

6/ The Hakka Ethnic Movement in Taiwan, 1986–1991

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This chapter describes and explains the Hakka ethnic movement (*Kejia zuqun yundong*) in Taiwan. Despite the youth and rapid growth of the movement, it has already differentiated into traditionalist, moderate, and radical branches, which reflect variation in ideas of Hakka identity and in responses to political conditions in Taiwan. The material discussed was collected in 1991 and consists of interviews with recognized leaders and publications authored by activists.

As an examination of the early period in a self-defined ethnic movement, this chapter contrasts with several of the case studies in this volume. The Taiwan Hakka movement is an islandwide phenomenon, but has important centers of activity in Xinzhu and Miaoli *xian* (in northern Taiwan) and in Taipei. The fact that the movement does not derive from village- or district-level historical tradition means that history is negotiable, subject to interpretation, and not wedded to particular localisms, traditions, and figures. Nicole Constable, in contrast, shows how village and local history in Shung Him Tong have contributed primary elements, out of which Hakka identity is constructed and affirmed. She also describes how a heterodox religion, Christianity, contributes to maintaining the residents' identity. The movement in Taiwan, however, embraces people whose religious practices are within the Chinese tradition. Unlike the Hakka of Shung Him Tong, those

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involved in the Taiwan movement can call on no particular local history to affirm their identity, since Hakka Taiwanese history is intended to synthesize the experiences of Hakka from all over the island.

In contrast to the residents of Shung Him Tong, the Tsuen Wan Hakka studied by Elizabeth Johnson share susceptibility to many of the forces eroding Hakka identity in Taiwan. Industrialization and its consequences—increased literacy, mass communication, and social interaction (especially marriage) with greater numbers of non-Hakka—have lessened overt signs of ethnic difference and have created an environment in which the bilingual can adapt more readily than those who speak only Hakka. Much of the thinking that guides leaders and activists in the Taiwan movement is a reaction to such diminishing ethnic distinctions. Tsuen Wan people are similar to most unaffiliated Taiwan Hakka; that is, many are unaware of any need to actively pursue or maintain Hakka identity as an adaptive economic or political strategy in life.

Ellen Oxfeld's discussion of Hakka tanners in Calcutta describes cultural, religious, and economic positions in Indian society that contrast with the situations of Hong Kong and Taiwan Hakka. The Calcutta Hakka are culturally alien and remain distinctly Chinese in Indian society, and have adapted as immigrants by occupying an economic niche that is stigmatized in both religion and society. As natives and as fully conversant Chinese, Taiwan Hakka live in a society lacking ethnic boundaries as insurmountable as the ones facing Calcutta tanners. The slight barriers to full integration with Hokkien and mainlanders in Taiwan society are primarily a matter of using language appropriate to circumstances. For the majority of Taiwan's Hakka population this is not difficult. Public-school instruction and most radio and television programming is delivered in *guoyu* (Mandarin, lit. "national language"), the official language of public affairs and politics. Hokkien (*minnanhua*) is the mother tongue of the majority of Taiwan's inhabitants and dominates in the economy.

A few observations can be made from this brief comparison with other chapters in this volume. First, the Taiwan Hakka movement does not have a locus of strength or organization in a well-defined community; one goal of Hakka activists is to appeal to all Hakka on the island. In consequence, neither history nor identity can be strongly identified with particular locales. Second, the movement does not now embrace all Hakka on the island; participation is voluntary and thus premised on personal interest. Third, Taiwan Hakka are members of an increasingly open Chinese society in which least-common-denominator elements of

consumer economics are pervasive. A tendency to assimilate with the majority Hokkien is apparent to many concerned Hakka. The primary public expression of ethnicity in Taiwan is how well—or how poorly—one speaks Hakka, Hokkien, or Mandarin. Violence, alien appearance or culture, practice of heterodox religions, and economic marginalization do not characterize the island's Hakka population.

The Hakka movement in Taiwan arose out of a perception that Hakka interests were excluded from the debate over Taiwan's political future. The goals of the movement are at once ethnic and political: ethnic goals are centered on preserving Hakka values and identity, and political goals are oriented toward creating legal guarantees that protect Hakka interests. The movement is not directed by one structured organization, but consists of various interest groups, which often cooperate but also initiate actions independently. The movement is inventing Hakka identity as much as it is attempting to preserve it. Having for decades lived under regimes (Japanese and Nationalist Chinese) whose strategic goals opposed vigorous displays of ethnic insularity, people in the movement are forced to consider alternate interpretations of what it means to be a Hakka in Taiwan.

PERSPECTIVES AND ISSUES

The issues raised in this chapter could not have been addressed in 1986 when I concluded more than two years of field and library research in Taiwan. The Taiwan Hakka movement did not exist at that time, except in so far as Hakka were interested in their history and participated in opposition politics in concert with Hokkien and dissident mainlanders. The state of ethnic consciousness was such that analysts (Gates 1981, M. Chang 1990) rightly collapsed the different ethnic origins of the Taiwan population. Hakka and Hokkien were counterpoised as native Taiwanese (*benshengren*) to mainland immigrants (*waishengren*), and the analysts' arguments were cast in political and economic terms. Taiwan's marginalized population of aborigines (*yuanzhumin*) did not enter into the analysis of ethnicity until radical activists organized a political movement in 1986 (Yang Changzhen 1991a:58).

This perspective must now be modified; it is no longer possible to discuss ethnicity (*zuqun tezhi*) in Taiwan without distinguishing Hokkien, Hakka, and aborigines from one another and from the population of mainland immigrants. Such once-sensitive issues as Taiwan's history of violent interethnic conflict (*xiedou*), prejudicial ethnic stereo-

types, and perceptions of anti-Taiwan bias in the ideology of the ruling party are now discussed and analyzed openly, without the cautious circumspection that characterized the voicing of dissident opinions in the past. The reason for this transformation in intellectual life is the gradual liberalization of political expression initiated in late 1986 by President Chiang Ching-kuo. Shortly after Chiang's liberalization, self-declared ethnic movements (*zuqun yundong*) were established. Aborigines founded the first movement (Yang Changzhen 1991a). The Hakka movement followed the aborigine lead; movement leaders date its founding as a popular, mass movement to a large-scale public demonstration held in Taipei on December 12, 1988. The ostensible purpose of the demonstration was to call attention to the decline of the Hakka language; the primary demand was for television programming using the Hakka language (Baozhong Hui 1989:158–59). Active ethnic movements exist now in Taiwan and the political landscape has changed dramatically. It follows that the need for a new perspective on Taiwan ethnicity exists.

The Taiwan Hakka movement is broadly similar to ethnic movements in other countries. It is about issues connected to ideas of the self as a member of a group different from others in society. The movement is concerned with the definition of Hakka identity (*rentong*), how to preserve this identity in a modern state, and how to restructure Taiwan society so that ethnic interests receive the protection of law. By the standards of the ferocious ethnic fighting afflicting formerly communist nations, the Hakka movement does not present a threat of violence. Indeed, one central idea is that ethnic-group interests be protected within a constitutional framework. However, the debate over what constitutes Hakka identity, the proper goals of the movement, and how to influence political life in Taiwan is serious and worth appraising.

STRUCTURE AND IDEAS

Leaders of the Hakka movement describe three factions: traditionalists, moderates, and radicals. Defined by different assumptions about what it means to be Hakka and different political perspectives, these factions overlap, and the intellectual boundaries between them are permeable. People who assume leadership positions or who are spokespersons for the various positions know each other. Although conflicting positions on ethnic issues sometimes lead to personal animosities, relations in public are cordial and cooperative. The movement is not riven by fac-

tional extremes but is rather undergoing a process of clarification in which the relevant issues are identified and variant positions adopted. The Hakka also are positioning themselves politically, for as they create ideas about their identity and Taiwan's future, ethnic issues overlap with political ones.

Traditionalists

The basic assumption of Hakka traditionalists in Taiwan is that the Hakka population of the world is, or should be, a unified whole (*da Kejia zu*), one that ideally is solidary and in constant contact. In order to maintain the ties linking this widely dispersed population, traditionalists look to common origin as the potent unifying myth. The traditionalist view of Hakka history depends heavily upon and derives much strength from mainland Chinese Hakka history. Eminent Hakka of former dynasties, past glories, the history of Hakka migration, and the all-but-unexplored truth that the Hakka language preserves Tang dynasty court language (*guanhua*) are particularly important symbols of unity in the traditionalist view (Chen Yundong 1989).¹

The assertion that modern Hakka speak a more pure, classical form of the Chinese language is an important symbol, for it implies that Hakka were members of the cultural elite in ancient China. By claiming linguistic descent directly from an ancient court language, Hakka symbolically assert a superior position in the hierarchy of Chinese society, although one Hakka scholar has taken claims of this nature as evidence of Hakka ethnocentrism (*minzu ziwo zhongxin pianjian*) (ibid.:12, 1991:44). Yang Xisong (1990:10) makes an assertion that contradicts theories of language change: "It can be said that the language of the Hakka has remained almost unchanged since it formed" in the remote past; this assertion is not accepted by others (Luo Zhaojin 1991a:25). What is important is not the validity of Yang's assertion, but the implication that the Hakka language is a more pure Chinese dialect from which its speakers derive a sense of pride.

The traditionalist view of ethnic unity leads many to support the Nationalist position on Taiwan's political reunification with the Peo-

1. It is revealing to note that the architecture of the proposed cultural center in Xinzhu symbolizes and abstracts the form of a mainland Chinese Hakka roundhouse (*tulou*) (Chen Ban 1991; Chen Yundong 1989:54, 64, and 1991; Lin Huowang et al. 1991). There is no evidence to show that immigrant Hakka in Taiwan built structures of this type.

ple's Republic of China. The deeply felt idea of Hakka unity is expressed as a blood relationship (*xueyuan guanxi*), which is temporarily in a state of disruption due to the bitter disputes between the Nationalists in Taiwan and the Communists in the People's Republic. Traditionalists hope that once the political questions are resolved, the natural state of unity will be restored. Intellectuals arguing for reunification base their positions on the experiences of other divided nations, notably Korea, Vietnam, and Germany. Traditionalists argue that future Chinese reunification should follow the course of Germany rather than Vietnam; the process of gradually warming relations between North and South Korea, and increasing semiofficial contacts between Taiwan and the PRC are discussed with keen interest. Critics of the traditionalist position assert that the German (or Korean) model does not fit the Chinese reality because Taiwan's fifty-year colonial experience under the Japanese and more than forty years under the Nationalists have caused social, political, and economic changes of such magnitude that island society differs too greatly from that of the mainland for successful integration (Yang Changzhen 1991a:60).

In matters of national politics the traditionalists face a dilemma arising from the fact that Taiwan's political liberalization resulted in the legalization of opposition political parties. In practical terms, the only party with the strength to challenge the Nationalists is the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP, *Minzhu Jinbu Dang*). The DPP is internally divided into several major factions, one of which supports national independence for Taiwan (the *xinchaoliu* faction), and one of which advocates a more moderate "Taiwanification" of democratic processes (the *meilidao* faction).²

Neither of these contrary positions compels strong support from traditionalist Hakka. Those in the DPP who advocate independence are a direct threat to ethnic unification. The faction that advocates democratic reforms and increased Taiwanese participation in national politics is viewed with suspicion; many Hakka feel that this faction favors majority Hokkien interests and brushes Hakka concerns aside. Furthermore, a distinction is often made between support for a reunification policy and support for the ruling party as a political entity. Support for reunification is not the only issue that concerns Hakka; the perception of bias

2. The internal divisions of the DPP are not addressed here. A good introduction to political issues and trends in the Republic of China for the period 1986-90 is contained in Leo Y. Liu (1991).

in government policy against Hakka language and culture also enters into political thinking.

Critics of the traditionalists think their political ideas are primitive and unclear. Less moderate critics feel that Hakka who support reunification fail to give due weight to Taiwan's delicate relationship with the mainland and the practical problems of achieving a workable union. Much of the Hakka debate labors under the weight of this evolving relationship; if the relationship develops peacefully, the ethnic debate on Taiwan will proceed smoothly. However, if the cross-straits dialogue lapses into hostility, ethnic interests will be shunted aside so that this larger question may be confronted.

Moderates

Moderates maintain that differences between the Hakka in Taiwan and those in mainland China are too great to bridge. One formulation of this position views Taiwan's political history as a succession of quite different regimes (the Dutch; the Ming loyalists under Koxinga; the Qing; the Japanese; and the Nationalists); in this view, the policies of each regime created social, political, and economic differences from mainland China. The Chinese nature of Taiwan society is not suspect, but Taiwan's history of colonization and external rule is contrasted with an idealized image of China as a monolithic nation that developed relatively free from alien influences. The contrast between Taiwan and the mainland is perhaps a distortion of history, but it is a satisfactory rationale to support the moderate stance on Hakka ethnic unity.

One fact that conditions this stance is that contact between people on opposite sides of the Taiwan Strait was somewhat restricted during the Japanese period and has been prohibited for most of the Nationalist period. Moderates feel that this span of almost one hundred years has created an unbridgeable gap.³ An informant expressed his feelings on this: "If I went back to Wuhua [*xian*, the ancestral home in Guangdong], it would be only to take a look around, to see what's there." He went on to say that although he would participate in kinship rituals with mainland

3. Travel to the mainland to see relatives is not, with few exceptions, now forbidden. The tourist trade from Taiwan has developed with astonishing speed since most prohibitions were eliminated in the late 1980s. Most of those who visit specifically to see kinfolk are post-Liberation mainland immigrants, but Taiwanese do trace relatives who have been separated for generations.

relatives, he would do so only out of an obligation to very remote ancestors, and not as a means of affirming solidarity with people who have no connection to his life in Taiwan. If kinship bonds are weak, ethnic bonds are weaker.

Political positions adopted by Hakka moderates are based on the realistic, yet cynical, view that both the Nationalists and the DPP either ignore or respond to ethnic issues (language, culture, and history) depending on political exigencies. Leading figures think the Hakka are treated as a useful political tool (*zhengzhi gongju*) whose support is sought only when it suits party needs.⁴ Hakka susceptibility to this treatment results from minority status (He 1991:64). The intellectual response to this perception of political marginality is to think of the Hakka as a bloc that can be used to ameliorate inattention. The island-wide Hakka population is conceived of as a swing-vote bloc. Translated into electoral politics, if Hakka can be motivated to vote as one on ethnic issues, they may play a role in excess of numerical strength and achieve positive results.

Motivating Hakka to act in unison is not easy. People active in the movement stated that the Hakka population's indifference and apathy toward ethnic issues (see Johnson, this volume) are the real obstacles to strengthening the Hakka position in government. Activists maintain that Hakka voting strength is linguistic: people vote for those who speak their language. One example is drawn from Xinzhu *xian*, where the population is split between an urban area (Xinzhu City) and a mix of rural villages and small towns. The majority of city residents are Hokkien; Hakka dominate the rural precincts. According to one informant, who is a school principal, it is "natural" that city residents vote for Hokkien-speakers and that country people vote for Hakka-speakers. When questioned about this state of affairs, this reflective and precise schoolmaster said that whether candidates in the hotly contested elections are capable politicians or willing to press ethnic demands is not a material consideration.

The question of unification or independence is avoided completely by many Hakka moderates. One moderate leader attributed this avoidance

4. One local issue that has the flavor of political expediency is the reconstruction of the Hakka Martyrs Temple (Yimin Miao) Middle School in Fangliao, Xinzhu *xian* (see also n. 6, below). Only after a personal visit from a high-ranking government official was reconstruction given serious encouragement. The Martyrs Temple has special significance for Hakka in northern Taiwan, and is a symbolic center of the movement.

to Hakka dependence and weakness. He maintained that if Taiwan takes the step to nationhood, the Hakka minority will be weak in national politics and incapable of pressing for protection. But if unification with the People's Republic of China occurs, the Hakka will be forced to contend with a government and an ideology the majority find alien and ruinous. The view of this moderate is that neither independence nor unification is desirable given Hakka strength on Taiwan, "So our political situation is strange and ridiculous." Moderate leaders are aware that choosing either independence or unification will eventually be necessary, but they will not decide until forced to do so by developments over which they have little influence. Attention is therefore directed to creating a more democratic political system and to local issues that affect the quality of daily life.

The moderate view of ethnic relations envisions a democratic Taiwan in which the equal rights of all ethnic groups are preserved in law and pursued in policy (Liu Guozhao 1990:13).⁵ The thinking of moderate leaders is decidedly unformulated. The eventual structure of a democratic government, the possibility of ethnic conflict in a democracy, and the methods of assuring equal rights receive little attention. But Hakka moderates have not simply adopted the political rhetoric of the post-1986 opposition movement; moderates are conscious of new issues and are in the process of deciding what the ethnic implications are and what positions to adopt.

Radicals

The radical stream of the Hakka movement is more articulate and better organized than its traditional and moderate counterparts. This results from active participation in opposition politics and from the involvement of young intellectuals who have university-learned analytic skills; their fresh perspectives, theoretical sophistication, and aggressive propagation of new views have propelled several into positions of authority at relatively young ages.

The leaders of this stream think of themselves as democrats and ethnic pluralists (*duoyuan*) rather than as radicals; their views are radical only in contrast to those of traditionalists and moderates. Opinions

5. The idea of legally sanctioned equal rights for ethnic groups is also shared by many in the radical stream; the difference is that many radicals support Taiwan's independence from mainland China.

differ on all major issues, but members of the radical stream generally endorse Taiwan's independence, a strong Hakka presence in national politics, and the creation of "new Hakka" in Taiwan (Li Qiao 1991a:3, 1991b).

Ethnicity: The New Hakka

Radical intellectuals and leaders cite their concern over Hokkien chauvinism (*shawen zhuyi*), increasing alienation from Hokkien-dominated opposition politics, an apprehension that Hakka identity faces extinction because of numerical inferiority, and the effect of social mobility in Taiwan's industrial economy as the major factors that precipitated the formal organization of Hakka ethnic organizations (Chen QiuHong 1991:42; He 1991:64). These concerns led in 1987 to the publication of *Hakka Storm* (Kejia fengyun), a magazine organized by writers, teachers, and politically active intellectuals with the expressed aim of advancing Hakka interests (Wu Jinxun 1991:1).⁶ He Xinxing (1991:64) marks the founding of *Hakka Storm* as the beginning of ethnic differentiation within opposition politics. The magazine was the first forum designed to express Hakka positions on social, political, and cultural issues (Wu Jinxun 1991:4). Editorial goals included raising ethnic consciousness, enhancing solidarity, solidifying political influence, and struggling for Hakka interests. *Hakka Storm*, and the interest it attracted, also provided a platform for debate about Hakka ethnicity.

One trend in the radical definition of Hakka ethnicity consciously centers on Taiwan as the point of common origin. Unlike traditionalist views of worldwide unity and moderate indecision, the radical stream rejects the symbolic link of all Hakka through blood bonds to the Chinese mainland. Taiwan is the new Hakka homeland, and the Hakka there are "new Hakka." This concept of Hakka ethnicity is expressed in an anthem written by Zhong Zhaozheng, a well-respected author and forceful voice in the radical stream. Zhong wrote the lyrics for the

6. By 1990 *Hakka Storm* was in economic trouble. New editors were added, the editorial tone was moderated, and new patrons were found; the reinvigorated publication became *Hakka Magazine* (Kejia zazhi). Support from the governing committee of the Martyrs Temple has been especially noteworthy. The temple is dedicated to the souls of loyal Hakka martyrs who fought with the Qing against rebels, primarily Hokkien, in the late eighteenth century. It is the center of a rotating ritual cycle that ties Hakka districts together as a ritual group. Hokkien do not participate.

anthem using vernacular expressions; it is intended to be sung in Hakka.

"The New Hakka" (Xin ge Kejiaren)

Stop repeating that the Hakka are so extraordinary;
 Stop repeating that the Hakka are so remarkable.
 The suffering and difficulty cannot be fully told;
 Crossing the sea from China, coming to Taiwan,
 Endlessly drenched in sweat and blood;
 Opening the mountains, cutting the forests, establishing roots;
 We are the new Hakka.

Don't reject this land for being too small;
 Our blood runs in just this land.
 Don't reject this land for being too weak;
 Our hopes are simply right here.
 We are the new Hakka.

Struggle with uplifted heads for freedom, and recreate the
 Hakka spirit;
 Struggle with passion for democracy, and recreate Hakka
 radiance.
 We are the new Hakka.

(Taiwan Hakka Association 1991:18; lyrics by Zhong
 Zhaozheng, 1990)

The theme that gives vitality to "The New Hakka" is a vision of Taiwan-based ethnicity—a theme that implicitly criticizes pride in former glory as a source of Hakka identity. Migration from China, suffering, shedding sweat and blood, pioneering, and establishing roots in Taiwan are important images.⁷ China, by implication, is no longer home. The "new Hakka" do not intend to borrow the greatness of the old to create a sense of ethnic solidarity. Li Qiao confirms this view by contrasting symbolic images of strength and weakness: "The Hakka need to be Israelis, not Gypsies; Taiwan is the last stop in our migration" (1991b:7).

The new critique of the old strikes at sources of Hakka pride. One

7. For representative works on Hakka pioneering in Taiwan see Zhuang and Chen (1982); Huang Zhuoquan (1989) and Huang Rongluo (1989).

example is revealing. Hakka traditionalists claim modern national leaders (including Sun Yat-sen, Deng Xiaoping, Li Kuan-yew [former prime minister of Singapore], and Li Teng-hui [president of the Republic of China]) as either fully Hakka or as descendants of Hakka ancestors.⁸ As symbols of power and influence, the men in these positions affirm that Hakka participate in national affairs at the highest levels and have the stature necessary to influence national and global events. In this view, borrowed glory reflects on the entire ethnic group. However, reflected glory does not translate into increased respect for the Hakka: "Do those who like to say these kinds of things understand the nature of the times? Are they just comforting themselves? Living among the glories of the past is anachronistic, demeaning, and self-oblivious" (Zhong Zhaozheng, in Taiwan Hakka Association 1991:4).

The ideas that constitute the new Hakka identity were formed not only in reaction to other conceptions, but were also called forth by perceptions of anti-Hakka prejudice and domination by Hokkien and mainlanders. Dominated politically by minority mainlanders and economically by the majority Hokkien, the Hakka risk becoming invisible in the cities and mere bystanders in the countryside (Chen QiuHong 1991:42-3; Li Qiao 1991a:2). Loss of Hakka identity is a process imperceptible to many, who do not participate in the ethnic movement and who may not be aware that they have an ethnic identity (*zuqun rentong*) to protect (Zhong Fumei 1990:20). Twin pressures to conform to Hokkien practices in economic life and to government practices in political life are effective agents of acculturation. Boundaries between Taiwan's three major ethnic categories are highly permeable and increasingly a matter of speaking the appropriate language. The problem for Hakka, however, is that the boundaries are permeable in one direction only: from Hakka to Hokkien and Mandarin. One activist and author summarizes the problem by stating, "In this state of oblivion you have already turned mainlander! You have already turned Hokkien!" (ibid.:21).

The radical effort since 1987 to formulate a new, Taiwan-oriented ethnic identity resulted from dissatisfaction with the Hokkien domination of opposition politics and from a mounting sense of a loss of identity through absorption into the consumer economy and the mainland political ideology. The ideological foundation of the new identity

8. Mary Erbaugh's contribution to this volume is a detailed description of Hakka networks operating before the founding of the People's Republic. She makes good use of evidence from scattered sources to demonstrate how Hakka gained leading positions.

combines elements that are recognizably ethnic (having to do with origins and boundaries) and political (relating primarily to the structure of government and the debate over Taiwan's future).

Nationalism: The New Taiwan

The radical stream of the Hakka movement favors political reforms that attend to the needs of different ethnic groups on the island. Democratization of political processes is the fundamental goal, but radicals also stress that a liberalized regime should recognize that Taiwan society is multiethnic and multilingual. Whether Taiwan should declare independence or reunify with the Chinese mainland is a question that receives no unanimous answer. Thinking about political issues facing the entire population of the island is mixed; ideas contain elements that advance ethnic interests and elements that are consciously chosen to benefit all the island's inhabitants. The ethnic and political positions members of the radical stream adopt reflect both new political realities and the post-1986 rise of ethnic consciousness.

The political reality is that the Hakka are a minority and cannot hope to achieve through ethnic isolation a position of strength. Therefore, the question is not whether Hakka should participate, but rather how to effectively use limited political strength. Cooperation with Hokkien is a theme that recurs throughout political discussions. "If Hakka who participate in opposition politics want to become influential politicians, they need to transcend their Hakka backgrounds. They will not get elected by depending only on Hakka votes" (Chen Qihong 1991:41; see also Li Qiao 1991a:2). Short-term expediency dictates that minorities must shun their ethnic identities in public in order to increase political influence. But, after a multiethnic power base has been established, long-term goals may be pursued (He 1991:64).

The most systematic political thinking occurs among movement leaders who support independence and reject reunification. Should Taiwan choose the former, one radical leader has proposed several principles that should guide the new state. First, political conduct should be premised on the rule of law and not of parties or people. Presidential powers should be constitutionally limited, in order to avoid domination by powerful autocrats like Chiang Kai-shek. Second, ethnic equality should be written into a reformed constitution so that the rights of all groups are guaranteed; the goal is ethnic coexistence without oppres-

sion. Third, the ideal new Taiwan is a democracy in which "the people are the rulers, [and] the government is the servant of the people" (Zhong Zhaozheng 1991:1; see also Zhong Fumei 1990; Li Qiao 1991b:7).

How far Hakka should press ethnic issues within the political context is a matter of debate. Two positions have emerged, both of which address the ethnic tensions in opposition politics. One position calls for ethnic politics in which differences between Hakka and (primarily) Hokkien are accentuated in an attempt to preserve identity and maintain prerogative:

Who, besides the Hakka themselves, will come forth to nurture our own culture, language, and political rights? Thus, to increase respect for ethnic minorities and determine the values of Taiwan's pluralistic culture, the more that languages and cultures are differentiated, the better; the alternative is assimilation [*tonghua*] and extinction. (Chen Qihong 1991:42)

The argument in favor of preserving distinct identities rests on the understanding that Hakka are a minority; if they would preserve this identity, they must struggle to do so themselves, for other groups will not. An overtly political expression of this position is an argument for political autonomy (*zuquan zaiwo*) in which all ethnic groups "demand equal, reasonable positions and room to develop" (Li Qiao 1991a:3). Finally, an extreme expression of the desire to preserve distinctions through political autonomy is found in the suggestion that Taiwan adopt geographic divisions modeled on the Swiss canton system; Taiwan's administrative divisions would be realigned to correspond with the ethnic composition of local populations (Yang Changzhen 1991b).

A second position regarding the balance between ethnic and political issues complements the first. This position is based on the recognition that Taiwan is an ethnically plural society. One informant summarized the idea by remarking that "Hakka should identify with Hakka and identify with Taiwan" as a society composed of different ethnic groups. Constitutional reform should proceed so that laws preserving the rights of each ethnic group are enacted, for the betterment of both the state and the groups (Liu Guozhao 1990:13). In this view, it is a serious mistake to create artificial contradictions between ethnic groups; so as to "avoid the 'historical error' of interethnic conflict [*xiedou*]" (Li Qiao

1991a:3; see also Harrell 1990a),⁹ new ethnic (Hakka) and national (Taiwanese) identities should emerge. The possibility that ethnic conflict may develop is taken seriously; one author maintains that if economic stability endures, ethnic problems will "become the most important political question once unification or independence is settled" (Yang Changzhen 1991b:49).

ETHNIC SYMBOLS: HISTORY AND LANGUAGE

Despite variation in points of view, movement activists agree that language and history define Hakka identity, and that both are threatened by the economic forces and political structures the movement was established to influence. The sense that the movement is in a state of emergency can only protect and invigorate (*qiangjin*) these aspects of identity, rather than fully promote (*tichang*) Hakka interests. Leaders sense that they are engaged in a rearguard action to preserve Hakka identity. Time for reflection is lacking and little effort can be expended to examine what Hakka identity means. The result is that people treat language and history as emblematic givens and as material for slogans in the movement's activities. Arguments advanced proceed little beyond the desire to preserve "good" Hakka culture and to allow the rest to disappear (Liu Fuzeng 1991:8).

History

The unique experiences of the Hakka in Taiwan are important aspects of identity to many, but historical knowledge is limited and stereotypical. Hakka are known for their pioneering spirit; many districts bordering Taiwan's mountainous interior were opened to Chinese colonization by Hakka pioneers. The Hakka are able to withstand deprivation and denial, for the lands they opened were positioned between hostile, unacculturated aborigines (*shengfan*) in the mountains and untrusting Hokkien neighbors on the western plains. Last, the Hakka are known for fidelity; loyalist forces raised to combat antistate rebels and foreign invaders in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries very often came from Hakka centers. The knowledge and application of history typical

9. Pointed references to interethnic conflict refer to the bloody past. Conflicts between Hakka and Hokkien were a major problem for Qing administrators between the 1680s and the 1860s (Dai 1979, Hsu 1980, Lamley 1981, Ownby 1990).

of movement leaders contrasts with the pursuit of identity through history that Nicole Constable (this volume) outlines for the people of Shung Him Tong. Although people who do significant historical research on Hakka subjects publish regularly, no synthesis reflecting the new ethnicity has emerged as a standard.

Stereotypical images of the Hakka experience do not have to be true. It is enough that they are thought to be so, for they reinforce qualities that are prized: the Hakka are conservative, frugal, enduring, self-respecting, and loyal (Li Qiao 1991a:2). Although historical information exists for the Qing period, little is available for the Japanese (1895–1945) and Nationalist periods. People explain this gap in terms of colonial exploitation and Nationalist oppression. The Japanese, it is felt, were not concerned with the events that would comprise Taiwan history; their colonial mentality acted to obscure Hakka history.

It is also thought that the Nationalist government has actively suppressed Taiwan history for political reasons. Educational policy has been marshaled in support of the national goal of a unified China and studies of Taiwan have been suppressed in favor of a continental view of Chinese history. Hakka university students point out that standard texts are devoted to the history and geography of mainland China; one informant remarked, "I studied everything about the provinces that border the Yangtze River but didn't know anything about Taiwan until after I graduated and began to study Taiwan history on my own." Taiwan, in this view, is a society with an unknown history, and Hakka history is blank because the Hakka are a minority.

Language

Language unites all elements in the Hakka movement; its status is tied to the fate of the people.¹⁰ It is feared that Hakka, as a spoken language, is declining in Taiwan. The reasons offered for this vary, but many think that the language will become extinct and be replaced by Mandarin and Hokkien. Apprehension over the state of the language led to a significant event in the early stage of the Hakka movement, the "Return My Hakka Language" (Huan wo Kehua) demonstration.

10. This point is made in most of the contributions to this volume. Myron Cohen's description (this volume) of Hakka settlement and social organization in South China offers compelling evidence that common language has been particularly important in the definition of who the Hakka are.

This demonstration was held in Taipei on December 28, 1988, and was the first Hakka ethnic demonstration in Taiwan. It was also the first peaceful mass demonstration since the Japanese period to present ethnic grievances. Organized by people in the radical and moderate streams, it was consciously designed to appeal to the whole spectrum of the Hakka population. This goal was achieved by simplifying issues and sponsoring the demonstration, in part, through the central Hakka religious site in northern Taiwan, the Martyrs Temple (Baozhong Hui 1989:158).¹¹ According to Luo Zhaojin, the demonstrators placed three concrete demands before the national government (1991a:25). First, Hakka television programming should commence. Second, legal restrictions on the use of dialects in the broadcast media should be repealed. Third, bilingual education in the public schools should be instituted. The authorities have reacted slowly, and the demands have met with limited success.¹²

The "Return My Hakka Language" demonstration was significant because it presented for the first time in public an issue that could unite most Hakka. An equation between language fluency and Hakka identity is expressed in speeches, publications, and interviews (Liu Fuzeng 1991:8; Wang Dehong 1990; Zhong Fumei 1990). The formula is a compact way of expressing an ethnic truth: in order to be a true Hakka, one must speak Hakka, and Hakka should not fear rejection for speaking their language when the situation is appropriate (Liu Guozhao 1990:11). Language, not common origin or shared blood, is elevated as the primordial characteristic Hakka use to identify themselves.

Evidence suggests that spoken Hakka is accepting a great number of loan words and is losing place to Hokkien and Mandarin (Yang Jingding 1991). First, a survey of two hundred Hakka primary-school students revealed that the majority of the youngest students could not pronounce their names in Hakka and that few older students could do so. Second, descriptive statistics strongly suggest that the parents of Hakka school-aged children routinely speak the language between themselves only about half the time (48 percent) and use Hakka with their children even less (21 percent) on a daily basis (Wang Dehong 1990:35

11. See notes 4 and 6.

12. At the time this chapter was written, television news and weather broadcasts in Hakka were scheduled to begin in September 1991 (Luo Zhaojin 1991b:1; Taiwan Hakka Association 1991:7-8). Bilingual education is officially supported by the Xinzhu *xian* administration. Hakka language classes are taught in schools on the basis of voluntary participation; the government "neither prohibits nor encourages" these classes, according to one teacher.

ff.). The evidence is not conclusive, but does give the impression that unless measures are adopted to revive it "Hakka is headed for a natural extinction" (personal communication from a primary-school teacher, 1991).

Language thus stands as the element that can be emphasized in order to separate Hakka from other groups. The 1988 language demonstration made this point clear, for although it was political in nature, it detached Hakka interests from opposition activity and was an exercise in ethnic politics. The position adopted by politically active Hakka, however, is that the languages and cultures of *all* ethnic groups in Taiwan should be protected in law. The Hakka position is unique because it offers protection to Hakka, Hokkien, and Mandarin; while radicals in the DPP support making Hokkien the sole official language of Taiwan, and Nationalists advocate the sole use of Mandarin. The Hakka position is advantageous because it at once exerts pressure on the government to deal with ethnic concerns and secures a uniquely Hakka position in the political opposition.¹³

INTERNAL CRITICISM

The Hakka movement is not without internal critics. An undercurrent of indecision about whether the Taiwan Hakka constitute a distinct ethnic group exists at the heart of the movement. Chen Yundong argues that if the Hakka are regarded as Han Chinese, they must be thought of as a subcategory created through historical and linguistic processes rather than as a distinct ethnic group (1989:11). Chen's point is that cultural variation among the Chinese is high, but that intergroup boundaries are permeable; given this, the notion of the Hakka as a distinct ethnic group with a categorical identity is not reasonable. One moderate thinker asserted that "the Hakka are not a race [*zhongzu*] or a people [*minzu*], but a dialect group [*yuzu*]." He explained this thought by citing Taiwan's transition from an agricultural to an industrial and service economy, rural to urban migration, and government education policies. In his view, these factors have reduced Hakka and Hokkien cultural differences almost to the vanishing point. Language maintains

13. Resentment over the central government's insistence on the continued use of Mandarin as the national language is openly expressed. The DPP makes a point of using Hokkien at rallies and in the legislature both as a symbolic slap at the Nationalist Party and as a means of communicating the party's Taiwan focus.

group boundaries but does not create segregation, ignorance, and animosity. Sharon Carstens (this volume) makes the same point; similar social and economic forces are acting to reduce distinctions among the Chinese population of Malaysia. Malaysian Hakka may need, in her view, to adopt special measures to avoid full assimilation.

The critics are active movement members and organizers who share a skepticism about the existence of the Hakka as an ethnic group and about the utility of language to unify the group. They are not fully convinced that the movement is an ethnic one and ask whether the Hakka do, or should, have goals distinct from those of other segments of the population. In this paradigm, if protecting Hakka language (or history or culture) drives the movement, it is not an ethnic movement but a linguistic (or historical or cultural) one. They ask why this course should be followed. A response predicated on the instrumental use of ethnicity as a political force is satisfactory to some. The idea is that Taiwan's political future is very unclear and fraught with danger, and Hakka must create opportunities to contribute to the debate and to stake a claim to the future (information from interviews). The movement's most articulate critics align with the radical faction, which invented the idea of the "new Hakka." However, I think that rather than deny that Hakka exist, which their most direct statements imply, the critics are attempting to create an understanding of how to be Hakka in Taiwan.

CONCLUSION

The Hakka movement in Taiwan is not unified; no center of authority or symbolic significance exists. Streams within the movement define Hakka solidarity in various ways. With the exception of rescuing the language from an inevitable decline, common goals do not exist. Internal critics even question whether the Hakka exist as an ethnic group distinguishable from Hokkien and mainlanders.

The structure of the movement reflects the national political debate, and a fundamental question dividing Hakka from Hakka is over the fate of Taiwan. Radicals prefer independence from mainland China, but traditionalists contend that unification is necessary. Those in the moderate center remain uncommitted, and advocate improving the quality of people's lives. Divisions within the movement are not rancorous, however.

History is a potent symbol in the movement as a whole, but does not

receive a uniform interpretation; what is important to some is not to others. The greatest contrast exists between traditionalist and radical interpretations. Traditionalists emphasize the undisputed links with mainland China to construct an image of overarching Hakka unity. Radicals consciously construct a Taiwan-centered Hakka identity that denies the relevance of former glory.

The single issue that has demonstrated the power to move the Hakka ethnic movement from the realm of intellectual debate to mass appeal is the perception that the Hakka language is in retreat. The common view is that the language is under attack from both within and without, with declining use of Hakka in Hakka homes. The argument that national policies and the Hokkien-dominated economy force minority Hakka to use other dialects has been successfully used to rally support for the movement.

Political liberalization beginning in 1986 provided an opportunity for the Taiwan Hakka movement to develop. However, active promotion of Hakka issues and attempts to reinterpret identity developed within opposition politics, not only as a result of Hakka opposition to the Nationalist government. The process of defining the issues, formulating positions, and debating political alternatives began when Hakka became convinced that the political opposition existed primarily to advance Hokkien interests. Hakka ethnic activity is thus also a product of differentiation within the opposition political movement.