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Is Taiwan Chinese?

The Impact of Culture, Power, and Migration on Changing Identities

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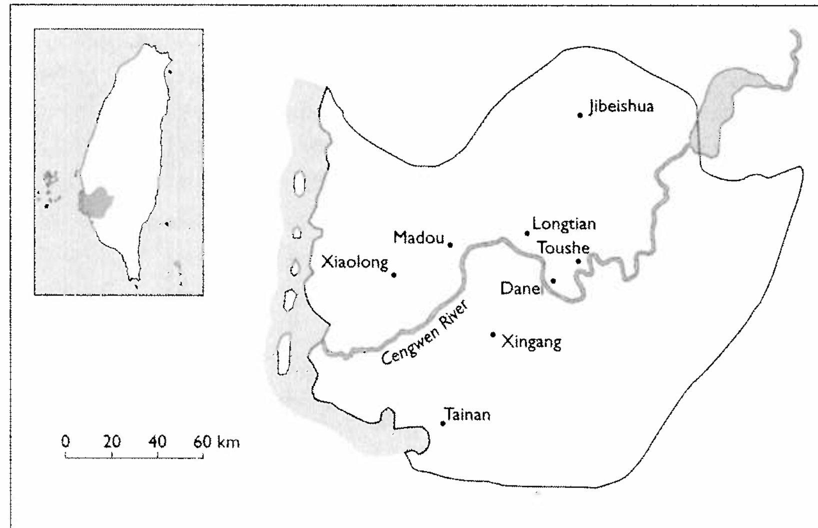

Figure 2. Map of Tainan County, Taiwan. China Historical GIS Dataset, Version: Pre-release (October 2001).

Regimes in Taiwan		*Regimes in China*	
Dutch	1624–1661	Ming	1368–1644
Zheng	1662–1683	Qing	1644–1911
Qing	1683–1895		
Japanese	1895–1945	Republican	1911–1949
Nationalist, Martial Law	1945–1987	Communist	1949–present
Nationalist, Post-Martial Law (transitional period)	1987–1996		
Full electoral democracy	1996–present		

Figure 3. Regimes in Taiwan and China.

CHAPTER 1

What's in a Name?

Culture, Identity, and the "Taiwan Problem"

At the turn of the twenty-first century, Taiwan is a global hot spot. The events and rhetoric surrounding Taiwan's second presidential election in March 2000 raised fears that tensions in the region might result in actual warfare among nuclear powers. Why is Taiwan—with a stable, democratic government and a strong economy—considered a threat to world peace? The People's Republic of China (PRC) disputes Taiwan's de facto sovereignty. The "one China" policy, officially supported by the PRC, the U.S., and many other countries, and formerly supported by Taiwan, asserts that there is only one China and that Taiwan is a part of it.[1] And yet, Taiwan is clearly no more a part of the PRC at the turn of the twenty-first century than, say, South Korea. So why does the PRC dispute Taiwan's sovereignty? Ultimately, the problem is one of identity—Han ethnic identity, Chinese national identity, and the relationship of both of these identities to the new Taiwanese identity forged in the 1990s.* The PRC

*Discussion of these issues is further complicated by problems in terminology. The English term "Chinese" can refer to ethnic identity (Americans of Chinese ancestry) or to national identity (citizens of the PRC). In Mandarin Chinese, the official language of both Taiwan and China, the distinction appears clear: *han ren* (lit., "Han person") refers to the Han ethnic majority, whom most Americans would think of as the ethnic Chinese. (Han are the ethnic majority both in China and in Taiwan.) *Zhongguo ren* (lit., "China person") refers to national citizenship and includes all 56 *minzu* (ethnic groups) officially recognized in China. However, the use of *zhongguo ren* in Taiwan is complicated by the term's earlier political uses: under the martial law rule of the Nationalist party (1947–1987), the term was used to support Taiwan's claims to ruling mainland China. For clarity, I use "Han" to refer to ethnic identity and "Chinese" to refer to national identification with China.

claims that Taiwan (unlike Korea) is ethnically Han and therefore should be part of the Chinese nation. Even though Taiwan acknowledges and honors its Chinese heritage, it now claims not to be Chinese. In the 1990s, this claim was made primarily on the basis of Aborigine contributions to Taiwanese culture and ancestry.[2] Since 1999, however, Taiwan has started to assert its claim to sovereignty in terms of the social basis of its identity. The complex ways in which identity underlies the political debate over Taiwan's future relationship with China are the subject of this book.

One of the most fundamental misunderstandings about identity is the widely accepted view that ethnic and national identities are based on common ancestry and/or common culture and therefore that identity is grounded in antiquity. Ancestry and culture are the ideological terms in which ethnic and national identities are claimed,[3] and as long as identity is discussed in these terms, antiquity seems a reasonable measure of its authenticity. However, culture and ancestry are *not* what ultimately unite an ethnic group or a nation. Rather, identity is formed and solidified on the basis of common social experience, including economic and political experience. When we realize that identity is really a matter of politics, and that it is no less authentic or "real" as a result—real in the sense of being meaningful and motivating to people—then we must examine identities and their implications very differently. We must untangle the social grounding of identities from the meanings claimed for those identities in the political sphere. We must also reveal where the claimed meanings run roughshod over the very personal, experienced-based meanings of individual members of identity groups.

Taiwan is a global political hot spot now because it is transforming its national and ethnic identities in ways that have unwelcome implications for the PRC's national identity and ethnic politics. Between 1945 and 1991, Taiwan's government portrayed Taiwan as ethnically Han and nationally Chinese, even claiming that it was the lawful government of mainland China. Since 1987, for the obvious political purpose of justifying their distance from the PRC, people in Taiwan have increasingly claimed Taiwanese identity to be an amalgam of Han culture and ancestry, Aborigine culture and ancestry, and Japanese culture (but not ancestry), in the making for almost 400 years, and separate from China for the entire twentieth century (cf. Chang 2000). (China disputes the length of separation.) Ironically, the PRC was more comfortable when Taiwan's government claimed legal authority over China, because at least then there was no questioning of whether Taiwan belonged within the Chinese nation. An independent Taiwan poses problems for China's national identity. First, it leaves out of the Chinese nation a territory that originally left China's authority due to colonial annexation: the PRC emphasizes this problem. Second, an independent Taiwan also raises issues for ethnic territories under Chinese authority: if Taiwanese are allowed to "leave" the nation because of ethnic differences, then why not Tibetans, or Turkic Muslims (such as the Uighur), or even Cantonese? Taiwan independence could have a domino effect that would break up the PRC, like the USSR or, worse, Yugoslavia. Given the political stakes involved, the rhetoric is emotional and often convoluted.

How can we get at the reality underneath the political rhetoric? How do we know what identities ordinary individuals in Taiwan and China have, and the basis on which these identities are actually built and claimed? Examining the borders of identities—how borders are drawn and how people cross them—helps to answer these questions. On the Taiwan side, three identity changes by descendants of plains Aborigines who intermarried with Han—one shift in the seventeenth century and two in the twentieth century—show the extent to which Taiwanese people and culture really are an amalgamation of Aborigine and Han contributions. These shifts also help us understand how identity changes can occur at all and how new identities come to be meaningful. Similar identity changes in China—among the ancestors of Tujia (an officially designated ethnic minority) in Hubei—shows that such changes in ethnic identity are not unique to Taiwan before 1949. Descendants of intermarried locals and Han immigrants in Hubei became the local Han. Although the fact of identity change in Hubei appears to raise questions for Taiwan's claims to nationhood, in fact it does not. Examination of subsequent identity change in Hubei after 1945 (to a non-Han minority), and PRC policies and actions affecting local identity and culture, shows that there *were* real differences in identity between Taiwan and Hubei at the end of the twentieth century. Moreover, the PRC's own policies and actions drove these differences. China's dismissal of the pre-1949 change to Han identity in Hubei contradicts its claims about Taiwan (where it emphasizes Han identity). That contradiction provides room for negotiating Taiwanese identity.

A CHINESE VIEW OF THE "TAIWAN PROBLEM"

People in China feel strongly that Taiwan is and should be a part of the Chinese nation. In March 1996, the PRC held war games in the strait

between Fujian Province and Taiwan—effectively subjecting Taiwan to a military blockade. These war games were in response to actions that might eventually lead to Taiwan's declaring itself a nation, independent of China. Many Americans do not understand why tensions run so high on this issue, given that Taiwan functions independently of China and has done so for years. But to date, Taiwan does not *call* itself a nation independent of China. Its government officially calls itself "the Republic of China" (sometimes adding "on Taiwan") and has done so since Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi) and his Nationalist (*guomindang* or GMD) followers fled the Chinese mainland in defeat in 1949. Both sides of the Taiwan Strait use the phrase *taiwan wenti*—translated variously as the "Taiwan problem" or "Taiwan question" or "Taiwan issue"—to refer to this impasse, but the phrase has slightly different meanings from these different vantage points. On the China side, the problem is how to bring Taiwan back into the Chinese nation. On the Taiwan side, the problem is how best to maintain comfortable economic and political trajectories without being swallowed up or bombed by China.

In July 1999, Taiwan's first democratically elected president, Lee Teng-hui (Li Denghui), said on German radio that future talks between Taiwan and China should be "state-to-state" talks, suggesting that Taiwan be *treated* as an independent country by the PRC. Beijing was furious and called Taiwan's president a "troublemaker." His move has been debated, with the PRC considering it a move toward independence and others, such as James Lilley (head of the U.S. mission to Taiwan under Reagan and U.S. ambassador to China under the elder President Bush), seeing the move as maintaining the status quo. Although one Taiwanese student in the U.S. suggested to me that Lee has a tendency to speak off the cuff without thinking, this move may not have been unplanned. In the summer of 1994, Lee publicly referred to his political party as the *taiwan guomindang*—the Taiwan Nationalist Party. The "*guo*" in *guomindang* refers to the nation, which since the party's founding has always meant the Chinese nation. Lee's usage as early as 1994 implied Taiwan's status as a nation. Moreover, Lee has publicly stated, "What the Republic of China [Taiwan] needs the most is an international affirmation of its sovereignty" (see *Free China Journal*, June 16, 1995:1 for the text of the speech).

This stance does not go over well in China. Traveling around southwestern Hubei in 1996 (before the war games, but when tensions were building), I frequently met local-level officials. Most of them would ask me about Taiwan when they found out I had done research there. Although

each of these conversations began with questions about what Taiwan is like socially, economically, and culturally, they all turned sooner or later to the question of Taiwan's status as part of China. My responses—that most people I knew in Taiwan who had discussed the issue with me were not strong supporters of independence but were not enthusiastic about reuniting with China either—were invariably met with vehement assertions. Taiwan is part of China's territory, I was told, it is for China to decide Taiwan's fate, and the U.S. had better stay out of it. I always agreed, and still do, that the U.S. has no right to decide this issue. However, I pointed out that in Taiwan, people think they—the people of Taiwan—should decide their own future, not China. The international support sought by Taiwan, which China interprets as moves toward independence, can ensure this freedom for the people of Taiwan to decide for themselves. The problem with this position, from China's point of view, is that it assumes precisely what they want to question—that Taiwan is *sovereign*—for sovereignty is a right granted to *nations*, not to their constituent parts.[4]

NARRATIVES OF UNFOLDING

National identity and ethnic identity are commonly portrayed as fixed, with clear borders. Identity is seen as the product of a person's culture and/or ancestry, and there is no room for individual choice about belonging or departing. In order to "mobilize people behind their political agendas," governments and ethnic leaders "actively hide the fluidity and changeability of identity and group membership" (Harrell 1996a:5); they discuss identity in terms of purported common descent and/or purported common culture (including language), even though ultimately it is common sociopolitical experience which binds group identity. The concealment of fluidity is accomplished by constructing "narratives of unfolding" (Bhabha 1990:1, Harrell 1996a:4), origin myths (Keyes 1981:8, Williams 1989:429), or a reified "History" (Duara 1995:4) that portrays the group as having a long and unified history distinguished from other groups. These narratives draw heavily on selected historic sociopolitical events to galvanize support around claimed ancestry and/or culture.

I prefer the term "narratives of unfolding," bulky as it is, because of three conceptual advantages. First, the term clearly distinguishes between constructed narratives of the past and the totality of what is actually known about past events, in a way that the term "history"—capitalized or uncapitalized—does not.[5] I use "history" to refer to actual events that

occurred in the past, and I emphasize that we know about history imperfectly. Many events are completely unknown to us, many events are known only through extremely biased perspectives, and many events are so contradictorily reported that it is difficult to reconstruct even a chronological sequence of what occurred. Narratives of unfolding are not history, nor are they simply a biased interpretation of past events; they are ideologies—"a conscious falsification, a conscious selection of some of the *available* evidence" of the past over other evidence for political purposes (Harrell 1996a:5–6n, emphasis in original). Thus, narratives of unfolding attempt to selectively shape our understanding of the past for political purposes. Their authors may call these narratives history, but they are in fact constructed ideologies.

The second conceptual advantage of the term "narratives of unfolding" is that it captures the sense which these narratives attempt to convey of an inevitable unfolding of destiny from the primordial past. At the same time, the term can refer to narratives about the "unfolding" of different things—the unfolding of one's own nation, the unfolding of a hostile nation, the unfolding of a disputed territory as part of one's own nation. Although the anthropological concept of "origin myths" incorporates both an attempt to construct a primordial past and a notion of a group charter, the term lacks the flexibility to refer to one group's version of the origins of another group and also lacks the sense of a destiny which continues into the present. The relation of the past to the present is crucial to narratives of unfolding. Although ostensibly about the past, they are really about the present. They are attempts to justify, to naturalize, to immortalize the present-day claims of a nation or an ethnic group.

Finally, narratives of unfolding change as societies change, as present-day political goals change, as international relations change. The terms "history" and "origin myth" do not easily accommodate the concept of a narrative that is constantly changing as people reformulate and transform their identities in the present. The term "narratives of unfolding," however, can be understood both as a purported unfolding of primordial destiny and also as narratives that are themselves continually unfolding and changing in relation to changing social contexts.

For example, consider China's narrative about the diversity of its population. China's Han imperialism *(da han zhuyi)* is glossed over in a narrative celebrating China's status as a united nation of diverse ethnicities *(tongyi duominzu de guojia)* (cf. Harrell 1995b). Yet we can see, simply in the classification of ethnicities, where the power lies. There are fifty-

six officially recognized ethnic groups *(minzu)* in China—the Han ethnic majority, constituting 91 percent of the population, and fifty-five ethnic minorities, together constituting 9 percent of the population.[6] However, there are also many unofficially recognized "regional" varieties of Han, and these so-called "regional" differences (or "subethnic" differences, as they are sometimes called) among the Han are really ethnic differences, both by the Stalinist criteria purportedly used to define ethnic groups in the PRC—common territory, common language, common economy, and common psychological make-up reflected in common culture—and by comparison to ethnic differences elsewhere in the world (as I discuss further below). Officially, all ethnic groups are determined according to the Stalinist criteria. However, the PRC government never considered variation within the Han ethnic group in terms of these criteria.[7]

Han were never subjected to classification into distinct minzu because of an older narrative of China's unfolding as a Han civilization. Han viewed themselves as a single group embodying Confucian civilization—the Middle Kingdom (*Zhongguo*, China) that stood between Heaven and the barbarian non-Han (cf. Ebrey 1996). In this older narrative, the great linguistic, cultural, social, and economic variation among the Han was irrelevant to their classification as part of a single Han civilization. In the PRC, classifying all Han as a single ethnic group both maintains the links of the present-day nation-state to past Han civilization and justifies Han political and demographic dominance as natural and predestined. If Han had been broken up into different ethnic groups, they would have competed with each other and none could have claimed to be the exclusive inheritors of the Confucian mantle. In spite of its dissonance with the older Han narrative, the very existence of a Chinese narrative about diversity (which I discuss below) shows that narratives of unfolding do change along with societies and their politics.

TAIWANESE IDENTITY

Because Taiwan's sociopolitical experience took a different path from China's, Taiwanese identity does not neatly correspond to any of these PRC identities—ethnic minority or "regional" Han. Before 1895, when Taiwan came under Japanese colonial rule, people in Taiwan did not think of themselves as a unified group (Chang 2000:53–54). Although Han in Taiwan undoubtedly viewed themselves as different from non-Han (both Aborigines and Europeans), there is no evidence of unity among the Han.

On the contrary, in the seventeenth century Han merchants warned the Dutch about an uprising of Han farmers and laborers, showing class rather than ethnic solidarity. From the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries, while some Han cheated Aborigines of their land and rents, other Han married Aborigines and helped them sue and even rebel against such abuse, showing solidarity along lines of personal connections and common economic interests rather than ethnic identity. Nevertheless, Han in Taiwan were surely as aware of European colonial incursions as Han on the mainland, and they may have begun to develop a single Chinese identity in reaction. Still, feuding *(xiedou)* based on ethnicity, lineage, and place of origin erupted frequently in Taiwan, with alliances crossing and re-crossing these identities as circumstances varied (e.g., Lamley 1981, Harrell 1990, Shepherd 1993:310–323), thus showing no signs of ethnic solidarity.

With the imminent arrival of Japanese troops came the first indications of a pan-Taiwanese identity, an identity limited to Han. James Davidson, an American war correspondent with the Japanese army, reported (1988 [1903]:257–370) that representatives of the various Han groups in Taiwan formed a short-lived "Republic of Taiwan" and organized a seven-year resistance to Japanese occupation of the island (cf. Harrell 1990, Ka 1995:83n1, 84n2). Thus, the first clear Taiwanese identity was a national one, linked to the unsuccessful formation of a nation-state.

Under Japanese colonial rule (1895–1945), peoples in Taiwan were classified by a notion of race which in practice, in the early Japanese household registers, looks a lot like today's ethnic classifications. Under the category of "race" *(zhongzu),* the Japanese colonial government distinguished between Hoklo and Hakka—"regional" varieties of Han with mutually unintelligible "dialects" and some significantly different customs—and classified Hoklo as *fu* and Hakka as *fu* or *guang,* depending on their province of ancestral origin.[8] The Japanese government also distinguished Aborigines—called barbarians *(fan)*—as "raw" *(sheng)* or "cooked" *(shu),* depending on their relationship to Han culture. "Raw" or "wild" Aborigines—living in the high central mountains, on Taiwan's eastern plain, and on Orchid Island off Taiwan's southeastern coast—had adopted few or no Han customs. "Cooked" or "civilized" Aborigines—living on Taiwan's western plain and in the western foothills of the central mountains—had adopted much of Han culture, including language. Thus, the Japanese colonial government perpetuated classification terms from the Qing regime, perhaps concerned that feuding along ethnic lines might continue.

However, by 1915 or so, these distinctions were not particularly important and they were no longer entered in the registers. Much more important to the Japanese were the distinction between Japanese and everyone else, as well as so-called class *(zhongbie)* distinctions, which were really police reliability ratings (Wolf and Huang 1980:19). Among other things, these latter distinctions affected wages and the frequency of routine police visits (Davidson 1988 [1903]:600, Wolf and Huang 1980:19). By the 1930s, many "cooked" Aborigines, who are now more politely referred to as "plains" Aborigines, had assimilated to Hoklo identity, and the Japanese government brought "raw" or "mountain" Aborigines forcibly under their control, removing once and for all Han fears of them.[9] Efforts were made during the late 1930s and early 1940s to get people in Taiwan to think of themselves as loyal subjects of the Japanese empire, but people in Taiwan experienced clear categorical differences between themselves and Japanese which left them with a sense of non-Japanese identity (cf. Chang 2000:56–62).

In 1945, Taiwan was "gloriously returned" *(guangfu)* to Chinese rule. Control of Taiwan was given to the Chinese Nationalists (GMD) by the terms of a 1943 agreement among Franklin Roosevelt, Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill, and Chiang Kai-shek. "There must have been a moment when, knowing they would soon be under Chinese rule again, Taiwanese [i.e., Han in Taiwan] could assume themselves simply to be Chinese. That moment lasted until shortly after the Mainlanders arrived" (Gates 1987:44, cf. Chang 2000:62). Corruption was rampant at all levels of government and the military, inflation skyrocketed, and the Mainlanders kept coming—some one to two million of them by the autumn of 1949. Tensions led to a Taiwanese uprising, referred to as the 2:28 Incident because of its start on February 28, 1947. The GMD brutally suppressed the uprising, executing thousands of Taiwanese within a few weeks and later hauling many more off to jail.[10] The GMD declared martial law, suspending constitutional rights for "security" reasons.

Under Nationalist martial-law rule (1947–87), Taiwanese identity became a strong "regional" identity. The term *taiwan ren* (Taiwanese) is often used in Taiwan today to refer to the Hoklo, who are the ethnic majority. Through the late 1980s, however, the term was generally synonymous with *bensheng ren* (lit., people from within the province), thereby including both Hoklo and Hakka whose ancestors came to Taiwan before 1895 when the Japanese colonial government suspended futher immigration from China. "Taiwanese" were thus mainly contrasted with *waisheng ren* (lit., people from outside the province), that

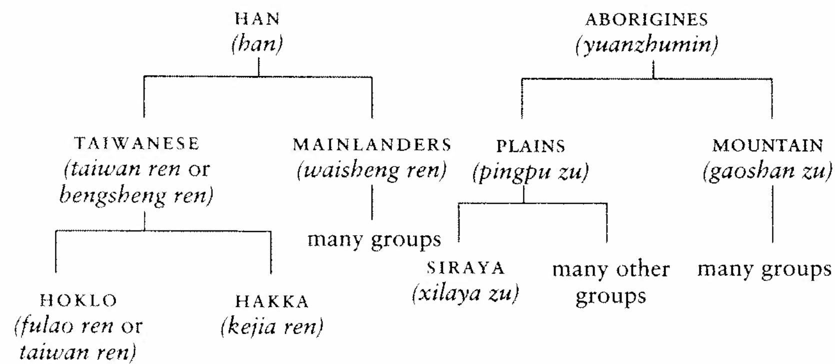

Figure 4. Relation of ethnic terms used for peoples in Taiwan.

is, Mainlanders who came to Taiwan with the Nationalists between 1945 and 1949 and their children and grandchildren born and raised in Taiwan.[11] "Cooked" Aborigines had disappeared (in the Japanese period) into the Taiwanese category, and "raw" Aborigines were classified separately as *gaoshan zu* (mountain tribes) but ignored in the political sphere until recently. (See figure 4.)

I suggest (contra Chang 1996:78n1) that the category "Mainlander" is an ethnic distinction in Taiwan (and hence should be capitalized, like "Han" and "Aborigine").[12] Mainlander identity is claimed on the basis of culture and ancestry—sometimes positively, in terms of language, culture, and recent ancestry from mainland China, and sometimes negatively, as simply not having Taiwanese language, culture, and ancestry. The fact that Mainlanders as a group do not share the *same* ancestry and culture should no more disturb their classification as a single ethnic group than the fact that Hoklo and Hakka do not share the same ancestry and culture disturbs their classification as Taiwanese, or the fact that Ami, Bunun, Atayal and other "mountain tribes" do not share the same ancestry and culture disturbs their classification as Aborigines. These differences emphasize the point made earlier: although group identity is *claimed* in terms of ancestry and/or culture, it is ultimately held together by common sociopolitical experience. "Taiwanese," for example, were largely (but not entirely) excluded from political power and national corporations in Taiwan during the period of martial law, and "Mainlanders," in turn, were largely (but not entirely) excluded from small and medium-sized businesses owned and operated by Taiwanese (cf. Gates 1981; Chang 1994, 2000; Corcuff 2000).

Taiwanese also excluded Mainlanders from their social spheres when they could. Political scientist Edward Friedman (1994, personal communication) tells a story of such exclusion from the 1970s. A Taiwanese-owned cafeteria that Friedman frequented near National Taiwan University had a sign in the window welcoming Japanese tourists. (In the 1970s, there were no Japanese tourists in Taiwan, in part because of the enmity with which Mainlanders viewed Japanese.) After some time, when Friedman knew the owner sufficiently to ask about the sign, the owner explained that he could not put a sign in the window telling Mainlanders to stay out but that this sign achieved the same results—no Mainlanders came in.

Martial law had important economic implications. The Nationalist government advertised Taiwan abroad as having a plentiful, cheap, and docile labor force that was forbidden to strike, and it established policies and special export zones favoring firms—both foreign and domestic—that exported all their products. Taiwan's economy grew more or less steadily from the late 1960s, faltering most seriously during the oil crisis of the mid-1970s but recovering thereafter. Indeed, the rapid economic development together with the social and political stability of the 1960s through the early 1980s is known as the "Taiwan miracle" (e.g., Gold 1986). Today, Taiwan has a fully developed economy and is quite wealthy, even with the economic downturns in 1997 and 2001.

Until 1986, political opposition to Nationalist Party rule and advocacy of Taiwan independence—meaning the declaration of Taiwan as a nation independent of China—was suppressed, often brutally. Unexpectedly, in 1986, then-president Chiang Ching-kuo (Jiang Jingguo, Chiang Kai-shek's son) tolerated the illegal formation of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which made Taiwan independence part of its party platform. He lifted martial law in July 1987, six months before his death, and set in motion other changes leading to democratization (e.g., Chang 1994, Gold 1994). The people of Taiwan now directly elect the National Assembly (since 1991), the governor of Taiwan and the mayors of the cities of Taibei and Gaoxiong (since 1994), and the president and vice-president (since 1996).[13]

Further political liberalization has occurred since 1986 as well. Mainlanders, and later Taiwanese, were allowed to visit the PRC. Public demonstrations are legal and frequent. Newspapers have genuine freedom to investigate and report. The 2:28 Incident, once unmentionable, has been the subject of an international-prize-winning film *(A City of Sadness)*, numerous publications, a presidential committee investigation

and report, an official presidential apology, monuments, and museum exhibits.

With the political and economic transformations of the 1980s and 1990s, Taiwanese identity has changed dramatically, becoming increasingly inclusive, proud, and nationalistic. During the 1998 Taibei mayoral campaign, Lee Teng-hui publically articulated the new Taiwanese identity as embracing both the ethnic Taiwanese and the Mainlanders.[14] The fact that Chen Shui-bian—the incumbent DPP mayor of Taibei running for re-election—started using this concept of an inclusive new Taiwanese identity as well shows how popular it is.

These politicians did not invent this identity; they merely articulated and emphasized a change in Taiwanese identity that had been developing over the previous decade. For instance, one person I know from Taiwan, whose parents had fled the mainland with the Nationalists in the 1940s, visited China in the mid-1980s, soon after such visits were allowed by Taiwan's government. After expressing shock at the standards of living, at the loss of Confucian civility and propriety in relationships, and at the apparent lack of work ethic which she found in China, she identified herself proudly as from Taiwan. Other "Mainlanders" from Taiwan have reported similar experiences and sentiments (cf. Hsiao and So 1996). Another anecdotal example of pride in Taiwanese identity dates from 1987, when I met a scholar wearing a knit hat which read "MIT." I asked if she had done her Ph.D. at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and she explained that to her it means "Made In Taiwan." She had bought the hat on a recent visit to Boston because she had been a student in the U.S. during the 1960s and 1970s, when "Made in Taiwan" was on so many labels (as "Made in China" is today), and Taiwan was associated with cheap products—inexpensive and not very well made. She had been ashamed to have Americans associate her with such cheap products. She said that now that Taiwan was known for its economic success, she would wear her MIT hat proudly. As a further example of the social basis of this new Taiwanese identity, another Taiwanese person, who had been bored by the American presidential campaigns she witnessed as a student in the U.S., recounted to me the unexpected captivation of Taiwan's first presidential campaign in 1996 and the strong sense of empowerment from voting in the election. These sentiments are probably not unique, and the people of Taiwan are not likely to forget such feelings of empowerment. The new, inclusive Taiwanese identity is born of such experiences.

Because it initially focused on including various Han identities, the new Taiwanese identity only recently began to explicitly include Aborigines. However, from the first, it implicitly included Aborigines as a result of the new narratives of Taiwan's unfolding constructing Taiwanese identity as an amalgam of Aborigine and Han ancestry (a major theme of this book). This new identity, with its basis in actual social experiences, contributes to the increasing numbers of Taiwanese who approve of the calculated risk of angering China in order to win international support for Taiwan's sovereignty.

FORMING IDENTITIES, NEGOTIATING CLASSIFICATIONS, DRAWING BORDERS

Identities must be negotiated; they are not simply a matter of choice, because identity formation in individuals and groups derives from their interaction with the social and cultural context in which they live (cf. Keyes 1981, Bentley 1987, Williams 1989, Harrell 1995a, Brown 1996a). ("Social context" here refers to the specific hierarchical organization of a society. By this broad definition, social context thus includes political and economic contexts.) Nevertheless, identity—a sense of who we are, in terms of how we fit into the world—is derived from how our minds process the world around us. Identities of individuals are socially constructed—formed and negotiated through everyday experiences and social interactions. Individuals understand these lived and social experiences in terms of the cultural meanings of the specific society in which they live (cf. Goffman 1963, Strauss 1992b, Strauss and Quinn 1994).[15] The experiential nature of identity is usually accepted for idiosyncratic identities associated with personality or achievement, such as Phi Beta Kappa members. However, as I have already discussed, identities of individuals as members of groups—especially national identity and ethnic identity—are portrayed by political leaders as fixed, with borders that are not based on individual experiences.

Our cognitive processing of the perceived identity choices available to us is influenced both by the biological structure of the human brain and its relation to mind and also by the cultural meanings and social processes we have experienced, which we rely on to make sense of the world around us (cf. Strauss and Quinn 1994). At the most fundamental level, identity is the way that a person classifies him- or herself, a mental representation or thought. This level of identity, however, is not what is generally discussed by scholars or political leaders, because we cannot know exactly what a person thinks, only what he or she reports think-

ing or what we interpret him or her to think based on statements or actions. In other words, we cannot know the actual mental representations of individuals, only their public representations (utterances or actions), which may or may not accurately reflect mental representations.[16] Individuals or groups of individuals may keep their mental representations concealed, for many possible reasons. Thus, what are actually discussed, in this book and in other discussions of identity, are the *public representations of identity* by individuals or groups.

How then can we compare what ethnic identity means to different individuals, let alone to people in different cultures and at different historical periods? Surely what it means to be Taiwanese is different than what it means to be American, and both of these identities were different in the seventeenth century than they are today. Of course the specific meanings of ethnic identities and their significance vary across individuals, across cultures and across time, but I suggest that the way that identity is formed does not vary. Moreover, I suggest that a universal process of identity formation means that the way that ethnic identity shapes the lives of individuals does not vary either. Because ethnic identity is based on *social* experience, Taiwan Aborigines in the seventeenth century and, for example, African Americans in the twentieth century both understood that being classified by these labels affected how other people treated them, their position in their local social hierarchy, and their ability (or inability) to negotiate a higher position.

A wide variety of factors influences which specific identities individuals will form: the meaning of particular identities in the culture(s) to which the individuals or groups are exposed, the social status or relative power of members of particular identities, and the various characteristics—cultural, social, and/or physical—used to mark or categorize particular identities.[17] Individuals may have limited choices about their identities, or may have no choice at all, because these factors affect the possibility of being classified as one or another identity. These factors also affect the benefits and disadvantages of being classified one way or another, and thereby affect which option people choose when choice is possible. There are also constraints on whether others accept the classification claimed by individuals or groups (cf. Yelvington 1991). Thus, the specific identities that form for individuals are the negotiated product of the interaction between what people claim for themselves and what others allow them to claim.

Identity formation occurs through the social experience of this interaction. People negotiate with others, both those who claim the same iden-

tity and those who claim different identities, and what these different groups of "others" allow one to claim often varies. For example, Gentiles and Jews often have different views about whether a person claiming Jewish identity is to be regarded as Jewish (that is, "allowed" to claim Jewish identity). There is variation within a group as well: Ultra-Orthodox, Reform, and secular Jews have different standards for judging claims to Jewish identity. *Identity formation, then, is the process of socially negotiating how to classify oneself in terms of the broader classifications of people existing in a particular social and cultural context* (cf. Barth 1969, Keyes 1981:7). Generally, such classifications (American, Taiwanese, Tujia) have social consequences, including political consequences—only U.S. citizens may run for Congress, non-Han minorities in China are given extra points on their college entrance examination scores, and so on.

Classification is a general human cognitive process. The physiological workings of human cognition interact with the socially and culturally constructed content of specific categorizations. Anthropologist Dan Sperber suggests that because of a human cognitive process which encourages essentializing classifications, cultural input which classifies people can be construed in the brain as signifying a larger, more essential distinction (cf. Boyer 1998):

> It is quite possible, then, that being presented with nominal labels for otherwise undefined and undescribed humans is enough (given an appropriate context) to activate the initialization of the *ad hoc* template. If so, then perception of physical differences among humans is indeed not the triggering factor in racial classification. (Sperber 1996:144)[18]

In other words, racial identities—and I would suggest other kinds of ethnic identities—are formed by a combination of social, cultural, and cognitive influences (I define a race as a special kind of ethnic group—an ethnic group with an *assumed* biological basis).[19] Telling a child that a man is black or white—or Han or barbarian, whichever terms are locally meaningful—may set up an essentialized cognitive difference for the child, which is later reinforced when the child finds differences in how black men and white men or Han and barbarians are treated in her society. Sperber's insight probably also extends to gender: we refer to someone as a man or a woman even more frequently than simply as a person.

Consider an example of classification which I discuss further in chapter 4. There were large numbers of Han men who migrated to southwestern Taiwan in the seventeenth century. Many of these men married local women—Aborigine women or women of mixed Han-Aborigine

parentage—and settled in "Aborigine" villages. Under Dutch rule of Taiwan, it would have been to the disadvantage of the "mixed" population to be characterized as Han by the Dutch. In contrast, under the succeeding Zheng regime, it was to the advantage of the "mixed" population to be considered Han. Moreover, patrilineally derived surnames linked to written Chinese characters had long been markers of Han status (Ebery 1996). This cultural classification scheme gave people of mixed heritage an opportunity to manipulate their own identities. If those who had been designated Aborigines under the Dutch had a Han father or paternal grandfather whose surname they could take with legitimacy in the eyes of other Han, they were likely to do so and thereafter be categorized as Han by the Zheng regime and later by the Qing regime.

In addition to changes in individual classification, many of the villages where Han men intermarried were later reclassified as "Han" villages. The designation of a village as Aborigine or Han had important social ramifications for all the members of the village, regardless of their individual identities: the tax structure was based on the ethnic classification of a village, for example. On what basis, then, was a village considered Aborigine or Han? A very "interesting turning point . . . occurred when the density of [Han] Chinese settlers [in a village] was such that people no longer perceived [Han] Chinese men in an Aborigine village and instead began to perceive a [Han] Chinese community with Aborigines in it" (Brown 1995:157, 1996b:67). I suggest that there is a cognitive threshold, related to critical mass, above which people perceive a public representation (here, an identity label of Han) as shared by the majority of individuals in a group (here, a village), and thus apply that representation to the entire group (here, viewing the village as Han) (Brown 1997, see also chapter 6 below).

From this example we can see several important aspects of classification as it relates to identity. Classification is influenced by demographic trends: without the migration of Han settlers, there would have been no reclassification at any level. Demographic trends do not, however, determine classification contents and labels. The mixed population could negotiate between Han and Aborigine identities, and economic and political advantages strongly influenced which identity people sought.

Identities are both fluid and changeable. The terms "fluidity" and "changeability" are sometimes used interchangeably by other authors, but I will use the two terms more specifically, to refer to two different dynamics. Although the portrayal of identities as fixed found in narratives of unfolding implies that there should be little problem in drawing an unambiguous border to classify different identities (that is, a border between individuals of one identity and individuals of another identity), in fact how the border is defined often shifts, across time and across space, allowing individuals and even entire groups to fall first on one side and then on the other side. I use "fluidity" to refer to this shifting of borders around individuals and groups who themselves do not necessarily change in cultural content (ideas and beliefs) or ancestry, the terms in which identity is claimed. The population of mixed Han-Aborigine heritage had the border to Han shift around them in the short span between the late Dutch period (1650) and the early Qing period (1685); similarly, the people in the villages of southwestern Taiwan where I conducted fieldwork had the border to Han shift around them in a short time span around 1930.[20] "Changeability," then, refers to the ability of individuals or groups to change the identity label under which they are classified: the border remains fixed—defined the same way as before—but individuals (and, rarely, groups) actively push across it. Individuals of mixed Han-Aborigine ancestry in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries probably used patrilineal surnames to negotiate a reclassification of themselves as Han. People in the PRC use the minority status of a grandparent to change their own status from Han to minority. Although the portrayal of identities as fixed implies that people should not be able to change the identity classification by which they are labeled, in fact they can and do change it under certain conditions. Thinking of fluidity as involuntary relabeling by external sources and changeability as voluntary self-relabeling can help us analyze specific cases, as long as we realize that these two dynamics can interact with each other. Once an external source has started relabeling individuals, these individuals can act to speed up or further shape the process.

"Variability" as I use the term in relation to identity refers to changes in the *content* of an individual's or group's identity. Which social, cultural, and/or physical characteristics are considered or claimed as part of a particular identity can change over time and across geographic space. Variability is related to the multivocality of identity, which means that the people classified within any given identity are not homogeneous. The degree of accepted social, cultural, and physical variation can differ widely for different classifications—for example, the category "Han" encompasses a wider range of variation than "Japanese." However, even identities claiming a large degree of homogeneity tolerate *some* variation among their members. As we shall see, such variation creates the poten-

tial for changing from one identity label to another and for changing the content of a single identity classification. Variability (content change) is strongly related both to changeability (voluntary label change) and to fluidity (involuntary relabeling). When the content of an identity varies, individuals may have the opportunity to change their identity labels and, at the same time, the classification border dividing that identity from others may shift.

Just how easy is it for an individual or group to change identity labels, and how often does the content of a person's or a group's identity change? In this book, I examine two groups who *have* changed identity labels, crossing the border to Han: plains Aborigines and their descendants in Taiwan, and Tujia and their ancestors in Hubei. However, it is important to realize that these changes were difficult. Although the content—and especially the cultural content—of identities varies easily and frequently, it is very difficult for individuals and especially groups to change the identity labels under which they are classified. Such label changes require special social and demographic conditions, including migration, intermarriage, and changes in political regimes.

Why are identity labels so difficult to change when identity content is not? I suggest that the stubborn persistence of identity labels, even in the face of varying cultural, social, and physical characteristics used to classify people, is related to cognitive processing of the "primordial" aspect of identity: purported common descent. Across cultures, descent is formulated in kinship terms. In a matrilineal society, for example, one is descended from "mother," a term which conflates biological and social roles. The terminology of adoption makes this conflation clear: the terms "birth mother" and "adoptive mother" both incorporate "mother," though one indicates genetic relatedness and one a social role. Cognitively, kinship is one of the most basic classification schemes of any society: the categories of mother, sibling, and father (or mother's brother) are among the first classifications of other humans that an infant learns. Moreover, these relations are biologically fixed—one cannot change one's mother or siblings or father—and so kinship and descent may also be *perceived* as fixed or in some sense "primordial."[21] One can change these relations socially, for example, through adoption, but in many societies descent is re-asserted fictively, with an adopted child using the same terms that a biological child would.

Across cultures, kinship terms reflect social kinship relations, not actual genetic relatedness. For example, although American kinship terminology classifies all first cousins by the same term, corresponding to

their similar degree of genetic relatedness, Han kinship terms do not. Patrilateral parallel cousins (one's father's brothers' children) have one set of kinship terms, are considered family, and have always been subject to the incest taboo applied to patrilineal relatives. Matrilateral parallel cousins and both types of cross cousins are grouped together under a different set of kinship terms, are considered more distant relatives ("relatives" versus "family"), and were formerly considered good marriage partners.[22] These differences between American and Han kinship classification terms reflect important social and cultural differences in kinship relations. In American society, which has long followed neolocal postmarital residence (newlyweds establishing their own independent house), a person is unlikely to grow up with any of his or her cousins in the same household; in Taiwanese society, which has only begun to depart from Han virilocal postmarital residence (newlyweds living in the husband's parents' household), a person might grow up in the same household with his or her patrilateral parallel cousins but would not usually grow up with any other category of first cousins.

One general observation about kinship helps clarify the difficulty in changing identity labels and helps identify the social conditions under which identity labels can change: kinship varies across cultures, or, more precisely, principles guiding social kinship relations vary across cultures (cf. Westermarck 1922 II:193, 1934:38; Wolf 1995:512–514). For example, seventeenth-century Dutch missionaries reported that, upon contact, Siraya plains Aborigines in southwestern Taiwan were matrilineal, calculating descent from the mother; Han immigrants from Fujian in China were patrilineal, calculating descent from the father. Where identity labels are linked to a single kinship principle, they are difficult to change, but when circumstances bring two differing kinship principles into the same society—as occurred in seventeenth-century southwestern Taiwan—identity labels can change more easily.

COMPETING NARRATIVES OF TAIWAN'S UNFOLDING

Certain aspects of the PRC's official narrative of Taiwan's unfolding as a Han and a Chinese domain are remarkably similar to the narratives used in Taiwan during the martial law period (based on PRC government white papers; see TAOIOSC 1999 [1993]:78–84). Taiwan is said to belong to China since antiquity, by asserting that the place names (Yizhou, Liuqiu) in third-century and later historical records refer to Taiwan, and by inflating the number of Han visits and size of the Han pop-

ulation in Taiwan prior to the seventeenth century. Both the older Taiwan narratives and the PRC narrative minimize the presence and significance of the many Aborigine groups who lived on Taiwan when the Han arrived, although the PRC narrative departs from older Taiwan narratives when it construes Aborigines as "Chinese people" (TAOIOSC 1999 [1993]:78) in accordance with the present-day rhetoric of China as a multiethnic nation. Expansion of the Han population in Taiwan in the seventeenth century is attributed to the efforts of Han pioneers, with no mention made of Dutch colonial impetus for this expansion. The PRC goes further than older Taiwan narratives ever did, in portraying Dutch control of Taiwan from 1624 through 1661 as an immoral invasion and occupation of Chinese territory (TAOIOSC 1999[1993]:79). However, both regard the Zheng invasion as restoring, rather than establishing, a Han rule which proceeds unproblematically through 1895; both gloss over the war between the Zheng regime and the ruling Qing dynasty in China. Both emphasize the initial Taiwanese opposition to Japanese colonial rule, but narratives used by the GMD government emphasized it especially strongly, minimizing later Taiwanese acceptance of Japanese rule and Japanese contributions to the economic development of Taiwan. Older Taiwan narratives ended with the "glorious return" of Taiwan to "China," meaning the start of GMD control, but the PRC narrative goes on to assert the PRC's authority over Taiwan and to implicate the U.S. for maintaining the division between China and Taiwan.

The PRC government gives its narrative of Taiwan's unfolding further importance by embedding it within its narrative of China's unfolding as a modern nation-state.

> The modern history of China is a record of subjection to aggression, dismemberment, and humiliation by foreign powers. It is also a chronicle of the Chinese people's valiant struggles for national independence and in defense of their state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national dignity. The origin and evolution of the Taiwan question are closely linked with that period of history. For various reasons Taiwan is still separated from the mainland. Unless and until this state of affairs is brought to an end, the trauma of the Chinese nation will not be healed and the Chinese people's struggle for national reunification and territorial integrity will continue. (TAOIOSC 1999 [1993]:77)

China's larger narrative of national unfolding focuses on its nineteenth- and twentieth-century political history, emphasizing the colonial annexations of territory and people by Western and Japanese powers, including the cession of Taiwan to Japan by the Qing imperial government in

1895. This national narrative of colonial humiliation—sometimes referred to as the "Century of Humiliation" *(bainian guochi)*—explains the tremendous symbolic importance to China of the return of Hong Kong in 1997 and Macao in 1999. It also construes Taiwan's de facto independence as further imperialism against the Chinese people.

Taiwan's new narratives of unfolding, however, distance Taiwanese identity from the Chinese nation by incorporating Aborigines in ways that acknowledge Aborigine cultural influence and even matrilineal ancestral contributions. The poem *Island Nostalgia: The Epic of Taiwan* (Liu 1991) emphasizes the cultural blending of Aborigine and Han peoples in Taiwan and imagines the island of Taiwan and migration to it as symbolic of Taiwan's distinctness from China (cf. Ren 1996). It starts with mythic stories of six mountain Aborigine groups—groups who were not only different from the ones whom the Han colonists faced on the southwestern plains but who actually had little contact with the Han until the twentieth century—implicitly claiming the cultural origins of these mountain Aborigine groups on Taiwan as part of Taiwanese origins. In accordance with older narratives, the poem presents a Han immigrant outraged by Dutch colonial efforts to "occupy our land" (Liu 1991:41) before considering the plains Aborigines perspective, thereby ignoring that Taiwan was Aborigine and not Han upon Dutch contact in the early seventeenth century. Moreover, plains Aborigines disappear into the category of Han:

> Our women,
> their men
> have become an unseparated part of the island. . . .
>
> We covered up our history,
> afraid of disappointing their 5,000 year culture. . . .
>
> We eventually cannot find ourselves
> on the island where we have lived for thousands of years. . . .
>
> In this unpredictable cycle of life
> the plains Aborigine is the beginning
> and the Taiwanese the ending.[23]

Aborigine contributions of culture and matrilineal ancestry are presented both as sufficiently present to make Taiwanese different from Chinese and as sufficiently hidden to allow Taiwanese to claim continuity with narratives about 5,000 years of "Han" culture. Thus, plains Aborigines produce a tension even within variations on the new Taiwanese narrative—Aborigine contributions are necessary to further the argument that

Taiwanese are not Chinese, but their contributions raise the uncomfortable topics of Han colonialism and non-Han barbarism. This tension is best elucidated in terms of the border between Han and non-Han.

CHINESE IDENTITY, CULTURE, AND THE BORDER TO HAN

Through 1999, both Taiwan and the PRC apparently accepted the idea that if Taiwan's people are culturally Han, they should be part of the nation of China. Lee Teng-hui's remark in July 1999 that Taiwan would continue negotiations only on a "state-to-state" basis prompted further clarifications from the Taiwan government, which suggested that Taiwan may no longer officially accept the link between Han culture and Chinese national identity. (I discuss these remarks further in chapter 6.) Nevertheless, it is important to understand this link in order to understand both China's and Taiwan's rhetorical positions prior to 1999 and to understand the lingering influences of this idea upon ordinary people in both China and Taiwan. Thus, several assumptions about Han ethnic and Chinese national identities that are built into this idea need to be examined. First, Han ethnic identity is linked to Chinese national identity. Second, Chinese national identity is linked to Han culture. Third, Chinese national identity has a clear border, and a person or group is located on one side of it or the other; that is, a person or group is definitively Chinese or not Chinese, Han or non-Han. All of these assumptions are problematic.

Han ethnic identity and Chinese national identity are conflated by people within China, both Han and non-Han, and by academics within and outside of China. This conflation can most easily be seen linguistically. The term *zhonghua minzu* is used by the PRC (as it was by the GMD) to refer to all the people of the Chinese nation, even though *hua* is a term associated with ethnic Han, and even though usage of the same term outside of China refers primarily to Han (Borchigud 1996:160).[24] Additionally, the national language of the PRC is generally referred to as *putonghua* (lit., "common speech"), but *hanyu* (lit., "Han language") is considered a synonymous term. *Putonghua*—called "Mandarin Chinese" in English—is linguistically a Sino-Tibetan language and the first language primarily for Han people, which justifies this conflation on one level: it is a Han language. However, to refer to the national language of a multiethnic country in terms of the dominant ethnic group implies that this ethnic group is most properly associated with the nation as a whole and that other ethnic groups have only a loose affiliation with the nation.[25]

The association of Han ethnic identity with Chinese national identity can also be seen in the frequent reminder that all ethnic groups are brothers and sisters in the officially multiethnic PRC, but the Han are Big Brother *(lao da)*, leading the way and offering guidance. The coincidence of Chinese usage with that of George Orwell is appropriate, because within Han kinship siblings are not equals—both sisters and younger brothers are subject to the authority of the oldest brother.[26] Before 1949, the Chinese imperial and republican states officially supported the hegemony of the oldest brother, as instituted morally in Confucian principles, just as these states supported the hegemony of parents (cf. Wolf 1995:95–96, 215–219). Since then, the Chinese communist state has implicitly supported the hegemony of the oldest brother through its promotion of a Han cultural model for the Chinese nation (Harrell 1995b).

The second assumption—that Chinese national identity is linked to Han culture—builds on the assumption that Chinese national identity is linked to Han ethnic identity, by adding the claim that Han ethnic identity is based on cultural practices, not on ancestry. The association of Han culture with Chinese national identity derives from a historic narrative of unfolding which links China as a political entity *(zhongguo)* and Han (or Hua or Xia, as it was sometimes called) *wenhua* (culture, civilization, education). In simplified form, this narrative says that the essential elements of wenhua—writing, a state system, a code of ritualized hierarchical relations *(li)* including patrilineal ancestor worship—developed in the historic Shang and legendary Xia dynasties three to four thousand years ago in the Yellow River valley, while peoples in the rest of what is today China were illiterate and tribal "barbarians" *(man)*.[27] These elements of wenhua spread to neighboring areas, creating a number of small states on the north China plain. In the third century B.C.E., these states were first united briefly under the ruler of the state of Qin. Rule of the largest part of that empire eventually passed to the state of Han, which held power for some 400 years. These early states are claimed as direct "ancestors" of modern Chinese states—imperial, republican, and communist—passing on writing, a state bureaucratic system, ritual, and ancestor worship largely intact, even though the actual "line" is rather circuitous in terms of territory, ruling powers, and actual cultural practices. Today, these essential elements of wenhua are referred to as Han, not Hua or Xia (e.g., Ebrey 1996:19n).[28] The full narrative is more com-

plex than this outline indicates, and the actual events that accumulated to create the Chinese empire were even messier than the narrative recounts. However, we can see even from this sketch that aspects of "Han" culture are inextricably linked with statehood and the creation of China as a single political entity.

Ethnic identities are generally claimed in terms of ancestry, or in terms of ancestry and culture. However, the link between Han ethnic identity and specific cultural practices, such as the rituals of ancestor worship, is special. The link derives from a set of Confucian principles referred to as "culturalism," and it suggests that a person or group can be considered Han as a result of their cultural practices *regardless of their ancestry.*

> Confucius and his followers over the centuries saw [Han] Chinese culture as superior to any other culture; they also saw that culture as something outsiders could acquire. To them the Chinese state and the [Han] Chinese family were perfect forms of social organization because they were based on the truest moral principles, universal principles such as loyalty and filial piety; adherence to these forms and principles were what made China [Han] Chinese and what made China superior to other places. Confucianism thus offered little grounds for erecting barriers against absorption of outsiders and indeed saw expansion of China through transformation or assimilation of non-Chinese [non-Han] as the natural state of affairs. (Ebrey 1996:20)

This is not to say that Confucian culturalism explains the *actual* assimilation processes that non-Han experienced. Indeed, historian Patricia Ebrey (1996) discusses at length how ancestry, as construed by surname, was terribly important to actual claims of Han ethnic identity. Rather, Confucian culturalism served as an ideological explanation of assimilation and justification for expansion of Han political control. As ideology, it still influences people's view of how the world works. Specifically, it suggests that Han identity is most importantly based on culture—shared meaningful ideas, in this case Confucian moral principles. Thus, Confucian culturalism makes the link between Han ethnic identity and cultural practices, a crucial link underlying some of the problematic assumptions embedded within the idea that if Taiwan's people are culturally Han they should be part of the nation of China.

The third assumption built into the idea that if Taiwan's people are culturally Han they should be part of the nation of China is that the borders of Chinese and Han identities are clear. The borders of contemporary Chinese national identity may seem unambiguous enough—everyone legally and permanently within its borders is part of the nation—but even ignoring disputed areas such as Tibet, these borders are actually far from clear. For example, before the return of Hong Kong to the PRC in 1997, Great Britain and China argued over what would happen to the ethnic Indian population of Hong Kong. In the view of the PRC government, the presence of this population in Hong Kong for several generations did not entitle it to Chinese national identity. Moreover, there is the issue of so-called Overseas Chinese or *huaqiao*—people of Han (or Hua) ancestry who reside outside of China or Taiwan. Some huaqiao families are recent emigrants; some lineages, especially in Southeast Asia, have resided outside of China for centuries. Chinese Americans include both recent immigrants and families who have been in the U.S. for over 150 years. Sociopolitical treatment of huaqiao creates problems for defining the border to Chinese national identity because they have legal rights, in both China and Taiwan, which other foreigners do not have. For example, there are quotas that designate spots for huaqiao in Taiwan's universities, and huaqiao have been welcomed by both China and Taiwan after Indonesian unrest targeted Han there in massacres in the mid-1960s and in looting in 1998. Throughout the Maoist era, huaqiao in the PRC were "allowed" to buy new private homes in cities and to select burial rather than cremation (Whyte 1987:296n).

The border to Han ethnic identity is even less clear. Analysis of this border takes up the bulk of this book. However, for a brief example, consider whether a third-generation Chinese American who is Christian and neither speaks nor writes Chinese is Han. Based strictly on his or her cultural practices, we would say no. However, in both China and Taiwan, such Chinese Americans are frequently classified as huaqiao and "ABCs" (American-born Chinese). Furthermore, during the 1992 and 1994 Olympics, both China and Taiwan proudly covered the performances of U.S. athletes Michael Chang (tennis) and Michelle Kwan (figure skating) as Chinese or Taiwanese athletes. These actions suggest that Chinese Americans are considered fundamentally Han and Chinese on the basis of ancestry.

The U.S. goverment also periodically buys into this ancestry-based classification. Spy scares in both the 1950s and 1990s led U.S. officials to target Chinese Americans working in government and military labs for scrutiny on the basis of unproven allegations that they leaked sensitive information to the PRC. Ironically, in the 1950s, American willing-

ness to disgrace Qian Xuesen, a U.S. Air Force colonel honored for his contributions to the development of Titan Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles, even though no evidence has ever been found against him, led to Qian's returning to the land of his birth and creating the Chinese Ballistic Missile System (Nelson 1999:6, 10). Treatment of Wen Ho Lee, a scientist at Los Alamos National Laboratory, in the 1990s was not much better. Stripped of his security clearances because he stored top-secret information on an unsecured personal computer, Lee endured almost a year of scrutiny and public allegations without any charges being brought against him. Eventually arrested and charged, he was denied bail in February 2000 for a trial set for November, and held in solitary confinement, even though European American John M. Deutch, a former CIA director who had downloaded far greater quantities of top-secret information onto an unsecured personal computer, was never charged with any crime. In spite of stern rebukes by the judge presiding over the case, the Justice Department continued to pursue the Lee case. Lee's lawyers finally negotiated a plea bargain in which Lee pled guilty to one charge of inappropriate handling of classified material and all the other charges were dropped. At the hearing for his release, the judge apologized to Lee for his treatment by the U.S. government. Prejudice because of ancestry-based classifications is also blatant in the 1999 Cox Report on Chinese spying:

> [This report] most irresponsibly . . . suggests that every Chinese visitor to this country, every Chinese scholar, every Chinese student, every Chinese permanent resident, and even every Chinese-American citizen is a spy, a potential spy, or "sleeper agent," merely waiting for the signal to rise up and perform some unimaginable act of treachery. (Nelson 1999:6)

Here we can see how readily ancestry-based classifications cross the line to racism.

How is someone who has only one parent of Han ancestry classified? Given Han patriarchal practices, someone with a Han father and non-Han mother was historically classified as Han; someone with a Han mother and non-Han father was not. Today, however, he or she *may* be classified on the basis of physical characteristics—whether he or she looks Han. However, physical characteristics are neither reliable nor consistent indicators of ethnic classification. Consider Tiger Woods, whom the media often identified as Asian American until he won big, and thereafter classified as African American. (Woods himself has tried to deflect such labeling, publicly calling himself "cablinasian"—meaning caucasian, black, Indian, and Asian—on Oprah Winfrey's talk show. The mixed category has gotten some press but the media continues to portray Woods as a prominent African American, often shown with his friend Michael Jordan.)

Social experience and how someone is treated in social interactions are always more important to actual identity than looks. Although Taiwanese Americans look Taiwanese, their experience in Taiwan often sets them apart from both Taiwanese and Americans. As a beginning language student in Taibei, my minimal Mandarin abilities were once lavishly praised by a Taiwanese shopkeeper who then berated my Taiwanese American friend's much better language skills as inadequate. Nevertheless, the potential to use surnames to organize Han identity across the usual markers of identity elsewhere—physical characteristics, language, culture, territory, a state—is exactly Ebrey's (1996:30) point when she argues that "imagining the linkage among [Han] Chinese as a matter of patrilineal kinship [as construed by surnames] differed in interesting ways from other ways of imagining group identities."

These assumptions leave loopholes in the argument that if Taiwan's people are culturally Han then they should be part of the nation of China. This argument could be challenged by questioning the link between Han ethnic identity and Chinese national identity. Most Americans would probably consider this challenge the most important, given that at the time of the American Revolution, American culture and English culture were not that far apart. Interestingly, however, this form of challenge has not been made by those advocating Taiwan's independence. The idea could also be challenged by revealing the actual role, as opposed to the ideologically claimed role, of culture in determining identity, or by revealing the ambiguities of the borders to Han and the Chinese nation. All of these challenges, however, require stepping outside of a Han cultural perspective.

Ironically, although people in Taiwan distance themselves from Chinese national identity, they often do so from within a Han cultural perspective. New narratives of Taiwan's unfolding accept the assumptions that borders to Han and Chinese identities are clearly defined and that these identities are inextricably linked to each other. They argue that Taiwanese fall outside the border because of the degree of Aborigine and Japanese influence on Taiwanese culture. This position takes Confucian culturalism to its logical conclusion: if non-Han can become Han, then Han can become non-Han. The irony here is that these narratives use a Han perspective to claim a non-Han identity and thus to challenge Tai-

wan's relation to the Chinese nation. Given Taiwan's emphasis on its wealth and political freedom relative to the PRC (e.g., MAC 1999[1994]: 97–98), this viewpoint also implies that Aborigine and Japanese cultural ancestors are as worthy as Han ancestors. Since 1999, politicians in Taiwan have begun to distance Taiwan from the Chinese nation on the basis of actual social experience—Taiwan has been governed separately from China since 1949—but the rhetoric of different culture and ancestry has not been repudiated.

Policies within the PRC have left the Chinese communist state in a position where logically they must accept the possibility that Han who emigrated to Taiwan have, over generations, changed culturally enough to be categorized as something else. Consider the following PRC policies. (1) Individuals can only claim a single identity, even if their parents have different ethnic identities. That is, a person is officially Han or Mongol or Tujia, *not* part Han and part something else. (People can petition to change their ethnic identities but only once.) This policy implies that ethnic identities and their borders are unambiguous. (2) China is a multiethnic country, but (3) the Han are Big Brother who lead the way to modernization and economic development for their "younger brothers and sisters." The introduction of Han political and economic practices is usually accompanied by the introduction of Han social practices and cultural ideas, linking Chinese national identity to Han culture and thus to Han ethnic identity (cf. Harrell 1995b). Linking Chinese national identity to Han ethnic identity in an officially multiethnic state poses a problem. If ethnic minorities in China are to be considered part of the Chinese nation by anything other than fiat, and with no ideological room left for separatist arguments, then the Chinese communist state must accept the possibility of non-Han becoming Han (sinicization), an idea derived from Confucian culturalism. Indeed, as we shall see in chapter 5, the official classification of people in southwestern Hubei as Tujia (a non-Han ethnic group) is based on an assumption that with intermarriage and sufficient time Han can be transformed into non-Han. The articles in Harrell's (1995a) edited volume argue that the Chinese communist state has undertaken a "civilizing project" that incorporates many of the assumptions and methods of the Confucian civilizing project. Given these current policies, the PRC is left arguing with Taiwan's distancing strategy in terms of the cultural character of Taiwan's people: how Han are Taiwanese?

The focus on whether Taiwanese are culturally Han diverts attention from the question of whether Chinese in the PRC are still culturally Han.

If we were to use Confucian criteria related to ancestor worship to classify people as Han, Taiwanese would turn out to be more Han than people classified as Han in post–Cultural Revolution China. Tu Wei-ming (1991) argues that in defining Chineseness as a Han identity, the "periphery"—that is, Han areas outside of China such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Overseas Chinese communities in places like Bangkok and San Francisco—has been more important, because it is more Confucian than the PRC. These arguments support the claim of narratives such as Liu's poem *Island Nostalgia* that the new Taiwanese identity is both Han and non-Han.

Although the potential for de-sinicization (becoming non-Han) is a logical consequence of the principle of Confucian culturalism, it is a consequence of such extreme impropriety that it is not explicitly discussed. In Taiwan, at least two types of attempt soften the very radical claim that Taiwan's people have become so culturally different that they are no longer Han. First, the claim is often stated indirectly—that Taiwan's people have become so culturally different that they are no longer Chinese *(zhongguo ren)*. However, acceptance of the assumption that Han culture is linked to Chinese national identity implies the more radical underlying claim. Second, the claim is made primarily in terms of culture. Discussions of the Aborigine ancestry of Taiwanese people generally acknowledge the existence of intermarriage between Han men and Aborigine women but give little or no consideration to rates of intermarriage. As we shall see in chapter 4, there is evidence that the rates of intermarriage in the early seventeenth century were so high that about half the population under Dutch control may have had mixed Han and Aborigine ancestry. Aborigine ancestry, where mentioned, actually plays a rhetorical role contrary to that of culture because of the emphasis that Aborigines were matrilineal ancestors. Ebrey (1996) argues persuasively that, in spite of Confucian ideology, most historically documented claims to Han identity relied on patrilineal ancestry not cultural practices. Thus, while culture is used legitimately in terms of Confucian rhetoric to make the radical claim that Taiwanese are not Han and thus not part of the Chinese nation, an emphasis on matrilineal Aborigine ancestry and thus patrilineal Han ancestry is used to indicate that Taiwanese are "really" Han, in terms of a different Confucian rhetoric which promotes patrilineal kinship ties. As we shall see for the Tujia (in chapter 5), this strategy of acknowledging non-Han matrilineal ancestors is used by others at the border to Han.

SINICIZATION: IDEOLOGY VERSUS ACTUALITY

Sinicization, or *hanhua,* as an ideological narrative of unfolding is important to our understanding of social, cultural, and identity changes within Han-dominated territories. By exposing hanhua ideology as the justification for power that it is, we can begin to understand how it shaped and, I suggest, continues to shape the views and arguments of Han and non-Han regarding the expansion of Han cultural and sociopolitical hegemony. The ideological aspect of narratives of the past is crucial to Han hegemony, because hegemony implies not only the existence of a social power hierarchy but also cultural justification for this hierarchy which is accepted by people in both dominant and subordinate positions of the hierarchy (cf. Gramsci 1992). Thus, "Han cultural and sociopolitical hegemony" refers to the *accepted* dominant position of Han cultural ideas, social practices, and political authority.

Historian Pamela Crossley (1990:2) has rightly pointed out that the concept of hanhua long held by Han literati and adopted rather uncritically by Western scholars as "sinicization" is "a bundle of assumptions regarding the reasons for and the manifestations of cultural change throughout a very broad expanse of Asia." She criticizes this conception of hanhua, because it "implied that through nothing much more subtle than the sheer charisma of Chinese culture, people were attracted to China and its society from elsewhere and, no great obstacle withstanding, were consumed in the flames of *hanhua.*" However, we should not dismiss the conception of hanhua or sinicization as merely a biased description of historical events. It was and is a functioning Han *ideology,* intended to shape what people perceive about how assimilation occurs, and to ignore this ideology obscures the past just as much as accepting it at face value. The actual historical processes of assimilation to Han identity and acculturation to Han cultural models worked very differently from the way this ideology asserts, and so it is crucial to distinguish what we know of how these processes actually worked from the ideology of how they purportedly worked. In order to do so, there are three implications of the ideological conception of sinicization which we need to recognize.

First, the ideology implies that there was no obstacle to becoming Han—that it was easy to take on a Han identity. There is ample historical evidence to contradict this implication. For example, Ebrey (1996:25) cites a 1370 edict by the founding Ming emperor against Mongols who took single-character surnames that could lead to their being mistaken for Chinese (here using the term *huaren*). She concludes, "Cross-surname adoption bothered a lot of people, so it is not surprising that cross-ethnicity transformations would as well." As we shall see, people did take on a Han identity, but such transformation was not easy. It required specific social and political circumstances.

A second implication of this ideology is the concept of Confucian culturalism—that culture was the key to becoming Han. This ideological implication was not true in practice because people did not claim Han identity on the basis of culture. Rather, they claimed Han identity on the basis of ancestry. Ebrey (1996:23) reminds us:

> [The] genealogies compiled in great profusion from the Song period on . . . [overwhelmingly] tell a story of Han Chinese migration, sometimes in the Han but most often in the Tang, Song, or Yuan [periods]. Rather than say they became Chinese the Confucian way, by adopting Chinese culture, they wanted to say they were Chinese by patrilineal descent. If Chineseness was actually something one could acquire by learning, why were so few willing to admit that they had learned it?

There is a tension, then, between the ideology of sinicization and the ideology of patriliny, both of which derive from Confucianism. Sinicization links identity change to cultural change; patriliny links identity change to ancestry. The fact that people used the ideology of patriliny to make their claims to Han identity does not, in itself, mean they saw no link between identity and culture, but they did view it as less important than ancestry and thus certainly not the key factor. How could culture be the key to becoming Han, as the ideology of sinicization suggests, if Han themselves apparently did not believe it? As we shall see, there is a further problem with this idea: identity change and cultural change do not necessarily occur at the same time.

Third, the ideology of sinicization implies that assimilating non-Han had no cultural impact on the Han, and therefore that the non-Han became exactly like those who were already Han. This implication fuels the notion of Confucian culturalism, because it suggests that there is a single model of Han culture whose core aspects (at least) are unchanging and eternal, which in turn justifies including an extraordinary number of people in a single ethnic category—over a billion worldwide, including Han in the PRC and overseas Chinese (huaqiao) and, depending on who is counting, Han in Taiwan (cf. Ebrey 1996:19). This apparent cultural unity is emphasized in spite of "regional" diversity within the Han that is as great or greater than that between different nations in Eu-

rope. Linguists (e.g., Ramsey 1987) generally classify Chinese into seven mutually unintelligible regional language varieties (but Norman 1988 suggests eight). Work by John Lossing Buck (1937), Arthur P. Wolf and Huang Chieh-shan (1980), Chuang Ying-chang and Arthur P. Wolf (1995), Burton Pasternak (1985), Janice Stockard (1989), and others have examined the tremendous regional variation in forms of marriage across China and Taiwan. Hill Gates' (1996a) book *China's Motor: A Thousand Years of Petty Capitalism* lays out the regional variation in the relations between market economy and state power in her analysis of the tributary and petty capitalist modes of production. Moreover, this "regional" diversity is often labeled with the names of the non-Han peoples associated with those geographic locations prior to Han annexation—for instance, Yue in Guangdong, Min in Fujian, and Wu in Jiangsu and Zhejiang. Here is a problem for the ideology of sinicization: if assimilating non-Han had no cultural impact on the Han, then why is there so much cultural, linguistic, and social (including political and economic) differentiation among Han regions?

The modern diversity of the Han also contradicts the idea implicit in the ideology of sinicization, that there is and/or was a static or invariant model of the cultural content required to be Han. Linguist Edwin G. Pulleyblank (1983) and anthropologist Arthur P. Wolf (1989) have suggested that substrate influences of different non-Han peoples may explain the regional variation of the Han. This suggestion is, I believe, similar to historian David Johnson's (1985:62–63) argument that women in late imperial China played an important role in transmitting popular culture and that, given the tendency for Chinese men to marry women of a lower class, this transmission was "one of the basic mechanisms of cultural integration in China, one whose effects ran directly counter to the effects of that other important agency of integration, gentry hegemony."[29] Thus, there are a number of scholars looking at broad empirical evidence who conclude that many non-Han peoples took on a Han identity over time and appear to have contributed—albeit in different ways and to different degrees—to changes in local models of what it means to be Han. In other words, crossing the border to Han identity yet maintaining non-Han cultural and linguistic continutities has happened many times in China's history.

What implications does sinicization have for Taiwanese identity? As already discussed, the *ideology* has been used to argue that Taiwanese are no longer culturally Han: if non-Han can sinicize, according to this ideological model, then Han can de-sinicize, and they did in Taiwan. Thus,

it is argued, Taiwanese identity should not be subsumed under Chinese national identity as, for example, Fujianese identity is. The *actual* historical processes of acculturation of practices and assimilation of identity which are masked by the ideology, however, pose difficulties for this particular distancing strategy.

First, this strategy ignores the obstacles to becoming Han—and by logical extension as well as empirical evidence, there are similar (though not the same) obstacles to becoming non-Han. When Taiwanese classify Chinese Americans as "ABCs" rather than American, they acknowledge the difficulties of identity change and thereby undermine their own claims to being non-Han. Second, this strategy ignores a more popular, competing ideology emphasizing patrilineal ancestry as more important to identity change than culture. Thus, cultural claims to a Taiwanese identity independent of Han and Chinese identities fail to counter competing claims to Han identity via patrilineal ancestry in their own narratives. As long as Taiwanese accept that Han patrilineal ancestry means Han identity, they undermine their own claim to being non-Han and non-Chinese. Finally, if the process of crossing the border to Han identity yet maintaining non-Han social, cultural, and linguistic continuities has happened many times in China's history, then what makes Taiwan different from Fujian or Guangdong or elsewhere?

The integrity of attempts to establish an independent Taiwanese identity are influenced in part by how sinicization and de-sinicization are resolved in claims to Taiwanese identity within Taiwan. In particular, while the new Taiwanese identity includes all varieties of Han—Hoklo, Hakka, and Mainlanders—inclusion of Aborigines has been more problematic. Descendants of Aborigines who assimilated to Hoklo identity in the 1930s were reclassified as Aborigine in the 1990s, after discovery and publication of their ancestry. This reclassification means that Taiwanese question the very transformation process which they embrace in their own bid for ethnic and national independence. Can such descendants be embraced as Taiwanese? In October 2000, several self-proclaimed plains Aborigines *(pingpu zu)* told me that they, not the Hoklo, are the "real" *(zhenzheng)* Taiwanese. They are making a bold bid for quintessential Taiwanese status, but this strategy could backfire and create a bitter dichotomy of indigenous peoples against colonizers if the Han Taiwanese do not welcome them into the new Taiwanese identity they are constructing. (The elderly people I interviewed in 1991–92 feared the return of such a dichotomy.) If, however, Han embrace Aborigines and their descendants as Taiwanese, then Taiwanese can make the Confucian argu-

ment that, in Taiwan at least, it truly is culture that matters. Thus, Taiwan could legitimately make the apparently contradictory claims of being quintessentially Han and at the same time non-Han, both on the basis of Confucian principles.

One legacy of the ideology of sinicization—specifically the assumption of total assimilation without substrate influence—is the acceptance of a strong link between ethnic identity and national identity. In China, this legacy ensures close government monitoring of minorities' political activities for anything which resembles separatism. It fuels the continuation of the government's "civilizing project," which encourages sinicization as part of modernization, and it highlights how important it is that Taiwan not call itself a separate nation, despite its de facto status as one. In Taiwan, the legacy of the ideology of sinicization comes into conflict with the reclassification of people as Aborigine based on evidence of how they actually sinicized. While debate rages over the "Chineseness" of Han descendants in Taiwan, the legacy of the ideology of sinicization led both China and Taiwan to accept for a long time this *cultural* debate as synonymous with the *political* question of whether Taiwan should be part of the Chinese nation. Taiwan's recent attempts to insert actual social experiences into the political rhetoric do not appear to have changed China's position.

CHAPTER 2

Where Did the Aborigines Go?

Reinstating Plains Aborigines in Taiwan's History

Variations of Taiwan's previous narrative of unfolding as a Han domain promoted Taiwanese identity as a Han identity. Thus these narratives open in the seventeenth century, when Han immigration to Taiwan began in earnest, and minimize the presence and significance of the many Aborigine groups who lived on Taiwan when the Han arrived. They tell of Han from Fujian leaving behind famine and poverty to bravely seek out a new life in Taiwan. Folk tales erroneously say that these Han colonists pushed the Aborigines who lived on the western plains into the mountains, and that the mountain Aborigines are the descendants of these displaced plains peoples.[1] Other, more scholarly versions of these older narratives view plains Aborigines who did not flee to the mountains as becoming completely sinicized, without influencing in any way the Han society into which they assimilated (e.g., Lamley 1981:282, Meskill 1979: 253–55).

As part of the construction of new narratives of Taiwan's unfolding, then, it has been necessary to reinstate Aborigines in Taiwan's history. The 1990s saw great interest, both scholarly and popular, in Taiwanese history. Not only did articles and books on the topic abound—e.g., Chen Gengjin (1986), Shi Wanshou (1990), Duan (1992), Pan Ying (1993), Shepherd (1993), and Chen, Chuang, and Huang (1994)—but the Academia Sinica (Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan), Taiwan's national consortium of research institutes, expanded Taiwanese history from a small program within the Institute of History and Philology into its own Institute of Tai-