

Naming China

Taiwan's National Day speeches as identity politics

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In the article, we analyze how names for China are used by five ROC presidents in National Day speeches over 58 years (1949–2007), including “communist bandits”; “Chinese communists”; “mainland” and “opposite shore/both shores”; “China”; and “People’s Republic of China.” Each name registers unique historicity and each displays associated expressions, reshuffling power structures and allowing negotiation of ideological positioning. Sometimes overlapping, sometimes joining at edges, these names cleave to inconsistent layers of meaning, helping presidents negotiate courses of action in Taiwan’s yet-to-be-resolved political identity.

Keywords: Naming Practices, Presidential Speeches, China, Taiwan

In 2001, a Taiwan reporter covering the APEC meeting in Shanghai referred to the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as “Chinese communists” (*zhonggong*), prompting this from Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan: “We are in the big Shanghai of the People’s Republic of China, and yet you keep calling us ‘*zhonggong*, *zhonggong*... [That] has become a historical term and yet it still comes from...you Taiwanese reporters”.¹ This eruption, reflecting hostilities between Taiwan and China, sparked by Taiwan’s exclusion from the meeting for the first time since 1993, prompted President Chen of Taiwan’s Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), at a press conference next day, to repeatedly call China “PRC” (*zhonghuarenmingongheguo*).

Beginning with Chiang Kai-shek’s move to Taiwan after losing the Chinese civil war to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the late 1940s, and his lifelong vow to reclaim the mainland, “China” has served as a reference point for Taiwan. Names for China have proved especially powerful means for Taiwan’s “identity project” through “...the infusion of symbols into a shared collective memory” (Laitin 1998: 264). “Bandits” (*gongfei*) from the late 1940s is officially obsolete, yet nostalgic in popular discourse. “Chinese communists” and “mainland” (*dalü*) persist,

modified by changing circumstances. “Opposite shore/both shores” (*duian/liangan*²) from the 1990s reflected increased contact, while “China” changed from meaning Taiwan and China, to more exclusively China. “The PRC,” taboo since 1949, entered only after 2000.

Contests over names confront nation-states, embedded within and shaping history. Name changes reshuffle power through ideological and political configurations; names can be made, assigned, and appropriated to suit agendas and mobilize action yet resisted and contested (Bakhtin 1986; Bhatia 2005). Imagined communities constructed and enacted (Anderson 1983) through names are realized recursively, as Taiwan negotiates identity through how it views China.

As names change, so do perceptions and construction of political reality (Edelman 1971), particularly when invoked by leaders on official occasions. National Day speeches commemorating the founding of the Republic of China (ROC) are one site to examine such names. Presidents speak for nations and know about names’ power with citizens. The government authorizes acceptable usage, endorsed by a divided public and monitored by international observers (Ensink 1997). We examine how naming practices serve as vehicles for Taiwan to manage its identity project (Laitin 1998) through analyzing names for China in 58 National Day speeches by five presidents: from 1949 to 1974 by Chiang Kai-shek; 1975–1977, Yan Jiagan; 1978–1987, Chiang Ching-kuo; 1988–1999, Lee Teng-hui; and 2000–2007, Chen Shui-bian.³

Names, political metaphors, and identity construction

Scholars from many disciplines have explored naming, focusing on naming locations to proclaim ownership and promote ideology (Azaryahu 1997); the state (Coakley 2009); and opponents (Bhatia 2005). Names are metaphorical devices providing conceptual casing summarizing complex sociohistorical circumstances (Edelman 1971; Lakoff and Johnson 1980). “[T]he very selection of a term... puts invisible boundaries for human perception and suggests attitudes for its evaluation” (Kiewe 1988: 81).

Yet names are more than conceptual frames or political tools; they are grounded in specific times and places, and language embedding contesting voices. Each name drives and is sustained by narratives in the process of “collective remembering” (Wertsch 2002), telling stories, suggesting links with behavior and unfolding events, giving full expression to metaphors. Once a name is assigned, “...a series of normative associations, motives and characteristics are attached to the named subject” (Bhatia 2005: 8).

Acts associated with collective remembering have to do with complex, varied political/cultural entities referred to by Anderson (1983) as “imagined communities.” By emerging in a charged environment of conflicting viewpoints, names enter the struggle for supremacy and survival, registering ideological conflict, legitimizing relations, and sustaining power differentials (Bakhtin 1986; Fairclough 1989).

Taiwan’s identity project evolves in a unique linguistic environment, a ground in which names take root and gain substance. Chinese, as a logographic writing system with noninflectional nature (verb forms do not change for persons or tenses, while nouns maintain the same form), is expressed in concrete shape, impression and sound. Although each character encodes phonetic value with meaning, and while a “character” has only one syllable, a “word,” as a unit of speech, may have more than one syllable and more than one character (P. Chen 1999; Liu 1962).

Chinese grammars are flexible and mobile (Liu, 1962). “The Chinese language has no grammar that irrevocably fixes and categorizes; that is, it has no parts of speech, number, gender, tense, declension, and so on” (Wu 1989:247). Almost any word can be a noun, verb, adjective, or adverb, depending on position. Since sentences are not especially important in Chinese syntax, clauses or phrases are fundamental elements of Chinese composition. Chinese philosophy “treats all words as names and treats compound terms...as mere strings of names” (Hansen 1985:500).

This flexibility makes names effective for political manipulation, as Chinese characters can form clusters of images, shortened, extended, and morphed into various other strings of words. Conceptions thus generated and supported are different, capable of revision to suit political and other needs more conveniently than might be the case with other languages.

Grounded in a strong strain of Confucianism demanding rectification (socially appropriate use) of names, Chinese names become supercharged metaphors. One who speaks should be aligned with one’s “name” — one’s position vis-à-vis the social hierarchy — since names designate and constitute the relationship (Blum 1997). Although the Confucian ideal is to ensure alignment of internal foundation and outward expression, political language endorsing external formality aims at establishing hegemonic authority amidst challenges from contesting voices.

The resilience of Chinese in building strings of words solidifies a name’s essence while allowing it to expand. Names for China have evolved through idiosyncratic contexts, intertwining among multiple layers, burdened with historical presuppositions. Taiwan, like many states, relies on language in the public sphere, using various symbolic means to secure, establish, and maintain its identity project.

Naming China in National Day Speeches, 1949–2007

National Independence Day (Double Tenth, celebrated October 10, tenth day and month) commemorates ROC's founding (1912). During KMT's early rule, this provided a "...yearly occasion for all...to celebrate the success of Xinhai revolution [or Wuchang uprising, the revolution of 1911], which revitalized the Han⁴ ethnicity and built the ROC" (1950). President Chiang notes:

The structure of ROC is the protection of people's freedom and rights; the national flag of the ROC is the symbol of revolution; the title of ROC solidifies people's patriotism; the national anthem represents the principle of building the nation with the Three Principles of the People [*Sanmin Zhuyi*]; and the Double Tenth Celebration is to pay homage to the harsh history of Han people's efforts in establishing the ROC. (1949)

Since the CCP controlled the mainland, early speeches contrasted ROC with that "illegitimate" regime which, until recently, could not be named "PRC." After the DPP won the presidency in 2000 and 2004, with a rising Taiwanese consciousness, nationalists were criticized as outsiders and the Double Tenth became controversial. As Chinese-consciousness was gradually supplanted, the Xinhai Revolution became irrelevant to some and alternative names for China in Double Tenth speeches — "communist bandits," "Chinese communists," "the mainland," "opposite shore/both shores," and "PRC"/"China" — were also contested.

Communist Bandits (Gongfei)

"Communist bandits" is based on *fei* (bandits) and prevailed as KMT consolidated rule over Taiwan during the Cold War (Cho 2002). A naming policy was implemented in 1947 specifying that all media address communists as *gongfei*.

Speeches by Chiang and Yan from 1949 to 1977 use *fei* extensively to prop up the reclaiming myth, continuing as frequency subsided from double to single digits after Chiang Ching-kuo became president. In 1979 and 1980, *fei* is absent, resuming in 1981, appearing two to four times per speech, until disappearing in 1987, the year before Chiang Ching-kuo died and Lee became president.

Fei refers to bandits or thieves, with attached characters for leaders, affiliation, and other connections. Communists are "communist bandits" (*gongchan feitu*), or "Chinese communist bandits" (*zhonggong feitu*). Mao Zedong is "bandit Mao" (*mao fei*), which leads to "chief Mao" (*mao qiu*) or "thief Mao" (*mao zei*).

The party is a "party of bandits" (*feidang*) or "gang of bandits of Zhu and Mao" (*zhumao feibang*). They are a "nest" (*chao*) breeding thieves who must be exterminated (*jiao*). Their "illegitimate bandit regime" (*feiweizhengquan*) is led by a "chief of bandits" (*feiqiu*).

These “sly bandits” (*jian fei*) “stole” (*qie*) the mainland, “fallen into the hands [of bad people]” (*lunxian*; or *lunwang*). They practice “tyranny” (*baozheng*) through slaughter and enslavement, producing a “disaster of bandits” (*fei huo*), condemning the innocent to “deep water and fierce fire” (*suishen huore*). The ROC must therefore “exterminate the communists” (*jiao gong*), who are not human, but ferocious rascals (*liao*).

This depiction progresses from communists, to their organization, to consequences of their actions — the CCP embraces terror and cruelty, making the mainland a place needing rescue. The CCP joined with Russia, making their rulers “traitors to the Han” (*hanjian*). According to one slogan, “Han People and Thieves Do Not Stand on the Same Ground” (*hanzeibuliangli*). “We as saviors” is set against “them as thieves,” as in another slogan, “Extinguish the All-Evil Communist Bandits and Rescue Mainland Fellows from the Same Womb” (*xiaomie wane gongfei, jiejiu dalu tongbao*).

Ironically, after China and Russia split, rhetoric hardened, perhaps reflecting Chiang’s frustration at being unable to reclaim the mainland. The inscription of Chinese communists as Russian allies shifted to political ideology, becoming violent, even irrational: “We know our mainland fell into the hands [of bad people] and the communist bandits won by sheer luck, purely due to their acting as parasites — outwardly they cheat, sew dissension between, and inwardly they seduce, control, pass through, and overthrow...” (1965). This speech contained 51 *fei*-names, highest of all speeches.

In 1966, Red Army soldiers are “muddled thieves of an evil religion, brigands and roaming bandits...whose evil can never be forgiven.” The difference between “Han” and “traitors of Han bandits” was clear: “Loyalty, piety, human-heartedness, love, faithfulness, righteousness, amiability, and peace, are the ever-growing, excellent cultural foundation for our Chinese people. The Boxer Rebellion of 1900 and the bandit Mao’s tyrannical cruelty...are just boils with vermin inside” (1966). Chiang called for “extinguishing this Mao chief of roaming bandits and brigands, [sparing] ourselves the pain of long war!” (1967). Similar expressions infuse all speeches, even after the PRC replaced ROC as representing “China” in the United Nations (1971).

In *gongfei* rhetoric, Taiwan is a springboard, under American protection, to aid ROC’s return to the mainland. As Yan says, people must “work together to exterminate all-evil Mao bandits, and rescue mainland fellows from the same womb” (1975). In 1977, recognizing China’s changing leadership, Yan uses “gang of bandits” (*feibang*) in eight of 21 *fei*-names, framing their actions as destructive purging and cleansing. Chiang’s and Yan’s rhetoric is formulaic, with slogans and repetition reinforcing the *fei* metaphor.

This practice continued in Chiang Ching-kuo's shorter speeches, *fei* appearing in seven of ten speeches, one to four times per speech. While continuing to use "bandits," Chiang reduced negative portrayals of communists, stating the goal was to realize the Three Principles of the People in Taiwan as a model for the mainland (1978). After China established ties with America in 1979, Chiang implemented the "three no's" policy: no contact, no negotiation, and no compromise between Taiwan and China, urging citizens to "reverentially fortify the self, and not be swayed in any changing circumstances." Chiang did not use *fei* in his next two speeches. The four 1981 appearances — three "communist bandits" and one "fake bandit regime" — are objections to the PRC's "usurping" history by celebrating the Xinhai Revolution anniversary. As a "model province" practicing capitalism, Taiwan had to serve as a standard for other *fei*-occupied parts of China while its identity connected inextricably to the mainland.

After 1986, as hope of recovering the mainland faded, "bandits" disappeared.⁵ Chiang lifted martial law in 1987, six months before he died. Lee became president in 1988, avoiding the term⁶ and continuing to democratize Taiwan. Lee abolished provisions for national mobilization on May 1, 1991, ending designation of the PRC as a "rebellious group" (*panluan tuanti*), resituating Taiwan in the Chinese polity. He also moved to acknowledge that China and Taiwan functioned under separate rules, replacing "bandits" with "Chinese communists" and "mainland."⁷

The Mainland (Dalu)

Throughout these speeches appears the metaphor "mainland" or "Chinese mainland." Seemingly ideology-free, this name sometimes denotes China, or appears as an adjective with terms designating people (like *dalu tongbao* and *dalu renming* [mainland people]) or land (*dalu guotu* [mainland territory]). *Dalu* stimulated nostalgia based on Chinese love of land, and the extended *dalu tongbao*, people on that land. While ROC distanced itself from the CCP — *gongfei* — it attempted to draw closer to people on *dalu*. Despite suggestions of common ancestry, China was distant physically and psychologically, and promoting mainland fellows as blood relatives "from the same womb" encouraged commonality and called Taiwanese to action.

Dalu was often invoked by the three mainland-born presidents, less by those Taiwan-born — only half of Lee's and one of Chen's speeches contain it. *Dalu* appeared frequently in speeches in double digits prior to the 1970s. After moving to Taiwan, nationalists depicted "the mainland" as imprisoned behind an "iron curtain" (*tiemu*) shielding a place destroyed or having changed color (*bianse*). Positioned quasi-religiously (Roy 2003), Chiang declared his goals: "...build Taiwan, counterattack the mainland, rescue the entire nation's *tongbao*, and revitalize the ROC" (1950).

Chiang took all this personally: “There is no word to describe my sadness and rage...” (1954). Controlled by thugs, *dalu* was in anguish and torment: “...communist bandits have...acted perversely in *dalu*, creating...[a] horrifying human hell” (1961; emphasis added). Moreover, “Today our happy land of freedom (*ziyoujidi*) stands in stark contrast to the hell of the mainland” (1970).

During the cultural revolution, the Red Guards were recast as bandits: “The Mao thief utilizes innocent...children to organize the ‘Red Guards,’ and commands them to engage in arrogant and blind fights and actions on the mainland” (1966). They made *dalu* a place of no government (1967) and are part of an evil ruling gang, while *dalu* remains pure and innocent.

Dalu tongbao have rebelled and are urged to rebel. Chiang contrasts the inhumane *fei* rulers with suffering, warm-hearted *tongbao*:

They [other nations] do not know that 98 percent of the six billion people are against and despise the bandits... In fact, they not only do not belong to the sly and fake communist bandits, they are strong preparatory soldiers...for the ROC to fight against the communists and the Russians! (1960)

Yan follows this rhetoric: “[*Dalu tongbao*] have suffered from the exploitation by the communist bandits...can you not risk danger and try to leave such a concentration camp of enslavement and the non-human black hell?...” (1976).

Chiang Ching-kuo dwelled less on events in China and appealed for cooperation. In 1979, he no longer cast China as “bandits” and ROC as “savior”: “Although our government has left the mainland...in fact, today our hearts and the hearts of the *dalu tongbao* are closely connected,” and *dalu* could be reinvented only if CCP emulated ROC, using “the spirit of the Xinhai Revolution” (1981) and “*Sanmin Zhuyi*” (1983).

As *fei* lessened after the 1980s, “mainland,” along with “Chinese communist,” took center stage in official discourse and the *dalu* nostalgia abated. *Dalu* encapsulates the mission of the Chiangs and Yan, but Lee’s *dalu* is a distant other, reinforcing superiority of self. Lee used the name (in eight of 12 speeches) to signify China’s failure and elevate Taiwan. In 1988, Lee noted “the rise of Chinese confidence emerging from the ‘Taiwan experience,’” since Taiwan “stands in sharp contrast to the bloody oppression of people for over 40 years on the Chinese mainland.” Unlike his predecessors, Lee admits reclaiming *dalu* is a lost cause: “For...40 years, the Chinese mainland across the Strait practices communism. Not only have people lost their right to freedom, they also cannot get rid of poverty and underdevelopment” (1988; emphasis added). This *dalu* is geographic, acknowledging differences in locality, yet instilling Taiwan with identity apart from *dalu*.

Lee directed his remarks to both rulers and “suffering” *tongbao*; *dalu* is their problem, not Taiwan’s, leading Lee to call rulers to action: “Teng-hui has pleaded

with the Chinese communists that they should learn the trend and bravely give up the one-party system and implement democracy and a free economic system..." (1990). Lee, then KMT leader, endorsed an anti-communist agenda and unification of China, but saw himself neither as "savior" nor defender of China's backwardness. Lee summoned the "mainland authority" (*dalu dangju*) to jettison ideology, equalize standards of living, and engage Taiwan as equal (1992). Although China is still not a state, it is treated as an administration that can take action.

Dalu gradually changed into a geographic name, devoid of blood-connectiveness. While Lee invoked it in 1988, 1989, and 1990 (to show connection), 1994 sees a change: "The great accomplishment of rights owned by people...has become the *dalu tongbao's* unattainable dream, a fact that cannot be denied..."⁸ To emphasize Taiwan's independence, Lee replaced "ROC" with "ROC in Taiwan," moving beyond the "One China Policy" implied in the ROC Constitution.

Dalu lingered through the 1990s. Subsequently, Taiwan has pursued self-determination in domestic and international affairs (Tu 1996). At the 1996 Conference on National Development, parties agreed to the "Taiwan first" principle (Chao 2003). "The mainland" became less a romanticized motherland needing redemption and more a place of opposition, even a "disenchanted marketplace" (Tu 1996: 1119).

An open door policy made "opposite shore" (*duian*) and "both shores" (*liangan*) preferred names for Lee and Chen. With its identifier *dui* — opposite — *duian* denotes collective difference and separation. Skipping *dalu* (1995–1997), Lee reiterated in 1998 and 1999 that ROC's success provides a model for the "Chinese mainland." Lee's focus on Taiwan makes transition to Chen easier; Chen used *dalu* only once (2001), noting that the government will "actively promote mainland people (*dalu renshi*) to come [visit]." Instead of *tongbao*, Chen used *renshi* (people), a more respectful, formal, hence distant, phrase. Preferring *duian* and *zhongguo*, Chen never used *dalu* again.

Chinese Communists (Zhonggong)

Another name in Taiwanese identity development is *zhonggong*, shortened from *zhongguo gongchandang* (CCP). Here ethnicity and nationality are specified, as is party affiliation (*gong* for *gongchandang*, communist party). *Zhong* is sometimes omitted, *gong* grounding metaphorical clusters (Jamieson 1992), such as *gongdang* (communist party), which practices *gongchan jiquan* (communist totalitarianism) through *gongjun gonggan* (communist army, cadres).

From 1949 until 2002 all presidents used *gong*-centered names consistently and often (*zhonggong* remained subordinate until the late 1980s). *Gong* transformed from designating a barbaric gang, to denoting an ideologically laden political party. Like "mainland," it began in the shadow of *fei*. *Zhonggong* increased in

the early 1980s, elevated by Chiang Ching-kuo as *fei* disappeared in 1987. In the 1990s, as Taiwan interacted more with China, *zhonggong* decreased, alternating with *duian/liangan* and ebbed in 2003, when Chen used only *duian/liangan* to address China, and “China” and “PRC” from 2006 on.

From 1949 to the late 1980s, *fei*'s supremacy meant *zhonggong* seldom appeared alone (except in 1949, 1952, and 1965). It was usually an adjective modifying *bandits*, such as *zhonggong feidang* (1949, 1977, 1984, 1985). At each center is *gongfei*, shortened in all expressions. In 1949 thirteen of sixteen *zhonggong* appearances are with *feidang*. Similar statements appear all the way to 1987.

During this period, while *zhonggong* alone was infrequent, *gong*-related expressions flourished. Led by Mao (*maogong*), *gongfei* produced *gong huo* (a calamity of communists). Those surrendering to communists were *mei gong* (grovel), *kong gong* (dread), or *wei gong* (fear). The ROC must *jiao gong* (eradicate); lead people to *fangong kange* (rebel and fight against communists and Russia⁹) or *fangong fuguo* (fight against communists and restore the nation): “Rescuing the country is above everything, and all is for the sake of *fangong*!” (1956)

Yan linked Chiang Kai-shek — “Since *zhonggong feidang* stole the mainland, they have done nothing but fight for power inside, liquidate people, and incite class struggle...” (1977) — to his son — “*Zhonggong feidang* bets on the legacy of Chinese culture and history — they...have become a source of trouble for the whole world” (1984). *Gong* and *fei* often appeared together, depicting a violent, cruel communist gang whose focus is more on brutality (*fei*) than ideology (*gong*).

This tack remains despite fewer negative portrayals of China — from the PRC's separation from Russia in the late 1950s; to ROC's alliance with America in the 1960s; to expulsion from the UN in 1971; to Chiang Kai-shek's death in 1975; to Yan's presidency; to Chiang Ching-kuo's “Three No's” policy in 1979; to Chiang's open door policy in 1987 and his death in 1988.

Chiang Ching-kuo promoted the Three Principles of the People against communism, elevating Taiwan over the mainland: “We all know the battle of anti-communism and recovering the nation is a battle between *Sanmin Zhuyi* and *Gongchan Zhuyi*” (1984). Note these “principles” are four characters with the last two indicating “-ism.” Communism is no longer tyranny by bandits, but an inferior ideology. The conflict became ideological when *gongfei* disappeared in 1987 and *zhonggong* was rehabilitated. Instead of naming bandits, *zhonggong* simply practiced communism, which the ROC stood against:

The faster the recovering base [Taiwan] develops, the more underdeveloped *zhonggong* appears. Hence, the more effort and progress made by our people and soldiers, the more pressure we will exert on the tyranny of *zhonggong* and the more hope will come to [our] *dalü tongbao*. (1987)

Note the contrast in how the two are put on equal footing. Still a “recovering base,” Taiwan stresses democracy and ideology, helping define its identity project. Paradoxically, as Taiwan highlighted its democracy, China gained legitimacy, noteworthy, since the elder Chiang accused (1949) Chinese communists as Russian spies and *not* a domestic political party.

Lee continued naming China *zhonggong*, but in 1988 added *dangju* (authority), much as he had with *dalu*: “[We] have the right to tell the *zhonggong dangju* that...the country’s prosperity and people’s happiness can never be accomplished by...rule of dictatorship.” Though Lee avoided addressing China as a state, his expansion adroitly acknowledges its legitimacy. Unlike Chiang’s and Yan’s poses as *dalu tongbao*’s saviors, and Chiang Ching-kuo’s seeking cooperation to solve ideological conflicts, Lee emphasizes government. Speaking “government to government,” Lee simply adds two characters, holding *zhonggong* accountable for good relations with ROC: “Teng-hui has asked *zhonggong* to see the trend, revise its position and discard one-party rule...and free economy...it is only on the road of democracy that there is opportunity for us to walk together...” (1990)

During the 1990s, *zhonggong* was often used with or was replaced by “opposite shore/both shores.” With *liangan* emphasizing Taiwan *and* China, *zhonggong* must be judged with Taiwan: “As proved by practice and compared to the Taiwan experience...*zhonggong* has lost its position of leadership” (1993). *Zhonggong* was now less demon than an opponent defeated by Taiwan.

Zhonggong’s full expression *zhongguo gongchandang* (CCP) contrasts with KMT’s full title *zhongguo guomindang* — both share a prefix, *zhongguo*, offering opportunity for domestic dispute resolution. However, *gong* makes it difficult for parties to reconcile — *zhong* ties, *gong* divides. This focus matches long-standing nationalist policy treating Taiwan as part of “China,” so the fight was a domestic dispute between *guo* (*guomindang*) and *gong* (*gongchandang*). Ideology and politics intertwine due to the language’s flexibility.

Emphasizing party membership, *zhonggong* paradoxically *denies* China’s statehood. To maintain relations, mainstream Taiwanese society accepts that “*zhonggong* is not China” and “anti-*zhonggong* is not anti-China.” “State” is different from “government,” and “government” from “political party.” Confusion arises because the PRC government is both tool and target of the communists. *Zhonggong* and China will be differentiated only when the PRC opens (*Can’t Name* 2001).

Zhonggong enables the uncertainty of Taiwan’s identity struggle, exacerbated by conflict between proponents of unification and independence, with *zhonggong* continuing during Chen’s presidency, infrequently at the beginning, until 2002. In his inaugural year, Chen said “verbal attacks and military threats from *zhonggong*” would be a test for his new government (2000). Chen mentions this twice in 2001, citing China’s ignoring Taiwan’s call for improved relations between “the

two shores” (mentioned eleven times). Although Chen claimed Taiwan extended its good will, “in the face of *zhonggong*’s ever increasing threats and intimidation...we harbor no illusions.” 2002 also marked the first appearance of “PRC.” That Chen jettisoned *zhonggong* and *dalu* for “opposite shore” and “China” reflects DPP’s desire for independence, as the bond between Taiwan and China unraveled.

Since *zhonggong* seems more neutral, the foreign minister’s agitation noted at our paper’s outset seems uninformed (*Can’t Name* 2001). Chen discarded a name that fails to acknowledge both sides’ status as states. With “opposite/both shores” taking center stage, and “PRC” and “China” replacing *zhonggong*, Chen says China is a country, not bandits or political party, which constructs Taiwan’s identity as a state for the first time in ROC history.

“The Opposite Shore” (Duiian) and “Both Shores” (Liangan)

“Two shores of the Strait” (*haixia liangan*) is often shortened to “two shores” (*liangan*), with China as the “opposite shore” (*duian*) and relations “cross-strait relations” (*liangan guanxi*). Taiwan and China occupy “sides” separated geophysically. Compared to *gongfei*, *dalu*, and *zhonggong*, all focusing on China, *duian/liangan* implies balance and opposition.

Lee introduced this name in 1988, using it throughout his terms, as did Chen, except for 1989, 1991, 2003, and 2005. In 1988 Lee called China “the Chinese mainland...across the Strait.” In this geographically realistic phrase, China and Taiwan are as yet unconnected but on equal footing. “For over 40 years, the separation of the Taiwan Strait cannot deny the fact that all Chinese are blood connected, and has never changed the will to be re-united by Chinese of both shores...” (1990)

In the *National Unification Guidelines* (1991), the UNC (National Unification Council) acknowledges KMT’s unification policy, emphasizing Taiwan and China are “under separate rule” with “mainland area [*diqu*]” as PRC, “Taiwan area” as ROC. Neither is independent; “two shores” are, literally, “two areas.”

Though “two shores” is a reality, unification depends on China changing. “Both shores” are separated physically and sociopsychologically: “Now the peaceful competition between the two shores has begun...” (1994). Starting from “the faith of Chinese lies in the Taiwan experience” (1988), Lee wanted to “manage big Taiwan” (1995) — not “big China” — a phrase from his 1996 victory speech, feting the first direct election of an ROC president. Earlier, Lee lamented that Taiwanese could not rule themselves, with KMT as much an “outside regime” as Japan was, presenting Lee with a rhetorical challenge, which he mediated by using *liangan* and allowing *liang* to challenge the “One China” policy.

Lee called on China to end hostilities, a major step considering KMT’s goal of reclaiming the mainland. “We deeply hope that *zhonggong* will...realistically face

the objective fact that *liangan* are under different rules and take active steps to improve the mutual trustworthiness of *liangan*, shorten the distance of *liangan* and open up a new historical phase of ‘win-win’ *liangan*” (1997). Making Taiwan more than a local government of the ROC, Lee “froze” the province of Taiwan in 1998.¹⁰

“Two shores” was later upgraded from ambiguous political “areas” under a future “China,” to “special state-to-state relations.” In his last speech, Lee notes:

...at present, our country is not yet unified and...*liangan* have their own perspectives about “One China”...the relation between the two is a special state-to-state relationship, both historically and legally. (1999)

“One” (China) can only in the future be merged from “two,” should such a union even be necessary.

Chen continued prioritizing “both shores” (excepting 2003 and 2005). In line with the “four no’s plus one” (*sibuyimeiyou*) pledge from his 2000 inaugural speech,¹¹ Chen’s first steps seem tentative: “In cross-strait relations, we are sincere and patient in seeking goodwill reconciliation, active cooperation, and long-lasting peace. We call on the *leaders of the opposite shore* to join us in returning to the ‘spirit of 1992,’ put aside disputes, and resume dialogue and exchange as soon as possible (emphasis added).”

Speaking to the leaders instead of the people, the following year Chen continues: “Although the Chinese mainland has not responded positively...we will continue to promote cross-strait reconciliation” (2001). “Chinese mainland” would soon be overtaken by “two shores,” suggesting a great impasse.

At China’s reluctance, Chen turns sterner: “...Taiwan’s sovereignty is inalienable and cannot be infringed upon” (2002), so its identity project is simply to define itself as a state instead of endorsing a unified China. For the first time China’s official title, PRC, was uttered and its threat to Taiwan acknowledged. If “two shores” for Lee is “special state-to-state,” for Chen it *is* state-to-state — “two shores” means “Taiwan, China, one country on each side” (*taiwan zhongguo, yibian yiguo*), as mentioned in a 2002 speech.

“Two shores” is not two systems with different histories, but related acrimoniously, since “the *China of the opposite shore* has never given up its goal to annex Taiwan by military invasion” (2006, emphasis added). “Opposite shore” is not a geographical locator, but is the country “China.” This matches “two shores” and “two states,” since “...its frame and vision should be elevated to the level of international political and economic situations” (2006). That was reinforced in 2007, as Chen added the official name “PRC” to his repertoire.

“People’s Republic of China” and “China”

As names proliferated, China’s official name, *zhonghuarenmingongheguo*, was prohibited, since recognizing it as independent would violate ROC’s claim as China’s representative; it took until 2002 for that name to be used. No KMT president used it and Chen’s use is provocative not diplomatic.

It first appeared in 1949, Chiang Kai-shek mentioning “fake ‘People’s Republic’” — in line with the 1947 policy, not only was it in parentheses to indicate special status, “fake” (*wei*) was used as its modifier. The first two characters of the full title, *zhonghua* (China/Chinese), are also omitted to underscore its illegitimacy. Similar expressions occur in 1950 and 1954.

In 1961, the name appeared as people discussed China joining the United Nations: “It shamelessly claimed that it will use its puppet ‘PRC’ to inherit the legitimate position of our ROC.” ROC “...not only has no connection with the sly, fake regime of Communist bandits, the so-called ‘PRC’...is a sly, betraying bandit of the ROC.” These rare occurrences prior to 1961 were to censure the PRC’s culpability, not address it as a political entity. It disappeared until 2002; thus, for 40 years the name by which the world knows China was absent from Taiwan’s official discourse.

Not only was “PRC” taboo, its short form “China” (*zhongguo*) — the first and last characters of both *zhonghuarenmingongheguo* (PRC) and *zhonghuaminguo* (ROC) — was not used to designate China. The Chiangs, Yan, and Lee used it to mean ROC, supposedly governing all Chinese, though temporarily hamstrung by the mainland occupation. When Lee became president and attention turned to Taiwanization (Chang 2004) “China” became less a name for Taiwan and more for China.

Dubbed “our China” by Chiang Kai-shek, ROC was also called “Free China” to contrast with the “lawless” mainland. In 1949, Chiang mentioned “China” 16 times, interchangeably with ROC. He lamented “China’s” suffering from Chinese communists and Russia. Russia invaded on many fronts, but “our China is unfortunate to be the first [to suffer]...” This persisted, though references to Russia were reduced in the early 1960s, disappearing after 1967. The narrative shifted to joining with America to fight Chinese communists and Yan followed Chiang’s narratives. “China” always referred to the ROC, not the PRC.

After the younger Chiang became president, “China” continued to mean “ROC.” In 1981, Chiang popularized a new slogan, “Unifying China by the Three Principles of the People,” offered to cure the mainland’s melancholy. “China” was not only the ROC’s China, but a future, unified China: “...unifying China by *San-min Zhuyi* has become the earnest hope of all Chinese... We should...rebuild a new China of peace, prosperity, and balanced fortune... (1982)

In 1984 “China” appears thirteen times: “We firmly believe China’s suffering will soon pass, and the new China...will appear...” Until Chiang’s death, “China”

was bereft, needing revitalization, with “China” embracing people in Taiwan and China as undifferentiated.

With Lee, the name changed. In his first speech, Lee continued promoting *Sanmin Zhuyi*, mentioning “China” 15 times, but splitting “China” into Taiwan’s China and China’s China: “We have seen much prosperity and energy surround us...it is the rise of Chinese confidence emerging from the ‘Taiwan experience.’ It provides a lively vision for China’s future...” (1988). In 1989, Lee mentioned “China” 17 times, emphasizing the importance of Taiwan: “Today, the experience and result of Taiwan has become...[the] envy and admiration of the eleven billion *dalu tongbao*...”

While “China” referred to both sides, in 1991 Lee distanced it from Taiwan by legalizing the “One China Policy.” “China” became a yet-to-be-realized state and was equivalent neither to PRC nor ROC, nor both together. Since Taiwan connects only to a future “China,” Taiwan and China are not the same. As Chao (2003) notes, since the 1990s “China” and “Chinese” have become “increasingly regarded as irrelevant or even ‘alien’ to the people of Taiwan” (p. 291). This maneuvering of “China” by destabilizing its discursive stronghold is difficult, as ROC “considers the word ‘China’ a term representing a culture, a nation, and a state” (Wang and Liu 2004: 573).¹²

Lee continued, “The split of China, and that [both sides] are under different rules, is the misfortune of the Chinese on both sides. Seeking unification of China...is our policy that has never been changed and never will be changed” (1994). Similarly, the worlds of the two sides were so divergent that Lee advocated “Managing Big Taiwan, and Building the New Central Plains” (1995) and supported the name “ROC in Taiwan” (*zhonghuaminguo zai taiwan*) in a speech at Cornell University that same year.

Since then, appearances of “China” sank to single digits and disappeared from Lee’s 1997 speech. In 1998, Lee discussed “gradually seeking the entire China’s future unification under democracy,” because Taiwan’s “China” is different from the PRC’s: “...we understand that...our country is not yet unified and that both sides have their own perspectives about ‘One China’” (1999). Lee reluctantly continued KMT’s ideology that ROC represented “China.” As focus shifted to Taiwan, he gave lip service to “China” as embracing Taiwan *and* China.

The decisive break of the names Taiwan and China came with Chen’s presidency. As Taiwan’s “native son” president, Chen symbolized rising Taiwanese consciousness (Chang and Holt 2009). “China” did not appear in his 2000 and 2001 speeches, *dalu* and *zhonggong* only intermittently. In 2002, Chen first addressed China by its official name, with a call for a referendum two months previous and implementation of the referendum law in 2003. Positioning himself as representative of ROC against PRC, “I therefore represent all fellows in Taiwan and seriously ask the leader in the

PRC to remove all four hundred missiles across the Strait, and publicly announce that he will give up [the idea of] using armed forces to invade Taiwan.”

In this array, six times for *duian* and once for *zhonggong*, Chen addresses China as “PRC.” Since 2002, *duian* was preferred and *dalu* disappeared the following year. This Taiwan-centeredness goes beyond Lee: calling China by its official title suggests international relations, reinforcing Taiwan’s sovereignty.

This would be unthinkable if not for rising Taiwanese consciousness. With efforts to de-Sinicize and Taiwanize (Chang, 2004), and fewer in Taiwan subscribing to greater Chinese consciousness, “Taiwan” became a viable identity category. Some argued that PRC should be addressed as “China” or “PRC,” and ROC as “Taiwan,” leaving “China” for China.¹³ Chen’s speeches address this. Naming China exclusively as “China” challenges China-centered rhetoric, a provocative act before increasingly dissenting audiences. Although over 80 percent of people in Taiwan endorse Taiwan-centered political identity, only a quarter see Taiwanese culture as different from Chinese culture (Wang and Liu 2004).

“PRC” did not recur until 2007, although “China” appeared one year earlier. In 2003 and 2005, focus was on Taiwan’s development, with no mention of China, or even *liangan* or *duian*. In 2006, confronting calls for his ouster over corruption, Chen used “China” and “both sides” ten times each. Chen’s strategy is obvious: “China” was no longer “our China” or “ROC’s China” but “*their* China,” in line with Chen’s announcement in February 2006 that removed the “One-China” policy.

Classifying “the opposite shore” as “China” bolsters Taiwanese identity. Those identifying as “Taiwanese only” changed from 36.9% just after Chen became president, to roughly 43% by the end of 2007; identification as “both Taiwanese and Chinese” remained about 44%; and identification as “Chinese only” just about 5% (Election Study Center 2010).

In Chen’s final speech, “China” increased from 11 to 27 times, along with “PRC” five times and “both shores” nine times. These frequencies accentuated distance, perhaps because, three weeks previous, more than 140 nations debated in the UN General Assembly Taiwan’s application for membership using the name “Taiwan,” after fourteen failed bids using “ROC” (General Assembly 2007). Chen replaced “ROC” with “Taiwan,” so “China” could be exclusively assigned to the PRC: “Taiwan and PRC are two independent countries that do not belong to each other.” (2007). While *duian* prepared for separation, this is accomplished by calling China “PRC.” For Chen, the more China is named “PRC,” the more “One China” is irrelevant and the more Taiwan can assert its independent identity.

Further Thoughts

Names as political metaphors induce collective memories. With narratives that sustain these memories, they support ongoing identity projects, particularly in light of unique features of the Chinese language, both linguistically and through people's attitudes toward language.

From 1949, the dream (or obsession) of Chiang Kai-shek to take back the mainland, its revision and abandonment, has configured Taiwan's identity negotiation. To disentangle its separation/connection with China, linguistic resources have been marshaled into service. Using these other-focused yet self-referential names, Taiwan names a locale it claims, but does *not* own; an opponent who is not always an opponent, but shares incongruent culture; and distinctions between land and people, all while managing push-and-pull as world political events unfold.

Gongfei, *zhonggong*, *dalu*, *duian/liangan*, and *zhongguo/zhonghuarenmingongheguo* claim different semantic territories in Taiwan's identity project. Chiang and Yan disparaged China as "bandits," vowing to rescue those on the "mainland." Younger Chiang, acknowledging his father's dream as unlikely, attenuated "bandits" while denying that China was a government. Under Lee, "bandits" vanished; keeping "Chinese communists" and "mainland" at bay, Lee popularized "opposite shore/both shores." With Chen, "opposite shore/both shores" became common; "China" and "PRC" represented the PRC; "mainland" and "Chinese communists" faded into disuse. Each maneuvered and appropriated different names to suit political agendas and stimulated action in changing situations, as Taiwan moved from KMT rule to DPP (and back to KMT in 2008); from authoritarian regime to removal of martial law; and from no contact with China to "open door" policies.

While each metaphorical cluster demarcates a specific frame, changing names defines alternative identities. In uses of these names — at times overlapping — by presidents, Taiwan's identity has gradually emerged from China-focused *gongfei*, *zhonggong*, and *dalu*, to the more balanced *liangan*, to "China" as, exclusively, China. That China was rarely named by its official title construes Taiwan's feud with China in domestic terms, leaving Taiwan's sovereignty unaddressed and its ambiguous identity ongoing.

Nor does the "same" name carry similar implications; each must be situated against broader sociohistorical contexts to identify its boundaries. "China" may be the two Chiangs' China; Lee's future China; or Chen's "their China." *Dalu* may be populated with blood-connected fellows from the same womb, or just a profitable marketplace. Narratives give life and meaning to metaphors; as stories change, boundaries fluctuate. Use of each name can be seen as a heteroglossic incursion into disputed territory involving collective memory subject to change.

Analyzing these multilayered self-other tensions allows us to evaluate the link between language and politics in an idiographic linguistic system. While Chen jettisoned the “One China” policy, current president Ma has revitalized it. In his first speech, Ma named China “both shores,” avoiding the contentious “China” and “PRC.” How these and other names play out in future presidential addresses remains to be seen as Taiwan continues to define its identity.

Notes

1. Retrieved 10 October 2004 from *Epoch Times* online edition [19 October 2001]: www.epoch-times.com/gb/1/10/19/n142649.htm
2. *Liangan* is often translated as “both sides”; here we follow the original Chinese character *an*’s meaning, translating it as “both shores.”
3. Chiang Kai-shek’s speeches were downloaded from <http://chungcheng.org.tw/thought/default.htm> on 30 January 2006; speeches by Yan, Chiang Ching-kuo, and Lee for 1988–1992, 1997, and 1999–2000 from udndata.com on 20 January 2007; by Lee for 1993–1996 and 1998 from *Collections of Mr. Lee Teng-hui’s Discourse* (volumes 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, all 2000); by Chen from the ROC Presidential Office’s site, 10 November 2008: http://www.President.gov.tw/php-bin/docset/listC.php4?_section=4.
4. The Han group comprises the majority of Chinese, with a bloodline traceable to ancient times. With others viewed as sub-branches of Han, the concept allows nationalists to imply a biological unity for people in China as a single state from a single race (Barabantseva 2008).
5. Chiang still used the phrase in venues like speeches at military school graduations (Oct. 19, 1987), to just before his death in early 1988.
6. Although Lee never used “bandits” in National Day speeches, he did at other times, such as celebrating the anniversary of the 823 Artillery War (August 24, 1988).
7. Additionally, in textbooks, “Chinese communists” replaced “communist bandits”; “armed forces of the communists” replaced “armed forces of bandits”; and so on. The Ministry of Defense started to call China the “mainland authority” or “Chinese communist authority”; its armed forces “armed forces of the communists”; and party and military cadres “cadres of Chinese communists.” Beginning May 1, 1991, the military stopped chanting slogans about “extinguishing the evil communists” (Jin 1991; Li 1991).
8. Lee’s attempt to refocus Taiwan is clear in this revision: “Abiding by President [Chiang’s] dying wish, following the leadership of the government, exterminating all evil communist bandits, and rescuing mainland fellows,” to “Abiding by the Three Principles of the People, following the leadership of the government, protecting national security, and accomplishing the great task of unification.”
9. Starting in 1957, this phrase was used interchangeably with *fangong kangbao* (*bao*, violent, brutal) with only the latter used in the early 1960s, as China split with Russia.

10. Currently, “Taiwan Province” is “frozen” (*dongsheng*), not abolished (*feisheng*). *Dong* (to freeze) suggests a temporary condition. Whether it will be abolished (*fei*) is uncertain.
11. According to the pledge, if China does not use military force against Taiwan, during his presidency Chen would not change the national title, engage in Constitutional reform, declare Taiwan independent, leave the *National Unification Guidelines* intact, or hold a referendum to change Taiwan’s status.
12. Even after ROC was expelled from the United Nations in 1971, voices advocating a “multiple-system state” or “one country, two governments” still failed to change the China-centered rhetoric (Cho, 2002).
13. Increasing calls for Taiwan to rectify names (*taiwan zhengming yundong*), initiated in 2002 and promoted by private efforts aided by the government, are in line with demands to dissociate China’s impact on Taiwan. Names with *zhongguo* are to be replaced with *taiwan*, or at least that the term *zhongguo* be removed.

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