

# The Social Psychology of Unification-phobia: De-colonization and Construction of the Taiwanese Subject

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## Abstract

Historically, both the Taiwanese people and the members of the Communist Party of China (CPC) have suffered persecution by the Nationalist (KMT) government. Logically speaking, both the Taiwanese people and the CPC should have viewed the KMT government as a common enemy or have experienced common grievance. How did this situation evolve into the present antipathy towards China existing in Taiwan? And how did it evolve into the deep apprehension in the Taiwanese people about the current links between the KMT and the CPC?

An analysis of the Taiwanese people's "unification phobia" must begin with an understanding of the origins of their "anti-China" feelings. To grasp the source of these feelings, it is necessary to gain a sense of their pain over hundreds of years of colonial rule, their postcolonial psychology and the psychology of decolonization.

This study disregards normative considerations, and approaches these issues from a descriptive standpoint. Using participant observation methodology, it first gives a brief description and discussion of the Taiwanese people's experiences under colonial rule, and particularly personal experiences of the last two colonial episodes. Secondly, adopting analyses and arguments of some contemporary colonial and post-colonial scholars, this study presents an interpretation of the psychology of de-colonization in Taiwan, and an analysis of the difficulties this psychology faces in constructing its subject.

**Keywords:** colonialism, postcolonialism, decolonization, theory of mirror stage, constructing the subject

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## 臺灣拒統情結的探討： 臺灣「去殖民化」心境的主體建構

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### 摘 要

從歷史經驗的角度來看，臺灣人民與中共黨員都曾經受過國民黨政府的迫害；照理來說，臺灣人民與中共在歷史情結上應該是有共同的敵人或仇人才對。怎麼會演變成目前臺灣人民的反中情結呢？又怎麼會演變成臺灣人民對當前國共合作的深層憂懼呢？根據馬克思的科學辯證理論，如果不能正視臺灣社會的「拒統」心理，又怎能談兩岸的「和平統一」呢？

要想分析臺灣人民的「拒統」情結，就必須先理解臺灣人民「反中」的根源；而要理解臺灣人民「反中」的根源，就應該先體會臺灣人民經歷數百年被殖民統治的「悲哀」、「後殖民主義情境」及「去殖民化心境」。

本文將跳脫「應然面」的思考，而以「實然面」的角度切入，對臺灣的被殖民經驗，尤其是對最近、也是影響最為深遠的二次切身感受，採取「投入觀察」的研究方法做簡要的說明與論證。換句話說，只在對事實存在台灣的「拒統」情結做論證，包括起源、演進與影響；至於這一個「拒統」情結到底應不應該，或攸關是與非的問題，皆不是本論文研究的旨意。其次，透過當代一些「殖民主義」與「後殖民主義」理論學家的分析與歸納，進一步詮釋臺灣的「去殖民化」心境，並分析其主體建構的困境。

**關鍵詞：**殖民主義；後殖民主義；去殖民化；鏡像理論；主體建構

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# The Social Psychology of Unification-phobia: De-colonization and Construction of the Taiwanese Subject

Understanding and coming to terms with history demands that we first face up to and understand history. Only then is it possible to move past our hatred and soothe our agony.

Lucie Cheng<sup>1</sup>

. . . in that dark time, the party-state often put on the mask of “China.” School texts that propagandized the party-state did so in the name of China. A careful look at the textbooks of the authoritarian era shows that our generation never saw the real China; all we saw was a cover for the KMT party-state. That outmoded, dogmatic China, that illusory China is the cause of the deepest trauma to Taiwan’s intellectual class. It is because they were never able to see the real China that the intellectuals invented an illusion of China. Our childish yearning for the imaginary China is the clearest legacy of the psychological trauma suffered by this generation. Party-state propaganda in our education deprived us not only of the opportunity to understand China, but also of the opportunity to understand Taiwan.

Fang-ming Cheng<sup>2</sup>

[Taiwanese] independence can be prevented through the manipulation of the power structures in the international system. However, unification can never be accomplished without a true understanding of the psychological factors that cause the Taiwanese people

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<sup>1</sup> Lucie Cheng. “Editor’s handbook.” *Biographical Literature* 91. 3 (2007): 1.

<sup>2</sup> Fang-ming Chen. “Against the party-state or against China?” *China Times* (2007): 15.

to reject unification. The use of force can only ever achieve nominal unification; it can never bring about real unification. Eventually Taiwan's tragic colonial spiral will become an eternal crisis for China.

228 Sixty Years On

*228 Sixty Years On*, a documentary by Sanlih Television on the 228 incident in Taiwan, deliberately misled viewers about the historical facts, and yet it was seen by a huge number of people in Taiwan. It was ill-made and controversial, but it served its political purpose. Clearly, most Taiwanese people do not regard historical accuracy as a priority. Rather, they care about whether or not a program fits their understanding of the "other," and whether it can satisfy their emotional demands. This kind of response is often ascribed, consciously or otherwise, to a pro-independence mindset (Wen 60-61). However, such black-and-white characterization is a distortion of the deep-seated psychological effects which drive Taiwanese politics. A case in point is a broadcast of *228 Sixty Years On*, in which the images of KMT government's prosecution of some members of the Chinese Communist Party (CPC) in Mainland China are misinterpreted as the repression of the Taiwanese people by the KMT in Taiwan after 1949. The victims have been misidentified, but the perpetrator is still the KMT government. In theory, the people of Taiwan should share with the CPC a common enemy. So what has caused the anti-China sentiment seen so often in modern Taiwan? And why are there deep-seated concerns about the KMT's establishing links with the CPC?

Rather than dismissing the reactions described above as the fantasies of independence activists, it would be more accurate to recognize anti-unification sentiment as a fact of Taiwan's social psychology. Objective analysis is necessary if a resolution is to be found to the complex of emotions and motivations that surround this issue. If we look at the popular opinion over the last 20-30 years, we see that anti-unification fits on the spectrum that runs between pro-independence on the one end, and maintaining the status quo on the other. Marx's historical dialectics tells us that, if we cannot obtain an objective understanding of anti-unification sentiment in Taiwan, there is no hope to construct a mechanism of confidence-building across the Taiwan Strait or to progress in discussions of peaceful unification.

## I. Introduction

Human behavior or social phenomenon can only be understood by tracing it back to its historical causes. So, if we wish to understand anti-unification sentiment among the Taiwanese public, we must find the origins of the anti-China movement. For this, we must consider Taiwan's centuries of experience of colonized, and its psychological state in the postcolonial and decolonial period.

For this study, it is important to reject any political or theoretical presuppositions of "what should be," and to take a purely empirical approach. I approach Taiwan's colonial history as a participant-observer, focusing particularly on Taiwanese responses to the two most recent colonial periods, as it is these two periods that have left the deepest impression on the Taiwanese people. Using the works of some contemporary scholars of colonialism and postcolonialism, I attempt to explain the psychological process of decolonization in Taiwan, and to explore the difficulty in Taiwan of constructing the Taiwanese subject.

Explaining his theory of nationalism, Sun Yat-sen wrote of the suffering of the Chinese people as they were forced to live as a "proxy colony" by the colonial powers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But the Taiwanese, as a marginal people, had endured hundreds of years of discrimination and oppressive rule by a series of governments whose only legitimacy came from their weaponry. The suffering of this situation is beyond imagination. Former president Lee Teng-hui referred to both Taiwan's suffering under colonial rule and its struggle to find an identity when he spoke of "the sorrow of the Taiwanese people."

The Taiwanese are a group of early migrants from the Chinese mainland. East Asians have not traditionally been strongly religious, nor do they have strong political ideals; it is therefore likely that the earliest immigrants to Taiwan did not leave their homes and move to Taiwan for religious or political reasons. The Taiwanese are a practical people, and it is generally believed that they moved from China to Taiwan for economic reasons. Geographically, most of them came from the southeastern part of China. For the most part, the earliest Taiwanese residents were most likely not from the upper strata of society. The population from the scholar class was probably very small, so for the vast majority of the Taiwanese population, life was a daily struggle for subsistence. They spent little time on considerations of identity and dignity, so as a group the Taiwanese tend to be adaptable and flexible. Consciousness of

their own identity usually emerges only in response to external pressures.

This being so, there is feeling of deep alienation towards politics in the Taiwanese ethnic consciousness. Even when political oppression is severe, the traditional Taiwanese response is to take what one can and make do. There is an old Taiwanese saying which reflects this attitude: “If your father’s in charge, you get fed; if your mother’s in charge, you get fed. So what does it matter who’s in charge?”

This lack of political consciousness compounded Taiwan’s exposure as a border area and its relatively flat socio-economic structure. The result of this combination of factors was centuries of domination by foreign powers<sup>3</sup>, and the “sorrow of the Taiwanese people.”

From the 17<sup>th</sup> century on, the Taiwanese were ruled by different governments including Spain (1626-1642), the Netherlands (1624-1662), the Zheng Shi Dynasty (1662-1683), the Qing Dynasty (1683-1895), Imperial Japan (1895-1945), and the Kuomintang Party (1945-1987). With the exception of the Zheng Shi Dynasty who identified Taiwanese as citizens of Chinese Ming Dynasty, most of the other governments identified Taiwanese under “Foreign Rule.” Spanish and Dutch colonization were extremely Draconian, but because of distance and cultural differences, these regimes were incapable of profoundly influencing Taiwan. The Spanish and Dutch governments were merely a distant illusion to the Taiwanese. Both Qing and Yuan Dynasties were originally unwelcome and considered foreigners within the Chinese heartland. However, culturally, the Chinese still deemed them to be legitimate. This can be seen in Tong Jing-song’s “Democratic Taiwan” proclamation where he clearly presents Qing Dynasty’s “First Beginning” (of Taiwan). Concerning the traditional effects of foreign dominion, the effects of a centralized governmental power were weakened due to Taiwan’s frontier border location. An example of this was during Qing Dynasty governance; Taiwan people did not feel its usual authoritative severity. For Taiwan, the most influential regimes were Imperial Japanese colonization and Kuomintang party

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<sup>3</sup> “Foreign power” here refers to external political powers, intuitively ethnically different from, or with different subjective emotional historical experiences than that of the Taiwanese. The term is meant to include Chinese rulers of the island. (“Alien races” here by no means indicate an alien race as determined by genetic relations or cultural standards, but the long-term withstanding rule of different political powers, intuitively ethnically different from, or with different subjective emotional historical experiences than that of the Taiwanese, even including those ethnic groups that does not classify as the colonized.)

rule. Because the Kuomintang regime was imposed on Taiwan at the same time as the removal of the Japanese, there were strong connections between reactions to the two regimes in Taiwanese society. This explains why the other colonized area—Manchuria, having endured similar Chinese rule and Japanese colonization, do not harbor the same kind of “Anti-China” sentiment now.

## II. Sacrificed to Japanese imperialism

After the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Enlightenment Movement of the West<sup>4</sup> triggered four great revolutionary concepts and ways of thinking, which led to the concept of imperialism to be born. Whichever country takes up imperialism can insure the strengthening of their country’s power in all areas—politically, economically, etc. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Western imperialism has treaded over and unhinged Eastern sovereignty. Whilst China was still stuck on its “China is the golden middle kingdom and thus is infallible” mentality, Japan has already taken up strengthening itself through Western means of imperialism, starting the process of self-strengthening by taking up the Meiji Restoration. As Japan grew in power and enlarged their sphere of influence, they made attempts to break down with the China Empire, seeking to bring down the power structure of China as East Asia’s center to make way for Japan to become the new center. Thus, expansionist Japan aimed first at two strategic locations. Korea was to be the springboard for achieving land supremacy in East Asia. Taiwan was the key to sea power. The Sino-Japanese War indeed became the turning point for the restructuring of East Asia’s power structure, as Japan gained the upper hand by seizing from China two important strategic war locations. Taiwan from then on was doomed to a tragic fate.

Thoughts determine behavior, and that holds true for a nation’s policies.

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<sup>4</sup> Before the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Asian culture was if anything superior to European culture; after the 16<sup>th</sup> century the situation was reversed. The cause of this reversal was the Renaissance, and four revolutions in thought that accompanied it: first was the theory of evolution, which established humanity as a subject; based on this were the scientific revolution, the political revolution and the industrial revolution. When China was attacked by the European powers, it felt first the military strength of the west; only later, in the 1919 May 4<sup>th</sup> movement, did Chinese scholars begin to discuss democracy and science. Even then, they still held to the idea that Chinese learning was inferior, so they could not surpass the west. See Yang Chih-cheng. How would Chinese cosmopolitanism react to the challenges of globalization? *Feng Chia Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 10 (2005): 131-54.

Japanese expansionist thought, Taiwan played a role as a militarily strategic location, and the main priority of Taiwan's colonization was its buildup to aid in Japanese expansion.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the economy and welfare of the Taiwanese people were never a priority consideration, which also resembles the period of Chiang Kai-shek's buildup of Jinmen Islands in order to "recover the mainland" (fan gong fu guo). Such thinking has resulted in a frequent changing of Governor-Generals accredited to Taiwan. In the half-century of Taiwan's occupation, there have been a total of nineteen Governor-Generals, each serving a short term, and the fifty-year occupation had seen two world wars, so it was impossible to truly build up and develop Taiwan. The critical component of Japan's time in Taiwan was to assist in the needs for war. For example, the railroads were constructed for gathering war resources and military mobilization purposes. Japan's imperial government needed to view Taiwanese people as a "barbarian race" or "enemy race," as this was a basic rule for being a colonizer. They could not afford to take lightly any unyielding or disobedient citizens. They had to be heavy-handed without exception, to completely detach the Taiwanese from their original "motherland," assimilate them, instill in their identity a glorified Japan, and make the Taiwanese completely submit to them while accepting unequal colonial rule.

To reach their imperial objectives, Japan had to construct a totalitarian government. Physically, there had to be a structure of authoritative symbolic value. Just as Goto Shinpei<sup>6</sup> said, "If we wish to rule this ethnic group, a magnificent government structure can have the persuasive effect on the people to accept us." With an outer shape bearing likeness to the Japanese army cap, Office of the Governor-General became a symbol of Japan's colonial authority. Today, this building is Taiwan's government Presidential Office Building. In regards to the structure of government authority, the Governor-General's authority encompassed executive, legislative, judicial, personnel, and military powers all in one, giving the person in this position absolute power to rule the Taiwanese and put down any opposition. Besides this system highly centralized

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<sup>5</sup> Yukichi Fukuzawa. "The reason for the order to cede Taiwan", Current Events, quoted in Wang Sang-yuan. *Japan's Cultural Attacks on China*. Kunlun Press: Beijing, 2005, 41-42; Wu Mi-cha. *Modern Taiwanese History*. Daoxiang Press: Taipei, 2001, 69-98.

<sup>6</sup> Goto Shinpei was governor of Taiwan and civil commander for Kodama Kentaro. 1898-1907. Author of *Japanese Colonial Policy*, Takushoku Press: Tokyo, 1925.



power, Japan's colonial ruling system was strict and tight, adopting a "lian zuo" system of collective responsibility. The higher-level supervisory positions were limited to only a Japanese, and under them "Taiwanese governing Taiwanese," forming a net that covered all Taiwanese society. In the cities, there was the Paochia system and in the countryside farmer's associations as local government centers forming a network of control with several functions including political, economic, cultural, educational, informative and intellectual, and policing functions. The buying and selling of people's goods and commodities were operated by this network, and in each city, the amount of goods that a store could sell was limited to a small fixed amount. This was controlled by the "Paocheng" of the Paochia system. In this time of rationing goods, control was very strict: those who would not be assimilated or "Japanized" found it difficult to access these necessities. Additionally, many important goods such as sugar and salt, rice, wood, and housing construction were controlled either by the Japanese or "Japanized" Taiwanese.

In sum, Japan's half-century colonial rule of Taiwan can generally be divided into four stages: (1) the establishment of racial superiority of the colonizer, (2) the stern suppression of rebellious activities, (3) strict and meticulous control of assembly, and (4) implementation of the national policy of assimilation. Racial superiority was fundamental for the Japanese to achieve absolute domination, as the Japanese believed they were the most advanced civilization of east Asia. Assuming the responsibility of governing barbaric and uncivilized territories was their mission (Izumi 95-96). Through such superior sentiments, the purpose was to cheapen and degrade the Taiwanese sense of identity<sup>7</sup> while simultaneously establishing the legitimacy of the colonizer's rule and make for more successful execution of assimilation policies. Further, in order to solidify a position of absolute domination, harsh and severe suppression of the colonized (considered as a non-equal race) was a necessary process. Anti-Japanese movements of Taiwanese people in the Japanese Occupation Period emerged in an endless stream, including bloody military conflict and peaceful political demands, but they were all stifled by strong

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<sup>7</sup> Wu Cho-liu. *The Asian Orphan*. Taipei: Yuan-Liou Publishing Co., Ltd, 1993. 60; *Taiwan Lien-kio*. Taipei: Grassroots book company, 2005. 40; Dai Guo-hui. Scars From Hidden Wounds, <[http://www.xiachao.org.tw/i\\_f\\_page.asp?repro=235](http://www.xiachao.org.tw/i_f_page.asp?repro=235)>.

measures from the imperial Japanese government. As for the “accepters”<sup>8</sup>, the colonial governments did not let them off easily. They were meticulously controlled by a network of government police. In the end, the Taiwanese sense of self was to be completely and utterly destroyed, to make the colonized willingly submit to the colonizer, forcing them to change their identities on their own will and accept a position of second-class colonized citizens. Within this transformation of identity, when the Taiwanese urgently went to the Japanese to prove their “likeness to Japanese people,” they still could not earn acceptance as a “true Japanese,” causing a crumbling of their self-hood, creating psychological feelings of alienation.

Can we say that the Taiwanese just willingly accepted assimilation during the time of such unequal and harsh rule? Looking at the experience of other colonies, we can conclude that all of the peoples that have been harshly colonized were still dissidents inside their hearts and minds. After pacification and assimilatory education from the colonial regime, some people’s spirit of dissidence eventually weakened. The behavior of the colonized experienced a four-stage process: self-denial, admiration of the colonizer, imitation of the colonizer, and wishing to become the colonizer. Then they finally became “submitters” and their role as the assimilated manifests. However, even after all of this, they were still dissidents in their unconscious minds. In fact, the nature of a “psychological feeling of alienation” is also a spirit of opposition. Therefore, Nitobe Inazo<sup>9</sup> believed that the policy of assimilation was purely idealistic, and making Chinese civilization assimilate would require thousands of years. It could only be possible if there was a wide difference in population ratios. In regard to the assimilation of the Taiwanese, Nitobe believed it would take at least 800 years to be possible (Nitobe 163). In fact, if there was never the later new oppressive authority, the Taiwanese people’s anti-Japanese complex would continue to be strong. In addition, the anti-Japanese “dissident culture” of the times was the same as pre-colonial “Manchurianized Chinese culture” or the “Chinese Assimilated Manchu culture.” It doesn’t matter

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<sup>8</sup> Albert Memmi. *The Colonizer and Colonized*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1965; Xu Boa-jiang and Luo Yong-sheng. *Decolonization and Nationalism*, Beijing: Central Compilation & Translation Press, 2004. 41.

<sup>9</sup> In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Nitobe Inazo held a series of official positions, including governor of Taiwan, head of the sugar office, minister for industry, consultant.

whatever culture it was; to the Taiwanese it was a yearning for the original “motherland.” The story of Liao Tian-ding of the Japanese Occupation Period as well as vindictive post-war acts on Japanese after their defeat, reflect the long-term pent-up anti-Japanese complex inside the Taiwanese. Also, the longing and hope for the original “motherland” was clearly seen from the enthusiastic welcoming of Chiang Kai-shek after the war’s end.

In truth, the Taiwanese people were not aware of the revolutionary overthrow of Qing dynasty and the mainland Chinese civil war. At the time, they only knew that Chiang Kai-shek had defeated Japan and taken back Taiwan. With good affections and in recognition of Chiang Kai-shek, they equated him with their motherland China. After enduring fifty years of Japanese rule, they naturally and warmly embraced the motherland, and grew excessive feelings of longing for and glorification of the mainland. However they were later disappointed. They fell into an even more bitterly painful and hopeless situation, even wanting their former enemy to retaliate against Chiang’s regime. What was more unfortunate was that in the following bleak situation that Taiwan fell into Chiang Kai-shek’s rule was not only Chiang’s failure, but the Taiwanese people’s tragedy, the motherland’s heartbreak. Additionally, the anti-Chiang sentiment of the Taiwanese became the source of their later anti-China sentiments.

Under Japanese imperial rule, whether the Taiwanese were accepters or resisters, Chinese nationalism followed Sun Yat-sen’s advocacy and the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement, gave rise to a vigorous breakout of Sino-Japanese of war. In the resulting war between China and Japan, the Taiwanese people not only suffered from being “Japanized,” but they also stood in the face of Chinese nationalist hostility.

### **III. Chiang Kai-shek’s quasi-colonial rule: Taiwan returns to the fold only to suffer discrimination and abuse**

Politically speaking, Chiang Kai-shek’s rule of Taiwan was a complete failure. As far as the Taiwanese were concerned, Chiang’s authoritarian rule was no better than colonization by the Japanese. They perhaps despised him even more than they did the Japanese, because of his corruption and pretense. Comparing Chiang’s rule with the history of Japanese colonization as outlined above, I can say with some confidence that there was little difference between

rule by Chiang and colonial rule. The repression was in no way relieved by the change of regime.

Chiang was welcomed at first as he brought apparent respite from the doctrines of racial superiority imposed by the Japanese. However, Chiang also looked down on “the Taiwanese.” He never saw the Taiwanese as true compatriots, despite his sloganeering. He arranged for mainlanders to come and take over the running of the island, not only in government but also in business and industry. All of the assets stolen by the Japanese occupiers were taken by the Chiang administration.<sup>10</sup> This was even harsher than when the Japanese had taken over in 1895-1896. Imagine if in 1997, after 100 years of colonial rule by Britain, all of Hong Kong’s assets had been taken by China. Would Hong Kongers have approved of their new rulers? Would they not have been forced into a position of wanting to be British subjects? Would they not have mounted anti-China and anti-unification campaigns?

Thorough research reveals Chiang’s contempt for the Taiwanese. Taiwan has always been a border area. Li Hong-zhang had described Taiwan to Ito Hirobumi as a barbaric place. Fukuzawa Yukichi was even more derogatory about the Taiwanese, calling them “primitives.” Both Chiang and Chen Yi, his appointed chief executive of Taiwan, had studied in Japan, and it would have been difficult for them to escape being affected by Japanese prejudices. At least subconsciously, they looked down on the Taiwanese. Secondly, because of the war between China and Taiwan, the Taiwanese were often seen as Japanese collaborators or spies. Taiwanese intellectuals who had opposed Japanese rule, such as Chung Hao-tung, Chiang Bi-yu and Hsiao Tao-ying, found themselves misunderstood and scorned.<sup>11</sup> Because of this, Chiang Kai-shek’s suspicion of the Taiwanese, who had undergone 50 years of Japanese rule, can be imagined. Added to his mistrust was the trouble caused by the feeling of accepting ownership of the island, the hardships of the war against Japan and the defeat in the civil war. The result was an attitude of great superiority among the KMT and the mainlanders who followed them to Taiwan. Interwoven with this was overcompensation for losing the civil war. This baseless, pompous feeling of

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<sup>10</sup> Jing-tao Chu. *A Record of the 228 Incident Volume 1*. Taipei: SGCUL Press, 2007. 50-56, 64-72.

<sup>11</sup> Bo-zhou Lan. *Song of the Covered Wagon*. Taipei: China Times Publishing, 2004. 73-82.

superiority made the Taiwanese even angrier than Japanese colonial attitudes. They had seen the sorry state of the first KMT units to arrive in Taiwan, defeated, ragged and disorderly. But at the same time, these fleeing remnants acted like conquerors. They seemed to have forgotten that the Taiwanese were not an enemy that they had defeated. What was even more unsufferable was the repressive rule that designated the Taiwanese as “the other” on their own island. But then, no one expected enlightened rule from Chen Yi, a reactionary, Japanese-educated soldier. Both Chiang and Chen forgot that during the period of colonial rule, Taiwan had been exposed, via Japan, to the tides of modern thought sweeping around the world. Thoughts of democracy were beginning to sprout, and the Japanese had been forced to take action to suppress these currents. The 228 incident was the beginning of the expression of Taiwanese dissatisfaction. In just two years, they had found that they could not stand the long-wished for held from the “homeland.” The bitter experience of the 228 incident planted the seeds of misgivings about the “homeland” in the Taiwanese consciousness. To this day, even though the “one country, two systems” policy may be well-intentioned, Taiwanese people cannot return to China with the confidence that Hong Kong displayed in 1997. The main reason for this is their doubts about “China,”<sup>12</sup> doubts which are grounded in very real experience.

The suppression of protesters during the 228 incident reflects on the one hand Chiang Kai-shek’s rejection of the Taiwanese as “others.” On the other, it consolidated the basis for his oppressive regime, and created in the mainlanders Chiang brought with him a consciousness of being the ruling class, an identity and a social position. Even today, half a century later, the echoes of Chiang’s bastard effect can be felt. Perhaps Chiang was knocked senseless during the civil war; otherwise, how could he have forgotten the cheers with which Taiwan greeted him? How could he have dispatched his army to put down the protest so mercilessly? Compatriots? Enemies! Taiwanese people in the aftermath of the protest discussed whether Chiang really represented “China.” They also puzzled over the propaganda endlessly repeated in schools stating that the Chiang regime was the legitimate and only ruler of China. Previously, no one had questioned this; the ones with doubts were the mainlanders that

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<sup>12</sup> Because of their historical experiences, Taiwanese recognition of China is confused. They cannot clearly differentiate between traditional, modern, contemporary and future China.

Chiang had brought with him. But once the connection was made then Taiwanese rejection of Chiang also became a rejection of China. Once the idea of rejecting China was formed, the natural next step was to oppose unification.

A small error at the start can lead one wildly astray. As political sentiment grew, it became impossible to put the genie back in the bottle. At least, Chiang Kai-shek lacked the necessary political acumen. Once armed suppression of the populace had started, political terror was inevitable. Chiang's authoritarian rule felt even harsher than Japanese colonial rule had been. On the one hand, Japanese rule was now just a memory, not a painful reality. Moreover, Chiang's propaganda constantly declared Taiwan to be part of "the democratic world." This obvious falsehood only added to Taiwanese disappointment. On the other hand, Chiang had become increasingly mistrustful since his defeat in the civil war, and was constantly on his guard. He not only made use of the social control mechanisms put in place by the Japanese<sup>13</sup>, he also developed intelligence and security forces modeled on those in the Soviet Union. The result was that Taiwan was a true "secret police state." with government through terror. Under the Japanese, terror tactics had been aimed at those who dared to speak out against the regime; once Chiang took charge, it seemed that even thought crimes could bring the death squads to your door. Chiang sowed the seeds of resentment and unrest in every level, every corner and every area of life in Taiwanese society. He controlled society through a system of collective reprisals that struck the family and friends of victims, He developed the a control network overseen by the most secret of secret police. All of Taiwanese society was thrown into severe repression. The seeds sown then, because of the suppression of the people over many years, became vested interests. Bad habits are hard to change, and many had no professional skills at all. Even now, decades later, the wounds caused by their savagery are not yet fully healed. With these experiences, why would the Taiwanese oppose a

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<sup>13</sup> Chiang's arrogance and methods of rule are very similar to those of the Showa emperor before WWII. Showa required his Japanese subjects to give their absolute loyalty to him as the embodiment of the nation state; Chiang similarly reserved for himself the titles of Leader, Director-General, Great Man. Even his son Chiang Ching-kuo did not dare use Chiang's titles. This might have surprised even Showa. Chiang continued the Japanese practice of using networks of local Taiwanese as his control system. It was based on farmers' associations in rural areas, and in neighborhoods in the cities. These grassroots control organizations were allowed to operate financial organizations and credit cooperatives, which started Taiwan's history of corrupt politics.

movement to eradicate Chiang's legacy?

The final stage of colonization is assimilation of the colonized population. Assimilation involves the long-term, repeated brainwashing of a colonized population, to make them forget their differences in ethnicity and culture, and deny the value of their own existence. Gradually they come to look up to the colonizers, and to enthusiastically embrace their status as second-class citizens. The Taiwanese shared cultural and racial origins with the mainlanders, but they had been colonized by the Japanese for 50 years, and the Japanese had been defeated by the mainlanders. These historical facts confirmed the mainlanders led by Chiang in their position as the ruling class. For most Taiwanese, the kind of rule represented by the mainlanders was not merely notional, it was an everyday reality. Years of foreign rule, pacification, propaganda and education had gradually deconstructed the Taiwanese identity. They therefore constructed a differential with the mainlanders, and consciously took them as their social model: thus they aspired to be not "Chinese people," but mainlanders. However, the mainlanders at that time were not prepared to accept the Taiwanese, and they could never give them equality or accept them as true compatriots. The Taiwanese were second-class citizens for them to rule over.

The highest level of assimilation is the removal of the mother tongue of the ruled group. The Japanese had forced Taiwanese people to give up their mother tongue and use Japanese. But they had never imagined that without time to draw their breath, their language would be similarly banned by the mainlanders, who imposed Mandarin in its place. Was there any difference to the Taiwanese between Mandarin and Japanese? Ernst Cassirer once wrote, "Men live, act and achieve their existence in an environment of language" (Cassirer 19). There is an intimate relationship between language and culture, even an identity. The Japanese scholar Oshima opposed the forced imposition of the Japanese language for this reason: language is used to express the culture, thought and habits of an ethnic group. If the language of the colonizers is universally imposed in education, there will be a break in the transmission of culture in the colony, and the philosophy, religion, habits and morals of the colonized will decay. This will cause great psychological turmoil among the residents of the colony. Even if the colonizers did succeed in imposing their language throughout the education system, the result would be a people who were "hollowed out" (Izumi 258), and dangerous. So strong feelings of resistance brewed in the Taiwanese under mainland rule just as they had under

Japanese rule.

#### **IV. Postcolonial theory: impeded decolonization**

The recent history of colonialism has shown a consistent pattern of imperialist expansion of influence. Political power is located externally and imposed on the colonized region, and the colonialist power is ready to use force to control and dominate the local populace. It establishes colonialist structures based on the superiority of the colonizers, and a system of colonialist rule emerges. Clearly, colonialist rule contravenes modern conceptions of human rights and civil liberties. While the colonized population may seem for a time to accept their unjust treatment and lack of equality, the impulse to rebel will inevitably ferment in their subconscious. As soon as the authoritarian power structure changes—whether because of internal resistance or external international pressure—the colonized people will snatch the opportunity to start a process of decolonization, in both their physical environment and their psychology.

This process can only be finished when a new identity has been constructed. Until that point, the population is stuck at the stage of postcolonialism. Once the colonial order has been deconstructed, and before a new order has developed based on the identity of the people, they are in a phase called postcolonialism. To look at it on a deeper level, during the postcolonial period, the remnants of the colonial order coexist with the developing identity, and the two form a dialectical relationship. That dialectic points the way out of the postcolonial phase through the completion of the decolonization process.

Moore-Gilbert notes that postcolonialism is the ultimate consequence of racial segregation, exploitation and occupation, including those which have already been materialized, and those which are incoming in the future. Postcolonialism is characterized by difficult temporality, and it is not possible to completely define its ongoing phases. Decolonization is a slow, difficult process. Colonial oppression in Taiwan ended in the late 1980s, and democracy followed soon afterwards, but decolonization is not yet completed. The reason is that decolonization must be accompanied by the construction of a new identity. However, the Taiwanese remain fixated on resistance to their rulers/others. Their identity is bound up with their resistance to the externally imposed rule, and as long as this is the case, they cannot escape being subaltern. As they construct their identity in their resistance, they cannot find their real



self. It does not matter if they are obeying or resisting the ruler, their identity is still that recognized by the ruler, not their true identity. This is why whenever an election comes along, a political party only has to fan the flames of resistance, and it can win everything. The problem is that as resistance grows stronger and more violent, identity becomes harder and harder to find. A group without an identity can only complain and protest its situation; it does not actively seek to construct an identity, much less can it identify with a notional homeland.

For many years, the Taiwanese people have had the culture and consciousness of their colonizers forced upon them, in the language of those colonizers. They have lost their independence and autonomy. They have suffered the authoritarian rule of the colonizers, and confronted with the authority of the rulers and the shattered remnants of their own identity, they see their own weakness (Wang Yuechuan 23). Therefore, the cultural domination of colonialism starts from the construction of the self and the other, and the relationship between them. Moore-Gilbert notes: escaping postcolonialism is a question of belonging, and of the relationship between identities of self and other (Izumi 258). Scholars working on the problem of decolonization often talk about postcolonial theory, and postcolonial theory marks the reemergence of the oppressed and “the native.”

There are three main schools of thought in contemporary postcolonial theories: psychoanalytic, deconstructionist, and feminist (Fang 3). Psychoanalytic postcolonial theory applies psychohistorical techniques, combined with in economic analysis and studies in cultural creativity, it evolves an institutionalized model of cultural criticism. Psychoanalytic postcolonial theorists have developed sophisticated analyses of the relationship between the self and the other. Authors in this school include Jacques Lacan, Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak. Lacan’s mirror stage is one of the important theories. Fanon’s personal involvement in anti-colonial movements is also an exemplar of participant observation.

According to Lacan, individuals gradually come to a fundamental identification (*identification fondamentale*) of themselves by observing the persistence of their reflection in the mirror. The unity of this subjectivity is constructed by piecing together the disjointed experiences (memories) of childhood. The formation of the subject is primarily completed through a process of imaginary recognition, and ongoing transformations in the

imagination (Du 130-32). From the recognition of the image in the mirror to the construction of the identity, it is basically done through distinguishing relations among the “other” environment around us. The recognition of the other by the subject is often also based on others imagined by the self, not objectively existing others, nor the selves that others recognize. Taiwan has been under the rule of plural “others” for centuries: Spain, Holland, the Manchurian Qing, Japan, and finally the othered mainlanders. Recognition of the Taiwanese subject was always through an image reflected in this succession of Others. Construction of the Taiwanese subject thus could never escape the tragic resistance narrative of decolonization. Fanon’s postcolonial theory is particularly applicable in this situation.

Fanon was a black native of the French colony of Martinique. He received an assimilationist colonial education, and even joined the French army to fight against Germany, but ultimately was unable to shrug off his identity as a black object of colonization. He involved himself in the anti-colonial resistance in Algeria, and wrote on postcolonial issues. Fanon exposed the deep wounds that extended colonization inflicts on society, drawing on a wide range of data. Colonization damages the colonized population physically and psychologically, and the effects continue even after a successful campaign of resistance. Establishing an independent subject is only the beginning of a series of political and social conflicts and challenges. Independence does not mean true liberation and freedom. True decolonization is a process of deconstruction and reconstruction on the levels of culture and social psychology, and it is an arduous task,<sup>14</sup> very different from the pursuit of formal independence. Fanon’s insight reveals precisely Taiwan’s quandary.

During the process of pursuing colonial policies, the colonizing power will generally create a highly positive self-image; at the same time, they will actively promote a negative image of the colonized. By constructing differential images on the physical, psychological and cultural levels, they undermine the rights of the colonized. Denying the right of the colonized to choose whether or not to be colonized is a concomitant part of this process. But however tight colonial control might be over the psychology and actions of the colonized, the colonized always have one choice left open to them: to resist or to accept. Resisting is the attempt to retain or restore what is taken in the

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<sup>14</sup> Frantz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. N.Y.: Grove Press, 1963.

process of colonization, often using cultural resources from the historical period before colonization. Accepting is a form of assimilation.

Fanon gives a detailed account of the anticolonial actions of black resisters, who act within the colonial structure constructed by white colonizers. He strongly opposed French colonial rule in Algeria, and personally took part in the national liberation movement of the black colonized. As part of the decolonization effort, black Algerians did everything they could to interrupt the “advanced” cultural model of the colonizers. They chose to cling to and restore a culture that the colonizers had ridiculed and labeled “primitive.” This is described in his book *A Dying Colonialism*.<sup>15</sup> The accepters, those who acquiesce to colonization and assimilation, are discussed in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Their psychological wounds from the enforced destruction of their selves are described as follows:

Black people want to become the same as white people. For the blacks, there is only one fate, and that is white. For a long time now, ever since black people accepted the indisputable (how could it be disputed?) superiority of white people, all of their efforts have been an attempt to achieve a white existence.  
(Fanon 1965: 215)<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, in the dangerous situation of the colonized, accepters are forced to try to change their circumstances by changing their roles. To get what they want, or simply to stay alive, they must complete a transformation of the self within the rules set down by the colonizers. They move from their colonized self towards the colonizer other (or to the image of the colonizer in the mirror), towards the assimilated self.

For black people, becoming white or acting white seemed to be the key to switching from an othered, slave identity to a master identity. It seemed to be the route to equality. And because of the psychological difficulty of establishing any kind of self, or because of the threats and blandishments of the

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<sup>15</sup> Frantz Fanon. *A Dying Colonialism*. N.Y.: Grove Press, 1965.

<sup>16</sup> Frantz Fanon. *Black Skin, White Mask*. N.Y.: Grove Press, 1967. 215. Quoted from Kuang-wu Hsu, “Eye of empire: Colonial Japan and its ‘other’ Taiwan,” doctoral diss. Taipei: Graduate Institute of East Asia Studies, National Chengchi University, 2006. 125.

colonizers, they took that route: they gave up, erased their old selves, took on new identities based on the image of the assimilated native that can be seen in the mirror/gaze of the colonizers.

Taiwan's isolation as an island on the periphery has led to a unique experience of colonization. By ancestry, ethnicity and culture, the majority of Taiwanese inhabitants are Chinese; there should be no basis for an anti-Chinese or anti-unification sentiment. However, if we take into account Taiwan's postcolonial status, and its history of colonization and decolonization, it is easy to see the common logic between the anti-Japanese and anti-Chinese movements. From the Manchu Qing dynasty through Japanese imperialism to the quasi-colonial rule of the KMT, the Taiwanese have perceived themselves to be constantly colonized. They never had the relief of liberation until the lifting of martial law (1987) and the advent of democracy in the 1990s. It was only at that time that they could begin the process of decolonization, and only at the turn of the century that the Taiwanese people could begin to genuinely cast off the label of "other" imposed on them by a foreign ruler. Their resistance to Japanese rule was in the name of Qing sovereignty and Chinese culture; the process of decolonization had barely begun after WWII when the KMT's quasi-colonial rule as the "recognized and legal ruler of China" began, and resistance to the KMT was grounded in Japanese colonial culture.

Moore-Gilbert notes in *Postcolonial Theory* that if cultural decolonization is to succeed, challenging imperialist knowledge and models is a necessary phase, and one which should not be ended too soon (Bart 157). Just as Taiwan was beginning its decolonization after the end of World War II, an unequal, quasi-colonial rule was imposed on it by the officials sent by Chiang to take control of the island. Martial law and rule by terror soon followed. In the colonial atmosphere created by the 228 Incident and the White Terror, Japanese imperial culture was preserved precisely for its value as a tool of resistance against the quasi-colonial KMT regime. Japanese culture remained a much more vibrant force than it would have during true decolonization. It served to reinforce the determination of Taiwanese to reject (decolonize) the Chinese culture imported by the KMT. It may seem ironic, or even tragic, that Japanese culture could serve as a weapon against colonialism in Taiwan, but it is the inevitable result of historical circumstance.

Under Japanese colonial rule, despite Japanese efforts to domesticate the population, the Taiwanese constructed a Chinese subject and identity in order

to resist the unequal relationship between Taiwan (self) and Japan (other). Under the KMT, the barrage of anti-communist propaganda, particularly in schools, seemed to Taiwanese minds to be not far removed from anti-China sentiment. The memories of Japanese culture were fresh and easy for Taiwanese to pick up as an identity with which to oppose the Nationalist government. Current Taiwanese fundamentalist thinking uses the same pattern in its anti-China campaign. Under the KMT's authoritarian rule, in Taiwanese constructions of the self/other, the Taiwanese/mainlander (narrowly defined as the KMT government) opposition was stronger than Taiwanese/Japanese. An anti-China structure and identity was constructed, which still today informs Taiwanese memories of colonial rule, and Taiwan's desire for decolonization. This anti-China sentiment can be excited at any time by the actions of the KMT and their supporters. Economic crisis seems to have prompted the Taiwanese to temporarily restore power to the KMT. But after over a century of colonial experience, the turmoil and struggle of decolonization is certain to reemerge. It will not be calmed by an economic recession. The process of decolonization experienced by the black people of South Africa are a confirmation of Moore-Gilbert's predictions. In *Das Kapital*, Marx suggests that the competitive nature of capitalism is also the mechanism by which competition is extinguished. Capitalism gives to the bourgeoisie monopoly control of capital, production and markets, and it is the capitalist system itself which fans anti-capitalist feeling among the proletariat, resulting ultimately in the socialist revolution which destroys the bourgeoisie. As part of his bid to secure his historical legacy as a hero in the struggle against Japan, Chiang Kai-shek attempted to manipulate the anti-Japanese sentiment of the Taiwanese. However, his efforts proved counterproductive. Sharpening anti-colonial sentiment sparked an anti-colonial struggle against the current regime itself, as the fast development of the resistance movement testifies. However, under the enforced guidance of the USA, Taiwan started a program of modernization and industrialization. Taiwan's economic miracle followed, and this has postponed the decolonization struggle against the quasi-colonial KMT. Despite this hiatus, the process of decolonization is not over; and further turmoil will continue to brew until decolonization is complete.

## V. Conclusion

In the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx describes the plight of the proletariat, who have lost their identity and subjectivity through their long oppression by the bourgeoisie under the capitalist system:

They are consequently incapable of enforcing their class interest in their own name, whether through a parliament or through a convention. They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them, as an unlimited governmental power. . . . (Marx 678)

The Taiwanese people enduring successive eras of foreign rule very early became lost in to the point that they are now unable to return to a real self. As a subject, they rely on an obedience or resistance identity of otherness to alluding to mirror stage of being alienated from oneself. The promotion of democracy for ten years has been unable to mitigate this state of mind. Representative of Taiwan stand high above the governed as a ruling authority, only considering themselves as different from the “otherness” of the local people. Thus, representing and governing Taiwan means dominating it “otherness” of its people.

From a cultural perspective, cultural manifests itself as a set of norms and diverse elements. Regarding the progression of cultural forms, Fredric Jameson believes any one cultural by itself does not have a culture. Culture is one type of group observing a group’s comprehensive atmosphere. Thus culture itself is a sort of product of “otherness” (Jameson 420-27). As groups interact, cultural construction, whether it be self-cultural or a colonial, all in reality proceed through a mirror stage of “otherness” thinking.

In relation to deemed “otherness,” a subject’s self-cultural construction employs its own respective culture thinking while gradually absorbing aspects of the other culture, further internalizing them as a norm for the purpose of reconciling disparate elements. As with Japan’s Meiji Ishin and Russia’s Peter the Great, both promoted westernization but implementation meant internalizing westernization through their respective cultural contexts. Cultures of otherness are subsequently changed as they become adopted and internalized. However, colonialism externalizes by repressing, eroding, and destroying the

culture of the colonized. In general, the total elimination of a culture is not a simple undertaking requiring at least several hundred years to complete. Once a colonizer's authority recedes, the repressed colonized culture returns by means of "decolonization" or reconstructing anew its self-identity and rediscovering a rural consciousness. In Taiwan however, over a succession of different rulers and their repression, a deep self-consciousness has been unable to re-emerge. In response to its various rulers, Taiwan has resisted instead of obeyed. As a result, has substituted resistance as the principle part of its identity and is yet unaware of a lost self, leaving it with what can be described as a postcolonial mindset.

A postcolonial attitude is the inability through existing self-worth to construct self-dignity and so draws support from stances of obedience or resistance to invoke a feeling into existence. This type of feeling forces the subject into a scenario of being lost. This resistance of authority (whether it be real or imagined) is the main focal point of the local view- an external decision of a superficial self that makes difficult a rediscovery of the previous self. Dialogues between the principle subject and the other groups is a natural means to root the question, "who am I" and its value for self construction.

From a different perspective, the relics of colonialism or the residual memories of colonial rule will still exist even after decolonization efforts. In relation, a postcolonialist mindset is also difficult reverse as is the consciousness of resistance that accompanies it. As such, does this leave Taiwan unable to reconstruct itself as a native land for its people? Does, for example, the era of Chang Kai-shek rule leave a shadow that the efforts of any "anti-Chang Kai-shek" consciousness fail to remove? As the Taiwanese people think "anti-Chang Kai-shek," no matter whether its in on behalf of the Democratic Party or historical recollection, the "anti-China" complex is automatically comes to bear. To think "anti-China," can Taiwan do anything but resist?

Taiwanese historian Chen Fang-ming wrote in an essay in 2007:

In that dark time, the party-state often put on the mask of "China." School texts aimed at propping up the party-state did so in the name of China. A careful look at the textbooks of the authoritarian era shows that our generation never saw the real China; all we saw was a cover for the KMT party-state. That

outmoded, dogmatic China, that illusory China, is the cause of the deepest wounds to Taiwan's intellectual class. It is because they were never able to see the real China that the intellectuals invented an illusion of China. Our childish yearning for the imaginary China is the clearest legacy of the psychological wounds suffered by this generation. Party-state propaganda in our education deprived us not only of the opportunity to understand China, but also of the opportunity to understand Taiwan. (Chen 15)

Tu Cheng-sheng's movement to undo the Chiang legacy may be motivated by a desire for Taiwanese independence, but in its effects it may bring about a historical dialectic. When Japan was stripping Taiwan of its resources to fuel its expansionist war machine, it built an infrastructure that later formed the basis for Taiwan's post-war economic development. Of course, history often springs surprises on its players; this historical coincidence does not mean that Japan's colonization of Taiwan was justified. But this side effect or unintended consequence of colonization is a living, undeniable fact. However, when Japan imported its modernity to Taiwan, it caused great confusion in the minds of Taiwanese thinkers, with no clear distinction between modernization and Japanization, just as the distinction between modernization and westernization has been difficult to pinpoint for many developing countries since World War II.

Clearly, Taiwanese consciousness is still today the product of centuries of political oppression. This consciousness and culture—both the accepting and the resisting sectors—is based on the reflected image of the other. It is a postcolonial consciousness, still wrapped up in the struggle for decolonization, not an independent subjectivity based in Taiwanese values and self-respect. Globalization is bringing a moment of historical and national reflection, and several key questions have emerged for the construction of the true Taiwanese subject. How do we find our place in a globalized world? How do we develop our own values and self-respect? How can we complete the process of decolonization, leave behind our postcolonial present? When the Taiwanese identity, a truly Taiwanese subjective consciousness emerges, unification or independence will no longer be the problem. The impact of globalization means that national consciousness will lose its importance.



Taiwan has been notable for its absence in the furious development of Chinese nationalism; if anything, it has been an opposition force. Calling the Taiwanese to rally around the standard of Chinese nationalism cannot succeed. As the controversy over the Chiang legacy continues, Taiwanese memories of the Nationalist regime will gradually fade, and with it will go their resistance mentality. Only then can Taiwan step by step recover its identity; and only with an identity is it possible to possess a consciousness of origins, roots, and motherland. And this will be the basis for peaceful progress in Taiwan's relationship with China.

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