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The Taiwanese Reappraisal on Chinese IR<sup>1</sup>

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Taiwanese scholarship on Chinese new IR thinking can be understood as a quest for relational security that is strategically girded by the American hegemony but culturally lured by Chinese alternatives, with an emotional/historical string connecting to Japan. It begins with a theoretical discussion on the choice of Taiwan as representation of civilizational identity (e.g. modernity, democracy/human rights), national identity (e.g. strategic alliance-ship, anti-China regulations, and civic nationalist discourse), and ethnic identity (e.g. aboriginal kinship, 400-year historiography), explaining why none of them works well. The chapter then advances four claims: First, new thinking such as harmony, *Tianxia*, or non-traditional/new security does not change Taiwanese academic evaluation of Chinese new IR or shake the realist mode of analysis concerning the balance of power. Second, Chinese new IR's potential to deconstruct Taiwanese relational security in terms of identity with American values and reliance on American protection nevertheless represents an intellectual threat. Third, the Taiwanese way to cope with China is divided more between exclusion and mingling than between balancing and bandwagoning in Western IR. Fourth, intellectual and political exits are existent, emerging, and possible for subaltern Taiwan.

**Introduction: American Relations instead of International Relations**

On October 11, 2011, the day after the anniversary of the Republic of China (ROC) and still during the national celebration, President Ma Ying-jeou conferred the Order of Brilliant Star with Grand Cordon on former U.S. Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld for his leadership in global anti-terrorism and the U.S. support for arms sales to Taiwan during his term. Ma's otherwise peace-loving statements severely contradicted the reputation of his awardee. Rather than for peace-making, Rumsfeld could be well known for his military acts such as his deliberate misinformation for the purpose of launching war in the Middle East, ruthless ignorance of the sacrifice of civilian lives, and subsequent instruction to use torture on prisoners of war. Nevertheless, Ma's recognition of Rumsfeld's achievements incurred neither criticism

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<sup>1</sup> Surnames precede given names for all East Asian individuals in this chapter's main text.

nor anxiety from the infamously critical opposition group. The irony of Taiwan's appeal to the value of peace, as exposed by the inappropriate conferring of award to Rumsfeld, is a harbinger of Taiwanese scholars' insensitivity towards new International Relations (IR) perspectives in the People's Republic of China (hereafter China, PRC, or Mainland China).

The background is noteworthy. To begin, Beijing initiated peaceful overtures towards Taipei in 1979, as well as pledged its principle of "peace and development" (which evolved into "peaceful development" in the new century) in 1986. Since the dawn of the 21st century, Taiwan has encountered an array of official narratives on "new security," "democratization of international relations," and "harmonious world" from China. Finally, since 2005, the academic faddism of the Chinese school of international relations has been primarily represented by the 'big three': Yan Xuetong and his hierarchical stability;<sup>2</sup> Qin Yaqin and his relational governance;<sup>3</sup> and Zhao Tingyang and his Tianxia philosophy.<sup>4</sup> Against this background, Taiwan celebrated the centennial anniversary of the ROC. If post-colonialism predicts the academic as well as political thinking in Taiwan, then the current system certainly has to follow the American style because the United States has dominated Taiwan in all aspects of life since the end of WWII. This situation ought to be true in IR studies than in any other field, as illustrated in the aforementioned example on the extent of attention that the United States receives in Taiwan.

Similar to numerous other subjects of China studies in Taiwan,<sup>5</sup> IR scholarship there has also been influenced by the U.S.-led Cold War, Chinese Civil War, and Japanese colonialism in terms of its dependence on American theories and values, anti-imperialist China/communist tendency, and lack of consistency in shopping for interest, identity, and relationship. This chapter argues that Taiwanese scholarship on Chinese new IR thinking can be understood as a quest for relational security that is strategically girded by the American hegemony but culturally lured by Chinese alternatives, with an

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<sup>2</sup> Xuetong Yan, *Ancient Chinese Thought and Modern Chinese Power*, Daniel Bell and Zhe Sun (eds.), Edmund Ryden (trans.) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Yaqin Qin, "Rule, Rules, and Relations: Towards a Synthetic Approach to Governance," *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Summer 2011), 117-145.

<sup>4</sup> Tingyang Zhao, "A Political World Philosophy in Terms of All-Under-Heaven (Tianxia)," *Diogenes* vol. 56, no.1 (February 2009), 5-18; and Tingyang Zhao, "Rethinking Empire from a Chinese Concept 'All-under-Heaven' (Tianxia)," *Social Identities*, vol. 12, no. 1 (January 2006), 29-41.

<sup>5</sup> Chih-yu Shih, "China, China Scholarship, and China Scholars in Taiwan," *China: An International Journal*, vol. 11, no. 3 (December 2013), forthcoming.

emotional/historical string connecting to Japan.<sup>6</sup> It begins with a theoretical discussion on the choice of Taiwan as representation of civilizational identity (e.g. modernity, democracy/human rights) or national identity (e.g. strategic alliance-ship, anti-China regulations, and civic nationalist discourse), explaining why neither of them works well.

The chapter then advances four claims: First, new thinking such as harmony, Tianxia, or non-traditional/new security does not change Taiwanese academic evaluation of Chinese new IR or shake the realist mode of analysis concerning the balance of power. Second, Chinese new IR's potential to deconstruct Taiwanese relational security in terms of identity with American values and reliance on American protection nevertheless represents an intellectual threat. Third, the Taiwanese way to cope with China is divided more between exclusion and mingling than between balancing and bandwagoning in Western IR. Fourth, intellectual and political exits are existent, emerging, and possible for subaltern Taiwan.

### **Whom to Patronize?**

#### **Between National and Civilizational Taiwan**

A rich repertoire of discourses and cultural perspectives could support a discordant variety of reviews on Chinese IR perspectives in Taiwan. This scenario leads to the anxiety of any author who regards him or herself as Taiwanese, because his or her choice of perspectives confronts different selections of others. Would this not expose an individual's innate identity to political targeting of a necessarily dissenting audience, or compel one into a similar act aimed at disgracing others? Each of these differing perspectives originate outside Taiwan, and thus enlisting authoritative information from its foreign source becomes a sound identity strategy for a Taiwanese author who wishes to avoid confrontational identity politics.

Therefore, an IR publication in Taiwan stimulates the imagination of a double audience, i.e. those from Taiwan and those from the presumed source countries of IR perspectives. The effects of such audiences become increasingly complicated after the intensified

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<sup>6</sup> The term "relational security" here refers to a quest for social beings to achieve stabilized reciprocal relationship in the long term. Since the notion allows for a bilateral relationship that focuses on reciprocal tolerance rather than shared values, one may be inconsistent in living up to one's own values when facing different countries at different times. "Balance of relationships" emerges when actors seek their relational security. See Chih-yu Shih and Chiung-Chiu Huang, "Balance of Relationships: A Confucian Route to Systemic IR," paper presented at the Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, San Francisco, April 3-6, 2013.

interactions between China and Taiwan in the 1990s. A real audience exists in both Taiwan and China, whereas an imagined audience exerts influence from the U.S. and Japan. The real audience judges the appropriateness of an IR piece in terms of whether it incorporates a separatist or non-separatist stance. The imagined audience may serve two functions. One is to camouflage, obscure, and change the identity of those who are not ready to claim a stance; the other is to assert, reproduce, and refocus those of individuals who are determined holders of separatist or non-separatist positions.

Among all the intellectual sources, the American IR literature is apparently dominant. Almost all IR scholars in Taiwan reiterate the troika of realism, liberalism, and constructivism.<sup>7</sup> The American IR literature is a perfect platform for Taiwanese and Chinese IR scholars to establish dialogue. However, new Chinese IR perspectives evolved as the exact result of critical reviews on American IR. By contrast, cultured in American IR twice as longer as their Chinese counterparts, Taiwanese IR scholars who first emerged in the 1970s have been consistently alienated from any critical reflections. Even the rare dissenting views originate from the faddish cultural studies that are similarly borrowed from the mini post-structural turn in the American IR research in Taiwan, which ostensibly pre-dates that of China by two decades, loses its advantage as the Chinese big three attract enormous attention from the rest of the world.

Since the end of the Chinese Civil War, Taiwan has depended on the U.S. in dealings with Communist China. Such political and strategic dependence cross boundaries are widespread in Taiwan, resulting in the defensive consciousness against China that suppressed the appeal of the return to the motherland, and later, the generation of support for Taiwan's independence. Embedded in American IR, the intellectual justification to such dependence legitimizes and comforts the Kuomintang's (KMT) reign in Taiwan upon its alleged mission to recover the Chinese Mainland from communism. Intellect and politics are mutually founded on the idea that governance requires reasons and that knowledge presupposes a political position of observation. The American IR provided an epistemological claim of universalism that intellectually empowers a small Taiwan.

This intellectual requirement for universalism seems ironically intensified after the KMT's battle over China was discontinued and the pro-independence Democratic

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<sup>7</sup> Kun-shuan Chiu and Teng-chi Chang, "A Review of the Studies on China's Foreign Policy in Taiwan: Opportunities and Challenges," paper presented at the Conference on Taiwanese Political Science: Review and Prospect, Institute of Political Science, Academia Sinica, Taipei, August 7, 2012.

Progressive Party (DPP) came to power in 2000. Without the civil war consciousness, pro-independence forces urgently sought a substitute that could naturally coincide with the concept of a universal Taiwan that is neither belonging to nor belittled by colossal China. Liberalism appears to consolidate the (probably imagined) ideological difference between China and Taiwan, whereas realism provides guidance on how this difference ought to be defended as it has always been. Taiwan's universalist identity has two components, namely, Taiwan's imagined Americanness and China's un-Americanness. The latter is reinforced by efforts to build indigenous IR schools in China. Facing nascent epistemological determination to confront U.S. universalism, all the people could do is to prepare for the disruption to Asia-Pacific security and stability as China rises to power.

This situation explains why, for over a decade, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Taipei has unfailingly spent a significant budget on two intellectual endeavors. One is the launch of the Taiwan Democracy Foundation, which aims to develop the country as a nominal symbol for, and in contrast to China's resistance to, democratization in the world. The other is the holding of endless conferences and workshops on all types of triangular relations (e.g. the Taiwan-U.S.-China relationship), whereby a game theory matrix can transform Taiwan into an equal national player, an opportunity that is not available in *realpolitik*. Both efforts mimic the American scholarship.

If American-ness confirms that Taiwan is external to China from the strategic and ideological points of view, then the former's superior obsession with a civilizational sensibility can date back to pre-War colonialism under Japan. The quest for a modern identity has led to vicissitudes in the Japanese modern history, but nevertheless left a permanent mark in Taiwan. Postcolonial intellectuals in Taiwan remain alert to their achieved modernity ahead of China. The IR component of European-ness that once fascinated pre-War Japan was not immediately significant. The hope of Japan to become a Britain in East Asia facing the Chinese continent was intrinsically international. However, the irony of history was that Japan eventually opted for a reincarnation of East Asia by expelling the white race out of the continent.<sup>8</sup>

The past hundred years of Japan has become a prophecy for Taiwan, which indulged in a game matrix to claim externality to the mainland. After WWII, Japan was again

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<sup>8</sup> Christopher Goto-Jones, *Political Philosophy in Japan: Nishida, the Kyoto School, and Co-Prosperity* (London: Routledge, 2005).

caught between the choice of being an Asian or a Western country. The choice to be Asian necessitated Japan to group with China; since Japan alone would find it uneasy to face China, it requires support from the U.S. However, the purpose of being Asian is exactly to differentiate from the U.S. and recover from the defeat in WWII. Reliance on U.S. support, which creates its own momentum, certainly damages the role of Japan in China. This dilemma similarly occurred in Taiwan, which may appear heavily dependent on the U.S. on every front. Indeed, the flow from the KMT's total reliance on the U.S. for the purpose of the civil war to the DPP's for the pro-independence cause parallels to the same, postcolonial path that Japan experienced. Taiwan's dependence is also a move away from attachment to China or East Asia. To date, both Taiwan and Japan identify their fates with the U.S.

As the colonial model for Taiwan, Japan likewise relies on the U.S. in dealing with China. IR writers in Taiwan primarily cite American literature, and their double or triple audiences do not always immediately include the Japanese. The shared dilemma and the common solution not only maintains the two intellectual strings to be closely informed on each other, but also almost strategically ties them to an inexpressible but clear hierarchy of alliance, with the U.S. on top and Taiwan comfortably at the bottom.

This intellectual background sets up the epistemological parameters for scholars in Taiwan to read new IR thinking from China. Note, however, Taiwanese scholars begin to disperse along the trend of globalization, albeit in small numbers. They could write from Europe, America, or elsewhere in Asia. Moreover, writing for international publishers makes imagined audience into a real one. A joint project that could simultaneously include Americans, Europeans, Australians, Japanese, Chinese or all of them compels Taiwanese to move beyond domestic politics and consider whether or not they want to exercise academic realignment that would in one way or another undermine the American dominance. As will be seen in the remainder of this chapter, these are nevertheless exceptions.

### **Perceptions of Chinese New IR Thinking in Taiwan**

Compared with their Japanese and Western counterparts, China's nascent IR thinking seems to resonate somewhat differently among Taiwanese academics. Given its persistent perception that China is not a right model to emulate as far as the birth of

modern, Westphalian international relations is concerned,<sup>9</sup> Japan's IR circle has virtually paid no attention to the latest development of the "Chinese School."<sup>10</sup> Such disinterest, and Western IR communities' surging interest to the opposite, can be considered two sides of the same coin, for the latter is very much preoccupied with confirming the impossibility/undesirability of indigenous theory-building in China.<sup>11</sup> By contrast, IR scholarship in Taiwan tends to be attracted by the possibility of Chinese new IR thinking as an alternative to mainstream, Eurocentric IR theories, while using American/Western IR as the benchmark to affirm that such a possibility has far from been materialized.

A case in point is Chao Chien-min and Hsu Chih-chia's study of the theoretical and policy implications of China's "harmonious world" under its fourth generation (i.e. Hu-Wen) leadership.<sup>12</sup> Chao and Hsu indicate that "harmonious world" as a new vision of international order and diplomatic thinking overall serves Beijing's purposes of constructing a favorable international environment necessary for China's economic development. They specifically illustrate how the "harmonious world" theory is designed to assure the international community that China is a status quo power and to emphasize the importance of respecting cultural difference, hence shielding the communist regime from external pressures; moreover, Beijing's calls for the democratization of international relations and multilateral mechanisms for reciprocal cooperation seek to constrain the U.S. hegemony on one hand and highlight China's growing importance on the other. Chao and Hsu applaud that "harmonious world" is conducive to the improvement of China's international image and is theoretically grounded by realism and constructivism. Hu Ming-yuan similarly argues that "harmonious world" is a result of learning and innovation in Chinese foreign policy, compatible with neo-liberal institutionalism's focus on international cooperation and multilateral organizations.<sup>13</sup> Curiously, none of them maintains that China has

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<sup>9</sup> For a useful critique of the Westphalian narrative, see Turan Kayaoglu, "Westphalian Eurocentrism in International Relations Theory," *International Studies Review*, vol. 12, no. 2 (June 2010), 193-217.

<sup>10</sup> Nor does Japanese IR community seek to explore relevant traditional Chinese sources for indigenous, "non-Western" theory-building. Ching-chang Chen, "The Im/possibility of Building Indigenous Theories in a Hegemonic Discipline: The Case of Japanese International Relations," *Asian Perspective*, vol. 36, no. 3 (July-September 2012), 463-492.

<sup>11</sup> Jack Snyder, "Some Good and Bad Reasons for a Distinctively Chinese Approach to International Relations Theory," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, August 28-31, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Chien-min Chao and Chih-chia Hsu, "中共第四代領導集體的和諧世界觀:理論與意涵 [China's Harmonious World: Theory and Significance]," *Prospect Foundation Quarterly*, vol. 10, no. 1 (January 2009), 1-44.

<sup>13</sup> Ming-yuan Hu, "中共構建和諧世界的戰略意涵:新自由制度主義的觀點[The Strategic Implications

succeeded in developing an original diplomatic theory with “Chinese characteristics,” for “harmonious world” remains a soft-power instrument of the communist leadership to sustain regime legitimacy at home and shape a favorable environment abroad; as such, “harmonious world” is more like a form of Chinese ideology than theory.<sup>14</sup>

Two observations can be made here. First, if “harmonious world” is also “for someone and for some purposes,”<sup>15</sup> it is unclear as to why being “problem-solving” automatically disqualifies it as an original thinking, not least because “problem-solving” theories have been abundant in the West.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, it is common for Taiwanese political scientists to look at new thinking and practices in Chinese foreign policy through the American microscope, typically a realist one.<sup>17</sup> Chao and Hsu, for instance, are skeptical as to whether China (as a rising hegemon) is willing to observe the cooperative principles of “harmonious world” when dealing with a declining United States at the expense of its national interest that would be obtainable through coercive means.<sup>18</sup> In essence, they consider China an offensive realist whose strategic choice is very much shaped by its power position, adopting an offensive posture when relatively strong and a defensive one when relatively weak. Rather than seeing the introduction of the notion of “new security” as Beijing’s learning of the post-Cold War trend in “deepening” and “broadening” the meanings of security,<sup>19</sup> Hu likewise reduces the “new security” notion to a soft-power instrument for shaping an external security environment in China’s favor. This body of literature thus treats China’s security interests as fixed and pre-given, immune to its social interactions with other states and the potential transforming effects such interactions may have over its national identity.

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of China’s Building a Harmonious World: From Neo-Liberalism Perspectives],” *Defense Journal*, vol. 27, no. 4 (July 2012), 3-16.

<sup>14</sup> Chao and Hsu, “China’s Harmonious World,” pp. 29-30; and Hu, “Strategic Implications of China’s Building a Harmonious World,” 16.

<sup>15</sup> Robert W. Cox, “A Perspective on Globalization,” in *Globalization: Critical Reflections*, ed. J. H. Mittelman (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1996), 27.

<sup>16</sup> Ching-chang Chen, “The Absence of Non-Western IR Theory in Asia Reconsidered,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, vol. 11, no. 1 (January 2011), 1-23 demonstrates the necessity for any feasible “non-Western” IR theory of being a Coxian critical theory, but this line of argument is not pursued at all in the aforementioned writings.

<sup>17</sup> Chiu and Chang, “A Review of the Studies on China’s Foreign Policy in Taiwan;” Chao and Hsu, “China’s Harmonious World;” Hu, “Strategic Implications of China’s Building a Harmonious World;” Teh-feng Chu and Hui-ming Tung, “中共崛起的理論與實際:國際關係理論的檢視與分析 [A Study on the Theory and Practice of China Rising: Reviewing and Analyzing from International Relations Theory],” *Fuxingang Bulletin*, vol. 100 (December 2010), 135-158; and Ching-tai Chang, “試論中共新安全觀的理論與實踐 [A Study of the Theory and Practice of China’s New Security Concept],” *Saint John’s Bulletin*, vol. 23 (July 2006), 323-340.

<sup>18</sup> Chao and Hsu, “China’s Harmonious World,” 31.

<sup>19</sup> Ken Booth, ed., *Critical Security Studies and World Politics* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2005).

In a more sympathetic study, Yu Chia-fang and Chang Teng-chi indicate that the (structural) realist paradigm in the study on China's foreign policy has reached its limits in the age of economic interdependence and regional integration, which explains why neo-liberalism has gained much popularity among Chinese IR scholars.<sup>20</sup> Yu and Chang are concerned with whether and how far theoretical innovation has taken place in China after neo-liberalism being introduced, emulated, and remodeled by IR scholarship there. According to them, the development of neo-liberalism in China has exceeded the stage of copying; it has led to reflections on the field of Chinese IR as well as efforts to draw on Chinese history, culture, and philosophy by bringing in other academic subjects. To be sure, Yu and Chang note, Western "democratic peace theory" conceives democracy as a new standard of civilization for confirming the war-proneness of non-democratic Others. On the other hand, they are quick to point out that whether the so-called "harmonious peace" inspired by traditional Chinese political thought could go beyond the "democratic peace" or only has limited applicability within what used to be the Sino-centric world in contemporary East Asia depends on the extent to which Chinese academics can substantiate the "harmonious peace" alternative, both materially and ideationally. Yu and Chang conclude that research on neo-liberalism in China has not reached the status of theoretical innovation, for Chinese IR scholars continue to rely on notions from "Western proto-type theory" (e.g. transaction cost) rather than their traditional culture and values to explain the origins of international cooperation and institutions. Without examining how and why these imported notions have been translated, modified, and appropriated in China, then, the West remains the sole and superior reference point for Taiwanese political scientists to judge the (im)maturity of Chinese new IR thinking.<sup>21</sup>

Chang Teng-chi's another recent research on the alleged emergence of the "Tianxia system" reveals a more explicit China-centric ontology.<sup>22</sup> Considering that some

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<sup>20</sup> Chia-fang Yu and Teng-chi Chang, "理論移植或創新: 新自由主義在中國國際關係學界的發展 (1998-2008) [Copying or Innovation: The Development of Neoliberalism in Chinese International Relations Scholarship, 1998-2008]," *East Asian Studies*, vol. 42, no. 1 (January 2011), 46-83.

<sup>21</sup> The same problem can be found among leading figures of the would-be "Chinese School," too. Qin, for example, writes: "The American IRT [IR theory] tells Chinese scholars that theorizing about important thoughts is a sign of disciplinary maturity. If persistent efforts are made, it will be inevitable for Chinese IRT, with local experience and universal validity, to emerge and grow." Yaqing Qin, "Development of International Relations Theory in China: Progress Through Debates," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, vol. 11, no. 2 (May 2011), 253. One must ask: What modes of theorizing are preferred or considered valid? Who decides which thoughts are important? How much theorizing is enough to claim maturity?

<sup>22</sup> Teng-chi Chang and Ying-shi Chen, "朝貢體系再現與天下體系的興起? 中國外交的案例研究與理

Chinese academics have started drawing upon ancient Chinese philosophical thought and diplomatic experience to rethink questions contemporary IR theory and international order are facing, Chang indicate that the rise of China is no longer a matter of foreign policy and practice but also a theoretical one. Moreover, its theoretical influence is not limited to familiar issues such as power transition or hegemonic stability; rather, it is relevant for the development of new schools, ontologies, and methodologies for IR theory.<sup>23</sup> Against this backdrop, the “universality” of the “Tianxia system” that does not seek to unite the world under market economy and liberal democracy seems to echo Beijing’s “harmonious world” that calls for the peaceful coexistence of plural civilizations and different political systems.<sup>24</sup> Rather than dismissing the growing literature on the “Tianxia system” as a part of “China’s discursive networks of power,”<sup>25</sup> Chang reminds us that it was Zhao Tingyang who first proposed his Tianxia philosophy in 2003, i.e. two years before President Hu Jintao’s “harmonious world” speech in the United Nations General Assembly. Contrary to the common perception held in Taiwan’s IR community (and elsewhere), PRC officials did not engineer the rise of the present Tianxia discourse as an exercise of Chinese soft power.<sup>26</sup>

Seen from some basic features of the tribute system and its foreign-policy relevance for China’s neighbors, one cannot but wonder as to why the Tianxia literature has not generated greater interest among Taiwanese IR scholars in studying relations across the Taiwan Strait. As Chang indicates, as long as the weaker counterparts followed the

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論反思[Revitalization of the Tribute System and the Rise of the ‘Under-Heaven System’? Case Studies and Reflections on China’s Diplomacy],” *Mainland China Studies*, vol. 55, no. 4 (December 2012), 89-123.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 91.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. Chang makes a distinction between Tianxia as an ancient Chinese ideal and worldview embodied in the tribute system and as a contemporary concept seeking to construct a new world system, but some do not hold such a distinction. For example, see Yongnian Zheng, “The Rediscovery of the Tianxia World Order,” in *National Identities and Bilateral Relations: Widening Gaps in East Asia and Chinese Demonization of the United States*, ed. Gilbert Rozman (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2013), 127-152. On the Tianxia system, see, *inter alia*, Tingyang Zhao, 天下体系:世界制度哲学导论 [The Tianxia System: An Introduction to the Philosophy of World Institution] (Beijing: China People’s University Press, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> William A. Callahan, “Chinese Visions of World Order: Post-Hegemonic or a New Hegemony?” *International Studies Review*, vol. 10, no. 4 (December 2008), 757-758. Chishen Chang, “Tianxia System on a Snail’s Horns,” *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1 (March 2011), 28-42, makes a more pertinent observation that the popularity of the Tianxia discourse has more to do with Chinese scholars’ desire to build *Chinoiserie* theories against Western ones than with any concerted instructions from the Chinese government.

<sup>26</sup> Chang and Chen, “Revitalization of the Tribute System and the Rise of the ‘Under-Heaven System’?” 98.

principle of “*shida*” (or *sadae* in Korean, meaning “serving the great and powerful”) and maintained their relations with the Chinese court in accord with rituals, China typically did not intervene in their domestic affairs and adopted a generous economic policy of “*houwang bolai*” (“giving more and getting less”) towards them.<sup>27</sup> This brings us back to the conclusion of the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) between the PRC and Taiwan in June 2010, which can be understood as the island’s increasing incorporation into Sino-centric cosmology. Hierarchical relations were confirmed when Taiwan (“vassal state”) submitted to the paternal Chinese state (“suzerain”) by upholding the so-called “1992 consensus” (i.e. a ritual of presenting “tribute”),<sup>28</sup> in return, the Taiwanese were granted trade privileges as gifts from Beijing (“son-of-heaven”). Since secondary political entities historically enjoyed immense latitude within the tributary order regarding their economic, cultural, and even military affairs, this perspective helps to understand why Chinese leaders formulated the “one country, two systems” proposal in dealing with Taiwan in the way they did (which precludes Beijing from exerting domestic control over the island), and why they have been willing to entertain issues pertaining to Taiwan’s “international space” so long as Taipei adheres to the “1992 consensus.”<sup>29</sup> Likewise, U.S. arms sales to Taiwan have been an irritant in PRC-U.S. relations not necessarily because those weapons systems and platforms would pose an insurmountable challenge to the People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA) ability to coerce or conquer Taiwan;<sup>30</sup> rather, the existence of such arms sales exposes an inconvenient truth that Taiwan’s security protégé is the United States, which, in turn, violates the *shida* principle and disrupts the island’s hierarchical relations with China.

Curiously, even though Chang concludes that current traces of the revival of the tribute system and Tianxia worldview are not yet sufficient to support the claim that Beijing is consciously pursuing a strategy to construct a new Tianxia system that may provide the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 96-97.

<sup>28</sup> The “1992 consensus” refers to a *modus operandi* under which Taipei neither openly challenges Beijing’s “One China Principle” (there is only one China and Taiwan is a part of it) nor accepts the latter’s definition of China (PRC). As such, Chinese leaders would not have demanded the “1992 consensus” as *the* foundation of cross-Strait exchanges had their mindset been fully and only under the influence of Westphalian norms.

<sup>29</sup> This point has been made in Chen, “Im/possibility of Building Indigenous Theories in a Hegemonic Discipline,” 480.

<sup>30</sup> Indeed, virtually all security experts including Taiwanese officials agree that the military balance across the Taiwan Strait has been titling in Beijing’s favor since the mid-2000s, and this trend is unlikely to be reversed even with the continuation of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan at their current level of quality and quantity. See Ching-chang Chen, “When Is China’s Military Modernization Dangerous? Constructing the Cross-Strait Offense-Defense Balance and U.S. Arms Sales to Taiwan,” *Issues & Studies*, vol. 45, no. 3 (September 2009), 69-119.

emerging “Chinese School” with a “real-world” foundation for theory-building, a conclusion that the present authors too find it sensible, he does so by developing some empirical indicators to measure the extent to which China and four of its former vassal states can be said to have been interacting within such a system. His project attempts to “connect history, extract concepts from historical experiences while relating them to modern IR studies, and finally operationalize these concepts so as to confirm the requirements of positivist research.”<sup>31</sup> Despite his China-centric ontological orientation, Chang, similar to his Taiwanese IR colleagues, is still under the influence of a Euro-centric epistemology that aspires to contribute to the betterment of social science by revising the laws on universal behavioral pattern.<sup>32</sup>

### **A New “China Threat” to Taiwanese Relational Security**

The previous section has illustrated that the reception of Chinese new IR thinking in Taiwan is mixed: Taiwanese academics have closely followed various emerging Chinese alternatives, from “new security” to the more recent “Tianxia system,” and yet overall they remain unimpressed by the indigenous theory-building on the other side of the Strait and their realist or Euro-centric mode of analysis remains unshaken.

But IR scholarship in Taiwan did not always maintain this ambivalent attitude towards the study of Chinese foreign policy. Until the 1980s, the field was dominated by a completely different generation of scholars, whose ontology and epistemology may be a lot more “non-Western” than contemporary critical IR scholarship (which is, after all, to a large extent informed by poststructuralism or post-colonial studies originated in the West). Experts in “bandit studies” (the name reserved for China studies after the KMT’s defeat on the mainland) focused on the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) ideology and propaganda when studying PRC foreign policy, pointing to its consistent principles and flexible tactics. Drawing upon CCP history and official documents, the thinking and remarks of its leaders, and, above all, their Civil War experiences against the CCP, these KMT-associated scholars were capable of empathizing with their archenemy;<sup>33</sup> indeed,

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<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Chang and Chen, “Revitalization of the Tribute System and the Rise of the ‘Under-Heaven System?’” 92-93.

<sup>32</sup> Chih-yu Shih and Teng-chi Chang, “The China Studies That Defend Chineseness: The Im/possibility of China Centrism in the Divided Sino-ophone World,” in *China’s Rise – Threat or Opportunity?*, ed. Herbert S. Yee (London: Routledge, 2011), 280-297.

<sup>33</sup> For example, see Ching-yao Yin, 中共外交與對外關係 [Communist China’s Diplomacy and Foreign Relations] (Taipei: Institute of International Relations, 1973); Ching-yao Yin, 中共的統戰外交 [Communist China’s Propaganda Diplomacy] (Taipei: Youth Culture, 1984); and Hua-lun Kuo, 中共史

they were particularly good at figuring out the networking and factional fighting among members of the CCP Central Committee and were able to describe and explain (and even predict) PRC foreign policy behavior with a level of sophistication hardly matched by today's social scientific, IR theory-armed China pundits.<sup>34</sup>

This generation of scholars did not emerge out of a geocultural vacuum.<sup>35</sup> As a self-therapy to compensate for its incompetence to representing China politically in the aftermath of the Chinese Civil War, the KMT-ruled ROC in Taiwan assigned the island a role as the representative of “authentic” Chinese culture, a strategy that was not unfamiliar to some second-tier tributary states such as Vietnam and Japan, which also had insisted that they were the “real” China. This tendency should not be too surprising, considering that they were socialized by a Tianxia worldview that allowed for peripheries to become the center as long as they could demonstrate their cultural and moral superiority in promoting social harmony. Responding to Mao Zedong's series of campaigns beginning with the Great Leap Forward in 1958 and later the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966, Chiang Kai-shek launched the much less noticed Chinese Cultural Renaissance Movement from Taiwan so as to “bring order out of chaos” (*bo luan fan zheng*); the CCP's ultimate downfall was deemed inevitable as it destroyed Chinese culture. Since scholars of the KMT-backed “bandit studies” were epistemologically illiterate in engaging English-language works on Chinese foreign policy and determined to represent China culturally, they may have been “the most conscious China-centrists ever.”<sup>36</sup>

This “(Communist) China threat” had a new twist following the pro-independence turn in Taiwan during the administrations of Lee Teng-hui (1988-2000) and Chen Shui-bian (2000-2008). Politically, the PRC was no longer simply seen as a civil war (i.e. internal) enemy; it gradually emerged as a Chinese “Other” against which a democratizing Taiwan struggled for its independent statehood.<sup>37</sup> Unlike the “bandit studies”

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論 [History of the Chinese Communist Party] (Taipei: Institute of International Relations, 1975), 4 volumes.

<sup>34</sup> Tai-chun Kuo and Remon H. Myers, *Understanding Communist China: Communist China Studies in the United States and the Republic of China, 1949-1978* (Stanford: The Hoover Institute Press, 1986).

<sup>35</sup> Perhaps their story deserves more detailed treatments in writings on IR knowledge production such as Arlene B. Tickner and Ole Wæver, eds., *International Relations Scholarship Around the World* (London: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>36</sup> Shih and Chang, “The China Studies That Defend Chineseness,” 290.

<sup>37</sup> Chih-yu Shih, “Constituting Taiwanese Statehood: The World Timing of Un-Chinese Consciousness,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 16, issue 53 (October 2007), 699-716, argues that, well before the island's democratization and the rise of independence movement, Taiwan already discursively emerged as a separate entity outside of China when the KMT sought to co-opt the American post-Vietnam War NICs

generation whose mission was to sustain Taiwan as the *best* part of China so as to support the ROC's pretension of representing the whole China, contemporary Taiwanese political scientists increasingly evaluate China in light of its (alleged) differences with Taiwan through employing Euro-centric theories and methodologies. As Shih Chih-yu observes, this is to the extent that:

Taiwanese scholars do not want to be different from their Western counterparts so as not to be reduced (in the eyes of the Western academic) to being a pre-modern, non-universal, non-rational actor. To speak the same language is not unlike becoming an equal colleague in the English-speaking academic community.<sup>38</sup>

The virtual absence of non-Western IR theory in Taiwan thus indicates as much Western IR theory's hegemonic status there as the local scholarship's choice to appropriate its assumed universalism for achieving different purposes.<sup>39</sup> The total acceptance of American/Western IR theory reflects a sort of self-empowering strategy through which Taiwanese associate themselves with the United States/West, which in turn allows some of them (and, indeed, the emerging Taiwanese state) to look at China from a separate, presumably universalist and superior position. For others (many of Taiwan's leading political scientists are offspring of the "bandit studies" generation and understandably under the pressure brought by the pro-independence turn in Taiwanese politics), the complete adoption/mastering of American/Western theories and methods, including strictly anonymous review procedures, can shield them and their research on China's foreign policy from the charge of being politically incorrect.<sup>40</sup> Either case, the obsession with Western theories and the embedded Euro-centric epistemology exhibited by Taiwanese IR scholarship as a whole ironically reveals that China is their common (and ultimate) concern.

Given that Taiwanese relational security has heavily depended on American theories, values, and "extended deterrence" (U.S. protection can only be "officially unofficial" in the absence of diplomatic ties), the recent development of Chinese new IR thinking turns out to be an unexpected source of the "China threat" as it possesses the potential

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(Newly Industrialized Countries) discourse that assigned Taiwan a new identity as a development model for China.

<sup>38</sup> Chih-yu Shih, *Democracy (Made in Taiwan): The "Success" State as a Political Theory* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2007), 218.

<sup>39</sup> Chen, "The Absence of Non-Western IR Theory in Asia Reconsidered," 12.

<sup>40</sup> Shih and Chang, "The China Studies That Defend Chineseness," 292-293.

to deconstruct Taiwan's relations with the United States. If a "Chinese School" emerged as a feasible alternative to mainstream, American IR theories (which would require a recognition that human ideas and experiences are ontologically equal, regardless of their national or civilizational background), Taiwanese scholars' strategy to appropriate the latter's alleged scientific universalism would be called into question, whether as an identity practice to demonstrate Taiwan's separation from China or as a means of survival to defend oneself from political harassment. On the other hand, if Chinese nascent IR thinking remains a "derivative discourse" of Western modernist social science that leaves the logic of colonial modernity intact,<sup>41</sup> it will challenge a popular imaginary held by Taiwanese IR scholarship regarding China's un-Americanness (hence blurring the assumed difference between IR studies in Taiwan and China). In fact, as shown in the previous section, when Taiwanese academics reach the conclusion that Beijing's promotion of "harmonious world" was a sophisticated realist-cum-constructivist exercise of soft power and the development of neo-liberalism in Chinese IR community has been beyond the stage of mere theory-copying,<sup>42</sup> the aforementioned appropriation strategy necessarily backfires as they admit that their mainland counterpart have also mastered American theory and diplomacy. Taiwanese IR scholarship has been caught in a predicament regardless of the future direction of Chinese new IR thinking.

### **How to Cope With China? Beyond Balancing and Bandwagoning**

In their study on the state of the field in Taiwan, Chiu Kun-shuan and Chang Teng-chi lament that IR theory-informed research on Chinese foreign policy remains in its infancy: "comparing to the rising quality and quantity of IR studies in Mainland China, Taiwanese scholars will face a serious challenge if they cannot take advantage of their existing Western academic training combined with their grasp of Chinese history."<sup>43</sup> On the one hand, Chiu and Chang point out that feasible IR theorizing requires researchers to take into account Chinese characteristics and to empathize with China; on the other hand, they caution that it would be too "limited and narrow" to use Chinese terminology for studying Chinese foreign policy without "making comparative reference to Western IR theory."<sup>44</sup> The remark above captures the general tendency of Taiwan's IR

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<sup>41</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

<sup>42</sup> Chao and Hsu, "China's Harmonious World;" and Yu and Chang, "Copying or Innovation."

<sup>43</sup> Chiu and Chang, "A Review of the Studies on China's Foreign Policy in Taiwan," 3.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

scholarship towards Chinese IR categorized by a mixture of exclusion and mingling. As will be illustrated in this section, such ambivalence is discernible in Taiwan's broader strategic behavior towards the PRC, which similarly cannot find proper expressions in Western IR jargon such as balancing or bandwagoning.

It may look strange for some that, in the face of China's military build-up, Taiwan's U.S. arms procurement does not fit well into the classical category of balancing. But the tendency for Taiwanese officials and strategists to seem more interested in the symbolism of such procurement than in the actual fighting capability those weapons and equipment purchases could add to Taiwan's military is not new even to American security analysts. In a 1999 RAND report, for example, President Lee was said to see the U.S. weapons "more as symbols of reassurance and resolve than as key components of a larger force structure designed to attain genuine warfighting objectives."<sup>45</sup> In a nutshell, purchasing U.S. weapons has been an essential act in establishing and maintaining Taiwan's association with the strong, thereby providing it with a certain confidence to be independent vis-à-vis China.<sup>46</sup> The aforementioned association does not require a substantial military alliance with Washington, an enhanced inter-operability with the U.S. armed forces, or even weapons and platforms on active service in the U.S.'s own arsenal. Taipei's decision to procure 150 outdated F-16 A/B fighters offered by George Bush senior's administration in 1992 is a case in point. Although these aircraft were not the advanced C/D version used by the U.S. Air Force and were not even equipped with some of the originally designed systems for firing and control upon delivery, politicians and the general public in Taiwan were highly satisfied with the deal. Indeed, the KMT government's first (semi-)official talks with Beijing since the end of the Chinese Civil War, that took place in 1993, became possible in part because of the morale-boosting F-16 sale.

U.S. arms sales acquired more salience in the formation of Taiwanese identity after 2000. To acquire a massive arms package approved by Washington in 2001, the pro-independence DPP government adopted a special budgetary program (under the

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<sup>45</sup> Michael D. Swaine, *Taiwan's National Security, Defense Policy, and Weapons Procurement Process* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1999), xv.

<sup>46</sup> This kind of self-empowering strategy can be traced back to the infamous February 28th incident of 1947, when thousands of local people were killed by mainland troops. Many Taiwanese involved in the uprising against the KMT's misrule were wearing old Japanese military uniforms, believing that Chinese soldiers would not dare to fire a shot at them. Tse-han Lai, Ramon H. Myers, and Wei Wou, *A Tragic Beginning: The Taiwan Uprising of February 28, 1947* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991).

rubric of “Three Major Military Procurement Projects”) in June 2004 for the purchase of eight diesel-powered submarines, six PAC-III missile defense systems, and twelve P-3C aircraft from the United States. The failure to push the special budget bill through in the Legislative Yuan notwithstanding, the DPP government’s campaign rhetoric for the Three Major Military Procurement Projects was effective in the (re)production of a peace-loving, pro-U.S. Taiwanese identity threatened by the warlike Chinese, on the ground that further deterioration of the cross-Strait military balance would make PRC aggression more likely.<sup>47</sup> Even though the Chen administration had been advocating the importance to cope with the mounting “China threat” by passing the special defense bill since 2004, it is worthy of note that Taipei allowed its annual defense budget as a percentage of GDP to shrink every year, from 3.8 percent in 1994 to 2.1 percent in 2006, until 2007 (months before President Chen finished his term).

The greatest significance of U.S. arms sales to Taiwan, then, is not the utility of the particular weapons systems in terms of addressing the unfavorable military balance across the Taiwan Strait; rather, it is the way in which the arms sales themselves confirm that Taiwan belongs to a camp of which China is not a part. Taipei’s seemingly irrational behavior of non- or under-balancing becomes intelligible to us when we recognize that being able to stay as a security partner of the United States has already satisfied Taiwan’s relational security need, whether and how far Washington is a credible guarantor against the “China threat” is a separate and, more often than not, secondary issue.

One might think that Taipei’s lack of “hard balancing” behavior under the incumbent Ma administration is rather self-evident; after all, the KMT traces its roots back to the mainland and President Ma himself was born in Hong Kong. But the simple “pro-China” explanation in turn prompts more questions than it clarifies: Why is there no noticeable about-face in Taipei’s security policy with respect to the PRC (e.g. bandwagoning), when the KMT is on the position to do so (which controls both the executive and legislative branches)? Why bother to reiterate calls for the United States to sell Taiwan F-16 C/D jet fighters whenever Ma and his officials meet American guests and to stress

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<sup>47</sup> As Tsai Ming-hsien, then-deputy minister of national defense, put it, “the greatest threat to the stability in the Taiwan Strait is the temptation for the PLA to act because they perceive that the military balance is tilted in their favor.” Cited in Tsai Ming-hsien, “Peace in Our Time, or Peace in Our Terms?” *Taipei Times*, October 5, 2004. For details of the special defense budget controversy and reflections on the hidden identity functions of a cross-Strait military/offense-defense balance, see Chen, “When Is China’s Military Modernization Dangerous?”

that Taipei's policies show no leaning toward Beijing when receiving Japanese politicians and journalists?

From a relational security perspective, an improving tie with Beijing means that Taipei actually has a greater need to stabilize its long-term relationships with Washington and with Tokyo, which is typically done through demonstrating Taiwan's alleged differences with China in front of the American and Japanese audience, real or imagined. Under two pro-independence administrations, Taiwan's emergence as a "subject in history" (i.e. no longer some other polity's peripheral territory or appendage) was promoted by resorting to the island's non-Chineseness.<sup>48</sup> The DPP government in effect treated the processes of charting a developmental course autonomously and that of de-Sinification as synonym, and Taiwan's colonial Japanese experiences and aboriginal inhabitants had served as important reference points to confirm such non-Chineseness, even though Imperial Japan also had imposed peripherality on the islanders and Malayo-Polynesian aborigines are ethnic minorities in a Taiwan society dominated by Han Chinese. After regaining political power in 2008, the KMT government slowed down the DPP's de-Sinification programs and sought to revitalize the island's own Chineseness—a strategy that is not unfamiliar to the generation of "bandit studies."

In his 2011 New Year's Day message "Building Up Taiwan, Invigorating Chinese Heritage," President Ma indicated that Taiwan's past development and the ROC's centennial history have been so intertwined that building foundations for another "century of prosperity" requires the consolidation of "our collective homeland."<sup>49</sup> For Ma and KMT supporters, the ROC on Taiwan represents a Chinese state that is more legitimate than the PRC. The sources of such legitimacy are specifically traced back to the birth of the ROC as the "true" inheritor of the Xinhai Revolution of 1911 that overthrew the Qing Dynasty and the ROC's sacrifice and victory in the War of Resistance against Japan (1937-1945). Furthermore, since "Taiwan has never experienced anything like mainland China's Cultural Revolution" and preserves "the roots of the Chinese culture intact over the past six decades," Ma brands the ROC as "the standard-bearer at the leading edge of Chinese culture" that successfully combines

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<sup>48</sup> Daniel C. Lynch, *Rising China and Asian Democratization: Socialization to "Global Culture" in the Political Transformations of Thailand, China, and Taiwan* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006), 150-180.

<sup>49</sup> The text of Ma's speech "Building Up Taiwan, Invigorating Chinese Heritage" is available at <<http://www.president.gov.tw>>.

the openness and innovation of a maritime culture and the Confucian values.<sup>50</sup> This self-perceived “authentic” Chineseness helps to explain why Taipei is currently waging an undeclared little war that pitches its Taiwan Academy against Beijing’s Confucius Institute around the world.<sup>51</sup> Likewise, Ma already held public ceremonies to worship Yellow Emperor (a legendary figure seen as the initiator of Chinese civilization and the ancestor of all Han Chinese) twice since 2009,<sup>52</sup> a traditional ritual performed by all self-proclaimed rightful rulers of China.

Another important source of legitimacy often invoked is the level of freedom and democracy enjoyed by ROC citizens. Ma describes Taiwan as “a paragon of democracy for the Chinese-speaking world” whose experience can “serve as a reference for the future development of mainland China.”<sup>53</sup> In his 2011 National Day speech titled “A Century of Struggle, a Democratic Taiwan,” Ma maintained that “‘The Republic of China’ is more than the name of a nation; it also stands for a free and democratic way of life, and serves as a model for those living in other ethnic Chinese societies who yearn for freedom and democracy.”<sup>54</sup> It is in this regard that Taiwan’s “authentic” Chineseness mingles with its Americanness, first as a vanguard of the U.S.-led anti-Communist camp during the Cold War and later a “model” of U.S. democracy promotion in the post-Cold War era.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, Taipei’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs repeatedly stresses that the near world-wide visa exemptions or landing visa status granted to the Taiwanese represent a testament to the international respect Taiwan receives. The recent inclusion in the U.S. Visa Waiver Program (VWP) in particular was boasted by the Ma administration as evidence that its foreign policy is “in the right direction” and that the Taiwan-U.S. bilateral relationship is “at their best in 60 years.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Introduction about the Taiwan Academy can be found at <<http://taiwanacademy.tw>>.

<sup>52</sup> “Three Years Later, Ma Ying-jeou Hosts the Ceremony of the Yellow Emperor Mausoleum Again,” *Sina News* (China), April 3, 2012.

<sup>53</sup> Ma, “Building Up Taiwan, Invigorating Chinese Heritage.” For critical IR scholarship, it is perhaps more accurate to describe Taiwan as having an image (not an identity) of being a democracy. See Shih, *Democracy (Made in Taiwan)*.

<sup>54</sup> The text of Ma’s speech “A Century of Struggle, a Democratic Taiwan” is available at <<http://www.president.gov.tw>>.

<sup>55</sup> Chris Cockel, “Taiwan Democracy a Model for Middle East: Wolfowitz,” *China Post* (Taipei), February 5, 2005; “Taiwan a Model for Asia: European Parliament Taiwan Caucus Chairman,” Central News Agency (Taiwan), January 17, 2008; and “Taiwan’s Democratic Lesson,” *Washington Post*, January 21, 2008.

<sup>56</sup> Shelley Shan and Shih Hsiu-chuan, “US Grants Taiwan Visa-Waiver Status,” *Taipei Times*, October 3, 2012; and “KMT Denies Ex-US-Officials Claims,” *Taipei Times*, April 2, 2012.

It is worthy of note that this “at-their-best” assertion has acquired a mantra-like status in Taipei’s foreign policy circle. Even when being recalled in protest of Tokyo’s move to nationalize the Senkaku islands (known as the Diaoyutai in Taiwan) which Taipei also claims as its own, Shen Ssu-tsun, Taiwan’s representative to Japan, still described the state of Taiwan-Japan ties in this way to legislators. Rather than siding with Beijing in the Diaoyutais imbroglio as outside observers had anticipated, Taipei’s latest decision to sign a fishery agreement with Tokyo that in effect prohibits Taiwanese fishing boats from entering the Japanese-controlled 12-nautical-mile belt of waters surrounding the contested islands (hence acquiescing in Japan’s sovereignty over them despite statements to the opposite) can thus be interpreted as an act to balance its relationships with China and Japan on the one hand and a show of resolving territorial disputes peacefully (in contrast to Beijing’s more high-profile patrolling in the East China Sea) in front of the international audience on the other.<sup>57</sup>

In short, Taiwan’s difference with the PRC has been demonstrated through the discursive construction of a “better China,” which, contrary to the prevailing “China threat theory” associated with the mainland, is capable of conducting cordial working relationships with both the United States/West and Japan and is welcomed by the international community at large. Taiwan’s foreign and security policy as an identity construction practice during Ma’s term is thus not qualitatively different from that of the Chen administration, for the Taiwanese self is still defined in opposition to the PRC Other through the creation of a series of binaries (e.g. authentic Chinese culture/disrespect for tradition, model of democracy/stagnant democratization, pro-U.S./anti-U.S., Japan-friendly/anti-Japan, international acceptance and respect/international suspicion and distrust, and so on). Can Taiwan ever rise above its “relational security dilemma” and start appreciating Chinese new IR thinking and practices in their own rights?

### **Conclusion: The Im/possibility of Transcendence in Subaltern Taiwan**

This chapter has sought to examine the ways in which Chinese IR’s emerging indigenous theories and concepts have been received by Taiwan’s IR scholarship. Under the influence of various legacies combined (namely, Japanese colonial rule, Chinese Civil War, and U.S.-led Cold War), IR scholars there are attentive but not sensitive to

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<sup>57</sup> Shih Hsiu-chuan, “Taiwan, Japan Ink Fisheries Agreement,” *Taipei Times*, April 11, 2013; and Adam Tyrsett Kuo, “Taipei-Tokyo Fishery Pact a Good Start for Further Progress: Ma,” *China Post*, April 23, 2013.

the development of new IR thinking on the other side of the Strait. Rather than make use of their advantage in Chinese language, history, and culture and join up with their mainland colleagues in building feasible alternatives to mainstream, Euro-centric theories for a genuinely “global” IR studies, Taiwanese academics tend to evaluate nascent Chinese IR thinking through an American (and typically realist) lens. Despite their subsequent conclusion that it remains premature to speak of indigenous IR theory-building in China or a plausible “Chinese School,” these Chinese alternatives unexpectedly pose an epistemological threat to Taiwanese IR scholarship, for they possess the potential to reveal that the universality associated with American/Western IR (through which Taiwan obtains a sense of superiority over China) is at best limited or that Chinese scholars also have acquired a good command of American theories and methods (hence obscuring the assumed differences between Taiwan and China). While academics and practitioners of international relations in Taiwan appear to be good disciples of American realism concerning themselves with the balance of power when facing China’s rise, not unlike their ambivalent attitude towards Chinese new IR thinking, this chapter has illustrated that Taipei’s actual foreign policy behavior towards the PRC is not so much about balancing (or, for that matter, bandwagoning) in a classical sense. Rather, it is more about how to balance Taiwan’s relationships with China on the one hand and with the U.S./Japan on the other. The quest for relational security has rendered Taiwan’s overall approach to China a mixture of mingling and exclusion, both politically and intellectually.

This leads us to an epistemological (and, indeed, political) question as to whether Taiwanese IR scholarship is able to understand new ideas and practices in China’s external relations *as they are*, unfiltered and unconstrained by any national (Chinese or Japanese) and civilizational (Confucian or Western) conditions. From the perspective of Western IR, it is fruitless to contemplate such a possibility because the nation-state remains the dominant unit of analysis in international politics. Postcolonial IR likewise is not interested in the possibility of transcendence, because it celebrates hybrid identities capable of switching between different situations. But scholars in China studies communities (especially those located in China’s immediate neighborhood) have been confronting very much the same question well before the current “China fever” in the IR discipline, and some creative suggestions have been proffered.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Discussions below draw heavily on Chih-yu Shih, *Civilization, Nation and Modernity in East Asia* (London: Routledge, 2012), ch. 5.

A relevant case in point is Takeuchi Yoshimi (1910-1977), who proposed Asia as a method of constantly *becoming* a different entity.<sup>59</sup> By denying the self from coming into being in any concrete or substantive sense, Takeuchi's method of self-denial envisioned a Japan/Asia that would not need to choose between leader and follower on the one hand and between China and the West on the other. In other words, Asia would not be reduced into an anti-West instrument under Japan's leadership as seen in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (GEACS), or a blind disciple of Europe that could never catch up with the instructor, hence avoiding Japan's failed attempts to counter Western hegemony in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>60</sup> Mizoguchi Yuzo (1932-2010) similarly maintained that studying China can serve as a way for Japan to learn how to understand a different nation based on the latter's own historical subjectivity, without taking any specific standpoint. From his perspective, studying China itself is no longer the purpose; rather, it is to reconsider the structural problems of human history by studying China.<sup>61</sup> In so doing, Japan could belong to a truly universal world, rising above any national or civilizational conditions.

The method of self-denial employed by Takeuchi and Mizoguchi has in fact been practiced several decades ahead by Tsai Pei-huo (1889-1983), an intellectual and political activist in colonial Taiwan. To advocate rights for the Taiwanese, Tsai realized that, as a colonial subject politically dominated by Japan and culturally subordinate to China, he needed to create a space not belonging strictly to either Japan or China in order for his arguments not to be dismissed out of hand by the colonial authorities. The gathering storm over the Asian continent and the subsequent Japanization campaign, however, presented the Taiwanese a dark prospect of choosing Japan over China. To stay integral and maintain self-respect, Tsai chose to be neither by resorting to "East Asia" for transcending the colonial Japaneseness. In his "The Son of East Asia" (1934),<sup>62</sup> Tsai placed East Asia above national communities: Taiwan was no longer subordinate to either China or Japan in this scheme; all of them could become sons of East Asia. To become an East Asian in Taiwan was an exercise of constant self-denial, being neither Chinese nor Japanese. Moreover, if all were East Asians, there would be

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<sup>59</sup> Yoshimi Takeuchi, *What Is Modernity? Writings of Takeuchi Yoshimi*, trans. Richard Calichman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).

<sup>60</sup> For the project of "overcoming modernity" backed by some of the most prominent intellectuals during wartime Japan, see Richard Calichman, ed., *Overcoming Modernity: Cultural Identity in Wartime Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

<sup>61</sup> Yuzo Mizoguchi, *方法としての中国 [China as Method]* (Tokyo: Tokyo University Press, 1989).

<sup>62</sup> Han-yu Chang, ed., *蔡培火全集 [The Collection of Tsai Pei-huo's Work]* (Taipei: Corporate Wu San-lien Taiwan Historical Data Foundation, 2000).

no need for them to fight each other for expansion, hence winning respect from other parts of the world.

Borrowing the Japanese metaphor of God's state to designate the identity of East Asia, Tsai also sought to persuade the Japanese militarist regime that the emperor's "princely way" could only be achieved by peace, leading to the land of eternal happiness. His conception of East Asia enabled him to make use of the princely way discourse for occupying the moral high ground against the war with China under the circumstance of war. Taiwan in Tsai's East Asia became a place where China and Japan could co-exist in harmony; unlike the confrontational nature exhibited in Japan's pre-1945 pan-Asianism that attempted to coerce the rest of Asia and the Western powers simultaneously (i.e. GEACS), East Asia in this regard was simply an invitation. Furthermore, since Tsai focused on the relationship between Japan and China without opposing Europe/the West, his East Asia was non-threatening to the West. To become an East Asian only required one to retreat far beyond all national conditions, which, in turn, brought one into what Nishida Kitaro (1870-1945) called the "place of nothingness."<sup>63</sup> It does not seem unreasonable to suggest that Tsai's scheme actually achieved a higher level of sophistication than that of Kyoto School philosophers in the sense that his East Asia rendered it impossible for his retreat to the place of nothingness to be co-opted or appropriated by the militarist regime, as seen in the case of Nishida and his disciplines.<sup>64</sup>

This is not to imply that it would be easy to pursue Tsai's East Asia as a method of constant self-denial. It should be reminded that Tsai himself was immediately imprisoned after the publication of the "Son of East Asia," for shaking the conviction of the Imperial Army. The fact that Tsai's writings have been largely ignored in contemporary Taiwan also indicates that the academic and political climate there is more concerned with the identification of (simulated) differences between Taiwan and China than with the transcendence of their relationship. Indeed, it is extremely difficult for an East Asian to consciously exercise conceptual retreat in her/his daily life permeated by national politics. The temptation of power eventually led Tsai to serve in the KMT government as a minister-without-portfolio in the early 1950s, forfeiting his nascent East Asian identity. Nevertheless, Tsai's thinking and activities demonstrate

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<sup>63</sup> Goto-Jones, *Political Philosophy in Japan*.

<sup>64</sup> Kosuke Shimizu, "Nishida Kitaro and Japan's Interwar Foreign Policy: War Involvement and Culturalist Political Discourse," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, vol. 11, no. 1 (January 2011), 157-183.

that intellectual and political exit to Taiwan's "relational security dilemma" (i.e. choosing between China and the U.S./Japan) are immanent, emerging, and possible. Rather than keep treating new IR thinking in China as a mere research object, Taiwanese IR scholarship should not forget the possibility of transcendence when engaging Chinese IR.