

# Forming a Basis for Recognition: The Construction of a Taiwanese Hakka Identity through Government Policy since 2000

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## Abstract

In the past, the voice of Hakka people in Taiwan has been less heard due to their ethnic minority status and the Mandarin-only policy of the martial law period from 1949 to 1987. Taiwan's rapid democratization brought with it a revival of Hakka culture and identity. This revival could be seen as synonymous with or resulting from the rise of overall Taiwanese consciousness and nation building policies that took root during former president Lee Teng-hui's rule, and was further developed in the following years.

This paper intends to explore the ways in which government policies after 2000 attempted to construct a Hakka identity in Taiwan that is unique from the other various groups in the worldwide Hakka diaspora. Particular consideration is given to the establishment of a Council for Hakka Affairs at the central government level in 2001, and the creation/launch of the annual Hakka Tung Blossom Festival in 2002.

The Hakka social movement also played a considerable role in spurring and shaping Hakka government policy. Upon examination of the interplay between social movements, policy, and the formation of identity, it is suggested that the significant promotion of ethnic inclusiveness and a multicultural Taiwan offer an explanation for the construction and further development of a Taiwanese Hakka consciousness.

**Keywords:** multicultural Taiwan, identity construction, social movement, ethnic inclusiveness, Council for Hakka Affairs, Tung Blossom Festival

## Introduction

The Hakka are an ethnic group likely originating from northern China with a long history of migration. Though their origins are contested (Government Information Office, 2006a; Longyan Municipal Government, 2008; Wright, 2006), it is generally agreed that the Hakka moved from the north to settle in southern China, with a large number then moving overseas to various countries, including Taiwan. The Hakka have always been recognised as a distinct cultural group with certain attributed characteristics in Taiwan. These attributes have shifted from tendencies in the workplace to, in more recent years, specific cultural attributes underlined by policies created and established by Taiwan's government. This paper explores the ways in which government policy has attempted to construct a Taiwanese Hakka identity, why there has been this emphasis on the development of identity, and also endeavours to determine the outcome of the aforementioned Hakka policies, focusing on the post-2000 period when the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) was the ruling party of Taiwan<sup>1</sup>.

It must be highlighted that stating there has been the attempted construction of a Hakka identity through government policy is not meant to imply that there was no existing Hakka consciousness prior to the policies and practices addressed in this paper. It is simply that an exclusively Taiwanese Hakka identity has come to be at the centre of focus through the government's Hakka policies. Additionally, because the success or failure of this identity construction is difficult to measure, such parameters for assessment being quite subjective, this study concentrates more upon how and why such policies were conceived and implemented in the first place.

Taiwanese society today is fraught with a number of problems which stem from historical issues: the lack of a common national identity; as well as

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<sup>1</sup> While events prior to the DPP taking power were significant to Hakka development in Taiwan as well, the focus of this paper is on the period between 2000 and 2008.

inequalities among the various cultural communities in Taiwan (Gao, 2005; Wang, 2004: 301). In response to these issues multiculturalism has become increasingly significant in Taiwanese cultural policy. A new national identity has been constructed around the concept of a multicultural Taiwan. The year 2000 was a watershed moment in history for both the nation and the Hakka ethnic group because the DPP, a party which up until that point had played the role of the opposition and was able to adopt platforms to appeal to a range of voters, suddenly needed to figure out a concrete stance on a multiplicity of issues, with Taiwan as a multicultural society emerging as one of the main talking points.

In the ensuing emphasis on the four main ethnic groups of Taiwan<sup>2</sup>, the Hakka have become more visible and their part of a mosaic-like multiculturalistic nation accentuated (Wang, 2004: 306; Wang, 2007: 876). The Hakka social movement, which began in the late 1980s, also played a considerable role in promoting Hakka identity as well as prompting and shaping Hakka government policy. The movement's demands led to the creation of a Council for Hakka Affairs (Kejia weiyuan hui, 客家委員會) at the central government level in 2001. Through specific case studies, this paper attempts to examine the government's Hakka agenda. Particular consideration is given to the implications of establishing a Hakka Council, and the ensuing Council-sponsored annual Hakka Tung Blossom Festival (Kejia tonghua ji, 客家桐花祭).

It would appear that there has not been much examination of Hakka identity construction through government policy, though there have been studies

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<sup>2</sup> Before the 1990s, one of the most salient ethnic distinctions in Taiwan was between Benshengren (i.e. multi-generational ethnically Chinese residents of Taiwan) and Waishengren (i.e. post-1945 Mainlander emigrants to the island). The distinction was clearly printed on citizens' ID cards under 'Province of Origin' and for purposes of classification the Hakka and Hoklo were grouped together as Benshengren. After the "Province of Origin" field was eliminated in the early 1990s, a new way of categorization focusing on Taiwan's four main ethnic groups came into official discourse under the name of "Multicultural Taiwan": aborigines (around 3% of the population), Hakkas (15%), Hoklo (65%) and Mainlanders (12%) (Simon, et al., 2005: 692; Wang, 2004).

discussing overall cultural policy or the concept of multiculturalism as promoted by the government (Chang, 2006; Wang, 2004; Wang, 2007). Just as significant if not more so however, as research on the actual circumstances of Hakka in Taiwan is what the government says the Hakka identity in contemporary Taiwan is, or should be. Through the examination of materials available from the Council of Hakka Affairs and other outlets, a clearer picture emerges of what the government sought to achieve through its Hakka policy. Focusing on how government policy has shaped Hakka identity is a top-down method. Conversely, the Hakka social movement has played a considerable role in influencing government policy, which demonstrates the input from a bottom-up approach as well. A top-down analysis ultimately remains at the forefront of this study, mainly because the Council for Hakka Affairs is one of the most visible proponents of Hakka identity in Taiwan today. However, the formation of Hakka identity may ultimately be viewed as a process where bottom-up and top-down approaches interrelated to form the current state of Hakka affairs in Taiwan today.

Upon examination of the interplay between social movements, government policy, and the formation of identity, it appears that the promotion of ethnic inclusiveness and a multicultural Taiwan were part of the intent to create a new, less China-centered<sup>3</sup>, Taiwanese national identity. This, with the added bonus of appealing to Hakka voters, offers an explanation for the focus on fostering a progression of Taiwanese Hakka consciousness during the DPP era.

## A History of the Hakka: An Overview

The most commonly held view among scholars is that the Hakka originated from northern China over several hundred years ago, moving south in at least five waves of migration during the following centuries due to

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<sup>3</sup> The official position of the DPP is that Taiwan is an independent and sovereign country, advocating a Taiwanese national identity which is separate from China.

political and socio-economic factors (Kiang, 1991: 13; Wang, 2007: 876; Wright, 2006: 10). They settled mainly in the Guangdong and Fujian provinces, and from the seventeenth century on also moved overseas to a range of different countries. Due to their long history of immigration the Hakka formed a collective identity “from the process of meeting other ethnic groups” (Lin, et al., 2000: 35, cited in Wang, 2004: 307). The term “Hakka” (*kejia*, 客家) meaning “guest people” or “strangers” was not self-ascribed, but rather a label that was first used to describe a group of people who were seen as outsiders wherever they settled, and only later claimed as a way of referring to themselves.

## The Hakka in Taiwan

The Hakka are the second largest of Taiwan’s four main ethnic groups, comprising about 15% of the population. Sizeable concentrations of Hakka can presently be found in Taoyuan, Hsinchu, and Miaoli in northern Taiwan, and Kaohsiung and Pingtung in southern Taiwan (Government Information Office, 2006b). In the past, the voice of Hakka people in Taiwan was less heard due to their ethnic minority status and the Mandarin-only policy of the martial law period from 1949 to 1987<sup>4</sup>. Taiwan’s democratization brought social pluralisation and the promotion of ethnic inclusiveness and with this came a greater awareness of Hakka culture and identity, though critics have also argued that the construction of a Taiwanese national identity basically elevates and endorses Hoklo at the expense of the other ethnic groups present in Taiwan (Hsiao, 2000; Klöter, 2004).

In the 1980s, Hakkas began to contemplate their loss of culture, tradition and language over the previous forty years under martial law, upon which they started their own movement as an “attempt to reconstruct their identity in Taiwan” (Wang, 2007: 880). The attempt to recognize the various heritages

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<sup>4</sup> Mandarin promoted by the Kuomintang was the language of elites, and local languages were not only discouraged but banned.

contributing to a new multicultural Taiwan was emphasized, among other ways, through the manifestation of *xiangtu jiaoyu* (鄉土教育), which is, in essence, local education promotion<sup>5</sup> (Vickers, 2009: 96). The revival of Hakka awareness could be seen as synonymous with or resulting from the rise of overall Taiwanese consciousness and nation building policies that took root during former president Lee Teng-hui's rule<sup>6</sup>, further developed in the following years.

## The Hakka Social Movement

In the late 1980s there was building concern over Hoklo chauvinism<sup>7</sup>, feelings of alienation from Hoklo-dominated (then) opposition politics, and apprehension over Hakka identity facing extinction due to numerical inferiority. There existed a sense of the Hakka being an “invisible minority” in that most of them were reluctant to reveal their ethnic identity as Hakka to others (Simon, et al., 2005: 695). These issues, along with the effect of social mobility in Taiwan's industrial economy have been cited as some of the major factors which precipitated the Hakka social movement (Chen Qihong, 1991 & He 1991, cited in Martin, 1996: 185). The Hakka movement must be considered in order to understand the rationale for policies that followed and the current state of affairs for the Hakka in Taiwan.

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<sup>5</sup> From the government-issued annual overview: “Taiwan society is a rich mixture of diverse cultures, and more people are becoming aware of the importance of preserving various languages and dialects. This awareness has been the propelling force behind government efforts to promote nativist education (*xiangtu jiaoyu*)” (Taiwan Yearbook, 2003, cited in Klöter, 2008). Since September 2001, Taiwanese primary school students have been required to take at least one local language course.

<sup>6</sup> Lee Teng-hui was the president of Taiwan from 1988 to 2000 and a strong proponent of the Taiwanese localization movement, in which the separate, individual culture of Taiwan is promoted over the concept of it being solely an appendage of China.

<sup>7</sup> Though there was originally a divide between *benshengren* and *waishengren*, “native” Taiwanese with a strong ethnic consciousness supporting the DPP as an alternative to Mainlander hegemony, resentment began to build among Hakka over the DPP's promotion of Hoklo usage over Mandarin Chinese. Concerns over what is interpreted as Hoklo chauvinism are still present today (Ko, 2003).

In 1987 *Hakka Storm* (*Kejia fengyun*, 客家風雲), a magazine orientated towards the advancement of Hakka rights in Taiwan, was published. The magazine was the “first forum designed to express Hakka position on social, political, and cultural issues” (Wu Jinxun, 1991, cited in Martin, 1996: 185) and exists in the present day as *Hakka Magazine* (*Kejia zazhi*, 客家雜誌<sup>8</sup>). The “Return My Mother Tongue” demonstration (*Huan wo muyu yundong*, 還我母語運動) in 1988 was held in protest of the broadcast and television laws which restricted use of the Hakka language in programs. The rally was a landmark event, being the first public Hakka ethnic demonstration in Taiwan. It led to heightened awareness of and support for Hakka recognition, culminating with the demonstrators placing their demands before the legislature (Hsiao & Lim, 2007: 7; Martin, 1996: 192; Radio Taiwan International, 2004). Consequentially, the existing restrictions on broadcast of programs using dialects were abolished, the establishment of the Formosa Hakka Radio was permitted, and the government began sponsoring the production of additional Hakka radio and television programs<sup>9</sup>. In 2003 the first Hakka television station (*Kejia diantai*, 客家電台) was created, which was one of the main objectives of the movement.

The Hakka social movement undoubtedly played a considerable role in spurring and shaping Hakka government policy, highlighting the visibility of a

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<sup>8</sup> The magazine is privately funded and remains a force in promoting a Hakka Taiwan identity. See *Hakka Magazine* (<http://www.hakka.url.tw/yellowpage/index.html>).

<sup>9</sup> The first Hakka television program, *Native People and Native Feeling*, was produced in 1989. Shortly thereafter the Chinese TV Company produced *Painting for the Hakka Culture* in 1990, and in 1991 the three television companies in Taiwan started to broadcast Hakka news for 15 minutes every day. The Satellite of the Central Plains was set up as the only channel broadcasting in the Hakka language for the whole day in 1996, and in the following year the Foundation of Radio and Television set up the Centre of Hakka Radio to provide Hakka programs for the different channels. At the same time, Chinese Radio set up a Hakka channel and the New Hakka Radio was permitted, becoming the first commercial Hakka channel. After public television was set up in 1998 it began providing Hakka programs, such as the *Hakka News Magazine* in 2001 and the first Hakka series (*Cool Nights*) in 2002 (Chang, 1997; Liu, 1996, cited in Wang, 2004: 316).

once-hidden and neglected sector of Taiwan's population and forcing certain issues to become public matters in Taiwanese society. However while the aims of the Hakka social movement still remain, the pursuit and execution of these goals is achieved through a different medium today. The Council for Hakka Affairs, a governmental organization established in 2001, was designed to "preserve the endangered Hakka language and culture and to promote Hakka identity" (Simon, et al., 2005: 694). Its formation was meant to satisfy the demands from the Hakka movement through essentially guaranteeing Hakka representation in Taiwan and fixing the Hakka as one of the permanent sectors of a supposedly all-encompassing multicultural nation.

## From Social Movement to Government Policy: The Hakka in Taiwan Post-2000

With the election of DPP candidate Chen Shui-bian as president in 2000, multiculturalism as a concept gained even more momentum than it had under the earlier localization movements. Certain policies were put into practice and procedures employed to redefine the place of Hakka within Taiwanese society, including the founding of the Council for Hakka Affairs, and the ensuing launch of the Hakka Tung Blossom Festival.

### Council for Hakka Affairs

In 2001 the Council for Hakka Affairs, a cabinet-level unit, was established under the Executive Yuan, the executive branch of Taiwan's government. In effort to sustain Hakka heritage, the Council's main undertaking is to develop plans to stimulate interest in Hakka culture as well as to support tourism and other industries that might help Taiwan's Hakka communities financially (Chung, 2003; Council for Hakka Affairs, 2009a; C. C. Yang, personal communication, 4 April 2009). According to the official Council website, its stated purpose of establishment is to cater to the needs and



desires of Hakka population in Taiwan, to "... .. perpetuat[e] the life of the Hakka languages and culture, to fight for the right and future of five million Hakka in Taiwan, and ultimately to advance Taiwan to a modern society that respects all racial and ethnic groups" (Council for Hakka Affairs, 2009a).

As elaborated by Jens Damm in his paper "Taiwan's Policy of Multiculturalism and Multiculturalism Online<sup>10</sup>", the Council's website includes information on political and non-political issues. History and historical Hakka sites in Taiwan are conspicuously included among these issues. This links the Hakka specifically to Taiwan and their place here rather than stressing only their ancestral connection to China and Chinese Hakka significant areas of interest. It may be surmised through what the Council chooses to make available to the public that it does not mean to "present a traditional and essentialist Hakka culture, but focuses on modern and hybrid forms as well as localized forms of Hakka cultures" (Damm, 2009: 15). The Council for Hakka Affairs is a valuable resource in providing data regarding the current state of Hakka issues in contemporary Taiwan. From its detailed website(s), research reports, information pamphlets, and other available resources, a comprehensive overview may be gleaned about the Hakka in contemporary Taiwan, or perhaps even more significant, how the Council would like the Hakka in Taiwan today to be viewed.

## Hakka Tung Blossom Festival

First launched in 2002, the Tung Blossom Festival is sponsored by the Council for Hakka Affairs. Now an annual event, it takes place every year during the period when the tung trees are in bloom from April to late May, and has become a way to promote Hakka culture in Taiwan. The trees were introduced to Taiwan during the Japanese colonial period and used to be a cash-

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<sup>10</sup> Jens Damm's "Taiwan's Policy of Multiculturalism and Multiculturalism Online" paper forms part of his current project "Cultural Products within the Chinese/Taiwanese Diasporic Cyberspace" which is a subproject of the larger "Cultural Memory and Knowledge Production" project at the Academia Sinica and National Central University in Taiwan.

crop for rural Hakka because the trees tended to flourish in areas populated by many Hakka, such as Taoyuan, Hsinchu, and Miaoli<sup>11</sup>. According to the official website of the festival, it is supposed to emphasize “cultural rooting in local areas”, which translated, could mean roughly to stimulate and recall the origins of communities where a Hakka majority prevails<sup>12</sup> (Council for Hakka Affairs, 2009b).

Yang Chang-cheng, former Secretary-in-Chief of the Council for Hakka Affairs, was the architect of the Tung Blossom Festival<sup>13</sup>. The duties of his position included: being responsible for policy, research and development, and implementation, with a long-term plan of how to put policy framework into action (personal communication, 4 April 2009). A feature within this plan was the “Hakka Culture Industry Value-Added Program” (*Kejia wenhua jiazhi chanye jihua*, 客家文化加值產業計畫), the basic concept of the program being to enhance the characteristics and achievements of the Hakka through the promotion of added economical value and tourism of Hakka industries. This program is what led to the conception of the Hakka Tung Blossom Festival, which fits the DPP’s focus on the economic value of cultural and creative industries since it first came into power (Chang, 2006: 194).

## Tung Blossom Significance

Though the initial association between the Hakka and tung blossoms might

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<sup>11</sup> Tung tree seed oil was used for waterproof coating and its timber for matches, toothpicks and clogs. Hakka children used to collect and sell tung seeds for money (Council for Hakka Affairs, 2009b; C. C. Yang, personal correspondence, 4 April 2009).

<sup>12</sup> The tung blossom festival cooperates with the county administrations of Yilan, Keelung, Taipei, Taoyuan, Hsinchu, Miaoli, Taichung, Changhua, Yunlin, and Nantou. 10 counties, 25 towns, and 45 units are subsidized in total.

<sup>13</sup> Yang Chang-cheng was also former director of the DPP’s Department of Ethnic Affairs as well as being a member of the Council for Hakka Affairs. He has been involved for many years in grassroots movements relating to ethnic minority groups in addition to his official positions within the DPP and the Council. A sample list of questions asked and answers he provided are included at the end of this report.

seem to be based on a somewhat tenuous connection, the link that now exists between the two is quite noteworthy. The tie may indeed be based on historical implications, but more crucial is that the tung blossom has come to stand as a symbol for Hakka culture in Taiwan. If one were to approach a Hakka residing in another part of the world; Southeast Asia for instance, the tung blossom would hold no relevance to them at all, not being part of their historical development. Additionally, many Hakka in Taiwan reside in areas without tung trees and the presence of tung blossoms does not necessarily equate the presence of Hakka. This is further evident when examining a brochure of cultural activities available during the Tucheng Tung Blossom Festival in Taipei County (Tsai, 2008). The Taipei County Hakka Museum is listed among the different sights and activities, but also included is the Wulai Atayal Museum, Tamsui Historic Sites, the Lin Family Mansion and Garden, and other places that have no association with Hakka culture in the slightest. A plausible explanation for this is that in Tucheng, the area where this particular festival is held, there is no significant population of Hakka people. Therefore, while it makes sense that Hakka culture is not highlighted as much in the tung blossom festival of this area, it belies the alleged deep, resonant connection between tung blossoms and the Hakka people -- one is present while the other is not. Until it was picked by the government to be a cultural signifier for Hakka in Taiwan, the tung trees did not have the same historical connotation to Hakka that it has in the present-day after being specifically allocated a particular cultural meaning and memory. It could be said that the tung blossom was assigned its significance to just the Hakka ethnic group in Taiwan in order to foster the bond between the Hakka on the island and further develop the concept of being Taiwanese Hakka.

## Hakka Identity and Consciousness

The Hakka are known to have a strong tradition of maintaining their family history, perhaps due to their being newcomers everywhere they went. It has been said that areas of Hakka concentration can be “readily identified by

language, customs, practices, and characteristics of the people.....[and] the ethnic concept of the term Hakka is concisely defined as ‘a people with unique culture without a state or nation of their own.’” (Kiang, 1991: 4). Others have stated that the key to Hakka identity lies not in language, common political interests, shared cultural practices, religion or native place, but rather in the way that these and other elements are invariably tied to Hakka history; in other words, Hakka identity should be seen as having been constructed through the telling and retelling of their history (Constable, 1994, cited in Wang, 2004: 307).

In actuality it would be more fitting to use a mixture of these reasonings to gauge the concept of a Hakka identity in Taiwan today. The adoption of the tung blossom as a symbol of the Hakka in Taiwan exemplifies the capacity of an assigned history to construct identity, and the Hakkas’ location in the multicultural discourse so endorsed post-2000 is indicative of this as well. Hakka language has also had a prominent role in the discussion of Hakka identity. The Hakka social movement was largely based on the preservation and elevation of the Hakka language in Taiwan media and society; language, rather than common origin or shared blood, was elevated as the primordial characteristic Hakka used to identify themselves (Martin, 1996: 192). The campaign for a Hakka television station and representation in media further depicts this, as does Wi-vun T. Chiung’s conclusion in his study on language and ethnic identity in Taiwan in regards to the Hakka: that while the erosion of one’s original ethnic language does not necessarily mean the erosion of ethnic identity itself, the maintenance of one’s ethnic language “is a contributing factor to the maintenance of one’s ethnic identity” (Chiung, 2005: 377).

Wang Li-jung states that the Hakka should be considered a diaspora in Taiwan and explores how the Hakka contribute to the construction of a multicultural Taiwan, arguing that multicultural Taiwan “influences the Hakkas along the three dimensions of identity, culture and citizenship” (Wang, 2007: 876). According to Wang, Hakka traditional culture and newer influences stemming from Hakka interaction with other ethnic groups have created cultural

complexity in the development of Taiwanese Hakkas. It would seem that it is this very cultural complexity and experiences unique to the Hakka in Taiwan were what the government sought to emphasise with its subsequent actions. It could be said that the Hakka policies conceptualised and implemented under the DPP were ways of instrumentalizing the Hakka, emphasizing their identity to form the larger notion of a Taiwanese national identity and give credence to the multicultural nation doctrine. There exists a concept of being “hidden Hakka” (*yinxing keja*, 隱形客家), where it was once considered a stigma to be Hakka (C. F. Shih, interview, 10 February 2009; Constable 1996; M. Hsu, interview, 16 August 2009). The multicultural society promoted under the DPP lessened the reluctance to be identified as Hakka, with more and more people of Hakka background today willing to come out and “embrace their Hakka traditions and identity in public” (Simon, et al., 2005: 695).

### The Hakka Place in Multicultural Taiwan and Political Implications

The prevailing multiculturalism discourse under the DPP is captured quite neatly in an episode of “Hakka World”, a 24-episode program sponsored by the Council for Hakka Affairs and produced by Radio Taiwan International from 2003 to 2004 that was designed to explore the language and culture of the Hakka. On March 3, 2004 in the episode entitled “The ‘Give me Back My Mother Tongue’ Movement”, after briefly outlining the short to long-term goals of the Hakka campaign it goes on to state that the “ultimate goal is for the four dominant cultures of Taiwan -- the Minnan, Mainland Chinese, aboriginal, and Hakka cultures, to be not only coexist, but indeed to flourish” (Radio Taiwan International, 2004). From the way dialogue has been structured since the Council for Hakka Affairs’ conception and within related material about the issue, it may be surmised that this push for a new definition of the Hakka in Taiwan as well as the prevailing multiculturalism dialogue was indicative of the DPP’s desire to create and solidify the idea of being “Taiwanese Hakka” over being just Hakka in Taiwan, and certainly an attempt to distance from the perception of being Chinese Hakka, overseas in Taiwan. This emphasis on an

inclusive, multicultural Taiwan is meant to draw in the Hakka as one of the enduring cultures on the island. Yet, a curious phenomenon appears to exist among Hakka from Taiwan who reside overseas; when asked, a number of them would still identify themselves as Hakka first, and Taiwanese assuredly second. This is markedly different from the “we are all Taiwanese” ideology so actively promoted during the DPP’s time in office, in that while these overseas Hakka Taiwanese do not deny their Taiwan identity, being Hakka still comes first (M. Hsu, interview, 16 August 2009). This could either be attributed to the rising acceptability to be acknowledged as Hakka -- or, it might illustrate the preservation of a way of thought when one is isolated or separate from certain promulgated “truths”, which in this case is the proclamation that being Taiwanese is an all-encompassing identity.

Perhaps an effective way to illustrate how the DPP government saw the Hakka and what they sought to emphasize can be seen through the investigation of two passages from a Government Information Office website, “Hakka Culture in Taiwan (臺灣客家文化)” (2006a):

## V. Cultural renaissance

In addition to continuing the traditions of native homelands, perhaps the most eye-catching aspect of Taiwan’s Hakka renaissance is its courage to adapt and change. Unique Taiwan Hakka characteristics have emerged in recent years in literature, music, drama, mass media, architectural design, and social structure. In particular, Hakka consciousness was raised by the Recover My Mother Tongue campaign of December 28, 1988, as Hakka culture has gradually attracted national attention and the Hakka’s accumulated capabilities finally found their voice, with Hakka-related cultural and productive activities found throughout Taiwan. Following establishment of the Council for Hakka Affairs on June 14, 2001, events such as the Paulownia Blossom Festival and Hakka Cultural Festival, and setting up of the Hakka Television Station on July 1, 2003, have made Hakka culture one important element of Taiwan’s pluralistic society.

## VI. Conclusion

Viewed from this grassroots level, Taiwan's Hakka culture is unique in the world, due to the particular way of its formation. Irrespective of their origin, whether Guandong, Fujian, Jiangxi, or the almost unanimously accepted theory of China's Central Plains, Taiwan's Hakka people have evolved their own distinctive culture over the past two centuries. In addition to investigating ancient traditional blood relationships, any definition of "Hakka" also includes self-identification from the perspective of this cultural renaissance and cultural movements. Because of this, the topics of constantly renewing and creative Hakka culture are new directions in Taiwan Hakka studies.

When reading these fragments, it is essential to note the continual re-emphasis of adaption, change, and uniqueness that is ascribed to the Hakka culture of Taiwan. It might be accurate to say that the then-government clearly desired to affirm the separateness of a Taiwan Hakka identity in the way that an overall Taiwan identity has also come to mean something besides an offshoot of Chinese-ness, with both possessing the ability to evolve (Gao, 2005; Hsiao, 2000; Huang, 2004).

The relative ease with which the Hakka movement was granted legitimacy through the conception of the Council for Hakka Affairs could be attributed to the DPP's original conception as an umbrella organization of sorts, comprised of various group advocating different agendas. The DPP, with its roots as an opposition party, was well-positioned to champion various causes, and the Hakka movement, along with contributing to the multiculturalism dialogue, may have offered the opportunity for obtaining support from a significant sector of Taiwan's population. Though the Council for Hakka Affairs was established under the DPP administration this does not necessarily make it inevitable fact that the Council had the same agenda or political intent as the DPP. However, the collaboration of the DPP and the Council for Hakka Affairs on the mutually beneficial issues of securing Hakka support and raising Hakka identity awareness may be evidenced by the positions that Yang Chang-

cheng held in both the governing bodies. His time spent first as a senior executive officer and then Secretary-in-Chief of the Council from 2002 to 2005 overlapping with his stretch of time as the Director of the Department of Ethnic Affairs for the DPP from 2004 on, it appears that potential conflict of interest may not have been much of a concern during this period.

The focus on the revival of Hakka identity and on improving the economic situation of predominantly Hakka areas through measures such as the Tung Blossom Festival might be seen as indicative of the DPP's intent to appeal to Hakka voters. Hakka voters are traditionally seen as having the tendency to be pan-blue<sup>14</sup> supporters; in light of this it would be reasonable to say that the DPP was in a sense, trying to "woo the Hakka [through] setting up a cabinet-level Council of Hakka Affairs, sponsoring Hakka cultural festivals, allowing the Hakka language to be taught in schools, and starting Hakka TV broadcasting", along with selecting Hakka local candidates to appeal to Hakka voters in specific regions (Eyton, 2004; Ko, 2003; Lin, 2005). According to some analysts, the DPP strategy worked; during Chen Shui-bian's administration<sup>15</sup>, it seems that support for the DPP grew among the Hakka, demonstrated by critical changes in election results between 2000 and 2004. There was an increase of at least 2.8 percent in total votes coming from the Hakkas, enough support to make a difference (Simon, et al., 2005: 696). It is a likely supposition that the Hakka noticed the DPP's endeavours to address Hakka issues after it came to power and were responding to, or rewarding, the then-administration's efforts.

Following along these lines, in a survey conducted by the Council for Hakka Affairs (2008: 64), findings showed that from 2004 to 2008 the percentage of the population sample size which identified themselves as Hakka

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<sup>14</sup> The pan-blues are a political alliance in Taiwan which consists of the KMT, the People First Party and the New Party, and tends to favor a Chinese nationalist identity over the Taiwan separatist one that its counterpart, the pan-green coalition, tends to advocate. The pan green coalition is comprised of the DPP, the Taiwan Solidarity Union, and the Taiwan Independence Party.

<sup>15</sup> Chen Shui-bian was re-elected as president of Taiwan in 2004.



(是客家人) increased from 41.2% to 47%; those who identified as “Not Hakka” (不是客家人) stayed roughly the same, 43.7 % for 2004 and 44.1% for 2008; and the number of those who answered “Do not know” (不知道) decreased from 14.5% to 8.8%. These results imply that in 2008 not only were there more members of Taiwanese society willing to identify themselves as Hakka than in 2004, but that more had also taken the steps to determine whether they are of Hakka descent. This could indicate a rise amongst Taiwan’s Hakka citizens in the awareness and acceptance of their heritage, and be taken as a measure of the DPP’s success in its efforts to promote multiculturalism and the decree that all cultures in Taiwan are equal.

That this was a survey commissioned by the Council for Hakka Affairs should not go unnoticed, nor should the fact that this qualifies as a way of quantifying Hakka identity. It could be said that this survey quantifies something that wasn’t defined before, using statistics in an attempt to obtain the affirmation and proof of different ethnicities and cultural plurality existing in Taiwan. The increasing number of those who define themselves a Hakka may be a positive development; yet, one must also wonder exactly what is to be expected if identity queries are continually posed to citizens, and whether it can be termed something which develops within their own consciousness or cultivated.

## Conclusion

The situation of Hakka in Taiwan has varied over the years, in both status and location within the societal framework. Democratization, the Hakka movement, and the subsequent accentuation of ethnic consciousness and diversity as well as the ongoing national identity dialogues have all contributed to forming the current state of affairs for the Hakka Taiwanese. Through the consideration of government policies under DPP rule such as the founding of a Council for Hakka Affairs and the annual nation-wide Hakka Tung Blossom

Festival, the intent to construct a distinctive Taiwanese Hakka identity may be discerned.

The Council of Hakka Affairs was established largely in part due to the increased visibility and strength of the Hakka, which was cultivated during their social movement period that got underway in the late 1980's. Together with other concerns the preservation of culture is what is said to have induced the Council to create the Tung Blossom Festival in 2002; other unspoken but inferred factors must also have contributed to its conception, such as appealing to Hakka voters. Firstly, since culture was advocated as "good business" by the DPP and having significant employment potential (Chang, 2006: 195) this offers a basis for understanding the intense focus on uniting Hakka culture through industries such as tourism, the festival being one example of this (Council for Hakka Affairs, 2009b; C. C. Yang, personal correspondence, 4 April 2009). Through the development of these Hakka communities a sort of cultural preservation is accomplished, with the potential to win over Hakka voters being there as well. If an implemented policy is seen to be beneficial, it reflects positively on the initiator, which in this case was the Council for Hakka Affairs and the DPP.

The DPP ran on a platform that included improving the status of Hakka in Taiwanese society. While this seems to have been successful, the current policies of preservation do not necessarily have good implications for Hakka culture and identity in the long-term. Language and culture remain among the two most significant matters of concern to involved Hakka. While preservation has great potential contribution to the prolongation of Hakka as a concept, especially since there has been a relatively new concept of Hakka in Taiwan as Taiwanese Hakka does there need to be careful consideration of how to continue on. As argued by Chang Bi-yu (2006: 105), the promotion of creative industries as the DPP has done "encourages standardisation and mass productivity, rather than fostering creativity and culture". The Hakka Tung Blossom Festival is a celebration of Hakka culture, and the decision to assign the tung blossom as a Hakka symbol inspires commendation for a creative

representation of something now known as uniquely Taiwanese Hakka. Nevertheless, caution must also be exercised in these gestures towards commemorating the Hakka in Taiwan not becoming simply intimations of action and progress. If the emphasis on Taiwan being a multicultural nation persists in the way it has up to this point, token representation and the disappearance of the Hakka voice becomes a risk. Already doubly marginalised in terms of language between the more dominant Mandarin and Hoklo in Taiwan if the Hakka are to benefit and be part of a multicultural Taiwan where each culture and ethnic group is fairly represented, they should have the full recognition and in-depth exploration that a majority population would enjoy.

This study intended to explore the promotion and construction of Hakka culture as it relates to the policies of a “multicultural” Taiwan. The correlating complex issues of national and ethnic identity must also be examined in the process of gaining insight into the Taiwan’s Hakka circumstances. In terms of obtaining more tangible information about this area, there could be a more thorough investigation of the different forms of multiculturalism, with the one that has been promoted in Taiwan being used to create a new political legitimacy and social justice based on ethnic equality (Wang, 2004: 304). The Ethnic and Cultural Policy proposed by the DPP in light of this attempt to incorporate multiculturalism into the national dialogue requires more consideration, as do the other existing models of multiculturalism. It would be interesting to discover whether a certain way of formulating and conceiving a Hakka identity, such as the pan-Hakka identity, is still acceptable in Taiwan.

The rise of academic interest in Hakka studies itself could also warrant more investigation, with several Hakka Studies Centers and programs having been established throughout Taiwan in recent years. The development of these centers and programs could be perceived as a way of formalizing Hakka identity, and it would be especially relevant to see how much say the government and Council have in what is researched, and figure out whether it is politically motivated. For a more comprehensive overview of Taiwan’s Hakka policy, local level politics and policies would require more attention, as well as the

concept of the local culture centers (*Difang wenhua guan*, 地方文化館) that are located throughout the entire island, with particular notice being given to areas of high Hakka concentration, such as Meinung. In this way, it would be possible to obtain a better concept of how far-reaching the implemented Hakka policies have been. Other potential ways to measure the effectiveness of the aforementioned policies could also be explored in future research.

## Appendix: Interview with Yang, Chang Cheng (楊長鎮)

During your position as Department of Ethnic Affairs director for the DPP was there a collaborative effort with the Council for Hakka Affairs about the reasons and implementation of Tung Blossom Festival?

身為族群委員會主任是否諮詢客家委員會有關設定桐花祭的理由與執行過程嗎？

shēnwéi zúqún wěiyānhuì zhǔrèn shìfǒu zīxún kèjiā wěiyanhui yǒuguān shèdìng tónghuājì de lǐyóu yǔ zhíxíng guòchéng mā?

Was the beginning conceptualization of Tung Blossom Festival social or economic (commercial)?

開始時，你是基於社會或商業的考慮？

kāishǐ shí nǐ shì jīyú shèhuì huòzhě shāngyè de kǎolù?

How is the festival different now from what it was before, or what it was meant to be (your intentions)/How has it evolved?

現在的桐花祭活動與你當初設想的有何不同嗎？有甚麼改變？

xiànzài de tónghuājì huódòng yǔ nǐ dāngchū shèxiǎng de yǒu hé bùtóng mā? you shènmé gǎibiàn?

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我在 2001 年 10 月進入行政院客家委員會擔任專門委員，負責政策研發和規劃，客委會的中長程計畫基本上是由我完成政策架構。在這些計畫中，有一項目叫做客家文化加值產業計畫，其概念就是以客家文化的特質作為客家地區產業的加值因素，客家桐花祭就是這個政策概念下的產物。其實在 2000 年初，我在苗栗與地方人士共同創辦苗栗新故鄉協會時，就構想推動客家桐花祭，希望藉由這個新創節慶帶動客家地區的生態旅遊和休閒觀光產業。但因為欠缺經費，所以未能實現。到客委會任職後，我認為可以藉由政府資源投入這構想，有效創造外部效益。

桐花祭的發想和我個人的成長經驗有關。我自小成長在苗栗山區，家中務農，父親經營家庭農場，主要是以造林和園藝用樹苗的培育為主。從 1960 年晚期代起，尤其是 1970 年代，我們就栽培許多油桐樹苗供應農家造林之用。我在國小高年級到國中階段，常常跟隨父親上山造林，種植了許多油桐樹苗。現在，這些樹都已經成爲巨木，並且自行繁衍，成爲油桐森林。父親在 1990 年過世，每年初夏返鄉看到滿山桐花，我就會想起幼時隨父親上山種樹的情景。不僅如此，我們同一輩的山上孩子，其實都有在秋末初冬，尤其是九降風時節上山檢桐籽的經驗。婦孺小孩上山撿拾桐籽，先將桐果整個曬乾，再以鐵釘挖出桐籽，賣給山產行。這段記憶其實代表了客家人與山林產業的最後一段故事。1980 年代開始，台灣產業結構劇烈轉型，山林產業漸漸無利可圖，中低海拔山區丘陵的油桐造林被遺棄在山上，不再砍伐。從清代開始的中北部客家地區開發其實就是以山林產業爲基礎的，客家人靠山吃山，客家人唱山歌，客家人耕山耕園，客家人被山林所養育。這樣的歲月到油桐造林幾乎進入了最後階段，最後一批桐樹來不及製成木材，山林產業已經隨風而逝，油桐樹因此被留下來，成爲客家人與山林最後的聯繫。因此，客家桐花祭其實象徵了客家人對自己土地的致敬，向山林的感恩，也象徵客家人對土地永恆的鄉愁。

第一年的客家桐花祭是試辦性質，我們只有 210 萬的經費。我一開始的規劃，就希望以生態文化旅遊爲主，因此，除了在苗栗縣公館鄉的北河山裡舉辦祭典，同時與己的鄉鎮和農會合作規劃了幾條桐花導覽路線，希望以遠足、健行的形式，也就是人的身體會進入生態與客家文化環境中的方式，來進行。後來基本上這規劃成爲模式。第二年，我們希望藉油桐花祭帶動客家的地方產業，而且基本上是在地的、手工的、家庭式的產業，但這樣的規劃未能嚴格執行，因開始有一些一般性的商品設計，而未限於地方性產品。

對我們而言，桐花祭是一個關於文化資本的重建或形成工作，本質是文化的。是對客家人文生態的一種美學詮釋。在這基礎上，這個概念或資本可以成爲發展其他發文化或經濟的基礎。

桐花祭形成風潮之後當然也有一些問題產生。許多地方政府喜歡搞拜拜式的活動，反而忽略了生態人文的調查、發現、詮釋與保護、保存等基本工作，桐花祭原來應該將人導向山林地景之中產生體驗，但卻往往在熱鬧的舞台活動中成為背景。而桐花產品也逐漸脫離原先構想的社區式、地方式、作者式的產品，變成可以永工業標準化大量生產的商品，卻對提升地方產業沒有幫助。

## English translation

In October 2001 I entered the Executive Yuan Hakka Affairs Committee to assume the position of senior specialist member of the Committee: responsible for policy, research and development, and implementation. The long-term plan was for me to plan how to accomplish/put into action policy framework. Within this plan, there was one item called the Hakka culture industry value-added program 客家文化加值產業計畫, the concept was to especially enhance the characteristics and achievements of the Hakka culture as a value-added industries in the Hakka regions. The Hakka Tonghua Festival 桐花祭 under the concept of this policy is the product. In fact, in early 2000, when the local people of Miaoli and I together established the Miaoli as the new home of the association was when we came up with the idea of promoting the Hakka 桐花祭, hoping through this tactic to spur eco-tourism and leisure tourism of Hakka areas. However, because of a lack of economic capability? we failed to achieve our goal. After being appointed to the Hakka Affairs Committee, I thought that bringing government resources into this concept would make this achievement possible.

The 桐花祭 has developed with my personal experiences. My youth was spent in the mountains of Miaoli, on a family farm, based mainly on planting and gardening with the cultivation of seedlings. From late 1960 onwards, especially the in 1970s, our tung tree seedlings on the cultivation of much use in the supply of farm reforestation. From my primary school to junior high

grades, I used to follow the wood growth reforestation up the mountain, and planted a lot of tung tree seedlings. Now, these seedlings have become huge trees, and multiplied to become a tung tree forest.

My father died in 1990 and every year when I return in early summer to my home town, I think of my childhood planting trees in the mountains with my father. Not only that, but children the same generation in the mountains, all used to have the same experience of in the late fall/early winter, especially the nine season winds, going up the mountain to inspect the tung tree seed. Women and children went up the mountain to pick tung seeds: first to collect tung fruit, then to dry in the sun and then used iron nails to dig out the seeds to sell to producers. This section represents the Hakka people and the forests' in the last paragraph of the industry's story. In the 1980s there was radical transformation of Taiwan's industrial structure, the mountains gradually became an unprofitable industry, in low-lying hills of the mountain reforestation for dill abandoned in the mountains, not deforestation.

From the beginning of the Qing Dynasty in the middle-north, Hakka regional development was in fact based on forest industries -- those living on a mountain live off the mountain (靠山吃山 kaoshanchishan) Hakka people sing mountain folk songs, Hakka people till/plough the mountain earth, Hakka people were brought up on/by the mountain. Such did the years pass to almost the final stages, the last time 桐树 made of wood, forest industry has the wind gone, the oil was left to 桐树 become Hakkas last contact with the mountains. Therefore, a symbol of Hakka 桐花祭 fact of their land to pay tribute to the mountains of Thanksgiving, but also a symbol of Hakka's eternal nostalgia for the land.

For the first year of the Tung Hua Festival 桐花祭, we had only \$210 million for funding. At the start of my planning, I hoped to foster eco-cultural tourism, therefore, except at the Gongguan Township, Miaoli County, in northeastern rivers and mountains, ceremonies were held at the same time and other co-operative farming towns worked together to plan routes beyond hiking, with the hope that through hiking, the human body would enter the ecological



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environment of the Hakka culture and the way to progress. Afterwards, this became largely a model of planning. The second year, we hoped the TungHua Festival 桐花祭 would drive the tung oil industry in Hakka areas, along with handicrafts place, manual and home-style industry planning. However, this could not be carried out due to limitations of merchandise design, as well as being confined/attributed solely to local products.

For us, about 桐花祭 is a cultural capital or the formation of the reconstruction work, are the essence of culture. This to Hakkas scholars is seen as an aesthetic interpretation of ecology. On this basis, perhaps the concept or development of capital can be made the basis of cultural or economy.

After the formation of the wave 桐花祭 of course, there are some problems. Many local governments engage in just the actions, ignoring the ecological humanities investigate, discover, interpret and protect and preservation of basic job, people should be 桐花祭 oriented original landscape of the mountains have experience, but often at the busy stage to become a background activity. Aegiceras products are moving away from the original ideal of community-based products that, although become standardized mass-produced industrial goods, but can never help enhance the local industry.

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## 形塑一個承認的基礎——2000 年後政府政策 對台灣客家認同的建構

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### 摘要

客家人的聲音在過去因為其少數族群的身份，以及 1949 年至 1987 年間戒嚴法下獨尊「國語」的政策，在台灣較少被人聽到。後來台灣快速民主化，客家文化與認同感跟著復甦。這種復甦可視為等同於或導自於台灣意識與建國政策的普遍提升，而這些意識和政策能夠提升是始自前台灣總統李登輝執政時期，以及其後幾年的進一步發展。

本文旨在探討 2000 年後，政府政策如何試圖在台灣建構一種客家認同，這種客家認同是獨特的、與散居世界各地的客家族群是不一樣的。特別考慮於 2001 年中央級的客家事務委員會的設立，以及 2002 年客家桐花節的創立和活動。

在刺激和型塑政府的客家政策上，客家的社會運動也扮演了相當重要的角色。審視社會運動、政策和認同形成之間的相互作用，對建構台灣客家意識以及其進一步發展有所瞭解，也解釋了族群包容和文化多元在台灣의顯著提升。

**關鍵詞：**多元文化台灣、認同建構、社會運動、族群包容、客家委員會、桐花節