struggle fighting for it. The resources that poured in became entangled with political interests, and made the local factional strife even more severe. The sudden increase of money intensified local factional strife.

The Community Construction Movement was supposed to mobilise a revival of community spirit and a sense of honour. It should have been a crusade fighting against narrow-minded nativism or localism. However, it seemed that it went the

opposite way. The central government's ignorance of the local environment hampered the effect of the movement. Many powerful factions that had good political connections grew stronger. They took advantage of the movement to win the factional strife. Hence, there were times when the movement became a crucial factor in dividing the community, not uniting it. (CHÊNG ROM-SHING, 1999)

#### **4.3.5. Top-down implementation**

At local level, this policy was a burden. Local governments viewed the policy as: "the CCA's business... we are just helping them". (CHÊNG I-CHÛN, 1996; HUANG HSIU-CHIN, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c; LI YÛ-LING, 1999) Therefore, the effort to implement Community Construction was sometimes criticised as a superficial and temporary 'make-over'.

For example, Sani 三義 town is a small Hakka town famous for producing wood carving artefacts. Miaoli 苗栗 County decided to promote Sani as a 'wood-carving town', and transform its high street into a 'wood-carving street'. In 1995, the County authorities urged the locals to organise a community committee to promote the woodcarving business and the town's image as part of the Miaoli Culture and Art Festival.

To express his support, President Lee Teng-hui was present at the opening, together with other high officials, such as the then Governor James Soong. In order to impress the high officials from the central government, Sani's messy street was changed

over-night. The shop signboards were re-designed and unified<sup>25</sup>, the jumbled street parking was moved away temporarily, and piles of wood in front of the shops were also transferred somewhere else. (HUANG HSIU-CHIN, 1995a)

On the surface, it seemed that Sani had been transformed into a community with distinct characteristics, and geared up to its cultural industry. In fact, it was not the case. According to Tsêng Chin-ts'ai 曾進財, the chairman of the Sani wood-carving Street Committee, "once the high officials left, the Festival finished, the street got back to its original state. The committee has not met since then." (HUANG HSIU-CHIN, 1995a) This sort of makeover effort did not improve the way communities organised their own affairs, nor affect the ways in which they operated as a whole.

Much professional help and financial support was offered by the central government. The same format of Culture and Art Festivals at local level was held all over the island to emphasise local character. However, after the attention of the media went, the experts and helping hands left the communities, and local people did not know what to do next. An enthusiastic participant in the Penghu 澎湖 festival expressed her anxiety: "What next? The government has not instructed us yet." (HUANG HSIU-CHIN, 1995a)

The movement was supposed to promote 'local uniqueness' and 'a sense of pride'. However, the way in which it was carried out became formulated and standardised. The so-called 'uniqueness' did not always have a cultural or historical connection, but

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<sup>25</sup> Not everyone was happy with the new design and put their own signboard back after the officials left. (HUANG HSIU-CHIN, 1995a)



was selected by experts or advised by local cultural workshops. Apart from a few cultural industries that traditionally existed such as wood carving in Sani and historical buildings and cultural tourism in Lukang, many 'local characteristics' were invented recently. For example, Paihe 白河 Town in Tainan County was given the beautiful image of the 'lotus', because of its newly developed lotus planting and lotus products. (HUANG HSIU-CHIN, 1995a, 1995b; LU CHIEN-YING, 1999)

However, this 'assigned character' was not necessarily to do with the local character, nor did it have historical or cultural significance locally. Sometimes, these 'characteristics' were arbitrarily imposed upon the inhabitants. For example, the selling point of Yut'ien 玉田 town in the National Festival was the 'Lion dance', which did not have a local historical origin. It was chosen by the Ilan 宜蘭 culture centre and local workshops to jazz up this insignificant little town. (HUANG HSIU-CHIN, 1995c)

I am not suggesting that the movement was not successful. Its ideals attracted people's imagination, and it produced a passionate response from both the culture communities and ordinary people. (CHOU I-CH'ANG, 1999; LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999) Many young people were touched by Ch'ên Ch'i-nan's passion and were inspired to dedicate their energy to their hometowns. (CHOU I-CH'ANG, 1999; CH'ÊN CH'I-NAN, 1996b) Furthermore, because the idea of the Community Construction Movement was borrowed from the Japanese *zaoding* (造町)<sup>26</sup> movement, for the older Taiwanese generation who were educated under the Japanese rule, it also seemed appealing.

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<sup>26</sup> *Zaoding* is a Japanese term; *zao* means 'construct', and *díng* means 'region' or 'area'. It was introduced by Ch'ên Ch'i-nan, and promoted by Japanese professor Miyazaki Kiyoshi 宮

In 1996, the CCA promoted the movement further and targeted: "*wenhua chanye hua, chanye wenhua hua* 文化產業化, 產業文化化(industrialising culture, and culturalising industry) to blend together local cultural character and the local agricultural industry. (CH'ËN CH'I-NAN, 1996b) The idea was borrowed from the Japanese experience of selling local flavour through agricultural products. (CCA, 1999c) For example, Japanese scholar Miyazaki Kioshi was invited to demonstrate how to carry out a *zaoding* project in Puli 埔里, an idyllic small town in central Taiwan. After interviewing local people and surveying, he recommended they use 'sugar cane' as starting point to develop local character and tourism. (CCA, 1999c: 59- 60)

This movement posed as a policy responding to the wish of the people, aimed at empowering the communities. It was supposed to be a social reform movement. Nonetheless, its whole development had proved that it was in fact a cultural policy imposed from above, not a social movement<sup>27</sup> initiated from the bottom and operated by the people themselves.

The criticism of being a top-down policy did not deter its architect, Ch'ên Ch'i-nan. He (CH'ËN CH'I-NAN, 1995, 1996a, 1996b) repeatedly defended the top-down strategy, and believed the CCA had to mobilise and promote it forcefully: "Many believed that the community consensus should sprout from the people, a result of autonomous response. Theoretically, it was true. But, if it was the case, the CCA should just sit back and enjoy the results. In reality, the community consensus could never evolve by itself." (CH'ËN CH'I-NAN, 1996b: 15)

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崎清. (CCA, 1999c)

<sup>27</sup> In general, there should be at least four aspects of a 'social movement' : 1) networks of informal interaction; 2) shared beliefs and solidarity; 3) collective action on conflictual issues; 4) action which displays largely outside the institutional sphere and the routine procedures of



Clearly, this movement was a top-down action. Although there were criticisms about the domination and arrogance that the movement had shown and how it was promoted, Ch'ên had different views. He believed that those criticisms adopted western concepts but ignored the unique situation in Taiwan. (CH'ÊN CH'I-NAN, 1995: 114) For him, top-down implementation and forceful promotion were necessary. (CH'ÊN CH'I-NAN, 1995) He believed that there was no non-governmental force in Taiwan supporting the arts, nor fundamental and long-term planning being carried out in the cultural sphere. "Without a strong and dominant cultural apparatus and system, it is obvious that both the development and the future of Taiwanese culture would be hindered... Therefore, not only do we need cultural policies, but also strong and dominant ones to put the cultural environment into a virtuous circle." (CH'ÊN CH'I-NAN, 1995: 114)

#### **4.4. Political storm**

##### **4.4.1. Pursuing international recognition**

Following his election in 1990, Lee Teng-hui had concentrated on constitutional reform in the early 1990s. During this period, Taiwan underwent a drastic process of democratisation. The Legislative election held in December 1992 was a watershed event in the course of the transition of Taiwan's political regime. (TIEN & CHU, 1996) At the party congress in August 1993, the historical objective of 'recovering the mainland' was formally abandoned. An old era had finished, a new age begun.



Democratisation encouraged the growth of Taiwanese consciousness. The process of democratisation has proven Taiwan to be an effective polity and separate sovereign state. Economic development and its growing influence also boosted Taiwanese confidence. However, the democratisation and economic development intensified Taiwan's ambiguous international status and the anxiety of the Taiwanese. The Taiwanese longed for a better and stronger international status and recognition. Domestic pressure grew stronger, and consequently, Lee Teng-hui was pressed to act more aggressively upon this issue and to test the limits placed on Taiwan's international status. (YAHUDA, 1996:1333)

For Taiwan, diplomatic ties were always difficult to establish under the resistance and obstruction of the PRC. Several 'alternative' diplomatic principles were developed. During the early 1990s, when the ROC took aggressive diplomatic moves in international society, the PRC did not pay too much attention at first and chose not to counteract in order to maintain a good relationship. However, since 1993, many different strategies were used to explore the possibilities of expanding Taiwan's diplomatic relationships, such as 'dollar diplomacy'<sup>28</sup>, 'the southward policy'<sup>29</sup>, and 'academic or holiday diplomacy'<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> This strategy targeted small and impecunious developing countries to build a diplomatic relationship by investing or donating money to help their economy. Taiwan used economic strength to present itself as an international benefactor, and set up a fund to help 'friendly states', such as giving economic aid to Poland, the Philippines, Paraguay, Latvia, and technical aid to African and Latin American countries. (YAHUDA, 1996:1331-1332)

<sup>29</sup> It was a deliberate attempt to shift Taiwan's excessive economic ties with the mainland to South-East Asia. Since early 1994, the ROC started to ease bureaucratic procedures for trade and investment in this area. Within a year, Taiwan had become the largest investor in Vietnam, the second largest in Thailand, and a major investor in the region as a whole. According to Yahuda (1996:1333-1337), this policy was not purely an economic one, but more a political one. Because of the increasing economic relationship with countries in this region, any threat to Taiwan would be regarded as a threat to their own economic stability.

<sup>30</sup> This strategy emphasised making every overseas visit useful by building informal relations and contacts. For example, then Premier Lien Chan visited the Czech Republic and received an honorary degree there in 1996. Governor James Soong visited the Czech Republic and Hungary later that year. Both claimed to have been taking a holiday there, but carried out

Many new strategies were also used by overseas Taiwanese representative offices. For example, the Co-ordination Council for North American Affairs (CCNAA)<sup>31</sup> revised its lobbying strategy, as part of a new diplomatic offensive in 1993. The CCNAA not only engaged almost two dozens lobbyists, but also spent US \$4.5 million to hire Cassidy & Associates in Washington D.C. to persuade American Congressmen of the rightness of Taiwan's policies and win sympathy. (ROBINSON, 1996: 1344-1345)

The ROC government initiated another diplomatic move in 1993 trying to re-enter the United Nations (UN), a proposition had always been preferred by the DPP. Although it was clear that there was no way that the appeal (joining the UN under the name of the ROC on Taiwan - ROCOT) would be accepted, because of the PRC's influence within the UN, the ROC took it as a strategy to raise its profile internationally.

There is no doubt that the ROC will continue to apply year after year, because this act symbolises the assertion of Taiwan's sovereignty. As Yahuda comments:

"Clearly it is more dangerous for the people of Taiwan to be ignored or overlooked than it is to be seen thwarted by China at the UN. The forlorn attempt to be considered for entry is in fact an opportunity to address the international community on terms of Taiwan's choosing... [and] to engage Beijing in open public debate." (1996: 1337-1338)

In 1995, when President Lee Teng-hui was invited to give the 'Olin Lecture' at Cornell University's alumni reunion weekend in Ithaca, New York, President Clinton allowed

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non-political activities and contact during their visits.

<sup>31</sup> The CCNAA was an organisation that had previously been the ROC Embassy in America. It was formed in 1979 after the USA established a formal diplomatic relationship with the PRC. Later in 1994, it was renamed the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO).



him a personal visit. The lecture Lee Teng-hui gave on June 9<sup>th</sup> was titled "Always in My Heart", and emphasised his political ideal of being 'always with the people'. *Time* said: "Lee Teng-hui's trip to the dais at his alma mater was a going-forth into the world for both Lee and his dynamic but perilously isolated island republic, Taiwan." (SPAETH, 1995)

Under great pressure from the PRC, apart from the lecture, Lee Teng-hui's American trip was kept low-key. He only met three U.S. Senators and attended class-reunion festivities. Lee Teng-hui did not receive the usual treatment as a head of state. The only involvement the Clinton Administration had was the granting of a visitor's visa. Even so, this visit was regarded as a "public relations triumph" for Taiwan. (SPAETH, 1995) Spaeth (1995) reckoned that "Lee's back-to-school holiday was the most important Taiwanese diplomatic coup since the U.S. broke off formal relations in 1979 in deference to Mainland China."

It seemed to be a triumph for Taiwan, but probably a bad decision for Washington. This incident triggered the lowest point in Sino-America relations. (ROBINSON, 1996) Shambaugh even described it as being "in real danger of degenerating into a new Cold War". (WEHRFRITZ, 1995:21) The PRC withdrew its ambassador from Washington, cancelled all high-level visits, and expelled two 'American spies' just before Taiwan's presidential election in 1996.

Shambaugh pointed out that Lee's trip to America was interpreted by the PRC as "a dangerous step towards *de jure* independence". (SHAMBAUGH, 1996a: 1286) Taiwan's attempt to expand its international recognition was interpreted as "a move to divide China permanently". Furthermore, it was especially serious for the PRC



because this incident had set up a 'bad precedent'. "The slight upgrading in American relations with Taiwan in 1994 and President Lee Teng-hui's visit in 1995 fundamentally changed Beijing's calculus. The Chinese leadership was concerned that other nations would follow suit." (SHAMBAUGH, D, 1996a: 1287)

All these diplomatic endeavours and conflicts were to do with 'Taiwan's place in the world'. The pursuit of international recognition in the 1990s was different from the 1980s' effort. The recognition that the ROC longed for had shifted from maintaining the image of the 'legitimate Chinese government' in the 1980s to constructing an image of Taiwan as 'a separate sovereignty' in the 1990s.

#### **4.4.2. Rising hostility from the PRC**

In terms of timing, the Community Construction Movement was launched at a period of conflict and disillusion. After the Qiandao Lake incident<sup>32</sup> in 1994, the Taiwanese were disappointed by the 'motherland' and disillusioned about the imagined identity of being 'Chinese'. (SHIH CHÊNG-FÊNG, 2000) Furthermore, when communications between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait increased in the early 1990s, the Taiwanese realised that they were different from the people of the 'motherland'. The realisation of their 'other-ness' became more and more obvious: "The values are so different... We feel somehow very familiar with Chinese culture... but we're a new kind of person." (ELLIOTT, 1996:16) Even the older generation mainlanders who lived in Taiwan for over fifty years found it difficult to feel at home in the mainland. "I

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<sup>32</sup> This incident happened in 1994. Taiwanese tourists were robbed and burnt to death on a boat trip in China. Also see Chapter 3, footnote 41.

no longer know anybody there. We have little in common." (ELLIOTT, 1996:16)

Once the old imagined 'motherland' was no longer the 'homeland', the anxious quest for a new identity and a sense of belonging intensified. This movement not only promoted an idealistic 'homeland-construction' idea, but also reflected the growing Taiwanese consciousness that appeared in the early 1990s. Most of all, it captured the newly released longing for '*dangjia zuozhu* 當家作主 (being one's own master, making decision for one's own affairs)' among the people. (HUANG HSIU-CHIN, 1995a)

President Lee openly expressed his 'sadness of being Taiwanese' in an interview with the Japanese writer Shima Ryutaro (司馬遼太郎) in 1994, describing the sadness of Taiwan's colonial past. He openly admitted that the KMT was one of the 'foreign regimes'<sup>33</sup> that ruled Taiwan', and expressed his wish to transform the KMT into a Taiwanese KMT. (LEE TENG-HUI, 1994a: 472- 473) This interview aroused doubt domestically, angered Beijing, and provoked overseas Chinese communities. (TU WEI-MING, 1996: 1131)

His statement irritated the PRC, and he was accused of endorsing Taiwanese independence. The PRC openly threatened to take action if Taiwan declared independence: "we will not sacrifice political concerns to economic interests... it is better to have a devastated Chinese Taiwan, which we can quickly rebuild, than an independent Taiwan under American-Japanese domination." (KEMENADE, 1998: 134)

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<sup>33</sup> Also see Chapter 4.2.4. When Lee Teng-hui talked about building Taiwan as the new *zhongyuan*, he also expressed similar ideas.



The threat became so real in 1995 that the Taiwanese lived under fear and uncertainty. A best selling book – *August 1995: Great Prediction of the Communist Chinese Invasion of Taiwan* (1995 runbayue: zhonggong wuli fan tai shiji da yuyan — 九九五閏八月：中共武力犯台世紀大預言, English title was provided by the publisher) – stirred up a wave of national anxiety and fear in Taiwan.<sup>34</sup> The author Chêng Lang-ping 鄭浪平(1994) described the psychological, political and strategic context in which the PRC's ambition to be an international superpower depended on its possession of Taiwan. His theory was that the PRC would sooner or later wage war against Japan. Without controlling Taiwan, it could not win the war. He predicted that the military action towards Taiwan would most likely take place between August 1995 and the Election Day (March 24<sup>th</sup> 1996). In 1994, 3,000,000 copies were sold in Taiwan alone. Although "professional military analysts initially regarded Chêng's book as pure sensationalism", (KEMENADE, 1998:127) Chêng Lang-ping's book reminded the Taiwanese of the military threat that Communist China had always imposed, and this intensified distrust of the PRC.

#### **4.4.3. Presidential election and missile crisis**

The cross-strait tension grew after Lee's US visit. The PRC cancelled a semi-official summit and postponed quarterly meetings on non-political issues with Taiwan

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<sup>34</sup> The book was based on traditional Chinese superstition and had an alarming impact on public confidence in Taiwan's security. Because 1995 was the last leap year of the lunar calendar of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with two intercalary months of August, it warned that such years were traditionally catastrophic in Chinese history. It predicted that Taiwan would be militarily vulnerable between mid-1995 to mid-1996, and the temptations for the PRC to invade Taiwan would be the greatest. In fact, the suspicion and panic about Chinese possible invasion was not purely superstitious. Just before 1996 Taiwan's presidential election, the PLA undertook its largest ever manoeuvres in the Taiwan Strait and nearby regions in which 150,000 troops, one large naval armada, newly-purchased submarines, fighter jets and bombers were



authorities. (NEWSWEEK, 1995a) Nonetheless, the real target of this aggression was the 1996 presidential election, which was regarded by the PRC as a deliberate action towards a new independent country, or at least a de facto one.

On July 21<sup>st</sup> 1995, the first PRC missile exercise commenced 95 miles north of Taiwan. The 815<sup>th</sup> Missile Brigade of the Second Artillery Corps of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) fired six M-9 medium-range surface-to-surface ballistic missiles into the sea in the subsequent five days. (SHAMBAUGH, 1996a:1285) In mid-August, a second 'missile exercise' was carried out. Highly accurate anti-ship missiles were fired from naval destroyers into the East China Sea. It appeared to some Taiwanese that these missile exercises happened to accord with Chêng Lang-ping's prediction: the T-Day (Turning Point Day, the time of Chinese invasion) was coming.

The tension was at its height before the 1996 Presidential election. Around the end of 1995 to the beginning of 1996, newspapers throughout East Asia were regularly filled with scenarios of the coming war between China and Taiwan. (KEMENADE, 1998: 134)

On 5 March 1996, less than 20 days before the election, China announced its new series of missile tests. The PLA fired four M-9 medium range ballistic missiles into two 25 kilometre-wide box zones just outside of the harbours of Keelung 基隆 and Kaohsiung 高雄 (two biggest harbours in the north and south of Taiwan), the impact zones were only 30 and 20 kilometres offshore. (SHAMBAUGH, 1996a:1287)

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deployed. (SHAMBAUGH, 1996a: 1286)

During the 1995 missile tests, not only was Taiwan's economy heavily hit, its morale was also put to a severe test. The stock market dropped 19 % within one month; at least US\$10 billion left the country to buy foreign currencies or gold; applications for emigration had dramatically increased. (CABESTAN, 1996: 1278-1279)

The reaction towards the missile threat in 1996 was relatively calm, and the economic impact was also much smaller than in 1995. People's attention was drawn to the bustling election campaign. The most popular slogan was '*chuandan* (傳單 election leaflets), not *daodan* (導彈 ballistic missile) will decide our future'. To the PRC's disappointment, the missile threat did not disrupt the presidential election or deter Taiwanese voters. On the contrary, this crisis aroused resentment towards Beijing and actually helped to boost Lee's popularity, because it "created a 'rally-around-[the-]leader' effect". (TIEN & CHU, 1996:1170)

The years 1994 to 1996 were the crucial period for the formation of Taiwanese identity. How the Taiwanese viewed themselves in the 1990s changed drastically at this point. According to 21 surveys concerning Taiwanese identity conducted by several reputable institutions (see Appendix 1) between 1992 and 2000, the identity trend reversed clearly at the point of Chinese aggression in 1995 and 1996.

In 1992, 44% of Taiwanese identified themselves as 'Chinese', 16.7% identified themselves as 'Taiwanese', and 36.5 % identified themselves as 'both Chinese and Taiwanese'. The figure started to change dramatically after the Qindao Lake incident. The incident changed the Taiwanese impression of the mainland Chinese as a whole. In July 1994, the figure of Taiwanese identifying themselves as 'Chinese' slumped more than half to 21.7%, the figure identifying themselves as 'Taiwanese' increased



dramatically to 28.4%, and as 'both' rose to 49.5%. Especially after the PRC's missile crisis, this shift developed further. Although the PRC appealed to resume cross-strait talks under the 'one China' precondition in 1997, the hostility between two sides of the Taiwan Strait did not subside. For example, the number of people who identified themselves as 'Taiwanese' by the end of 1997 rose to 43.3%, as 'both Chinese and Taiwanese' 39.4%, and the once dominant group identifying themselves as 'Chinese' became the minority at 17.3%.

Since then, people who identified themselves as 'Chinese' steadily decreased over the years with or without the PRC aggression (16.3% in April 1998, 12.7% in April 1999, 13.6% in April 2000). The once minority group (those identifying themselves as 'Taiwanese') increased since 1994 (22.5% in March 1994), to 42.3% in April 1998, and 42.5% in April 2000. The group identifying themselves as 'both' remained steadily around 40% (41.2% in April 1998, 45.4% in April 1999, 38.5% in April 2000). This dramatic reverse between Chinese and Taiwanese identities demonstrated both negative factors (such as national security crisis, and factional strife) and positive factors (such as cultural constructions, policy promotion, and funding) could influence the formation of identity, and even reverse the tide to grasp political hegemony.

#### **4.4.4. Politicisation**

In spite of domestic uncertainty, the prediction of possible catastrophe, and military threats, the year 1995 was in fact a year of historical significance and reconciliation for Taiwan. Firstly, it marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the recovery of Taiwan and 100



years of the Shimonoseki Treaty<sup>35</sup>. Secondly, Lee Teng-hui, representing the KMT, apologised to the 228 Incident's victims and their families for the mistakes that the KMT government made. Lee's open apology was the first time since 1947 that the KMT government admitted and begged pardon for the historical tragedy. The government's recognition of the victims' suffering helped to heal the historical wounds.

Many measures were taken officially to rehabilitate these cases of injustice. The 228 investigating team was set up to investigate the incident and give a just and neutral report about what happened. The 228 Monument was erected on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1995. At the same time, the construction of the Taipei 228 Memorial Museum was also undertaken. In this politically sensitive time, Chêng Shu-min 鄭淑敏 was appointed to take over the CCA.

Chêng Shu-Min had many years' experience of working in the media<sup>36</sup>, and therefore, she was very good at 'voicing' the CCA policy and winning support. (LU CHIEN-YING, 1995b) Her PR ability and media background helped the CCA to establish a better relationship with the public, and to have a much 'easier' time in the Legislative Yuan. However, she played a different role to the three previous chairpersons. Under her leadership, the CCA was used to support Lee's election campaign and carry out political missions. (LI YÜ-LING, 1999; LU CHIEN-YING, 1999; K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999)

Many cultural events at that time were held to either push the historical message

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<sup>35</sup> Treaty of Shimonoseki 馬關條約 was signed by the Qing Court with Japan in 1895. Taiwan was ceded to Japan because of this treaty. It brought half a century's colonial rule to Taiwan.

<sup>36</sup> She had worked in the Chinese Television System, and on the newspapers the *China Times* and the *China Times Weekly*, as well as in the Government Information Office.

forward, or seek reconciliation for the purpose of improving social harmony and making alliances. Many concerts<sup>37</sup> were themed and designed to celebrate the occasion, and to re-examine Taiwan's relationship with Japan and China. For example, the 228 Commemoration Concert held by the CCA was part of the healing remedy, an expression of apology for the historical wrongdoing, held just one month before the Presidential election.

Among all the events held, the 'Music, Moon Festival, and Intercalary August' (音樂中秋 閏八月 *Yinyue zhongqiu runbayue*) in October 1995 was considered the most politicised cultural event. 90 concerts were held simultaneously island-wide, with over 160 music groups involved. Although the concerts were to celebrate the 'Moon Festival' (the full moon of the eighth Lunar month), it was obvious that the concerts were designed to calm Taiwanese anxiety, to relieve the tension stirred up by the prediction of a catastrophic 'intercalary August'.

All in all, the cultural events that the CCA held before the presidential election were either for the purpose of building confidence, or part of Lee Teng-hui's election campaign. (LU CHIEN-YING, 1995a) It was apparent that Chêng Shu-min not only played a key role in 'spinning' the Lee Teng-hui ideology, but also led the CCA to make way for Lee to run his presidential campaign. (LI YÜ-LING, 1999; K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999)

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<sup>37</sup> Many concerts were held, such as '50 years of Taiwan recovery (*guangfu wushi* 光復五十)', '50 years' victory of the anti-Japanese invasion (*kangzhan shengli wushi nian jinian* 抗戰勝利五十年紀念)', 'the July 7<sup>th</sup> Anti-Japanese war anniversary (*qiqi kangri jinian* 七七抗日紀念)', 'War and Peace: 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Second World War (*zhanzheng yu heping: er ci dazhan wushi zhounian* 戰爭與和平: 二次大戰五十周年)', etc.. (NATIONAL CHIANG KAI-SHEK CULTURE CENTRE, 1996:212- 226)

It was evident that the CCA used it as a political propaganda vehicle. According to K'o Chi-liang (1999), a CCA veteran: "As far as the culture community is concerned, the politicisation of the CCA was problematic. However, from a political point of view, it was understandable that the ruling party used all the political assets it could get hold of during the election period."

As with Shên Hsüeh-yung, Chêng Shu-min's tenure of office was short, less than nineteen months. It seemed that her appointment was also a short-term arrangement. The work that the CCA did during her tenure was almost identical to that of previous chairpersons'. The only difference was that she liked to organise big events, especially international ones, endeavouring to improve Taiwan's international image<sup>38</sup>.

#### 4.4.5. Spiritual Reform

In June 1996, Chêng Shu-min was promoted to President of the board of China Television Company (CTV)<sup>39</sup>. A new chairwoman – Lin Ch'êng-chih 林澄枝 – was appointed. She did not have any cultural connection or background. The only qualification she had was an undergraduate degree from the Shijian Home Economics Training College (實踐家政專科學校). Because of her father-in-law, the

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<sup>38</sup> For example, one month before she left the office, she organised cooperation with the French Academy to set up the annual 'Sino-France Award', which began in 1996 to encourage international Sinology studies. By her initiative, an annual event - 'Grand Autumn Art Fair: The Evening of New Cultural Silk Road (*shengqiu yiban - wenhua xinsilu zhiye* 盛秋藝宴—文化新絲路之夜)' was launched. These events indicated her intention to improve communication and set up an image of 'new cultural *zhongyuan*' of Taiwan.

<sup>39</sup> The CTV was the party-owned television station, and its programme and administration policy were mainly controlled by the KMT. Inside of the KMT hierarchy, the new post meant she had done well to earn herself a promotion to such high position inside the party-run business.



senior statesman Hsieh Tung-min 謝東閔<sup>40</sup>, she had spent most of her career life in the KMT<sup>41</sup>. Since she had had strong party connections and a low profile, she was regarded as a reliable appointment in the cabinet.

In contrast to Chêng Shu-min's promotion, the deputy chairman Ch'ên Ch'i-nan was again left out. He was first predicted to be the chairman in 1993 before Shên Hsüeh-yung was appointed. When Chêng Shu-min took over the post, rumour said that her appointment was only a temporary arrangement for running the Presidential election campaign. (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999) However, when Lin Ch'êng-chih was appointed in June 1996, Ch'ên Ch'i-nan resigned. Although he stayed for another half year because Lin asked him to 'save her face', (LI YÜ-LING, 1999) he left by the end of 1996. Ch'ên Ch'i-nan now teaches in the National Institute of Arts (Taiwan) and works in a non-governmental foundation - the ROC Community Construction Foundation.

Ch'ên Ch'i-nan had stayed at the CCA for four years. Within that period, not only had the whole movement encountered great difficulties, but he had suffered criticism from within and outside the government. There were different explanations of why Ch'ên Ch'i-nan was not chosen to chair the CCA. (LI YÜ-LING, 1999) However, according to the CCA veteran K'o Chi-liang (1999), it was Ch'ên Ch'i-nan's high-handed style and unyielding, uncompromising character that had offended many Legislators from both parties, and had therefore blocked his political career.

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<sup>40</sup> Hsieh Tung-min was Chiang Ching-kuo's vice president between 1981 and 1984. He lost his left arm from a mail bomb sent by Taiwanese independence activists in 1984 and retired early. Lee Teng-hui was chosen to replace him.

<sup>41</sup> She was the deputy chair of the Department of Women's Affairs (DWA 婦女工作會), Central Committee (KMT) in 1989, and the chair in 1993. Her connections within the KMT were based on the old connections of her father-in-law. All her previous working experiences were related to children's and women's issues within the party domain.

Compared with the full support when the movement was first launched, the weight of the Community Construction Movement had fallen drastically within two years. Ch'ên Ch'i-nan's powerlessness indicated that the shift of cultural policy had been affected immensely by the political situation. This emphasis on 'community' was soon replaced by another Lee Teng-hui slogan - spiritual reform.

In the television speech on the Taiwan's Recovery Day (October 25<sup>th</sup>) 1996, Lee Teng-hui first mentioned the idea 'Spiritual Reform (*xinling gaige* 心靈改革)'. (LEE TENG-HUI, 1997: 266- 267) He celebrated the striving character of Taiwan's early settlers, never giving up, fearing no hardship. He appealed to the Taiwanese to re-establish traditional values and a robust spirit by starting a spiritual reform to create the next 'Taiwan miracle'.

Lee mentioned 'Spiritual Reform' again in the New Year's Day speech in 1997. Although it was a slogan rather than a policy, Lee Teng-hui intentionally put it forward and promoted it as a movement. He even listed it as one of his three 'national tasks'<sup>42</sup>. (CCA, 1998a: 32) Lee Teng-hui used this slogan to call for a peaceful, orderly and law-abiding life style and to promote an attitude of "purifying one's heart and reducing desires". The CCA was asked to draw up a plan to 'rebuild social values' and improve public order.

This was a time when political corruption, social chaos and economic disorder were rampant. (CCA, 1998a: 31-33) In order to compete with the DPP in the election, the

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<sup>42</sup> The other two tasks were: 'constitutional reform' and setting up the 'Asia-Pacific Regional Operations Centre (APROC)'.

KMT not only allowed business tycoons and powerful gangsters to stand as their candidates, but also accepted financial backing from enterprises with particular business interests. Since the 1990s, this kind of situation, generally called *heijin dangdao* 黑金當道 (the underworld and dirty money were in power), had gone from bad to worse. The combination of money and the underworld influenced Taiwan's political ecology, and bribery and corruption were rampant. (BAUM, 1996; KEMENADE, 1998:110; TU WEI-MING, 1996:1130) There were daily news stories of kidnapping, murder, arson, robbery, and youth suicide<sup>43</sup>. (LI YIH-YUAN, 1998) The slogan 'Spiritual Reform' was employed again for Lee's political needs.

When the slogan was first introduced, many worried that the Spiritual Reform concept would be used at the service of a political movement. However, many critics felt the social chaos was even more worrying. "We suddenly realised that this society is severely ill... even those who criticised the political intention of 'Spiritual Reform' felt the necessity and urgency for social reform." (LI YIH-YUAN, 1998: 31)

The CCA listed thirteen focuses in its report to the Executive Yuan in 1997. The Community Construction works became part of the CCA's routine duties, and emphasis was shifted to 'spiritual reform' by encouraging a 'healthy' and positive leisure life. Therefore, new programmes were promoted, such as 'Fill Taiwan with the Literary Aroma (*Shuxiang man baodao* 書香滿寶島)' and 'Protecting the Spiritual Environment' (*xinling huanbao* 心靈環保). (CCA, 1998b:80-84; LIN CH'ENG-CHIH, 1997:3-5) Furthermore, following the introduction of the 'two-days off, twice a

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<sup>43</sup> The crime rate in 1986 in Taiwan was 48.14 cases in every 10,000 people. It almost doubled within ten years (93.34 cases in 1996) after the lift of martial law. (HSIEH MING-HUI, 1998) According to *The Economist* (UNITED EVENING NEWS, 1995), the corruption in Taiwan was the worst among the Four Asian Little Dragons (Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and South Korea).



month<sup>44</sup> scheme in 1998, the encouragement of leisure life, tourism and entertainment became new focus. (LIN CH'ÈNG-CHIH, 1998: 25)

#### 4.4.6. Cultural policy made way for political manoeuvres

The 1990s were an era of self-discovery in political, social and cultural spheres for people in Taiwan. As mentioned, an obvious identity reversal had taken place in the mid-1990s. As a result, the cultural policies of the second half of the 1990s manifested the change from China-centric to Taiwan-centric ideologies - in other words, an official indigenisation trend emerged.

Examining the slogans that President Lee promoted over the years, it became clear that his interests and political agenda had shifted rapidly according to the political situation and his own needs. The slogan '*shengming gongtongti*' was asserted in May 1993, at a time when he wanted to calm the non-mainstream faction and call for solidarity. The purpose of promoting the 'Community Construction Movement' in 1994 was to prepare Taiwan to build a new 'hometown', to have a new identity, and new culture in its own right. When public order worsened in the second half of the 1990s, the call for 'Spiritual Reform' was raised to improve social order. In order to prove that Taiwan was not a province of the Chinese regime<sup>45</sup>, Lee Teng-hui abolished Taiwan

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<sup>44</sup> The 'two-days off, twice a month' system was implemented from the beginning of 1998, for the purpose of "increasing leisure time for the people... and enhancing spiritual life". (LIN CH'ÈNG-CHIH, 1998:1) Until this time, people had only a one and a half day weekend. Following this announcement, the first and third weekends of every month were the 'long weekend' (two days off), and the other weekends remained the same (half day at work or in school on Saturday). Finally, the 'two-days off' system has become the norm since 2001 for students and civil servants.

<sup>45</sup> The governments on each side of the Taiwan Strait insisted that there was only one China, although each had different views on who was the legitimate government. Lee tried to break totally from the old KMT party line 'one China', and made it clear that Taiwan was not a province, but an independent sovereignty.

Province. Under Lee's instruction, the Interim Provincial Government Downsizing Act was promulgated in December 21<sup>st</sup> 1998 and the first elected governor James Soong was forced to step down.

In 1998, to win votes for Ma Ying-chiu 馬英九, the KMT's second generation mainlander candidate running for Taipei Mayor, Lee Teng-hui issued another slogan: "New Taiwanese"<sup>46</sup>. It was devised to promote Ma, and also combat the DPP candidate, then Taipei Mayor Ch'ên Shui-bian. Lee explained his definition of 'New Taiwanese' in an interview in the Japanese newspaper *Yomiuri Shinbun* (讀賣新聞) on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1998:

Taiwan was originally deserted by the Chinese and has since then developed its own uniqueness. The KMT party came to this island only after the Second World War, and the Taiwanese had never had their own political regime... Now, people in Taiwan have finally been able to create their own future. Therefore, the *Shengji* conflicts between Taiwanese and mainlanders should no longer be an issue. We should unite as a whole. That is what I call New Taiwanese-ism. (CENTRAL DAILY NEWS, 1998)

These slogans, usually related with cultural and identity construction, were closely followed by the KMT government and the CCA. Although some of them were just political assertions, or slogans, they affected cultural policy greatly.

Lee's political strategy heavily relied on 'culture'. He liked to use cultural statements and cultural policy to pave the way for future state policy changes. Not only did he mobilise cultural targets, moralise policies, and try to control speech, but most of all, he paid great attention to the formulation of dominant discourses. Therefore, cultural policy worked hand-in-hand with political goals, and a pattern was formulated: Lee

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<sup>46</sup> The phrase *xin taiwan ren* (新台灣人) was generally translated in foreign media as 'New Taiwanese' in foreign media. However, the Director-General of the KMT Chang Hsiao-yen 章孝嚴 believed that it should be "neo-Taiwan person". (CENTRAL DAILY NEWS, 1999) Here, I use 'New Taiwanese' to reduce confusion.



launched cultural slogans, expounded elaborately, cultural policies followed, and finally, political battle was fought.

#### **4.5. Indigenisation**

##### **4.5.1. Indigenisation trend in social life**

The identity of the Taiwanese changed dramatically around 1995 and 1996. This was triggered by many factors including the Qiandao Lake Incident, the PRC's aggression towards Taiwan in international society and the missile threat. It was around the mid-1990s that the old KMT ideologies had been put under severe scrutiny, the once heated 'China Fever' subsided, and the indigenisation trend became acceptable and politically correct.

The DPP had always asserted Taiwan's own subjectivity, and had been ahead of the KMT in responding to the indigenisation trend. When the DPP candidate Ch'ên Shui-bian 陳水扁 won the election for Taipei Mayor<sup>47</sup> in 1994, he carried out many cultural policies to push the DPP ideas forward. Being the first opposition Mayor governing the Capital, many new policies were implemented to wage cultural battles to "break down the old symbols and systems set up by the KMT", (CHI YEN-LING, 1995; YANG CHIN-YEN, 1995) and remove the authoritarian traces of the Chiang Kai-shek period. The central government, located in the opposition-controlled capital, had many dramatic conflicts with the Taipei City Government.

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<sup>47</sup> Before 1994, the Taipei Mayor was assigned by the central government and had always been a KMT member. Ch'ên Shui-bian was the first elected Taipei Mayor.



Most of these measures were symbolic gestures. For example, an outdoor dance party was held at the square in front of the Presidential Office building on Taiwan Recovery Day 1995. Taipei City Government claimed that holding the party in the restricted area of the capital symbolised liberation from the authoritarian regime. (CHINA TIMES, 1995a; UNITED DAILY NEWS, 1995a) According to rough estimation (UNITED DAILY NEWS, 1995b), there were over seventy thousand people in the square that night.

This kind of political gesture happened frequently during Ch'ên's office (1994-1998). Others included cancelling the national anthem broadcast in the cinema between the trailers and the films and taking one of Chiang Kai-shek's official residences in Shi-lin 士林 (since the land belonged to Taipei City Government) and transforming it into a public park. (CHINA TIMES EXPRESS, 1996)

Amongst all such changes, the most symbolic was the renaming of Chieh-shou Road 介壽路. This road ran through the government district in central Taipei up to the Presidential Office. The original name meant "wishing Chiang Kai-shek long life". (HSIA CH'UN-HSIANG, 1998) In 1996, it was renamed "Ketagalan Boulevard" (CHINA TIMES, 1996; KEMENADE, 1998), named after the Ketagalan, the aboriginal tribe that inhabited this area before Chinese emigrants arrived in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

In addition, Ch'ên Shui-bian also tried to rebuild Taiwanese history and memory. For example, the sixty-year-old Taipei New Park, located on the north side of the square in front of the Presidential Office, was renamed the 228 Peace Memorial Park in 1996. The Ch'ên Shui-bian administration also planned to change the Taiwan Provincial Museum inside the park into the 228 memorial hall, and to refurbish the old

city government building into a Taiwanese Culture Museum. (CHI YEN-LING, 1995)

However, these plans were eventually overturned because of criticism that they were politicising cultural affairs.

The Taiwan Provincial Museum remains because it is the oldest natural science museum in Taiwan. The 228 Memorial Museum was relocated appropriately in the old building of the Taipei *Hoso*<sup>48</sup> Bureau inside the park, because of its historical significance in the 228 Incident. (TAIPEI CITY GOVERNMENT, 1997) As to the old city hall, this was refurbished and reopened in May 2001 as the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Taipei, to promote Taiwanese modern arts. (LU CHIEN-YING, 2001)

#### 4.5.2. Indigenisation trend in education

In 1989, the DPP drew up a strategy of "containing central government at local level (*difang baowei zhongyang* 地方包圍中央)" to increase its influence in the political arena. After all the pre-1949-elected representatives were forced out and replaced by newly elected parliament in the 1992 election (TIEN & CHU, 1996: 1141), the influence of the local politicians grew. As a result, not only could local demands be voiced, but also the indigenisation trend grew and boomed accordingly. (CH'ËN CHAO-YING, 1995a)

Although many changes were conducted or forced through by the opposition and

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<sup>48</sup> *Hoso* is a Sino-Japanese-European loanword. (LIU, 1995: 285) It means 'broadcast'. This old building was the Taipei Broadcasting House when the 228 Incident broke out. (KERR, 1966) It belonged to the Ch'ên I administration and was used to broadcast governmental propaganda, and announce the implementation of martial law.



public opinions, the most fundamental changes happened in the domain of education. In the past, education had always been the most conservative and the slowest area to respond to social changes. It played a role as the final hold for the ruling power to construct ideologies and reproduce its values. The call for the liberation of the stringent education system since the early 1980s came from many sectors, including from non-governmental organisations, foundations, and intellectuals<sup>49</sup>. (HSUEH HSIAO-HUA, 1995) However, education reform and indigenisation arrived much later.

It was not until January 1994, the University Law was finally enacted. The relationship between the MOE and universities was changed from 'direct management' to 'distant supervision'. (MOE, 2000) By the end of 1994, the MOE set up the "Education Reform Committee" and appointed Lee Yuan-tseh 李遠哲-- a Nobel laureate in chemistry and the President of Academia Sinica<sup>50</sup>-- to lead the investigation and carry out reform planning.

The breakthrough in the education system as a whole was drastic and happened within a very short period of time during the second half of the 1990s. For example, the most criticised system, the standardised textbook and unified editorial system,

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<sup>49</sup> The movement for the reform of Taiwan's educational system began in the early 1980s. Hsueh Hsiao-hua (1995) divided it into several stages: 1, Embryonic period (1983-1987), which took place mostly on university campuses; 2, Organisation period (1987 -1990). At this stage, many non-governmental organisations were formed to urge the MOE for more aggressive action, e.g. Women's Alliance 主婦聯盟, University Education Reform Association 大學教育改革促進會, Teachers' Human Rights Association 教師人權促進會, Taipei Society 澄社, Renben Education Foundation 人本教育基金會; 3, Pushing for action period (1990 -1994). Many hearings were held in the Legislative Yuan. Non-governmental organisations were invited to get involved in drawing up the laws and advising on reform; 4, Prosperous era (1994-). After 1994, many suggestions made by the non-governmental organisations were taken and put into practice. At the same time, academic freedom was also gained after the University Law was promulgated.

<sup>50</sup> The Academia Sinica was founded in Nanking on June 9, 1928. As the highest academic institution in the Republic of China, the Academia Sinica has two basic missions: conducting high-standard academic research in its own institutes, as well as providing guidance and channels of communication, and secondly encouragement to raise academic standards in the



was loosened in 1989. Nonetheless, subjects opened to optional textbooks were still limited, and included Arts, Music, Design Technology and Crafts, and Physical Education. The textbooks for traditional academic subjects (such as Chinese, Mathematics, History, and Geography) and subjects concerning ideology-building (such as *shehui* 社會—Social Studies, *gongmin* 公民 – Citizenship) were still standardised and provided by the National Institute for Compilation and Translation. (SHIH CHI-SHÊNG, 1995; also Chapter 1.3.1.)

The standardised textbook system was finally relinquished at the primary school level in 1996, and opened to schools' and teachers' choice at junior and senior high school levels in 1999. (OU YUNG-SHÊNG, 1997) According to Ou Yung-shêng (1997), the policy not only gave the freedom to choose textbooks, but also, returned the responsibilities and the right of the teachers. Through regaining power, many other teachers' rights were also restored, such as the right to join the teachers' scrutiny committee, to share decision-making and the responsibility for hiring new staff, to organise teachers' union, and the right to appeal in disputes.

Another problem in Taiwan's education system was the lack of knowledge about Taiwan. The issue had been argued about since the 1980s. However, it was not until the early 1990s that the situation started to improve. Partly, this improvement was because the opposition party was in power in some counties and cities, and they promoted a 'Local Studies' module in primary schools<sup>51</sup>. Partly, it was because public support grew for more indigenous content in education.

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country.

<sup>51</sup> According to Chiang Wen-yu's research (CHANG TS'UI-FEN, 1995a), counties where the opposition was in power were Taipei County, I-lan County, Hsinchu County, Tainan County, Kaohsiung County, and P'ingdong County. Although they promoted mother-tongue education, once the power changed hands, such as in P'ingdong, provision ceased.

In 1993, Education Minister Kuo Wei-fan announced that the MOE would increase the proportion of Local Studies(*xiangtu jiaoxue* 鄉土教學) in the new elementary curriculum, covering Taiwan's history, geography, natural environment, arts, and local dialects. (LI CH'IN-AN, 1997) Even with all the good intentions of strengthening local studies, there were still many difficulties. For example, the teaching hours<sup>52</sup> of Local Studies were insignificant. According to Li Ch'in-an (1997), the teaching of local dialects accounted for only 1/40 of the time spent learning Mandarin. Furthermore, its status as an 'optional module'<sup>53</sup> was also insufficient. (CH'ËN MAN-LING, 1999b)

However, it was not until June 1995 that the MOE finally redressed the problem in the new 1996 national curriculum for primary and junior high schools. According to the MOE, the characteristic of the new curriculum was "indigenisation". (CHINA TIMES, 1995b)

In 1998, changes were made in curriculum at the junior and senior high school levels to make the courses more lively and acceptable, and also to celebrate the 'indigenisation' trend. (HAN KUO-DONG, 1995) For the first time, a new subject "Knowing Taiwan (認識台灣 *renshi taiwan*)" was added to the 1998 curriculum. Another major change was to combine *jiazheng* 家政 (Household Management for girls) and *gongyi* 工藝 (Design Technology and Crafts for boys) into one joint subject called "Family and Technology in Life". According to the MOE, the purpose was to provide students with the all-round knowledge they needed in life without presuming

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<sup>52</sup> From summer 2001, all primary schools students have to take a 'Native Languages *xiangtu yuyan* 鄉土語言' module for two hours per week. It includes Minnan yu 閩南語 – the dialect of south Fujian Province and the mother-tongue for the majority of Taiwanese – Hakka dialect, and aborigine languages.



that girls and boys are different in terms of their future roles. (UNITED DAILY NEWS, 1995c)

The MOE claimed that any content concerning ideology formation would be removed from textbooks or modified. (HAN KUO-DONG, 1995) Such content in Sanminzhuyi, Chinese Literature, Military Training, and Citizenship was either removed, or reduced to the minimum. (CHANG TS'UI-FEN, 1995b, TSÊNG I-FANG, 1999a) The most affected were Sanminzhuyi and 'Military Training' lessons.

Apart from the changes in the curriculum and the freedom to choose textbooks, many other major improvements to the education system were also carried out. The heavily criticised *liankao* 聯考<sup>54</sup> systems at junior and senior high school levels have undergone continuous modification and thorough reform since the late 1990s. In 1999, then Education Minister Lin Ch'ing-chiang 林清江 announced that the joint examination system would be totally abolished before the academic year 2002. (CH'ÊN MAN-LING, 1999a)

#### 4.5.3. Taiwan studies is the new *in*

The growing indigenisation trend gradually became politically correct in the mid-1990s. By then, it was generally accepted that Taiwan issues and Taiwanese

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<sup>53</sup> After countless petitions, the MOE finally made it a compulsory module in 2000.

<sup>54</sup> The *liankao* was an examination system for testing students' academic performance, which was needed for entry to the next level of education. It was held every July. All the third year students of the junior and senior high schools would take a national examination. Based on the result of that exam, students would be able to enter the next level of education: senior high school or university. The exam took place on the same date, and all the students from all the schools were mingled together. Because the students had only one opportunity to prove themselves through *liankao*, pressure mounted. Suicide cases of frustrated and nervous students had often occurred in the past.



identity had long been ignored, degraded, and misunderstood. In the past, any academic studies relating to Taiwan issues would face difficulties of funding, gaining official support or gaining credit. (CHANG YEN-HSIE, 2001) Taiwan Studies scholar Tai Kuo-hui 戴國輝 said in 1985 that his research (Taiwan Studies) had been a "lonely pursuit". (TAI KUO-HUI, 1994:126)

In June 1995, 18 non-governmental organisations and foundations held a joint hearing in the Legislative Yuan, and urged the MOE to establish Taiwanese Literature (*Taiwan wenxue* 台灣文學) Departments in universities. (CH'ËN CHAO-YING, 1995c) Even with the growing consensus of placing more emphasis on Taiwan, this call for setting up departments of Taiwanese literature was not responded to by the authorities.

Moreover, there were two immediate setbacks. In 1996 Ching-I 靜宜 University applied to set up a new module - 'Taiwanese Literature' in the Department of Chinese Literature. The proposal was turned down by the MOE. Another similar proposal to set up a 'Taiwanese Literature' Module under the Graduate Institute of Chinese Literature was rejected in an internal meeting at the National Taiwan University (NTU). (CH'ËN WEN-FËN, 2000)

However, the tide finally turned and objections subsided because of growing public support. After seven to-and-fro applications and modifications, the Aletheia University (then the Danshui Management College 淡水工商管理學院) was able to gain MOE approval to set up the first-ever Department of Taiwanese Literature in 1997. (CHAO CHIA-LIN, 2000) In the following year, the proposal of the National Cheng Kung University (NCKU) to set up a Master degree course in Taiwanese Literature was

also approved. The MA course started in summer 2000, and a Ph.D. course (Taiwanese Literature) in the NCKU is in preparation for the 2002 academic year. (CH'ËN WEN-FËN, 2000)

In contrast to the previous negative attitude, only four years later in 2000, the MOE wrote to all national and public universities and asked them to consider the possibility of setting up a Taiwanese Literature Department. (WU CHIN-HSÛN, 2000; WËNG TS'UI-P'ING, 2000) Furthermore, to act as an encouragement, the MOE will provide two extra staff for a newly established department.

According to Chang Kuo-bao 張國保, the deputy director of the Department of Higher Education(MOE), this policy was designed to deal with the pressing need to deliver the new compulsory subject, Local Studies. (WËNG TS'UI-P'ING, 2001)The change was triggered by the new national curriculum, which started in the summer of 2001. This subject urgently needed teachers with professional ability to teach or compile and produce teaching materials for 'Local Studies' and 'native languages'.

Because of the new curriculum and emerging market, several national universities such as Ch'ing Hua 清華 University and Chung Hsing 中興 University sent proposals for new courses beginning in the 2002 academic year. (WËNG TS'UI-P'ING, 2001) Even without the formal establishment of Taiwanese Literature Departments, many Chinese Literature Departments have already started to run Taiwanese Literature modules to provide options for students.

From an idea to reality, from a lack of recognition to its emergence as the favourite new subject, Taiwanese Literature has been established in universities within a few

years. Consequently, Chinese literature was under siege. (HSIANG YANG, 1998) The resources and student numbers of Chinese Literature Departments plunged. It was undeniable that the growing popularity of Taiwanese Literature Departments suggested the inevitable decline of Chinese Literature. Many Chinese Literature Departments were criticised for ignoring Taiwanese culture, being Chinese-chauvinist, or teaching the "enemy's literature". (CH'ËN CHAO-YING, 1995c)

Debates over identity affected not only politicians and activists but also, and perhaps most of all, ordinary people. The debates involved everyone in Taiwan and affected everyone's life. (WACHMAN, 1994) Many families, friends, and couples were estranged because of the identity dispute. However, the intellectual debates were at the front line in forming a Taiwanese consciousness, fighting to win the hegemony to influence people's perception of identity, and constructing the 'discourse'.

Emotional feelings and heated debates in academic communities were stirred up because of the different political stances of the early 1990s. The most noticeable academic debates on Taiwanese identity appeared around 1994 to 1995, a watershed of Taiwanese identity reversal. Such debates included: the 'Taiwan complex' and 'China complex' that Tai Kuo-hui (1994) initiated, the debate on the limitation of new Taiwanese nationalism (CHANG MAO-KUI, 1993; CHAO KANG, 1996:1-72), and the debate about the definition 'who were the fake Taiwanese'. (ISLE MARGIN, 1993,1995)

Ch'ên Chao-ying's essay (1995a, 1995b) on Taiwan's nativistic movement also aroused intense debate and discussion about Taiwanese identity. Many scholars joined in to discuss the definition of 'Taiwanese' and Taiwanese subjectivity. (LIAO



CH'AO-YANG, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c, 1996; LIAO HSIEN-HAO, 1995a, 1995b, 1996)

In general, most of the debates could be categorised into two different camps: one advocated the necessity and historical reasons for building Taiwan's own subjectivity; the other, criticised the tendency to deny Chinese influence in Taiwanese culture.

Even in Taiwan's highest academic institution, the Academia Sinica, the indigenisation trend also took its course and changed the structure of the institution. Initiated by the prominent historian Chang Kwang-chih 張光直, the Academia Sinica passed a resolution in 1988 to form 'the Office of Field Research on the History of Taiwan (台灣史田野研究室)'. In 1990, a Preparatory Planning Team was set up, because of "the growing interest in the study of Taiwan[ese] history... and the increasing encouragement from the Legislative Yuan". (ACADEMIA SINICA, 2000) In 1993, after the Legislators' visit and their expressions of concern, the Institute of Taiwan History Preparatory Office was established. Huang Fu-san 黃富三, Professor of the Department of History at the NTU, was the first Director.

Taiwan went through a process of severe self-examination and soul-searching in the mid-1990s. Eventually, the struggle of cultural hegemony was won by the Taiwanisation discourse, which advocated building up Taiwan's subjectivity and constructing Taiwanese culture as central. The growing indigenisation trend started to dominate every aspect of government policy by the late 1990s - state resources and official support have all been diverted to this new direction of Taiwanisation. Taiwan Studies had long suffered suppression by the KMT authorities. However, because of the change of the political atmosphere, by the end of the 1990s it had become the most important subject to be involved in, and attracted funding and state support. Some raised worries that politicisation would affect intellectual neutrality, academic

conscience and autonomy. (CH'ËN CHAO-YING, 2000; WANG MING-K'O, 1994b)

Undoubtedly, the indigenisation trend has started.

#### **4.6. Centralisation**

##### **4.6.1. Impact of cultural globalisation**

The urge to be recognized internationally has always been an important issue for the Taiwanese. It was even more urgent in the 1990s when the Taiwanese encountered the PRC's hostility. Under the shadow of identity crisis and the surging globalisation trend worldwide, the need for the Taiwanese to become part of the global village, to be recognised and mapped in international society became desperate. As a result of such longing, embracing global culture and cultural products became a way of expressing the urge and dealing with the anxiety of wanting to be part of the global development.

Therefore, the Taiwanese have been keen on absorbing foreign culture (mainly Japanese and American) and consuming foreign cultural products. For example, the first branch of McDonald's in Taiwan was established in 1982. The chain then swept the island creating an American 'fast food culture'. By 2001, there were 340 McDonald's restaurants island-wide. Kentucky Fried Chicken established its first Taiwanese branch in 1985, and now has 124 stores. Starbucks came to Taiwan in 1999 and has set up 74 stores on this tiny island within three years; TFI Friday restaurants came to Taiwan in 1991, and Planet Hollywood in 1998.

The ROC government has always endeavoured to develop Taiwan's economy, and



therefore, has engaged in global economic activities since the 1960s. (See Chapter 3.4.3.) However, the Taiwanese experience of the influence of global culture was totally different. Communications with the outside world were very limited for ordinary people before the 1980s. According to Chang & Hsü (2000), the KMT imposed strict control in order to 'maintain national security'. Hence, global cultural influence in Taiwan started much later than in the economic sphere.

The beginning of the introduction of global culture was limited to TV programmes, films, publications, which however, were filtered by the KMT's stringent censorship. Before the lift of martial law in 1987, most 'global culture' to be found in Taiwan was mainly American. Chiu Hei-yuan (1997: 197) comments that Taiwanese society had been 'Americanised' after the 1950s. This was because America was not only the major international ally and economic investor in Taiwan had after 1949, but also the most powerful cultural exporter in the world. American ways of life and values were passed on through popular music, imported TV programmes and Hollywood films.

The globalisation of Taiwanese culture began in daily life by people using cultural products; reading foreign publications, listening to foreign music, and viewing foreign films and television. The lift of martial law changed the filtered information flows and increased the availability and varieties of alternative views. For example, the state control on culture subsided after the 1980s, and the quick expansion of cable and satellite TV influenced Taiwan greatly. After the ban on overseas travel was lifted, international travel grew dramatically<sup>55</sup>. Overseas travel experiences provided opportunities for the Taiwanese to see the outside world for themselves and compare

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<sup>55</sup> Only 640,700 people travelled overseas in 1982. Within ten years, the figure increased 6.5 times to 4.214 million overseas visits in 1992. (DGBAS, 1993) In 2000, overseas travels



different cultures.

Before cable TV was legalised in 1993, broadcast television was monopolised by three government-run television stations – Taiwan Television Enterprise (TTV, est. 1962), The China Television Company (CTC, est. 1969), and The Chinese Television System (CTS, est. 1971). Even so, in the prosperous 1980s, apart from the mushrooming video rental business, satellite TV and cable TV had also permeated the Taiwanese market, operating illegally for over a decade before the legislation<sup>56</sup> that allowed it was passed.

According to Wang & Chung (1988: 217, 271), foreign imported programmes took up 90% of all cable TV programming in the late 1980s. Research on video rental habits confirmed that the most popular videos were western films in English. 82.72% of the interviewees favoured western films (mostly American). In addition, Japanese and Chinese films were also popular. Over half (57.3%) of the interviewees liked to rent Japanese films, and 44.94% liked Chinese films<sup>57</sup>. (WANG, 1986: 371)

As well as the cheap video rental and cable options, well-off middle class customers who could afford to, installed satellite receivers in the 1980s, in the main to watch Japanese TV. (P'AN & WANG, 1989) By the early 1990s, the number of households that had installed satellite receivers was around 400,000; the highest density in Asia

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increased to 7.33 million trips. (GIO, 2001: 132)

<sup>56</sup> The earliest record of cable TV was in 1979. The *United Daily News* had a report on the appearance of cable TV in Keelung and Juifang 瑞芳. The KMT government tried to ban them in 1981. Resistance from the cable TV industry began in 1984. There were around 230,000 cable TV users in Taiwan by 1985, and this figure rose to 540,000 in 1991. (FENG CHIEN-SAN, 1995: 36-37)

<sup>57</sup> The sort of Chinese film is called *kuo pian* (國片), referring to films in which characters speak either in Mandarin and in Cantonese. Before martial law was lifted, *kuo pian* referred mostly to Taiwan-made or Hong-Kong-made films.

(INGELBRECHT, 1992: 40; FÊNG CHIEN-SAN, 1995: 14) The number of households subscribing to cable TV mushroomed and reached 1,500,000 in the Taiwan region. In 1993, the government finally changed its media policy, and legalised cable TV stations in order that they could be controlled and regulated. (FÊNG CHIEN-SAN, 1995: 37)

A vast quantity of global information and view-points from all over the world (however, mainly American<sup>58</sup>) poured into every household, breaking the monopoly of mass media broadcasting and its KMT-controlled view-point. According to Fêng Chien-san's estimation (1995: 5-6), the total import of foreign films and television productions in 1993 was worth at least NT\$ 138.05 billion. In addition, Japanese culture was already deeply rooted among the older generation of Taiwanese, (CHIU HEI-YUAN, 1997) and it gradually increased its influence in the 1990s on youth sub-culture through Japanese TV and popular music. (LII & CH'ÊN, 1998)

After the ban on Japanese drama on Taiwanese television was lifted in 1992, Japanese icons were introduced into Taiwan's market: soundtracks of popular soap operas became top sellers in the record shops, which introduced more Japanese popular music and singers into Taiwan. (LII & CH'ÊN, 1998) According to Taiwan's Social Change Survey conducted in 1994, (CHIU HEI-YUAN, 1995: 132-33) 41.9% of the interviewees liked Japanese popular music, 43.5% liked western popular music, and 51.2% liked western classical music.

In the last few years, Korean popular culture followed the same pattern – soap

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<sup>58</sup> Typical channels included Cable Network News (CNN), Home Box Office (HBO), Disney Cartoon, American Broadcast Company (ABC) news, Discovery etc.



operas became popular first, sound tracks second, then, pop idols and popular music followed to become part of Taiwanese popular culture. People could sing Japanese and Korean songs in Karaoke without understanding the lyrics, (LU CHIEN-YING, 2001) in the same way that they had sung western popular songs in the 1960s without knowing their cultural context. (CHIU HEI-YUAN, 1997:198)

Many scholars noticed that the Taiwanese generally embraced globalisation and ignored cultural imperialism, especially the younger generation. (LIAO HSIEN-HAO, 2000; LIU TA-HÊ, 2001; CH'ËN K'ANG-I, 2001) This condition was so severe that media scholar Fêng Chien-san claimed that cultural globalisation of Taiwan had created "*wuwo* 無我 (selfless-ness). (CH'ËN K'ANG-I, 2001) This wholehearted embrace of globalisation is a worrying social phenomenon. In contrast to what Castell predicted in terms of reactions against globalisation, networking and flexibility in a gradually globalised world, the Taiwanese took on western values, adopted foreign systems, and welcomed technological and social changes, as long as they brought 'progress'.

#### **4.6.2. Laying foundations for funding structure**

Because of the willingness to accept foreign culture and the enthusiasm for bringing change and borrowing values and technologies, the state control on culture started to thaw. In order to deal with the globalisation trend and regain control, cultural regulation -- the state effort to construct culture and influence meaning production -- became more and more important.

Cultural regulation and subsidy were two means to achieve state intervention in



cultural policy. (LEWIS, 1994) In the process of meaning production, how state resources were distributed related closely to what kind of cultural capital the state encouraged. Therefore, funding was an issue not only of the distribution of resources, but also of meaning production. The KMT did not pay much attention to 'arts funding' before the 1980s, because most cultural resources and events were under state control anyway. It was not until the end of the 1980s that the Legislators were interested in how subsidies were given, and to whom. The KMT gradually realised the 'usefulness' of cultural policy and the need to establish a funding system to 'reward' certain cultural products and reinforce desired meanings.

When theatre theorist Chung Mingder (1990: 224-225) reviewed ten years' of the development of Taiwan's little theatre, he suggested that the CCA systemise funding. According to Chung (1990), state funding should provide long-term financial and managerial support to excellent groups for at least three to five years in order to empower them to develop to "professional scale"<sup>59</sup>. (CHUNG MINGDER, 1990: 222-226)

Chung Mingder's suggestion was put into practice with Kuo Wei-fan's support. The construction of a state funding system had finally started. The very first funding system, the *Scheme to Foster International Performing Groups* (*guojixing yanyi tuandui fuzhi jihua* 國際性演藝團體扶植計劃), was drawn up in 1991, and implemented in 1992. It was one of 24 important tasks in the Culture Construction Programme (1992-1997).

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<sup>59</sup> Chung Mingder received his Ph.D. degree in America; therefore, many of his suggestions drew influence from the American professional theatre environment and system. He suggested that the CCA fostered the little theatre into a 'non-profit professional theatre' as part of public service. (CHUNG MINGDER, 1990: 225, 229)

The goal of this scheme was to support excellent performing groups to present Taiwanese modern arts in the international arena and to strengthen their financial ability. However, criticism arose soon after this scheme was imposed. First of all, the most important criterion, the ability to represent Taiwan internationally, was considered unfair, because different art forms had different markets. (LIN KU-FANG, 2000a: 41) Most of all, it seemed to benefit the well-established groups instead of encouraging young artists. (LU CHIEN-YING, 1999)

In 1992, the first year of the scheme, there were only eight elite groups on the list: 2 music groups, 2 dance groups, 3 theatre groups, and 1 *xiqu*<sup>60</sup> group. Each group received an annual budget to "substantiate their cast" and "improve training". (LIN KU-FANG, 2000a: 104) The number of subsidised groups increased to twelve in 1993 and 1994: 3 music groups, 4 dance groups, 2 *xiqu* groups and 3 theatre groups.

Because of the criticism of unfairness and of being too exclusive, and because of the new emphasis on promoting the Community Construction Movement, the CCA decided to reduce the international emphasis and focus on 'improving the constitution of artistic groups'. The CCA changed strategy in the middle of the scheme, and modified its criteria for selection in 1995. This 'opening-up' policy had changed the nature of the scheme and selection criteria. The number of funded groups increased to twenty-eight in 1995: 10 music, 10 dance, 3 *xiqu*, and 5 theatre groups.

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<sup>60</sup> *Xiqu* is a general term for traditional opera form. However, when the scheme was first launched, the only *xiqu* group chosen was the Contemporary Legend Theatre, a group using Beijing opera technique to modernise theatre form. From official prospect, the CCA still took it as Beijing opera group.

In 1998, the scheme was replaced by the *Scheme to Select and Reward Excellent Performing Groups (jiechu yanyi tuandui zhenxuan ji jiangli jihua 傑出演藝團隊甄選及獎勵計畫)*<sup>61</sup>. The number of subsidised groups rose substantially. In 1999 and 2000, the figure reached 65: 18 music groups, 16 dance, 17 *xiqu* and 14 theatre groups. The total number increased eight times from 8 groups in 1992 to 65 in 2000.

It was evident that the surging indigenisation trend from the late 1980s had affected which group or individual, and what kinds of art form would be subsidised. For example, community theatre groups had been included since 1995 because of the promotion of Community Construction. Taiwanese *xiqu* forms became the most popular category because of their place within indigenous culture. The number of subsidised *xiqu* groups rose seventeen times within eight years.<sup>62</sup>

In addition, a string of state-resource distribution measures were also taken to encourage indigenisation. For example, *Information for Applying for Subsidy for Community Construction (CCA, 1997)* was announced to encourage community activities; *Measures to Select Important Folk Artists* was announced in 1995 to boost the status of folk arts and artists. The National Centre for Traditional Arts (a preparatory office was set up in January 1996), the National Cultural Heritage Preservation and Research Centre (its preparatory office was set up in October 1996), and the Traditional Music Centre were all set up to promote Taiwanese traditional culture.

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<sup>61</sup> The scheme was changed again to *Scheme to Foster Performing Groups (yanyi tuandui fazhang fuzhi jihua 演藝團隊發展扶植計畫)* in 2001, to place emphasis on managerial ability.

<sup>62</sup> In 1992, there was only one *xiqu* group (Contemporary Legend Theatre) was selected. The figure grew each year (2 *xiqu* groups in 1993 & 94, 3 in 1995, 4 in 1996, 8 in 1997, 13 in 1998, 17 in 1999 & 2000), and most of them were Taiwanese *xiqu* groups -- 2 Taiwanese *xiqu* groups in 3 chosen *xiqu* groups in 1995, 6 in 8 groups in 1997, 9 in 13 groups in 1998, and 13 in 17 groups in 1999. In 2001, only 2 among 21 *xiqu* groups did not perform Taiwanese *xiqu*.



The state funding system was constructed in two areas: one was direct subsidy to improve the constitution of artistic groups and their financial stability, e.g. *Foster International Performing Groups*; another area was the general improvement of cultural environment, e.g. the *Regulations of Encouraging Culture and Arts*, and the *Tax Reduction and Exemption for Cultural Industry*.

According to Article 19 of the *Regulations of Encouraging Culture and Arts*, a special institution was needed to deal with funding affairs directly. Therefore, the National Culture and Arts Foundation (NCAF) <sup>63</sup> was established in 1996 and took over most funding business from the CCA. Since then, the CCA only dealt with special cases and the *Scheme to Foster International Performing Groups*.

As to the NCAF, it was designed as an arm-length organisation functioning as the "service centre for the arts and culture". (NCAF, 1996: 2) There were five areas that the NCAF stressed: research, grants, awards, stabilisation, and promotion. (NCAF, 2000) Their services were provided for both artists and the public, ranging from subsidies, legal advice, and insurance advice, to managerial help to improve administrative ability. Among all its responsibilities, its most important mission is "funding the arts"<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>63</sup> The NCAF is a foundation for promoting and assisting cultural and arts activities. (NCAF, 1996:2) The "Statutes on the Establishment of the National Culture and Arts Foundation (*guojia wenhua yishu jijinhui shezhi tiaoli* 國家文化藝術基金會設置條例)" were passed in October 1994, and its office opened and started operation on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1996.

<sup>64</sup> The NCAF provides funding for different art forms. The subsidies are given for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, encouragement and support for creation, research, performance and exhibition of arts (music, dance, fine arts, theatre, literature, folk arts, crafts, environmental arts, photography, television, film and radio), research on the cultural environment, publication, and promotion of arts. (EXECUTIVE YUAN,

After the NCAF was established, a total structure for state funding was finally accomplished. At central government level, two cultural apparatuses, the CCA and NCAF, provided funding for various occasions and purposes. (LI YING-P'ING, 1998)

The Cultural Affairs Department and its local branches, under the control of the Taiwan Provincial Government, were set up in May 1997<sup>65</sup>. They were in charge of cultural affairs at provincial levels, 24 County and City Culture Centres, local museums, and Taiwan's ancient archives. In addition, the most important cultural policy in the 1990s, the Community Construction Movement, has also played an important role in building up a nation-wide cultural network. By the late 1990s, the whole state funding system has been constructed, and functioned, from top to bottom, at every level.

#### **4.6.3. Upgrading to ministry**

According to Gramscian ideas, 'popular beliefs' are an area that hinges the leaders and the led. (BENNETT, 1981) The way in which to form a broad block of social forces, by constructing a common conception of the world, is important. The struggle of cultural hegemony is therefore crucial for establishing political hegemony. In order to win cultural hegemony, the politicians realised that cultural affairs could be influential and the opposition parties were especially aware of their significance. (PERFORMING ARTS ALLIANCE, 1999)

Even though there had been debates about whether it was necessary to upgrade the

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REGULATIONS OF ENCOURAGING CULTURE AND ART, 1992)

<sup>65</sup> The Taiwan Provincial Government was abolished after The Interim Provincial Government Downsizing Act was promulgated on December 21<sup>st</sup> 1998. The Cultural Affairs Department and its local branches were handed over to the CCA, and became the mid-Taiwan office and local branches of the CCA.

CCA to ministry status since the 1980s (THE INDEPENDENT NEWS, 1993; HAN PAO-THE, 1989; THE CHINA TIMES, 1994), official opinion had always favoured upgrade. The politicians preferred to 'manage' cultural affairs with greater power and under a unified administrative body. At the same time, the arts communities also preferred the centralised structure of a Ministry. (TÊNG WEI-WEI, 1994; CHINA TIMES, 1994b; JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1994) As to the general public, the view on establishing a more concentrated and controlled cultural apparatus was the same. (PERFORMING ARTS ALLIANCE, 1999) Even so, the whole process of upgrading the CCA has been a long and winding road, full of turns and twists.

Originally, the proposal to upgrade the CCA was made in 1985 to tackle the problems of its powerlessness and overlapping duties. The problems had been mentioned many times, right from its inception. Only few years after the CCA was established, the problems were identified officially by the research commissioned by the Research and Evaluation Committee (Executive Yuan). (CHIU HEI-YUAN, 1985) Since then, suggestions to establish a higher rank and unified apparatus were raised to solve the problem.

In 1988, the Executive Yuan started to revise its *Organisation Law* (*Xingzhengyuan zuzhifa xiuzheng caoan* 行政院組織法修正草案), and planned to upgrade the CCA to a Ministry of Culture status, along with three other upgrades (for Councils of Agriculture, Labour Affairs, and the Department of Health). The only problem for the CCA upgrade plan was who, what business and which departments of other related ministries would be merged to form the future Ministry of Culture. (LIN YING-CHÊ, 1989) The most affected institutions included the MOE, the MOI, the GIO, and the Taiwan Provincial Government. The target for upgrade was May 1990.



Although there was no objection to upgrade, this plan was put on hold and dragged on for almost five years, because the upgrade was part of the Executive Yuan's problematic reorganisation. (TÊNG WEI-WEI, 1994b) By the end of the 1980s, a general principle within the Executive Yuan was "reduce the staff and simplify the administrative structure". (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999) This, again, hindered the CCA's upgrade.

In 1994, the Executive Yuan revised the amendment draft, and a special investigation team was set up to reconsider the original reorganisation plan. The team decided that it was inappropriate to upgrade the CCA since all cultural affairs could be dealt with by other Ministries and councils. (TÊNG WEI-WEI, 1994a) After the decision was made, they were criticised for belittling culture and its importance. (TÊNG WEI-WEI, 1994a, 1994b; HUANG HSIU-CHIN, 1994)

An anonymous source from the team revealed that the overturn of the CCA's upgrading plan was purely "a trouble not of one's own making (*chiyu zhi yang* 池魚之殃)". (TÊNG WEI-WEI, 1994b) Among all upgrading cases, the newly considered case for the Environmental Protection Administration was most unlikely to be upgraded because of strong objection from big enterprise. The team worried that it might cause severe protests and criticism from environmental activists, and "it would look bad if there was only one case that failed". (TÊNG WEI-WEI, 1994b) They assumed that the voice from the culture communities was the weakest, and the CCA was the least demanding council among all, hence, it was easily sacrificed with the Environmental Protection Administration. (TÊNG WEI-WEI, 1994b)

However, the culture communities were not as 'tame' and 'voiceless' as the Executive Yuan had expected. Many protests and petitions were made and supported by the Legislators. A few days after that meeting, the investigating team claimed that the decision was not definite. (TÊNG WEI-WEI, 1994b) It was again put aside, this time, for another three years.

It was not until June 1997 that Premier Lien Chan announced that the upgrade plan would be included in the newly revised Organisation Law of the Executive Yuan. (YÜ KUO-HUA, 1997b) Consequently, the draft of *Rules of Organisation of the Ministry of Culture (Wenhuabu zuzhifa 文化部組織法)* was sent to the Executive Yuan, eight years after its first version was produced, and is still waiting to be discussed in the Legislative Yuan.<sup>66</sup> However, the principle of upgrading the CCA has been accepted and the final date for upgrading is 2003. (CCA, 2001a)

#### 4.7. Taiwan in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

After 40 years of Sinicised education and China-centric cultural policy, many Taiwanese were torn between the old values of being Chinese and being proud of Chinese tradition and culture, and the newly emergent Taiwanese awareness. This ambiguity showed through in the social change survey in Taiwan, conducted by the Academia Sinica in 1994. On the one hand, 68.3% interviewees claimed that they were proud of Chinese culture, while only 17.4 did not think so, and 69.2% believed that Taiwan was rich in material life but poor in cultural, while 18.6% disagreed. One

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<sup>66</sup> The delay is caused by the lengthy discussion of *Xingzhengyuan zuzhifa* (the amendment for the Executive Yuan Organisation Law). Because the restructure of the bigger framework (the Executive Yuan) has not been accepted in the Legislative Yuan, all the related reorganisation plans have to wait.



the other hand, 74.2% of the interviewees agreed that Taiwan should establish its own culture (only 8.8% disagreed), and 59.7% wished to add Minnan yu as one of the national languages (25.7% disagreed). (CHIU HEI-YUAN, 1995: 129 -130)

It showed a similar result to the 'identity' surveys conducted around the mid-1990s.

(Appendix 1) The identities that people in Taiwan identified for themselves (as Taiwanese, Chinese, or both) had changed dramatically in the 1994 -1996 period.

This volatile change was caused not only by the severe discourse struggles between competing views, but equally important, by the aggression from the PRC.

Because of the hostility across the Strait, Lee proposed the policy of *jieji yongren* (戒急用忍 guarding against rashness with patience) in 1996, in an attempt to slow down the rate of investment in China. In 1996, there were over 21,000 Taiwanese investment cases in the mainland and Taiwanese direct investment in the mainland was over US\$ 11.7 billion. (LIN SHU-YÜAN, 2000) In order to cool off the China Fever and divert the economic dependency away from China, Lee reminded Taiwanese enterprises to be cautious. Following this *jieji yongren* policy, more bureaucratic procedures and restrictions were imposed in 1997 to control capital outflow and to scrutinise all investment in Mainland China. According to the Investment Commission (Ministry of Economic Affairs), Taiwanese investment in Mainland China on average took up 42% of total Taiwanese overseas investment before the policy was imposed. However, Taiwanese investment in China reduced to 27.7% after *jieji yongren* policy. (LIN SHU-YÜAN, 2000)

This policy was at first an economic strategy, but soon became an official line and manifestation of Taiwan's mainland policy. In recent years, many argued this policy



obstructed the progress of Taiwan's economy and missed out the great opportunity of upgrading the Taiwanese economy in the international arena. Others argued the policy has prevented the drainage of vast capital and technologies to the mainland and helped Taiwan to hold on to its dominant position. (LIBERTY TIMES, 2001)

In the 2000 Presidential campaign, the DPP candidate Ch'ên Shui-bian won the election by a narrow margin. Ch'ên Shui-bian got 39.3% of the vote and became the first opposition President. His victory ended the Nationalists' regime in Taiwan, which had begun in 1945. However, the other 60% of votes went mostly to either the ruling Kuomintang's (KMT) Lien Chan (23.1%), or the previous Taiwan governor, KMT-breakaway candidate James Soong (36.8 %). According to Greg May (2000), the Assistant Director of the Nixon Centre, this election was "a three way race, no candidate won a majority". (MAY, 2000)

It was a close contest between three candidates, who represented different political positions and cultural identities. Both Lien Chan and James Soong were pretty similar<sup>67</sup> – they both preferred the *status quo* at that moment, and did not exclude the possibility of reunification with mainland China (however, they both claimed that it was only possible when it was in Taiwan's interests). Most of their voters supported the idea that Taiwan retain the *status quo*, and still regarded themselves as Chinese, or at least both Chinese and Taiwanese. Ch'ên Shui-bian's supporters, on the other

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<sup>67</sup> Lien was chosen by Li Teng-hui as successor to the KMT chair and presidential candidate. Lien represented the mainstream faction within the KMT. Soong was once Li's right-hand man, but their relationship soured when he was forced to resign from his governor post in order to make way for Li's plan to abolish Taiwan's provincial status. Soong broke away from the KMT in 2000 to run for the Presidential election. His voters were mostly old KMT members who disagreed with Li's pro-independence approach. Now he has formed his own party: People First Party (PFP, Qinmin dang 親民黨). After the 2000 election, Li and Lien broke up as well. Li left the KMT and also formed his own party - the Taiwan Alliance Party (TAP, 台聯黨).

hand, represented a group of the Taiwanese majority, who wished for Taiwanese independence.

In a survey of how the Taiwanese viewed themselves in the same period (April 2000), there were 42.5% of Taiwanese viewing themselves as 'Taiwanese', 13.6% as Chinese, and 38.5% as both. Similar results were shown in the Presidential election. Roughly 40% of Taiwanese voted for pro-independence candidates; the rest were scattered between small portions of pro-unification extremists and the majority of people who identified themselves as both 'Chinese and Taiwanese'.

The result of the 2000 presidential election demonstrated clearly the relationship between the changing Taiwanese identity and the struggle for cultural hegemony. The once suppressed and outlawed stand of Taiwanese independence has gradually become the official line of Taiwan government. The DPP's political hegemony was gained through the course of reversing cultural identity and winning the discourse. By December 2001, the DPP has finally become the ruling party<sup>68</sup> in the elections. It indicated the final victory of the indigenisation discourse and the winning of political hegemony through gaining cultural hegemony.

After Ch'ên Shui-bian assumed office, the relationship across the Taiwan Straits worsened, because the PRC suspected that the ultimate goal of the DPP was Taiwanese independence. (MAINLAND AFFAIRS COUNCIL, 2000) The DPP victory

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<sup>68</sup> The DPP won 87 seats in the Legislative Yuan. The previous ruling party, the KMT, only won 68 seats. Two newly formed parties, the People First Party (PFP) and the Taiwan Alliance Party (TAP) also performed well and won 46 and 13 seats respectively. Many dissatisfied KMT voters supported PFP's candidates. Many TAP supporters were attracted by Lee Teng-hui's personal charisma, his previous dedication in political reform, or his pro-independent tendency. (CHINA TIMES, 2001)



in the 2001 election again intensified the unfriendliness and distrust between two sides. No one can really predict how the cross-strait relationship will develop in the future. However, what is for sure is that its relationship will influence greatly how Taiwanese identity develops and their view on the island's future in terms of unification, independence, or maintaining the *status quo*.

## Summary

Since communication across the Taiwan Strait became possible, the differences between 'us' and 'them' have been revealed. The search for Taiwanese identity became the most highly debated issue in Taiwan in the 1990s. The repercussion of competing views on Taiwanese identity in the political sphere expanded to daily life, and aroused anxiety, frustration, and emotional debate. An attempt to overturn the old values and cut the cultural ties with 'cultural China' has been carried out vigorously since the early 1990s. (TU, 1994, 1996)

The Taiwanese identity debate in the 1990s was a typical struggle for hegemony: unifying a variety of different social forces into a broad alliance to express a national-popular collective will, a strategy that Gramsci termed as 'the war of position'. (SIMON, R, 1982:25, 64) As Gramsci said, there must be "a cultural-social unity through which a multiplicity of dispersed wills with heterogeneous aims, are welded together with a single aim, as the basis of an equal and common conception of the world". (1971:349) The alliance must be made through the intermediary of ideology to "spread throughout the whole of society determining not only united economic and political objectives but also intellectual and moral unity." (GRAMSCI, 1971:180-185) In other words, this collective will can only be forged through intellectual and moral



leadership. By forming a system of new 'discourse', a new leadership could be won.

As we have seen in this chapter, the reversal of Taiwanese identity was indeed made possible through rewriting 'discourse' about Taiwan, and its culture and history.

Foucault's concept of 'discourse' provides a good analytic framework to look at how a system of representation influences people's concept of the 'truth' and how it was formed. By 'discourse', he meant 'a group of statements which provided a language for talking about ... a particular topic at a particular historical moment'. (HALL, 1997a)

It did not exist in a single action, text, or behaviour. The influence of discourse appeared across a range of texts, and as forms of conduct, at different sites and in various forms within society.

In this identity struggle, culture was taken as the vanguard to form opposition discourse in order to forge a new national-popular collective will. It was amazing to see how the 'regime of truth' was rewritten within only ten years. The whole process is a good example of how discursive formation was formed, how it affected people's perception of the world and how it changed Taiwanese identity. As Foucault said:

Truth... is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint... Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned. (FOUCAULT, 1980:131)

He argued that things meant something and were 'true' only within a historical context. This 'regime of truth' could be sustained only within a certain locality and a particular historical setting. Therefore, this is not 'truth' in an absolute sense, but a condition that everybody believed to be true.

The construction of a new 'regime of truth' started in the 1980s, moving away from the once dominant China-centric ideology, and preparing for the total 'Taiwanisation' process. In the 1990s, the construction became severe and took place in the national debates on Taiwanese identity and Taiwan's future. In the struggle for hegemonic discourse, intellectuals again played an indispensable role in the formation of a 'regime of truth'.

Although beginning in the Chiang Ching-kuo period, the KMT also tried to forge a new collective will by adopting opposition ideologies and indigenising its policy, it still lost political hegemony. Under pressure, the official cultural policy did not help the ruling party KMT to win or maintain its cultural hegemony. On the contrary, the indigenisation trend that the official policy was forced to take on also contributed to the reversal of Taiwanese identity and political hegemony (since the DPP represented the indigenous political party).

Therefore, the trend for Taiwanese cultural policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has already shown its route: centralisation and indigenisation, for the sake of strengthening state control and reinforcing the pro-independence ideology.

## PART II CASE STUDY

After my initial research on Taiwan's cultural policy, I carried out six-weeks of fieldwork in Taiwan in 1999. My intention was to check my textual research through an understanding of how the arts community responded to cultural policy.

There are two chapters in this part, recording and analysing the case studies. My fieldwork covered two areas (*xiqu* 戲曲-- traditional Chinese theatre form, and *xiju* 戲劇-- western theatre), concerning the relationship between social change and the development of theatre, especially after the lift of martial law in 1987. I want to examine how cultural policy affected theatre development, how theatre dealt with political and social changes, how competing discourses affected theatrical expressions and their identities, and how the theatre challenged what was imposed on them.

The reason why I chose theatre was because of its historical and social significance. Firstly, traditional theatre - *xiqu* - has always been used as material to invent historical memory, as I will discuss later in Chapter 5, and has been effective in constructing cultural identity. Hence, traditional theatre was especially useful at a time of severe struggle for cultural hegemony to create shared memories and a sense of continuity. Secondly, the closeness of the traditional theatre and the masses was a convenient vehicle for politicians to make use of.

In Chapter 5, I deal with two most important *xiqu* forms in Taiwan -- Beijing opera and Gezaixi 歌仔戲(Taiwanese opera). Before the late 1980s, Beijing opera was regarded as 'national *xiqu*' representing the most orthodox Chinese performing art, and



supported fully by the authorities as the 'cultural emblem'. In contrast, Gezaixi has struggled for survival since the 1970s, even though it is the only local *xiqu* born and bred in Taiwan. Since Gezaixi is the typical indigenous *xiqu* in Taiwan, it was especially hard hit during the Cultural Renaissance Movement period because of its implications of vulgarity and parochialism. It was not until the 1990s that Gezaixi finally gained its official recognition because of the indigenisation trend, and replaced Beijing opera as the Taiwanese 'cultural emblem'.

Their different developments demonstrated symbolically the shift of official definitions of 'national culture'. By funding a 'national *xiqu*' and promoting it officially, the authorities intended to construct a different cultural identity. Therefore, Chapter 5 explores how the traditional theatre was used to create a sense of shared history, to lure public support, and to construct a new identity and discard the old ones.

In contrast to traditional *xiqu*, the western (contemporary) theatre was historically an art form of intellectuals in Taiwanese (also Chinese) society. The development of western theatre in China and Taiwan had strong connections with social reform, and played an especially important role in Taiwan's democratisation process after the mid-1980s.

In Chapter 6, I examine the development of Taiwanese contemporary theatre, especially the political theatre movement in the late-1980s, which joined forces with political reformists, and acted as a catalyst for social change. By examining this politically sensitive art form and how cultural policy tried to incorporate theatre activists, my intention is to detect the political intention of post-war cultural policy, its influence on identity building, and how theatre reacted to cultural policy.

The development of Taiwanese modern theatre in the last two decades captured the essence of the drastic cultural change. This development vividly manifested the 'incorporating' trend in the arts. Was it a result of culture policy? How were their artworks affected by, and how did they respond to the Taiwanese identity crisis?

Confining my research to theatre provided me with evidence to see how the theatre interacted with cultural policy and responded to social change. In considering the relationship between cultural policy and identity, the case studies also provided different angles from which to examine the issue. The decline of folk arts in the gradually industrialised society (consumption element), the shift of national cultural emblem (representation element), how cultural policy was made and has changed (regulation element), and the fast growing number of festivals and leisure activities (production element), all contributed to the identity formation process.

## Chapter 5 Traditional *Xiqu* in Taiwan

### 5.1. Historical development

#### 5.1.1. *Xiqu* – people's art

The traditional Chinese theatre – *xiqu* 戲曲(*xi* means 'play and drama', and *qu* means 'music and songs') – was the most popular entertainment in traditional Chinese society. It differs from the western conception of 'theatre'. (RILEY, 1997)

*Xiqu* was described as 'traditional Chinese theatre'. However, until the 1900s, "there was no such thing in China as a 'spoken play' ... Drama (for the Chinese) consisted of sung verses, or 'arias', interspersed with percussion-accompanied sections of stylised chanting in prose or, sometimes, spoken dialogue." (MACKERRAS, 1975:11)

Because of the music and sung elements, *xiqu* is usually called 'Chinese opera' in English. However, as far as the form is concerned, *xiqu* is unique<sup>1</sup> and different from Western opera. (MACKERRAS, 1975:11)

There have been many different opinions<sup>2</sup> about the origin of *xiqu*. The most accepted origin was 'ancient ritual ceremonies', asserted by historian Wang Guowei 王國維(1983) (MÈNG YAO, 1979; ZHONGGUO DA BAIKE QUANJI : XIQU, QUYI, 1983)

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<sup>1</sup> Chinese *xiqu* is regarded as a comprehensive art form embodying all Chinese performing arts into one. (TSÈNG YUNG-I, 1980:14; 1988:80) Generally speaking, there are four main elements in Chinese *xiqu*: *chang* 唱(singing), *nian* 唸(speaking), *zuo* 做(acting), *da* 打(martial arts and formulated battle scenes). (ZHONGGUO DA BAIKE QUANJI – XIQU, QUYI: 427-28)

<sup>2</sup> Nalan Rongruo 納蘭容若 thought that *xiqu* form evolved from the court dance of the Liang dynasty 梁(around 502-557A.D.); Xu Dishan 許地山 believed Chinese *xiqu* was influenced by *fanju* 梵劇(Ancient Indian drama); Sun Kaidi 孫楷第 found many similarities between puppet shows and the *xiqu* performing style. (TSÈNG YUNG-I, 1988: 79-113; ZHONGGUO DA BAIKE QUANJI : XIQU, QUYI, 1983: 451-452)



There are well-documented studies of how rituals employing *gewu* 歌舞(singing and dancing) in ancient Chinese society were used to worship the Gods, celebrate the harvests, gain blessings and protection from Gods, pray for victory in wars, and scare bad spirits away.<sup>3</sup> (ZHANG & GUO, 1985, Vol.1: 9) The origin is difficult to pinpoint, although its connections with folk dance and songs, *shuochang wenxue*<sup>4</sup>, and *huajixi*<sup>5</sup> are certain. (ZHONGGUO DA BAIKE QUANJI: XIQU, QUYI: 449)

The development from primitive forms of *gewu* and ceremonial ritual to theatrical form in China was a gradual progress. It was not until the end of the Northern Song dynasty, around the twelfth century, that *xiqu* had finally reached a mature form. (ZHENG CHUANYAN, 1995:102; ZHENG GENG, 1983:4) However, it was not until the Mongols conquered China in the 13<sup>th</sup> century that drama began to flourish. (BROCKETT, 1977:239)

Usually, each province or district had its own *difang xi* 地方戲 (local *xiqu*)<sup>6</sup> that was derived from local *gewu*, and performed in local dialect. The performing style and scripts of each *difang xi* were closely related to folklore, dialect, local music, and dancing style. Amongst all elements, the operatic tune (*shengqiang* 聲腔) has a

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<sup>3</sup> There are many documents recording such activities (worshiping the Gods with dancing, singing, and ritual ceremonies). *Shujing* 書經(The Book of History) and *Lushi Chunqiu* 呂氏春秋(Lu's Chronicle) had records of people clapping stones to make rhythms for dance; *Zhouli* 周禮(The Book of Rites) recorded witches dancing for rain; *The Analects* described the *Nuo* 傩 ritual (in which participants would wear masks to perform exorcism) in Confucius' hometown. (ZHANG & GUO: 1985, Vol.1: 3 -7)

<sup>4</sup> *Shuochang wenxue* 說唱文學 is a genre of popular literature, partly in verse and partly in prose, used as material for story-telling and ballad-singing.

<sup>5</sup> *Huajixi* 滑稽戲 is a kind of ancient farce that evolved from the performance of *You* 優 - a court jester of the King You of the Zhou Dynasty (周幽王).

<sup>6</sup> It was possible that one *xiqu* could be popular across several areas or provinces, and several different *xiqu* could also co-exist in one district. Furthermore, all *xiqu* influenced each other or even mingled together creating a new *xiqu*, due to geographic connections or the

fundamental connection with local dialect, because when *xiqu* spread from one place to another, it changed its original form by combining local dialect, folksongs, and adopting local legends. (TSÊNG YUNG-I, 1988:117-119; CHÊNG JUNG-HSING, 1999)

Because of its liveliness and close connection with local culture, it is not surprising that there are at least three hundred different kinds of *xiqu* in China even today.<sup>7</sup> This large number shows not only the diversity and richness of the *difang xi* heritage, but also manifests the degree of closeness that *difang xi* has built with ordinary people and their daily lives.

However, the authorities always disdained *xiqu*. (ZHANG & GUO, 1985: 101) *Xiqu* in Chinese history was always considered by the authorities as a medium propagating sexual and greedy desire (*huiyin huido* 誨淫誨盜), and took the blame for "obstructing farm work, wasting money, corrupting public morals, and disturbing public feelings". (ZHENG CHUANYAN, 1995: 9) There had been bans on *xiqu* performances for hundreds of years. However, the bans could never be wholly effective. Many believed it was the close connection with the masses and the important role it played in folk festivals and religious ceremonies<sup>8</sup> that kept it alive. (SU GUORONG: 1987:66-67; ZHENG CHUANYAN, 1995; SU GUORONG: 1987:66)

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origins of local residents

<sup>7</sup> Generally speaking, there are over three hundred different kinds of *difang xi* and over two thousand *xiqu* troupes in China today. (ZHANG GENG, 1983:1; MENG FANSHU, 1988:4) However, according to a survey conducted in 1962, there were over 460 different kinds of *xiqu* in the whole of China. (TSÊNG YUNG-I, 1988:115) In 1992, the research of Zhou Lingfei (1992:221-251) found at least 298 *xiqu* that still existed and were performed at that time.

<sup>8</sup> These festivals were the core of people's spiritual lives in agricultural society. "Festival was the axis of daily lives... Festival in Chinese life was multi-functional. It was the event for commercial trading, the opportunity for cultural activities and entertaining competition, and the social event for friends and families. Among all festival activities, watching *xiqu* (*guan xichang* 觀戲場) was the most important highlight." (ZHENG CHUANYAN, 1995:13)



Even so, the *xiqu* trade was the lowest social rank in Chinese society, and *xiqu* performers were considered as low as beggars and prostitutes. Thus, the involvement of intellectuals and writers in theatre came late, in the Yuan dynasty<sup>9</sup>:

Inherited from Han<sup>10</sup> society, *xiqu* performance had been "the major leisure activity in Taiwanese life until the end of Japanese rule"(CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 59). Most early Chinese settlers arriving in Taiwan in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries came from the south of China -- mostly Fujian Province (mainly two regions: Quanzhou fu 泉州府 and Zhangzhou fu 漳州府). Therefore, the *xiqu* styles introduced into Taiwan by immigrants were mainly those popular in these two regions: Nanguan<sup>11</sup>, the oldest

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<sup>9</sup> In Chinese literary history, most of the intellectuals who wrote plays did so as a hobby. Making a living out of writing plays only happened after the Yuan dynasty (1279AD-1368AD.). (FU JIN, 1995:239-243, 298-308) When the Mongolians invaded and ruled China in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, strict social ranks were imposed. Mongolians established the Yuan dynasty, and divided the society into four ranks--Mongolian and *semu ren* 色目人 (Europeans and people from western regions) were the ruling classes; the Hans (people from the northern part of China) and *nan ren* 南人 (the Southerners, people from the southern part of China) were the dominated classes. The Southerners were also Hans, however, because they were the subjects of the previous Song dynasty, and were considered the lowest of all. In Yuan society, Mongolians divided different professions into ten categories, and the Chinese intellectual was classed as the ninth, just one level higher than the beggars. (MÈNG YAO, 1979 Vol.1: 158; ZHANG & GUO, 1985, Vol. I: 101) Traditionally, imperial examinations had been the route for Chinese intellectuals to pursue their official career. However, in the Yuan dynasty, imperial examinations were abolished for seventy- seven years. Many intellectuals did not have any chance to pursue a career. Because there was no way that Chinese intellectuals could get official positions, or obtain any intellectual fame, frustrated writers either joined in theatrical troupes, or wrote plays to make a living. Intellectuals' frustration in fact created the high peak of Chinese *xiqu* literature. In Chinese literature history, *xiqu* was the most representative literary form in the Yuan dynasty. (MÈNG YAO, 1979; ZHANG & GUO, 1985, Vol.1: 81-126) According to literature critics, the Yuan *xiqu* was the tool to 'write essays' for frustrated intellectuals'. (FU JIN, 1995: 66-68; WANG GUOWEI, 1983: 74)

<sup>10</sup> 'Han people' 漢人 (also 'the Hans') is China's main nationality.

<sup>11</sup> Originally, Nanguan 南管 is the music used in Liyuanxi 梨園戲 -- which is claimed to be the oldest existing *xiqu* in Minnan dialect. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 140) Sometimes, Liyuanxi is also called Nanguan. According to historical documents, Liyuanxi was the earliest popular *xiqu* in Taiwan around the end of 17 century. (LIN QINGXI, 1991:235) During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, Liyuanxi performance started to change, and introduced *beiguan* music into Liyuanxi. As the name suggests, Nanguan music means 'wind music from the south' (*nan*: south; *guan*: wind music). In general, Nanguan music has a close link with southern Chinese *xiqu* music.



*xiqu* in Taiwan; Beiguan<sup>12</sup>, the most popular *xiqu* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Taiwan; Cheguxi 車鼓戲, simple cart-drum style *xiqu*; and three kinds of puppet shows – Piyingshi 皮影戲, shadow puppet show; Budaixi 布袋戲, hand-held puppet show; and xuansi kuilei 懸絲傀儡, string puppet. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 131)

According to the folklore scholar Ch'iu K'un-liang (1992a), *xiqu* activities came with Chinese emigrants and became an important part of Taiwanese social life. They served as an offering to the gods during religious festivals (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 36-60). The old Taiwanese saying: "*you hui jiu you xi* 有會就有戲 (whenever there is a gathering, there is a *xiqu* performance)" indicated how popular and important *xiqu* performance was for traditional life in Taiwan.

In addition, *xiqu* performances also functioned as the cement for the community. Because festivals were usually held for the purpose of praying for local prosperity, the involvement of local people and the scale of *xiqu* performances were crucial for its success. As a result, *xiqu* became the showcase to display the prosperity of the locality. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 41-46; LI FÊNG-MAO, 1992: 88)

### 5.1.2. Local factions and *zidi tuan* competition

Before the rise of commercial performances in the mid-1910s, professional performances were almost unseen. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 69-129) Taiwanese

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<sup>12</sup> Beiguan 北管 is also known as Luantan 亂彈. It had been the most popular *xiqu* in Taiwan for over a century before Gezaixi took its place in the 1920s. In China, Luantan was a general term for *xiqu* styles other than those using *kunqiang* 昆腔 or *yiyangqiang* 弋陽腔 music during the mid-Qing dynasty. Its music was the origin of Beijing Opera. Luantan was first introduced to Taiwan around the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The name of Beiguan suggests its link with northern *xiqu* music in China. (bei: north)

*xiqu* was mainly performed by *zidi tuan* 子弟團, a kind of community amateur club performing in local ritual ceremonies and festivals. From an anthropological point of view, *zidi tuan* was a voluntary association and its members had a strong sense of belonging and community spirit from performing in local festivals<sup>13</sup>. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 3-6) People took great pride in taking part because they could demonstrate their sincerity to god, and also display their social status.

As mentioned in Chapter 1.1.1, Taiwan was once a stronghold of the Ming supporters, led by General Cheng Ch'eng-kung<sup>14</sup>. The establishment of a Han settlement formally started in 1661. After the Qing court took over Taiwan in 1683 a closed-door policy<sup>15</sup> was imposed, and as a result, not only was the livelihood of coastal provinces suppressed, but also the problem of over-population worsened. (KIYASU SACHIO, 1999:61-64) Many people who lived along the coast took the risk and sneaked into Taiwan. These risk-taking emigrants wanted a better life, and usually settled down with those clansmen or *tongxiang* 同鄉 (fellow villagers) who had come to Taiwan earlier.

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<sup>13</sup> There were different folk customs and events according to changes of season. The most important occasions included: *yuanxiao* 元宵 (Lantern Festival; the 15<sup>th</sup> of the first lunar month); *qingming* 清明 (the day marking the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> solar term - traditionally the festival for worshipping at ancestral graves); *duanwu* 端午 (Dragon Boat Festival, the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> lunar month); *zhongqiu* 中秋 (Moon Festival, the 15<sup>th</sup> of the 8<sup>th</sup> lunar month); *zhongyuanjie* 中元節 (Ghost Festival, the 15<sup>th</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> lunar month when sacrifices are offered to the dead, the Festival of the Dead Spirits); *chunjie* 春節 (Spring Festival, the beginning of the first lunar month). Folk customs were very important for agricultural society in ancient China, and provided many functions: religious worship; marking the changes of seasons and their connection with farming; enlivening the hard farming life and preparing for the next season; educating the youth; and socialisation. (ZHENG CHUANYAN, 1995:9-29)

<sup>14</sup> In 1644, Chungzhen 崇禎, the last Emperor of the Ming dynasty, hung himself in Beijing after the rebels broke through the gate of the Forbidden City. The Qing dynasty was established by the Manchus in the same year and took over the Chinese empire. Many Ming generals supported Chungzhen's male offspring in the attempt to overthrow the Qing dynasty, which failed. In 1661, the final successor Ming Yunli 明永曆 was captured by the Qing court, and General Cheng led Ming supporters retreating to Taiwan.

<sup>15</sup> People who lived along the mainland coast opposite Taiwan (mainly the Fujian province) and who relied largely on fishing to make a living, were forbidden to go to sea. Furthermore, they were forced to move inland for the convenience of the Qing court in enabling them to



According to Ch'iu K'un-liang (1992a), without the official approval and protection from the Qing court, the connection between kin and neighbours was crucial in this enclosed emigrant society. *Zidi tuan* became the channel to introduce newcomers and was the focus of village social lives. Ch'iu K'un-liang claimed: "The popularity of *zidi tuan* in Taiwan manifested the true nature of 'socialisation' in *xiqu* activities." (1992a: 6)

*Zidi tuan* organisations were very common in Taiwanese society at that time, and almost every town and village had its own. The purpose was to help newcomers from the mainland adjust to their new environment, enhance their social connections, and learn the traditional values and social codes of their new community. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 2-6, 242-261) Every *zidi tuan* would perform different art forms<sup>16</sup>, and *xiqu* was the most popular and important form.

According to Ch'iu K'un-liang, (1992a: 1-8) *zidi tuan* was popular and influential in Taiwanese society, because it was almost the only entertainment and social event in Taiwanese agricultural society, and the most active participant at social occasions and religious ceremonies.

It was common in Taiwan for the inhabitants of a village to belong to the same lineage, or to have come from the same area in China. *Zidi tuan* was the extension of

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control the coast and Taiwan (1683 - 1895).

<sup>16</sup> There were all sorts of *zidi tuan*, such as: Beiguan 北管, *zidi quguan* 子弟曲館 (club playing Nanguan music), *songjiang zhen* 宋江陣 (a kind of folk martial art training for local militia), Beijing opera, Gezaixi 歌仔戲 (Taiwanese indigenous *xiqu*), or even western orchestras.



either form of solidarity. Even after Taiwan was ceded to Japan in the Jiawu War<sup>17</sup>, this had not changed.

Through *zidi tuan* activities, each village forged its identity and a strong sense of belonging to a certain clan. Therefore, the villages' *zidi tuan* competition became a contest of village honour. In order to show off fortune and wealth, they competed with extravagant costumes, scenery, and close-to-professional performances. The winning *zidi tuan* felt that they glorified the village or family name by displaying a stronger financial ability and a greater wealth of artistic talents.

However, the emphasis on different names and origins had developed so strongly that severe *xiedou* 械鬥 (group fights with weapons) were developed. There were three main origins – Quanzhou, Zhangzhou and Chaozhou 潮州. (YAMANE YUZOU, 1930:15-16; CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1982; KIYASU SACHIO, 1999:67-68) These fights were often caused by the result of *pinguan* 拚館 (*xiqu* competition between *zidi tuan*). Once the result of the competition was unsatisfactory, disputes were inevitable.

Amongst all the areas, the disputes in Ilan and Keelung were the most severe. After studying the criminal records in Ilan court, Lin Chüeh-t'ai (1917: 42-45) found out that major local disputes took place in the Spring festival, the Ghost festival and the Moon festival. He identified the cause to be *zidi tuan* competitions, and blamed the Japanese authorities for not being able to calm the situation down. Suzuki's document (1934) had similar findings: "They fought with weapons and set fire to each others' houses. It threatened public order... The disputes were caused by *zidi tuan*

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<sup>17</sup> The Jiawu War was the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. It was launched by Japanese imperialists to annex Korea and invade China.

competition ... (and) had caused serious casualties." (SUZUKI, 1934:12)

### 5.1.3. Emergence of commercial theatre

Commercial *xiqu* performances were very rare, and therefore, the festive performances were usually carried out by *zidi tuan*, in front of the temple – either on a set stage, or on a temporary stage. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 45; 70-71) Rich and poor alike could attend and enjoy performances. (TOUHOU TAKAYOSHI, 1936) Even when the Japanese took over Taiwan in 1895, traditional *xiqu* activities were generally tolerated by the authorities and performed as usual<sup>18</sup>.

In 1897, the first commercially-run venue, Taipei's Langhuazuo 浪花座, was established especially for the Japanese. The rise of professional venues changed the Taiwanese *xiqu* environment. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992 a: 72) Within six years, there were four professional venues built in Taipei<sup>19</sup> (LÜ SU-SHANG, 1961:195), and two in Tainan<sup>20</sup>. (HSÜ PING-TING, 1956) Around 1900, *xiqu* performance became a business, which brought money and fame to those involved.

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<sup>18</sup> When the Japanese took over Taiwan in 1895, there was a very short period of military rule because of constant revolt. The rebellion was finally ended in 1915 after the *Xilai an* Incident 西來庵事件. Official records showed there were 14,948 Taiwanese killed between 1898 and 1902, including 11,950 in the revolts, and 2,998 captured and sentenced to death. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 30) Consequently, the Japanese focused more on eliminating the rebels and tolerated local customs and habits that were considered bad or backward, such as taking opium, foot-binding, etc.

<sup>19</sup> Tanshui *guan* 淡水館 was originally for official gatherings. It opened to the public in 1898; Both Taipei zuo 台北座 and Shizi zuo 十字座 opened in 1900; Rong zuo 榮座 opened in 1902. However, these theatre venues were all located inside the Taipei City Wall, where the Japanese gathered. Not only did Taiwanese audiences decline to attend, but also Taiwanese *xiqu* were seldom staged there. Later, Tanshui Theatre 淡水戲館 was built in the Tataoch'êng 大稻埕 (outside the Taipei City Wall) region in 1909 to target Taiwanese audiences. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 72-73)

<sup>20</sup> The exact date of the establishment of Tainan's theatres could not be pinpointed. However, according to Hsü Ping-ting's memoirs (1956), there were performances put on in Tainan's Nan Zuo 南座 around 1907-09, and Da Wutai 大舞台 in 1911.

Taiwanese *xiqu* had grown and become commercialised along with the emergence and development of cities<sup>21</sup>. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992 a: 69-92) According to Sung Kuang-yü (1990: 25-26,36), the ways of celebrating religious ceremonies were different in city areas and rural villages. In particular, the record of religious activities after the 1920s showed an acute increase in city areas. The reason for holding intensive festivals and giving frequent *xiqu* performances was not for religious reasons, but to "*kuozhang fanlu* 擴張販路 (expanding the sale)". (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992 a: 102) In other words, it was a 'new marketing attraction to expand local business'. (CHIEN JU, 1924)

Professional *xiqu* had broken away from its earlier religious role, and became pure entertainment and business. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992 a: 77-79) By the mid-1930s, commercially run *xiqu* venues in Taiwan were opened in almost every town. Commercial *xiqu* became part of city life and the most important social event.

#### 5.1.4. The rise of Gezaixi

The prevalence of extravagant festivals had brought about a thriving *xiqu* business. The most influential *xiqu* at this period (before 1936) were Beijing opera and Gezaixi. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 79)

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<sup>21</sup> Before the Japanese occupation, the population in Taiwan was less than three million. The average population in the two biggest cities (Tainan and Taipei) was then about 50,000. People who lived in big towns (with a population over 2,500) made up only 14.03% of the whole population. In general, most Taiwanese lived in rural villages before 1895. After the modernisation by the Japanese government-general, cities had started to develop. Within thirty years (1905 - 1935), the proportion of large cities, those with over 20,000 population, had increased from 4.92% to 15.91%. (CHANG YING-HWA, 1986: 233- 273)



Originally, Gezaixi derived from a simple ballad -- *gezai* 歌仔(songs), a kind of ditty that came from the Minnan area on the mainland, south of Fujian Province. It was said that *gezai* was performed and introduced into Taiwan by travelling entertainers and settlers from the mainland. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 183-184; YANG FU-LING, 1999:16-21; ZHONGGUO DA BAIKE QUANJI: XIQU, QUYI: 88-89) The exact date of the transition from pure folksong singing to dramatisation cannot be identified. However, at the beginning of its existence, the form was very primitive and was performed on the street, or as part of a ritual parade, without costumes, written script, or make-up.

In the late Qing dynasty, Gezaixi was dramatised by absorbing the movement, costumes, and music from Cheguxi (cart-drum xi). It was around the 1920s that Gezaixi evolved from a simple two-character street- singing format to a new *xiqu* form that was locally born and bred. The whole evolution took only twenty years. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 185) According to a Japanese survey in 1927, Gezaixi suddenly became one of the most popular *xiqu* forms in Taiwan, alongside Budaixi and Luantan (see footnote 12). (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 421-436)

Gezaixi groups borrowed programmes, costumes, movements and make-up from Beijing opera, Luantan, and Gaojia<sup>22</sup>, and they also invited professionals from other *xiqu* to work for them in order to boost the cast and enhance their performing ability. Ch'iu K'un-liang (1992a: 204) believed that it was Gezaixi's adventurous nature of experimenting and absorbing the other *xiqu*'s quintessence that enabled it to grow so fast and strong.

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<sup>22</sup> Based on the foundation of Liyuanxi, Gaojiayi 高甲 increased fighting roles and added Beiguan music.

When Gezaixi was growing strong, Taiwan *xinju* (new theatre)<sup>23</sup> was also developing. Because these two emerging genres tried to win over audiences, the competition caused antagonism. *Xinju* activists saw *xiqu* as a medium embedding backward and old-fashioned ideologies. Therefore, Gezaixi was regarded as a major obstruction hindering the progress of modernisation.

Although Gezaixi was condemned as 'evil' and a scourge, it dominated the Taiwanese *xiqu* scene in the 1920s and 1930s. According to Ch'iu K'un-liang's research (1992a: 187-203) on news coverage of Gezaixi in *Taiwan Minbao* and *Taiwan Xin Minbao* between 1927 and 1932, criticisms of being 'vulgar' or 'licentious' were common, as were the accusations that it was "as vicious as snakes and scorpions", and "offended public decency". Gezaixi's popularity among the masses was unprecedented and such that "ignorant men and women poured into theatres and filled the seats day and night". The media also accused Gezaixi of "corrupting public morals... [and] instigating elopement of married women". (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 189-191)

Although condemned, Gezaixi performances were never banned by the Japanese authorities. Taiwanese intellectuals suspected that the Japanese employed a laissez faire attitude towards superstition and Gezaixi, in order to repress *xinju* and weaken the Taiwanese nationalist movement. (CHANG WEI-HSIAN, 1954)

#### 5.1.5. Beijing opera in Taiwan

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<sup>23</sup> *Xinju* 新劇 was a common term for western theatre in Japanese. It was first introduced into Taiwan in 1911, and was promoted by intellectuals in the 1920s. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a:



Under Japanese rule, Beijing opera and Gezaixi were on a par as the most popular *xiqu* in Taiwan. Tracing the Taiwanese *xiqu* history, *pihuang*<sup>24</sup>, the main *xiqu* tunes used in Beijing opera, then known as 'Luantan', came to Taiwan around the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a:151) Based on the popularity of Luantan, when the visiting *jingban* 京班 (Beijing opera groups from the mainland) came to perform in Taiwan<sup>25</sup>, it gradually became fashionable during the 1910s and 1920s. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 79) In contrast to the populist appeal of Gezaixi, there were also historical and aesthetic reasons for the growing popularity of Beijing opera.

After Taiwan was upgraded to Provincial status in 1885, many Chinese officials and celebrities from the Qing court travelled to Taiwan. Most of them were Beijing opera fans<sup>26</sup>. Not only did many *xiqu* groups learn to play Beijing opera, (LIEN YA-T'ANG, 1992b: 35) but the upper classes in Taiwan also took Beijing opera as their way of showing their literary cultivation and taste. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 161)

When *Jingban* first visited Taiwan in 1908, it was the "only *xiqu* that could sell tickets then."<sup>27</sup> (HSÜ PING-TING, 1956) In the 1920s, Taiwan's economy boomed and cities

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295, 302, 307, 325) The development of *xinju* will be discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>24</sup> The term *pihuang* 皮黃 was a conflation of two words: 'xipi' 西皮 and 'erhuang' 二黃, two chief types of *xiqu* music. Both tunes were essential in Beijing opera music, hence, the term 'pihuang' also denoted 'Beijing opera'. Before Beijing opera became popular in Beijing and gained its nationwide popularity in 1789, its original *xiqu* form, 'Luantan' had already been introduced into Taiwan. Because of the closed-door policy, Luantan was different from the later mature form, Beijing opera.

<sup>25</sup> During the Qing dynasty, Taiwan governor Liu Mingchuan 劉銘傳 invited *jingban* from Beijing around 1870 -1880 to perform for his mother's birthday celebration. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 160-161; TAKEUCHI OSAMU, 1943: 47) Another record mentions that Taiwan's last governor Tang Jingsong 唐景崧 invited Shanghai *jingban* to perform for his mother's birthday in 1891. (LIEN YA-T'ANG, 1992b: 35)

<sup>26</sup> Beijing opera was the most popular *xiqu* from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Because it was the favourite entertainment of the emperor, it became fashionable among high officials.

<sup>27</sup> Most *xiqu* were still performed in religious events. Although they were professional *xiqu* performers, their performances were paid for by the temples and donators, and free to the



appeared, boosting not only Gezaixi, but also Beijing opera. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 152)

According to Ch'iu K'un-liang, there were two important figures that promoted Beijing opera to be the most influential *xiqu* in Taiwan. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 74-92, 160-169) They were Ku Hsien-jung 辜顯榮, and the famous Lin family in Panch'iao.

Ku Hsien-jung was an influential businessman from Lukang. He had won the trust of the Japanese because he led the Japanese army marching through the Taipei Gate when the Japanese first arrived and had encountered Taiwanese resistance. His political influence and connections with the Japanese enhanced the status of his personal interest, Beijing opera, and generated a trend among the upper class of going to Beijing opera performances, and further more, learning Beijing opera singing as keen amateurs.

Even the Japanese authorities had to take this into consideration, and included Beijing opera programmes in official celebrations. (CHEN & LIN, 1967; WU TÊ-KUNG, 1960) For example, the Japanese authorities invited the famous Beijing opera performer San Mazi Junior 小三麻子 and his group, from the mainland, to perform in the 1935 Taiwan Expo, celebrating forty years of Japanese rule. (TAIWAN RIRIXIN BAO, 1939: 300-301)

Another example was *yangwen hui* 揚文會, a big banquet held by the governor-

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public as part of religious events.

general Kodama Gentarou in 1900 to buy intellectuals' support<sup>28</sup>. At this banquet, Ku Hsien-jung, who was in charge, organised a Beijing opera performance to liven up the atmosphere after the dinner party. (WU TÊ-KUNG, 1960: 36) It not only showed how the Japanese yielded to local taste and tried to win favour by using Chinese entertainment, but also this combination of banquet and Beijing opera had influenced the ways the upper classes entertained their guests. Consequently, Beijing opera became even more fashionable because of the endorsement of the Japanese authorities.

Another aspect of Ku's influence was his effort to provide better performance venues. Ku Hsien-jung bought the Tanshui Theatre, a venue originally built for the Japanese, and reopened it as the 'New Stage' Theatre. New Stage opened in 1915 and became the most important theatre in Taiwan at that time. Its performances were mainly Beijing opera performed by visiting *Jingban*. (CHEN & LIN, 1967:3-10)

In contrast to Ku's political influence, Panch'iao's Lin family's love for Beijing opera delivered a different message. The Lin family was a powerful family in Taiwan, and famous for its intellectual tradition. Their appreciation of Beijing opera implied good taste and literary pursuits. Whenever there was a birthday celebration or wedding, the Lin family would hire *Jingban* to perform on their garden stage, and invited local people to enjoy the performance together. This kind of family celebration would sometimes last over a month and became a public gathering. People from other parts of Taipei would travel a long way just to enjoy the free performances. (CHEN & LIN,

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<sup>28</sup> To gain the support of Taiwanese intellectuals, the first step was to win over those who had received official rank (including: *juren* 舉人, *gongsheng* 貢生, *linsheng* 廩生) in the Qing court. They were all invited to this banquet. The purpose was to buy popular support for the new Japanese government.

1967)

When the *jingban* started touring Taiwan around 1910<sup>29</sup>, they came mainly from Shanghai and Fuzhou. Because of the geographical connection with Shanghai and Fuzhou, the *haipai*<sup>30</sup> style of Beijing opera, which was popular in the south of China, was popular among the Taiwanese audience.

Beijing opera was not as popular and frequently performed as Gezaixi. Nevertheless, it was influential among *xiqu* professionals. It is fair to say that all Taiwan *xiqu* forms were influenced by its performing method, format and style. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a) For example, *haipai* specialties, such as the *liantai benxi* 連台本戲 (serialised theatrical performances)<sup>31</sup>, the martial art formulation in *wuxi* 武戲 (fighting or military programmes); and machine-operated stages were widely adopted by many Taiwanese *xiqu*. Even today, the performing method and style, its theatrical format and repertoire still provide inspiration for many Taiwanese *xiqu* performers. (CHIANG WU-CH'ANG, 1997; LIAO CH'IUNG-CHIH, 1999)

Not only did many *xiqu* groups learn Beijing opera programmes and arias, and introduce machine-operated sets, many *jingban* performers were asked to stay on, to either teach or join in local *xiqu* groups. In addition, some *zidi tuan* converted from

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<sup>29</sup> After Sanqing Ban in 1908, a Taichung businessman invited Jingdu Hongfu Ban 京都鴻福班, a *jingban* from Fuzhou, to perform in Taipei in 1910. It started the *jingban* trend. After this, commercially run *jingban* performances from Shanghai and Fuzhou became extremely fashionable. (LÜ SU-SHANG, 1961: 179-198)

<sup>30</sup> There were two main styles of Beijing opera performance: *jingpai* 京派 (Beijing school) emphasised a delicate and subtle performance style, while *haipai* 海派 (Shanghai school) featured complex machine-operated stage scenery, sensational stories and an exaggerated performance style. The two different styles divided in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and became a boundary defining the different artistic styles of the north and the south. This division remains to the present.

<sup>31</sup> *Liantai benxi* originated in Shanghai. It played one historical or legendary story in parts,



performing Luantan to Beijing opera<sup>32</sup>. *Yidan*, similar to Japanese geisha, in big restaurants also changed their performance from Nanguan to Beijing opera. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 162)

#### 5.1.6. Obstruction of the *Kominka* Movement

The rise of Japanese militarism had become intense in the 1930s. The first step that the Japanese authorities in Taiwan took was to reinforce colonial stability by reconstructing Taiwanese culture. In 1936, Japanese language learning centres (*riyu jiangxi suo* 日語講習所)<sup>33</sup> were set up all over the island. In addition, 2,192 village-improvement associations (*buluo zhenxing hui* 部落振興會) were also formed across the island. (CHÉN HSIAO-CH'UNG 1991: 493-516) The purpose of these measures was to "modernise the backwardness of Taiwanese life by introducing modern Japanese lifestyle and customs", to teach Taiwanese "the beauty of Japanese", and to make them "acknowledge the imperial favour and honour given by the Emperor to have the Japanese national flag". (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 326 - 27)

When the war between China and Japan broke out in 1937, the *Kominka* Movement 皇民化運動 was imposed throughout the island in order to make Taiwanese loyal subjects to the Japanese Emperor. It was not a political movement, but a cultural construction project for Japanese daily life. After 1941, when Japan engaged itself in

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usually divided into ten and played for ten nights. It was similar to a staged soap opera.

<sup>32</sup> There are many examples of *zidi tuan* changing track to perform Beijing opera, such as the famous Eyun She 遏雲社. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 167) The number of Beijing opera *zidi tuan* increased rapidly, especially between 1935 and 1937. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1991)

<sup>33</sup> The number of Japanese learning centres had grown four times from 3,932 in 1936 to 15,833 in 1940, with student numbers reaching 763,263.

the war in the Pacific, more severe cultural policies were carried out. For example, people were encouraged to change their names from Chinese to Japanese names; old traditions and Chinese customs were banned; statues of Chinese gods and goddesses in the temples were burned down and traditional offering rituals were altered. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a; CHÉN HSIAO-CH'UNG, 1991)

All Chinese entertainment and *xiqu* performances were banned. The Japanese put further strains on Taiwanese local culture and imposed strict regulations on any public performances. Gezaixi was banned too. (LŪ SU-SHANG, 1954:86) However, the *xiqu* trade adapted quickly by conforming to the authorities' requirements - speaking in Japanese, wearing kimonos, using marching music, adding samurai characters, and Japanese figures and stories. (LI T'IENT-LU, 1991:97) Even so, most *xiqu* troupes could not maintain, and only Gezaixi was sustained in *zidi tuan* activities and performed in rural areas. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 339)

## **5.2. Early post-war years**

### **5.2.1. Gezaixi boom**

After the Second World War, Gezaixi immediately got back to business and boomed. The famous Gezaixi actress Liao Ch'iung-chih was recruited as an apprentice at the age of 11 after the war. She still remembered the excitement of how the Gezaixi business was picking up. It was common for fans to follow the Gezaixi stars touring around the country, and throw bank notes and gold rings on the stage during the performances.

Within only three years after the war, there were over 300 Gezaixi troupes throughout the island. (LIAO CH'IUNG-CHIH, 1999) This grew to more than 500 after the mid-1950s. (YANG FU-LING, 1999:35) According to Liao's calculation (1999), every group performed at least two shows a day, and an extra free Sunday morning show for the Armed Forces during the heyday in the 1950s. On average, Gezaixi groups performed at least 720 shows a year.

During Japanese rule, Gezaixi performances were mainly held outdoors in front of the temples or on the village squares, and Beijing opera played mainly indoors. However, after the Second World War, the situation changed. Because of the impact of the 228 incident and the new policy 'reforming folk arts, economising religious ceremonies (*gaishan minsu jiejue baibai* 改善民俗, 節約拜拜), many *xiqu* performances were forced to move indoors for survival. (See chapter 1.5.4; LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1998; CHIANG WU-CH'ANG, 1990; LÜ LI-CHENG, 1990)

Since Gezaixi moved into indoor venues, its previous role as an 'offering' to gods was lost. An era of commercial *xiqu* had arrived. Gezaixi performances took over almost all the venues in Taiwan within a decade. This kind of performance was called *neitai xi* 內台戲, which meant '*xi* (drama) performed indoors'<sup>34</sup>. (SUN HUI-MEI, 1997:37)

Usually, *neitai* Gezaixi groups travelled from town to town and performed for ten days at each place. Each programme was performed in a format of ten drama serials to attract audiences to come back every night (YANG FU-LING, 1999: 35). This format

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<sup>34</sup> The theatres where *neitai xi* played in the 1950s were not the same as the theatre venues we see today. According to the memory of Gezaixi actress Hsü Yu-chu 許玉珠 (SUN HUI-MEI, 1997:43), some of the venues were constructed of bamboo and poorly built. However, it was still better than performing in an outdoor environment.



was borrowed from Shanghai *liantai benxi*. They emphasised the use of machine-operated stage scenery, and performances were therefore more advanced and exciting than traditional programmes. By the end of the 1950s, almost all Gezaixi groups performed indoors. (HUANG HSIU-CHIN, 1987: 17) *Waitai xi* 外台戲(*xi* performed outdoors), mostly found in religious ceremonies and local festivals, was performed by *zidi tuan*. This kind of balance of *neitai xi* entertaining the people and *waitai xi* entertaining the Gods<sup>35</sup> had lasted over a decade.

### 5.2.2. Threat from film, radio, and TV

Gezaixi had 15 glorious years of prosperity, but by the mid-1960s, its leading position was threatened by other more competitive and exciting entertainment forms. Film was the main competitor and gradually drove *neitai xi* out of theatre venues. (YANG FU-LING, 1999; LIAO CH'IUNG-CHIH, 1999) Radio Gezaixi arose in the mid-1950s providing a convenient way to enjoy the form. A few years later, the arrival of television was the final blow to the livelihood of Gezaixi

There had been quite a prosperous film industry in post-war Taiwan (LÜ SU-SHANG, 1961:63), but film had never been a threat to the *neitai* Gezaixi business. In 1956, Ch'ên Ch'êng-san, the head of Mailiao Gongyue She 麥寮拱樂社(a famous Gezaixi group from Mailiao)<sup>36</sup>, produced the Gezaixi film *Xue Pinggui yu Wang Baochuan* 薛平貴與王寶釧 (a traditional programme) that created an unprecedented box office record: NT\$300,000 taken within 24 days (LÜ SU-SHANG, 1961), and a total income

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<sup>35</sup> This balance was only a general description, and not an absolute situation. There were still some smaller scale groups playing at outdoor events. (HUANG HSIU-CHIN, 1987:17)

<sup>36</sup> Ch'ên Cheng-san 陳澄三 placed emphasis on well-written scripts and insisted on quality. Therefore, the performances of Gongyue She always had a good reputation. He has always

of NT\$1,200,000. (YANG FU-LING, 1999) A *taiyu pian* 台語片<sup>37</sup> frenzy started.

According to Yang Fu-ling (1999: 52-53), the reason for its popularity was that, "it offered audiences a concentrated Gezaixi performance, compressing ten episodes into a two hour performance, with the best cast and the best quality production."

Soon after this box office success, fast-reacting businessmen were producing *taiyu pian* in order to satisfy the mass Minnan yu speaking audiences. (LÜ SU-SHANG, 1961: 70) In 1956, twenty-one *taiyu pian* were made. This figure rose to 38 films in 1957, and 76 films in 1958.

Many theatre venues changed their management strategy and put on this popular, and even cheaper, *taiyu pian*. Around the late 1950s, the effect of *taiyu pian* started to show its impact on the *neitai xi* business. In 1959, when costume drama films appeared, the *neitai* Gezaixi business was severely hit and soon went downhill. (SUN HUI-MEI, 1997:45) It was because costume drama films not only had bigger audiences – not limited only to Gezaixi audiences – but also had more freedom of story development and less demand on performers.

Liao Ch'iung-chih still remembered what it was like when theatres changed into cinemas. "The films took the *neitai* business away. Many groups were dismissed. Everyone was anxious about the retreat from theatre and worried for the future."  
(1999)

Radio Gezaixi programmes were put on air around 1954 to 1955, reaching a peak in

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been regarded as a pioneer of refined Gezaixi and a reformer. (LIN FÈNG-HSIUNG, 1987)

<sup>37</sup> *Taiyu pian* 台語片 were films in which characters spoke in Minnan yu (the major Taiwanese



1962. (YANG FU-LING, 1999: 45-49; SUN HUI-MEI, 1997: 44) According to Yang Fu-ling (1999), radio was the main family entertainment medium in the early 1960s and television sets were items of luxury. There were only 4,400 television sets throughout Taiwan when Taiwan Television Enterprise Ltd. (TTV) first started broadcasting in 1962.

Radio Gezaixi began with live recording of *neitai* performances, but due to the poor quality of live recording, radio stations recruited their own groups and stars to record programmes in the studio.

Because Gezaixi had gradually disappeared in the theatre, most of the Gezaixi fans relied on radio programmes. As a result, the need for new *qudiao* 曲調(tunes) became urgent. In Gezaixi, as its name suggested, the *gezai* (song) is the most crucial element. Although the two main *qudiao*, *qizidiao* 七字調 and *dumadiao* 都馬調 remained as the core, new tunes were regarded as a necessity to enrich musical expression and attract audiences. The musicians and performers quickly picked up other sources – popular music and other *xiqu* music –, which blended into new *qudiao*. (TS'AI HSIN-HSIN, 1998:30-31; LIU NAN-FANG, 1998:44-45; YANG FU-LING, 1999:49) Thus, Radio became a forum not only for testing new possibilities in music, but also providing singers with opportunities to try out new ways of singing and to improve their skills. (SUN HUI-MEI, 1997:44)

Liao Ch'iung-chih remembered the brief heyday of radio Gezaixi: "Around seven o'clock in the evening, if there were ten households in the street, there would be at least seven of them listening to the Gezaixi programmes on the radio." (1999)

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local dialect). This category included Gezaixi films.



Radio Gezaixi did not last long, and declined very quickly after television became increasingly common. Within a few years, the number of television sets in Taiwan increased dramatically. The number of Taiwanese households that had television sets rose to 1,846,010 in 1971, over 400 times which it had been when television first started broadcasting in 1962. (TSÊNG HUI-CHIA, 1998: 54) *Taiyu pian* and radio Gezaixi did impact on Gezaixi development, but the arrival of television dealt its fatal blow. (LIAO CH'IUNG-CHIH, 1999; SUN HUI-MEI, 1997:45-46)

When the TTV started broadcasting, Gezaixi programme performed live, and was similar to the performance on stage. (YANG FU-LING, 1999) It was not until 1965 when Yang Li-hua joined the TTV Gezaixi group that its format changed and created a TV Gezaixi craze<sup>38</sup>. Over two decades, she created a 'Yang Li-hua frenzy', and had a superstar status. Not only did she achieve record high ratings, but also became a household name. When the China Television Company (CTV) was established in 1969, a ratings war was declared straight after it set up its own Gezaixi group to compete with Yang Li-hua's show. The CTV intensified competition even further by creating a television version of *liantai benxi* to boost ratings. After this, Gezaixi became a daily programme and changed its performing style to suit studio recording. In contrast, the business of *neitai xi* started to slump. (YANG FU-LING, 1999)

In 1971, the Chinese Television System (CTS) was established, and also set up a Gezaixi group to compete in the ratings war. New productions were made to look like soap operas. Thus, TV Gezaixi became part of TV drama and separated itself from

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<sup>38</sup> Yang Li-hua 楊麗花 came from Ilan county. Before Yang got into television, she played as a child in *neitai xi* and then was recruited for radio Gezaixi (Zhengsheng Radio Station). After

the stage format.

The seemingly popular TV Gezaixi programmes, according to Yang Fu-ling (1999), "did not help to boost the development of Gezaixi". Because of the nature of broadcast television and its limitations, TV Gezaixi had to reduce its *gezai* performance, which was exactly the essence of Gezaixi. "Adjustments were made constantly, such as giving up the long aria, simplifying *xiqu* movements, abandoning surrealist sets in favour of realistic settings, naturalising make-up and costumes, verbalising dialogues, and emphasising special effects." (YANG FU-LING, 1999: 68-74) Therefore, TV Gezaixi was regarded as a different art form from live performance. (LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999; CHIANG WU-CH'ANG, 1997; YANG FU-LING, 1999) In terms of music and performances, TV Gezaixi was closer to a costumed 'soap opera' with little *gezai* singing.

On the one hand, TV Gezaixi provided the convenience of viewing at home with ease and comfort. On the other, it prevented the audience from going to live performances – which could only be found in front of the temples or in local festivals. As a result of that, not only had television changed Gezaixi performance, but it had also damaged its lifeline.

Most scholars dated the death of '*neitai xi*' in 1974, when Ch'ên Ch'êng-san dismissed Mailiao Gongyue She. Nevertheless, for people in the Gezaixi trade, the change came much earlier. Liao Ch'iung-chih (1999) believed the obvious deterioration of *neitai xi* started around the mid-1960s. Most Gezaixi groups struggled

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she joined TTV, she became a household name and enjoyed superstar status.



to maintain their livelihood by gradually transferring to *waitai* performance<sup>39</sup>. Because of social change and severe competition, many people in this trade had to change track and leave. Those who stayed on could only manage in the *waitai xi* business.

(SUN HUI-MEI, 1997: 47)

### 5.2.3. Beijing opera and armed forces

Because of its nationwide popularity and mature performance style, Beijing opera not only influenced many *difang xi*, but also was identified as the most representative form of all *xiqu*. Therefore, it was called '*guoju* 國劇 (national *xiqu*)' by the prominent theatre theorist Ch'i Ju-shan 齊如山. Around the 1930s, this term was commonly used<sup>40</sup>. Many scholars referred to Beijing Opera as "the gem of Chinese Culture" (YÜ TA-KANG, 1977: 1; MAO CHIA-HUA, 1995:9; JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a: 3), and "the chief of all *xiqu* " (MENG FANSHU, 1988:11). Small wonder, then, that Brockett (1974:329) considered it "the embodiment of Chinese classical theatre".

Although it had never had the same popularity among the Taiwanese masses as Gezaixi, Beijing opera had always been a commercially sustainable business in

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<sup>39</sup> There are many documents recording this change. Liu Nan-fang (1998:36) believed that the popularity of Gezaixi was challenged by *Taiyu pian*. However, its decline was actually caused by the industrialisation of Taiwanese society.

<sup>40</sup> Ch'i Ju-shan referred to Beijing opera as '*guoju*(national opera)' in his book -- *Zhongguoju zhi yanjiu* 中國劇之研究(The studies of Chinese theatre) published in 1930. In 1931, the great masters in Beijing opera, Mei Lanfang 梅蘭芳 and Yu Shuyan 余叔岩, gathered together with scholars and celebrities in Beijing to establish *guoju xuehui* 國劇學會(the National Opera Society). The term '*guoju*' was generally accepted and loosely used afterwards. (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a:1) After the mid-1960s, this term was emphasised and promoted in the Cultural Renaissance Movement. It was not until the lift of martial law in 1987 that the usage of the term '*guoju*' when referring to Beijing opera was cast into doubt. Criticism emphasised the absurdity of naming Beijing opera Taiwan's 'national opera', and called for more attention to be placed on Taiwanese *xiqu*. Since the 1990s, some have suggested that Taiwan's *guoju* should be Gezaixi. Therefore, this term '*guoju*' (as the denotation of 'Beijing opera') was gradually abandoned in the 1990s. Hence I use the term 'Beijing opera' in this thesis to avoid confusion.



Taiwan. However, its status slipped after the Second World War. There were only eleven Beijing opera performances in total between 1946 and 1947 put on by local performers.<sup>41</sup> (LÜ SU-SHANG, 1961: 212-215) Partly, it was because the rupture created by the *Kominka* Movement after 1937, and partly, it was the lack of good performers coming from the mainland after communication between two sides was cut off in 1949.

Therefore, Beijing opera in post-war Taiwan, lacking local support and the stimulation of visiting *jingban* after 1949, was only barely maintained by enthusiastic amateurs: Beijing opera clubs inside military units, local *piaofang* 票房(Beijing opera amateur clubs), and a few individual performers and *jingban* that had toured Taiwan before 1949 and had been detained. (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a: 36)

For example, the famous *dan*<sup>42</sup> performer Ku Chêng-ch'iu 顧正秋 led her group from Shanghai to Taiwan in October 1948, and was detained in Taiwan. Ku's Theatre settled in Taipei's Yungle 永樂 Theatre between 1948 and 1953. (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a: 36) In 1953, Ku married and retired from the stage. Apart from her company, even though there were some attempts<sup>43</sup> to run Beijing opera groups privately, none succeeded, because the audiences were limited - mainly mainlanders and local gentry, intellectuals, and officials. It was difficult to maintain all-year-round

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<sup>41</sup> This record does not include the performances of visiting *jingban*. According to Mao Chia-hua, there were eight *jingban* tours from 1947 to 1948. During this period, many remained in Taiwan and later became the core members of Beijing opera troupes in the Armed Forces. (MAO CHIA-HUA, 1995:115-116)

<sup>42</sup> There are four main divisions of roles in Chinese *xiqu*: *sheng* 生- male role; *dan* 旦- female role; *jing* 淨 - painted-face role, who is usually a man of virile or rough character; *chou* 丑 - comic role.

<sup>43</sup> Famous actress Tai Chi-hsia 戴綺霞 formed her own group and performed in Taipei's Xinmin 新民 theatre in 1949. After a few days, she failed to attract audiences and dropped out. Wang Chên-tsu 王振祖 led the China Theatre Group 中國劇團 and arrived in Taiwan in 1949. He had tried several times to run a whole-month programme but had bad box office returns.

performances.

In addition, from 1945 there were some Beijing opera clubs<sup>44</sup> organised within the Armed Forces. At first, these small clubs were formed by soldiers' *piaofang* (amateur clubs) to simply satisfy their desire to perform. However, their performances also provided comfort for homesick soldiers from the mainland. Their members were partly professional, but mainly amateur.

Because of its self-organised nature, comforting function and voluntary manpower, the army officials allowed these groups to develop without interference. The situation changed after 1950 when these clubs got support from high-ranking generals<sup>45</sup>, and some units even started to form professional *judui* 劇隊(*xiqu* troupes in the armed forces). Their cast became more professional after Ku's Theatre dissolved in 1953, because many of its members joined *judui*.<sup>46</sup> From that time until 1995, the Armed Forces became the most important institution accommodating and preserving Beijing opera. (LI FANG, 1980:86; JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a: 14, 34 -39)

In 1953, the Grand Competition of Literature and Artistic Entertainment in the Armed Forces was held for the first time. Beijing opera was one of six competition

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(JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a:40 )

<sup>44</sup> According to records, there were at least 14 Beijing opera clubs within the Armed Forces of significant scale during the early 1950s. (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a: 36)

<sup>45</sup> In the 1950s, both Wang Shu-ming 王叔銘, then Commander in Chief of the Air Force, and Yu Ta-wei 俞大維, Minister of National Defence, were firm supporters of Beijing opera. They insisted that Beijing opera could provide comfort and entertainment for the soldiers. (LI YÜAN-P'ING, 1992: 303; WÊN CH'IU-CHÜ, 1994:647)

<sup>46</sup> Apart from the Tap'êng 大鵬 *judui* which was established by the Air Force in May 1950, most *judui* were set up after 1953. For example, the Kanch'êng 干城 *judui* was formed in 1953; the Haikuang 海光 in 1954; the Tawan 大宛 in 1954; the Lungyin 龍吟 in 1954; the Lukuang 陸光 in 1958 and the Mingt'o 明駝 in 1961.(MAO CHIA-HUA, 1995: 116-117)



categories<sup>47</sup> that were promoted and encouraged in the Armed Forces. The purpose of these competitions was to encourage artists and writers within the Armed Forces to carry forward the mission of 'cultural battle'. (MND, 2001)

Over the years, there were many reshuffles and mergers between *judui*. Only three troupes remained after 1986, one belonging to the Army (Lukuang 陸光), one to the Air Force (Tap'êng 大鵬), and one to the Navy (Haikuang 海光). There was only one exception, the Feima yuju dui<sup>48</sup>, which belonged to the Marine Corps and performed *yuju* - Henan provincial *xiqu*. Since then, Beijing opera had always been provided for by the state until 1995.

Many believed that the Cultural Renaissance Movement was the first 'obvious cultural policy' in post-war Taiwan, since the KMT government seemed to put all its energy on national security. (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a; YANG TS'UNG-JUNG, 1992; HSIAO A-CH'IN, 1991; LI YIH-YUAN, 1996a) However, a policy to 'promote Beijing opera' had begun as early as the 1950s, implemented by the Ministry of National Defence (MND). In other words, this policy of promoting Beijing opera was prioritised in an era when emphasis was placed on coercion and suppressive control. Most of all, Beijing opera was under the jurisdiction of the MND (apart from the Fuxing<sup>49</sup>). It

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<sup>47</sup> Apart from Beijing opera, the other encouraged categories in this competition (*Guojun wenhua kangle da jinsai* 國軍文化康樂大競賽) were literature, painting, Chinese calligraphy, singing, and *huaju* 話劇 (stage play, spoken drama).

<sup>48</sup> Feima yuju dui 飛馬豫劇隊 was founded in September 1953 in Tsoying 左營 in the south of Taiwan. Feima was established to make use of the staff and old costumes that were left over from the Chung-Chou yuju tuan 中州豫劇團, which had just returned from Vietnam with the Marine Corps the same year. Yuju 豫劇 is the provincial *xiqu* of Henan, a province in central China. The establishment of Feima was an accident, rather than a deliberate policy. In the beginning, it was not fully supported financially, and therefore had struggled during the early years. All the members and students could have only two meals a day during the early 1960s. (KUO KUANG YUJU DUI, 1998:6, 11-12)

<sup>49</sup> Fuxing *juxiao* 復興劇校 (Fuxing *xiqu* school) was originally established by Wang Chên-tsu 王振祖 in 1957. Because of financial difficulties, this private school was rescued and taken over



was clear that Beijing opera was promoted as part of national defence, rather than cultural heritage.

Beijing opera did not have the environment or enough audience to maintain commercially in post-war Taiwan. Its development only stabilised after the professional *judui* (*xiqu* troupes) and *juxiao* 劇校(*xiqu* schools)<sup>50</sup> were set up in the 1950s and '60s with state support. Consequently, the originally market-driven mechanism had changed. After this, the development of Taiwan *difang xi* and Beijing opera took totally different paths. (CHI HUI-LING, 1997:74)

On the one hand, Beijing opera was provided for by the state without the worry of box office or audiences. It was taken at first, as a combatant in cultural warfare, and later became the symbol of Chinese cultural heritage. On the other hand, Taiwan *difang xi* fought against the drastic social changes that were brought about by industrialisation. *Xiqu* business struggled to make a meagre living in the *waitai* environment, and furthermore, was hard hit by the Cultural Renaissance Movement. Taiwanese *xiqu* suffered deliberate belittlement and had become a symbol of bad taste. Although TV Gezaixi and Budaixi were popular, they were discouraged by the authorities. (See footnote 54 & 55)

### 5.3. Bleakest period for traditional *xiqu*

#### 5.3.1. Impact of industrialisation

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by the MOE in 1968. Wang remained as the principle of Fuxing until he died in 1980.

<sup>50</sup> When *juxiao* was first established in Taiwan in the 1950s, its training method was still very old-fashioned. (WANG CHÊN-TSU, 1980a) Dapeng *judui* set up its training course (*xiaoban* 小班) in 1955; Lukuang in 1963; and Haikuang in 1969. (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a: 37)

As mentioned earlier (Chapter 3.2.4), Taiwanese culture was belittled by the Cultural Renaissance Movement. According to folklore scholar Lin Mao-hsien (1999), the suppression of local culture was actually an attempt by the KMT to build up 'China-centric' values in Taiwan. In contrast to naming Beijing opera *guoju*, all the other *xiqu* forms in Taiwan were called *difang xi* (local *xiqu*). The implication of parochial limitations served as a foil to the classic, orthodox and more presentable Beijing opera.

Moreover, because of the emphasis on economic growth, Taiwan thrived during the 1960s and boomed in 1970s. (KIYASU SACHIO, 1999; LÜ SHAO-WEI, 2000) The original agricultural social structure had changed drastically. In 1951, the proportion of GDP (gross domestic product) by industry was 32.29% in agriculture, 21.33% in industry, and 46.38% in services. This emphasis on agricultural production was reversed in the period from 1958 to 1959. By 1970, the GDP share in agriculture had reduced to 15.46%, industrial production rose to 36.83%, with services accounting for 47.71%. By 1980, the percentage of GDP accounted for by agriculture slumped to only 7.68%, while industrial production rose to 45.75%. (DIRECTORATE-GENERAL OF BUDGET, 1997)

Lifestyle had already begun to change with the growth of Taiwan's economy in the late 1960s. By the late 1980s, religious activities had already lost their central place in Taiwan's gradually modernising society. (LIU NAN-FANG, 1998:36) Inevitably, *xiqu* was pushed further away from the modern lifestyle and audience. The role left for *xiqu* to play was to fulfil its religious function of worship for the Gods. (LI FÈNG-MAO, 1992:90)



Because of the drastic change, traditional *xiqu* – once the focus of social life and the main form of entertainment in agricultural society – had lost its socio-economical grounding and importance. It was a bleak picture in the 1970s. By comparison with the privileged and protected Beijing opera, *difang xi* was badly hit since the late 1960s. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1980)

After Gezaixi lost its entertainment function to films, radio, television and other forms of recreation, not only was it driven out of performance venues, but also found it hard to find business in religious events because of the policy of encouraging economy with regard to religious ceremonies. Most people in the Gezaixi trade either struggled to perform in poor conditions, or they left the business. (LIAO CH'IUNG-CHIH, 1999; CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1980:117; SUN HUI-MEI, 1997:48) The dissolution of Mailiao Gongyue She in 1974 indicated the "overall withdrawal of Gezaixi from the commercial theatre." (LIN FÊNG-HSIUNG, 1995: 252) After this time, almost all Gezaixi groups stayed in the *waitai xi* market.

In an article written in 1980, the prominent folklore scholar Ch'iu K'un-liang worried about the fast decline of traditional Taiwanese *xiqu* in modern society, and called it an "irresistible and irreversible trend". (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1980:116) He found out in his fieldwork that many *xiqu* groups still existed in the late-1970s; however, they had fewer opportunities to perform<sup>51</sup>, and younger generations were reluctant to join the

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<sup>51</sup> The number of *xiqu* groups indicates the condition of the *xiqu* environment. In 1980, Ch'iu K'un-liang estimated that the number of *xiqu* groups had dropped drastically from thousands to less than a hundred between 1946 and 1980. Ch'iu was the first folklore scholar to study Taiwan's indigenous *xiqu*. The figure Ch'iu quoted in 1980 was based mainly on his fieldwork, because there were no official statistic figures for *xiqu* groups. However, the figure rose after the late 1980s. Ch'iu K'un-liang later said, "at this moment, there are over seven hundred professional troupes." (1989:28) The figure was based on how many troupes registered as



business. Even *zidi tuan*, once the social focus of village life, became lifeless<sup>52</sup>.

Ch'iu K'un-liang (1980:113-124) commented that, although traditional *xiqu* was robust and would not easily disappear, their future was worrying. Problems such as a decline in quality, a decreasing market, bleak prospects, audience withdrawal, and intense competition were so severe that the *xiqu* business was forced to adjust, or transform itself to fit in the fast changing environment, no matter for better or worse. He predicted the crisis of traditional *xiqu* could be 'fatal' if urgent measures were not taken. If the situation did not improve, traditional *xiqu* was doomed to die out.

Scholars such as Ch'iu K'un-liang, Tsêng Yung-I and Lin Fêng-hsiung believed that it was industrialisation that wrecked *xiqu*'s social grounding and replaced the roles that it once occupied. The vivid scene which Ch'iu depicted in 1989 – the difficulties that traditional *xiqu* encountered in modern society – revealed an unsuitability and backwardness that all traditional arts had in common:

The temples, once the centre of folk belief, arts and culture ... are replaced by luxurious restaurants and bars... The activities of traditional folk art served many functions... in agricultural society. In modern society, however, most of these functions have been taken over by other artistic activities or social events... The multifarious cinema and television industries, singing and dancing, with the help of modern science and technology, have captured the fancy of the majority. In contrast, traditional drama and music... have lost their footing; they are particularly rejected by the younger generation... Widespread education has rendered meaningless the edifying function of traditional drama, which teaches morals through singing and dancing... Although folk-performing art... is still kept alive (because of its religious function), ... its theatrical presentation fails to attract new audiences; its very existence and future are faced with a serious crisis. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1989:20-28)

Facing the fast changing world, the Beijing opera trade, comfortably maintained by

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members of Taiwan Difang Xi Association.

<sup>52</sup> Some *zidi tuan* were forced to dissolve because other kinds of social events and other forms of entertainment had replaced its role, such as dining out, dancing and singing clubs. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1989)

the state, did not worry about its livelihood. On the other hand, Gezaixi business declined, but however, managed to survive in *waitai* during the bleakest period of the 1970s without any governmental support.

### 5.3.2. Vicious circle

Traditionally, Gezaixi performances were based on a simple story line and a series of *gezai* (songs). It relied on one experienced veteran to tell the story and direct the performance, and experienced performers to improvise. Therefore, performers relied heavily on rehearsal and experience to improvise. This kind of *yan huoxi* 演活戲 (acting with a quick mind) style is still common in *waitai* performance in rural areas today. (LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999) Since the pay for *waitai* performances was meagre, Gezaixi performers had to take up extra jobs to make ends meet. As a result, daily rehearsals and the quality of the performance were sacrificed.

When *waitai* became almost the only option, and traditional programmes seemed not to be as exciting as modern entertainments such as TV, films, disco and MTV, the Gezaixi trade was forced to update its repertoire and adopt gimmicks. After the mid-1970s, the arrival of *huache* show<sup>53</sup> in festivals and temple fairs made the competition even bloodier. In order to compete with sexy dance girls in *huache* shows, some Gezaixi groups blended in flashy disco lights, pop music, and bold

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<sup>53</sup> The *huache* show 花車秀 was a kind of exotic song and dance show performed on the back of festooned trucks. It was sometimes called a 'strip show', though not always involving stripping. During performance, three sides of the truck would be lifted, and the back of the truck would act like a stage, decorated with flashy neon lights. Though simple and small, it guaranteed the show could be performed anywhere. Also because of its mobility, *huache* shows dared to perform sexual content without fear of being caught. They usually performed in temple fairs and at local events. People in charge of festivals and fairs believed that they attracted a larger audience than the usual *xiqu* and outdoor films.



stage stunts to attract audiences. Furthermore, some even combined *huache* show with Gezaixi and added sexual content, vulgar language, and revealing costumes. (CH'ËN SH'ËN-FU, 1999) These measures taken to win back audiences did not always work, but made Gezaixi further despised. (LIU NAN-FANG, 1998:41-42)

The impact of brutal competition and industrialisation was not a crisis that only Gezaixi faced, but a general problem for traditional art forms, including Beijing opera. Apart from the religious function, the original roles of traditional *xiqu* in an agricultural society – entertainment, socialisation, passing on traditional values and morals, and providing economic opportunities – had mostly been replaced by other activities in modern society. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1989:20-30, 1996:93; LI FËNG-MAO, 1992) The essential problem of losing ground to modern art forms and leisure activities troubled all traditional arts.

The decline of *xiqu* in daily lives indicated "the end of traditional life style and the breaking down of the close connection between village life and *xiqu* activities". (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992 b: 98) The difficulty that Gezaixi had encountered embodied the problem of all traditional culture in the course of modernisation. Taiwanese traditional culture, as a whole, had reached a critical point where its very existence was at stake.

The *Radio and Television Broadcasting Act*<sup>54</sup> in 1976 suppressed Taiwanese *xiqu*

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<sup>54</sup> It was promulgated by the GIO to impose restrictions on the use of dialects in TV and radio programmes. Article 20 regulated the proportion of Mandarin programmes to be no less than 70% and this figure should increase year after year. Even though the GIO loosened the restriction soon after the regulation was criticised, the damage had been done. By 1992, programmes in Minnan yu accounted for less than 10% of total TV and radio output. (LI CH'IN-AN, 1998) In 1993, Article 20 was finally abolished.



even further. This suppression of local dialects had not only directly cooled down the rising popularity of television Gezaixi and Budaixi<sup>55</sup>, but also, degraded local dialects as second-class and vulgar. Liao Ch'iung-chih (1999) believed that its secondary status was the crucial barrier to promoting Taiwanese culture. The inferior status of Minnan yu also affected Gezaixi's status. Liao Ch'iung-chih said, "A few years ago, many people still mistook Minnan yu speakers to be vulgar and have bad taste. People would feel ashamed to use Minnan yu in public before the 1980s, especially among the younger generation." (1999)

The belittling attitude towards folk arts and local dialects had a significant effect. Many young people saw Gezaixi as un-cool and vulgar, and would not speak Minnan yu. (LI CH'IN-AN, 1998) In other words, the younger generation of Taiwanese were ashamed of admitting their own Taiwanese identity and language. It was not until Taiwanese awareness gradually emerged at the end of the 1980s and the indigenisation trend in the 1990s, that the tide turned. Minnan yu finally became acceptable and decent. (HUNG KU, 1996)

When the restriction was severely criticised and started to loosen, TTV Gezaixi staged a comeback for Yang Li-hua in 1979 to boost its popularity. Although her comeback attracted attention, it was never the same again. (YANG FU-LING, 1999) However, the format she performed had a different impact on TV Gezaixi. This time, the television Gezaixi was carefully planned and produced as a television series. The

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<sup>55</sup> TV Budaixi was extremely popular in the late 1960s and the 1970s. Huang Chün-hsiung's 黃俊雄 Budaixi programme on TTV started a Budaixi craze. Huang's daily programme became a big hit and created a new style for Budaixi. There were incidents of children dropping out of school, claiming that they wanted to follow the example of the characters in Huang's show and learn kung fu. The restrictions of the *Radio and Television Broadcasting Act* were imposed because of its great popularity and influence, as the government feared the power of popular culture. (SU HENG, 1992)

style of television Gezaixi changed from studio-filmed performances to a totally different format: a mixture of swordsman fiction and romantic melodrama that was apparently influenced by Hong Kong kung fu films and soap opera. (YANG FU-LING, 1999:64-68) Once again, Gezaixi tried to survive by adapting itself to suit the taste of modern audiences.

However, television Gezaixi was only a small portion of the whole Gezaixi scene. Most Gezaixi groups were still struggling in the *waitai* environment.

### 5.3.3. Censorship

When the Cultural Renaissance Movement was launched in 1967, Beijing opera became the preferred art form and the national cultural symbol. From being a popular entertainment in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it rose to be officially granted the title 'national opera', and became *the* art form embodying the essence of traditional Chinese performing arts. Since then, referring to Beijing opera as *guoju* became standard.

In response to the Cultural Revolution, the MND organised Literature and Arts Combat Teams in 1968 to prepare for the cultural battle with the Communists. Beijing opera was no longer promoted as a comfort for homesick soldiers from the mainland, but rather it was to carry out a grand mission to "embody Chinese culture essence, and revive the beauty of Chinese art". (CCRC, 1977) Most of all, it was taken as the symbolic weapon with which to combat the 'evil' Cultural Revolution. Therefore, the main principle behind the promotion of Beijing opera was to "preserve the tradition".

Since the 1960s, the mission to 'revive traditional Chinese culture' had become a



burden. Because of the principle of 'preserving the tradition', no change was allowed. Any modifications would face severe attacks for not sticking to the tradition. (WU HSING-KUO, 1999) In effect, the movement paralysed Beijing opera and suffocated its development by blocking any change. After this, the requirement to 'preserve tradition' transformed into stringent censorship, so that every new script was subjected to strict censorship<sup>56</sup>.

Therefore, experiment was inconceivable during the Cultural Renaissance years, and even those altering traditional repertoire would be condemned as 'demons and heretics' by the reactionaries. The usual tactic to prevent change was the fabrication of 'problematic ideologies'. Even many years after the Cultural Revolution had ended, such accusations still constantly shadowed the Beijing opera trade. (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a: 53)

For example, the Yayin Ensemble<sup>57</sup> were forced to change the ending of their first production *Doue yuan* 竇娥冤 (The Injustice of Doue's Case) in 1980 on the day of the debut. This was because some accused *Doue yuan* of implying the injustice of the Kaohsiung Incident<sup>58</sup> trials, which took place at the same time. Because of the accusation, the original ending was altered from a tragic to a happy one. (CHANG

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<sup>56</sup> Officially, the Ministry of Education (MOE) was placed in charge of stage script censorship. New Beijing opera scripts had to go through strict scrutiny within the Armed Forces, before being handed to the MOE. There was also another element of self-imposed censorship, which was inevitable, because all members in the opera troupes were part of the military forces and were expected to behave like soldiers. (WU HSING-KUO, 1999) However, censorship of Beijing opera scripts was finally abolished in 1990. (CHAO YA-FÊN, 1990; CHANG BI-YU, 1990b)

<sup>57</sup> Yayin was a private Beijing opera group, organised by Kuo Hsiao-chuang in 1979.

<sup>58</sup> The Kaohsiung Incident 高雄事件 (also known as the 'Meilidao Incident' 美麗島事件 or 'Formosa Incident') happened on November 10<sup>th</sup> 1979. It began as an event organised by *Formosa Monthly* to celebrate International Human Rights Day. However, the demonstration calling for human rights, the lift of martial law and freedom of speech was crushed by the armed police. Many opposition figures were arrested and accused of treason. Trials were held in 1980.



BI-YU, 1994: 26)

The power of censorship was not limited to new productions; the traditional repertoire was also under ideological scrutiny. For example, the old play *Silang tanmu* 四郎探母 had been banned many times<sup>59</sup> because of the accusation it "encouraged illicit relations with the enemy". (CHAO YA-FÊN, 1990) Another example was the ban on an old play *Lu Wen-long*. (WU HSING-KUO, 1999) In its final act, the hero Lu Wen-long concluded the whole story by saying: "*youdao shi zhongliang bu juehou* 有道是忠良不絕後 (How true it is that the faithful and the upright will never be without offspring)!" Unfortunately, there were some high officials in the audience who did not have offspring and were offended by the dialogue. *Lu Wen-long* was therefore banned.

Unfounded accusation could cause a witch-hunt. For example, in 1990, the National Theatre put on the famous play *Meihouwang* 美猴王 (Monkey King) to celebrate President Lee's inauguration. When the programme was announced, rumours circulated, that the title viciously mocked Lee's inauguration as "*muhou er guan* 沐猴而冠 ('a monkey with a hat on', meaning: a worthless person in imposing attire)".

(CHANG BI-YU, 1990a) As the political atmosphere started to loosen, taboos were also lifted. *Meihouwang* was staged as planned. Soon after this incident, the

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<sup>59</sup> *Silang tanmu* was a classical play in Beijing opera. The play was about a Song court general, Silang, who was captured by Liao 遼 - a northern invader. Silang had concealed his identity and had been married to Liao's princess for 15 years. When the war broke out again between Liao and Song, Silang heard the news that his mother was the commander in chief of the Song court. The play described his dilemma of whether to reveal his secret to his wife or not (in order to go to the opposite camp to visit his family), and the princess's dilemma of whether she should help him or not. The earliest record of this play was in 1824. (ZHONGGUO DA BAIKE QUANJI: XIQU, QUYI: 364) It had been banned several times before the lift of martial law, because it was interpreted as encouraging mainlanders on Taiwan to surrender to the enemy, the Communists, and visit their families. (CHAO YA-FÊN, 1990)

censorship of Beijing opera scripts was finally lifted. (CHAO YA-FÊN, 1990; CHANG BI-YU, 1990b)

Not only Beijing opera, but also the development of *difang xi* was affected by censorship. A great deal of politicised content and inappropriate dogma would be staged for official occasions. For example, it was common then that modern political slogans such as *zhuangjing ziqiang* 莊敬自強, *chubian bujing* 處變不驚<sup>60</sup> would appear in official competitions. In *difang xi* competition, some groups even held the national flag, sang patriotic pop songs (*Plum Flowers* 梅花, *The Dragon Generations* 龍的傳人, etc.), or asserted political slogans (long-live Sanminzhuyi 三民主義萬歲).

#### 5.3.4. Propaganda instrument

In contrast to the bare survival of *difang xi* performers, most people in Beijing opera were provided for as part of political battle units in the Armed Forces. However, this only delayed the impact of drastic social change. Their crisis showed around the late 1970s, after the Cultural Revolution ended on the mainland. Their mission to preserve Chinese tradition was dissolved. (CCRC, 1977: 3-4) Beijing opera suddenly lost its goal, and many people felt aimless.

Because of its political mission and cultural implication, Beijing opera in Taiwan before the 1980s was rigid. For many years, it was encouraged to revive the early 20<sup>th</sup> century style. Li Hsiao-t'i (1995: 32) described it as becoming "*dingxinghua* 定型

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<sup>60</sup> The phrases of *zhuangjing ziqiang* (gaining dignity by improving oneself) and *chubian bujing* (staying calm while encountering difficulties and changes), were commonly used during the 1970s. They were raised by President Chiang Ching-kuo to encourage people in Taiwan to face the continuous diplomatic defeats with calm and dignity.



化 (the setting had fallen into a pattern and stagnated)".

Chung Ch'uan-hsing 鍾傳幸(1999), the youngest head of the Fuxing Beijing opera group, admitted that people in this trade were used to keeping the 'mission' (preserving tradition) in mind as their lifelong task and took the 'tradition' for granted. This self-imposed inhibition was deeply rooted and lasted long after it was invalid.

After the end of the Cultural Renaissance Movement, not only had its status as the 'emblem of national culture' changed, but also its existence in the Armed Forces was cast into doubt. Professional army officers no longer saw the opera troupes as 'a battle force', but rather as being redundant.

Rumours of the dissolution of all the *judui* (opera troupes) in the Armed Forces had circulated for over ten years before it really happened in 1995. (WU HSING-KUO, 1999) According to the MND, the idea of dissolving *judui* was proposed as early as 1985, when the Mingt'o *judui* was dissolved after its leading star Hsu Lu 徐露 left. (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1990) The threat of being discharged haunted the Beijing opera from that moment on. (WU HSING-KUO, 1999)

Not only were the members of *judui* treated as soldiers, but their officers managed them as soldiers as well. Beijing opera performers had to agree to sign a 'joint pledge of life- style' when signing their annual contract. For instance, the pledge of the Haikuang *judui* (HAIGUANG GUOJUDUI, 1994) clearly stated what kind of behaviour was forbidden: "leaking military secrets, making public speeches, gambling, getting into fights ... or leading a luxurious and wasteful lifestyle". It also asked the members to "make sure that rehearsal is like military training" and "remember the stage is our



battlefield".

As a result, many of the older generation of performers were afraid of the officers and Military police, because they were treated as 'unwanted soldiers', and their performances were regarded only as military missions. There was no forum for artistic discussion, or place to argue their artistic rights. For example, the famous *chou* (comic role) performer Wu Chien-hong 吳劍虹 was put into prison and stood trial in a court-martial because he had a minor argument during a rehearsal. (WU HSING-KUO, 1999) Therefore, many performers were afraid of making any trouble, as the result would be a court-martial.

Wu Hsing-kuo<sup>61</sup> could still vividly remember how the captains of the Lukuang *judui* regularly mocked his colleagues. "They would bluntly tell you that they were laymen of this field and were not interested in Beijing opera at all. The only mission they were given was to supervise us, get us working, and win the army competitions." (WU HSING-KUO, 1999) One captain even laughed at the performers saying that they would 'starve to death', because no other governmental organisations would take them up. The older generation was terrified. They were not sure whether they could manage until retirement, and worried for their family and their old age pension. (WU HSING-KUO, 1999)

Generally speaking, Beijing opera faced a no-win situation. It was constantly taken to task for its state-supported status and criticised by other *xiqu* performers for

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<sup>61</sup> Wu Hsing-kuo 吳興國 started his career as *wusheng* 武生, also danced for the 'Cloud Gate Dance Theatre' from the mid-1970s. He was a member of Lukuang, but he and some colleagues founded Contemporary Legend Theatre to further their interests and ambitions to reform Beijing opera. (CONTEMPORARY LEGEND THEATRE. 1995: 37)

monopolising state resources. However, this 'privileged status' had suffocated its creativity and energy, blocked any opportunity for experimentation, and worst of all, degraded their existence to a state propaganda machine.

## **5.4. Anxiety and hope**

### **5.4.1. Tide turned**

By the end of the 1970s, the trend of searching for cultural roots (also see Chapter 2.3. & Chapter 3) provided a turning point for the development of Taiwanese culture. (LI YIH-YUAN, 1998:21) The native-soil literature debate raised the issue of Taiwanese identity. Urgent calls by intellectuals for the preservation of Taiwanese culture had also caught national attention in the late 1970s. (T'EN SHIH-LIN, 1980; HSÜ CH'ANG-HUI, 1989; LIU NAN-FANG, 1998; CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1980, 1982, 1989) As the result, the interest in folk arts grew. This urge to know more about Taiwanese culture later sprouted into Taiwanese awareness in the 1980s.

This craving for 'self' completely changed the humiliating status of indigenous culture. (LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999) After the involvement of academics and the emergence of Taiwanese awareness, Gezaixi gradually cleared its reputation for vulgarity and bad taste, and the common attitude towards local culture changed from being despised to praise and appreciation.

Taiwan's *difang xi* finally had the chance to turn its fortune, and Gezaixi started to fight its way back to theatre venues. The first group to return was the TTV Gezaixi Group, led by Yang Li-hua. (TS'AI HSIN-HSIN, 1998:14) They performed in the Sun

Yat-sen Memorial Hall for New Aspect's International Arts Festival in 1981. The following year, the winners of the Taiwan *difang xi* competition, the Mingguang 明光 and Youlian 友聯 Gezaixi groups, played in Shijian Hall in Taipei's Traditional Arts Festival. Although these were only limited events, their return forecast a change in Gezaixi's status.

The most significant event took place in 1983, when the Minghuayuan 明華園 Gezaixi group was invited by the CCA to perform in the National Festival of Culture and Art. Not only did the success of Minghuayuan gain nationwide praise, but also demonstrated the potential of Gezaixi as an art form, rather than simply an entertainment or a religious activity. After this, many Gezaixi stars such as Yang Li-hua, Liao Ch'iong-chih, Tang Mei-yün, and Yeh Ch'ing, were invited to perform in national festivals or to give talks.

The vitality and energy of Minghuayuan excited audiences, although its roughness was also clearly shown in a theatre environment. Hence, the new found success set Gezaixi in pursuit of *jingzhihua* 精緻化(refinement). (TS'AI HSIN-HSIN, 1998; LIU NAN-FANG, 1998) The idea of preserving folk art and traditional *xiqu* became commonly accepted after the 1980s. Once the first cultural institution, the CCA, was established in 1981, it started to promote Taiwanese folk arts officially.

#### **5.4.2. Beijing opera reforms**

The repercussion of the root-searching trend blended with identity crisis (shaken as it was by the increasing international isolation). The awareness of being 'Taiwanese' and the search for indigenous culture was awakened for the first time.



The impact of this newly awakened Taiwanese awareness on Beijing opera was enormous. This art form was once recognised as the orthodox 'tradition', and deliberately chosen, promoted and preserved. When the old ideology was challenged, the guideline of 'sticking to tradition' was also cast into doubt. In the early 1980s, the younger generation of Beijing opera performers started to feel the urge to try new ways to express themselves.

Yayin Ensemble 雅音小集, founded by Kuo Hsiao-chuang 郭小莊, was the first group to emphasise the reform of Beijing opera. Kuo was inspired and supported by the renowned scholar Yü Ta-kang 俞大綱 and the choreographer Lin Hwai-Min in the 1970s. Her staging of Yü's play, *Wangkui fu Guiying* (王魁負桂英, Wang Kui Abandoned Gui-ying), was highly praised in 1977 as Taiwan's first modernised Beijing opera production. After Yü died, Kuo established the Yayin Ensemble in 1979 and dedicated herself to modernising Beijing opera. Her actions were highly controversial during a period immediately following the end of the Cultural Renaissance Movement and when the cultural atmosphere was still rigid. She called her works '*gailiang xinxi* 改良新戲 (improved new *xiqu*)'. (WANG CHÊN-TSU, 1980b)

*Gailiang xinxi* was fashionable among young audiences in the 1980s and could be seen as part of the trend of searching for cultural roots. At a time when the exchange of information between the two sides of the Taiwan Straits was strictly forbidden, she used to collage famous programmes and arias from the mainland's new productions<sup>62</sup>.

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<sup>62</sup> The attraction of Yayin's new works was the new arias that were borrowed from the mainland's new programmes, such as *New Baishezhuàn* 白蛇傳, *Wangjiangting* 望江亭, and

'*Gailiang xinxi*' represented a trend of searching for a new face for a traditional art form, and did attract young audiences at the bleakest moment for traditional *xiqu*. Historically, it broke the taboos on challenging tradition, and opened a market for a younger audience. However, Yayin's work on refinement of the form was only an individual effort, and relied heavily on 'borrowing' materials from the mainland. Therefore, '*gailiang xinxi*' did not stimulate further development or foster any local talents.

Nonetheless, the desire to revolutionise Beijing opera was shared by many young performers when the fetters of the Cultural Renaissance Movement were untied. (LIN HSIU-WEI, 1990: 4-5) The dilemma was that if they tried to make any change, to experiment, or make even slight modifications, they would put their careers at risk because of reactionary criticism and possible discharge from *judui*.

In contrast to *gailiang xinxi*, the second wave of Beijing opera reforms took a different route. Their solution was to borrow inspiration from modern theatre, and draw support from enthusiastic academics. The Contemporary Legend Theatre was formed in 1984, led by Wu Hsing-kuo. In contrast to the stardom of Yayin and other private groups<sup>63</sup>, most members of Contemporary Legend were not leading

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*Qin Xianglian* 秦香蓮. Its productions attracted young audiences and made Beijing opera more accessible. Apart from this, Kuo's modern approach, exaggerated acting style, and well-conducted PR tactics had all contributed to its success. Even before the lift of martial law, many so-called 'banned' records of these new programmes from mainland China could easily be found in record shops in the 1980s. It was an unspoken secret that Kuo' borrowed arias and scripts from the 'banned' repertoire. Because of ideological restrictions, state *judui* could not openly use the same tactic of drawing inspiration from mainland classics. However, it became more and more common to do so even within the official *judui* in the 1990s.

<sup>63</sup> Before Contemporary Legend Theatre was formed, there were only very few private Beijing opera groups outside of state *judui*. Most private groups were 'one-star' groups. The most famous private company was Yayin, led by Kuo Hsiao-chuang. The others included the Tai

performers in this trade. United by the desire to transform and update this traditional art, they gathered voluntarily and created a new production, *The Kingdom of Desire*, in 1986. (CONTEMPORARY LEGEND THEATRE, 1995:36-37)

They were the first to try out modern theatrical tactics and concepts, and started off another wave of reform. They drew inspiration from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, the base and starting point of their experiment.

There was no surprise that *The Kingdom of Desire* created severe criticism at first. Those who were involved in this production were almost dismissed from the Lukuang<sup>64</sup>. (WU HSING-KUO, 1999) One and half years later, the situation reversed after receiving international praise<sup>65</sup>. Finally, domestic recognition was gained. It was promoted to the international arena as a 'made-in-Taiwan' cultural product that had accommodated both the old and the new. After their success in the early 1990s, experimental Beijing opera works became acceptable, and even fashionable.

Contemporary Legend Theatre saw this as the way to go forward, and claimed their wish to "create a new form of 'Chinese theatre', which would be neither a 'stage play' nor a 'new Chinese Opera'." (CONTEMPORARY LEGEND THEATRE, 1995: 37) For them, it was not a departure from tradition, but a search for a creative space, which was freer, and without traditional burdens. Along with the contemporary (modern /western) theatre movement in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see next chapter),

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Chi-hsia Group, and the Shênglan Beijing Opera Group (led by Ma Yuqi 馬玉琪), etc.

<sup>64</sup> When the private companies held performances, they had to 'borrow' performers from state opera groups (such as Fuxing, or *judui* from the Armed Forces). Because the state controlled almost all the resources and human capital in this trade, consequently, state monopolised Beijing opera taste dominated its development

<sup>65</sup> *The Kingdom of Desire* was performed in the National Theatre, London in 1990, also see Chapter 3.4.4.



young Beijing opera reformers were also considered as part of the 'modernisation' trend in Taiwan. (CHUNG CH'UAN-HSING, 1999)

Because of its success, the CCA even drew up the *Scheme to Foster International Performing Groups* to encourage the development of similar 'made-in-Taiwan' cultural products. (Also see chapter 4.6.2. & Chapter 6)

### 5.4.3. Changing fortunes

For traditional Beijing opera performers, talents, skills and hard work were the key to success; however, the pursuit for innovation was not always a priority. Though the restriction on keeping tradition untouched was eased in the 1980s, most people in the Beijing opera trade did not know how to tackle the new freedom. Especially during the second half of the 1980s, Taiwan's society underwent drastic changes. When political control was lifted and the cultural mission withdrawn, for those who were once awarded the status of 'cultural warrior', there was no clear direction what to do next. In contrast to the promising prospects of *difang xi*, this was an era of self-doubt for Taiwan's Beijing opera trade. When communication with the mainland became possible and visiting performances of Beijing opera from China became frequent, the identity of Taiwan's Beijing opera was at stake. Taiwan's Beijing opera performers had to ask themselves how Taiwan's Beijing opera differed from the art form in mainland, and where its future lay.

To begin with, the name *guoju* 國劇(national opera) was problematic. Since Beijing was the Capital of the People's Republic of China, naming Beijing opera as Taiwan's *guoju* was absurd. In order to avoid embarrassment and confusion, the term *guoju* in

Taiwan was quickly replaced by the original name *jingju* 京劇(Beijing opera) in the early 1990s. (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a: 61)

Secondly, once the Beijing opera performers from the mainland appeared on Taiwanese stages, the myth that Taiwan's Beijing opera was orthodox and authentic collapsed. In comparison with the Beijing opera elite from mainland, Taiwan's Beijing opera seemed *zouweir* 走味兒(losing original flavour, stale). (CHUNG CH'UAN-HSING, 1999)

Finally, not only did the threat of troupe dissolution become increasingly real, the uncertainty about identity became ever more disturbing. As a second-generation Taiwan-bred Beijing opera director, Chung Ch'un-hsing had gone through a long soul-searching process:

I have thought long and hard about what role Beijing opera in Taiwan can play in the future. Most importantly, what am I, a member of Taiwan's Beijing opera, going to do in this day and age? I was very confused and troubled when people questioned the value of my being in the early 1990s. In the past decade, I have been working on new possibilities of this old art form in modernised *xiqu*. The experience proved that it was possible to have a different development from the mainland, because Taiwanese society was tolerant of differences and more ready for change and experiment. (CHUNG CH'UAN-HSING, 1999)

Because of flourishing Taiwanese consciousness in the 1990s, the 'indigenous *xiqu*' generally referred to Minnan-yu-speaking *xiqu*. Taiwan's Beijing opera, even with its different development and style from the mainland, was not included. Losing confidence after comparison with the mainland's performers, and being excluded from Taiwan's cultural scene, many Beijing opera performers dropped out of the business in the 1990s because of bleak prospects. (WU HSING-KUO, 1999)

Even *difang xi*'s reversed social status and a growing interest in the form were



no guarantee that it would have a better fortune than Beijing opera. All traditional *xiqu* forms have faced the crisis of losing audiences and their grasp of the times in an industrialised modern society. However, for many Taiwanese *xiqu* performers, Beijing opera was the main scapegoat to blame for not receiving state funding. (LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999) The hostility between Beijing opera and Taiwan *difang xi* became obvious in the 1990s.

Antagonism created an emotional reaction, even among scholars and experts. For example, in a meeting in the Fuxing *xiqu* school, folklore expert Lin Mao-hsien questioned the proportion of annual budget used on Beijing opera courses and accused them of taking too large a proportion of available state resources. He was quoted as saying, "Since Beijing opera is the *xiqu* of Beijing, why should the authorities in Taiwan support it? It should go back to Beijing where it belongs. It does not belong here." (CHUNG CH'UAN-HSING, 1999; WU HSING-KUO, 1999)

Many people in the Beijing opera trade faced similar hostility, and felt let down by the government and bitter about being accused of having vested interests. Chung Ch'uan-hsing found it difficult to argue with emotional complaints. She said, "I understand their frustration, however, it is not in our power to change the past, nor to decide who should get a share of state resources." (CHUNG CH'UAN-HSING, 1999)

Wu Hsing-kuo (1999) also found it hard to deal with the Taiwan-centric atmosphere. He said, "We were fostered to represent the orthodox tradition. Ironically, we are now categorised as 'foreign'. In reality, we are only scapegoats for the shift of the culture building process." (WU HSING-KUO, 1999)



In contrast to Beijing opera, Gezaixi performed in theatre became fashionable in the 1990s. (LIAO CH'IUNG-CHIH, 1999; TS'AI HSIN-HSIN, 1998) This time, Gezaixi performed in theatre was not the same entertainment business as it was in the *neitai xi* period, but was presented as an art form. (LIU NAN-FANG, 1998:37-38) Scholars referred to it as '*juchang* Gezaixi'<sup>66</sup> or refined Gezaixi. (TS'AI HSIN-HSIN, 1998; LIU NAN-FANG, 1998) This new trend drove ambitious Gezaixi groups further to elevate themselves from an entertainment business to an artistic group, and to win recognition for their artistic achievement.

Since the mid-1980s, the development of Gezaixi has polarised and divided into two different directions. The divisions had different appeals and markets. The majority of groups stayed in *waitai* for religious and folk events. These groups still remain in the *waitai* environment (religious and festive occasions) and make a meagre living. (CHI HUI-LING, 1997:87-88; LIU NAN-FANG, 1999:91; LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999) The others endeavoured to refine Gezaixi art forms (*juchang* Gezaixi), although there were only a very small number of Gezaixi groups and individual stars that could afford to do so. (TS'AI HSIN-HSIN, 1998; LIU NAN-FANG, 1998; LIAO CH'IUNG-CHIH, 1999) However, most *juchang* Gezaixi groups will still need to rely on the *waitai* market to maintain their living. They only applied for state funding once or twice each year to maintain their reputation and leading status within the trade.

## 5.5. Indigenisation trend

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<sup>66</sup> *Juchang* Gezaixi 劇場歌仔戲 is different from the *neitai* Gezaixi of the 1950s, even though they both take place in the theatre. It is regarded as an artistic pursuit and cannot be sustained in a commercial market. Usually, this kind of refined Gezaixi production was performed in art festivals or state-funded events.

### 5.5.1. Dissolution of Beijing opera troupes

As a result of the political transition of Taiwan's regime in the early 1990s (TIEN & CHU, 1996: 1141) Taiwan was heading towards indigenisation. The focus of cultural policy also shifted from 'preserving Chinese tradition' to 'restoring Taiwanese culture'. (HÊ HSÜ-CH'U, 1991) The indigenisation trend dominated every aspect of Taiwanese life, and Indigenous culture became increasingly popular. Consequently, traditional Chinese culture became relatively unpopular and outdated.

Apart from the change in the domestic domain, the international atmosphere had also changed. Following the end of the cold war and the cessation of military action across the Taiwan Strait in the mid-1980s, the MND was under pressure from the Legislative Yuan to reduce armaments and increase redundancies after 1992. (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a: 61-62) The MND was the authority responsible for Beijing opera, and had been under attack for its ideological position in guarding orthodox Chinese culture. It was not until then that the use of public money to support only Beijing opera finally seemed outrageous. The pressure peaked during 1994's Qiandao Lake incident<sup>67</sup> when general antagonism and scorn were aroused towards China. Therefore, *judui* (opera troupes) were at the top of the list of military redundancies. (LIU HSIEN-CH'ANG, 1998: 30, 71)

The decision to dissolve *judui* was announced in November 1994, only half a year before the actual dissolution. The news stirred panic and anxiety, (LAN HSÜN, 1994b) because no private Beijing opera group had managed to survive by box office alone since the Ku's Theatre. (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a: 152) After forty years of being

provided for by the state, *judui* dissolution meant 'unemployment' for people in this trade. Furthermore, it would bring Beijing opera to extinction in Taiwan.

In the previous decade, every time proposals for dissolution were raised, there were objections from opera fans in high positions that managed to secure its place. This time was no exception. One month before the announcement, the decision for 'total dissolution' had been reversed (LAN HSÜN, 1994c) because of intervention from 'above'. According to K'o Chi-liang<sup>68</sup>(1999), the pressure came from many generals and members of the cabinet.

It was the end of 1994, a sensitive pre-election period, and the severe concern and objections to *judui* dissolution had shaken Lee Teng-hui. Lee appointed Chiang Yen-shih 蔣彥士, then secretary-general to the President, to deal with the aftermath of the dissolution. According to Chiang (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999), the best way to save Beijing opera from dying out was to select the best performers and set up a national group.

The future of Taiwan's Beijing opera was decided in this urgent meeting held in the Presidential Office in October 1994. Shên Hsüeh-yung, then chairwoman of the CCA, and Kuo Wei-fan, then Minister of Education, were called in to discuss how to deal with the placement of Beijing opera performers after *judui* dissolution.

K'o Chi-liang (1999) also attended that meeting. He recalled the decision-making

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<sup>67</sup> The Qiandao Lake incident took place on March 31<sup>st</sup> 1994.

<sup>68</sup> K'o Chi-liang was a senior officer in the CCA. He was involved in the planning of the *judui* dissolution planning from the beginning, and was appointed as the first president of the newly formed Kuo Kuang Chinese Opera Company in 1995.



process, " It was in this crucial meeting that the future for Beijing opera in Taiwan was decided. Chiang Yen-shih told us that it was not acceptable to let it [Beijing opera] disappear. Therefore, the future arrangement for dismissed personnel should be the core concern of this rescue plan."

Chiang Yen-shih wanted the CCA to take charge of a new Beijing opera group that consisted of the best performers in this trade. However, there were some difficulties concerning legal restrictions preventing the CCA from directly establishing national art groups. Finally, the responsibility was handed to the MOE. (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999) A special team was organised within the Executive Yuan to deal with the matter with great care.

According to the meeting's conclusion, the MOE would take over the responsibility of fostering Beijing opera. As a result, the MOE had two tasks to fulfil: one concerned 'sustaining traditional *xiqu*'; and the other was to carry out *xiqu* education. (KUO KUANG CHINESE OPERA COMPANY, 1995; JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a: 98) In other words, the whole merger plan had two missions: one concerning the merger of *judui* talents and related resources; another the reorganisation of *xiqu* education as a whole<sup>69</sup>.

Facing the increasing Taiwanisation trend, the planning period for setting up a

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<sup>69</sup> For the purpose of entertainment and propaganda, the MND had its own performing troupes and training school - the Kuo Kuang Performing Art Experimental School (*Kuo Kuang Juyi Shiyan Xuexiao* 國光劇藝實驗學校). It was an art school that trained military artistic talents, and included *xiqu* training. Before the 1980s, *juxiao* (*xiqu* school) was seen as part of the *judui*, and most students were trained inside military camps. It was regarded as a place for poor children from broken families. Students lived in the barracks, had political lessons once a week for an hour, and were given a monthly allowance. In the 1980s, the MND merged three *juxiao* (*xiqu* schools that belonged to three *judui*) and put them into Kuo Kuang (with other performing art courses). In 1995, Kuo Kuang was handed to the MOE as part of the merger

national company was an awkward one. One of the early planners - Jung Pao-shan recalled, "No one would dare to say publicly that the establishment of this new group was to 'protect' or to 'develop' Beijing opera, even if it was the case. We had to do it quietly to avoid criticism and trouble from the Legislative Yuan. " (1999b)

In summer 1995, the first national opera group, the Kuo Kuang Chinese Opera Company<sup>70</sup>, was established according to plan. It is *the* national opera company, claiming to have a modernised structure and western managerial style. (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a: 147-202; 1999b) In theory, its future should be bright. However, after a few years, it was criticised for its high-handed dominant style and the impractical measures taken by ignorant managers. (WU HSING-KUO, 1999)

#### 5.5.2. 'One- troupe, one- school' plan

Originally, the rescue plan seemed straightforward: there would be two Beijing opera troupes (Fuxing and the newly formed Kuo Kuang Chinese Opera Company) and two *xiqu* schools (Fuxing and Kuo Kuang school) after the *judui* dissolution. However, the plan was challenged. The original plan was cast into doubt after the public hearing *Who Cares About Traditional Arts* held by the opposition legislators Fan Hsün-lü 范巽綠, Ts'ai Shih-yüan 蔡式淵 and Ts'ai Huang-lang 蔡煌瑯 on June 14<sup>th</sup> 1996. At that public hearing, both legislators and scholars criticised the China-centric ideology of the KMT government. The unfairness of resource-distribution to each *xiqu* also

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plan, in order to sort out *xiqu* resources, including *difang xi*.

<sup>70</sup> In Chinese, the troupe is called Kuo Kuang *jutuan* 國光劇團. The title does not have a specific indication of what kind of *xiqu* it performs, and therefore, opens up the possibility of accommodating different *xiqu* and various performing teams in the future. The English title was used in its official brochure. (KUO KUANG CHINESE OPERA COMPANY, 1999a: 5, 1999b: 5)



became an issue. (CHOU MEI-HUI, 1996; CHIANG WU-CH'ANG, 1997)

Kuo kuang's report *Advice on Mergers and development* (1996) already recognised this problem and the changing attitude among the public towards Taiwanese *xiqu* and Beijing opera. In the report (KUO KUANG CHINESE OPERA COMPANY, 1996: 5), it was pointed out that many people were not only dissatisfied with the way resources were being distributed, but also blamed the government for neglecting indigenous culture and promoting only Beijing opera.

At the same time in the 1990s, the general pressure to increase efficiency and reduce redundant fuctions within the Executive Yuan was overpowering.

Consequently, the MOE announced that new educational institutions would not be established for at least five years. (CHOU MEI-HUI, 1996; JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999a: 271) The MOE finally found the solution to cope with both the construction of new institutions and the need to provide resources for different *xiqu* by combining all facilities and resources into one. (KUO KUANG CHINESE OPERA COMPANY, 1996: 3-4) It assumed that "within a 'one-troupe, one-school' structure, the resources could be fully used and shared, the state-organised system would also run more efficiently." (KUO KUANG CHINESE OPERA COMPANY, 1995, 1996) Moreover, it could also achieve the goals of "reaching a balance between the mainland Chinese and Taiwanese culture" and "reflecting the Taiwanese multicultural environment". (KUO KUANG CHINESE OPERA COMPANY, 1997: 25,27)

After the military *judui* merged in 1995, the second stage of merger (between Fuxing and Kuo Kuang) started in late 1997. In contrast to the political burden and military supervision imposed on *judui*, Fuxing was under the jurisdiction of the MOE as an



educational institution. The 'school' sector of Fuxing had always been more important than the 'opera group' sector<sup>71</sup>, in contrast to the military *judui*. Fuxing had developed a wide range of traditional performing arts courses, and most importantly, the establishment of the Gezaixi Department in 1994.

Because of its long history and strength in various traditional *xiqu* courses, the members of Fuxing had enjoyed many years of stable benefits and a retirement scheme. They did not want any change or risk redundancy. Putting everything under one umbrella was an ideal solution for the authorities, but the staff of Fuxing were unhappy.

When the final decision about the merger was announced in 1998 and a timetable drawn up, Chung Ch'uan-hsing, the head of the Fuxing opera troupe, encountered huge resistance and a strong emotional reaction. Some members threatened to go on strike. Some refused to come in to rehearse. Most of them did not want to work on the new production since it was not known whether the new play would be staged or not. (CHUNG CH'UAN-HSING, 1999)

The two opera schools were merged in summer 1999. It was upgraded to 'college' status as the National Taiwan Junior College of Performing Arts (NTJCPA, *guoli taiwan xiqu zhuanke xuexiao* 國立台灣戲曲專科學校), fostering traditional performing artists in all areas. However, the merger between the two troupes was first postponed and then abandoned in 2000, because of strong objections within the trade. (JUNG

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<sup>71</sup> Fuxing had its own opera group mainly accommodating its graduates. Apart from Beijing opera, there were three other departments – *zongyi* 綜藝 (acrobatics and variety shows, established in 1982), traditional *xiqu* music (established in 1988), and Gezaixi (established in 1994).

PAO-SHAN, 2000; 2001)

### 5.5.3. Balancing *shengji* complex

It was evident that the merger was not merely a measure taken to sort out two existing Beijing opera groups and schools. By putting all *xiqu* forms into one institution, limited resources could be redistributed much more easily, as the policy-makers wished. By extending subsidy from Beijing opera to selected Taiwanese indigenous *xiqu*, the policy-makers hoped to deal with the problem of the 'long-ignored indigenous *xiqu*'. (K'O CHÊNG-FÊNG, 1999)

New departments were set up in the National Taiwan Junior College of Performing Arts (NTJCPA), and a new emphasis was placed on indigenous culture as a whole, in the hope to remedy the *shengji* (province of one's birthplace of origin) complex. As a result, Beijing opera is no longer the dominant department in the NTJCPA. In addition, there is a Gezaixi department, *xiqu* music department, *zongyi* (acrobatics and variety show) department, Yuju department, and, to many people's surprise, a preparatory office of the Hakka Caichaxi<sup>72</sup> department.

*Xiqu* such as Budaixi, Nanguan and Beiguan are more popular and influential than Yuju and Hakka Caichaxi. (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999b; LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999, CHIANG WU-CH'ANG, 1997) The urgency of the need to preserve Budaixi and Nanguan was mentioned in the original planning report (KUO KUANG CHINESE

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<sup>72</sup> Caichaxi 採茶戲 means 'tea-picking xi'. It is a kind of local *xiaoxi* 小戲 (simple form of *xiqu*, without complicated staging, not too many characters or programmes), usually popular in Chinese provinces, like Jiangxi 江西, and Hubei 湖北. Caichaxi usually evolved from folk songs and dances, and is a very simple folk form.



OPERA COMPANY, 1995), and neither Hakka Caichaxi nor Yuju were considered important or in danger of extinction. According to Lin Mao-hsien (1999), the reason for setting up these two departments was purely political.

The policy of rescuing all *judui* after their dissolution was instructed directly from the Presidential Office in 1994. (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999; K'O CHÊNG-FÊNG, 1999) Feima Yuju dui was included as part of the *judui* dissolution plan from the very beginning. Hence, creating a place for Yuju within Kuo Kuang and NTJCPA was already planned. After the hand-over to the MOE in 1995, Feima became a sub-group of Kuo Kuang.

Lin Mao-hsien challenged this arrangement on various occasions. (CHUNG CH'UAN-HSING, 1999; WU HSING-KUO, 1999). In the public hearing *Who Cares About Traditional Arts*, he raised questions about its future:

It was mad to keep Feima when it was possible to get rid of it in 1994. Keeping them does not do Yuju any good in the long term. For example, where can Yuju students go or do after they leave school? It is not fair for them, since there is no Yuju market. The authorities might as well give the annual budget to Henan Provincial government in China. It will probably be more effective. (CHOU MEI-HUI, 1996)

Another surprise was the setting up of the Hakka Caichaxi department. While Hakka music is famous for its folksongs and the *suona*<sup>73</sup>, Caichaxi is a fairly small and comparatively young *xiqu* form in Taiwan. Hakka Caichaxi was chosen to put into the education system, instead of other more influential and important *xiqu* such Budaixi, Nanguan, and Beiguan. K'o Chêng-fêng(1999), the Deputy Director of Department of Social Education (MOE), admitted frankly, it was because of the support of Wu Po-hsiung 吳伯雄.

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<sup>73</sup> *Suona* 嗩吶 is a kind of Chinese woodwind instrument. Hakka *suona* is the key instrument in Hakka music, and has usually played at weddings and other festive occasions.



Wu is a Hakka senior statesman in the KMT government and a powerful politician. K'o Chêng-fêng said that the setting up of the Hakka Caichaxi department was supported by Wu Po-hsiung, then Secretary-general to the President. Partly, it happened because of Wu's influence and interests in Hakka culture, but partly, it was because the new Hakka course fitted in perfectly with the policy of 'balancing *shengji* difference'. (K'O CHÊNG-FÊNG, 1999) Even the newly appointed principal of the college, Cheng Rom-Shing, was an authoritative scholar in Hakka music and Caichaxi. The re-structuring of the National Taiwan Junior College of Performing Arts not only embodied the cultural policy trend, but also manifested the way in which political considerations could influence cultural affairs.

The preparatory office for Hakka Caichaxi was set up in 1998; however, at present there seems little chance that it will materialise. Cheng Rom-Shing (1999) complained about the delay and worried about the possible liquidation of the Caichaxi department. "The policy to 'simplify personnel' in the Executive Yuan was imposed after this office was set up. It meant that there would be no extra budget or personnel. Without those two elements, how can a new department be set up?" (CHENG ROM-SHING, 1999)

In fact, there had been strong opposition to the Caichaxi department since the beginning. Many argued that Caichaxi lacked cultural representation, and the establishment of departments for insignificant *xiqu* was putting the trivial above the important, and political considerations above cultural significance. (CHIANG WU-CH'ANG, 1997; LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999)

When, in 1999, Wu Po-hsiung stepped down from his post as Secretary-general of the KMT, the prospects for the formal establishment of the Hakka Caichaxi department seemed even bleaker. According to K'o Chêng-fêng (1999), its formalisation needed some 'political push', because "policy changed when politics changed".

Involved in the rescue plan from the beginning, Jung Pao-shan regarded the policy a result of political struggle. "The establishment of Kuo Kuang was a bizarre product of the time. It was a decision made during the severe political struggle. The way it went bore the traces of struggle between pro-Chinese ideology and anti-China-centric campaign within the government. " (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999b) Under the increasing influence of the indigenisation trend, the future of Taiwan's Beijing opera was even more shaky and uncertain. (WU HSING-KUO, 1999)

#### **5.5.4. Heading for indigenisation and modernisation**

The ups and downs of traditional *xiqu* and the reversal of status between Gezaixi and Beijing opera in the last decade showed clearly the changing focus of the national culture building process. These reshuffles and mergers of Beijing opera groups and schools indicated the determination of the KMT government to 'Taiwanise', and to reduce the 'China-centric' elements in the cultural scene.

The promotion of indigenous culture once condemned as 'separatist and rebellious', became fashionable and politically correct in the 1990s. In my interviews, both Beijing opera and Gezaixi performers agreed that they could sense this surging trend. Without any doubt, heading for indigenisation was the only way to 'survive'. (JUNG



PAO-SHAN, 1999b; CHUNG CH'UAN-HSING, 1999)

Although Beijing opera is still heavily subsidised by the state, it has embarked on a painful process of reform and self-examination since the 1980s. In order to fit in a gradually indigenised society, the Beijing opera trade worked on *xiqu* music, modernised script structure, adopted directorial concepts from contemporary theatre, and most importantly, has deliberately focused on local subject matter and concerns. (CHUNG CH'UAN-HSING, 1999; JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999b)

As to the way to go about 'indigenisation', the Kuo Kuang used Taiwanese legends<sup>74</sup> in new productions as the start. However, this kind of attempt was criticised for being a change only on the surface. It did not solve the issue that traditional *xiqu* faced in modern society: how to progress to keep traditional essence and modern demands in balance, and what to do to allow traditional techniques blending in with artistic innovation. (WANG AN-CH'I, 1998) Instead of using local stories as Kuo Kuang had done, another approach – carried out mainly by Fuxing, led by Chung Ch'uan-hsing – drew inspiration from modern Taiwanese culture and life, and embraced 'trial and error' to modernise the art form. (CHUNG CH'UAN-HSING, 1999) The younger Beijing opera performers consciously pursued both modernisation and indigenisation, and were eager for change in order not to be driven out of Taiwan's cultural scene.

In contrast, the development of Gezaixi in the 1990s was totally different. People in the Gezaixi trade tended to think that justice was finally being done. After thirty years

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<sup>74</sup> When Kuo Kuang was established, K'o Chi-liang announced their plans, including a three-year production plan for the *Taiwan Trilogy*. The Trilogy depicted three of Taiwan's legendary figures: *Mazu* 媽祖(1998), *Cheng Ch'eng-kung and Taiwan* 鄭成功與台灣(1999), and *Liao T'ien-ting* 廖添丁(1999).



of struggle in temple fairs, people in the Taiwanese *xiqu* trade were excited by the prospects of this change and looked forward to having the same status and privileges that Beijing opera had, and predicted that Gezaixi was going to replace Beijing opera in Taiwan as the 'culture emblem'. (LIAO CH'IUNG-CHIH, 1999; CH'IU YÜ-LING, 1999; TAI LIEN-I, 1999)

Since the 1980s, not only have many Gezaixi stars and famous groups carried out reforms to challenge the general impression of Gezaixi as rough and vulgar, but also quite a few scholars have worked to enhance Gezaixi's artistic status and emphasise its beauty and tradition. Because Gezaixi was the only genuinely local-bred *xiqu* in Taiwan, its future seemed optimistic. This meant, keeping the traditional form intact was important, in order to maintain its new found artistic status and 'tradition'. Yet, having a history less than a hundred years, the refinement of Gezaixi in the 1990s was a process of both reinventing and developing a 'tradition' — including borrowing performing methods (its weakest element) from Beijing opera as its tradition-building materials. (LIAO CH'IUNG-CHIH, 1999)

However, the prospects that the government would promote and preserve indigenous arts seemed disappointing. The resources for all traditional *xiqu* had not been increased. (JUNG PAO-SHAN, 1999b; CHENG ROM-SHING, 1999) The current policy was only juggling with the existing resources and redistributing them more widely. In order to achieve the goal of 'everyone having a share of the spoil', wider distribution meant that 'no one had enough'. (LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999; CHIANG WU-CH'ANG, 1997)

In fact, the existing resource, once offered only to Beijing opera, was far from

sufficient. Chiang Wu-ch'ang (1997) warned that carving up an already inadequate resource by redistributing it from Beijing opera to all *xiqu* was not the way to revive traditional arts. He demanded more resources and overall support to prevent *xiqu* forms fighting over inadequate resources.

Generally speaking, nine out of ten traditional *xiqu* groups still rely on *waitai* performances in temple fairs as their main lifeline. (CHI HUI-LING, 1997: 87-88; CH'ÊN WEN-I, 2001) Most Gezaixi groups have survived without state funding. Since the rise of indigenisation, their social status and general perception has changed; their business, though, has not been improved.

Although it was true that "as long as there was a temple, there was a business for Gezaixi", (LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999) *waitai* Gezaixi could only maintain a meagre living because of severe competition. The *waitai* business had to cut the price so low that they could barely survive. The quotation for hiring one-night's Gezaixi performance was about \$NT 30,000 (around £600) in 1996. (CHI HUI-LING, 1997: 87) This price included two performances (afternoon and evening shows), and also transportation, electricity, meals, and administration fees. Worst of all, when I checked in summer 2001, the price has not risen since then.

Some Gezaixi groups even reduced the price in order to compete with bigger groups. The quote could be as low as NT\$ 27,000 (around £540). Ch'ên Wen-I (2001), the owner of the New Ying-fêng 新櫻鳳 Gezaixi group, was angry with those kinds of 'corner-cutting' performances and the vicious circle caused. He said, on average, *waitai* performance needed at least 17 people. Some groups would cut the cost by

reducing the cast, using recorded music and simple sets<sup>75</sup>. "How could we live on NT\$27,000 divided between 17 people? It is hard enough to have the price as low as NT\$30,000, the same as three or four years ago."

In fact, the poor environment of *waitai* Gezaixi has not improved since the 1970s. According to Lan Chên-hsiung (2001), the owner of the Hongsheng 宏聲 Gezaixi group, the business was in fact better twenty years ago. The influence of governmental policy, such as 'reforming folk arts, economising religious ceremonies (*gaishan minsu jieyue baibai* 改善民俗, 節約拜拜)', was relatively mild compared with the impact of the recession in recent years. "Even during the 1970s, there were more *waitai* opportunities than now." (LAN CHÊN-HSIUNG, 2001)

What folklore experts worried about was not the livelihood of the *xiqu* trade, since they could make a living by playing *banxian xi* 扮仙戲<sup>76</sup> in religious occasions, but the roughness and decreasing quality of *waitai* performance. (SUN HUI-MEI, 1997: 74, 177-178; CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1995; LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999) The carelessness and crudeness of *waitai* performance dragged their standard down. Therefore, Lin Mao-hsien believed that the future for Gezaixi lay in *juchang* Gezaixi (see footnote 66) because it stood more chance of replacing the 'national opera' status that Beijing opera once occupied.

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<sup>75</sup> Because *waitai* usually took place on a temporary stage, Gezaixi performances should also provide stage sets. Some groups would stress the importance of sets and props, however, some used a simple painted screen rather than realistic sets.

<sup>76</sup> *Banxian xi* is a kind of role-playing episode before the formal performance, carrying out religious functions. It performs the Gods giving blessings to the audience or exorcising evil spirits. Typical *banxian xi* are *tiao jiaguan* 跳加官, *tiao zhongkui* 跳鍾馗, and *tianguan cifu* 天官賜福. Most of the *waitai* Gezaixi groups could make a small profit, not from the performance itself, but from the tips received for playing *banxian xi*, which was not included in ordinary charges. (SUN HUI-MEI, 1997: 74, 177)



Similarly, Liao Ch'iung-chih looked forward to the establishment of a national Gezaixi group<sup>77</sup> to encourage the development of *juchang* Gezaixi. She said, "The recognition is important to us, it means that we are finally recognised by the state." (LIAO CH'IUNG-CHIH, 1999) In fact, most Gezaixi performers were as excited about the prospect of a national Gezaixi group as Liao. They believed that the establishment of a national group indicated the "national opera status", and longed for "being recognised by the authorities". (CH'IU YÜ-LING, 1999; TAI LIEN-I, 1999; YANG LI-WÊN, 1999; TS'AO YA-LAN, 1999)

Governmental support cannot always guarantee the future prospects of Gezaixi. According to a survey that *Performing Arts Monthly* conducted in 1998, most *xiqu* performances were free to the public because they belonged to temple fairs. (CHU NAI-LI, 1998:119) Even for some prominent groups which were active in *juchang* Gezaixi performances such as the Hanyang 漢陽 Gezaixi Group and Minhuayuan, most of their income still came from the *waitai* business. (SUN HUI-MEI, 1997: 65, 177- 178) They rely on the income from the *waitai* business to make a living, and use the profit to support the refinement of the unprofitable *juchang* performances. It means that the development of refined and *waitai* Gezaixi is inseparable.

According to Lan Ch'ên-hsiung (2001), the running of the *waitai* business relied mainly on two elements: connections with temple managers and local factions, and economic development in Taiwan. Lan also stressed that Gezaixi groups could only rely on themselves rather than expecting government funding. "The chance to perform in governmental events was very small for ordinary Gezaixi groups like us. If

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<sup>77</sup> The MOE told Liao Ch'iung-chih that a national Gezaixi group would be formed in the near future, as a sub-group of Kuo Kuang, or within the framework of National Taiwan Junior

we relied on that, we would be out of business by now. Only those exceptional few can receive state funding."

Traditional *xiqu* faced a fundamental problem that could not be solved by just funding and recognition. The problem was to reduce the gap between the quality of *waitai* and *juchang* performances. Because of the newly emerged indigenisation trend and the increasing funding of Taiwanese *xiqu*, the gap between *waitai* and *juchang* Gezaixi was in fact increasing.

At this moment, *juchang* Gezaixi looks very prosperous because of the governmental support and the general interest in Taiwanese culture. However, the environment is not as healthy as it seems to be. It was a steep learning curve when *waitai* Gezaixi groups tried to do *juchang* performance. Their idea of 'refinement' was quite simple: buying new costumes and making new sets. Instead of rethinking the art form, spending more time on rehearsal, allowing performance to develop further, or working with talents from other areas to enhance the quality... they focused mostly on 'material' issues. This seemingly prosperous, actually fragile *juchang* Gezaixi needs modernisation. (LIN MAO-HSIEN, 1999)

The New Ying-fêng Gezaixi group was granted NT\$120,000 by the CCA to tour Taiwan in 2001. Its director Ch'ên Wen-I (2001) also admitted that this kind of opportunity to be funded by the state was rare, and agreed that most state funding went to a few star-groups. Although he was proud of the fact that his group was 'recognised' by the authorities, he did not think that *juchang* Gezaixi could make much difference to Gezaixi development. For the majority of Gezaixi performers, state funding provided them opportunities to perform in better conditions and present Gezaixi properly. They did not regard 'refining the art form' as their task or goal.

The path transporting a rough but lively folk art form into the forum of high arts was not an easy one. The performing format of Beijing opera was borrowed. Furthermore,

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College of Performing Arts. However, this plan has been postponed. (LEE HUEI-NA, 2001)

when Gezaixi was put into the education system (Fuxing) in 1995, most of the teachers were from a Beijing opera background<sup>78</sup>. Consequently, the trend of *jingjuhua* 京劇化(becoming like Beijing opera) which was a deliberate effort of refinement, became obvious from the mid-1990s. (LIU NAN-FANG, 1999)

After almost two decades of academics advocating 'indigenous culture', there was in fact very little action to put the ideas into practice. "Apart from a few star-status *xiqu* groups that were fostered as a showcase, the overall environment of indigenous culture is actually getting worse, not better ... The need to put Taiwanese indigenous arts into the education system is urgent." (CHIANG WU-CH'ANG, 1997) In contrast to scholars' views of the urgent need for governmental action, the Gezaixi trade generally regarded governmental policy as irrelevant. The reality was that the market place was more important. Apart from their skills and local connections, the most important factor influencing the Gezaixi business has always been how the economy was doing. (CH'ËN WEN-I, 2001; LAN CH'ËN-HSIUNG, 2001)

## Summary

In post-war Taiwan, traditional *xiqu* had faced difficulties at various stages, for example, the emergence of film and television and the impact of industrialisation. Taiwan's *xiqu* forms were driven out of the theatre and barely managed to sustain a meagre living in religious ceremonies and temple fairs. Only Beijing opera was provided for by the state.

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<sup>78</sup> The strength of Gezaixi was in its *gezai* (songs), not in theatrical movement. Because it is a fairly new art form, its performing style is still developing. In addition, many traditional Gezaixi performers were trained in the performing groups, and there had never been any systemised training method. Hence, they had to rely on Beijing opera teachers or performers to develop Gezaixi movement.



Even during the awakening of the indigenous culture trend in the 1980s, official cultural policy still hung on to a China-centric mentality. The KMT government started to include indigenous culture in cultural policy, and although this 'incorporative' strategy satisfied the urge of searching for cultural roots, it also conveniently allocated local culture within a China-centric cultural framework. Furthermore, the superior status of Chinese culture was maintained.

After the lift of martial law and the emergence of Taiwanese awareness in the late 1980s, the importance of 'indigenous culture' became increasingly prominent in every respect, and the China-centric mentality gradually became out-dated. According to policy-makers (e.g. K'o Chêng-fêng, Jung Pao-shan), the shift away from a China-centric focus was inevitable, because the upsurge of indigenous awareness was powerful among the Taiwanese and the demand for Taiwanisation was getting stronger in the Parliament. Thus, many policies were altered to respond to people's wishes or to win favour of the voters, such as the removal of the 'emblem of national culture' status of Beijing opera, *judui* dissolution in the Armed Forces, and the setting up of Gezaixi and Hakka Caichaxi departments in the education system.

Because of the low social status *xiqu* performers inherited from the past, most of them longed for official recognition, and were actually 'grateful' for the recent changes. I am not saying that traditional *xiqu* performers were all passively manipulated by the state, or suggesting that they were unaware of the political situation and increasing opportunities. However, for those once regarded as the lowest of lower classes, their wish to be provided for by the state and their sense of honour at being recognised as a cultural emblem proved overwhelming.

In this chapter, I have looked at the history of *xiqu* and their current development in Taiwan. The policy to preserve and protect 'important *xiqu* heritage' has remained unchanged. However, the definition of what 'Taiwanese heritage' is has.

Apart from bottom-up pressure, another crucial factor influencing cultural policy was the 'rule-by-men culture' in Taiwan. Taking the influence of the 2000 Presidential election as an example, we can see how this rule-by-men culture influenced policy-makers, and moreover, determined the direction of policy.

One year before the election, the business within the government did not go on as usual<sup>79</sup>. Because this election was a close contest between three candidates, civil servants did not want to make any decisions that might contradict the future policy of the new ruling power. The CCA's policy and business in 1999 and 2000 remained unchanged, while they waited for future 'instruction'. (HSIAO TSUNG-HUANG, 2000)

According to many civil servants (e.g. Hsiao Tsung-huang, Jung Pao-shan, K'o Chêng-fêng, K'o Chi-liang), they were prepared to have policy U-turns in every aspect, because it was expected that the DPP's political beliefs and Taiwanese-independence tendency would be carried out through their policies.

After the DPP won the election, Chên Shui-bian's *National Policy White Paper* (CCA, 2000a) showed that the new government was keen on cultural affairs. Because of Chên's enthusiasm, the CCA was also eager to implement tasks that were set up in

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<sup>79</sup> For example, the scheme of funding excellent performing groups was put on hold for more than a year. Li Hui-na (2000), the manager of Creative Society Theatre, was told by the CCA in 1999 that they were not sure that the scheme would continue, or be replaced. The CCA told her that cultural policies would be changed drastically if Lién Chan (the KMT candidate) lost.



this *White Paper*. (CCA, 2000a) Looking at the goals<sup>80</sup> listed in the document, it was no surprise to see the 'indigenisation' principle would dominate Taiwan's future cultural policy.

At a period when the anxiety of losing one's identity built up, the urge to building a new identity on a "blank subjectivity" became urgent. (LIAO CH'AO-YANG, 1995b; CH'IU K'UEI-FÊN, 1999) How to control the identity construction and memory creation became an important issue for all political forces. Chên Shui-bian's wish to get indigenous culture into the state apparatus displayed the intention of a tighter control.

*Xiqu* was a good material for constructing Taiwan's tradition, history and cultural identity, because of its symbolic connections with the past and the masses. Therefore, Gezaixi was especially important in the indigenisation process to reconstruct Taiwanese history and memory, since it was the only *xiqu* that was born and bred in Taiwan. The tactic of using *xiqu* as the 'material' would not only construct an identity full of indigenous flavour, but also reinforce a historical memory tightly entwined with official interests. Hence, traditional *xiqu* policy is no longer purely a policy dealing with *xiqu* affairs. Because of its association with historical memory and its instrumental usage in culture building, it has become an arena for competing discourses struggling to win it over.

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<sup>80</sup> These tasks included: setting up national cultural institutions; promoting a special cultural zone in the capital; awarding young people with a 'cultural passport'; putting aboriginal culture on the international stage; establishing national language research institution; encouraging local history research and its publication; publishing a series of national books; pushing through more translation projects in Taiwanese literature; encouraging artists to work on site with local people, local industries or local government; and setting up a national institution for the most prominent artists. (CHÊN SHUI-BIAN, 2000: 115-118)



## Chapter 6 -- Contemporary Theatre in Taiwan

### 6.1. Early modern theatre

#### 6.1.1. Beginning of introduction of western theatre

The concept of western theatre – *xiju* 戲劇 – was foreign and new when it was first introduced to Chinese audiences during the 1900s. Compared with Chinese *xiqu*, which was considered 'an actor's theatre'<sup>1</sup>, western theatre was traditionally considered to be 'a theatre of writers'. (ZHANG & GAI, 1986:133; MA SÊN, 1994:108; FU JIN, 1995:255; YAO I-WEI, 1984:55)

When Chinese intellectuals were first exposed to western theatre at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they were fascinated by its ideals of reforming society, and inspired by its possible educational function. Because *xiqu* scripts were usually simple, and mostly '*caizi-jiaren*'<sup>2</sup> in order to attract the masses, they were criticised severely by intellectuals such as Qian Xuanton 錢玄同 and Fu Sinian 傅斯年 as being 'illogical' and 'vulgar'. (MA SÊN, 1994: 23-24)

The first distinct theatre performance in the western style was organised by Chunliu She 春柳社, an amateur theatre club of Chinese students in Tokyo. They put on the third act of *La Dame aux camélias* (by Alexandre Dumas) around 1906 - 1907<sup>3</sup>. The

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<sup>1</sup> The main creator in Chinese *xiqu* was the performer, who created the performing conventions (both music and performing styles) and developed a personal repertoire. Comparatively, the play itself was not that important.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, *caizi-jiaren* 才子佳人 means 'genius and beauty', and usually implies a simple stereotyped storyline: a romantic story in which a talented scholar and a beautiful lady meet and fall in love. This plot was common in Chinese traditional *xiqu* repertoires.

<sup>3</sup> There were some disputes about the exact date. Some records show the first performance

performance not only drew attention among the Chinese community in Japan, but also won acclaim from Japanese theatre critics. This was the first generally acknowledged record of western *xiju* performance in Chinese theatre history. Partly, it was significant because its members later became important pioneers, or active in, Chinese theatre, and partly because of its influence in the Chinese revolution.

The Tongmenghui<sup>4</sup> praised the Chunliu She for its contribution to the Chinese revolution, because many students joined the Tongmenghui (Tokyo branch) after watching their second production, '*Heinu yutian lu* (黑奴籲天錄 *Uncle Tom's Cabin*) in 1907. This anti-slavery story sent an anti-imperialist message and inspired students to join in the revolution demanding for reform. (MA SĒN, 1994:40; DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980:188)

Inspired by Chunliu She, Wang Zhongsheng 王鐘聲 set up Chunyang She 春陽社 in Shanghai in 1907 and also put on '*Uncle Tom's Cabin*'. However, it was not a pure spoken-drama, but a mixture of western theatre and Chinese *xiqu*. It used Chinese *xiqu* music and arias, mixed with western stage lights, sets and modern costumes. (MA SĒN, 1994: 53) Later, this mixture was commercialised in Shanghai, and called '*wenming xi* 文明戲'.

In 1911, just before the Xinhai revolution 辛亥革命<sup>5</sup> succeeded in China, Ren Tianzhi, a member of Chunliu She, established the first professional theatre group Jinhua Tuan 進化團 in Shanghai and advocated revolutionary ideas. According to the famous

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was in 1907. Others believed it was performed for a Christmas charity fair in November 1906. (CHEN & DONG, 1989:38-39; MA SĒN, 1994: 36; OUYANG YUQIAN, 1985a)

<sup>4</sup> Tongmenghui 同盟會 operated from 1905 to 1912, was the predecessor of the KMT. It was lead by Sun Yat-sen, and advocated a Chinese revolution to overthrow the Qing dynasty.



playwright Tian Han 田漢(1985: 4), their performances won passionate public support, and triggered off widespread discussions on international justice and aroused resentment against foreign imperialist forces.

Because western theatre was totally foreign to the Chinese, people referred to it as '*xinju*' (new drama) and to the Chinese *xiqu* as '*jiuju*'(old drama). In order to use its novelty without losing *xiqu* audiences, Shanghai businessmen mixed the two together into a new product - *wenming xi*. Because of the novelty, it was commercially successful around the 1910s. (OUYANG YUQIAN, 1985b) According to Ouyang Yuqian (1985 b: 48), the founding member of Chunliu She, "*Wenmingxi* was supposed to be a positive term - a 'civilised' and 'advanced' drama. This fancy term was originally used to promote and advertise new productions." However, because of the organisers' eagerness for quick money, gradually, *wenmingxi* was disgraced by its vulgar taste and bad quality. (TIAN HAN, 1985; OUYANG YUQIAN, 1985b; DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980:190-194)

### 6.1.2. A theatre of new ideas and hope

Since the Opium war of 1840-42, China had been constantly haunted by the fear of national doom (*wangguo* 亡國) and race extermination (*miezhong* 滅種)<sup>6</sup>. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, China had become a semi-colonial region in which many imperialist powers vied for its spoils. At that time, foreign imperialist powers in China included Britain,

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<sup>5</sup> It was in the revolution of 1911 that Chinese Nationalists, led by Sun Yat-sen.

<sup>6</sup> Although China has never been subjected to the kind of colonial rule exercised in India, China's semi-colonial status damaged the confidence of the Chinese. Especially after defeat in the Jiawu War, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, the Chinese felt the urgency to build up a stronger and more modern state. Influenced by Darwinism, Chinese intellectuals warned the Qing court of the danger of nation extermination. (LI KUO-CH'I, 1994)



Germany, France, the United States, Italy, tsarist Russia, Japan, and Austria.

Nationalism and patriotic awareness were awakened by painful experience. Tu

Wei-ming described the embarrassing status that China faced:

...from the imagined universally recognised culture centre (the 'Central Country') to the humiliating status of backwardness in virtually all areas of human endeavour. Responding to unprecedented exogenous forces threatening to reduce China to a mere geographic expression, nationalism emerged as the strongest Chinese revolutionary ideology in the twentieth century. (TU WEI-MING, 1994:vi-vii)

The Chinese felt bitter and hostile towards foreign powers. However, despite a strong anti-imperialist mood, armed struggles such as the Boxer Rebellion<sup>7</sup> failed because of weak military forces. (LI KUO-CH'I, 1994) Intellectuals felt humiliated and longed for reform. The greatest challenge to the Chinese intellectuals since the Opium war has been to find a viable way of resolving the problems arising from the contact between Chinese and Western culture and society. (LIN YÜ-SHENG, 1996: 175)

The desire to modernise China and the anxiety to catch up with all the advanced countries surfaced after the May Fourth Movement and became a continuous pursuit for the Chinese. Politically, it was an anti-imperialist movement; culturally, however, it was an anti-traditional movement, that brought new ideas into China and challenged the old way of thinking. (LIN YÜ-SHENG, 1996; HUANG, RAY, 1988) Many Chinese literature historians saw 1919 as the beginning of Chinese New Literature. (CHEN & DONG, 1989) Even some new literature works had already appeared before 1919 and the May Fourth was not initially a literature movement, the May Fourth indeed opened up the path for change in Chinese culture, and allowed challenge and

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<sup>7</sup> In 1900, the Boxer Rebellion arose because of the mounting hostility towards foreign powers,. The Eight-Power Allied Forces got into Beijing, suppressed the rebels, and asked the Qing court for Boxer Indemnity.

creation. (MA SÊN, 1994:80)

The May Fourth movement has been regarded as the most important drivers of cultural and ideological enlightenment in modern Chinese history. Its legacy provided the Chinese a simplified rhetoric: "since China's backwardness... had deep roots in Chinese polity, society, and culture, a total transformation of Chinese-ness is a precondition for China's modernisation."(TU WEI-MING, 1991:5) Therefore, its influence urged generations of Chinese to pursue modernisation. It seemed to hold the key to open a beautiful New World - a modernised China.

For many intellectuals, there was no better vehicle than theatre to arouse national awareness of China's semi-colonial status, to educate the ignorant, and to reform the crumbling old empire. Therefore, theatre was first used to advocate revolution, then the modernisation of society after the 1920s. After the May Fourth Movement, theatre became an issue that concerned intellectuals and writers. Many scholars got involved in play writing, not because of literary interests, but to advocate modern ideas. For example, Hu Shi 胡適 wrote his first and only play, *Zhongshen dashi* (終身大事 *A Great Event in a Lifetime*) in 1919 to advocate liberal marriage.

*Wenmingxi* was spurned and a new theatre trend emerged. A new generation of playwrights from academic and literary backgrounds<sup>8</sup> rose and changed the prospect of Chinese theatre. (MA SÊN, 1994:123) To them, theatre provided an arena in which to challenge old ideology and old-fashioned concepts with more scientific and logical ways of thinking. It was their way of delivering ideas, of being critical of the

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<sup>8</sup> There were many scholars who were active in theatre, such as Ouyang Yuqian 歐陽予倩, Song Chunfang 宋春舫, Chen Dabei 陳大悲, Xiong Foxi 熊佛西, and Guo Moruo 郭沫若. (DU



authorities, and of being creative. (MA SÊN, 1994: 37, 128 -29)

In order to break away from the notorious image of *wenmingxi*, intellectuals and writers who engaged themselves in the theatrical world called theirs 'amateur theatre'<sup>9</sup>. The term indicated the amateur status of their involvement, the purity of their spirit and works, and a creativity uncorrupted by commercial interests. They were devoted to realism, and imitated a realistic style in their new plays. Although there were many different styles of theatre in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, realism dominated Chinese theatre<sup>10</sup>. It seems that Chinese theatre activists submitted to Western realism in the hope of educating the people and reforming society.

Amateur theatre was concerned mostly with literary values and social reform. At first, many translated plays were published<sup>11</sup>, mainly classics of realist playwrights such as Anton Chekhov, George Bernard Shaw, and Eugene O'Neill. Among them, Ibsen was most influential. His works were constantly staged and studied. Following their examples, many Chinese intellectuals involved themselves in play writing to endorse the development of amateur theatre<sup>12</sup>.

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YÜN-CHIH, 1980; MA SÊN, 1994: 80-108)

<sup>9</sup> The Chinese name for amateur theatre was *aimeide* 愛美的 theatre. Literally, *aimeide* means 'beauty-loving'. Song Chunfang translated it from the French *amateur* to emphasise its unpolluted, non-professional nature, and artistic merit. The first amateur theatre group was Minzhong xijushe 民眾戲劇社 in Shanghai, formed in 1921 and organized by Ouyang Yuqian, Chen Dabai, and Xiong Foxi. (MA SÊN, 1994:124)

<sup>10</sup> Realism dominated the theatre in China before the 1980s. It was especially influenced by Russian tradition. (ZHOU LINGFEI, 1992:369-383) Realist theatre in Taiwan was important too, especially before the 1980s. Apart from the Chinese realist theatre tradition, American modified realist theatre was also influential in Taiwan. (WANG MO-LIN, 1999)

<sup>11</sup> According to Ma Sên (1994:107), there were over 170 translated plays, from over 70 playwrights in 17 countries published in China between 1917 and 1924.

<sup>12</sup> Hong Shen 洪深(1935: 56) described how the situation changed after 1924. "The number of theatre clubs in school and amateur groups increased day after day... Because of its popularity, all the bookstores not only sold plays, but also were willing to print new plays."



On account of the urge to change, it seemed logical to abandon all tradition and Chinese-ness. Traditional *xiqu* was considered a product of the old feudal society, and was criticised as anti-scientific and anti-democratic. Conversely, western theatre was recommended as the scientific and democratic modern art form. (TIAN HAN, 1985:4) In the pursuit of the modernisation of China, it was clear to the intelligentsia that theatre was a powerful vehicle that could easily influence the people, especially the illiterate masses, to create a modern and advanced China.

In 1928, playwrights and theatre theorists gathered in Shanghai to celebrate Ibsen's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. After the celebration, they decided to unify the term for modern drama in Chinese. Song Chunfang, one of Chinese theatre's pioneers, suggested the name *huaju* 話劇<sup>13</sup> (*hua* means 'words', and *huaju* means 'spoken drama'). It became a common term referring to western-style theatre. (DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980)

### 6.1.3. Left-wing theatre and the war

Because of the close links between the theatre circle and idealistic intellectuals, the *huaju* trade had had a close connection with Chinese Communism since the late 1920s. (XIA YAN, 1985:145) The direct link between theatre and Communism started when Xia Yan 夏衍, the underground Communist leader, who came back from Russia and organised a theatre group, the Shanghai Artistic Theatre (Shanghai yishu jushe 上海藝術劇社) in 1929. (ZHENG BOQI, 1985:154) Its establishment was under the

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<sup>13</sup> In that gathering, Song claimed that modern drama used oral language as the core of its performance. Therefore, he suggested using this term to differentiate it from the old *xiqu*. (DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980:198) In effect, this term – *huaju* – also distinguishes itself from the previous theatre form - *wenmingxi*. The term is still in use in Mainland China. However, the term *huaju* developed a different implication in Taiwan after the late 1970s. It became an opposite term to *shiyanju* 實驗劇 (experimental theatre) or *xiao juchang* 小劇場 (little theatre). Now, the term in Taiwan refers to an old-fashioned theatrical form with a realist style.

direct order of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). According to Xia Yan (1985:144-145), the connection became concrete when they first proposed the idea of "proletarian drama" and delivered the idea through performances.

Many intellectuals and writers either joined the Communist party, or at least sympathised with it, because they identified with the socialist ideal, and wished to form a modern and fair country. In 1930, the Chinese Left-wing Writers Alliance was set up in Shanghai and openly espoused Communist ideas. After only two public performances, the Kuomintang (KMT) government sealed its studio and suppressed left-wing theatres. As a result, the Left-wing Theatre Alliance (*Zuoyi jutuan lianmeng* 左翼劇團聯盟) was formed to fight against the KMT's suppression, and many theatres turned to the left and endeavoured to "play for the workers and peasants". (XIA YAN, 1985:149 -150)

Because theatre at this period became political and socially critical, it gradually dawned on the KMT that the potential influence of theatre should not be overlooked. The KMT also set up its own theatre-training organisation, the Canton Theatre Research Institute in 1929. The theatrical veteran Ouyang Yuqian<sup>14</sup> was its head.

By the 1930s, Chinese modern theatre was thriving. Many important classics were written at this time. (MA SĒN, 1994:127-143) They included: Hong Shen's 洪深 *Nongcun sanbuqu* (農村三部曲 *Trilogy of the Countryside*); Cao Yu's 曹禺 *Leiyu* (雷雨 *Thunder Storm*), *Richu* (日出 *Sunrise*), and *Yuanye* (原野 *The Wilderness*); Tian Han's *Carmen* (adapted from the opera); and Xia Yan's *Shanghai wuyan xia* (上海屋檐下

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<sup>14</sup> Although Ouyang was hired by the KMT to run the theatre institute, he sympathised with communism. After the KMT fled to Taiwan in 1949, he stayed in mainland China.

*Under the Eaves of Shanghai*).

The boom was interrupted by the Lugouqiao Incident<sup>15</sup> on 7 July 1937, the day that marked the beginning of Sino-Japanese war. The struggle between the right and the left was temporarily halted, as they united to fight against the invasion from Japan. Most theatre groups were based in Shanghai, and they gathered to form the Shanghai Theatre Association of National Salvation (Shanghai xijujie jiuwang xiehui 上海戲劇界救亡協會) to support the government. The 813 Incident<sup>16</sup> happened one month later, and subsequently, Japan occupied Shanghai. People from the theatre and film industry, who stayed in Shanghai *zujie*<sup>17</sup>, formed thirteen National-salvation Theatre Teams (*jiuwang yanju dui* 救亡演劇隊) touring around China to dispense messages of resistance to the Japanese invasion. (DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980: 204)

During the eight years of the War of Resistance (1937-1945), theatre became the most powerful tool to unite the country and disseminate an anti-Japanese spirit. (MA SÊN, 1994:136-143; DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980:204-206) During the wartime, it was impossible to find proper theatre venues. Theatre groups had to manage to perform on the street. *Jietouju* 街頭劇 (street theatre) was born to provide simple but straight forward entertainment and information. Based on current affairs, *jietouju* improvised their performances in order to inform the illiterate masses how the war was going.

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<sup>15</sup> Lugouqiao 蘆溝橋 is a bridge near Beijing, also known as Marco Polo Bridge. On 7 July 1937, the Japanese made an excuse that one of their soldiers was missing and insisted on entering Chinese territory to carry out a search. Being refused, the Japanese shot a Chinese lieutenant and occupied a suburb of Beijing. The result of this incident was that Japanese occupied Beijing and it marked the beginning of Japanese aggression against China.

<sup>16</sup> The 813 Incident happened on August 13<sup>th</sup> 1937, one month after Beijing fell into Japanese hands. Shanghai was besieged and finally taken by the Japanese.

<sup>17</sup> Since the Opium War, many countries tried to seize Chinese territory and its natural resources. After China's defeats, these imperialist powers demanded to set up *zujie* (租界), a tract of land in Chinese cities or ports, supposedly on lease to, but actually seized by these powers, and put under their colonial rule.



Hence, *jietouju* was also called *huobaoju* 活報劇(living newspaper), and played an important social and political role that no other art form could rival.

## **6.2. Taiwan's early modern theatre**

### **6.2.1. Early development in Japanese rule**

Modern theatre in Taiwan under Japanese rule had a similar role as in China. Theatre in Taiwan, introduced by the Japanese, was taken as a tool with which to reform Taiwan and with which to advocate the political and cultural autonomy of the Taiwanese. Just like the Chinese, Taiwanese intellectuals used theatre as the vehicle to advocate nationalism.

The first theatre event held in Taiwan was performed by Japan's prominent theatre artist Kawakami Otajirou 川上音二郎 in Taipei's Asahi-za 朝日座 theatre in 1911. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a; HUANG KUO-SHU, 1988) Inspired by it, the Asahi-za organised the first Taiwanese theatre group, the Taiwan Dialects Reform Theatre in 1912. However, it was not successful, (HUANG KUO-SHU, 1988:37) and traditional *xiqu* still dominated Taiwanese theatrical activity. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 289; MA SÊN, 1994:199) It was not until 1921 when the Taiwan Cultural Association (Taiwan wenhua xiehui 台灣文化協會) – a self-organised union run by local intellectuals and gentry – was established that the situation changed.

The goal of the Taiwan Cultural Association was to elevate cultural standards and promote Taiwanese nationalism and political autonomy under Japanese rule. By the means of constructing a new Taiwanese culture, they hoped Taiwanese national

consciousness would be awakened. Thus, the ultimate task in pursuing Taiwan's autonomy and social reform would be achieved. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 293-95)

Among all the measures taken to enhance Taiwanese culture, the Taiwan Cultural Association believed that theatre was the key for cultural enlightenment. They wanted theatre to replace the backward and superstitious *xiqu*, and to educate the ignorant. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 295; HUANG KUO-SHU, 1988: 39; DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980: 210 -212) Hence, the theatre movement was launched in 1923 as the locomotive of the nationalist movement. Because of its mission to 'enhance culture', it was called *wenhuaaju* 文化劇 - theatre of culture.

Compared with the populist appeal of traditional *xiqu*, *wenhuaaju* was considered an activity that belonged only to intellectuals and the upper classes. Moreover, because of its nationalist appeal and emphasis on 'artistic pursuit', *wenhuaaju* was criticised as dogmatic and highbrow. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 325-326) Although most scholars agreed that the significance of Taiwan's theatre lay mostly in its connection with Taiwan's nationalist movement, its influence was limited.

According to many scholars (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a; HUANG KUO-SHU, 1988), a split within the Taiwan Cultural Association in 1927 obstructed the development of theatre. The strong and growing left-wing faction within the association criticised theatre for being "a game that belonged to the petit bourgeoisie" and which would "fritter away the fighting will of our young fighters". (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 300)

After the *Kominka* Movement (the movement to make the Taiwanese subjects of the Japanese Emperor) was imposed in 1931, most theatre activities were put on hold,

(HUANG KUO-SHU, 1988: 44) apart from *huangminju* 皇民劇 (theatre of the royal subjects) and *qingnianju* 青年劇 (theatre of the youth). These two kinds of theatre were used as the Japanese mouthpiece to promote the 'Japanese spirit' and militarism, especially during the Sino-Japanese war. (CH'IU K'UN-LIANG, 1992a: 301, 326 - 336)

### 6.2.2. Post-war Taiwanese theatre

When the Second World War ended, Taiwanese theatre groups were eager to get back to the stage again. The Tainan Student Union arranged the first post-war performance in Tainan in September 1945, just after the Japanese surrendered on August 15<sup>th</sup>. Both plays performed, *Touzoubing* (偷走兵) and *Xinsheng zhi zhao* (新生之朝), mocked Japanese rule.

Although western style theatre was not as popular as Gezaixi, many theatre groups started to perform. For example, Taiwan yishu jushe 台灣藝術劇社 put on the new plays, *Ronggui* (榮歸 Going Home Gloriously) and *Jietou de xuejiang zhi lian* (街頭的靴匠之戀 The Love Affair of Street Shoemaker's), on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1946. To celebrate "going back to the motherland", they chose to perform in Mandarin, the official national language of the ROC, even though most Taiwanese could only speak Japanese and local dialects (Minnan yu, Hakka, or aboriginal languages). (DU YÜ-CHIH, 1980: 213; LI HSIAO-YANG, 1995)

In June 1946, the Shengfeng Theatre Research Gathering put on two plays in Taipei's Zhongshan Hall for five days – *Bi* (壁 The Wall) and *Luohan fuhui* (羅漢赴會 Arhats Go to the Banquet). When they planned to restage the same production, they



were told that the plays were banned. The reason was because the authorities (the Ch'ên I administration sent by the KMT to take over Taiwan) suspected them of implying "the tyranny of harsh rulers" and of stirring class struggle. (LÜ SU-SHANG, 1961:337; LI HSIAO-YANG, 1995: 38)

Apart from local theatre activities, theatre groups from Mainland China were also introduced to Taiwan after 1946. The first theatre groups to arrive were *juxuandui* 劇宣隊 (theatrical propaganda teams).<sup>18</sup> These small groups belonged to different military units for entertainment and propaganda purposes.

New China Theatre Group (Xin zhongguo jushe 新中國劇社) was the first professional group to come from the mainland. It came from Shanghai in December 1946, and was led by the theatre veteran Ouyang Yuqian. Even the problem of the language barrier was an issue, because not all members of a Taiwanese audience could understand Mandarin. The New China Theatre Group solved the problem by selling cheap scripts with the tickets to help the audience understand. (MA SĒN, 1994:208) Its performances were popular among audiences and created an unprecedented box office success. (LI HSIAO-YANG, 1995: 39; LÜ SU-SHANG, 1961:345-349) Moreover, its professional standard had such an impact on Taiwan's theatre that it was regarded as "a demonstration of how far advanced the theatre in the motherland had developed". (DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980: 213) The prominent Taiwanese theatre

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<sup>18</sup> The setting up of theatre groups in military units started in the Sino-Japanese war. People involved in theatre formed small theatre teams, and later some joined the army. This kind of group was called *kangzhan jutuan* (抗戰劇團 Resisting Japanese invasion theatre group). (DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980:204) Because of the war, theatre groups had established strong connections with the army and its propaganda sections. Many people from the theatre became members of the Artistic Working Team (*yishu gongzuo dadui* 藝術工作大隊), under the jurisdiction of the General Political Warfare Department (總政治作戰部) in the Ministry of National Defence (MND).

activist and historian Lü Su-shang (1961: 332) agreed that Chinese theatre influenced the early development of Taiwan's theatre immensely. As a result, Lü believed that he could see an alliance beginning to develop between the two sides.

### 6.2.3. Three problems

However, because of the 228 Incident, this alliance never really formed. Three crucial problems emerged hindering the development of post-war Taiwanese theatre: the language barrier, censorship, and the chilling effect of the 228 Incident. (MA SÊN, 1994: 209)

Since theatre was an art form relying heavily on language, after fifty years' of Japanese occupation, the language barrier was the most obvious difficulty in terms of communication. Although some Taiwanese could write Chinese, most spoke only Japanese and local dialects<sup>19</sup>. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the essential principle to enable the KMT government to take over Taiwan was 'de-Japanisation'. (YEH SHIH-T'AO, 1990) Therefore, strict language policy was imposed and both written and spoken Japanese were banned after the 228 Incident. Most Taiwanese who grew up under Japanese rule felt out of place and inferior. (YEH SHIH-T'AO, 1990; LIU CHIEH, 1994; CHANG CHIN-CH'ANG)

According to Ma Sên (1994: 208), the KMT authorities were especially cautious

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<sup>19</sup> The Japanese started to set up public schools to teach Japanese in every county and city in Taiwan as early as in 1889. However, it was not until 1930 that the Japanese government officially abolished Taiwan's *sishu* 私塾 (old-style private school, a place for Taiwanese to learn *hanwen* 漢文 - written Chinese). A total ban on Chinese learning was imposed in 1937 when the Sino-Japanese war broke out. 22.7% Taiwanese could speak Japanese in 1932. This rose to 51% in 1940 and to 71% in 1944. (HUANG HSÜAN-FAN, 1993: 93)



about Taiwanese theatre activities. First of all, they suspected that there were still remains of the Japanese militarist influence in Taiwan. Secondly, because of the defeats that the KMT was experiencing in the civil war, they suspected a possible Communist influence. Although the Executive Yuan of the ROC had already abolished censorship in the mainland, the Ch'ên I administration unilaterally imposed the *Regulation on Theatre Management in Taiwan Province* (Taiwansheng jutuan guanli guize 台灣省劇團管理規則) to control theatre activities. All theatre groups had to be registered before they performed in public, and all scripts had to be censored<sup>20</sup> before staging. (MA SÊN, 1994: 208; LI HSIAO-YANG, 1995:42)

Worst of all, most theatre activities were stopped after the 228 Incident. If there were any, they were organised only by the government, and performed mostly by *juxuandui*, school theatre clubs, and touring theatre groups from the mainland. (LI HSIAO-YANG, 1995) The only exception was *Xiangjiao xiang* 香蕉香 (Aromatic Banana) performed on November 1<sup>st</sup> 1947 in Taipei Zhongshan Hall by *Shiyan xiao jutuan* (實驗小劇團). This four-act farce described disputes and mimicked the misunderstanding between Taiwanese and mainlanders during the 228 Incident. Fighting broke out among the audience between Taiwanese and mainlanders on the debut night. The play was immediately banned on the second day. (LI HSIAO-YANG, 1995: 42)

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<sup>20</sup> When the New China Theatre was invited to Taiwan in 1946, they also experienced Taiwan's stringent bureaucracy and censorship. (LÜ SU-SHANG, 1961:338) According to Ouyang Yuqian, (CHIAO T'UNG, 1990b: 81) there were four governmental institutions in charge of censorship in Taiwan: the Propaganda Committee (*xuanchuan weiyuanhui* 宣傳委員會), the Education Department (*jiaoyu chu* 教育處), the KMT (*dangbu* 黨部), and the Headquarters of the Military Police (*jingbei silingbu* 警備司令部). Before any performance was put on, theatre groups had to go through each of these institutions to get permission. Among them all, the last was "the most powerful one and could ban any performance at the last minute, even without the other three's consent." (CHIAO T'UNG, 1990:81)



After this rare performance, further critical or experimental performances were almost impossible. Most Taiwanese intellectuals, who once were active in theatre, were either killed or imprisoned. Those who were not involved chose to keep silent to avoid trouble. (MA SÊN, 1994:209) Because of the chilling effect of the 228 Incident, the antagonism between the Taiwanese and mainlanders became increasingly severe. Moreover, cultural development was directly suppressed, including the theatre. The environment for theatre was described as "barren and thin". (CHIAO T'UNG, 1990b: 74) Taiwanese writers and intellectuals generally felt a sense of powerlessness and subordination. Many gave up writing. Without Taiwanese writers' involvement, the mainland playwrights dominated Taiwan's theatre for many decades. (MA SÊN, 1994: 214)

#### 6.2.4. Anti-communist theme

The theatre scene in Taiwan between 1947 and 1949 was mostly dominated by touring theatre groups from China<sup>21</sup>, and the *juxuandui* in the Armed Forces. Soon after the KMT government fled to Taiwan in 1949, Taiwanese theatre became increasingly silent and inhibited. (YEH SHIH-T'AO, 1987: 79) Taiwanese theatre was crushed before it could grow. (MA SÊN, 1994; CHIAO T'UNG, 1990b)

In the 1950s, Taiwan's cultural scene lay wasted. One crucial reason was that many of Chinese theatre's elite such as Ouyang Yuqian, Tian Han, Xia Yan, Cao Yu, and

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<sup>21</sup> After the 228 Incident, records show that two Chinese theatre groups toured around Taiwan. The Taiwan Sugar Corporation invited the Audiences' Performing Touring Company (Guanzhong xiju yanchu gongsi luxing jutuan 觀眾戲劇演出公司旅行劇團) from Shanghai on November 1947. On this occasion, it was the first time that "Taiwan's rural villagers saw modern theatre performances". (DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980:214); In 1948, the National Nanjing Theatre College was invited to perform at the Taiwan Fair.

Wu Zuguang 吳祖光, did not come with the KMT government to Taiwan, because they either were active communists or sympathised with Communism. (CHUNG LEI, 1984: 111-112) Alongside the stringent thought control, there was a vacuum in Taiwan's theatre scene.

Many classical plays written by left-wing playwrights were banned, even though they were popular among Taiwanese audiences before 1949. Such plays included *Nongcun sanbuqu* by Hong Shen; *Leiyu*, *Richu*, and *Yuanye* by Cao Yu; *Zhengqi ge* (正氣歌) and *Fengyu ye guiren* (風雨夜歸人) by Wu Zuguang. (DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980: 216) Consequently, there were almost no plays available for Taiwanese theatre groups to perform. In addition, new plays were also forced to be in line with the anti-communist national policy. (MA SÊN, 1994:211) The crisis of *juben huang* (劇本荒 scarcity of scripts) occurred in the 1950s. (DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980)

According to Ma Sên (1994: 211), apart from the above mentioned problems, theatre development was restrained by ideological considerations and language policy. Since most new plays were written in Mandarin, all the Minnan-yu-speaking audiences, performers and playwrights were unfamiliar with the grammar and speaking format. According to theatre theorist Ma Sên (1994:211-212), "it is fair to say that there was only Mandarin-speaking theatre in Taiwan after 1949, but no Minnan-yu theatre."

Apart from the language barrier, the idea of cultural warfare dominated the Taiwanese cultural scene in the 1950s. (HUANG HUI-MIN, 1997:31; LI HSIAO-YANG, 1995) Only three kinds of theatre activity remained: *juxuandui* in the Armed Forces, the *wenhua gongzuodui* (cultural team) of the KMT, and theatre clubs in the universities. (WU & JIA, 1985; CHIA I-TI, 1987: 82-97; MA SÊN, 1994:210-211) In

addition, the Association of Chinese Literature and Art (ACLA) endeavoured to promote anti-communist art works and to encourage 'the right kind of plays'. (Also see Chapter 1.5.1.) By rewarding authors with publication and money, 69 new plays, which emphasised an anti-communist theme were published and received awards within only 6 years (1950-56). (LI HSIAO-YANG, 1995:44)

In general, Taiwanese theatre in the first few decades of the post-war era was dull and lifeless. (HUANG HUI-MIN, 1997:42) Du Yün-chih (1980: 215) called theatre of this kind '*kanluan xiju*' 戡亂戲劇 (theatre of suppressing the rebellion)', and Ma Sên (1994: 211) termed it as '*fangong xiju*' 反共戲劇 (anti-communist theatre)'. In this period, only the universities' theatre clubs carried on the 'amateur theatre' tradition, even though their performances were crude and still remained in the old-fashioned realist style of the 1930s.

The MND also initiated preparation for cultural battle and set up the Grand Competition of Literature and Artistic Entertainment in the Armed Forces in 1953 to encourage ideologically correct *huaju* (spoken drama). Since 'anti-communism' was the highest guideline in every aspect of Taiwanese life in the 1950s, it also affected theatre development. Private theatres were not commercially sustainable, because dogmatic performance had no box office interest. Hence, the lifeline of Taiwanese theatre was actually maintained by the theatre activities in the forces, even though artistic development and creation was discouraged.

Apart from the censorship that limited creativity and prevented the unpredictability of freethinking, theatre activities were also discouraged by high taxation and the high



charges made for state-owned venues<sup>22</sup>. (DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980) In the 1950s and 60s, the tax was so high that it took away 40% of total income from the box office.<sup>23</sup> (DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980: 217-218) The policy of high taxation was like a punishment to the theatre for putting on plays.

Generally speaking, *juxuandui* monopolised Taiwan's theatre scene until the 1960s. Partly, it was because private theatre groups could not afford regular performances, for both financial and ideological reasons. Partly, there was no space for creativity and artistic pursuit. Even though in 1955 there was a temporary boom<sup>24</sup>, the theatre environment was generally frail.

By 1959, Taiwan's theatre had reached its lowest point. There were only eight private theatre groups registered, and very few had any performances. (DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980: 219) The famous film director Li Hsing 李行(1982:127), who had thirty years experience in theatre and film, criticised the KMT government for not supporting or funding theatre. He believed that the government's passive attitude, and neglect of theatre, was an indirect way of discouraging theatre and silencing dissent.

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<sup>22</sup> There were no private theatre venues suitable for professional theatre performances, only those that belonged to the government. According to Du Yün-chih (1980), as early as 1949, theatre groups had already faced these difficulties and asked the government to change the regulations. Nothing was done and the situation continued. For private performances, they either hired cinemas or tried to get hold of government venues, usually through personal connections. Only those who had connections in high positions had a good chance of putting on performances. In general, venues were difficult to get hold of.

<sup>23</sup> The tax on theatre performance was higher than on any other kind of performances. According to Du Yün-chih (1980:217-218), commercial theatre performances faced three different kinds of taxation: income tax, entertainment tax, and the venue tax.

<sup>24</sup> In 1955, theatre groups united and appealed for governmental support. They called for revival of the Chongqing spirit 重慶精神. Chongqing was the temporary capital of the ROC government during the Sino-Japanese war. It stood for a spirit of 'making the best out of poor conditions'. The KMT government gave its support and established the Spoken Drama Movement Committee (*huaju yundong weiyuanhui* 話劇運動委員會) to promote theatre activities. Although it tried to solve the problem of high taxation by demanding that theatre be placed into the same tax category as concerts and exhibitions, theatre development did not pick up as wished. The committee soon dissolved in 1956. (DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980:217-218)

### 6.3. Development of little theatre

#### 6.3.1. Theatre in the 1960s

Inspired by new trends and thoughts, new playwrights emerged in the 1960s. (MA SÊN, 1994:261-271) Although their works did not have much chance of being staged, they wrote them as literary exercises. Among them, Yao I-wei 姚一葦 and Chang Hsiao-fêng 張曉風 were most influential (LI HSIAO- YANG, 1995:46-47). Influenced by western trends at that time – the theatre of the absurd, Brechtian theatre, cruel theatre – they pioneered an untouched area.

When Professor Li Man-kuei 李曼瑰 came back from a visit to America and Europe in 1960, she started to advocate the idea of 'little theatre'<sup>25</sup>. (DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980:219) Because of her strong connection within the KMT and the Ministry of Education (MOE)<sup>26</sup>, she managed to get their support to promote theatre and set up Sanyi Theatre, the Huaju Appreciation Committee, and Little Theatre Promotion Committee. In order to foster young audiences, she also organised two annual theatre festivals on university campuses: the World Theatre Festival (focusing on world famous classical plays) and the Youth Theatre Festival (focusing on Chinese plays), funded by the MOE. Although this had little impact on theatre aesthetics, amateur theatre's tradition was maintained, and an alternative to the anti-communist

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<sup>25</sup> This term 'little theatre' was first used by theatre scholar Song Chunfang in 1919 to describe non-commercial theatre. The idea of 'little theatre' that Li Man-kuei promoted in 1960 was borrowed from Strindberg. However, Li only referred to the 'size' of the theatre, not the anti-traditional and anti-realist spirit of Strindberg. (WU & CHIA, 1985:226-236) Promotion by Song or Li had little impact. When I discuss 'Taiwan's little theatre' later, I generally mean the avant-garde and experimental theatre that developed after 1980.

<sup>26</sup> Chi Wei-jan criticised Li for being the cultural red guard for the KMT. However, many believed that her endeavour had influenced and laid foundations for little theatre development



theatre was provided.

In 1967, the Cultural Renaissance Movement was mobilised, and consequently stopped the thawing process of the long frozen cultural environment. Once again, culture was assigned a political mission, and change was discouraged. Taiwan's cultural environment was as static as "stagnant water". (CHUNG MINGDER, 1994:106)

Another big impact on theatre development was the arrival of television in the 1960s<sup>27</sup>. Both actors and playwrights were recruited by television stations and the film industry. Taiwanese theatre was left almost in a vacuum. (MA SÊN, 1994: 213-218, DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980: 220-221)

### 6.3.2. The rise of Lanling

In 1980, Lanling Theatre Workshop gave its debut with their play '*Hezhu's New Match*' in the first 'Experimental Theatre Festival', and created a new trend in Taiwan's theatre development.

*Hezhu's New Match* was adapted from the Beijing opera play *Hezhu's Match*, and also drew upon many traditional *xiqu* tactics. Because of this skilful blending of techniques and styles, both Taiwanese modern theatre and traditional *xiqu* performers were inspired by the possibilities of mixing the old with the new. (WU

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in the 1980s. (DU YÜN-CHIH, 1980: 219-220; MA SÊN, 1994, 1996)

<sup>27</sup> The three major television stations in Taiwan were: the Taiwan Television Enterprise Ltd. (TTV, established in 1962); the China Television Company (CTV, in 1969); and the Chinese Television System (CTS, in 1971).



JING JYI, 1982)

Lanling's success had caught the attention not only of the cultural community, but also ordinary people. They had full houses, and the audiences were passionate and responsive. The painter and writer Chiang Hsün exclaimed excitedly after its debut: "Lanling has found a way out from the long-term stagnancy. It is the first time I have ever seen such energetic and lively theatre in Taiwan." (CHIANG HSÜN, 1982:169-170) In Taiwan's rigid and formulated *huaju* (spoken drama) environment, Lanling brought in a breath of fresh air. Many called it "a miracle in Taiwan's theatre". (LI OU-FAN, 1982:139-140; WANG HSI-CHEN, 1980:155)

Lanling sent an important message to the long inhibited theatre environment that theatre could be connected with reality and real life. Under the shadow of repression and censorship for more than thirty years, the new generation of Taiwanese theatre finally found a new way to express itself. It was commended as a "new mixture (of old and new theatrical elements) that resembled the life in the 1980's Taipei". (CHUNG MINGDER, 1996 b: 54)

Liu Ching-min 劉靜敏, the founding member of Lanling, created the memorable figure Hezhu. Before she joined Lanling, she also played *huaju*. She found it "distant and pretentious"(1999). She recalled her experience in *Hezhu's New Match*: " For the first time, I felt something was alive when I stood on that stage. It was a totally different experience from *huaju* performance. I felt I had established a new relationship with the audiences. " (LIU CHING-MIN, 1999)

It was not until then that Taiwan's theatre had finally broken away from heavy political

dogma and an old-fashioned *huaju* format, and had begun to explore new possibilities. Lanling's work may seem relatively conservative today and show clear traces of *huaju* influence, but nonetheless, their work made the search for new styles and new forms of expression possible. Lanling became a cultural phenomenon in the 1980s, and marked the rupture with the *huaju* tradition.

Before the 1980s, *huaju* was almost the only theatre style. When playwright Yao I-wei organised the 'Experimental Theatre Festival' in 1980, it was a direct response to the *huaju* tradition and its politicised tendencies. Yao I-wei's idea of 'experimental theatre' had three dimensions: an avant-garde theatre, an artistic theatre, and a theatre of the youth. (YAO I-WEI, 1982: 76-77) It allowed mistakes, embraced alternatives, and abandoned cliché and convention. Even so, generally speaking, *huaju* was still the mainstream in the early 1980s.

### 6.3.3. Early funding chaos

According to K'o Chi-liang, a veteran policy-maker in the CCA, cultural subsidies before 1990 were basically given case by case. There were no standard criteria of whom, what, how and how much to subsidise. The decision was made by the judgement of civil servants who happened to be in charge of related areas. "Before the 1980s, these decisions had a strong element of *renqing* consideration." (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999) *Renqing* 人情 is an interesting phrase in Chinese and is regarded as an important aspect of human relationships in Chinese society. Literally, it means 'human feelings'. It means that you should sympathise with, and be sensitive to, friends' and relatives' needs and feelings. Therefore, it is also used to indicate 'a favour given by you' to people who are related to you when they are in need. In this



case, K'o meant that there had been pressure coming from high positions asking for *renqing* - funding for certain productions, 'inviting' certain artists and groups to perform in governmental festivals.

Before the CCA was established, not only were non-governmental activities uncommon, but cases receiving state subsidies were also rare. Those who got funding were mostly people who had good connections in the KMT, or had relatives in high positions. Because most plays were boring and dogmatic, even occasional *huaju* performances could not be maintained. More and more, *huaju* relied on meagre subsidies from governmental institutions, such as the MOE, the Taiwan Provincial Government, the KMT, and the Chinese Culture Restoration Committee (CCRC). Getting funding depended heavily on personal connections and PR skills. (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999) Therefore, this connection between *huaju*, official dogma, and the KMT was strong before the 1980s. That also explained why people in the *huaju* trade were usually associated with the KMT, or belonged to the armed forces.<sup>28</sup>

When the CCA was established in 1981, the CCA started to deal with funding, the pressure came mostly from statesmen or the KMT, asking for *renqing* and recommending 'appropriate' art works. Moreover, they demanded a stringent scrutiny that could detect 'unhealthy' and 'poisonous' ideologies. Because of the influence that some *huaju* people had within the KMT, pressure was imposed on civil servants to privilege *huaju* rather than experimental theatre. Moreover, most of them were very cautious about 'problematic ideologies', and consequently keen on policing thought. (K'O CH'I-LIANG, 1999 ) The CCA would risk severe criticism if it subsidised

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<sup>28</sup> Most of the old theatre generation came from the background of the Artistic Working Teams in the army. Such actors and playwrights included Wei Su 魏蘇, Ch'ang Fêng 常楓, Lang



unconventional performances.

Accusations were constantly made criticising theatre for offending public decency, disseminating 'incorrect' ideologies or Communism, and encouraging a tendency towards Taiwanese independence. (SU KUEI-CHIH, 1999)

The pressure from party reactionaries was most severe before the mid-1980s. If the CCA gave grants to any groups of this kind, it would be severely criticised for taking a laissez-faire attitude. (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999; SU KUEI-CHIH, 1999) Deciding whether to subsidise or not and how much money to give became a risky task for civil servants. (K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999; SU KUEI-CHIH, 1999; HSUEH MAO-SUNG, 1999)

Because *huaju* was promoted as part of literary tradition, and little theatre was categorised as 'performing arts', this division of duties caused confusion<sup>29</sup> within the CCA, and affected how civil servants dealt with theatre<sup>30</sup>.

Apart from the obstruction of reactionaries, according to Su Kuei-chih<sup>31</sup>(1999), a

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Hsiung 郎雄, Li Man-kuei, Kung Ming 貢敏 and Chao Ch'i-pin 趙琦彬.

<sup>29</sup> There were three main departments in the CCA: the first department dealt with regulations and national heritage; the second with literature, media and drama; the third performing arts and fine arts. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Department was in charge of theatre, as part of the literature tradition. However, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Departments took little theatre on because experimental theatre could not fit in the category of 'literature'. Hence, confusion occurred. The confusion of division of labour between the two departments continued until 1993 when Ch'ên Ch'i-nan became the deputy chairman, and reshuffled the labour division between departments. (SU KUEI-CHIH, 1999; K'O CHI-LIANG, 1999) Now, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Department is in charge of all theatre activities.

<sup>30</sup> At the height of the political theatre movement in the late 1980s, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Department tried to ignore little theatre to avoid trouble. In contrast, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Department sympathised with the little theatre and started to take over.

<sup>31</sup> Su Kuei-chih had worked in the CCA (2<sup>nd</sup> Department), and dealt with literary affairs (including plays) since the mid-1980s. She was also in charge of Parliamentary liaison. Although she was in charge of 'plays' (both *huaju* and written plays), she was sympathetic to little theatre development. By the late-1980s, she worked closely with Dr. Chung Mingder and supported many little theatre activities. She was regarded as the most sympathetic official and became important for getting little theatre into the state funding system.

veteran civil servant in the CCA, another problem of early funding was caused by the vagueness of its goals. In these days, there were no criteria or guidelines to follow, and the award of funding was considered to be *renqing*. Even if sometimes the decisions were not made according to *renqing* consideration, criticism of unfairness still occurred. Su (1999) admitted, "Ideology mattered most among all considerations... Because it determined whether the production or the group would get subsidies or not, and how much." In general, 'sound-minded' and uplifting plays found it easier to get subsidies; whereas, subversive, provocative, and disturbing works found it harder.

However, the so-called 'subversive and provocative ideology' was difficult to define. What was the definition of 'subversion' for civil servants? Su Kuei-chih (1999) explained, "Things like swearing, insulting state leaders, denouncing Confucius, performing some indecent actions, or nakedness... were all difficult things for us to give money to and 'encourage'."

However, the situation changed when funding became systematised. By the beginning of the 1990s, the political atmosphere changed and reactionary forces subsided. *Huaju* was considered old-fashioned and dogmatic, and could not easily get funding or opportunities for performance. (CHUNG MINGDER, 1994: 106)

#### **6.3.4. The development of Little theatre**

Even under strict censorship, little theatre groups mushroomed in the 1980s. The booming of little theatre was, in fact, a manifestation of a gradually opening society and a strong-growing Taiwanese culture. In general, the KMT government started to

shift cultural emphasis from China to Taiwan around this period. In addition, Taiwan's economy took off and the opposition grew stronger and more active. A new atmosphere developed, and consequently, Taiwanese modern arts started to flourish. Lanling's emergence was part of the change. Its success was the outcome of two decades' of brewing social change.

Little theatre had evolved in a different form to Li Man-kuei's simple idea. Although Taiwan's little theatre in the 1980s did not have a unified style or a shared set of beliefs, its multi-faceted character and experimental spirit was the key. 'Little theatre' after the 1980s referred to "a style, a fashion or even a (experimental and avant-garde) movement", (MA SÊN, 1996:19) rather than just to 'the size of the theatre venue (i.e. no more than two or three hundred seats)'.

According to theatre scholar Chung Mingder, (1992:11-12) the main characteristics of little theatre were: performing in a small and alternative space; small production; avant-garde and experimental tendencies; subversive and anti-establishment. Chi Wei-jan, a theatre director and Associate Professor in English Literature, defined little theatre as: "anti-tradition, anti-mainstream, anti-capitalism, and anti-bourgeoisie". (WU CH'ÜAN-CH'ÊNG, 1996: 254)

The size of theatre venue could not guarantee its experimental and artistic nature. However, its size and the type of space definitely provided some possibilities (as well as limitations) for certain performances and styles. For example, if the venue was small, the performance had to be simple. In unconventional spaces such as a street, harbour, classroom, park, warehouse, or the seaside, the performance had to break away from theatrical tradition, and thus the space released possibilities for



experiment. Since these groups used free venues and produced on a very low budget, the box office pressure was much lower than in mainstream theatre, and experiments were also more affordable.

These unconventional spaces broke the division between the audience and the performers. The possibilities of theatre were expanded, the relation between the observers and the observed also changed. The liberation from traditional theatre venues gave little theatre freedom away from the limitation of the proscenium stage, traditional performing methods, and written scripts. As James Roose-Evans said, "theatre should reflect not the everyday reality of naturalism, but rather those intimations that are beyond the reach of words." (ROOSE-EVANS, JAMES. 1991:1)

Taiwanese little theatre in the 1980s finally stepped forward and broke away from the ghost of the 1930s *huaju* tradition.

Since Lanling's emergence in 1980, Taiwanese little theatre was generally categorised into three generations. Chung Mingder (1992, 1994, 1996a) called them the first generation – 'experimental theatre' (1980-1985); the second-generation – 'avant-garde theatre' or 'political theatre' (1986 - the early 1990s); and the third generation – 'post-modern theatre' (the mid-1990s to present).

This division has been used by many critics (e.g. Li Shih-ming, 1996; Huang Hui-min, 1997). Yet, there were different opinions about how to make this division, and what defined the transition from one generation to the next. Each division is slightly different according to the dividers' opinions on the priorities of theatre development. Ma Sên (1996: 26-27, 1994: 271-294) preferred to trace further back to the 1960s. He believed that modern Taiwanese little theatre inherited Li Man-kuei's little theatre

tradition, and could only be divided into two generations: little theatre (1980-1989) & alternative theatre (1990 onwards).

In contrast to putting theatre development into historical order, theatre director, activist and critic Wang Mo-lin (1992: 129-154) insisted that Taiwan's little theatre only existed between 1986 and 1990. To him, 'little theatre' was a *movement*. Therefore, Lanling was too conventional to be included. Chi Wei-jan (2000) even opposed the idea of dividing Taiwan's theatre development into generations. He criticised Chung Mingder and Ma Sên for theorising theatrical progress into an academic discourse, which was a way of mythicising little theatre in order to build their own authority. Their division ignored the ruptures and anti-establishment character of post-war Taiwanese theatre history, and deliberately established a false unity between 'generations' that ignored the ruptures.

In order to avoid implying (incorrectly) that each generation had the same character, I propose to divide little theatre development into four stages (1980 -1985; 1986-1992; 1993- 1999, 2000 - date) rather than into generations. I begin my discussion of little theatre from 1980, because the emergence of Lanling marked the first breakthrough in thirty years of a barren theatre environment. I believe that there would be no base for little theatre to develop or counterattack if it were not for the foundations that Lanling laid.

Dividing this development into stages, provides me the opportunity to distinguish the social and political backdrop of each period, and to recognise the changes of different stages and their possible reasons. By doing so, I can not only avoid the mistake of segmenting a linear and diverse development arbitrarily, but also provide

a better way of examining the relationship between Taiwan's overall environment and theatre development.

In addition, most of the divisions devised by commentators on little theatre were made in the mid-1990s. According to my interviews in 1999 and the current developments in Taiwan, I found the newly emergent theatre after the mid-1990s playful, individualist, multifaceted, and very 'Taiwanese'. All the characteristics of this period related to preparation for the change to the next stage, to come after 2000.

#### **6.4. The first stage (1980-1985)**

##### **6.4.1. Experimental theatre festival**

The first stage of little theatre was fostered and encouraged in the Experimental Theatre Festival. Since 1980, the festival became an annual forum for creativity and experiment in theatre, and Taiwanese theatre started to boom. Within the five-year period (1980-1984), 34 new plays were produced<sup>32</sup> and many new theatre groups were formed. Many talents, who later became established in the theatre trade, were fostered through this opportunity of 'trial and error'. Some of them were established as theatre directors, playwrights and actors: for example, Chin Shih-chieh 金士傑, Cho Ming 卓明, Stan Lai 賴聲川, Huang Ch'êng-huang 黃承晃, Wang Yu-hui 王友輝, and Li Kuo-hsiu 李國修. In addition, some became critics (Huang Jian-ye 黃建業, Huang Mei-hsü 黃美序), academics (Ch'ên Ling-ling 陳玲玲, Ma Ting-ni 馬汀尼, Niu Chuan-hai 牛川海), film makers (Tsai Ming Liang 蔡明亮,

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<sup>32</sup> Of 36 productions (in the Experimental Theatre Festival from 1980 to 1984), there were only two western scripts. The remaining 34 productions were all new plays. (WANG YU-HUI,



Christopher Doyle), and traditional *quyi*<sup>33</sup> artists (e.g. Wang Zhen-quan 王振全).

At that time, there were very few artistic groups in Taiwan. When the KMT decided to promote arts positively, Lanling soon became the favourite group of governmental institutions and was very popular in festivals<sup>34</sup>. Lanling was invited to tour around Taiwan's universities and culture centres, and performed in every festival.

In 1981, the newly established CCA became the biggest patron of Lanling. Not only did Lanling become the CCA's star group, but was also chosen to run theatre training workshops for young people between 1984 and 1988. It played the role of the locomotive of Taiwanese little theatre for almost a decade. (MA SÊN, 1994: 276; CHUNG MINGDER, 1996: 36) Because of its influential status and connection within the CCA, Lanling became the most powerful theatre group in Taiwan before 1985. (CHÊN MEI-MAO, 1996b)

Lanling's founding members Chin Shih-chieh and Cho Ming admitted that Lanling had never got over its sudden fame, or grown out of the shadow of *Hezhu's New Match*. (CHUNG MINGDER, 1996 b: 63-65, 1989a) Moreover, because of the success of *Hezhu's New Match*, all festival organisers wanted to commission similar productions<sup>35</sup> to attract box office success. (LIU CHING-MIN, 1999) As a result, the

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1996:73; HUANG HUI-MIN, 1997:55-57)

<sup>33</sup> *Quyi* 曲藝 means 'folk art forms'. It includes ballad singing, story telling, comic dialogues, clapper talks, etc.

<sup>34</sup> Most festivals were held by the government, including the CCA, Taipei and Kaohsiung City governments, the Taiwan Provincial government, and the MOE. They had the budgets and the responsibility to hold festivals. Before the mid-1980s, there was only one non-governmental art festival - the New Aspect International Art Festival, held by the New Aspect Art Promotion Company.

<sup>35</sup> For example, Lanling were commissioned to produce three new plays (*Shehui ban* 社會版, *Xuansi ren* 懸絲人, and *Na dashi chuanqi* 那大師傳奇) in 1982, right after the success of *Hezhu's New Match*. They were all directed by Lanling's core members and the main creators

success of *Hezhu's New Match* in fact suffocated Lanling's creativity and future development. Different styles, alternative experiments, and more conceptual approaches were discouraged, because of the expectation of producing a similar 'result' to *Hezhu's New Match*. It not only prevented other creators in Lanling from having the same opportunities to develop and grow, but also forced Lanling to repeat itself. Therefore, during ten years' of its existence, its emphasis was mostly on 'acting' and narrative structure.

#### 6.4.2. Alternative approach evolved from Lanling

The same night that *Hezhu's New Match* was performed, their other work *Baofu* 包袱 (Baggage) caught less attention. Compared with the former, *Baofu* was heavier and more difficult to understand. It emphasised body language and explored the potential of non-narrative structure. The strength was in its abstract form and its abandonment of language, which clearly transcended the limitation of spoken drama<sup>36</sup>. (TSÉNG HSIN-I, 1982: 206; CHUNG MINGDER, 1990, 1996)

These two approaches, represented by *Hezhu's New Match* and *Baofu*, appeared as early as the end of 1970s when Lanling underwent two years of training. Huang Ch'iung-hua 黃瓊華 - one of the founding members of Lanling - pointed out the differences:

There are two main creative directions (of Lanling): searching for theatre's new

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of *Hezhu's New Match* -- Chin Shih-chieh and Cho Ming.

<sup>36</sup> It was the first time that Taiwanese theatre placed emphasis on body language. Many experiments that *Baofu* carried out had become the main concerns that little theatre tackled later on, such as deliberately abandoning dialogue and narrative tradition, developing a collective improvisation format, emphasising body language, and exploring theatre space. However, because abstract concepts were difficult to accept, this style of theatre seemed alien to audiences then. Without doubt, *Baofu* was not as popular as its counterpart, yet, its influence was much greater in later years. (CHUNG MINGDER, 1990: 227)



possibilities from the elements of traditional Beijing opera; and experimenting with possibilities of body language to replace oral language. Chin Shih-chieh's *Hezhu's New Match* laid the foundations of the first direction; As to the experiment of body language, that was conducted by Dr. Wu Jing Jyi and the inspiration of Poor Theatre laid the foundations for the latter. (HUANG CH'IUNG-HUA, 1982: 34)

The two different pursuits later became the main threads of Taiwanese theatre development. Around 1985 to 1986, a split developed. Liu Ching-min (1999) called 1985 'the year of rupture', because the fissure between two different styles became clear with each going its own separate way.

One route is represented by the core members of Lanling, such as: Chin Shih-chieh, Cho Ming, and Li Kuo-hsiu. It inherited part of the *huaju* tradition and developed a managerial format. Their concerns were mainly the audiences and market response. Their style was considered 'mainstream' after the mid-1980s.

Since Chin Shih-chieh was the director of *Hezhu's New Match*, his works became the trademark of Lanling, which was a more conventional style with strong narrative elements. Thus, Lanling became more and more accessible for the audiences. Also, because of the experience of dealing with governmental institutions, it developed a format of running theatre like a business.

Following in their footsteps, many similar theatre groups had been set up and developed from little theatre to middle-size theatre. Similar groups included the Performance Workshop (led by Stan Lai)<sup>37</sup>, and the Pin-Fong Acting Troupe (led by Li

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<sup>37</sup> Stan Lai worked with Lanling Theatre Workshop in 1984 after he got his Ph.D. degree from Berkeley, California and came home to teach in the National Institute of Arts(NIA), Taiwan. He established the Performance Workshop(表演工作坊) in 1985. The group was famous for improvisation and comic performances.



Kuo-hsiu)<sup>38</sup>. They were regarded as the most powerful theatre groups in the 1980s. (HUANG HUI-MIN, 1997: 58; MA SÊN, 1994:287-289, 1991: 213-218)

Another direction was represented by the marginalised members of Lanling, such as Huang Ch'êng-huang and Liu Ching-min. This style started off with experiments with body language, and later on, expanded to explore physical possibilities, psychological expression, and sometimes, a subversive anti-authoritarian spirit. (CHUNG MINGDER, 1996: 46-47) This direction was developed by some marginalised Lanling members. (WONG MO-LIN, 1992; CHUNG MINGDER, 1992) This kind of theatre is usually called 'non-mainstream theatre', 'avant-garde' theatre, 'fringe', 'radical theatre', or, 'alternative theatre'. (CHI WEI-JAN, 1999; CHUNG MINGDER, 1989; MA SÊN, 1996: 23) After the mid-1980s, such theatre groups started to sprout, including: U Theatre 優劇場 (led by Liu Ching-min in 1987), Notebook Theatre 筆記劇團 in 1985 and Renzi 人子劇團 Theatre in 1988 (both led by Huang Ch'êng-huang).

#### 6.4.3. The major patron in arts

The post-war Taiwanese theatre had been kept in the domain of the state apparatus until the 1980s – either in the Armed Forces, or in the university theatre clubs. Because of the success of Lanling, many similar *shehui jutuan* 社會劇團 (literally meaning 'theatre groups from the society', i.e. outside of the usual categories of military and campus theatre) mushroomed afterwards.

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<sup>38</sup> Li Kuo-hsiu first won his fame by playing the main comic figure in *Hezhu's New Match*. Li Kuo-hsiu later established the Pin-Fong Acting Troupe (屏風表演班, the English title was provided by the group) in 1986. Pin-Fong soon became a popular group and built its reputation on farce and comedies.

There were very few performances and most of them were organised by the state in the early post-war Taiwan. (LI SHIH-MING, 1996:82-83; MA SÊN, 1991:16) The pattern of funding theatre groups to perform for the governmental events started and soon became popular in the 1980s. The number of theatre groups mushroomed because of increasing opportunities to perform and to gain funding. This kind of working pattern of the cultural institutions buying programmes from theatre groups, or commissioning them to produce new productions for certain events or festivals, became the norm.

However, Taiwan's cultural environment at this period was still unsound. It was impossible for artistic groups to support themselves merely by box office income. Furthermore, private sponsorship was almost unheard of in the early 1980s<sup>39</sup>. (JUNG SHU- HUA, 1999; CHOU HUI-LING, 1999a; CHUNG MINGDER, 1990:222) Consequently, governmental events and funding was the only source of support for theatre artists.

In addition, almost all the theatre venues were owned and run by government<sup>40</sup>. Therefore, even with private money, it was almost impossible to put on any production without official approval. Because of this, when the number of little theatre

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<sup>39</sup> The beginning of private sponsorship in Taiwanese theatre began in the late 1980s. For example, it was a big news when Cathay Pacific Airlines sponsored the Performance Workshop in 1987. Soon afterward, the Pin-Fong Workshop received sponsorship from the 7-11. Before then, private sponsorship was mostly given to foreign companies touring from abroad (e.g. Philip Morris sponsored the American Symphony Orchestra's Asian tour, which included Taiwan).

<sup>40</sup> Before 1980, there were only 3 performing halls in Taiwan. In the 1980s, many culture centres opened, but only two of them did not have a performing space. In 1991, the number of other kinds of performing halls increased to 9. (CCA,1992: 60-61) In 1998, places suitable for artistic performances had risen sharply. Apart from those mentioned, there were 8 *Shejiao guan* (social educational halls 社教館), 5 memorial halls, 11 performing rooms, and 15 alternative spaces suitable for holding exhibitions and performances. (CCA, 1999: 100)

groups increased after the mid-1980s, they tended to use unconventional spaces in order to save money, avoid trouble and censorship, and enjoy the freedom and convenience.

By the mid-1980s, when all 24 culture centres were opened, there were many empty performing halls and plenty of festivals waiting to be filled. The demand for performances was unprecedented. The pattern of the 'one-show company' emerged to cope with the particular need. (CHUNG MINGDER, 1990: 221-223; HUANG HUI-MIN, 1997:67) The so-called 'one-show company' was a phrase used to describe the temporary formation of a group for just one production. (CHUNG MINGDER, 1990: 221-223) When a proposal was accepted and funded, a group of theatre people would form a 'one-show company' for a particular event and produce an approved programme. When the production finished, the group vanished.

Almost all theatre groups were run like this in the 1980s. Most theatres did not have studios to rehearse, or regular training, let alone a permanent office, long-term plans for the future, or any managerial personnel or press officer. Therefore, everyone in this trade was a freelancer, and worked whenever a job opportunity came up.

Not only was the lack of performance venues problematic, but also the fact that there was little appetite for arts among the public was an obstruction to progress. (CHIU HEI-YUAN, 1985:80) According to a survey<sup>41</sup> undertaken by sociologist Chiu Hei-yuan (1985:76 -77) in 1980, the Taiwanese in general did not have the habit of going to the theatre. Only 8% of interviewees in the capital Taipei claimed to have

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<sup>41</sup> The survey was conducted in 1980 to evaluate the results of newly built culture centres. The figures could only show part of the Taiwanese situation in early 1980, when new cultural



gone to theatre once within the last six months.

After the cultural environment started to improve<sup>42</sup> in the 1980s, an ambivalent attitude emerged in Taiwanese cultural circles. On the one hand, they were thrilled by the freedom given to them after three decades of tight thought control and political interference. On the other hand, they wanted the government to support arts more actively, and to 'build' culture more aggressively in order to catch up with advanced countries.

When I started working as a reporter on theatre and the arts for the *Central Daily News* in 1982, the longing for a stronger cultural apparatus and the hope for forceful cultural policy were constantly expressed in cultural circles. Those involved in culture preferred forceful cultural construction and a powerful cultural institution. A group of influential artists and intellectuals strongly advocated the necessity of setting up the Ministry of Culture, including anthropologist Ch'en Ch'i-lu, composer Hsü Po-yün, choreographer Lin Hwai-min, Dr. Wu Jing Jyi, and music anthropologist Hsü Ch'ang-hui.

Having the same kind of mentality, the general assumption of theatre groups was that they needed and deserved the full support of the government. Such opinions were often expressed, both by the old *huaju* generation and the younger generation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (HUANG MEI-HSÜ, 1980:233-236; CH'ÉN MEI-MAO, 2000a, 2000b)

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construction had just started. (CHIU HEI-YUAN, 1985: 71-107)

<sup>42</sup> The *Improvement Programme for Culture, Education and Entertainment* (Jiaqiang wenhua yu yule fangan 加強文化與育樂方案) was promulgated in 1978, and the CCA was established in 1981 to deal with cultural affairs and to plan for overall cultural construction.

Although the number of performances organised by private promoters has increased since the 1990s<sup>43</sup>, the majority of artistic events today are still organised by the government. For example, government-held theatre events accounted for 81.46% of all theatre performances in 1989, decreasing to 76.99% in 1990, and 74.20% in 1991, (CCA, 1992: 123-124) According to veteran art promoter Li Hui-na (2000), although the first private arts promotion company New Aspect was established as early as the late 1970s, it was not until the 1990s that privately organised performances became common. Even so, the figure of government-held theatre events rose to 83.02% in 1998. (CCA, 1999:162)

## 6.5. The second stage (1985-1992)

### 6.5.1. Avant-garde theatre thrived

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the 1980s saw the beginning of Taiwan's political reform. Around the mid-1980s, Chiang Ching-kuo initiated radical party reform; the opposition party, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), was established; the Taiwanese Independence Movement was also vocal abroad and many leaders on the black list once exiled were trying to get back to the island<sup>44</sup>. On July 15 1987, martial

<sup>43</sup> According to *Cultural Statistics* in 1998 (CCA, 1999: 41 -45), the figure of performances (including: music, theatre, and dance) has risen since 1989. It rose from 6,051 performances in 1989 to 18,658 in 1998, although the proportion of government-organised performances decreased a little (73.14% in 1989, 72.35% in 1994, 76.15% in 1996, and rising again to 76.03% in 1998). All in all, the main buyer and promoter of performing arts was still the government.

<sup>44</sup> Since the early 1960s, increasing numbers of Taiwanese students who studied abroad organised the Taiwan Independent Movement around the world. In 1970, similar organisations in Japan, Europe, Canada, and the USA joined force under the name of World United Formosans for Independence (WUFI). Since then, the Taiwan independent movement was mobilised by overseas Taiwanese, especially intellectuals. In February 1985, Hsü Hsin-liang 許信良, and Hung Shêng-chê 洪勝哲 established the 'Taiwan Revolution Party' (later 'Taiwan Nation-building Alliance') in the USA. One of the opposition leaders Shih Ming-tê 施明德 started a hunger strike in June. The following March, Hsü Hsin-liang mobilised the action to



law was finally terminated<sup>45</sup>. All these changes took place within a very short period. Issues were discussed openly in a way that had never been possible before.

By the end of the 1980s, Lanling had lost its grip on Taiwan's fast changing society. The little theatre 'locomotive' was weakening and could not keep up with the times. Their plays were full of the 'haunted past', because of their employment of an unused language (*Jingpianzi* 京片子- Mandarin with Beijing accent) or their use of a distant performing formula (Beijing opera) to represent Taiwan's modern society. According to linguist Huang Hsüan-fan (1993: 4-7), Lanling's works demonstrated the 'past tense of Taiwan' - the Taiwan that had been overshadowed by China-centric ideology, a society which stayed in the past. Apart from *Hezhu's New Match, Chinese Comedy in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century*<sup>46</sup> was another example of a China-centric play that failed to grasp the 'presence' of Taiwan, not only in the language it used, but also in its performing method and its ideology.

In 1986, Taiwanese society had gathered enough energy to move forward; and theatre was also gearing up for drastic change. Wang Mo-lin called the year 1986 "the beginning of the little theatre movement". (1996:101-117; 1992:141-155) Many little theatre groups started to challenge the old narrative structures and *huaju* influences, including the usage of Beijing accented Mandarin, and its realistic style. Many felt that challenging old ideologies was the only way to explore new aesthetic

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*qiandang hui tai* 遷黨回台 (move the Taiwan Revolution Party back to Taiwan) in order to support the establishment of the DPP and challenge the KMT's 'black list'. (CH'IU KUO-CHÊN, 2000) In September 1986, the DPP was formed. Hsü Hsin-liang attempted to enter Taiwan and was arrested at the airport, which led to the 'Taoyuan Airport Incident'. ([www.wufi.org.tw/events.htm](http://www.wufi.org.tw/events.htm) and HSÜ HSIN-LIANG, 1995: 427)

<sup>45</sup> Taiwan's martial law was imposed on May 20<sup>th</sup> 1949.

<sup>46</sup> The play was originally called *Nanyiye women shuo xiangsheng* 那一夜我們說相聲 (We Performed a Comic Dialogue That Night). Here, I used their own translation from the CCA's website: <http://www.cyberstage.com.tw/portfolio/>.



possibilities. (WANG MO-LIN, 1996, 1999) and early 1980s. (Chen, 1996)

social and political issues were discussed freely and openly.

It has been well documented that the second half of the 1980s turned out to be the most exciting and revolutionary era in Taiwan's theatre history. (MA SËN, 1996; CHUNG MINGDER, 1990, 1992, 1996 b; WANG MO-LIN, 1992)

Partly, this was because political issues could be discussed freely after martial law was lifted. Partly,

it was because avant-garde theatres did not rely on state support or box office pool

income, they could be as provocative and subversive as they liked. Partly, the

expectations for Taiwan's democracy pushed young theatre members to pursue

social reform for a better society. (Chen, 1996; MA SËN, 1996; CHUNG MINGDER, 1990, 1992, 1996 b; WANG MO-LIN, 1992)

The breakthrough in theatre at this stage was only made possible because of social

and political liberation. It happened on the street, outside of comfortable theatre

venues, and broke away from conventional theatrical forms and traditional narrative

structures. Inspired by the times and the exciting atmosphere, theatre embraced the

changes wholeheartedly and joined forces with political and social movements. This

change was mobilised by the university theatre clubs. In contrast to the traditional

school drama clubs of the Li Man-kuei period, university students in the mid-1980s

were not satisfied with merely going on stage to enjoy the buzz of acting. They were

keen to explore theatre aesthetics, and used theatre as their arena to express ideas

and debate issues. (Chen, 1996; MA SËN, 1996; CHUNG MINGDER, 1990, 1992, 1996 b; WANG MO-LIN, 1992)

Moreover, in contrast to drama students within an orthodox theatre discipline,

university students were less inhibited by theatrical conventions, and had more

intellectual desire and aesthetic curiosity. As a result, university campuses became

the 'greenhouse' for avant-garde theatre. The cooperation between theatre activities

and the student movement in the universities became the nucleus of little theatre at this stage.

Starting from 1986, many little theatres were drawn into political campaigns, social movements, minority protests, and environmental activities. Among them, three groups were most influential: the Left Bank theatre, the Huanxu Theatre, and the Critical Point Theatre Phenomenon.

'Left Bank' grew unplanned from a dramatised poetry-reading in the literature club of Tanchiang University in 1985<sup>47</sup>; Huanxu Theatre was a theatre club of the National Taiwan University<sup>48</sup>. All their members came from a literary background. Their interests lay in theatre aesthetics, and they adopted post-structuralist ideas to challenge the *huaju* tradition.

The biggest contribution that Huanxu and Left Bank made was their innovation in theatre language. The Left Bank was interested in finding new possibilities of theatrical structure, exploring the relationship between physical language and verbal messages. (SHIH WAN-SHUN, 1988) Huanxu endeavoured to develop a new theatre that had "an anti-narrative structure and non-representational mise-en-scene,

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<sup>47</sup> All the members of Left Bank(河左岸劇團) were members of *Wenshe* 文社(Literature Club) in the Tanchiang University. A poetry-reading started their connection with theatre. In June 1985, their first work *Wo yao chi wode pixie* 我要吃我的皮鞋(I want to eat my shoes) was read out and performed in a students' flat. They formed a theatre group in 1986 and named themselves 'Left Bank' to indicate their wish to be marginal and anti-establishment'.

<sup>48</sup> The main figures in Huanxu theatre (環墟劇團) were a student couple -- Li Yung-p'ing 李永萍 and Hsü Nai-wei 徐乃威. They organised a play and won the first prize in the university theatre competition in 1985. The group was then invited to perform in the New Aspect Little Theatre in 1986 and called itself Huanxu. (CHUNG MINGDER, 1994: 115-121) Huanxu was active in the political theatre movement, and Li was especially active in the DPP campaign. In 1992, partly due to lack of financial backup, and partly because the core members graduated from university, the group was dissolved. (CHUNG MINGDER, 1992; WU CH'ÜAN-CH'ÉNG, 1996: 218-220)

involving performer's presence, audience participation, and the relationship between theatre aesthetics and political changes". (CHUNG MINGDER, 1992:149-173, 1994:118)

Although the Critical Point Theatre Phenomenon was also a group initiated by university students, it differed from the other two and was unique both in theatre style and ideology. Its leader T'ien Ch'i-yüan 田啓元 was a gay artist who had contracted AIDS<sup>49</sup>. He gave his debut *Mao shi* 毛屍 (Hairy Corpse) in 1988, and aired the issue of homosexuality - a taboo in Taiwan's society before the 1990s. After martial law was lifted, T'ien Ch'i-yüan's works soon attracted passionate reactions from the gay community and liberal intellectuals, and made open discussion of homosexuality possible. T'ien Ch'i-yüan's works were ideologically provoking and visually 'ugly'<sup>50</sup>. He flaunted his homosexuality, and criticised oppressive Confucian culture.

### 6.5.2. Political theatre movement

When the political temperature rose and the social movement intensified between 1987 and 1989, little theatre groups immediately joined forces with social and political activists, and launched the political theatre movement. (CHUNG MINGDER, 1992: 139) For the first time in post-war Taiwan, theatrical activities had finally engaged with social issues, and acted upon these concerns.

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<sup>49</sup> T'ien Ch'i-yüan 田啓元 was an art student in the National Taiwan Normal University. He became well known in 1988 because his lecturers were unwilling to teach him in case they caught AIDS, even though they admitted he was gifted. He started his theatre group the Critical Point Theatre Phenomenon (臨界點劇象錄) following this, and became a symbolic figure in avant-garde theatre. In 1996, he died at the age of 32.

<sup>50</sup> When I worked at the United Daily News covering theatre news, I interviewed him many times between 1988 and 1990. He said that his works emphasised the roughness and ugliness of life, and forced the audience to look them in the face without escaping or pretending.



Since the late 1980s, drastic changes in politics had shaken Taiwan as a whole. The undercurrent of longing for change was growing. Little theatre changed its focus from aesthetic subversion to social and political criticism. Li Yung-p'ing, one of Huanxu's founders, explained their enthusiasm for being involved in political activities: "For many Taiwanese in the late 1980s, politics was the hope for the future... Many things needed to be overturned and make a change through political activities and political will. Therefore, joining in political campaigns was the way." (WU CH'ÜAN-CH'ËNG, 1996:223)

The elections that took place on December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1989 were the first to be held since the DPP had been legalised. Although the DPP had little experience of organising an electoral campaign, their candidates, standing for the first time, managed to win an average of 27.82% of all Legislator, mayor, and councillor seats. The KMT had only won an average of 61.33% of those same seats. For the first time in forty years, the KMT's total control of Taiwan had been shaken. In this very first battle, the involvement of 'theatre' played an important role.

The Councillor candidate Ts'ai Jên-chien 蔡仁堅 in Hsinchu City formed the first campaign theatre – Green Theatre. His original idea was to invent a new political language, which was a laughing matter at first among political rivals. (CHANG BI-YU, 1989b) When it was proven effective and popular, many DPP politicians (such as Pên Hsin-i 賁馨儀, Hsieh Ch'ang-t'ing 謝長廷, and K'e Ching-shêng 柯景昇) adopted the tactics; Lü Hsiu-lian 呂秀蓮 sponsored the 'Clean Election Theatre' touring around Taiwan to run an anti-bribery campaign; Yeh Chü-lan 葉菊蘭 set up "Yeh Chü-lan Theatre" to advocate her political views. She won great support from the voters partly

because of the theatrical appeal. (CHUNG MINGDER, 1992: 265 -266) Therefore, other DPP candidates even borrowed the group to help boost their popularity.

Not only did little theatre use theatrical presentations to attract voters and make their points clear, political candidates also dramatised their approach to reinforce their image or put their points forward. For example, the Legislator Chu Kao-chêng 朱高正 was famous for his "table show (*shangzhuo* show 上桌秀)"<sup>51</sup> which started the 'parliamentary battle' within the Legislative Yuan. Although it damaged Taiwan's international image, (SHAPIRO, 1995b) at a time that the KMT occupied the majority of Legislative seats, by acting dramatically and drastically, Chu Kao-chêng made his point 'heard', attracted attention and challenged the KMT domination.

Another extraordinary dramatised event happened just before the 1989 election. Kuo Pei-hung 郭倍宏, the chairman of World United Formosans for Independence (WUFI) who was on the KMT government's black list, slipped back to Taiwan to support the DPP election. He showed up at the electoral hustings of Lu Hsiu-i 盧修一, who ran for Taipei County Councillor seat. Because the authorities had already heard the news that someone on the black list would show up and give a talk openly that night, hundreds of riot policemen were deployed to catch him. (LIN WEN-I, 1989)

On that evening (22<sup>nd</sup> November), Kuo Pei-hung showed up, as expected. After his talk, he walked down the stage into the crowds, and put on a black mask with 'black

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<sup>51</sup> Before all the older generation of legislators were forced to resign in 1992, the KMT still dominated the majority of seats in the Legislative Yuan. It was difficult for the opposition party, the DPP, to stop any pro-KMT or unfair acts being passed. The DPP had tried many tactics to slow down or interrupt the process. Chu started off this trend using seemingly mischievous interruptions to achieve that purpose. He would rampage through the chamber, stomping on the tables, ripping out microphones, and flailing at those who tried to restrain him. He was called "the Rambo of the legislature" by the foreign media. (SHAPIRO, 1995b)

list' written on the front. Suddenly, he disappeared in the crowds, because hundreds of the DPP supporters also put on the same black mask. The whole event happened within a few minutes and the police lost him. (CHANG BI-YU, 1989a) It was a well-designed political 'performance', getting both the 'performers' and 'observers' involved, using costumes (black masks), and creating surprise by having hundreds of policemen approaching and trying to catch him. It was exciting and entertaining, and at the same time, its effect of challenging the 'black list' was extraordinarily powerful. The whole incident was described as "slapping the KMT on the face". (MINSHI NEWS NETWORK, 2001)

However, the goal of the political theatre movement was not limited only to elections. Little theatre provided an active force fighting for overall reform and social change. Apart from those already mentioned, many new theatre groups emerged, such as Notebook Theatre (1985), 425 Environmental Theatre (1985), Contemporary Taipei Theatre Laboratory (1986), Luo-ho Concept 洛河展意(1986), Zero Degree Theatre (1987), and U Theatre (1987). They launched theatrical campaigns fighting for democracy, human rights, social equality, and environmental issues.

They tackled all sorts of issues that had never been touched or were not allowed to be discussed. For example, the event *Driving Lanyu's Evil Spirits Away* was the first 'theatre of social action'. (WANG MO-LIN, 1992:108) It was organised and performed on Lanyu island by theatre activists in 1988 to protest against the dumping of nuclear waste there.

Around the mid-1980s, the student movement and little theatre were "two sides of the same coin". (CHUNG MINGDER, 1992:256) A noticeable event happened in the



National Taiwan University (NTU). On the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the May Fourth Movement in 1989, the NTU students' union, led by its chairperson Lo Wên-chia 羅文嘉 (later he became the right-hand man of the DPP president Ch'ên Shui-bian), formed the Anti-ghost Theatre and performed *Totem and Taboo* in the student activity centre. In the performance, they burnt the national flag and insulted Chiang Kai-shek, an action unimaginable before the late 1980s. The NTU authorities decided to punish Lo. As a response to this, another performance - *The sacrifice of Lo Wên-chia* - was organised to protest against the high-handed punishment. The event took place right in front of the Chiang Kai-shek statue in the NTU campus. This time, any students wanting to join in were welcome to mock Chiang Kai-shek. The performance had won the sympathy of many students, and its effectiveness drew them closer to little theatre, using theatre as the means to express criticism and demand democracy. (CHUNG MINGDER, 1992: 259-260)

Starting from 1986, theatres were drawn into political campaigns, the social movement, minority protests, environmental activities, and the student movement. (CHANG BI-YU, 1994; CHUNG MINGDER, 1989b, 1992, 1994) Theatre became so "politicised" that the period between 1986 and 1990 was described as "an era of political theatre". (CHUNG MINGDER, 1992; WU T'IENTU, 1991)

#### **6.5.4. Disillusion and decline**

In general, most Taiwanese theatres at this stage were dedicated to political and social reform, in exactly the same way that left-wing theatre promoted the May Fourth Movement spirit, and Taiwanese intellectuals advocated the nationalist movement in the 1920s. Theatre scholars saw political theatre as the 'catalyst' that made a stormy

sea stormier in the social reform movement of the late 1980s. (MA SÊN, 1996; CHUNG MINGDER, 1994; HUANG HUI-MIN, 1997) They also regarded highly the influence of the theatre at this stage in pushing the course of political reforms. (WANG MO-LIN, 1992; MA SÊN, 1996; CHUNG MINGDER, 1990, 1992, 1994)

However, according to the interviews I carried out in 1999, many theatre veterans viewed it differently. They felt that theatre's involvement in political activities had cost them highly. Some felt bitterly disappointed, and were let down by politicians; some realised that they were driven into their involvement with historical events without consciously choosing or thinking properly. (LI HUAN-HSIUNG, 1999; LIU CHING-MIN, 1999; CHOU I-CH'ANG, 1999 )

The emptiness after the revolutionary mission had been accomplished made many theatre members feel lost. For example, Liu Ching-min, founder of the U theatre, did not believe that political theatre had made any difference. "Nothing had been learnt from that experience. If theatre groups did not join in the street protests and political campaign, the democratisation would still go on. The theatrical tactics adopted in political campaigns were only used to increase 'interest', and were not essential." (LIU CHING-MIN, 1999) According to her, theatre involvement was only a product of the times.

Li Huan-hsiung, the founder of Left Bank, also described the whole experience as 'empty': "After the first power redistribution in the 1989 election and the student movement in March 1990, we suddenly sensed the emptiness of direct involvement in protests and political activities. If we were really interested in reform, we might as well throw ourselves into politics." (LI HUAN-HSIUNG, 1999)



Among them, some did join in the DPP directly and advocated opposition ideologies whole-heartedly. However, disappointment with politicians came about from working together in elections. (CHANG BI-YU, 1989b) For example, Chou I-ch'ang<sup>52</sup> joined the DPP in 1989, and was the first to organise theatrical performances in the DPP electoral campaigns. After years of cooperation and working experience, even he was appalled by politicians: "I am a DPP member, however, I am very disappointed. Frankly speaking, there is no cultural policy in the DPP, or genuine concern for Taiwanese culture. Culture has always been taken as the vehicle to deliver their political message." (CHOU I-CH'ANG, 1999)

The disillusion led little theatre to reconsider its relationship with politics. To theatre people, not only had they wasted their time, lost confidence in politics, but also lost their original direction. This interruption slowed down the development of little theatre, and drained its energy in the early 1990s.

The ways in which the theatre community and scholars looked at the political theatre movement and its significance seem contradictory. However, in my view, the change in Taiwanese society in the 1980s did not take place on its own. The political theatre movement was definitely one of the 'catalysts' for the overall change in Taiwan. It played an indispensable role in voicing dissent, challenging the old KMT ideologies, and popularising Taiwanese consciousness.

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<sup>52</sup> Chou I-ch'ang 周逸昌 was the founder of the Zero Degree theatre, and later established the Gang-a Tsui theatre 江之翠實驗劇團 in 1991. He was very active in political theatre and the DPP. He is still working in a DPP constituency (Panch'iao 板橋 City) and leads Gang-a Tsui Theatre for the city government. In recent years, he has dedicated his energies to



Furthermore, theatre changed the ways Taiwanese politicians presented themselves. In other words, it changed the culture of Taiwanese politics by dramatisation, shock effects, and the building up of highlights and suspense. Theatre later even transformed political actions into cheerful and colourful carnivals. It changed the boring and distant image of politics into something dramatic and exciting.

The fading of the political theatre movement was inevitable. On the one hand, theatre groups felt the urge to break away from merely being the 'political messenger'. On the other hand, the politicians who took theatre as the medium for political discussion were also dissatisfied after a while. Some of them actually disliked theatrical 'tricks', and reckoned that theatrical considerations in fact obstructed their delivery of political messages. (CHUNG CH'IAO, 1992:354) The ambivalent relationship between the two finally brought the relationship of cooperation to an end.

After the 1992 election, some theatre groups decided to withdraw from direct political involvement and contemplated what to do next, while some activists joined politics directly. People who were enthusiastic in politics eventually diverted their energy and joined in politics. According to Li Yung-p'ing, Huanxu's founder, "I was once confused by the roles I played in the political theatre movement: a theatre performer, or a social reformer. I realised that if I wanted to put reform into action, theatre was not enough for me." (WU CH'ÜAN-CH'ÊNG, 1996:219, 225) Therefore, Li joined the DPP first, then later became an active member and Legislator candidate of the People's First Party (PFP) in 2001; Lo Wên-chia was active in the DPP after he left the NTU and became Ch'ên Shui-bian's right-hand man.

### 6.5.5. Polarised orientation

Theatre activities not only developed actively on the street, but also grew in theatre venues. Theatre venues increased drastically between 1984 and 1985. 83.34% of Taiwan's theatre venues were opened after 1986<sup>53</sup>. (CCA, 1992: 65 - 66) As a result, theatre groups mushroomed. There were roughly seventy to eighty little theatre groups between 1985 and 1989<sup>54</sup>. (CHUNG MINGDER, 1990: 214)

In parallel to the vigorous political theatre movement, the mainstream theatre was also growing. The counterbalance between *huaju* and experimental theatre in the early 1980s, had been replaced by mainstream and avant-garde theatre after 1986.

The theatre environment began to change when the Performance Workshop broke box office records in 1985. Before *Chinese Comedy in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (*Nanyiye women shuo xiangsheng*), there had never been any performance run over a week. (MA SÊN, 1994: 287-288, 299-300) It performed 20 days continuously in March 1985 and was taken as a record-breaking milestone, setting the example for well-marketed and commercially-conscious productions of the future.

Even today, the run for each production is still short. According to the survey conducted by the National Culture and Arts Foundation (NCAF) in 1997, almost 1/4

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<sup>53</sup> Apart from culture centres and state theatre venues, private venues also increased in the late 1980s. They included the New Aspect Theatre, Crown Theatre, Lanling Theatre, U Theatre, Performance Workshop Studio, Nostalgia Theatre, China Times Theatre, Youth Theatre, Shanpi Theatre(善比), and Wisdom Plaza Theatre. (CHUNG MINGDER, 1992: 138)

<sup>54</sup> Ma Sên's figure (1994: 285-287) was much less than Chung's. Taipei Theatre Union had 18 members in 1987, and there were at least 15 theatre groups outside of the union. It seemed to me that Chung's estimation was probably too optimistic, because many of them were either short-lived students groups, or were formed temporarily for street protests and political campaigns. Nonetheless, it did show how quickly little theatre grew at the beginning



(24%) of performing art groups put on only one performance per production, 14.5% two, and 10.5% three. Those who could put on more than 20 performances for each new production only took up 8% of all groups. (NCAF, 1997a: Chart: G4a-1)

Unlike their counterpart, the avant-garde theatre that felt let down and manipulated in later years, mainstream theatre cashed in by using popular political issues to ensure box office success. (WANG MO-LIN, 1992) Apart from *Chinese Comedy in the Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century* and its two follow-up productions, similar box-office hits capitalising on political topics included *Wanli changcheng* (萬里長城, The Great Wall, by Pin-Fong), and *Taiwan Diyi* (台灣第一, Taiwan First, by Godot).

The success of Performance Workshop was a mixture of a popular approach and skilful marketing<sup>55</sup>. It demonstrated the possibility for the theatre to sustain itself commercially. Therefore, the power of modern management and the desire to satisfy the audience's taste became a great concern for mainstream groups. Followed by the encouragement of the CCA<sup>56</sup>, marketing and management became increasingly important.

Stan Lai was criticised for dressing up his cultural commodities with artistic appeal. (MINSHENG DAILY NEWS. 1987) Even so, in contrast to the sometimes abstract, sometimes ideologically heavy little theatre works, it was obvious that mainstream

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of the 1980s.

<sup>55</sup> The commercial intentions of Performance Workshop showed in many aspects. For example, it liked to recruit television actors and pop singers to its cast, focused on publicity and PR work, and exploited current topics. These techniques were targeted at winning popularity and boosting income. Everything associated with the play became a cultural product. Not only was the play itself a product to be sold, its many by-products such as T-shirts, books, tapes and CD of the play were also earning substantial incomes. (WANG MO-LIN, 1992: 309-319)

<sup>56</sup> Since the beginning of the state funding system, the CCA has always emphasised fostering



plays were more accessible for ordinary audiences.

Similar groups emerged in the late 1980s, and gradually developed a more efficient management and PR style. The other groups included the Pin-Fong Acting Group (see footnote 37), the Godot Theatre (led by Liang Chih-min)<sup>57</sup>, the Paper Windmill Theatre (led by Li Yung-fêng)<sup>58</sup>, and the Green Ray Theatre (led by Lo Pei-an)<sup>59</sup>.

They all took up a mainstream theatre principle – producing *haokan* 好看 (interesting, watchable and nice looking)<sup>60</sup> dramas – and adopted managerial tactics to become professional and business-like.

These mainstream groups had set up a professional 'management model' in Taiwan's theatre, and borrowed western fund-raising models and PR techniques to find private sponsorship or donations. (MA SÊN, 1991:213-218) These mainstream theatre groups moulded a 'modified' professional theatre management model in Taiwan.<sup>61</sup>

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the long-term managerial ability of artistic groups.

<sup>57</sup> Liang Chih-min 梁志民 was Stan Lai's student at the National Institute of Arts(NIA). Liang established Godot Theatre in 1988 and copied Lai's directing and managerial style. Godot Theatre overtook the Performance Workshop commercially in the late 1990s and was famous for its aggressive PR tactics. (CHOU I-CH'ANG, 1999; CHI WEI-JAN, 1999)

<sup>58</sup> Li Yung-fêng 李永豐 was a founding member of Lanling. He dedicated himself to children's theatre and established Paper Windmill in 1990. Later, Li bought out several theatre groups to form the Paper Windmill Foundation, and established his theatre enterprise, which included several small groups, a production company, workshop, and theatre courses for children.

<sup>59</sup> Lo Pei-an 羅北安 studied theatre in America and his interests lay in the musical. He established Green Ray 綠光 theatre in 1993, dedicated to localising musical form.

<sup>60</sup> Ch'ên Ch'i 陳琪, the manager of Godot Theatre, expressed her opinions on mainstream theatre management in an interview, which demonstrated exactly the strategy of mainstream theatre. (LIBERTY TIMES. 15/6/1996) She said that their main concern was how to present "haokan" 好看 (means both 'interesting to watch', and 'nice-looking') dramas for the audiences.

<sup>61</sup> According to an argument between Chou Hui-ling (1999a: 50-54) and Jung Shu-hua (1999:37-49), Taiwan's environment is not sufficient or mature enough for a commercial theatre environment to develop in terms of legislation and market capacity. Her argument was based on Langley's definition (1990: 10) of 'commercial theatre'. Nonetheless, no matter how crude the Taiwanese theatre environment might seem, many groups tried to set up full-paid staff and a commercial managerial format.

Avant-garde theatre, on the other hand, did not have much chance to get state funding, private sponsorship, or box office returns. (OU YING-CH'UAN, 1989; MA SÊN, 1994:290) They were often condemned for "acting wild in defiance of the public opinion (*huzuo feiwei* 胡作非爲)", and "indulging oneself in the name of experiment, but in reality, making no sense at all for audiences." (HOU CH'I-P'ING, 1992)

At this stage, avant-garde theatre members were mainly students and enthusiasts. For them, financial rewards always came last. They dedicated their energy, spare time and own money to theatre. (LI SHIH-MING, 1996) Chou I-ch'ang (1999) explained, "Little theatre had built an anti-establishment and anti- government alliance in the 1980s. Even if they (the government) wanted to give us money, we would never take it."

In contrast to mainstream theatres, the way little theatres kept going in the 1980s was mostly by the dedication and passion of its volunteers. Theatre activist and critic Wang Mo-lin (LIBERTY TIMES, 15/6/1996) called it 'comrade theatre'. They placed emphasis on the comradeship within the group to push creativity further and to support each other's artistic experiments. Therefore, material returns could be sacrificed for spiritual rewards. (WANG MO-LIN, 1999; LI SHIH-MING, 1996: 80-81)

However, in the early 1990s, Wang Mo-lin (1992) declared that little theatre had died. He (1999) explained to me that he drew this conclusion because he regarded little theatre as a movement. Once the characteristic of 'theatre of action' faded, he gave his verdict. Chi Wei-jan (1999) agreed with him and criticised little theatre for losing its 'counter-cultural' role. However, Chung Mingder (1996 a: 176-177) criticised Wang for being too narrow-minded in confining little theatre's role to that of a political



movement, and ignoring its other achievements, such as its educational and promotional function.

As far as avant-garde theatre was concerned, I think Wang Mo-lin's verdict was fair. Since the revolution succeeded, it was only natural that this 'theatre of action' should die out. After the 1990s, things started to change.

## **6.6. The third stage (1992-1999)**

### **6.6.1. New generation emerged**

After 1992 when a new parliament was elected for the first time, the curtain fell on the final act of the political theatre movement. Many little theatre groups either dissolved or stopped performing. (LI SHIH-MING, 1996) These changes indicated the end of a revolutionary era. Some of its members left and got into more mainstream theatres and institutions<sup>62</sup>, some managed to get state funding, and some went into politics.

Most political theatre activists concluded that the decline of little theatre was caused by disillusion and blamed themselves for being too naïve and idealistic in the late 1980s. (LIU CHING-MIN, 1999; LI HUAN-HSIUNG, 1999) However, Wang Mo-lin believed, there were actually two crucial reasons undermining the progress of political theatre:

Firstly, the National Theatre set up its own Experimental Theatre in 1990. This was the first move made by state apparatus to incorporate the radical force – little theatre. Secondly, theatre groups had only simple political ideas, could do no more than 'describe problems' or 'declare social injustice'. It was the fatal

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<sup>62</sup> Li Huan-hsiung is now the Senior Manager of the Classical Music Department of EMI, Taiwan; Chou I-ch'ang runs a DPP county's theatre; Liu Ching-min leads the U Theatre, which has become a multi-million dollar business.



weakness of Taiwan's theatre. They did not have their own political discourse or agenda. It was the lack of core ideologies that failed then. (WANG MO-LIN, 1999)

Between 1992 and 1994, most political theatre groups were inactive. It was a period of transition, full of self-doubt and self-examination. Even the most active theatre groups withdrew from performance or participating in events, and started to put more effort on artistic development, especially training. (CH'ËN MEI-MAO, 1996a) For example, the U theatre recuperated and focused on developing a new body language and training system; Left Bank started its research on Taiwan's untold history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. interviewed victims of the 228 Incident). Most of all, they shifted concern from political issues back to their original interest: theatrical form.

By the mid-1990s, apart from some political theatre groups that remained, this recuperation period offered a good chance for a new generation to emerge. These younger members of the theatre did not have any particular political belief or historical interest. They were mostly postmodernist, new-age youngsters who grew up with MTV, computers, video games and the internet. Their emergence brought e-generation culture into Taiwanese theatre.

Some called it the 'post-modern generation' (CHUNG MINGDER, 1992, 1994; CHI WEI-JAN, 1999; CH'ËN MEI-MAO, 2000a; LI HUAN-HSIUNG, 2000) indicating its multifaceted, fun-loving and non-uniform characteristics. Typical new groups were Taiwan Walker (started in 1991 by Ch'ên Mei-mao), Golden Bough Theatre (started in 1993 by Wang Rong-yu), and Xi banzi. There was no single issue that concerned every group. Their interests differed from one to another, including topics such as sexuality, music, Taiwan's indigenous culture, body language, theatre forms, feminist

issues, and community development. Different characteristics showed not only between groups, but also, sometimes within a group.

In general, there were three types of theatre at this stage: mainstream theatre (such as Performance Workshop, Pin-Fong, Godot), community theatre<sup>63</sup> (such as Sweet Corn Field in Hsinchu, Nanfeng in Kaohsiung, Tainan Jen in Tainan, and Gongjiao in Tait'ung), and little theatre (such as U, Golden Bough, and Taiwan Walker).

Compared with the first two, the little theatre was usually the most ignored category in state funding and least likely to be subsidised. However, the younger theatre generation held a much pragmatic attitude towards funding, which the theatre groups in previous periods would never adopt. They were better and quicker than the previous generations at joining in the resource-sharing mechanisms, and fighting for support.

For example, Taiwan Walker united some little theatre groups and formed a 'Taipei Little Theatre Alliance' in 1996. They were supported by Ch'ên Shui-bian, then Taipei City Mayor, and took over an unused property owned by the City Government, to set up Chungchêng Êrhfênchü 中正二分局, a small venue suitable for little theatre performances. The city government provided them with not only funding to refurbish the venue, but also part of the annual budget to run the place. (CH'ÊN MEI-MAO, 2000a)

Wang Mo-lin said, "The younger generation know how to play the 'game'. Once the

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<sup>63</sup> The emergence of community theatre owed much to the growing awareness of Taiwanese-ness. In 1991, the CCA introduced a new policy to encourage community arts in response to the suggestions given in the First National Culture Convention in 1990. (SU KUEI-CHIH, 1999) Because of its character of involving local people and reflecting local issues, theatre was chosen to improve the local cultural environment.



name of 'Alliance' was provided, the legitimacy created by representing a group of people enabled them to get funding in an open and aboveboard manner, and take a bigger share of the state resources."

The attitude of accepting funding has generally changed, even among the once-rebellious and politically critical little theatre groups. Li Huan-hsiung found the atmosphere within Left Bank had changed, when he directed two works<sup>64</sup> in 1998. It was a completely different experience from ten years before. He said:

The productions in 1998 cost ten times more than ten years ago; half of the budget was spent on personnel. In the past, we worked over half a year and no one thought about getting 'paid'. Material reward was never an issue. For the younger generation nowadays, it is different. There is no such thing as 'comradeship' or 'self-sacrifice' any more. (LI HUAN-HSIUNG, 1999)

#### 6.6.2. Indigenisation trend

Little theatre in the late 1980s became a term indicating a theatre style not only subverting old values, but also challenging theatre conventions. Both the performing method of realist theatre and the Beijing-accent Mandarin, inherited from *huaju* tradition, were challenged. Taiwan's theatre started to introduce indigenous elements. First, change was made in the language. Minnan yu was used in many theatre productions<sup>65</sup>. As well as this, theatre dealt with local issues and stories, and absorbed folk arts to increase local essence, or to emphasise locality.

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<sup>64</sup> These two plays were *Xugou feixing* 虛構飛行 (A Flight Over the Fictional Clouds) and *Xing zhi anyong 2000* 星之暗湧 2000 (Shimmering the Stars - Nights with Anarchist Ghosts from 1920s, Taipei). (LI HUI-NA, 2000)

<sup>65</sup> Using Minnan yu as the main dialogue began with Godot's *Taiwan First* (台灣第一) in 1989. Since then, many theatre groups have used Minnan yu in their plays. For example, New Cool Theatre 牛古演劇團, which evolved from the Pailingying (白鴿驚) Taiwanese Arts Research Group, dedicated themselves to promoting Taiwanese dialects. In addition, many other local languages were also used in theatre.



Most of all, the common character of the theatre at this stage was the transformation of body language. However, the impact of the body liberation was usually overlooked. Before the lift of martial law, many restrictions on the body were imposed, inhibiting people's body language, behaviour, and dress codes.

Many codes of conduct had been imposed as moral manners, either to inhibit or regulate daily behaviour, for example restrictions on students' hairstyles<sup>66</sup>, manners of daily life<sup>67</sup>, or the uniforms that civil servants<sup>68</sup> and members of the state apparatus were encouraged to wear (e.g. attendants in the banks or post office, or school teachers). Certain behaviour was classified as lascivious, such as shaking your legs, putting hands on other people's shoulders, flirting or eyeing people, raising voices or laughing loudly in public, making faces, or wearing revealing clothes. Those behaving in such a manner were described as loose in morals, or lacking education. Wang Mo-lin described the situation as the "body under martial law". (1996)

As a result, body language in Taiwanese arts was also inhibited and closely guided. For example, Dance Departments in higher education only taught Chinese ethnic dances to promote 'traditional Chinese culture' while Taiwan's aboriginal dances and folk dances were excluded.

The promotion of the outdated realist *huaju* form was another example. (WANG

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<sup>66</sup> In the past, students (before entering the university) had to follow hair regulations and wore dull and conservative uniforms. The boys needed to shave their heads, and all girls had a bob style, so short that it could not exceed the ears. As to student uniforms, girls' skirts should be longer than knee length, and boys were not allowed to wear flared trousers.

<sup>67</sup> Such regulations were promoted mostly through schools, such as *The necessary knowledge of the modern citizen's life* (promoted in 1968) or *Examples of proper manners of good citizenship* (promoted in 1970). (Also see Chapter 2)

<sup>68</sup> It was common for civil servants to wear a Zhongshan suit(中山裝) before martial law was lifted. The Zhongshan suit is a kind of Chinese tunic suit, which was favoured by Sun Yat-sen.

MO-LIN, 1996:106) *Huaju* format (both vocal and body languages, and acting method) dominated post-war Taiwanese theatre, film and television. It not only demonstrated how the Taiwanese should view themselves visually, but also influenced the ways in which the Taiwanese carried themselves physically, since there were no alternatives available.

According to Wang Mo-lin (1992, 1996: 101-117), the liberation of body in fact accelerated the liberation of mind. He believed, it was as important as political liberation. Especially because people hardly noticed that their bodies and behaviour were controlled and monitored by the state, the hidden politics of body language was even less noticeable.

The trend of searching for a Taiwanese body language emerged in the 1990s. This trend was mainly inspired by Grotowski's concept of 'poor theatre'<sup>69</sup> (CHÊN MEI-MAO, 1996a; HUANG HUI-MIN, 1997) and the growing Taiwanese awareness. U Theatre was the first theatre group trying to construct its subjectivity through a new body language. (LI HUAN-HSIUNG, 1999; WANG MO-LIN, 1996:108) Liu Ching-min studied with Grotowski in America in 1985, and was encouraged by Grotowski to find her own interpretation of Taiwanese body language. (LIU CHING-MIN, 1999)

In the early 1990s, U Theatre had spent a long time exploring all different sources

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Civil servants usually wore them on official occasions.

<sup>69</sup> What is a 'poor theatre'? In Grotowski's view, "theatre could exist without make-up, costume, décor, a stage even, lighting, sound effects, it could not exist without the relationship of actor and spectator. This essential act, this encounter between two groups of people... [is] called Poor Theatre." (ROOSE-EVANS. 1991:147) Because of his belief in the power of actors, the training technique in Grotowski's poor theatre was most demanding on performers. For him, "[the] actor is a high priest who creates the dramatic liturgy and ... guides the audience into the experience... Actors must learn to use his role as if it were a surgeon's scalpel to dissect himself." (ROOSE-EVANS. 1991:147)



from folk art, such as Taiwan Cheguxi 車鼓戲(cart-drum xi), Beiguan xi, Tai chi, bajiajiang 八家將<sup>70</sup>, and Zen contemplation. In 1993 they gradually developed a stylised performing method drawing inspiration from Cantonese Lion-dance drumming techniques. According to Ch'ên Mei-mao (1996a: 132), U's use of drumming was similar to a collective ritual ceremony. Not only did it easily place the performers into a state of trance, but also excited the audiences into a condition of ecstasy.

Inspired by Grotowski, many little theatre started to adopt folk art and traditional *xiqu* performing techniques, and indigenised Grotowski's training method. Taiwan Walker started to add Tai-chi, acrobatics, and a lot of elements of common people's entertainment<sup>71</sup> to its training. Golden Bough Theatre borrowed the performing method of Cheguxi and Gezaixi techniques; Gang-a Tsui Theatre transformed itself from learning *xiqu* techniques enriching its performing ability into a modern Nanguan group dedicated to this old *xiqu* form; Mei Deng Feng Theatre used local pensioners to play their own life stories; Tainan Jen Theatre, New Cool Theatre and Fun Theatre all emphasised the use of Minnan yu. (CCA; 2001c; CHÊN MEI-MAO, 1996a)

The rise of community theatre was another way of expressing Taiwanese awareness in theatre. In 1991, the CCA provided five local theatre groups NT\$ 2 million each to encourage professionalism. (SU KUEI-CHIH, 1999) Many theatre people from Taipei

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<sup>70</sup> Performers, with painted faces, paraded along with the touring Gods (mostly they accompany the Wufu Emperor 五福大帝, but sometimes the local god of the land 土地公 as well) acting as their guards in religious parades and ceremonies. They dress like generals, dancing and pacing in a formulated manner (*qixing bu* 七星步 the Plough steps), sometimes in a trance condition. (CHOU MING, 2000)

<sup>71</sup> Taiwan Walker deliberately used many elements of 'common people's entertainment'. For example, they recreated the *huache* show/strip show (see chapter 5 footnote 53) scene or local entertainment (usually mixed with erotic dance and gestures); imitated dodgy vendors in temple fairs selling medicines with sexy assistants and sexual performances; or sometimes



were attracted to the countryside to set up new groups in order to get funding<sup>72</sup>.

Although this scheme stopped in 1995<sup>73</sup>, community theatres had taken roots locally, and become an important part of the Taiwanese theatre scene. Indigenous culture and local concerns have now become easier to express.

All these changes in theatre indicated the urge to find a unique way to represent the Taiwanese. By drawing inspiration from folk arts and the *xiqu* tradition, and building up a Taiwan-centric mentality, Taiwan's theatre tried to construct Taiwanese subjectivity, and move Taiwan from its peripheral place to the centre.

### 6.6.3. Individualism and playfulness

The original concerns of the late-1980s – human rights, democracy, social justice, freedom of sexuality – were replaced by self-interest issues in the 1990s' theatre. Ma Sên criticised little theatre at this stage for "losing its grounding", and mocked it for "shocking for shock's sake". (1996:25-26) Huang Hui-min described their characteristic as "playful, jolly, funny and individualist". (1997:68) Li Huan-hsiung (1999) felt that the younger theatre generation could not open up new dimensions, nor add depth to discussions of issues such as sexuality, feminism, and Taiwanese identity. Instead, their works showed a more personal aspect. (LU HSIEN-MA, 1995) They did not care about 'reform', 'social justice', or any ideological issues. Chi Wei-jan (1999) concluded that what they were after was pure 'fun'. Because of this

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used working class language, etc. (CCA, 2001c)

<sup>72</sup> For example, Sweet Corn Field in Hsinchu was set up by theatre graduates from the National Institute of Arts; Tait'ung's Gongjiao Theatre was set up by Lanling veteran Cho Ming.

<sup>73</sup> Ch'ên Ch'i-nan, the deputy chairman of the CCA, objected to this scheme. He thought it encouraged refinement, which was not the CCA's intention. (SU KUEI-CHIH, 1999) Therefore, the scheme was replaced by the Community Construction Movement.

fun-loving nature, everything was like a carnival.

They especially liked joint performances (*chuanyan* 串演) to celebrate their differences and particular interests, such as homosexuality, bad taste, and specific cultural interests. (MA SÊN, 1996:25-26; HUANG HUI-MIN, 1997:66-69) In 1994, Tianmimi 甜蜜蜜 café theatre held the 'January, Little Theatre in Tianmimi' event. After this, little theatre festivals became a fashion, such as the Crown Mini Festival (1994); Man-man, Woman-woman, New Culture – Homosexual Special (1995); Fourth Grade Superstar Festival (1995); Taiwan Comrades<sup>74</sup> Festival (1995); and the Gengxin Festival (1997). They were described by Chi Wei-jan as having a fancy but hollow approach. "For the younger generation, holding performances was like organising *dabaibai* 大拜拜 (grand temple worship) and having orgies. The goal is to 'have fun'. Therefore, these events were big, flashy, vulgar, loud, yet empty." (CHI WEI-JAN, 1999)

Generally speaking, little theatre had lost its anti-institutional, non-mainstream, and counter-cultural position. (CHI WEI-JAN, 1999) The combination of carelessness, bad taste, sex and nudity, loose collage, and shock effect, demonstrated a seemingly post-modern chaos. Alongside the strong-growing indigenisation trend and fragmented foreign concepts, Taiwan's theatre showed a strange hybridity<sup>75</sup>. It was described as 'alternative', (HUANG HUI-MIN, 1997) 'post-modernist', (CHUNG

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<sup>74</sup> After the issue of homosexuality had been aired and gradually accepted around the early 1990s, homosexuals started to call themselves *tongzhi* 同志 – comrades.

<sup>75</sup> The concept and training method of 'Poor Theatre' became influential in Taiwan's theatre from the late 1980s. Alongside this revolution in body language, the post-modernist concept was also introduced by Chung Mingder in the mid-1980s. Taiwan's little theatre had freely and unselectively absorbed and used fragments of western theatre trends. Consequently, it showed an unintentional post-modern chaos in theatre works. Ma Sên (1994) called it "the second wave of theatre westernisation".



MINGDER, 1996a) or even as the "little-little theatre of individualism". ( WANG MO-LIN, 1996: 111-112)

## 6.7. Money matters

### 6.7.1. Incorporation conspiracy

The subtle changes of losing its anti-establishment nature and counter-cultural position had a lot to do with the construction of the state funding system. In Wang Mo-lin's view (1999), there were two stages of little theatre's incorporation by the state. When the National Theatre set up Experimental Theatre to attract avant-garde theatre<sup>76</sup>, Wang Mo-lin (1999) believed, it was a 'passive move' for little theatre to join in the establishment.

In October 1994, the Renjian Festival 人間劇展, held by the CCA and the *China Times*, was considered the watershed for the development of little theatre. (WANG MO-LIN, 1999; CHOU I-CH'ANG, 1999) It was the first time that the state apparatus and mainstream media had ever got involved in 'promoting little theatre'<sup>77</sup>. Wang Mo-lin (1999) saw it as the second stage of incorporation, and the key threshold of little theatre development.

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<sup>76</sup> Apart from the big theatre hall, the National Theatre also has a small black-box theatre, which was the best venue for experiments at that time. It started to hold an 'experimental theatre festival' in the early 1990s, which provided money, a venue, and all administrative support for experimental performances. Hence, it attracted applications from avant-garde groups.

<sup>77</sup> Five little theatre groups were invited: Critical Point Theatre Phenomenon, Taiwan Walker, Unicorn Performing Workshop 獨角社表演工作室, Stalker Theatre 密獵者劇團, and Big and Small Theatre (dada xiaoxiao Yiren guan 大小小藝人館).



Because of this festival, the issue of whether joining in and receiving funding denoted being incorporated within the state was debated intensely in cultural circles. Of course, all the involved groups denied that they had been incorporated. However, the 'incorporation conspiracy' (*shoubian lun* 收編論 - a conspiracy theory of being incorporated by the authorities and the establishment) had been raised. This particular festival was regarded as the beginning of little theatre's surrender to money and the state. Also, their enthusiastic participation indicated their desire to get into the mainstream, and their anxiety to be recognised.

During the festival period, many little theatre groups criticised those who joined in, and protested outside of the venues holding banners accusing participants of being incorporated and being bought off. Even so, after the avant-garde theatres experienced the sweetness of funding, many started to take initiatives to get into the system of their own accord. Wang Mo-lin (1996:115-116, 1999) described it as the desire to "*fuquan* 復權(regain the power)", because "little theatre did not want to be marginalised any more":

The same year, many avant-garde groups united with mainstream groups setting up the 'Arts Alliance' to protest the secretive procedures of setting up the National Culture and Arts Foundation (NCAF). They demanded an open and transparent process of state funding, and asked for their fair share and involvement. (WANG MO-LIN, 1996: 115) In Taiwan's Modern Theatre Symposium held in 1996, the issue of 'incorporated theatre' was still the most controversial and heated topic. Even in the interviews I conducted in 1999, people in little theatre were generally uneasy of talking about it. (LI HUAN-HSIUNG, 1999; CHOU I-CH'ANG, 1999; LIU CHING-MIN, 1999) It had become the most common accusation among theatre groups and a long

unresolved confusion shadowing the theatre community.

### **6.7.2. Culture network woven by the state**

In the late-1980s, the Legislators started to pay attention to state funding. According to Su Kuei-chih (1999), who was in charge of Parliament liaison, the most important issue for the Legislators was 'how the subsidies were given'. Therefore, it was not an issue of how much money was spent, or whether it was enough or not, but how the money was distributed. Consequently, decision-making within the funding mechanism became a political consideration, e.g. how to subsidise, who should decide, and what kind of art forms and ideologies were preferred.

The first official funding system was the *Scheme to Foster International Performing Groups* imposed by the CCA in 1992. According to Li Huan-hsiung's analysis, " It was originally designed to foster the mainstream theatre; in other words, to suppress the possible surviving space for little theatre... (and) squeeze little theatre out of the market by helping mainstream theatres to grow stronger. " (1999) It was true that all the subsidised groups from the 1980s to the early 1990s were established mainstream groups, such as Lanling, Performance Workshop, Cloud Gate, and Contemporary Legend Theatre Workshop. In 1995, the CCA changed the selecting criteria of the scheme, spanning all kinds of groups, including community theatre and avant-garde theatre. After this, it became possible for avant-garde theatre to get funding, even though its proportion was small.

Whenever little theatre faced the dilemma of taking funding, it was common to



self-justify by saying: "if T'ien Ch'i-yüan took it<sup>78</sup>; so could we". (CHI WEI-JAN, 1999)

It was an action that little theatre in the 1980s would never have taken. Suddenly, not only did the younger generation of theatre fight to get funded, but those once rebellious political theatre activists also strove for state resources.

The desire of *fuquan* (regaining the power) moulded the characteristic of little theatre after the mid-1990s. By the late 1990s, getting state funding became the norm. Instead of worrying about the accusation of 'being incorporated', the mainstream theatre ideology crept in and influenced how little theatre operated. Because of the desire to get funding, audience taste and official emphasis (such as: indigenous culture) became increasingly important. (WANG MO-LIN, 1999)

The construction of Taiwan's cultural apparatus and funding system was accomplished around the mid-1990s. (See Chapter 4.6.2.) The CCA and the NCAF were in charge of cultural resource distribution at central government level. Apart from the local cultural apparatus<sup>79</sup>, the Community Construction Movement also built a local cultural network nation-wide. Wang Mo-lin (1999) said with great suspicion, "Look at how perfectly the whole cultural system has been constructed and functions at every level. State apparatus has spread a dragnet from which there is no escape. How can anyone escape from this?"

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<sup>78</sup> T'ien Ch'i-yüan had a high profile in little theatre. When T'ien joined the Renjian Festival in 1994, he was severely criticised. However, he denounced the 'incorporation conspiracy'. In 1996, his group (Critical Point Theatre Phenomenon) was chosen by the CCA as the International Performing Group. Since T'ien's works had always been controversial and shocking, little theatre groups used his case to justify them taking money from the authorities.

<sup>79</sup> The Cultural Affairs Department of the Taiwan Provincial Government was set up on May 15<sup>th</sup> 1997. Its establishment was clearly stated as 'focusing on promoting and fostering Taiwan's culture and Taiwanese artists', (HONG MENG-CH'I, 1998; CULTURAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT, 1997:4-5) and also a deliberate act of cultural de-centralisation.



His observation was close to the fact. Artists became dependent on state funding. According to the CCA's survey, (LIN KU-FANG, 2000: 134) among all the listed excellent performing groups, 31.27% of their financial sources came from government funding. Box office incomes only accounted for half (54.06%) of their income.

### **6.7.3. Money and recognition**

By the end of the 1990s, little theatre generally felt that there was no reason to 'refuse' what they deserved to receive. Especially after the state subsidy structure was built, little theatre felt that they had finally earned their recognition and funding. Most groups believed that taking subsidies did not mean that they endorsed the dominant ideology or were controlled by the state. (LIU CHING-MIN, 1999; CHOU I-CH'ANG, 1999) However, their uneasiness about accepting funding was shown, by 'finger-pointing' at others, and emphasising their independence.

For example, Liu Ching-min said: " It is government's responsibility to support the arts... I have never felt that I have to compromise what I did or wanted to do... (and) they cannot 'touch' us any more, not like the old days. " (LIU CHING-MIN, 1999) This kind of attitude was shared by many (such as Chou I-ch'ang, Li Huan-hsiung, and Chi Wei-jan). They said that the state had never interfered since the 1990s, but rather only provided money "for the sake of public good". (CHOU I-CH'ANG, 1999) "If there was any impact on the theatre, I would say it was only financial, not ideological." (LI HUAN-HSIUNG, 1999) Chi Wei-jan also agreed, "The state had no influence on the theatre. The rule of the (resource-distribution) game is 'I take the money and forget all about it'. " (CHI WEI-JAN, 1999)

Apparently, they all felt that little theatre did not care what the authorities thought and official opinions would not affect their works either. As to my questions about indirect interference, their replies were the same: "I have never experienced any." (LI HUAN-HSIUNG, 1999; CHOU I-CH'ANG, 1999; CHI WEI-JAN, 1999; LIU CHING-MIN, 1999)

In contrast, the younger generation actually embraced the funding system. For example, the process of setting up Chungchêng Êrhfêrchü, an old property belonging to the Taipei City Government that was turned into a theatre venue. In order to gain support and finance to run the venue, Ch'ên Mei-mao, the chairman of Taipei Little Theatre Alliance, had communicated extensively with city government officials through personal emails. Between 1998 and 1999, he had written 6 to the Mayor Ma Ying-chiu, 9 to the head of Culture Bureau Lung Ying-t'ai 龍應台, and 8 to the head of Government Information Bureau Wu Huei-mei 吳慧美. (CH'ÊN MEI-MAO, 2000b) In these emails, Ch'ên Mei-mao not only pleaded forcefully for money and government support, but also invited them, quite humbly, to attend performances and events held in the venue.

Another typical attitude of the younger generation towards funding was demonstrated by the young director Hong Hong 鴻鴻. He emphasised in a conference that the way out for today's little theatre was "to attack and capture (the resources)" rather than "to reject and scorn". (WU CH'ÜAN-CH'ÊNG, 1996:265)

In contrast to its previous rebellious image, little theatre after the mid-1990s appeared to be "grateful" to the authorities and was proud of being subsidised. For



example, newly selected as an Excellent Performing Group in 1999, Xi banzi Theatre was thrilled, and claimed on the CCA web-site *Cyberstage: Taiwan* that being selected was "an honour". Furthermore, "Xi banzi was finally recognised by the CCA in 1999 for our long-term endeavour, and won the Excellent Performing Group status... This honour encouraged us to have an even higher sense of responsibility and enthusiasm in promoting theatrical art." (CCA, 2001c)

Among all the theatre veterans, the most interesting example was Wang Mo-lin. In many of his books, articles and interviews, he had been critical of the possibility of little theatre losing its independence. However, Wang joined in the game in 1998 for his production *Tsou, Oedipus*<sup>80</sup> and claimed that he was 'playing the system'. (LI HUAN-HSIUNG, 1999) Although the others jokingly mocked him as 'losing his virginity', he was genuinely proud of 'playing the system' when I interviewed him.

My production has set up a model for cultural exchanges between two sides of Taiwan Strait. I took money from both governments and I feel great. Originally, the performance was only staged on the mainland. It was Lin Ch'êng-chih [then chairwoman of the CCA] who wanted to show it in Taiwan as 'part of her cultural achievement'. I did not ask for it; they came to me. It was different from the other productions that relied totally on state subsidies... However, Lin was clever to use me -- the most righteous artist. (WANG MO-LIN, 1999)

Even though some suspected a hidden agenda behind official subsidies, no one was prepared or willing to give them up. There was only a small proportion of people who were aware of, and anxious about, the danger of taking subsidy. Even so, they could not afford to lose out since "everyone else was taking advantage of the system". (LI HUAN-HSIUNG, 2000)

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<sup>80</sup> "Tsou, Oedipus" combined the story of Oedipus with the myth of the Tsou tribe 曹族 (one of nine tribes of Taiwan's aborigines) and was played by aboriginal actors from two sides of the Taiwan Strait. It was staged first in Beijing from October 4<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> 1997. In 1999, the CCA bought the programme and put it on at the National Theatre.



However, when state funding shifted its emphasis in 2001 to 'professionalism' (in other words; commercial theatre), they changed their tone.

#### **6.7.4. Who gets the money and why?**

Before a complete state funding system was finally constructed in the mid-1990s, the case-by-case, patchy state subsidies of the past were given according to ideological considerations. Therefore, before the little theatre was politically correct<sup>81</sup> and legitimised as 'avant-garde theatre', they were regarded as 'trouble-makers'. Su Kuei-chih explained: "Because little theatre seldom had written scripts, it was difficult to judge whether subsidy should be given or not... The best principle at that time was to 'ignore' little theatre by encouraging productions with written scripts and a reputation of 'healthy' and righteous ideology." (1999)

Because of the uncertainty, little theatre seldom got subsidy, even though they were not politically critical. While the political atmosphere loosened in the 1990s, the cultural apparatus had also made a U-turn on their policy and emphasised 'indigenisation'. They started to notice the influence of little theatre and wanted to encourage the 'righteous groups' and 'correct ideologies' that could fit in this new focus. In order to win little theatre over into state control, the state funding system became better organised and more open. This move made the state increasingly important, becoming the biggest sponsor for little theatre.

The distribution of state resources manifested the direction and focus of state cultural

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<sup>81</sup> Little theatre in the late 1980s advocated free speech, democracy, social justice, and human rights. In the 1990s, the era embracing political freedom and celebrating Taiwanese

policy. No matter how open and fair the state funding system seemed to be, there would always be selection involved. Once there was a selection, there would be value judgement and ideological preference. Consequently, the kind of theatre and style that was most likely to get funding not only demonstrated the official preference at that time, but also determined the trend of productions seen in the theatre. For example, the selection criteria of the *Scheme to Foster International Performing Groups*<sup>82</sup> showed the official attitude of using the performing arts to explore diplomatic relationships.

Originally, the scheme was set up to foster mainstream groups representing Taiwan internationally. Among eight performing groups, there were only three theatres – one *huaju* group (Zhonghua Hansheng Theatre), one mainstream theatre (Performance Workshop), and one little theatre (U Theatre). Most of the selected groups were well established (such as Cloud Gate Dance Company). This situation lasted for 3 years. When the scheme was modified to include more groups, the number of theatre groups increased to five, most of which were still mainstream theatre (Performance Workshop, Pin-Fong, Paper Windmill, and newly emerged community theatre Tait'ung Theatre). The U was the only 'little theatre'<sup>83</sup> on the list.

In fact, from 1992 to 2000, the number of theatre groups had increased almost five times, from 3 groups in 1992 to 14 in 2000. The number of little theatre groups did

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awareness, the ideology that little theatre advocated had become politically correct.

<sup>82</sup> The *Scheme to Foster International Performing Groups* was the most important and influential funding system in Taiwan's cultural environment supporting artists on a long-term basis. (LIN KU-FANG, 2000) Later, because of the shift of official emphasis, the scheme has been modified three times. However, it remains one of the most important schemes fostering the arts. (Also see Chapter 4.6.2.)

<sup>83</sup> The U Theatre started as a little theatre group and worked hard on its method for training the body. However, over the years, the scale and business of the U grew dramatically. For many little theatre groups, whether or not the U should be categorised as 'little theatre' was a

not grow with the increasing budget or the growing number of subsidised groups. Because of their small box office returns and less commercial approach, their need for financial support was desperate. However, money was put in mainstream theatre rather than little theatre. Even though little theatre was regarded as the 'pioneer' in theatre aesthetics, (CHUNG MINGDER, 1992; WANG MO-LIN, 1992) it was obvious that little theatre was not the priority in cultural policy.

For example, over the years, the budget for the scheme and the number of performing groups grew many times. However, not only did the meagre budget for little theatre go mostly to the U Theatre, but also the money spent on little theatre was actually reduced year after year. In 1995, when the scheme opened up more opportunities for more groups and styles, there was still only one little theatre (U theatre) on the list, taking up less than 1/4 (24.21%) of the total theatre budget. (LIN KU-FANG, 2000: 107-111)

What is more, the U had already become part of the establishment, and thus its status as a little theatre was in dispute. (CH'ËN MEI-MAO, 1996a) In 1996, the Critical Point Theatre Phenomenon<sup>84</sup> was selected for funding. It was the first time that little theatre had been awarded this 'status'. Symbolically, it was the beginning of the little theatre joining in state funding voluntarily, and of the state apparatus accepting little theatre into its domain. (WANG MO-LIN, 1999)

In 1998, when the scheme was changed to encourage 'excellence', twelve theatre

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disputed issue. (CH'ËN MEI-MAO, 1996b; CHI WEI-JAN, 1999; LI HUAN-HSIUNG, 1999)

<sup>84</sup>T'ien Ch'i-yüan's new work '*Bai Shui*' 白水 (White Water) gained him international fame in 1994. Because of that, his group, Critical Point Theatre Phenomenon was included on the list. However, he died of AIDS in 1996 and the subsidy was stopped in 1997 because of the



groups were on the list, including five from mainstream theatre, three from community theatre, two from children's theatre, and two little theatre groups. Out of NT\$ 20.2 million that were spent on the theatre, little theatre took up only 15.34% of theatre budget (9.9% of the budget going to U and 5.45% to Golden Bough). In 1999 and 2000, the little theatre category included three groups: U, Golden Bough, and Xi banzi. However, excluding the well-established U, less than 10 % of the whole theatre budget was spent on little theatre.

Many little theatre groups complained about the privilege of the U and claimed that it was not a 'little theatre' group. (CHI WEI-JAN, 2000; CH'ÊN MEI-MAO, 1996b) It was criticised for taking the little theatre quota of state funding and for turning into a 'cultural model'<sup>85</sup> similar to Cloud Gate and Contemporary Legend. Since 1993, the U willingly joined in many state celebrations such as the National Day parade, and the Presidential inauguration ceremony. Hence, its close connection with the CCA and the state became even more problematic.

Why was the U chosen as the cultural model? It was a decision based on political considerations. Its artistic achievement was recognised by its counterparts<sup>86</sup>, but most importantly, its artistic pursuit was timely<sup>87</sup>. The CCA started to fund their *Su* 溯 (Tracing Back) project around 1989. It was at first described by its artistic director Liu

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company's "uncertain future development". (LIN KU-FANG, 2000:135)

<sup>85</sup> The goal of the scheme was to foster artists to represent Taiwan internationally. U was chosen when the scheme started in 1992. The chosen groups were considered able to present modern Taiwanese culture. Eventually, the scheme tried to "improve the diplomatic relationship as a whole". (LIN KU-FANG, 2000: 9-10)

<sup>86</sup> Chi Wei-jan (1999) thought that U had strong sense of 'de-colonialism'; Huang Hui-min (1997: 87-88), Wang Mo-lin (1996), Ch'ên Mei-mao (1996), and Chou I-ch'ang (1999) all held U's artistic achievement in high esteem.

<sup>87</sup> Since 1989, U had endeavoured to absorb the quintessence of folklore and religious rituals of Taiwan, China and Southeast Asia. Their indigenous origin and ritual-like character have created a new style in Taiwanese performing methods. (CH'ÊN MEI-MAO, 1996a: 1131- 132)

Ching-min as a project to "find the modern Chinese body language". (CHANG BI-YU, 1989c) After two years of *Su* project, the CCA selected the U as one of the 'international performing groups'. It was chosen not because of its unique training method and gradually increasing reputation, but for its emphasis on the search for 'a modern Chinese body language'.

Around the mid-1990s, the U started to change track and its goal was modified to 'search for a Taiwanese body language'. (LIU CHING-MIN, 1999)

As far as the state apparatus was concerned, the U was worth this investment. Not only were its training methods based on Taiwanese and Chinese folk arts, its focus on 'Taiwanese body language' also fitted in the current political trend. Hence, it was no surprise that U was the favourite 'little theatre' group, chosen to represent Taiwan. After many years' state funding, U had in fact developed into a multi-million Dollar business, which did not fit the 'little theatre' definition any more.

Another typical example of why state funding was given to little theatre was Left Bank's production *Zhang Qilang* 張七郎 in the 'Experimental Theatre Festival' of 1992. It was the only production for which Left Bank received full funding in fifteen years. Left Bank was told that the production was funded fully because it accidentally fitted in the theme of that year – 'the Year for rehabilitating the 228 Incident'. (LI HUAN-HSIUNG, 1999) Little wonder that little theatre protested that state resources were extremely thin on the ground, unless there was some political consideration that would be 'useful' for the authorities.

Although the funding list might vary each year, the tendency of funding mainstream,



conventional, and established groups remained. In addition, the 'Taiwanisation' trend also took its toll on the cultural environment and became the dominant element in funding criteria. Consequently, within a few years, the number of community theatre groups<sup>88</sup> increased faster than little theatre.

No matter how small a portion that little theatre took from state funding, compared with mainstream art forms and groups, the degree of its influence was much greater. Even meagre subsidies could make substantial differences. However, very little money was spent on little theatre. "Most funding was given to 'established companies' - mainly mainstream and commercially sustainable theatre. I cannot see the need to subsidise them." (CHOU I-CH'ANG, 1999)

According to Ch'ên Mei-mao (2000a), little theatre had always been treated unfairly in the system. On average, less than 5% of the CCA's annual budget was available to little theatre in the 1990s, the same as twenty years ago. (WU CH'ÜAN-CH'ÊNG, 1996a: 262, 265)

## **6.8. Transition to the fourth stage**

### **6.8.1. Commercialisation**

It seemed to many of my interviewees that the idea of possible state interference or control was absurd. However, their fear of commercial interference was much more strongly acknowledged.

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<sup>88</sup> Community theatre was encouraged even before the Community Construction Movement was launched. There was one community group (Tait'ung Theatre) in the Scheme to Foster



Liu Ching-min (1999) admitted that she could ignore official opinions, but not the pressure from private sponsors. "Accepting governmental subsidy is different from taking money from the private sector. Without any doubt, we need to take their opinions and needs into account." Chi Wei-jan (1999) also warned, "a greater threat is hidden behind the seemingly carefree surface. Both private sponsorship and the speculation of audience taste could have undermined their creativity and independence. Commercialism has become the real threat for Taiwanese theatre."

Originally, audiences' reaction and box office returns were the two major concerns for the mainstream theatre. However, these concerns have gradually become the priority for almost all theatre groups in the 1990s. The pressure of boosting box office income, attracting audiences, and gaining recognition was immense, especially for new theatre groups. Severe competition within Taiwan's limited market worsened the situation. Many groups adopted marketing strategies in order to compete for relatively small audiences. (CHI WEI-JAN, 1999) As a result, consideration of how to attract audiences became more important than aesthetic pursuits. For example, what did audiences want from a performance? Who were the most likeable performers? What was the hottest topic addressed in this production that would attract audiences? What were pleasures that the audience had in theatre that would not be gained from watching TV or cable?

Searching answers, every group developed its own promotional style and techniques. Performing Workshop formulated a combination of farce, famous comedians, and heavy PR campaigns to achieve record box office; Pin-Fong, Green Ray and Godot

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International Performing Groups in 1995. By 2000, the number grew to four.

theatre groups set up subsidiary groups, in order to tour around remote areas, perform cheaply, and make their names known island-wide (LU CHIEN-YING, 1999); Green Ray held seminars on the internet for their fan club (CHOU HUI-LING, 1999b: 30); Paper Mill held children's theatre workshops in order to foster a basic fan club from an early age, and extended its business as a production company organising official festivals and events. (LI YÜANG-FÊNG, 2001)

Amongst all, Godot Theatre was considered the most ruthless in terms of the tactics it adopted to expand audiences. It created its own web-site, set up an on-line box office and chat-room. Furthermore, Godot even let the audiences vote for the outcome of the new production and choose their favourite actors. (CHI WEI-JAN, 1999; LI HUAN-HSIUNG, 1999)

For many theatre managers, fund-raising and private sponsorship were important, and writing proposals was a basic survival skill. The senior Gezaixi group director Liu Chung-yüan (LIN KU-FANG, 2000: 144) complained about this 'proposal culture' that dominated the Taiwanese theatre community. Lacking the ability to present a well-written proposal would be fatal in terms of getting funding.

### 6.8.2. Waging war

When the DPP President Ch'ên Shui-bian took office in May 2000, he assigned pianist Ch'ên Yu-hsiu and Lo Wên-chia<sup>89</sup> to chair the CCA, in charge of constructing

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<sup>89</sup> The CCA chairwoman Ch'ên Yu-hsiu 陳郁秀 was a DPP member and the wife of the DPP Legislator Lu Hsiu-I 盧修一. The Deputy Chairman Lo Wên-chia was the leader of the student movement in the NTU in the late 1980s. During the 1990s, Lo became Ch'ên Shui-bian's personal advisor and spokesman during Ch'ên's Taipei mayor tenure. Their appointment



a new culture for the new government. The first major cultural policy that the new government imposed was to modify the funding scheme, encouraging the professional management of artistic groups.

After five months' consultation, the *Scheme to Foster Performing Groups* was announced in October 2000 and took away the emphasis on 'excellence'. Instead, the purpose of the new scheme, according to the CCA deputy chairman Lo Wên-chia, was to foster a professional performing arts environment and its artists. The selection criteria of the scheme stipulated the companies must have at least three years history, one artistic director, at least have 3 full-time employees, and the ability to have at least one production and certain number of performances each year... (CCA, 2001d)

When the scheme was announced, some expressed their worries, because the little theatre, which was operated on the basis of comradeship rather than being managerially-oriented, would lose out in this new scheme. (CHI WEI-JAN, 2001) Their worries were proven correct.

The CCA announced the chosen groups of the new scheme in January 2001. Its total budget increased from less than NT\$ 83 million in 2000, to over NT\$120 million in 2001. The number of subsidised groups also rose from 65 to 71. In theory, artists should have been very happy. In reality, little theatre was totally defeated. It angered the little theatre community and stirred up debates.

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(especially Lo's) demonstrated the importance of cultural affairs for the new government. Lo left the CCA in February 2001 to run for Legislative election. Dr. Wu Mi-ch'a 吳密察, assistant professor in the History Department of the NTU, took over. He was also an active member in the DPP and the Taiwan Association of University Professors (台灣教授協會).



What was going wrong? Out of 35 theatre applications, there were 16 theatre groups chosen, mainly mainstream commercial theatre. Even the most favoured U was almost excluded. The convener of theatre adjudicators, Ma Sên, announced at the press conference that, the result was not satisfying even for the adjudicators themselves. However, they had to follow the criteria set by the CCA. His analysis of why little theatre was left out was that the new regulations placed priority on each group's 'managerial ability' (60% of the assessment). Moreover, he implied that the little theatre had low artistic standard (40% of the total mark) which failed them in the process. (TS'AI JO-CHIN, 2001a) This sort of comments – little theatre was crude and poor – was a familiar criticism from the theatre people who had a traditional drama background. (HOU CH'I-P'ING, 1992; OU YING-CH'UAN, 1989)

This remark stirred up a heated debate. (YÜ KUO-HUA, 2001; CHI WEI-JAN, 2001; MA SÊN, 2001; TS'AI JO-CHIN, 2001b; CHUNG CH'IAO, 2001) Many condemned the adjudicators for being prejudiced and argued that they had never seen any little theatre work. In addition, their definition of 'artistic standard' was questionable, because most adjudicators came from a similar background and had a similar 'preference' for mainstream theatre. It was obvious that little theatre would be marginalised and driven out of the framework of 'resource distribution'.

Moreover, the question of 'how the adjudicators were chosen' was raised. Since most of them came from a literary background, many had strong connections with the *huaju* tradition. Worst of all, one of the adjudicators, Huang Ying-hsiung 黃英雄, was the head of a newly chosen group (Gengxin Experimental Theatre). (CHI WEI-JAN, 2001) Little wonder that little theatre groups were furious about their biased position and challenged their professional judgement. After being criticised, Ma Sên

complained that it was unfair to attack him, "it is nonsense for them to blame the referee for losing the ball game". (MA SÊN, 2001)

Finally, the angry protests of the little theatre pressed the CCA to hold a meeting to explain itself, to apologise and to pacify little theatre by offering other funding opportunities. Chairwoman Ch'ên Yu-hsiu also promised that the CCA would reconsider the scheme the following year. (TS'AI JO-CHIN, 2001b)

The dispute between reactionary forces and the young radical theatre groups developed further into a debate on theatre aesthetics that is still on-going. The little theatre groups united within a few days and petitioned the CCA, pressing Ch'ên Yu-hsiu to reconsider the scheme. More importantly, it triggered a heated debate causing little theatre to rethink its counter-cultural role, and the meaning of 'little theatre'. After furious email discussion and media debate, members of the little theatre proposed to rename themselves the 'micro theatre', in order to redefine their anti-establishment position. (WEI YING-CHÜAN, 2001) An aesthetic battle was declared against the dominant and mainstream theatre tradition, as was the need to examine its own tendency to move gradually towards conformity and incorporation.

## **Summary**

The development of contemporary theatre in Taiwan embodied the change in the cultural environment and manifested the complicated love-hate relationship between artists and the state. On the one hand, because the theatre responded to cultural policy enthusiastically, governmental promotion, including funding and official recognition, could directly influence and indirectly encourage the development of



certain artistic trends, art forms, and styles. For example, because money was poured into communities, community theatre boomed as a result. On the other hand, external factors such as political and social conditions, cultural change, or bottom-up protests, could also pressurise official policy to change. For example, the antagonism towards China re-ignited with the 1994 Qiandao Lake Incident, and was intensified by the missile threat in 1995. Consequently, the emphasis of cultural policy shifted swiftly from a China-centrism to indigenisation within two years.

Since the state funding system was set up, it was obvious that only two kinds of theatre were subsidised: the mainstream theatre that most policy-makers could recognise and make sense of, and the non-mainstream theatre that scholars such as Dr. Wu Jing Jyi, Dr. Chung Mingder and Dr. Ma Sên recommended as 'artistic' or intellectual. The selection criteria of state funding demonstrated what kinds of theatre were officially approved and supported. Apart from the populist approach of the mainstream theatre, the selection of the academics showed another bias. These scholars were mostly established drama theorists, or professors in theatre departments. Their 'selection' manifested their literary preferences and tastes. Their position enabled them to reproduce their values and reinforce discourses that they proposed and disseminated.

In the cultural circuit, cultural regulation is an official attempt to produce meanings. By funding or supporting selected artists, the state encouraged cultural communities to produce officially desired art works and to reinforce the representation system that the authorities wanted to create and maintain. It was not only whom and what they chose that mattered, but more importantly, what the authorities did not choose and why. It was a subtle trap, which was invisible to most people.



Once the funding network was constructed, the cultural apparatus gained more power to decide what kinds of meaning could be produced. Compared with the totalitarian control in the 1950s and 1960s, this was much more subtle and indirect, but more effective and yet invisible.

Because cultural policy has become so important in formulating the 'meanings' that no modern state can do without, the cultural apparatus becomes the best patron for the arts, more tolerant and less demanding than commercial sectors. However, the sudden change of funding regulations in 2001, the *Scheme to Foster Performing Groups*, was a good example of how the state tried to influence the meaning production process through funding. When the state apparatus set up its own 'artistic standard' and official priorities, artists finally realised that state cultural control was always there.

All interviewees scorned the suggestion that they might be influenced by the authorities. Most of them did not give a second thought about why they were chosen to be funded, why the others were not, and what were the differences between them. The 'selection' made between different values, ideologies, and styles was a subtle but conscious process of choice and exclusion. In fact, all cultural policies – giving funding and recognition, setting up funding systems and cultural institutions, encouraging certain kinds of art forms and styles, and giving official recognition – could have a crucial impact on framing the cultural framework. Once a group or artist was funded, it was difficult to avoid conforming to or taking up official values both directly and indirectly.

Of course, cultural communities were not simply passive receivers of top-down policies. For example, the development of theatre from the mid-1980s demonstrated its ability to challenge the official line, to advocate social and political change, and to initiate actions to make a difference. Apart from the example of the political theatre movement, the joint protest against the new *Scheme to Foster Performing Groups* in 2001 also displayed little theatre's power to subvert top-down policy, and resumed their critical role.

Through the actions of joint protest and making alliances, little theatre learnt to use its potential power to challenge the official line. After their forceful campaign, little theatre pressurised the authorities to reconsider the scheme, or at least, prevented the authorities from imposing policy wilfully. Their successful experience of networking and cooperating on the internet empowered them to rejoin the struggle for cultural hegemony and reconsider their course. At this moment, a war to seize the right to interpret and establish Taiwanese modern theatre aesthetics is being waged, a fight to win discourse in theatre.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this research, I have been concerned with the politics of cultural policy, and how the processes of meaning production have influenced our sense of belonging, shaped our values, and regulated our conduct and ways of life. Through the examination of how culture was regulated in Taiwan, I looked not only at the cultural change in Taiwan, but also intended to gain a general understanding of the role of cultural policy in the culture-building process.

During the course of this research, I have noticed that similar changes in cultural policy and a greater official emphasis on constructing culture and cultural identity have also appeared elsewhere, e.g. in the UK. Cultural regulation has become a crucial public arena for different political camps to seize hegemony and win the right to write culture. Although this thesis is concerned with the relationship between cultural policy and identity change in Taiwan, I also found a universality in Taiwan's case.

This research has two aspects. One concerns the shifting Taiwanese identity, and the other, the politics of cultural policy and its potential on culture building. Before this research, Taiwan's cultural change and volatile identity crisis in the 1990s had never been examined. Issues such as how cultural hegemony was gained and how the indigenisation trend came about, were never tackled. The changing nature of cultural policy and its possibility to produce meaning had also been overlooked.

Before the 1980s, a centralised military regime in Taiwan was effectively maintained by stringent cultural control, a forceful education system, and successful economic



development. People in Taiwan were taught to believe that they represented the 'true Chinese' and that the ROC was the only legitimate Chinese government. It was not until the 1980s that the old KMT ideology was challenged, and the search for Taiwanese identity became an important issue for the greater majority of people in Taiwan.

As communication across the Strait increased, the gap between 'us' and 'them' became obvious. Even so, the majority of people in Taiwan ten years ago still perceived themselves as 'Chinese'. (See Appendix 1) The situation started to change in 1994, when for the first time the figure of those who identified themselves as 'Taiwanese' outnumbered those considering themselves 'Chinese'<sup>1</sup>.

In the debates on Taiwanese identity during the early 1990s, the most common issue was 'who are the Taiwanese'. Many debates argued a notion of Taiwanese identity on the basis of race, history, political regime, geographical connection, and culture. It is, in fact, constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. In other words, cultural identity is 'a positioning' rather than 'an essence'. (HALL, 1990) Because some took Taiwanese identity as 'a fixed origin', (CHANG MAO-KUI, 1993) searching for the same fixed identity was an impossible task. The ever-changing nature of cultural identity was overlooked in this debate, and the possibility of its being culturally constructed was also ignored.

Theoretically, this ever-changing positioning can be influenced, modified or even

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<sup>1</sup> This number of people who identified themselves as 'Taiwanese' had increased dramatically. It outnumbered the group who considered themselves 'Chinese' in 1994 for the first time, and soon became the dominant group in 1996. (See Appendix 1)

reconstructed. It is exactly the complexity and flexibility of 'cultural identity' that makes the debate on Taiwanese identity complicated and confusing. During an unpredictable and uncertain period such as the 1990s, Taiwan's cultural policy could have played a crucial role in maintaining the old ideology, or constructing a new identity and dominant discourse. Yet, the KMT government failed to address this issue or to make use of the rising opportunity of the transition period. In 2000, the KMT lost not only cultural hegemony, but also political leadership.

This reversal of cultural identity in the mid-1990s not only demonstrated how a new identity was constructed, but also displayed the shift of 'position' and the replacement of different versions of narratives of the past. This journey of searching for and building Taiwanese identity became an indigenous cultural revolution. Consequently, it triggered the overturn of old values and reversed cultural hegemony. Although the focus of this research was placed on cultural policy, the purpose was to find out how change in culture came about. There are several factors that I identified that led to identity reversal and the overthrow of old discourse.

Firstly, cultural change usually takes place in a period of crisis, especially where external hostility is a factor. Under the threat of crisis, people would be most likely to act as an entity, uniting under a shared goal and fighting against whatever the 'enemy' might seem to be. This happened several times in Taiwanese history. For example, because of the military threat from the PRC in the 1950s and 60s, the KMT successfully implemented thought control to reinforce national security and launched the anti-Communist campaign to unite people in Taiwan.

When Taiwan suffered diplomatic setbacks and international isolation in the 1970s, a



trend of searching for cultural roots emerged. Taking advantage of this, the KMT government encouraged this trend to reinforce Chinese cultural roots, and took it as the ideological cement with which to build 'national confidence'. The impact of the Qiandao Lake Incident (1994) and the PRC's missile threat (1995-96) was another example. Not only did the support for the old China-centric ideologies subside dramatically within two years (1994-96), but also Taiwanese awareness thrived. In response, cultural policies since the mid-1990s emphasised indigenous culture.

Secondly, big changes that come about in culture rely mainly on changing meaning in the cultural circuit, a process of establishing a new discourse and becoming dominant. In the struggle of gaining the power to produce meanings, both intellectuals and the education system play an indispensable role because of their involvement in producing knowledge and reproducing values. Since knowledge not only produces meanings, but also regulates social practice, constrain behaviour, and constructs 'a regime of truth', it is the site that all social forces strive to occupy and control.

In Taiwan's case, the process of Taiwanisation in the 1990s was a successful example of producing new meanings in the struggle for cultural hegemony. Before martial law was lifted in 1987, anything related to Taiwan had always been taken as subordinate or inferior to China, and the issue of Taiwanese independence was an inconceivable taboo. In the mid-1980s, huge change in Taiwanese political, economical and social spheres had fundamentally shaken and challenged the old KMT discourse. An opportunity for establishing a new representation system arose. However, the cultural apparatus could not cope with the change, nor take the chance to transform the once dominant discourse. The CCA only maintained its daily routines,



and missed the opportunity to create new meanings and grasp hegemony at the crucial moment in the late 1980s.

Although intellectuals started to question the KMT's authoritarian rule and demand Taiwanese independence as early as in the 1960s and 70s, it was not until the mid-1980s that KMT ideology was seriously challenged. Academic advocacy for political reform and the intense debate over 'Taiwanese identity' among intellectuals laid the foundations for a discourse of 'Taiwanese subjectivity' to emerge. When the old discourse was cast into doubt and a new opportunity for change appeared, in contrast to the inactivity of the cultural apparatus, competing discourses fought on and prevailed.

Through the heated debates on Taiwanese identity, a new representational system was created and gradually accepted as 'true'. This new 'regime of truth' overturned old values, changed China-centric identities, pressurised policy U-turns, and shook the old political hegemony. Hence, the issue of Taiwanese independence has become a political agenda, the China-centric focus in all government policy has been removed, and Taiwanisation has become politically correct and the norm in every aspect of life. Even the KMT openly flaunted its Taiwanisation tendency in policy-making. Two competing camps seemed to voice a similar message, and tried to seize the hegemony by claiming the ownership of 'indigenisation'. Finally, the indigenisation trend has become the hegemonic discourse, and changed how Taiwanese identify themselves accordingly.

In order to overturn the old discourse and popularise the new, other than the advocacy and elaboration of the academics, the education system is equally

important for the dissemination and reproduction of this 'regime of truth'. Therefore, calls for educational reform and changes in national curriculum are made to reinforce this new discourse. I believe that all the changes in Taiwan in the last decade were made possible because of the profound involvement of intellectuals. After several decades' struggle, they finally seized the power to produce meaning and helped the opposition win the hegemonic struggle with the help from the educational system and intellectuals to reproduce the regime of truth.

Thirdly, political hegemony can only be won when the cultural hegemony is tightly grasped. From a sociological point of view, culture is inscribed by, and always operated within, the play of power. Moreover, meaning and meaningful practice are constructed within discourse. Before seizing political hegemony, in order to foster national-popular consensus and popularise it as 'common sense', the battle of cultural hegemony must first be won.

For example, the Opposition in Taiwan started to advocate indigenisation and Taiwanese awareness in the 1970s. However, it was not until the communication across the Strait increased after 1987, that people in Taiwan started to sense their 'otherness' to people in China and form a consensus (of indigenisation) in the 1990s. Consequently, this awakening of Taiwanese consciousness and the 1996 missile threat accelerated the Taiwanisation trend. This change of identity not only pressurised the authorities to comply with the indigenisation trend, but also supported the DPP in the presidential election to become the ruling party in 2000.

Another example of winning cultural hegemony was the cooperation between the Opposition and political theatre. Before the strife between mainstream and



non-mainstream factions ended in 1993, in my view, the battlefield had already been cleared, and prepared by the political theatre movement in the late 1980s. Little theatre raised questions, broke taboos, inspired spectators, raised awareness of Taiwanese consciousness, and acted as the vanguard for the political struggle between two competing discourses of identity.

Fourthly, I believe that Taiwanese cultural policy in the 1990s has been transformed to a form of 'subjective regulation'<sup>2</sup>, especially under the impact of globalisation. In contrast to its dominant and coercive nature in the past (such as censorship, restrictions on mass media, standardised textbooks, language policy), cultural policy since the 1990s has made state control seem insignificant. The cultural apparatus made alliances by including different political interests, luring dissidents with funding and recognition, and drawing in big players in this field by encouraging commercial productions. In order to make use of cultural industry as state cultural capital and regain control in the network society, cultural policy had to change.

Instead of imposing oppressive restrictions, the new strategy of cultural policy is to set up a kind of self-motivating and self-disciplinary mechanism. For example, the funding of the U Theatre not only manifested the official line – encouraging indigenisation – but also directly encouraged other groups to follow voluntarily. Similarly, the new emphasis on managerial ability in the funding system directly manifests state support for a commercialisation, rather than artistic pursuit. Another example was the increasing funding of Gezaixi, the only Taiwan born and bred *xiqu* form. Instead of fostering all Taiwanese *xiqu* forms as a whole, the state chose to

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<sup>2</sup> Subjective regulation is a form of 'regulation by culture'. (HALL, 1997a) Instead of constraining behaviour, this form of regulation tries to produce new subjects and endeavours



support those Gezaixi artists who performed in the 'most traditional style'. (LIN MAO-HSIAN, 1999) This principle was set up not only to construct a sense of historical continuity, but also to distinguish the uniqueness of Taiwanese traditional culture through an art form having no direct cultural connection with China.

The new tactics were especially effective in Taiwan when state funding was systematised and a web of cultural apparatuses were set up island-wide to provide funding and promote official 'excellence'. On the surface, cultural policy is designed to provide support and foster the arts. It seems that the state respects artistic freedom and is less demanding than private sectors. The possibility of state interference seems fairly small. However, through regulating, funding, and encouraging selected art forms and artists, cultural policy can maintain control, increase cultural capital value, and reinforce the selected ideology in a subtle way.

Lastly and foremost, I believe that the indirect influence of cultural policy has generally been overlooked both by artists and policy-makers. Cultural policy is the most conscious action initiated by the state to build culture. Therefore, it is not just drawn up for administrative purposes, but is the means for the state to invent tradition, rewrite history, reproduce meanings, and construct culture that it desires and will benefit from. Within this framework, the state weaves the cultural environment into a tightly entwined ideological web.

Although Taiwan's case is unique in terms of historical background and cultural character, there are universalities in the formation of cultural policy and its role in national culture building, e.g. the way in which cultural policy is formulated and

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to get its members to regulate themselves subjectively.

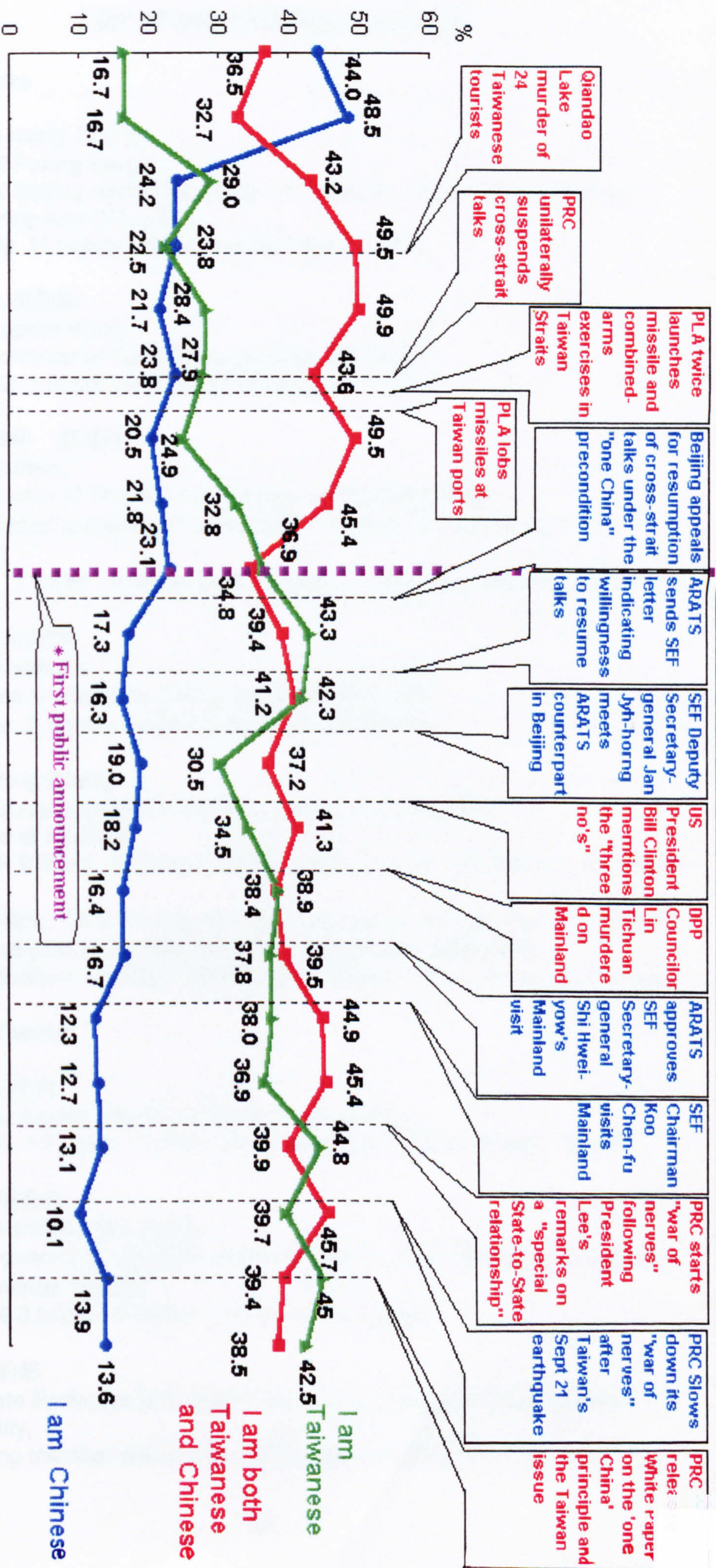


implemented, its tendency of being instrumental, the growing need to make alliance with commercial sectors, and its influence on constructing culture and cultural identity. For the state, cultural policy has become the most effective and yet hidden tool with which to discipline people, to form consensus, and to fight against the uncontrollable global influence with the comfort of a more secure, indigenised identity. I am not suggesting that top-down policies have had absolute influence on identity formation, or are entirely instrumental. Nonetheless, because the politics in cultural policy is usually hidden and rarely noticed, my research challenges the naivety of taking it as a purely administrative and managerial concern.

The composition of cultural policy has changed in order to maintain its hegemony. The influence of cultural policy is invisible and its interference is subtle. It has become a mixture of regulation and commerce, an alliance between policy and market forces, in order to restrain the unwanted and promote the desirable. The selection criteria in state funding have predetermined the framework of a cultural environment that the authorities would like to build. Consequently, this world that we see, live in and interact with, becomes the only world and the unquestionable 'truth'.



# How People in Taiwan Identify Themselves, as Taiwanese, Chinese, or Both?



How people in Taiwan identify themselves?

## Appendix I

Mainland Affairs Council, Executive Yuan, Republic of China  
16F, 2-2, Chinan Rd, Sec 1, Taipei, Taiwan, ROC  
Tel: 886-2-23975269 Fax: 886-2-23975286  
WWW URL: www.mac.gov.tw

Survey Conducted by: (a) Election Study Center, National Chengchi University, Taipei (886-2-29387134)

(b) Burke Marketing Research, Ltd., Taipei (886-2-25181088)

(c) China Credit Information Service, Ltd., Taipei (886-2-87873266)

(d) Center for Public Opinion and Election Studies, National Sun Yat-Sen University, Kaohsiung (886-7-5252000)

(e) Survey and Opinion Research Group, Dept. of Political Science, National Chung-cheng University, Chiayi (886-5-2720411)

\* First public announcement made on this set of internal survey data, September 1997

Respondents: Taiwanese adults aged 20~69 accessible to telephone interviewers



## **Appendix II**

## ***List of Interviewees in 1999***

### **Traditional Theatre**

Chung Ch'uan-hsing 鍾傳幸

Head of Fuxing troupe,  
Head of Beijing opera Department in National Taiwan Junior College of  
Performing Arts (NTJCPA)  
23/11/99 11.00pm-1.00am (telephone interview)

Wu Hsing-kuo 吳興國

Beijing opera actor;  
Artistic director of 'Contemporary Legend Theatre '  
14/11/99 1.00pm - 4.30pm (interviewed in Taipei)

Liao Ch'iong-chih 廖瓊枝

Gezaixi actress;  
Artistic director of Xinchuan Gezaixi group 薪傳歌仔戲團;  
Senior teacher in National Taiwan Junior College of Performing Arts  
(NTJCPA)  
11/11/99 2.15pm - 4.45pm (interviewed in Neihu 內湖 campus of NTJCPA)

Lin Mao-hsien 林茂賢

Folklore scholar;  
Associate professor in Chingji University 靜宜大學  
26/11/99 2.30pm - 6.00pm (interviewed in Taipei)

Cheng Rom-shing 鄭榮興

Professional musician in Hakkas music; music theorists;  
Principal of NTJCPA  
23/11/99 9.30am -12.00pm (interviewed in Mucha 木柵 campus of NTJCPA)

Yang Li-wen 楊麗文; Ch'iu Yü-ling 邱于玲; Ts'ao Ya-Lan 曹雅嵐; Tai Lien-i 戴戀懿  
Four final-year students in the NTJCPA Gezaixi department

11/11/99 5.00pm - 6.00pm (interviewed in Neihu 內湖 campus of NTJCPA)

### **Contemporary Theatre**

Wang Mo-lin 王墨林

Art critic; Artistic director of 'Body Phase Studio'  
18/11/99 12.30pm - 3.30pm (interviewed in National Theatre, Taipei)

Chou I-ch'ang 周逸昌

Theatre activist; film-maker;  
Artistic director of '*Jiangzhicui shiyan jutuan*' 江之翠實驗劇團(Jiangzhicui  
Experimental Theatre  
15/11/99 3.00pm - 5.30pm (interviewed in Taipei)

Chi Wei-jan 紀蔚然

Associate Professor in English Department, National Taiwan Normal  
University;  
Founding member and director of 'Creative Society Theatre' 創作社

10/11/99 12.00pm-3.00pm (interviewed in Taipei)

Li Huan-hsiung 黎煥雄

Founding member and director of Left Bank Theatre 河左岸

Director in Creative Society Theatre Company

Senior Manager of Classical Department, EMI Taiwan

16/11/99 2.30pm - 5.30pm (interviewed in Taipei)

LIU CHING-MIN 劉靜敏

Founding member of 'Lan Ling Theatre Workshop';

Artistic director of U Theatre

13/11/99 7.30pm - 12.00am (interviewed in her house in Hsintien 新店)

## Policy Maker

K'o Chi-liang 柯基良

Currently, the director of the preparatory office of National Traditional Arts Centre (1998-date)

First president of the Kuo Kuang Chinese Opera Company and the principal of Kuo Kuang Performing Art Experimental School (國光劇藝實驗學校); (1995-1998)

Director of 2<sup>nd</sup> Department of the Council of Cultural Affairs (CCA) (1982-1995)

30/11/99 2.30pm - 5.00pm (interviewed in National Traditional Arts Centre)

Hsüeh Mao-sung 薛茂松

Section chief of performing arts division of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Department (CCA) 第三處表演科科長(1990-1994);

*Bianzhuan* 編撰(senior officer) in CCA (1994-date).

17/11/99 2.30pm - 4.45pm (interviewed in CCA)

Jung Pao-shan 鍾寶善

Stage designer;

Chief of Production Division of the Kuo Kuang Chinese Opera Company

Chief of Production of National Theatre (Taipei)

9/11/99 11.00am - 3.00pm (interviewed in Kuo Kuang)

K'o Chêng-fêng 柯正峰 K'O CHÊNG-FÊNG

Deputy director of Social Education Department, Ministry of Education

17/11/99 10.00am -10.30am & 14/12/99 10.30am - 11.20am (telephone interviews)

Su Gui-zhi 蘇桂枝

Head of curriculum in the NTJCPA (1995 - date)

Section chief for literature and theatre (1989 - 1994) ;

14/12/99 4.00pm - 6.45pm (in Mucha campus of NTJCPA)

## Media

Li Yu-ling 李玉玲

Senior reporter in United Daily news

18/11/99 10.00pm - 11.30pm (telephone interview)

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