

University of Ljubljana  
Faculty of Arts  
Department of Asian and African Studies

and

Slovene Ethnographic Museum

Symposium

## Taiwan II

**Abstracts**

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Jana Rošker<sup>1</sup>

## **Modern Confucianism in Taiwan**

### 台灣的新儒學

Confucianism was the central state doctrine and the ideological basis of the traditional Chinese society for a total of two millennia. However, in specific circumstances of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, there surfaced an affirmation that this ideological system, at least in its traditional orthodox form, could no longer serve as a basis for the development of modern society. On the threshold of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the criticism of Confucianism was most clearly expressed within the May Fourth Movement which was, on one hand, defined as a patriotic campaign aimed against Japan and the western imperial forces, and on the other hand as an extensive criticism of the ossification and the destructive influence that the traditional doctrine had on the society. The beginnings of the Modern Confucianism, which was an attempt to renovate and update the ideas, also belong to the same era as the before mentioned movement. The originators of Modern Confucianism were mostly Taiwanese philosophers whose most important representative was Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909 - 1995). He was one of the three most gifted pupils of Xiong Shili. Among them, Mou reached the highest level of intellectual achievement. He was widely read and had deep understanding of both Chinese and Western philosophy. This scope of learning provided a unique vantage point from which to compare Chinese and Western thought. His new Confucianism not only established a complete system of Chinese philosophy, but also provided grounds for the critical assessment of Western philosophy.

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<sup>1</sup> Jana S. Rošker is professor of sinology at Department of Asian and African Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. She received her Ph.D. from University of Vienna. Her research is focused on the fields of Chinese philosophy, especially traditional and modern epistemology, and intercultural research studies.

Mitja Saje<sup>2</sup>

### **The Chinese Colonization of Taiwan and Peculiarities of Taiwan's Development**

The isle of Taiwan was relatively unknown territory until the Ming dynasty, when the colonization began through Fujian. The plains on the western coast were taken over by the immigrants, forcing the natives to move to the centre of the island. At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Dutch try to invade Macao, but are thwarted by the Portuguese who already live there, so they settle on Taiwan in 1624. After the establishment of the Qing dynasty, Zheng Cheng-gong, a loyalist of the Ming government also known as Koxinga, moved to Taiwan in an attempt to preserve the former dynasty there. He succeeded in conquering and banishing the Dutch in 1662. In the year 1683, however, the expedition of the Qing dynasty invaded and took over Taiwan, administratively putting it under the province Fujian. Much later, in the year 1895 the Japanese founded their first colony there, starting to modernize the isle very carefully, supporting and improving the agriculture, to prevent a rebellion of the local community. Under the Japanese hegemony, Taiwan modernized very quickly compared to the other countries, having a vast road network and a railroad connecting the north and the south already in 1903. In 1949 Taiwan was invaded once more, now taken over by the Chinese nationalistic party led by Chiang Kai-shek, founding the Republic of China. After his death, under the leadership of Chiang Ching-kuo, Taiwan slowly became a democratic country.

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<sup>2</sup> Mitja Saje is professor of sinology at Department of Asian and African Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. He received his Ph.D. in Chinese economy. His research is focused on the fields of Chinese history, economy and political studies.

Ralf Čeplak Mencin<sup>3</sup>

## **Museums of Taiwan**

Renowned British museologist and passionate speaker in favour of museums, Kenneth Hudson, once stated: »I deeply believe in importance of museums; I can also affirm that one can estimate a society after the quality of its museums.« Beside the numerous national museums, there is also a variety of private museums in Taiwan, which number has recently increased owing to the new works of art and collections of cultural heritage brought to Taiwan. Therefore, they tend to improve expertise of the museums' employees and provide necessary infrastructure. Museums' in general exhibit works of Taiwanese and Chinese culture and accordingly present rich and versatile tradition and history of the region. Among these, *National Palace Museum* 國立故宮博物院 is the most heterogeneous in exhibited artefacts. Some of other renowned Taiwanese museums include *Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall* 國立中正紀念堂, *National museum of Taiwan* 國立台灣博物館, *Museum of World Religions* 世界宗教博物館, *The Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines* 順益台灣原住民博物館 and *Museum of Contemporary Art* 台北當代藝術館.

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<sup>3</sup> Ralf Čeplak Mencin received his B.A. in ethnology and psychology from Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. He is especially interested in Asian cultural heritage and arts. He works at Slovene Ethnographic Museum from 1990 as a museum adviser.

Saša Istenič<sup>4</sup>

### **From Betel Nut Beauties to Ghosts: On Taiwanese Culture, Tradition and Rituals**

The main aim of this very colorful presentation was to build bridges of understanding between different cultures, lifestyles and tradition of Slovenian and Taiwanese people. From the Taiwan's diversified ancestral roots, unique historical experiences to the recent DNA discoveries and increasingly reinforced Taiwanese identity, the presentation focused on very unique parts of Taiwanese multicultural society and endeavored to portray some of the distinctive Taiwanese features. Among those unique phenomena that Taiwanese themselves regard as typically Taiwanese, one can find the betel nut beauties (*binlang xishi* 檳榔西施) and ghosts or spirits which presented the main theme of the lecture. Enriched by a number of recent photos the presentation provided some fascinating intricacies of Taiwanese culture and Taiwanese peoples' daily rhythm.

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<sup>4</sup> Saša Istenič (Ph.D., National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan, 2009) is an assistant at the Department of Asian and African Studies, University of Ljubljana, and a president of the Taiwan Research Center in Slovenia. Her research interests are mainly focused on European countries' relations with Taiwan and China.

Miha Mlakar<sup>5</sup>

### **Ang Lee – Director Caught Between Two Worlds**

Nowadays we often hear of »clash of civilisations«. If we ask ourselves, what the term implies, we most probably come across the following two notions. The first one, of course, is the fact that the progress of all sorts of connections and the global dominance of single economy system intertwines each part with the rest of the world as firmly as never before. Consequently, there is no room left for the so called »vacuum« between various civilizations, which were once interspersed only by isolated caravans and adventurous seafarers. In other words, the well known process of globalization compels diverse cultures in closer contact. But the bare nature of this kind of connection is described with the word collision. Furthermore, a collision is bound to have destructive consequences; it is a situation in which enormous amounts of energy are being spent for quiet devastation. Comparable pessimism can be felt in modern society and politics: on the one hand we have xenophobia, rejection of everything different and foreign; whereas on the other hand we come across exaggerated tolerance, accepting everything from other cultures, simply because it is foreign. Lack of reasonable dialog makes escalation to violence very real and threatening. Sometimes even a tiny inappropriate sketch can become a trigger. However, there is a better prospect and it lies in art. The convergence of different artistic traditions has actuated a large-scaled creative explosion: from literature, through music, fine arts, design, theatre, dance to film. Such is the art of the Taiwanese filmmaker Ang Lee, whose work is something of the finest beauty and above all, originates from China's contact with Western civilization.

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<sup>5</sup> Miha Mlakar is third year student of sinology and philosophy at Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.