

Chapter 20

Studies of modern Chinese history in Taiwan

On 1st October 1949, Mao Zedong proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China in Beijing, which led to the coexistence of two Chinese governments on China's territory and in the international community. On 7th December of the same year, as a result of its defeat in the civil war, the Chinese Kuomintang (KMT in short) transferred the government of the Republic of China to Taiwan and stayed in power until the year 2000, when it was replaced by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP in short). Before that, during the 40 years of KMT rule, the Taipei government had continued to claim sovereign right to the mainland, and believed that it was the only representative of China's legal government. It was only in March 1991, when the *Guidelines for National Unification* were promulgated, that the Taipei government officially stated that its authority did not extend over the Chinese mainland; however, it did not cease to claim sovereignty over the mainland. Even now, when the Taiwan's ruling party is the DPP consciously striving for Taiwan's independence, the Republic of China still legally exists and the confrontation between the two Chinese governments is still a source of tension across the Taiwan Strait.

In fact, the governments on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, which have been emphasising their lawful character since 1949, are the continuators of historical China. However, due to the ideological divergences between them, either inevitably puts forward its own approach to China's history. These divergences are all the more visible when China's modern history is at stake. It is so not only because Taiwan has become the political centre of China's legal government. The even more significant fact is that the KMT's predecessors, the Revive China Society and the United League, painstakingly developed the revolutionary movement, which overthrew the Qing dynasty, and the KMT played an important role in the establishment and development of the Republic of China. This is why the party maintains the right to interpret modern Chinese history, which all the more seems to confirm the legal character and legitimacy of the Republic of China as representative of China as a whole.

Under such circumstances, the study of modern Chinese history has been a prominent discipline in Taiwan. Yet, when does the modern history of China begin? When the issue of

periodisation of history is concerned, Taiwanese historians are far from sharing the view of their mainland colleagues. In their opinion, the period called *modern history of China* in the West comprises in fact two periods: modern and recent history. According to the textbooks in use, modern history begins in 1840 with the Opium War, and ends with the Xinhai revolution. The following issues are highlighted: the foreign invasion, the Qing resistance against it, and the chaos into which the country had plunged. Other scholars, however, adopt a different starting point: China's cultural contacts with the West at the end of the Ming dynasty and early under the Qing dynasty. Moreover, they place the end of modern history after the central period of the Qing rule, at the time of conflicts with foreign countries. On the other hand, according to recent history textbooks, that period overlaps with the growth and development of the KMT. Special attention is paid to the discussion of the revolutionary movement, beginning with the establishment of the Revive China Society in 1894, while the Manchu government's perspective receives hardly any. The ending point of recent history is usually the year 1949, when the KMT moved to Taiwan, and the situation that emerged on both sides of the Taiwan Strait after 1949 is only treated as an addition.

This is why when discussing the Qing dynasty and the Republic of China it is not necessary to favour any particular periodisation. Generally speaking, this is the framework of modern Chinese history as Taiwanese historians perceive it. Therefore, the present chapter refers only to the former period, and discusses the following 1) historical sources, 2) priorities and research findings, and 3) the challenges of our times. Given space limitations, the present chapter can only offer a general view of the research conducted in Taiwan, but no detailed discussion of individual works.

1. Historical sources

Historical research demands the study of a great amount of library materials. Before 1945, during the Japanese occupation, the main library was the Library of the Taiwan General Governor's Office, founded in 1915. After the war and the takeover of Taiwan by the KMT, it was renamed the Library of the Taiwan Administrator's Office, and later it was merged with the Southern Library (*Nanfang ziliaoguan*), which belonged to a corporation with legal entity, thus establishing the Taiwan Province Library, which was subsequently renamed the Taipei Library of Taiwan Province (*Taiwan shengli tushuguan*). Moreover, after the war, the Imperial University in Taipei was renamed the Taiwan State University (*Guoli Taiwan Daxue*); at that time, it already possessed a collection of historical prints belonging to the Historical Department of the Faculty of History and Politics. Although the two institutions had been functioning since the times of the Japanese occupation and were enlarged in the years following the war, the collections of these two libraries were still unable to fulfil the research and teaching needs related to the modern history of China.

In 1949, the institutions affiliated to the KMT moved to Taiwan and gradually started to resume their activity. The significant amount of donated archive materials constituted

a collection of valuable historical sources so necessary for academic research of the modern history of China. The Central Library, formerly based in Nanjing, was evacuated to Chongqing during the second Sino-Japanese war (the Anti-Japanese War of 1937–1945; R.S.), and returned to Nanjing after the war. In 1949, it was transferred to Taiwan and officially resumed its activity in 1954. As it survived the twenty-year-long turmoil of war and was moved twice, certain losses in its collections were inevitable; however, this library holds the highest prestige in China; its collections still include books and periodicals that cannot be found anywhere else, and is still Taiwan's largest, central library.¹ The Academia Sinica (*Zhongyang yanjiu yuan*, *Zhongyanyuan* in short), established in 1927, by 1949 had already had 10 research institutes, but only two of them, the Institute of History and Philology, and the Institute of Mathematics, were transferred to Taiwan. The library collections of the Institute of History and Philology were large even back in its mainland times, and suffered no damage when the Institute was moved to Taiwan. In 1960, a new Academia Sinica building was erected in the Nangang district, where the Fu Sinian Library (*Fu Sinian tushuguan*) of the Institute of History and Philosophy, is located. It holds large and well-known collections of books and magazines. In 1955, a preparatory centre for the founding of the Academia Sinica Institute of Modern History (*Zhongyanyuan Jinshisuo* in short) was set up. The establishment of this specialised institution was the milestone in Taiwanese research of the modern history of China. Most of the Institute's library collections naturally pertain to their fields of research.

The greatest difference between the study of modern Chinese history and the study of other historical periods lies in the large number of original archive records providing source materials for research work and dating from the 17th to 20th centuries. The archive materials on modern history brought over to Taiwan were always in the custody of several institutions. For instance, most of those related to the Qing dynasty are now in the State Palace Museum (*Guoli gugong bowuyuan*), more precisely in its Library (*Tushu wenxianguan*). The four hundred thousand volumes of Qing archive materials are well-known among researchers of this field. The Institute of Modern History is also in the possession of some archive records from this period: they are now being sorted and published. However, not all archive materials concerning the Qing period are now in these two institutions as many institutions collecting archive materials were established, yet without status of state archives, in the last years of the Qing dynasty and during the Republic. After 1949, in the general turmoil, those governmental institutions had to manage the transportation of their collections to Taiwan and secure their protection on their own.

Under such circumstances, the degree of availability of historical sources to researchers in state archives was not the same at any place and time. The archive records made available first were those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 1955 to 1956, the MFA entrusted 224 crates of archive materials to the Academia Sinica Institute of Mod-

¹ The Central Library was renamed the National Library (*Guojia tushuguan*) in 1996.

ern History for safekeeping. Some of them returned to the MFA afterwards, yet they still make the object of research concerning foreign relations during Qing dynasty. In 1984, the MFA once again handed over a part of its collection of records of embassies accredited in various countries, dated to the early years of the Republic. In the 1990s, the Academia Historica (*Guoshiguan*) took over the diplomatic archive records. The diplomatic records are now to be found in the archives of the Academia Sinica Institute of Modern History, at the Academia Historica, and at the MFA itself. The handing over of economic archive records took a totally different course. In 1965, the Ministry of Economy entrusted part of the Resource Committee (*Ziyuan weiyuanhui*) collection to Academia Historica, where the sources related to the Anti-Japanese War were to be sorted out. Since 1966, the Ministry entrusted all its old archive materials to the Academia Sinica Institute of Modern History, thanks to which, apart from diplomatic archive records from the end of the Qing dynasty to 1926, the above-mentioned Institute is also in the possession of all economic records from the end of the Qing dynasty to 1960.

Strangely enough, since 1980, the Academia Historica was granted the status of state archives and was authorised to supervise the handing over of state institution archives, to sort them out and make them available to the public. The documents already handed over, or those archive materials that have not yet been taken over by the Academia Historica, are partially available on individual demand (archive materials are thus made available for consultation) and can be read by researchers, but some sources are still totally unavailable. The MFA archive records can be ordered for consultation at the Department of Archive Consultation (*Dang'an zixunchu*). All archive materials belonging to the Ministry of Defense can be ordered and consulted at the Historical and Political Editing Department (*Shizheng bianyishi*). The Ministry of Education also introduced the possibility of ordering and consulting the materials on its premises in 2004. The above-mentioned institutions are 'normative archives' and their collections are easily available.

The Commission of Party History of the Chinese Kuomintang (*Dangshihui*) also keeps historical sources in its archives well-known to historians. The Commission is not a state institution, but as the Nationalist Party now has an almost a century-long history, its collections are closely related to modern China, which is why this party's records can constitute both sources for the study of party history and a supplement to the archive materials of state institutions. After the KMT lost power in 2000, the Commission was renamed Library for Party History (*Dangshiguan*). Chinese local magazines from before 1949 and the Chiang Kai-shek Archives (commonly known as *Daqi dang'an*) have long been added to the collections of Academia Historica. The documents and meeting reports that are in the keeping of the Commission itself are very valuable for research.

With reference to the number of collected archive records related to the modern history of China, one can say that the collections in Taiwan are extremely large and more complete than other collections of this kind, and that they contain extremely valuable historical sources. The possession of such significant archive materials naturally creates a good environment for the study of modern Chinese history. Moreover, since 1959 the

Institute of Modern History has continued research in the field of the so-called 'oral history'. During the first three years, research was done in collaboration with the American Columbia University, and was subsequently continued thanks to the sponsorship of the Ford Foundation. From 1972 to 1983, the research work was temporarily interrupted, yet was resumed in 1984 and has been carried on since, and the number of historical sources in the form of oral records is incessantly growing. Since the 1980s, the number of institutions and persons conducting historical interviews has been increasing, which constitutes a certain peculiar trait of the Taiwanese historians' circles.

Prints and archive records are a constant source for research work, and researchers have to study them in order to achieve academic results. This is why historians' private resources are even more significant. The education of modern history researchers is closely related to the teaching of modern Chinese history.

In August 1945, the Second World War ended, and the recovered Taiwan became one of China's provinces. To China, Taiwan was a peripheral region. In order to change the views of Taiwan's population, which during the fifty years of Japanese occupation had been subjected to the policy of gradual 'Japanisation', the Chinese authorities – having recovered their right to rule over Taiwan – started their work from the field of education. In order to eliminate the Japanese influence, under the slogan of 'cultivating national culture', the government did its best to ensure that Taiwan's population resumed its contact with China's history and literature².

The history taught is the best proof of placing emphasis on China. The subject called History of China was initially included in primary school curricula, and was later included in the social science section. In secondary education, this subject has been treated as 'a tool for the implementation of nationalism' (*guozuzhuyi*)³ since 1950, and the Ministry of Education defined its standard reference books. However, in actual teaching practice the modern history of China constituted one sixth of the courses in Chinese and world history, not only because it concerns relatively recent times and many historical facts are verifiable, but also because the contents of textbooks could strengthen the national consciousness and emphasise the significant role of the Kuomintang.

History teaching in Taiwan, makes use of the so-called 'spiral' method, which consists of discussing the successive periods in Chinese and world history at growing levels. Application of such a methodology results in the same issues being inevitably repeated.⁴ Modern history is taught at junior high school and discussed at senior high school again, at a somewhat higher level. At universities, the General History of China used to be the

² *Minguo sanshiwu Taiwan nianjian* (Taiwan Yearbook of the 35th year of the Republic [1946; R.S.]), Taipei: Xinheng baoshe, 06.1947, p. K-31.

³ Chien-jung Lu, *Lishi wenben zhuzuo yu guozuzhuyi* (Historical texts and nationalism), Taipei: *Lianhebao, fukan* (*Lianhe Bao Supplement*), 10.11.2000.

⁴ Ming-hui P'eng, "Taiwan lishi jiaoyu yulishi jiaokeshu (1945-2000)" (History teaching and textbooks in Taiwan), *Taiwan lishixue de Zhongguo zongjie* (The relationship with China in Taiwan's historical studies), Taipei: Maitian, 01.2002, p. 247.

only compulsory subject, but in 1972 two subjects were introduced as compulsory: the Recent History of China at all university departments, and the Modern History of China – in vocational schools. This decision made the modern history of China enjoy an unprecedented rise in popularity.

Thanks to the introduction of modern Chinese history as a compulsory subject in the curricula, the need for qualified teachers increased, causing a rise in the number of seminars for graduate and doctoral students at history departments of universities. According to statistic data, from 1945 to 2000 the MA and PhD theses written at academic history departments on subjects related to modern and recent Chinese history amounted to 34.6% of all theses on Chinese history, and scored by far the highest in rankings of studies of individual periods. In the 1970s and 1980s, the proportion was 37% and 43% respectively.⁵ A tendency to choose subjects of thesis from this field is easily discernible among candidates. In 1980, the Ministry of Education founded scholarships for MA and PhD students who chose subjects related to the modern history of China for their thesis, which obviously encouraged them to do so.

Having obtained MA and PhD degrees and – in some cases – having continued their studies abroad, in Europe, America or Japan, those scholars who became university lecturers or chose to work in research institutes constituted the basic research staff in the field of modern Chinese history. Their graduation theses and monographs are representative for research achievements of Taiwanese scholars.

2. Priorities and research findings

As mentioned above, in Taiwan there are many original archive sources for the study of modern Chinese history available to scholars. However, the 'Archive Law' was only enforced in 2002 in Taiwan, and most archive materials were in the keeping of state institutions. As there were no legal regulation as to the handing over of archive records and making them available to the public, only part of those materials could be of any use to researchers. Therefore, only those historical sources that had already been made public or available stimulated the development of research in certain fields.

Since 1954, the Party History Commission, which keeps the source materials for KMT history, has published subsequent volumes of the series entitled *Geming wenxuan* (Documents of the revolution), of which over 100 volumes were issued by 1990. The KMT was in power for a very long time, and the records preserved constitute an extremely important part of the sources for modern Chinese history. In 1960, the Party History Commission supervised the publication of *Zhonghua minguo kaiguo wushi nian wenxuan* (Collected documents on the 50th anniversary of the Republic of China), containing plenty of historical materials from the end of the Qing times and the early years of

⁵ Ming-hui P'eng, "Taiwan diqu lishi yanjiusuo bo, shuoshi lunwen quxiang: yige jiliang shixue de fenxi (1945–2000)" (Trends in MA and PhD theses in history teaching and research in Taiwan (1945–2000)), Quantitative analysis of historical works (1945–2000)", *Taiwan shixue*..., op. cit., pp. 156, 160.

the Republic. These two large editorial series, the renewed editions of periodicals from the end of the Qing and beginning of the Republic, as well as the *Zhonghua minguo zhongyao shiliao chubian: dui Ri kang zhang* (First editions of important historical materials of the Republic of China: the Resistance War against Japan), published in the 1980s, all constitute very valuable materials for researchers of modern Chinese history. In 1950, the Academia Sinica Institute of Modern History began to sort out diplomacy-related materials, and since 1960 it has published *Zhongguo jindai shi ziliao huibian* (Compendium of materials for modern Chinese history). Since the 1970s, the Palace museum has published its collection of memorials to the throne from the 'Court Archives' of the Qing dynasty. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Academia Historica published materials from its collections, and private publishers issued numerous new editions of books and magazines. For instance, the Wenkai publishing house issued the *Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan* (Series of historical materials for the modern history of China) series and *Ming Qing shiliao huibian* (Compendium of Ming and Qing materials); Xuesheng shuju published *Zhongguo shixue congshu* (Collected reprints from the history of China), and Chengwen published *Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* (Collected reprints of Chinese local chronicles). For Taiwanese historians, these publications became valuable materials for the study of modern Chinese history, and they even had a certain influence on the research focuses of American historians.⁶

The historical sources already published are but a small fragment of the archive materials used for further research by historians. After 1990, both the number of archive records made available and the range of research topics in modern history significantly increased. Summing up, the following development tendencies and particular characteristics can be said to have emerged during the latter half of the 20th century in the study of modern Chinese history in Taiwan:

1. During the first five years after the KMT government moved to Taiwan, the problems related to survival were the centre of attention, and little heed was paid to academic research. At that time, only universities and specialised higher education centres offered courses in modern history, and the lecturers who conducted them only sporadically took up research and did not have any outstanding achievements. Since 1955, three university professors, Hsiang-hsiang Wu, Tsun-p'eng Pao, and Ting-i Li edited *Zhongguo jindai shi luncong* (Discussion of the modern history of China), and in 10 years they published 18 issues in two volumes, in which they organised their predecessors' most significant research findings for use in further historical research. Those eighteen issues contained above all the findings of research done before 1949 on the Chinese mainland, and could be regarded as the Taiwanese continuation of traditional historiography concerned with modern history.

⁶ F. Wakeman, Jr., "Chinese Archive and American Scholarship on Modern Chinese History", *Jindai Zhongguo lishi dang'an yantaohui wenji*, Taipei: Academia Historica, 1998, p. 196.

2. Granting access to diplomatic archive records at the Institute of Modern History pushed forward the initiation of research into China's foreign relations during the last period of the Qing dynasty and the beginning of the Republic. The tangible outcome of this research were over twenty monographs by the Institute staff and a large number of articles published. Apart from topics related to foreign relations in general, the studies also focused on the new undertakings of the Self-strengthening Movement and the biographies of figures involved in it. Scholars from outside the Institute (mainly university teachers) also conducted research based on the diplomatic sources from the end of the Qing and beginning of the Republic. However, the diplomatic archive records from 1912–1927, kept in the archives of contemporary Beijing government were used by Taiwanese scholars only to an insignificant extent. It may have been so because the KMT government at that time did not encourage them to undertake research on issues related to warlords' governments.

3. The making of historical sources public by the Party History Commission stimulated research into the political history of the late Qing and the early Republic times. Most research topics concerned the predecessors of the Chinese Nationalist Party – the Revive China Society, the United League, the Kuomintang and the Chinese Revolutionary Party. By subjecting the issues of organisation, staff, financing and conducting revolutionary activity to in-depth criticism, the Kuomintang's point of view on the modern history of China was revealed. Nevertheless, certain scholars were not content with such a one-sided view of history and focused their attention on the power struggle between the revolutionary parties and on the activity of other political forces. This was the source of study of the Constitutionalists from the end of the Qing and the beginning of the Republic, of dissertations on the various political organisations that emerged after the Xinhai revolution, and on the polemics between scholars from the revolutionary and constitutionalist camps. They are a noteworthy element of the study of modern Chinese history in Taiwan.

4. During the early stage of the cold war, the Chinese mainland was out of reach for Western scholars, and Taiwan became a key source of information on mainland China. This was why the editorial activity of the Institute of Modern Chinese History obtained encouragement and financial support from American academic sources, and university graduates went to study abroad, mainly at American universities. The academic exchange between America and Taiwan was also flourishing, and our academic research inevitably underwent American influence. In the 1960s and 1970s, sociological theories and methods were widely used by American scholars, and their research reached Taiwan by various routes. In 1973, the Institute of Modern History initiated a collective research programme entitled *Regional Studies of China's Modernisation*, which was an experimental field for the Western 'modernisation theory'. By means of methods borrowed from political science, economy, and sociology, these scholars undertook research of certain seaside and riverside Chinese regions in the latter half of the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries. In 1978, a certain stage of these works ended, and the Monographic

Studies of Modernisation in China were initiated. They employed regional materials concerning ten topics: population and cities, development of industry, improvement of agriculture, reforms in the field of finances and taxes, development of railways, involvement in political life, evolution of local administration, evolution of the army, social elites, and reforms in education. These issues were studied at the country level by means of quantitative and comparative methods. In 1985 the second stage of the collective Regional Studies of China's Modernisation research plan was initiated; seven regions in mainland China were studied with very promising results by means of a research method that combined theory with the comparative method.

5. The organisation of academic conferences can be regarded as symptomatic of research trends in academic circles; they may also induce researchers to conduct more in-depth studies of certain issues. The academic conferences organised by the Institute of Modern History before 1990 revolved around the following issues: the Concept of Revival (*weixin*) in Modern China (1978), the Revival of Modern China – Reforms and Constitutionalism (1981), the Xinhai Revolution (1983), Etatist Thinking in Modern China (1984), History of the Beginnings of the Republic of China (1984), the History of Building the State During the Decade Before the Anti-Japanese War (1984), History of the State During the Anti-Japanese War (1985), Regional History of Modern China (1986), the Self-Strengthening Movement During the Qing Dynasty (1988), History of the Early Stage of Modern China (1988), History of Rural Economy in Modern China (1988), and China's Modernisation (1990). The character of the above conferences was determined both by the Institute's selection of subjects in chronological order and by the emphasis on the monographic approach. In the 1990s, it was social and cultural issues and the history of ideas that became the mainstream, and the following conferences were organised: Clans and Politics in Modern Times (1992), Identity and State: Comparison Between the History of China and the West (1994), Finances, Economy, and Modern History (1999), Neo-Confucianism and Sex: Postmodernism in the Pre-modern History of China (2000); Public and Private: the Rebuilding of Individualism and Collectivism in Modern China from 1600 to the Present Day (2001); Visions of China's Modernisation and the View of Culture from 1600 to the Present Day (2001), Modern Chinese Women, State, and Society 1600–1950 (2001), Life, Knowledge, and China's Modernity (2002), The Formation of the Modern Chinese State (2002). These conferences and the Institute's activity not only reflect the new trend in the research conducted at the Institute, but to an even greater degree determine the scope of modern history, which has already expanded to include the last years of the Ming dynasty.

6. Apart from the Institute of Modern History, the Commission of Party History also published historical sources and organised academic symposiums on party history, the

⁷ P'eng-yüan Chang, "Disan jie. Jiti yanjiu jihua" (Chapter 3. Specific research plans), *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan jindai shi yanjiusuo sanshi nian shi gao* (The development of historical research at the Institute of Modern History during the 30 years of activity of the Academia Sinica), Taipei: Academia Sinica, Institute of Modern History, 1985, pp. 110–143.

revolutionary movement, and on such figures as Sun Yat-sen, Chiang Kai-shek, and others. Every other year, the Academia Historica organises academic conferences under the common title Symposiums on Issues Related to Republic of China History. Although characterised by thematic diversity, these conferences lack a leading theme, even though 20th-century history naturally prevails. After 1990, when the restrictions on Taiwan's social life were abolished, taboo topics disappeared also from academic research. Some state institutions have finally started to respond to historians' insistence and have allowed access on request to a large number of Republic of China archive records. Two further organisations having the status of academic societies and conducting research activities should be mentioned here: one of them is the Association of Historians of Modern Times (*Jindai shixuehui*), actively involved in organising small conferences dedicated to the history of culture and society, and the other is the Association of Historians of the Chinese Military (*Zhonghua jun shi xuehui*), mainly concerned with issues related to military issue and war history.

7. Apart from monographs and dissertations published in journals and collected conference papers, the research findings of Taiwanese scholars can also be found in synthetic collective works, such as the 10-volume *Zhongguo xiandai shi lunji* (Collected essays on recent Chinese history), edited by Yü-fa Chang, published in 1980, and the 35-volume *Zhongguo jindai xiandai shi lunji* (Collected essays on modern and recent Chinese history), published in 1986, and the 5-volume *Zhongguo Guomindang dangshi lunwen xuanji* (Selected essays on the history of the Chinese Kuomintang), edited by Tun-shu Kao, published in 1994.

3. Dilemmas and challenges

After 1949, the KMT government continued its authoritarian rule, exercised mainly by people who had come to Taiwan from the mainland. Such a situation was favourable for the stabilisation of power, but it could not last forever. Not even for a moment did local personages interrupt their attempts to seize political power. In 1971, the USA started to normalise diplomatic relations with the PRC, and in October that year the PRC replaced the Republic of China in the UN. In 1972, US president, Richard Nixon, visited the mainland and signed the Shanghai Communique with Zhou Enlai. Those events not only induced many countries to sever their diplomatic relations with the Republic of China, but also became a strong incentive for Taiwan's population. More and more voices were requesting reforms and claiming political power. In 1975, Chiang Kai-shek died, and in 1978 the United States issued a declaration establishing diplomatic relations with the PRC, which was an even greater shock to Taiwan's population. At that time, opposition forces began to expand their ranks day by day, and were by various means searching for an opportunity to step onto the political stage. Local personages' challenges to the authoritarian government grew stronger. In September 1986, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was established, and in July 1987 president Chiang Ching-kuo announced termination of the state of emergency. Chances for political participation significantly

increased. Against this background, the 'Taiwanese local consciousness' was gradually taking shape, and it was those views that questioned the historical concept of the lawfulness of China's authority.

From the position of Taiwan's government, Taiwan returned to the bosom of the motherland after the war ended in 1945. In 1949, the central government moved to Taipei and Taiwan became the base of counterattacks aimed at retrieving the country, as well as a model [Sun Yat-sen's – R.S.] province managed according to the three principles of the people. For this reason, it goes without saying that Taiwan's history is part of China's history. However, from the overall perspective of history as a whole, this part only concerns modern and recent times, which are but a small fragment of history. In what concerns the Japanese rule of Taiwan (1895–1945), emphasising the Taiwanese people's resistance against Japan and passing over the colonial government in silence is not a constructive approach. Under KMT rule, the people who had lived under Japanese rule made up over a half of Taiwan's population. The lack of due attention to this issue in the teaching of history, and on the contrary, the overemphasis on modern Chinese history, not very familiar to these persons, will lead to the emergence of gaps in the writing of local history.

The most direct result of the emergence of the 'Taiwanese local consciousness' was the large number of publications concerning the study of Taiwan. Post-1987 statistics show that the number of published research works on Taiwan increased, and the proliferation was far greater than in the case of any other publications.⁸ Large bookstores began to set up special sections with books dedicated to the study of Taiwan, mainly to its history. They certainly did so out of an eagerness to fill the 'white spots'. In 1993, the Preparatory Office for the establishment of a Taiwan Institute was founded within the Academia Sinica as an expression of the great popularity enjoyed by research in this field. In February 1995, the Association of Taiwanese Historians was set up, with the conscious purpose of emphasising that Taiwan's history was no longer to be treated as part of China's history.

It goes without saying that the events mentioned above were reflected in history teaching. In the 1990s, the Ministry of Education annulled its decision on treating the 'Modern history of China' as a compulsory subject in higher education institutions of university type, and in 1994 the decision-making process concerning the introduction of new subjects was decentralised, leaving discretionary power to the departments of history of individual universities. Under such circumstances, curriculum revisions in some universities meant granting modern and recent history the status of compulsory subjects, while other universities decided that the students of various departments should take a course in 'broader common history' or the 'history of their mother country', yet the con-

⁸ Fu-ch'ang Wang, "Minzu xiangxiang, zuqun yishi yu lishi – *Renshi Taiwan* jiaokeshu zhengyi fengbo de neirong yu maige fenxi" (National imagery, ethnic consciousness and history. Subject of the great dispute over the textbook *Get to know Taiwan* and in-depth analysis), *Taiwan Yanjiu* (Taiwan Research), vol. 8, No. 2, p. 169.

tents of this subject was not limited to modern and recent history. This was why the demand for teachers changed: the number of teaching positions for specialists in modern Chinese history with MA and PhD degrees decreased, and the demand for teachers of Taiwanese history increased. In 1970, the number of PhD and MA holders who had chosen subjects related to the history of Taiwan for their graduation theses amounted to 7.9% of the total number of theses on Chinese history. This percentage increased to 12.5% in 1980 and suddenly rose to 25.7% in the 1990s. On the other hand, the number of graduation theses on the modern and recent history of China decreased from 43% in the 1980s to 30.3% in the 1990s.⁹ The reason for this is to be found in a change of interests among students, who turned towards the history of Taiwan as source of topics for their graduation theses. In 1990, the Ministry of Education abolished the academic scholarships for students of modern Chinese history, which became one of the reasons behind the decrease in popularity of studies related to modern Chinese history.

This tendency aroused disputes in political and historical circles. In June and July 1997, heated discussion was conducted over a high school textbook entitled *Knowing Taiwan*, which became a sensation.¹⁰ The dispute concerned a concept of Cheng-sheng Tu, an Academia Sinica member, who in May 1994 proposed the founding of three domains in teaching that were to concern 'knowledge of local issues', 'knowledge of China', and 'knowledge of the world'.¹¹ In January 1995, he drafted a course in the history of what he called 'the circle of common memory', which meant that the core of history courses was to be the history of Taiwan, enhanced to five circles expanding outwards: history of the neighbouring areas – history of Taiwan – history of China – history of Asia – general world history.¹² At the end of the debate over *Knowing Taiwan* in August 1997, Cheng-sheng Tu emphasised that the construction of a 'circle of common memory' marks the 'beginning of a new view on history'.¹³ His historiosophy thoroughly changed textbook-writing methods, which formerly used to revolve around the history of China, while not denying the need for understanding China's history. Later, courses based on *Knowing Taiwan* were introduced to high school curricula, but the circle of common memory proposed in Tu's historiosophy has not yet been written into high school textbooks. In 2003, the DPP government deliberately separated Taiwanese history from Chinese history, and all history courses in state-owned high schools were added to the nine-year sociology course. High schools considering the introduction of history-related subjects opted for

⁹ Ming-hui P'eng, "Taiwan diqu...", op.cit., p. 160.

¹⁰ Fu-ch'ang Wang, Ibidem.

¹¹ Cheng-sheng Tu, "Yuhuo fenghuang – dangqian renwen shehui kexue yu shehui zhengzhi shengtai hudong de shengsi" (The phoenix bathed in fire – Considerations on the mutual relationship between liberal and social studies and the socio-political system), *Zouguo guanjian shi nian (1990–2000)*, Taipei: Maitian, 09.2000, vol. 2, p. 416.

¹² Cheng-sheng Tu, "Lishi jiaoyu de gaizao" (History teaching reform), *Zouguo guanjian...*, op. cit., pp. 331–335.

¹³ Cheng-sheng Tu, "Yige xin shi guan de dansheng" (The birth of a new historiosophy), *Zouguo guanjian...*, op. cit., pp. 383–396.

regarding history prior to the 16th century as world history, and not as national history. This triggered heated discussions, which almost escalated into a political problem. In the end a compromise was reached: two separate textbooks were created for the history of Taiwan and the history of China, but those fragments of China's history that related to Taiwan were to be discussed during History of Taiwan classes.

The institutions connected with historical sciences had long realised that the 'consciousness of Taiwan's subjectivity' was a tendency whose rise could not be stopped, and they began to go with the tide by taking into account the history of Taiwan when organising activities related to the study of Chinese history. During the last few years, Academia Historica and the Commission of Party History have organised conferences where Taiwan-related topics were present in specialist discussions. In collections of historical sources edited by various institutions, the number of Taiwan-related issues has increased. However, this method still led to placing Taiwan within the history of China. In March 2001, after the DPP won presidential elections, Yen-hsien Chang, a Taiwan historian with a strong awareness of local consciousness, was appointed president of the Academia Historica. In the speech delivered on his investiture, he stated that "in the future, the Academia Sinica should become a part of Taiwan's society and tighten its contacts with the country (...) In the future, we should develop our exchange programs with universities and academic institutions, for instance by jointly organising conferences dedicated to local history and culture".¹⁴ The Sixth Conference on the History of the Republic of China held in October 2001 was dedicated to "20th-century history of Taiwan and its prominent figures". Therefore, after the change in ruling political power, Taiwan consciousness has had a growing influence on historians' views.

The fashion for studying the history of Taiwan has challenged the former stance in the study of modern Chinese history and has led to restricting the expenditure on it, but has not pushed it into the background. Throughout the 1990s, the MA and PhD theses, as well as research programs on the history of China and Taiwan were highest in number, and even statistic data provided in 2000 showed the superiority of the former.¹⁵ Whether this situation is going to change in the future, we shall see.

Conclusions

Independent study of the modern history of China has been conducted in Taiwan for over forty years now, and became a significant field of historical studies. The reason for this is the continuation of historical research by the KMT and the transfer of an enormous number of historical sources over to Taiwan. Although Taiwanese historians have lost academic contact with the recent years' 'history of the motherland', they still have numerous historical sources easily available for reading and interpretation, which is why their work

¹⁴ Yen-hsien Chang, "Yinzhao guoshiguan meili yuanjing" (The creation of a beautiful image of Academia Historica), *Jindai shixuehui tongxun* (Bulletin of the Association of Historians of Modern Times), No. 11.07.2000, p. 10.

¹⁵ Ming-hui P'eng, "Taiwan diqu...", op.cit., p. 163.

has had definite outcome in the form of publications. However, the KMT, who was in power for a long time, overemphasised certain issues and underplayed others, in order to underline its own legitimacy. Political and military history was at the centre of attention. In those fields, the official view on history was prevalent, but the history of warlords times, CCP development, Wang Jingwei's rule during the war or China's post-war situation made the topic of only a few works. Candidates in search of topics for their graduation theses were consciously avoiding these issues. Moreover, the KMT archive records were ineffectively made available, and certain fragmentary studies could not go forward. For instance, diplomatic archive records were made available only up to 1926, which was the reason why research in the history of diplomacy during the rule of the nationalist government could by no means be carried out in depth. The handing over of archive sources that belonged to other institutions, so that they could be made available, was endlessly being postponed, which limited the possibilities of research in the fields of finance and economy, military sciences, education, and culture.

In 1987, the state of emergency in Taiwan was abolished, which brought about the quickening of archive opening in the 1990s. The former taboo on certain research fields was lifted, and restrictions were maintained only at the lowest level. Moreover, as a result of the gradual thaw in relations across the Taiwan Strait, scholars on both sides of it were granted the possibility of collecting materials on the other side. This was why the attitude towards research conducted in Taiwan has improved. However, in spite of the rise in prestige of works concerning Taiwan, and the emphasis on the history of culture and social ideas, the Taiwanese scholars' interest in the recently opened archives has not turned out to be quite as strong as it had been expected.

One of the central hopes for the future is that a solution should be provided for the issue of whether the history of Taiwan and the modern history of China (or the history of the Republic of China) can indeed be treated separately. The emergence of a Taiwan consciousness was initially directed against the KMT rule that came from the mainland. In the last few years, the leading names in Taiwanese history have been granted the possibility to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the island's past before 1895. Therefore, their authors can perform a new appraisal of the Japanese rule between 1895 and 1945. The 1945–1949 period will also be easy to study. There only remains one question: should the development of the Republic of China in Taiwan after 1950 be studied as history of China or as history of Taiwan? How should the advantages and disadvantages of the half-a-century-long KMT rule in Taiwan be appraised? And how should our research topics be categorised, since what had been happening on the mainland before 1949 was continued in Taiwan after that date? These issues will undoubtedly become the object of incessant, heated debates between Taiwanese historians.

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