Taiwan is Not China: Aborigines, Colonial Rulers and Democratization in the History of the Beautiful Island

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Chinese False Histories of Taiwan

“In history and culture, Taiwan is an integral part of continental China.” (China Yearbook 1969-70, p. 94)

“Taiwan has belonged to China since ancient times [original emphasis]” (China White Paper, 1993)

Taiwan is “an inalienable part of China.” (China White Paper, 2000)
When Dutch arrived in Taiwan

- No permanent Han Chinese community in Taiwan. Only three temporary groups of Han Chinese
  1. Merchants came to trade
  2. Fishermen came to fish
  3. Pirates came to hide
Pre-Invasion Aboriginal Taiwan to 1500 BCE

- Taiwan separated physically from the Asian mainland some 10,000 years ago.
- From about 4,000 BCE to 2,500/2,200 BCE, Early Neolithic period, Taiwan one general culture, Ta-pen-k’eng (Dabenkeng 大坌坑) or TPK culture, distributed along Taiwan’s coasts, rivers and lakeshores.
- Middle Neolithic period (c.2,500-1,500 BCE), 300 sites, 5 groupings with cultural variation, farming.
- Middle Neolithic migrate to every island in the Pacific.
Late Neolithic (1500-300 BCE)

- Many sites, e.g. key Peinan site 卑南遺址 in southeastern Taiwan, extensive house remains, slate coffin burials, nephrite (jade) ornaments, distinctive forms of pottery.
- Megalithic monuments 1500 through 500 BCE.
- Large alluvial plains developed around coastal zones, so much more land for rice and millet farming.


**Metal Age**

- Unlike China and the countries of Mainland Southeast Asia, the island regions like Taiwan and Philippines no Bronze Age prior to the appearance of iron. Both bronze and iron technologies arrived at the same time imported from Southeast Asia.

- Hsiao-chun Hung and Chin-yung Chao propose three stages for the Metal Age in Taiwan:
  - Early (400 BCE-200 CE),
  - Middle (200-800 CE) and
  - Late from 800 CE until 1624.
Huge Trading Networks (1)

- During the Early Metal Age, Taiwan’s peoples involved in substantial trading networks as far as the South China Sea including modern Philippines, eastern Malaysia, central and southern Vietnam, peninsular Thailand, and eastern Cambodia.
- Eastern Taiwan near modern Hualien produced jade, but contemporary spectroscopy proves that jade found in these various Southeast Asian sites originated in eastern Taiwan.
- Radiocarbon dating suggests these trading networks were active from 500 BCE to 500 CE.
- Produced jade “blanks” so could suit local cultures.
Huge Trading Networks (2)

- Glass beads found in Taiwan originated modern India around 400-300 BCE, later glass beads also made in modern Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and Sumatra.

- Some trade occurred throughout Taiwan. Glass beads from India and Southeast Asia are found all over Taiwan including the relatively high Alishan area.

- Although likely, we have no evidence at present of trade between Taiwan and the Pacific islands.

- Much archaeological evidence demonstrates Metal Age trading and technological contacts with Southeast Asia, not with China.

- Fujian only part of China in Sui and Tang (581-906 CE)
When Dutch Arrived, 1624

- Taiwan, an island of Austronesians, the ancestors of today’s Taiwan aborigines.
- The Austronesians were divided and no one authority united Taiwan.
- Austronesians did trade with others including Japanese and Chinese.
- Austronesian products included deer skins and meat as well as jade from the Hualien area.
Dutch Imported Chinese to Taiwan

- Dutch believed Chinese brought wealth: “The Chinese are the only bees on Formosa that give honey.” (Dutch governor Nicholas Verburg).

- Chinese made money because of Dutch military and administrative structure (Andrade).
Taiwan’s 6 colonial regimes: 1624-1988

1. the Dutch (1624-1662),
2. the Spanish (1626-1642), who ruled in north Taiwan simultaneously with the Dutch,
3. the Zheng (Cheng) family (1662-1683),
4. the Manchu Qing (Ch’ing) empire (1683-1895),
5. the Japanese (1895-1945), and
6. the authoritarian Chinese Nationalist regime (1945-1988)
Definition of “Colonial Regime”

“Rule by outsiders for the benefit of the outsiders”

Su Beng (史明)
The Zheng Regime as Colonialists

- Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功, aka Koxinga 國姓爺
- Father, Zheng Zhilong 鄭芝龍 aka Nicholas Iquan (一官?)
- Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)
- Southern Ming (rump to 1662)
- Zheng Regime colonial: used Dutch institutions, population less than aborigines
- Status of independent, trading nation
The Manchus as Colonialists (1)

- Before 1683, Taiwan \textbf{never} belonged to either China or Manchus (Manchu emperors, \textit{Veritable Records} \\實錄)

- Kangxi Emperor in 1683: “Taiwan is a small pellet of land. There is nothing to be gained by taking it, and no losses in not taking it” (台灣是彈丸之地, 得之無所加, 不得無所損)

- Yongzheng Emperor in 1723: “From ancient times, Taiwan has not been part of China. My holy and invincible father brought it into the territory” ( 台灣地方自古不屬於中國, 黃考生略神威, 取入版圖)
The Manchus as Colonialists (2)

- Manchu empire was **Manchu**, not Chinese
- Manchus dominated Grand Council
- China and Taiwan were separate colonies of Manchu Empire (not ruled entirely the same)
- Manchus did not control aborigines
- 1867: US Consul signed treaty with aboriginal chief
Six Parallels: Japan and Kuomintang

Colonial Regimes

1. Systematic discrimination against Taiwanese
2. Killed lots of Taiwanese early
3. 25 years of strong oppression
4. Owing to domestic and international factors, some liberalization
5. Renewed repression
6. Both pushed “National Language” (國語 Jap. kokugo, Chi. guoyu), Japanese and Mandarin Chinese respectively, as part of their larger cultural attempts to make Taiwanese second-class Japanese and Chinese.

No democratization and no Taiwanization under both regimes.
Taiwanization (bentuhua 本土化)

- No colonial regime allowed Taiwanese to push their Taiwan identity
- Taiwanization ≠ Democratization (though closely linked)
- Being Taiwanese increasingly means “I am not Chinese”
- Taiwan NOT a sub-culture of China
Manifestations of Taiwanization

- Eat Taiwan foods (e.g. sweet potato gruel) (*hanji muai* 番薯糜 in Hokkien)
- Interest in Taiwan history, society, literature and language (soaring publications in these areas after 1988)
- Taiwanization increasingly important in politics after 1988
Changes in the Taiwanese/Chinese Identity of Taiwanese as Tracked in Surveys by the Election Study Center, NCCU (1992～2015.06)
## Taiwan Attitudes Toward China

### Table 2: Taiwanese Attitudes Towards Independence and Unification (June 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Combined Status</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence as soon as possible</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain status quo, move toward independence</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain status quo indefinitely</td>
<td></td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain status quo, decide at later date</td>
<td></td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain status quo, move toward unification</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unification as soon as possible</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-response</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>99.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Taiwan’s Democratization

Asia: only India, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan (though Indonesia and Mongolia some steps)

Gives Taiwan widespread support

15-20% swing (mobile) voters so elections swing back and forth.
Reframing Taiwan

- History demonstrates Unification (or falsely, Reunification)/Independence is wrong framing
- Taiwan is decolonizing (as it is democratizing). Decolonization creates many more potential allies in world
- “One China” framework set under Chiang Kai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo when Taiwanese had no say. Unification/Independence leftover from colonial past.
International Law: States

Convention on Rights and Duties of States (signed Montevideo, 1933)

Article 1: A state has “a) a permanent population; b) a defined territory; c) government; and d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states”.

Article 3: “The political existence of the state is independent of recognition by the other states”.

Taiwan is clearly a “state”.
Conclusions

- Taiwan is a state.
- Taiwan is Taiwan, not China
- Taiwan should face future of “decolonization”, not “unity/independence” (already independent state)
- Thus, should get more international support in future.