On Becoming Chinese

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Owen Lattimore (1962, 477) distinguishes China's northern and southern frontiers as a "frontier of exclusion" and "a frontier of inclusion" respectively. He points out that traditionally the Chinese set out to demarcate the northern frontier as a border and to defend it from northern "barbarians," goals impressively demonstrated by the existence of the Great Wall. Conversely, the Chinese pushed the southern frontier with migration, appropriating the land and either appropriating the peoples on that land through assimilation or forcing them to retreat to higher altitudes (Lattimore 1962, 476). To appreciate how much land and how many people have been appropriated over the centuries, one only need realize that at one time the southern frontier began at the Yangtze River (Knapp 1980, xi). This essay discusses how, on one part of this southern frontier in southwestern Taiwan, descendants of some of Taiwan's Aboriginal peoples crossed the boundary separating Chinese from Aborigines.

Historically, Taiwan's Aboriginal peoples have been categorized by Chinese not according to their own classifications or even...

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linguistically (as the Dutch tried to do), but according to their relation to Chinese immigrants and to Chinese culture—shufan (cooked savages) and shengfan (raw savages). The “cooked” Aborigines were those whom the Chinese considered “civilized” or sinicized; the “raw” Aborigines maintained their own customs and were beyond Chinese government control. Although I use “shufan” and “shengfan” when referring to the categories, when referring to people placed in these categories I use “plains Aborigines” or “mountain Aborigines” respectively, since “Aborigine” is the preferred English appellation of the Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines (Taiwan Yuanzhuminzu Quanli Cujinhui). I also capitalize “Aborigine,” paralleling “Chinese” and “Dutch.”

Self-representation of Descendants of Plains Aborigines

Twentieth-century descendants of plains Aborigines in the southwestern communities where I worked in 1991–92 consider themselves Hokkien Chinese or Taiwanese. In discussions with me about self-representation, people linked ethnicity, culture, and physical characteristics. Moreover, it became clear that people did not consider these categories immutable; categorization of both populations and individuals was flexible.

When I first began interviewing in three historically plains Aborigine communities, I used the local religious practices surrounding an Aboriginal deity known in the literature as Alizu to ask about each community’s Aboriginal heritage (e.g., Liu 1987 [1962]; Pan 1989a, 1989b, 1994; Shepherd 1986). People readily responded that the deity was Aborigine but said that the community was no longer Aborigine. Alizu, it was explained to me, is the deity of the place, and whoever lives there must worship her. When I asked what happened to the Aborigines who used to live there, I was told they were gone. On several occasions, when I asked what happened to them—whether they had migrated or been killed—people pointed out a prominent village man in his sixties who has “black skin” (darker than that of many of the other villagers), a “high nose” (higher and more prominent, it was pointed out, than my nose), and “round eyes.” This man, they said, was the last Aborigine. Two of the people who pointed this man out were agratically related to him. “But he’s your uncle,” I said, surprised that kin of the same surname could be assigned different ethnic identities. “Yes,” I was told, “he’s the last one.” I draw two important conclusions from this example. First, people perceived that the population had changed—become Chinese—even though this man had not. Second, ethnicity was perceived as defined (at least in part) by physical characteristics. From further conversations in 1991–92 and in a return visit in the summer of 1994, it has become apparent that the origins of these physical characteristics are perceived as variable: physical characteristics may be inherited, though they are not necessarily inherited, or they may develop over time (as will be seen in the next example).

Toward the end of my fieldwork in 1992, an American friend visited me for a few days. On two independent occasions, in two different communities, local people first remarked that we both spoke Chinese and used chopsticks; then they commented that her hair, skin, and eyes are darker than mine; finally they concluded, “She’s been here [in Taiwan] longer, right?” They assumed that she looked more Chinese (i.e., darker) because she had been in Taiwan longer. The implication here is that people perceived that physical characteristics (and thus presumably ethnicity) change in individuals over time as those individuals change culturally.

There was variation in people’s knowledge of and willingness to talk about their own Aborigine heritage. When I initially asked about this heritage through Alizu, I found people reluctant to talk about it. I think part of the difficulty was in the terminology.

1 The designations “cooked” and “raw” were continued under Japanese rule of Taiwan. More recent designations are pingpu zu (plains tribes) and gaoshan zu (mountain tribes). Although ostensibly geographic categorizations, these terms still refer to the same groups historically distinguished by their relative degree of sinicization. For example, the Ami who live on the eastern plains of Taiwan and the Yami who live on an island off the southeastern coast of Taiwan are today categorized as “mountain” Aborigines. They were both historically categorized as shengfan. See also Chao, this volume, for a discussion of how lowland Naxi are considered sinicized while highlanders are considered more “authentic” Naxi.

2 This essay will not deal with the complex issue of how perceptions of physical characteristics are linked to perceptions and concepts of race.

3 Genealogies tracing an ancestor to mainland China were sometimes mentioned in this context to suggest that the speaker’s family, if not the community as a whole, was Chinese. (See Ebrey, this volume, for a detailed analysis of the importance of genealogies to claims of a Chinese identity.) Moreover, today in all these communities people commonly speak Minnan (Taiwanese); they practice virilocality marriage with few exceptions; they bury their dead under the instruction of a Daoist priest; they worship their patrilineal ancestors as well as deities of the Chinese pantheon—Guan Yin, Ma Zu, Qing Shui Zu Shi Gong, and Tu Di Gong. These practices stand in marked contrast to practices that early accounts described as plains Aborigine (e.g., use of Austronesian languages, duolocal or uxorilocal endogamy, etc.)
People in these communities had no ethnic term for their Aborigine ancestors except huan-à (savage). Given the extremely pejorative nature of the term there, I was unable to have genuine conversations on the topic until I found a way to allow them to raise the topic and the term themselves. One day I asked a woman in her eighties if her mother or grandmother had bound feet. She said, “Guàn huan-à bō pakhha” (we savages didn’t bind feet). The woman’s granddaughter was surprised by her response. In this case, and in almost every subsequent interview I did in the historically Aborigine communities, this question brought up a discussion of Aborigine heritage; learning they had an Aborigine heritage often surprised younger family members.

However, people in these communities today—including the old people who did discuss their Aboriginal heritage—do not have a sense of themselves as Aborigine. They think of themselves as Hokkien Chinese and only discussed their Aborigine ancestors in private interviews focusing on the past. Between August 1992 when I left the field and June 1994 when I returned for a visit, two plains Aborigine groups in northern Taiwan became vocal in the political activism of the Alliance of Taiwan Aborigines, and one has petitioned to be recognized as the “tenth” Aborigine tribe. Given the prominent media coverage of these events and the obvious pride with which these plains Aborigine groups have claimed and proclaimed their heritage, I wondered if people in southwestern Taiwan where I worked were also beginning to take pride in their Aborigine heritage. In response to my inquiries about whether any local people were identifying themselves as plains Aborigines (pingpu zu), several people made it clear that they do not.

One older man told me that he does not know of anyone in his community who identifies him- or herself as Aborigine, though he told me that he could tell who was really Aborigine and indicated his own high cheekbones as an example of which physical characteristics can be used to detect plains Aborigines. This man was one of the most knowledgeable people in his community about his and his community’s Aboriginal heritage and has talked openly with me about both. Nevertheless, when I asked him if he would identify himself as pingpu zu, he shook his head no and even appeared apprehensive until the topic changed. A young woman in another community reminded me, when I inquired about identity, that her family is Han, not Aborigine, and brought out a genealogy to show me. She had shown me an old and incomplete copy of her family’s genealogy in 1992, but she brought out a new copy this time and told me that after I left the family had copied it from another branch of the family and added her brothers and their sons to it. The genealogy shows the earliest ancestors as a pair of brothers who traveled from Jiangxi to a southwestern Taiwan village that historical documents indicate was a plains Aborigine settlement. Several generations remained in that village until they migrated to their present village, a migration that has been historically described as a resettlement of plains Aborigines. A woman from the third community, who helped me as an interpreter in my research, told me that she now describes herself as parti plains Aborigine and that she thinks some of the young people in the village where she lives might also be willing to do so (though no one as yet had done so publicly); she does not think the older people in the village will ever identify themselves as plains Aborigine, however, because they are afraid of being called huan-à again.

Ethnicity and Sinicization

In considering the recent debate over sinicization, I find it helpful to distinguish between the concept of sinicization (hanhua) and the phenomenon of becoming Chinese. John Shepherd (1993, 521n5) defines “sinicization” (by which he means what I call the phenomenon of becoming Chinese) as “a process of acculturation in which a non-Chinese group adopts elements of the Chinese culture with which it is in contact.”5 Prasenjit Duara (1993, 4n7) and Pamela Crossley (1990, 2–5), however, throw out the concept of sinicization, which Crossley (1990, 2) dismisses as “not merely a convenient word describing acculturation to Chinese culture or assimilation by it, but...a bundle of assumptions regarding the

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4 Pickering (1992, 117) reports that by 1865 plains Aborigines in this area had already adopted Minnan as their first language and already had no term other than “huan-à” (Mandarin: fänzi) to describe their ancestry. For a discussion of the very different meaning of “fänzi” to non-Han in Hainan, and thus a different translation of the term, see Pang (this volume).

5 Although one could apply the notion of becoming Chinese to the socialization process of children raised by two Han Chinese parents in a Han Chinese community, I do not think that Shepherd or others in the debate intend for such socialization to be included in the concept of sinicization.
reasons for and the manifestations of cultural change throughout a very broad expanse of Asia." Shepherd (1993, 521n5) criticizes Crossley's "attempt...to reify the descriptive term `sinicization' ...and her failure] to distinguish acculturation from assimilation and ethnic identity" without apparently recognizing that Crossley conflates the conception of sinicization by Chinese literati and officials (and some China scholars) with the phenomenon of becoming Chinese—in spite of her own admonition (Crossley 1990, 7) against failure to distinguish between the phenomenon and the concept of race.

Crossley (1990, 2) is right that the conception of sinicization (the explanation of cultural change toward a Chinese model) frequently "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." It has often been assumed that when non-Han peoples assimilated into Han culture and society they vanished into a sea of Han humanity never again to be distinguished (e.g., Lamley 1981, 282; Meskill 1979, 253–55). While many non-Han peoples have sufficiently assimilated to be considered Han, they may well have left some evidence of their cultural origins by introducing some variation from the ideal Han pattern into the regional cultural repertoire (e.g., Pulleyblank 1983; Wolf 1989; Chuang and Wolf, forthcoming). Yet Crossley herself misses the importance of this point. She implies (1990, 2) that there must be some absolute and invariant standard of "Chinese-ness" if one is to use any concept of sinicization: "Its conceptual flaw lay in its circularity. To be `sinicized' was to become `like the Chinese,' who were only those who had been previously sinicized." Ironically, this supposed circularity in the concept of sinicization is a fairly accurate description of the historical process of the phenomenon of becoming Chinese: people change culturally toward a Chinese model, and the model of what is considered Chinese varies across time and space as do the boundaries around those included in the model.

But does culture alone define what it is to be Chinese? Is becoming Chinese a change in culture or a change in ethnic identity? James Watson (1988), Evelyn Rawski (1988), and Shepherd (1989, 1993) view the phenomenon of becoming Chinese primarily as cultural change—though they see different factors as motivating that change (state-enforced orthodoxy, state-inculcated orthodoxy, and prestige in a rational-choice paradigm respectively). They do not consider when or under what circumstances cultural changes yield a change in whether specific peoples are considered Chinese, either by themselves or by others. Identity does not change with the first cultural changes, and sometimes it does not change even with many cultural changes. Crossley (1990), Duara (1993), and Patricia Ebrey (this volume) consider the means by which people negotiate a Chinese identity and thus focus on the phenomenon of becoming Chinese as identity change. While identity change does not happen with direct correspondence to cultural change, neither is it completely independent of cultural change.

One factor that all six of these authors have in common is the scale upon which they consider sinicization. They focus on societywide changes, a focus that I suggest clouds the perception of sinicization as a process and enhances the misperception of boundaries as clear and tangible. In contrast, I consider the process of "becoming Chinese" at the level of individuals, where interaction with "society" occurs through family members, neighbors, tax collectors, etc. At this level, cultural change is a process; boundaries for identification are neither clear nor always important and are frequently opportunistically employed; here "becoming Chinese" is best seen in retrospect. At this level also, the importance of the local social organization—i.e., the social conditions under which cultural changes do or do not yield a change in identity—can be seen. The number and composition of neighboring households and the types of relationships between them, as well as the relationship between the community and the larger society of which it is a part, are strong factors in the socialization and enculturation of new members of the community, be they children or adults.

Social organization affects the relative importance of different lines of cultural transmission. Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman (1981, 54–57) define lines of cultural transmission as occurring vertically from parent to child, horizontally across generational peers, and obliquely from someone of a senior generation (e.g., a teacher, an elder, or a state official) to non-genetically-related person(s) of a younger generation. They and Boyd and Richerson (1985) have mathematically modeled how the serial replication of cultural units affect their transmission through space and time. Durham (1991) has built on this work, incorporating both an ideational
definition of culture and the possibility for social imposition in cultural transmission and arguing for a hierarchically structured model that reflects the relative importance of different types of transmission processes.  

I argue that intermarriage is a primary means for cultural change because descent as a primary line of cultural transmission provides an important mechanism for introducing different cultural values and practices into a community. In other words, parents are primary agents for inculcating cultural values and practices, and while we often think of parents as agents of persistence (because they perpetuate their own values), they are potentially agents of change if their cultural values are different from those of the rest of the local community (e.g., Bruner 1956).

Consider how a new value—the adoption of the Chinese practice of making offerings to one’s ancestors—is introduced into an individual household. Why should people who do not already believe in it do it? If there is no violent coercion, the effects of the state or a school text or even some neighbors saying that everyone ought to worship his or her ancestors are different from the effect of a Chinese immigrant father teaching his children with an Aborigine woman that they must make offerings to the father after the father is dead or else the father will be cold and hungry in the afterworld. In the case of an external authority or neighboring peers espousing the practice of ancestor worship, one is likely at most to practice ancestor worship opportunistically (and not regularly) for the sake of prestige. In the case of a father’s instruction, however, the children may well make regular offerings and instruct their children to do so out of grief and respect for their father and his beliefs—even if they do not believe them. And they may believe them, because their father taught them those beliefs. In one Puyuma community (the Puyuma are a mountain Aborigine group in southeastern Taiwan), evidence suggests that ancestor worship was introduced into the Aboriginal community by in-marrying Chinese husbands in the Qing period, though such worship “does not involve boasting of Chinese descent” by the present-day descendants (Suenari 1994, 205–6).  

It should be noted, though, that the idea that one acquires prestige from worshiping ancestors makes some vague assumptions about the local social organization. It implies either that ancestor worship is valued by the larger society (which can mean either the majority of the population or those with power) or that ancestor worship is valued by the majority or authority of the local community. I suggest that such different local social organization can produce quite different effects even along the same line of transmission. The proselytization of one neighboring household, for instance, carries a different weight than does the disdain of the majority of the community’s households for not practicing ancestor worship. Similarly, a state edict carries a different weight in a community that has never seen a state official than it does in a community that houses a garrison of state troops.

Because intermarriage could accompany (and accelerate) the mechanisms of coercion, immigration, and differential access to power as well as occur in relative isolation of them, and because parental instruction could lead to the adoption of values as well as practices, I suggest intermarriage was the primary mechanism for introducing and spreading Chinese values and practices into Aborigine communities. I wish to stress, however, in agreement with the findings of Suenari (1994) and Shimizu (1994), that the local social organization greatly influences the extent, pace, and direction of change that intermarriage introduces. I also suggest that the provision of the primary agents for the transmission of Chinese cultural values—in marrying Chinese fathers—via intermarriage may have contributed to the view discussed by Ebrey (this volume) that paternal Chinese ancestry was at least as
important as cultural behavior to being considered Chinese.\footnote{As will be argued below, most in-marrying Chinese in southwestern Taiwan were men.}

The potential for ancestry \emph{and} for culture to define Chineseness can be seen in the two major routes—a short one and a long one—by which the plains Aborigines in Taiwan have become Chinese. What I call the short route was rapid identity change and subsequent cultural change via significant rates of intermarriage due to structural changes in communities. What I call the long route to becoming Chinese in Taiwan was slow cultural change with a modicum of intermarriage in communities with relatively stable social structure followed years later by identity change. Both of these routes involve intermarriage of Chinese immigrants with Aborigines and their descendants, but in each route other structural variables influenced the course and the timing of the cultural and identity changes taking place. Thus, while explanation of both routes requires some imagination of how the cultural background that a Chinese immigrant man and a local Aborigine woman brought to a household would affect its dynamics, consideration of the different routes requires an understanding of how these dynamics would also be affected by such features of the local social organization as the relative numbers and power of others around them (in village life and society as a whole) who shared each of their cultural values and practices.

Consider in this light the issues that arose in the home of a Chinese immigrant husband and an Aborigine wife: What language would be used? Would daughters’ feet be bound? Would women (who were the primary horticulturalists in Aborigine society) work in the fields? Whose method of agriculture would be used? Whose deities would their children worship—Aboriginal ones, Chinese ones, or the Dutch (Christian) one? These questions are even more vital given David Johnson’s argument (1985, 62–63) that women played an important role in transmitting popular culture (which often varied locally from elite 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 [of non-Han] in China, whose effects ran directly counter to the effects of that other important agency of integration, gentry hegemony” and one that, I argue, may have contributed to cultural variation within China.

Historical Evidence of Intermarriage and Cultural Change

I turn now to seven historical points to show that intermarriage did in fact occur between Chinese and plains Aborigines and to document the cultural and identity changes of plains Aborigines who followed the short route and the long route toward a Chinese model. The first three of these points—(1) that Chinese settlers were overwhelming male, (2) that Chinese immigrant men married plains Aborigine women, and (3) that the population called Chinese grew sufficiently to suggest that rates of such intermarriage must have been significant in the Dutch, Zheng, and early Qing periods—define the social conditions for the short route.

During the Dutch period (1624–61), Chinese women were rare in Taiwan. “In November 1649, amongst a [Chinese] population of 11,339 [11,339] there were 838 women” (Huber 1990, 274n25).\footnote{Huber cites the source of this figure as an unpublished November 18, 1649, letter from Governor Verburg and the Council of Formosa to their superiors, the governor-general and councillors of India in Batavia. However, he does not say where Verburg got the figure or whether the figure was supposed to be for Chinese women only or for all women married to Chinese men, which would presumably include most if not all Chinese women and some Aborigine women.} Even if we assume that all of these women were Chinese immigrants, the ratio of Chinese men to women generally was disproportionately male (1,353 men to 100 women). The proportion of women may have dropped after the Chinese rebellion in 1652 (which was put down by a combined Dutch and Aborigine force) because after that the Dutch decided to include women in the poll tax (Huber 1990, 289). Later in the Dutch period, between 1655 and 1658, the number of Chinese women (223 to 921 women) per year sailing in Chinese ships to Taiwan ranged between 4 percent and 12 percent of the total number of passengers, and not all of these remained in Taiwan (Hsu Wen-hsiung 1980a, 19).

Given the disproportionately male population, most men who settled in Taiwan (whether Chinese or Dutch) had to seek Aborigine wives. Some of the Dutch married Aborigine women (Campbell 1903, 85, 99, 101, 102, 106, 179, 324, 551), and at least some of the Chinese living in Taiwan had integrated themselves into Aborigine communities by 1636 (Campbell 1903, 118, 127, 128, 133). Chinese men, one in 1636 and an unspecified number in 1644, were even reported by the Dutch as needing to be instructed in Christianity because they wanted to marry Christian Aborigine women (Campbell 1903, 139, 201–2).
To infer anything about the rate of intermarriage between Chinese and Aborigines, it is important to get a sense of their relative population sizes, of Chinese migration, and of the growth of the Chinese population. The earliest estimate I have of the Aboriginal population is from 1639. Dutch governor Jan van der Burg reports the population of the five principal Siraya-speaking Aborigine villages (Sinkan, Matica, Soulun, Bakloan, and Tavan) to range between 1,000 and 3,000 with a total of 8,647 based on "trustworthy statements" (Campbell 1903, 179-80). Dutch census material by the middle of the century, which covers the much larger geographic area under Dutch control at that time, records the Aborigine population as between 53,000 and 63,000 in 1647, between 64,000 and 88,000 in 1650, and more than 39,223 (in a smaller area and after famine) in 1655 (Nakamura 1936, 1937, 1951).

The Chinese population in the limited area under Dutch control by 1633 was estimated at seven hundred to eight hundred (Shepherd 1993, 85). Between 1625 and 1636, an estimated one hundred to four hundred Chinese ships annually left the mainland for Taiwan, and after 1636 the number increased; in 1637 there were 491 Chinese ships: 188 trading junks and 303 fishing boats (Hsu Wen-hsiung 1980a, 16-17). In 1640, some 3,568 Chinese settlers paid poll taxes in the expanding areas under Dutch control; in 1650, the figure was 10,811 (Hsu Wen-hsiung 1980a, 17, Shepherd 1993, 86). These figures are for adult men only, since the poll tax did not include women and families until 1652. Huber (1990, 275) estimates twelve thousand Chinese taxpayers in 1653, which at that time would have included both men and women. A 1675 source attributed to Frederick Coyett, the last Dutch governor, estimated the Chinese population in 1661 (after famines in 1653-55 and in 1661) at twenty-five thousand armed men, not including women and children (Campbell 1903, 384); Hsu (Wen-hsiung 1980a, 17) projects this figure to forty thousand to fifty thousand Chinese men, women, and children, while Shepherd (1993, 86) estimates thirty-five thousand to fifty thousand. These estimates assume that most of the Chinese men have wives and that all those wives are Chinese. It is not clear, however, whether Coyett reported the Chinese population only in terms of men because they were the labor and fighting power with which he was concerned on the eve of Cheng Chenggong's invasion or because he did not consider the women and children to be unambiguously Chinese. Shi Lang, the Qing admiral who defeated the Zhengs in 1683, estimated Taiwan's Chinese population under the Dutch as only twenty thousand to thirty thousand (Jiang 1960 [1704], 244; Shepherd 1993, 96).

It is not clear exactly how many troops and settlers came to Taiwan in 1661 and 1664 under Cheng Chenggong and Zheng Jing. In 1668, Shi Lang (in Chen Shaoxing 1964, 117; Jiang 1960 [1704], 244, 258; Shepherd 1993, 96-97) estimated thirty thousand (of which twenty thousand were soldiers) had gone in 1661 and six thousand to seven thousand (of which four thousand were soldiers) in 1664, and he estimated six thousand casualties to war and disease between 1664 and 1668. Assuming all of the people the Zhengs brought to Taiwan were Chinese but taking into account attrition due to war and disease, Shi Lang estimated the Chinese population in Taiwan in 1668 at a maximum of sixty-one thousand.15

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13 These were not by any means the only Aborigine villages; they were the ones geographically closest to the Dutch (e.g., Campbell 1903, 212). The Aborigine villages immediately surrounding the Dutch fort at present-day Anping (which serves as the point of reference for what I call the "core" area) were all Siraya-speaking (e.g., Ferrell 1969, 26; 1971, 233). The Dutch population never reached more than 1,200, according to a 1675 anonymous Dutch source attributed to Frederick Coyett, the last Dutch governor (Huber 1990, 269n9; Campbell 1903, 386).

14 Nakamura (1951, 94-95, 108), who worked with the original Dutch-language documents, gives different figures for the total population in 1647. Although Nakamura seems to prefer the estimate of 62,849 (which is used by Wang 1980, 38), it takes into account villages whose population totals are not reported in the census. Nakamura gives two lower figures to represent the villages actually counted: 57,579 (which is used by Shepherd 1993, 40) and 57,632. The total of the unambiguous figures given (i.e., apparently based on direct counts) is 53,493 while 57,579 includes an estimate of 4,086 of a village for which only the number of households (908) is recorded (Nakamura 1951, 104) and 57,632 includes both this estimate and the figure for another village (53 that Nakamura (1951, 101) lists in parentheses with a question mark.

Nakamura (1936, 1-2, 15, 17) also gives different figures for the total population in 1650. The total number of villages for whom population figures are given totals 64,252 but a series of villages for which the population figures are given totals 68,657 (Nakamura 1936, 15-17). (Note that for 1650 Shepherd uses 68,657 in agreement with Nakamura's estimate while Wang uses 68,567.)

Nakamura (1937, 2) gives the total population in 1655 as "39,223+9" as he did not estimate and include in that figure the population for forty-three villages listed as containing 1,306 households. (Both Shepherd and Wang use 39,223.)

15 Cheng Chenggong had Portuguese mercenaries among his troops, who laid siege to the prefectural capital of Zhangzhou, Fujian, in 1652 (Huber 1990, 287) and had two companies of "Black-boys," many of whom had been Dutch slaves."
It is even less clear how many of those who came to Taiwan at that time were women. If Shi Lang’s figures of the total number of people who went to Taiwan in 1661 and 1664 include both men and women, the largest possible number of women who migrated is the difference between his estimate of the total number of migrants and his estimate of the number of soldiers: thirteen thousand. If we further assume that each woman estimated represents one marriage, the minimum number of men who came to Taiwan in the early Zheng period without wives was eleven thousand. In 1668, Shi Lang estimated that 50 to 60 percent of the Zheng forces (i.e., soldiers)—9,000 to 10,800 men—were without wives. Who married the soldiers? The fact that half the men left in 1668 were married does not mean that all their wives accompanied them from the Chinese mainland to Taiwan. Some wives may have accompanied their husbands; other women were kidnapped from the Chinese mainland and sold as brides in Taiwan (Hsu Wen-hsiung 1980a, 25; Jiang 1960, 244, 258; Shepherd 1993, 97). In spite of these sources of Chinese wives, it is still likely that by the end of the Zheng period a large number of soldiers’ wives were local women. General reports that some Chinese men married Aborigine women continue throughout the Zheng period and well into the Qing (Campbell 1903, 551; Chuang 1987, 181, 188; Hagenauer 1977 [1930], 92; Hsu Wen-hsiung 1980a, 17, 25; Meskill 1979, 21, 31, 43, 46; Shepherd 1993, 84, 152; Huang Shujing 1957 [1736] translated in Thompson 1969, 120, 122, 137). Under Qing rule, the Chinese population initially declined (Shepherd 1993, 106–7, 137, 472nn6, 7; Shi 1958 [1685], 67, 69; Zhuang 1964, 1–2). Zheng military forces were either sent back to their home communities on the mainland or incorporated into Manchu armies; Chinese settlers without wives, property, or a trade also had to return home. At the beginning of 1684, Shi Lang estimated Taiwan’s total Chinese population at 100,000; eight months later he estimated that half the Chinese population had left. Since most of those who left were single men, the proportion of Chinese men to women must have fallen. The remaining Chinese population was highly concentrated in the area immediately surrounding present-day Tainan (Shepherd 1993, 426). The population rebounded, however. Shepherd (1993, 145, 161, 169, 175) concludes that by 1717 the Chinese population exceeded the Zheng period maximum and that “areas of concentrated Chinese settlement” had spread both north and south of the Tainan core. Population figures from 1684 until the Japanese colonial survey in 1905 do not distinguish Chinese from plains Aborigines (Shepherd 1993, 161), but Chinese immigration rates appear to have been high. About a thousand people were caught attempting unlicensed crossings over ten months in 1758, and many more succeeded in such illegal crossings than were caught (Shepherd 1993, 152; Zhuang 1964, 16). The disproportionately male migration during the early Qing period can be attributed in part to the fact that for 93 of the first 104 years of Qing rule (1684–1788) women and families were not allowed to migrate to Taiwan (Chen Shaoping 1964; Hsu Wen-hsiung 1980b, 88; Lamley 1981, 296–97; Shepherd 1993, 143; Zhuang 1964), although this prohibition was apparently not enforced strictly until after 1717 (Shepherd 1993, 145–46).

In a 1727 memorial, Governor-General Gao of Fujian and Zhejiang noted that immigrants in the old settled areas around Tainan had wives and families whereas those in newly settled areas did not; arguing that the prohibition on family migration be lifted, he blamed the 1721 Zhu Yugu rebellion on the lawlessness derived from too many unmarried men in the population (Shepherd 1993, 149). Some Chinese men apparently even participated in polyandrous marriages. Under the heading “Marriage,” Censor Huang Shujing reported on the practice of Aborigine men and Chinese men becoming sworn brothers (fudun) in five plains Aborigine villages in 1722:

In Pan-hsien Village many [of the barbarians] have united with Chinese as fudun... that is, “sworn brothers.” The Chinese, taking

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16 I assume that none of the soldiers were women. Thus $(30,000 + 7,000) - (20,000 + 4,000) = 13,000$.

17 The assumption that each woman represents one marriage allows us to be confident that we cannot have underestimated the number of married men, as some of the women were likely to be polygamosly married and some were likely to be unmarried relatives. Calculation: 24,000 soldiers + 13,000 married men = 11,000 unmarried men.

18 0.5 $(24,000 - 6,000) = 9,000$; 0.6 $(24,000 - 6,000) = 10,800$.

19 Like Shepherd (1993, 525n77), I have relied heavily on Thompson’s (1964 and 1969) excellent translations of Huang Shujing’s report. In Taiwan, the Zheng period was 1661–83 and the Qing period 1683–1895. Taiwan was a colony of Japan 1895–1945.

20 Women and families were allowed to migrate 1732–40, 1746–48, 1760–61, and again after 1788.
advantage of his means, will utilize the services of a barbarian woman as a go-between, and first come to an agreement with this woman to present several pieces of cloth to the parent of the woman [he covets], and to become the fu-tun of her husband; [then] he can come and go [in their home] without restriction. In the villages of Mao-er-han, T'ung, and Hsi-lo, and Ta-wu-chun, they also follow this evil practice, only not to such excess.

(Translated in Thompson 1969, 84; editorial remarks his)

Hsu Wen-hsiung (1980b, 90) and Shepherd (1993, 387) cite this passage to suggest that Chinese men used fudun as trickery to gain access to Aborigine lands, but the passage seems to suggest polyandry (which Shepherd [1993, 527n127] calls “wife-sharing”) or perhaps cuckoldry.21 Elsewhere in the text, Huang noted the sexual freedom he saw in plains and mountain Aborigine villages (Thompson 1969, 54, 60, 67–68, 76, 84, 87, 94, 102, 110, 119–20, 137). We also know that by the late Qing, intermarriage occurred between plains Aborigine men and Chinese women (Pickering 1898, 115; table 1).

Although a specific rate of intermarriage cannot be estimated, we do know it was high enough to be a source of friction between Chinese and Aborigines. In 1737, the marriage of Chinese men and Aborigine women was prohibited to lessen “tensions” (Shepherd 1993, 453n41). Even so, enough intermarriage continued that Fujian governor Wu Shigong argued in 1760 that Chinese men marrying Aborigine women were disrupting tribal life (Shepherd 1993, 152). In a 1787 memorial, Fukang’an (the governor-general of Shaanxi and Gansu whom the Qianlong emperor commissioned to put down the Lin Shuangwen rebellion) suggested that Chinese settlers easily found local wives:

In every village I visit, the settlers have families, and among the refugees [from the Lin rebellion] women and children are especially numerous. These people have already lived in Taiwan for several generations; they could not be ordered back to the mainland. If the prohibition were reinstalled now, single men arriving in Taiwan could still [find wives and] establish families here; so no matter how strictly enforced, it would be a prohibition in name only.

(Translated in Shepherd 1993, 330; italics mine)

21 Huang also noted that in many Aborigine groups, grooms’ families gave gifts to the brides’ families (Thompson 1969, 54, 60, 68, 76, 83, 87, 94, 101, 141). An 1869 contract (translated in Ebrey 1981, 235) for a polyandrous marriage in Taiwan provides further evidence of polyandry in the cultural repertoire, although the ethnicity of the participants is not stated.
These local women probably included both “short-route Chinese” (that is, people of mixed descent with a Chinese identity) and plains Aborigines. Given that migration remained disproportionately male through at least 1788, was migration high enough to account for most if not all the large growth of the “Chinese” population? To account for most of the population growth, migration would have to have first replaced the number of men who died without offspring and then added to that figure. Given the high demand by Chinese men for brides, and assuming that people at that time linked perceptions of physical characteristics, ethnicity, ancestry, and culture, I think Chinese immigrant men probably preferred to marry the daughter of a Chinese man rather than the daughter of an Aborigine man. If a mixed household produced sons, these sons probably had a better chance at getting married (given their mothers’ ties) than immigrant Chinese men. Yet I think the daughters of mixed-descent men, too, would probably have been preferred as brides by Chinese immigrants, so “mixed” households may have contributed more to the population over time than their percentage of the population at any one given time might initially suggest. Thus, even modest intermarriage rates would have significantly affected growth of the population that might be considered Chinese.

These “mixed” families and their descendants undoubtedly found themselves in a position where they could claim or negotiate a Chinese identity or an Aborigine identity opportunistically. By virtue of the Chinese immigrant man, the (extended) family had a connection to Chinese social and economic networks (e.g., native-place ties, temple networks, and same-surname organizations); by virtue of the Aborigine woman, the family (and the immigrant’s Chinese friends) had access to Aborigine social and economic networks (which could be used for gaining a bride, land, or trade goods). The claim to Chinese identity must have become more useful with continuing organizational changes in the larger society—the increase in the Chinese population and the take-over of political and military power by first the Zheng and then the Qing regime. I suggest “mixed” descendants may have used ancestry (including the use of Chinese surnames) to make claims to Chinese identity because they still retained many Aborigine cultural practices and the ability to claim Aborigine identity. It was these “mixed” descendants who took the short route to becoming Chinese.

How quickly did these people and their further mixed descendants take on a Chinese identity? During the nineteenth century, descendants of intermarrying Chinese and plains Aborigines in the Puli basin of central Taiwan adopted a Chinese identity within twenty years (Hsieh 1979, 45). Identity change can occur, then, as rapidly as a single generation, but under what type of social organization? Although there were fewer Chinese immigrants to the Puli basin in the nineteenth century than there were to the southwestern plain during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Taiwan was unambiguously under Qing rule by the time Puli was settled. Moreover, although the Chinese population increased under Dutch rule, the Chinese were politically and militarily disenfranchised until 1661, when Zheng Chenggong invaded. Plains Aborigines, however, had access to power before the Zheng invasion; they were allies of the Dutch and were used to control the Chinese population. Because it would have been to the disadvantage of the “mixed” population to be characterized as Chinese by the Dutch, I think it unlikely that they would have claimed a Chinese identity (except in private) before the Zheng invasion. Once Zheng Chenggong arrived and it was not only to their advantage to be considered Chinese but also to their disadvantage to be too closely associated with the Dutch, I think the mixed population (on the southwestern plain) became the short-route Chinese, perhaps even within one or two generations of the invasion. After all, Chinese soldiers and settlers who wanted wives could ill afford to antagonize potential affines by denying their claims to a Chinese identity, and settlers who got “mixed” or Aborigine wives themselves had an interest in granting the children of “mixed” marriages Chinese status so that their own children could have Chinese status.

The last four historical points to be discussed here—(1) that some plains Aborigines moved away from areas of high Chinese population density, (2) that those plains Aborigines who moved

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22 People may have traced ethnicity patrilineally (like Chinese surnames) as Japanese colonial officials traced “race.”

23 See Khan (this volume) for a discussion of the effects of massive Han immigration in the last hundred years on Mongol society and culture in Inner Mongolia.

24 Where a settler’s affines were clearly not Chinese, the settler also had an interest in promoting his relatives as “civilized,” stressing their function as a boundary that not only separated “Chinese” and “wild savages” but also mediating between the peoples of these categories economically and politically.
away reduced the rate of intermarriage but did not stop it, (3) that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there were benefits to the maintenance of a plains Aborigine identity, and (4) that cultural changes toward a local Chinese model continued despite maintenance of Aborigine identity—define the social conditions for the long route to becoming Chinese in Taiwan.

Migration was a general and recurrent Aborigine solution to threats, both violent and economic. Candidius, the first Dutch missionary to Taiwan, wrote as early as 1628 and 1629 that some of the people of Sinkan (a Siraya-speaking Aborigine village that was later the primary ally of the Dutch) had fled inland in fear of military action by the Dutch (Campbell 1903, 96, 99). Moreover, the Sinkan people even verbalized such migration as a strategy: Junius, one of the Dutch missionaries, wrote in 1636, "Whenever difficulties arose between us and our Sinkandians and other villages, and they thereby incurred our displeasure, they were wont to say, 'We will go to Teverang, there the Dutch cannot and dare not come,' and this idea hardened them in their wickedness. In order to show them that their threat was a futile one, the Governor resolved to visit the people of Teverang" (translated in Campbell 1903, 126). Junius also reports four villages using this strategy in anticipation of two Dutch raids in 1635 (Campbell 1903, 117, 119–21, 123–24) and one mountain Aborigine village that moved lower into the foothills (also interestingly enough to Teverang) in reaction to a threat by other mountain Aborigines (Campbell 1903, 122, 136–37).

This strategy may have been a useful one for head-hunting raids (which were common islandwide before the intervention of the Dutch, Zheng, and Qing governments) when one head may often have been enough to satisfy a raiding party (e.g., Campbell 1903, 102–3). Its continued usage suggests this strategy was passed to successive generations.25 In the Zheng period, two tribes near Tainan moved a few miles east toward the foothills when a Zheng military colony (village) was established near their original village sites (Shepherd 1993, 94, 469n23). Under the Qing, Chinese harassment also caused Aborigines to migrate (Shepherd 1993, 242; Pickering 1898, 116). In the late 1600s, a group of Siraya plains Aborigines reportedly migrated successively from the Tainan area, first east to the foothills, then further south in the foothills, and finally in the early 1700s further into the mountains (Ferrill 1971, 225). In 1804, more than a thousand plains Aborigines from ten villages migrated to Yilan (Hsu Cho-yun 1980, 73; Shepherd 1993, 357–58). Between 1823 and 1831, in the largest and best known of the migrations, plains Aborigines (using Confucian rhetoric) petitioned for Qing permission to settle the Puli basin and to exclude Chinese migration there (Hsieh 1979; Shepherd 1993, 391–93).

Such migrations suggest that intermarriage and other kinds of contact with Chinese were not desirable to all plains Aborigines. However, with the continuing expansion of Chinese settlers and the territory they annexed, migration did not stop contact or intermarriage between Han and Aborigines. Other than the general reports of intermarriage already discussed, there are few specific examples before the Japanese period. Based on his 1722 visit to Taiwan, Huang Shuang (1735) said that, in one plains Aborigine area, "in recent days there are many barbarian women who have 'joined hands' with [i.e., slept with and will soon marry] Chinese [men]" (translated in Thompson 1969, 120). He also reported that these same plains Aborigines practiced uxorial local postmarital residence (Thompson 1969, 119). For an area south of Tainan, he reported that "in all the villages of [Langqiao—eighteen villages in the Qing southern county of Fengshan] they like to marry Han Chinese" and they practice uxorial local postmarital residence (translated in Thompson 1969, 137).26

The statistical volumes compiled annually by the Japanese colonial government report figures of intermarriage between plains Aborigines and Chinese for all of Taiwan beginning in 1905 (see table 1). Shepherd (1993, 387) suggests that the intermarriage figures for Aborigine men and women from 1905 to 1908 are roughly balanced at 18 percent and 27 percent respectively, but in cultural terms these figures are misleading. In the villages where I worked, old people reported, and the Japanese period household registers record, adoptions of Hokkien girls into Aborigine families (as daughters, not as the "little daughters-in-law" of minor

25 As Shepherd (1993, 2, 358) notes, these migrations were not the origins of the mountain Aborigines, nor did these migrations push all the plains Aborigines into the mountains. Many plains Aborigines did not migrate; of those who did—which was often only part of a village—many migrated only a short distance from their original villages (e.g., Pickering 1898, 116).

26 Thompson (1969, 135n172) does not identify the linguistic affiliation of these villages or their status as "raw" or "cooked." However, one of the villages is identified in Shepherd (1993, 328) as a "submitted raw" village.
marriage). In one village, these were the only Chinese women in the village before the 1930s. In the registers, from adoption through marriage, these daughters are listed as Hokkien Chinese, but since they grew up in the Aborigine village I argue that they are as culturally Aborigine as any of the women who grew up in that community and who were listed as Aborigine in the registers. Where in-marrying (adult) Chinese are considered bearers of Chinese culture, these daughters may be designated culturally Aborigine (if they were adopted as infants or very young children, as many were). Not knowing how many of the women designated Chinese who married Aborigine men were themselves culturally Aborigine, we can only focus on the 27 percent of all marriages between Chinese men and Aborigine women to supplement Huang Shujing's (1957 [1736]) data and to give us a sense of the rate of intermarriage among those who followed the long route to becoming Chinese.27

State policy is another important aspect of social organization to be taken into account in considering cultural and identity change in Taiwan (e.g., Huang, Chen, and Chuang 1994, 17; Shepherd 1993). Qing policy in Taiwan was such that there were potential benefits to maintaining a plains Aborigine identity. Plains Aborigine villages were frequently distinguished throughout the Qing era as sources of loyalist troops, which could be relied upon to put down rebellions by various Chinese place-of-origin groups (e.g., Quanzhou, Zhangzhou, Chaozhou). Through the end of the eighteenth century, plains Aborigine militia were used by the Qing government at least twelve times—four campaigns each against Chinese, mountain Aborigines, and other plains Aborigines (Huang Huanyao 1986, 144, 192–93; Shepherd 1993, 309). In the nineteenth century, plains Aborigine auxiliaries were used eighteen times by the Qing government, nine against Chinese between 1804 and 1862 and nine against mountain Aborigines at the end of the century (Huang Huanyao 1986, 194–96; Shepherd 1993, 357).28 These services led to tangible rewards, at least in the short term. Land reclamation boundaries (established after the 1721 Zhu Yigui rebellion and redrawn several times) meant to keep Chinese out of mountain Aborigine

territory were patrolled after 1760 by plains Aborigines who were paid out of rents received from Chinese tenants who reclaimed and farmed tribal lands (Shepherd 1993, 16–19, 302). The problem with such arrangements was that Chinese settlers often took advantage of their physical occupation of the land and the complexities of land tenure policy to acquire control of Aborigine lands (e.g., Chen Chiu-kun 1994; Shepherd 1993, 301). The extent to which Chinese settlers gained control of Aborigine lands, however, fluctuated as Qing government policies variously accommodated and impeded Chinese settlers in Taiwan (Shepherd 1993, 239–307).

The 1790 military colony scheme is a good example of the shifts that changed a policy from one rewarding plains Aborigines with land to one making more land available to Chinese settlers along the tense border with mountain Aborigine peoples. In a 1787 edict (translated in Shepherd 1993, 331–32) the Qianlong emperor ordered military colonies to reward the plains Aborigines for the military aid they were giving Qing forces during the Lin Shuangwen rebellion (1766–88) by granting them confiscated rebel farmland. In addition to rewarding the plains Aborigine militia, such an action would also intersperse loyal plains Aborigines among the various antagonistic Chinese groups (e.g., Zhangzhou Hokkien, Quanzhou Hokkien, Hakka). In spite of the emperor’s intentions and in spite of the fact that the peoples categorized as shufan lived in villages all over the western plain, the plains Aborigines were eventually granted unopened land in the foothills just beyond the land reclamation boundary. The plains Aborigine military colonies were assigned locations between the Chinese-controlled plains and mountain Aborigine territories not to buffer rival Chinese groups but to buffer Chinese as a whole from mountain Aborigines, who effectively defended their territory from Chinese encroachment.29 Thus, the military colony scheme attempted to institutionalize shufan as a boundary between “Chinese” and shengfan. However, because the military colony lands were assigned with little attention to the home location of the plains Aborigines who were to colonize them, most of the land wound up leased to Chinese settlers (Shepherd 1993, 331–52). So although the Aborigines did win economic benefits (in the form of rent) from these lands (at least in the short term),

27 Hokkien Chinese preferred not to give their sons up for adoption (e.g., Wolf and Huang 1980, 202–15).

28 Old people in two of the villages where I interviewed told me their villages had sent troops to one of the latter Qing campaigns.

29 Mountain Aborigine defenses remained highly effective until Japanese troops used artillery against them.
the Qing government got neither the buffer between antagonistic Chinese groups that the emperor had initially envisioned nor the neat shufan buffer that Governor-General Fukang'an (who was put in charge of Taiwan’s reconstruction after the Lin rebellion) sought between Chinese and mountain Aborigines.

Plains Aborigines migrated both to get away from the population density in the core areas and to get away from the burgeoning Chinese cultural models there. Chinese cultural models were found in the local population, which was considered Chinese, made up as it was of the continuing flow of immigrants and the short-route Chinese. In spite of this movement, and in spite of the benefits of maintaining an Aborigine identity, sinicizing cultural change still occurred, although different cultural characteristics changed at different rates.

Agricultural change began under the Dutch, who introduced plows and draft oxen from China (Campbell 1903, 248–49; Shepherd 1993, 80). By the early Qing period, ox carts had spread through the plains Aborigine villages (Shepherd 1993, 82; Thompson 1964, 182, 185). Huang Shujing (1957 [1736]) reported that in 1722 the plains Aborigines in southern Taiwan were using agricultural tools like those of the Chinese, with some villages even using wet paddy agriculture (Thompson 1969, 54–55, 116).

Chinese language had at least made inroads by 1722, as indicated by Aborigine youths who could recite from the Confucian Analects: not only did these youths speak Chinese, they were literate as well (Thompson 1969, 73, 85). Shepherd (1993, 347) asserts that by the late Qianlong reign, Chinese was the lingua franca between plains Aborigine men of different linguistic backgrounds, implying that these villages were bilingual. In groups that migrated farther from Chinese influence, indigenous Austroasiatic languages may have been retained longer. Pickering (1898, 115) reports that in Xingang (formerly Sinkan, at the heart of the core area of Chinese immigration) in 1865 there were sini-
cized descendants of the plains Aborigines who “dress like the Chinese, and have forgotten their old language.” However, they still maintained connections with the village in the foothills to which some of their former village members had migrated (Pickering 1898, 116). When Pickering (1898, 117) traveled to this latter village, he thought the people less sinicized and noted that “the old people retained a knowledge of the language spoken by their forefathers.” That neither the parents nor grandparents of the oldest people I interviewed (who were themselves in their seventies and eighties) could speak an Aborigine language means that by the 1870s, if not before, Minnan was the standard language in these villages. By 1895, there were only a few older people in these (formerly Siraya-speaking) areas “who remembered that language and those customs” (Tsuchida, Yamada, and Moriguchi 1991, 1). Nevertheless, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century records written in the Siraya language using a Roman alphabet and the Dutch had taught the plains Aborigines in the early seventeenth century (Shepherd 1993, 66–68, 252–53, 379, 525n83; Thompson 1964, 183, 1969, 53; Tsuchida, Yamada, and Moriguchi 1991, 1, 11n1; Weng 1990) provide evidence that an Aborigine identity was maintain-
ed.

Burial practices also changed at different rates. Chen Di, who participated in an expedition against the Chinese and Japanese wako pirates using Taiwan as a base, reported that in 1603 (before the Dutch arrived) the Aborigines did not make coffins for their dead (Thompson 1964, 174; Shepherd 1993, 378). Huang Shujing (1957 [1736]) stated that by 1722 various things were used as coffins in many Aborigine villages in or near the core area (Thompson 1969, 54, 60, 69, 76, 120). Shepherd (1993, 385) remarks on grave markers for “prominent tribal leaders from 1806 and later” as indicative of sinicization (see also Chen Chunmu 1982). In the villages where I worked, marking graves with stones began only in the last forty to fifty years, when people started practicing Qingming graveside rites, and exhumation of bones with a secondary burial began only in the last fifteen years or so.

Changes in postmarital residence occurred early. The Dutch record that upon contact the Siraya-speaking plains Aborigines of

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30 Although most immigrants to Taiwan came from a relatively small geographic area of one province, it should be remembered that Fujian was (and is) highly variable culturally and linguistically. Thus there was more than one model of “Chineseness” even among the immigrants.

31 Such cultural change toward a Chinese model does not mean that plains Aborigines abandoned their own traditions wholesale (cf. Suenari 1994; Shimizu 1994) or that Chinese did not change toward an Aborigine model (as will be discussed).

32 Language, like other cultural traits, may be transmitted vertically from parent to child, horizontally from generational peers, or obliquely from a nonrelated elder. The importance of being a native speaker of a Chinese dialect is further discussed in Borchugud (this volume): Chinese-speaking Mongols are often regarded as Han by Han residents of Inner Mongolia.

33 Some of these records had Chinese translation; some did not.
the core area were matrilineal and had duolocal residence for some twenty years after marriage, after which time the husband and wife would move to a new home; they were ideally monogamous, though both adultery and divorce were “common”; abortion of all pregnancies was prescribed while husband and wife resided duolocally (e.g., Campbell 1903, 19–20, 95; Shepherd 1993, 65–66). The Dutch effectively stopped the duolocal marriage and the abortion practiced with it (Campbell 1903, 186) but do not say what kind of postmarital residence was subsequently practiced. Huang Shuing (1957 [1736]) reported the postmarital residence for groupings of the mostly Plains Aborigine villages he visited in 1722; the vast majority of these—eight groupings (of different numbers of villages)—sometimes practiced uxorilocal residence and sometimes practiced virilocal residence (Thompson 1969, 81, 83, 94, 101, 110, 119, 132–33); three groupings practiced uxorilocal residence (Thompson 1969, 54, 67, 137), and one grouping practiced virilocal (Thompson 1969, 87). The old people I interviewed reported roughly equal uxorilocal and virilocal residence among their parents, but most of them and virtually all of their children (and any married grandchildren) had married virilocally (coinciding with an increase in marriage to Chinese). Chuang and Wolf (1995, 786: table 2) report on the frequencies of different types of marriage (for the first marriage of women born 1881–1905) for a group of 357 “Ta-nei Siraya” women: 24.4 percent uxorilocal, 70.3 percent major (virilocal) and 5.3 percent minor (virilocal).

Although other cultural changes occurred, Plains Aborigines very rarely adopted footbinding. By the twentieth century, foot-binding was the most salient marker distinguishing Chinese from Plains Aborigines in the communities where I interviewed. After one old woman told me about being called huan-á in a neighboring market town, I asked her how she was identified as such. She told me that all anyone had to do was look at her unbound feet to know. Further evidence that footbinding was the marker that held the boundary between Plains Aborigines and Chinese comes from what happened when this marker was forcibly removed from the Chinese cultural repertoire.

31 For two groupings, it was not clear which they practiced (Thompson 1969, 60, 76).

35 Compare these figures to those they give for 1,154 “Ta-nei Han” women: 9.8 percent uxorilocal, 84.7 percent major (virilocal) and 5.6 percent minor (virilocal). (Danei shiang is in eastern Tainan county in southwestern Taiwan.)

36 Most men who married uxorilocaly also married within the village.

The Japanese colonial government banned footbinding completely in 1915 and effectively enforced this ban (e.g., Levy 1967, 99–103, 279–80). This coercion was not directly felt in the Plains Aborigine villages where I interviewed. The changes it produced in the social relations between them and neighboring Han villages, however, were crucial to their subsequent change in identity. In the 1930s—by which time there were surely no available (first-time) brides with bound feet—there was both a sudden increase in intermarriage between the historically Plains Aborigine villages where I worked and neighboring Chinese villages and a sharp decline in the number of marriages arranged between the three historically Aborigine villages. (Interestingly, the preference for Chinese villages was explained to me not as a desire to marry Chinese but as a desire to be closer to out-marrying daughters.) Old people who talked with me about being called huan-á by neighboring Chinese recalled it from their childhood and early youth, not from later in their lives. Thus, this taunting must have also stopped about the time that intermarriage increased. I speculate that either Chinese people realized the implications of calling villagers huan-á on the basis that they did not bind their daughters’ feet when the Chinese themselves no longer bound their daughters’ feet or else the Chinese did not want to taunt (and therefore admit to) the Aborigine heritage of their own affines. These descendants of plains Aborigines (who took the long route) finally acquired a Chinese identity in the twentieth century, after many changes in their own cultural behavior toward a Chinese model and after a crucial (socially imposed) change in the cultural behavior of the neighboring Chinese—and thus the Chinese model itself—allowed widespread intermarriage.

Those who argue that ancestry is the key to a Chinese ethnicity might take the coincidence of intermarriage with the acceptance of a Chinese identity for these long-route Chinese as proof that ancestry is the key to negotiating a Chinese identity (as in the earlier transformation via the short route). However, because the context of local social organization is different here, I argue that this coincidence requires a different interpretation than that required by the coincidence of intermarriage and identity change on the short route. Underlying the highly visible difference of state coercion, there are important social differences related to population size and density. Into the eighteenth century, Chinese
settlers needed wives, as argued earlier and as further reflected in the popular frontier saying “Having a wife is better than having a god” (Hsu Wen-hsiung 1980b, 88). By the early twentieth century, Chinese men had a large Chinese population from which to draw wives; they did not need Aborigines. Thus, intermarriage in the early twentieth century was not the compromise for the sake of having a wife that it was in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I suggest that intermarriage increased in frequency so quickly once footbinding was eradicated because the Chinese perceived that no other real differences remained between the “Chinese” and the “plains Aborigines.” Further evidence for this point is that, in the twentieth century, it was not the descendants of mixed marriages who came to be considered Chinese; it was the intermarrying people themselves—the old people who told me that they had been called huan as children. Thus, I argue that, for the long route, cultural behavior is more important, and I offer as evidence that these twentieth-century descendants of plains Aborigines were considered Chinese when the cultural trait that had served to draw the boundary separating them from Chineseness was removed and no other cultural traits served as a clear boundary.

**Sinicization in Taiwan**

Both cultural behavior and claims of ancestry are integral parts of a Chinese ethnicity. Both the short and the long routes eventually incorporate changes in cultural behavior and claims to Chinese ancestry. Thus, the choice between cultural behavior and ancestry as the defining characteristic of a Chinese ethnic identity is, essentially, a problem only for synchronic categorization of a person or a group as “Chinese” or “not Chinese.” That is to say, it is only a problem for drawing boundaries. This problem occurs because change, by definition, occurs temporally and because cultural transmission is not easily seen synchronically. Boundaries dividing real people into discrete ethnic categorizations are difficult to construct synchronically because of the synchronic spatial variation that results from multiple temporal vectors of cultural behavior and claims to ancestry, since either may precede the other and either may lead to identity change.

In examining the sinicization of plains Aborigines in the southwestern area of Taiwan, I find that the basis for an initial change in identity—whether that basis is cultural behavior or claims to Chinese ancestry—is linked to such social conditions as the relative densities of the ethnic populations and the relation of each ethnic group to means of power in the larger society. Variability in categorizations of people—that is, variability in local models of what is considered Chinese—also appears linked to the order in which these factors occur in identity change. If identity changes with ancestry claims first, as in the short route, then the cultural changes that follow take the mixed descendants toward a Chinese model but at the same time incorporate Aboriginal values into that Chinese model. If cultural behavior changes first, however, as in the long route, then the changes appear to be primarily in the direction of a pre-existing Chinese model.

I find footbinding the best example to illustrate these points. For the short route, consider the household of a plains Aborigine woman and a Chinese man in the core area near present-day Tainan—where the Dutch, Zheng, and Qing governments held their primary military power and where most of the Chinese immigrants landed. Imagine the reaction of an Aborigine woman to her Chinese husband who told her he wanted their daughters’ feet bound. In the context of a large Aboriginal population early in the Dutch period, one can imagine that were such a thing even suggested it did not go far. However, as the Chinese population grew, and some Chinese women with bound feet appeared in the region if not the village of the mixed household in question, pressure from the Chinese husband might grow. I say might because we must also keep in mind that such a man would realize he would lose the field labor of his daughters should their feet be bound and that they did not need their feet bound to be marriageable to Chinese or anyone else, given the sex ratio in that population. Probably his desire for daughters with bound feet would be

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37 Compare this argument to Suenari’s (1994, 218) suggestion that even though Puyuma ancestor worship is different from that of the local Chinese, “many people who consider themselves unambiguously Chinese would accept them [the ancestor-worshiping Puyuma] as Chinese.”

38 Similarly, Cheung (this volume) refers to Ge men who are themselves considered (by other Ge) to have become Miao through marrying Miao women.

39 To examine the importance of these and other social conditions, see the discussion in Borchgiedt (this volume) of the development of a Neimeng ren (Inner Mongolian) identity that includes both Mongols and Han (and intermarriage) in the PRC.
influenced by whether he could afford to lose their labor, and the need at the household level for labor and the imbalanced sex ratio of the general population were important for quite some time. An additional important factor is that until there were women with bound feet present (immigrants or daughters of Chinese women with bound feet), there would have been a scarcity of people who knew how to bind feet.40

Did the short-route Chinese ever come to bind women’s feet? The Japanese-conducted 1905 census (MNRKC 1908; Shepherd 1993, 526n119) reports the following rates of footbinding for all Taiwan: Hokkien women, 68 percent; Hakka women, 1.5 percent; and plains Aborigine women, 0.5 percent. The ethnic classifications in the Japanese census were made in 1905; thus, the plains Aborigines who took the short route show up in the Hokkien category—they were already considered Chinese by this time. The fact that only 68 percent of Hokkien women had bound feet suggests that, while some descendants of mixed households may have bound feet, many did not, and the decision to bind feet did not affect their ability to claim Chinese status in the midst of significant rates of intermarriage. Following Johnson’s (1985) point that women introduce nonelite cultural values up the social hierarchy through marriage and Tannen’s (1982) work on continuities with Greek culture among English-speaking Greek-Americans, I suggest that, for the short-route Chinese, the Chinese model varies from the previous forms brought from Fujian as a result of influence from a non-Chinese cultural substrate. One way to evaluate this suggestion is to consider whether 68 percent was a low rate of footbinding compared with Hokkien in Fujian or elsewhere in 1905. Wolf and Huang’s (1980, 265) data suggest that it may be: 85.2 percent of women in the (almost exclusively Anxi Hokkien) Haishan area of northern Taiwan born between 1891 and 1900 had bound feet in 1905. We also need to evaluate the distribution of the 32 percent of Hokkien women in Taiwan without bound feet. If they were distributed among the poorest classes of Hokkien across the island, it would suggest an economic explanation, but if they were differentially distributed by region, we need to consider other factors, such as whether these regions were areas with historically high rates of intermarriage between Chinese and plains Aborigines. In the latter case, I would not expect to find a high rate of Hokkien women without bound feet in areas with historically high rates of families (i.e., including women) who immigrated.

Not only do women appear to have been the agents of changing local Chinese models (by transmitting to their children non-Chinese cultural values), but women’s relation to power in a patriarchal, patrilineal Chinese system also affected mixed descendants’ claims to a Chinese identity. Short-route descendants had recourse to patrilineal ideology in their negotiation of Chinese identity because in the short route it was primarily Chinese men who married Aborigine women. In the long route, Aborigines did intermarry with Chinese—with Chinese men who married uxorilocally into Aborigine communities or with Chinese women (who may have been daughters of the short-route Chinese) who were adopted into the Aborigine communities. However, uxorilocally marrying Chinese men might well not contribute a Chinese surname to their descendants—if, for example, surnames were not used at all in the Aborigine community or, where surnames were used, if the wife and her family succeeded in having all her children assigned to her surname, perhaps in overwhelmingly Aborigine communities.41 Ironically, at the beginning of Chinese settlement of Taiwan, all the Chinese men marrying Aborigine women must have done so uxorilocally. The interesting turning point in the short route occurred when the density of Chinese settlers was such that people no longer perceived Chinese men in an Aborigine village and instead began to perceive a Chinese community with Aborigines in it.

The long route to becoming Chinese was taken by those plains Aborigines who resisted Chinese encroachment upon land and women by migrating away from areas of dense Chinese population. Plains Aborigines who migrated changed toward a Chinese model in many respects, but they did not generally adopt footbinding. However, a few (0.5 percent) did. Pickering (1898, 115) mentions an anecdote from an 1865 visit to a plains Aborigine village (Xingang) that sheds light on those plains Aborigines who did bind feet and further indicates the potential influence of local social organization—specifically, access to power as well as relative population sizes—on the adoption of footbinding: “The chief of this village was a Pepo-huan [“plains savage”], who was a small mandarin, having gained some military rank as a reward for

40 Footbinding was usually done by a girl’s mother or grandmother (Levy 1967, e.g., 26, 224, 234, 246, 247, 249–51).

41 Only in-marrying men had the option of contributing a Chinese surname.
his services in China during the Taiping rebellion. He had brought back from the mainland a singular trophy, in the shape of a small-footed [i.e., bound-foot] Chinese wife, whom he had captured by his sword and bow.” A Chinese woman with bound feet, whose sinicized Aborigine husband saw her bound feet as a sign of prestige and who may herself be assumed to have a valuation and knowledge of footbinding, would likely bind her daughters’ feet. In the Japanese registers these daughters would be listed as Aborigine since, for the years that the Japanese recorded “race,” one was assigned the ethnic designation of one’s biological father. Thus, the Aboriginal value against footbinding could be overcome, taking some of the long-route Chinese perhaps eventually closer than the short-route Chinese to Chinese models from Fujian. We have seen that Chinese ethnicity viewed diachronically incorporates both Chinese cultural behavior and claims to Chinese ancestry, that either of these factors alone may suffice to negotiate a Chinese identity, and that the order in which these factors are adopted both depends upon the changing local social organization (e.g., changing composition, size, and density of the local population and changing access to power) and appears to be significant for the long-term composition of the local Chinese cultural model. (If identity changes initially as a result of ancestry claims, the local Chinese model will change over time.) Intermarriage between Chinese and non-Chinese is an important means both for introducing cultural change toward (and of) Chinese models and for claiming Chinese identity. After all, the significance of claims to Chinese ancestry as well as the specific content of the Chinese cultural model are transmitted culturally (i.e., the valuation of Chinese ancestry is itself learned). Intermarrying spouses are agents for change as well as persistence when each of their parental roles in cultural transmission is considered in the context of local social organization. Thus, identity develops out of a dynamic process linking cultural transmission with the specific, local social organization.

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