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中華民國五十五年秋季

臺灣·南港

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中華民國五十五年秋季

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TAIWAN AS A LABORATORY FOR THE STUDY OF CHINESE SOCIETY AND CULTURE*

SHAO-HSING CHEN

China is one of the sources of world civilization and her people account for more than one fifth of the world's population. For some time she was considered a sleeping lion, but the awakening of the lion in recent times is a concern for people in many countries. In his lecture at Georgetown University in March, 1966, Hubert Humphery, Vice President of the United States, said: "Our problem to-day in Asia is that we are abysmally ignorant of that part of the world. Out of the tragedy of the war comes an impetus and incentive for knowledge" (*Time*, April 1, 1966, p. 9). Probably because of these and other reasons many western countries are eager to learn about China. Social scientists wish to go to Mainland China for their research but the current situation does not permit them to pass through the bamboo curtain. Reluctantly, they have gone to Hong Kong and Taiwan, using these places as substitutes for their study of Mainland China. But can these substitutes fulfil their needs? Let us examine the situation of Taiwan.

Taiwan was under Japanese rule for 50 years (1895-1945), and remarkable changes took place during these times. Therefore, a question may be raised: Is Taiwan not a Japanized society? or is it still a Chinese society? In fact this is an embarrassing question to the people in Taiwan, but since not a few foreigners are still not certain concerning this problem, it seems not unnecessary to ponder somewhat on this point. India was under the British rule for more than 180 years, and Indonesia under the Dutch for about 120 years, but probably nobody thinks India was Britanized and Indonesia Netherlandized. For 88 years China was ruled by the Mongols and 268 years by the Manchus, but the people and culture are still Chinese, though not without change. The length of time under alien rule does not necessarily mean the ruled were assimilated by the rulers.

No doubt, alien rule will have its impact upon the ruled. Various constructions carried out by colonizers and peace and order kept by them do have influences upon their subjects, but society and culture: ways of daily life, family life, religion or folk belief, and the attitude of the people, etc. are not easy to change. These are what Emile Durkheim defined as "social facts," existing inside the mind of people,

* The author is grateful to Prof. and Mrs. Bernard Gallin, Prof. Edgar Wickberg, Prof. Frederic Joseph Foley, Mr. George P. Cernada, and Mr. William L. Parish for their constructive comments on this paper.

and it is very hard to change them from outside. Though the material construction and political system brought by the colonial rulers will have their impact on the society and culture of the ruled, if there is no attitude change among the people to respond to the stimulation, the stimulant from outside can only have a superficial influence and cannot change the configuration of society and culture. The Amish of the United States still keep their traditional way of life despite the fact that they have lived among a most industrialized and modernized environment for a long time.

The oppression and exploitation of the conquerors or colonizers upon their subjects inevitably bring forth resistance and antagonism of the latter against the former. Usually this situation will consolidate the unity of the conquered, and drive them to stick to their traditional way of life. Under certain circumstances, however, the ruled will change their attitude, and as a result bring forth remarkable social and cultural changes. This was what took place in Taiwan during and after the end of World War I. Economic boom during the War and depression after the end of the War were completely new experiences for the rank and file in Taiwan, and involved them in the modern economic cycle for the first time, shook them loose from their conservative traditions, and induced them to try to adopt new cultural traits. On the other hand, stimulated by the world-wide current of democracy and liberation, enlightenment and anti-colonialistic movements were started by young Taiwanese at these times. The combination of subjective attitude change and objective stimulation wrought out the remarkable social and cultural changes from these times⁽¹⁾. An example will help us to understand the situation. For a long time Taiwanese celebrated their New Year by the lunar calendar, and called the New Year of the Gregorian Calendar "Japanese New Year." The Japanese pressed the Taiwanese to adopt the new one and to give up the old one, but were not successful. In their enlightenment movement the young Taiwanese told their fellow people that the solar calendar is a good calendar, adopted by most civilized countries, and the Japanese also adopted it. We should not hesitate to adopt it because it was adopted by the Japanese. This helped many Taiwanese to adopt new cultural traits, and there were many such examples.

By the later years of Ch'ing rule the able Governor-General, Ming-ch'uan Liu, had started a program of modernization, but the extremely conservative circumstances of that time did not permit the innovation to succeed. After the Japanese

(1) This is an interesting and significant topic which the author has analyzed in several of his articles ("Population Growth and Social Change in Taiwan" *Bulletin of the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology*, National Taiwan University, No. 5 and 6, 1955; "Social Change in Taiwan," *Studia Taiwanica*, First issue, 1956; "Diffusion and Acceptance of Modern Western Artistic and Intellectual Expression in Taiwan," *Studia Taiwanica*, Second issue, 1957), and intend to elaborate further in the future.

arrived, the colonial government carried out a plan of development. It was forced upon the people by police power and was quite "effective." Perhaps because of this, it was assumed that the modernization in Taiwan was carried out by the Japanese. We must be careful in the analysis of this point. What Ming-ch'uan Liu failed to do and the Japanese succeeded at doing were material construction and innovation of administrative systems, and not changes in society and culture. If there were no attitude change among Taiwanese themselves, there would be no substantial changes in society and culture, despite the changes in material construction and administrative system, as we observe in India under the British and Indonesia under the Dutch, or the Amish in the United States.

Because new cultural traits were adopted by the Taiwanese through the Japanese, and in fact some liberal Japanese even cooperated with Taiwanese in their struggle against the unreasonable colonial oppression, the change was inevitably tinted with Japanese color. No doubt this had gave rise to the impression of Japanization of Taiwan. But in fact the new cultural traits adopted by the Taiwanese were not Japanese cultural traits but were western, modernized cultural traits which the Japanese themselves had adopted only shortly before. The Taiwanese adopted them voluntarily and selectively, and from their own social and cultural context. Just as the Japanese are modernizing, so the Taiwanese are also modernizing. Social scientists familiar with society and culture understand that these are "social facts" existing within the minds of people, and that if there is no subjective response, society will not change by mere objective stimulation, and that, if there is subjective response to the objective stimulation, the change is the change of the society itself, and not a "nization" of the stimulant. It is clear from these considerations that the remarkable social change that took place in Taiwan during the Japanese rule is not a Japanization, but is a modernization of a Chinese society. Though it might differ from that of the Mainland, it is still a Chinese society, and the difference is not a drawback but is a benefit for the study of Chinese society, because it tells us the possibility and the possible way of future social change in China.

Though Taiwan is a Chinese society, is it "typical" of China? This is a difficult problem, and the same question can be raised against Chekiang, Honan or any other parts of China. Anyway, Taiwan is a part of China, and probably we have to study many parts before raising the question of what is "typical" of China. Still, there are some characteristics of Taiwan among the whole of China, which will be pointed out in the follows. In terms of land area, Taiwan accounts for only 0.37 percent of the whole of China, and in terms of population the former is only 1.52 percent of the latter.⁽¹⁾ Mainland China has a proverbially long history, but for Taiwan the dependable documents currently available date only from the early

(1) cf. note 1 in the following page.

seventeenth century.⁽²⁾ On the Mainland there were "china" and "silk" which the nobles of the world were attracted to, and thought and philosophy which Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau and others had admired, but in Taiwan we observe only common folk culture. Considering the spectacular variety in geography and culture on the Mainland, what exists in Taiwan is quite mean and simple. Indeed, in these respects, Taiwan is tiny and insignificant in comparison to Mainland China and it seems difficult to believe that the substitute could be of any use for the study of China. From the standpoint of social science, however, there seem to be some other perspectives.

Before going into detail, a preliminary consideration of a point of our subject is necessary. What does the word "study" mean? If its main point is the description of facts, then surely the tiny and insignificant island of Taiwan is not worthy of attention for the description of a spectacular and magnificent China. In a "study," however, theoretical analysis and interpretation are more important than the factual description. From this aspect, although the spectacle and magnificence of Athens or Rome might well be splendid subjects for a colorful description, but they are not necessarily the best subjects for social scientific analysis. On the other hand, small and seemingly less significant subjects, such as the several Mexican villages studied by Robert Redfield, may not capture the attention of national chroniclers, but if properly studied, significant theoretical contributions, such as Redfield's theory of folk society, may be derived from them. For theoretical analysis a simpler society is often a more appropriate subject than a complex one. From these considerations we can see that, though Taiwan may not be an attractive subject for a colorful description of China, still it can be a good subject for scientific study of Chinese society.

Throughout the world there are abundant materials which can be used for social research, but before proper research is possible these raw materials have to be collected and processed and transformed into scientific data. There are different types of data and different types of research, and the latter depends upon the former.

(1) According to United Nations' *Demographic Yearbook*, 1963, the proportions are as follows:

	Area (sq. km)		Estimates of Midyears Population, 1963	
	Absolute figure	Proportion	Absolute figure	Proportion
Mainland China	9,561,000	99.63	686,400,000	98.48
Taiwan	35,961	0.37	10,612,000	1.52
Total	9,596,961	100.00	697,012,000	100.00

(2) Chen Ti: *Tung-huan-chi* (Description of the Eastern Barbarians), 1602, contains the earliest concrete description of Taiwan based on first hand observation.

In an unexplored tribal society, data are collected by observation and field survey. Inevitably the scope of such data is limited and it is not easy to check the validity of the collected data. In a peasant society, chronicles, gazetteers and other literary works are usually available. No doubt they are useful, but they are not compiled by people with a sense of modern science, and often they can be utilized only after careful examination. In a modern society there are reports, statistical returns, and other documents prepared by people with a scientific sense, and with these data an extensive and systematic analysis can be carried out. With the first and the second types of data only "explorative" or "formulative" studies are possible, but with the third type of data it is possible to carry out "descriptive" studies.⁽¹⁾ In Taiwan, as will be stated below, there exist substantial data of the third type since the beginning of Japanese rule, but on the Mainland, most of the data available belong to the second type. In other words, the data available in Taiwan afford material for a more substantial and extensive analysis of Chinese society than those available on the Mainland.

There are Chinese, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese records concerning Taiwan (Formosa) from the latter half of the sixteenth century. Chinese bibliographies during the Ch'ing rule (1683-1895) are numerous and most of them have been edited and republished by the Office of Economic Study of the Bank of Taiwan and other agencies. All of these belong to the second type of data as stated above. Beginning with the Japanese period (1895-1945) there are specific reports and statistical returns on land, population, agriculture, commerce, industry, transportation, communication, public health, education, religion, crime, etc. The name of an able and enlightened colonial officer, Shimpei Goto, who served in Taiwan from 1898 to 1906, is worthy of mention in this connection. Goto was a medical doctor and believed in "scientific administration." To him, understanding the situation of land and people was the foundation of successful rule and he carried out a huge project of land survey (started in 1898 and completed in 1905, with an expenditure of 5.22 million yen), and a census in 1905. Japan had planned to take her first census in 1905 but because of the incumbent Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) the project had to be postponed. In Taiwan, however, the resolute officer Goto enforced the project despite strong objections from the central government of Japan. The census of 1905 was not only the first census of an integral part of the Chinese population, but also the first census in the Far East. It took two years for preparation, 7,405 people worked on it, and the expenditure amounted to 185,840 yen. Besides the survey of land and people, a commission for the research on political, legal, economic and social conditions was organized in 1901. Abundant funds were allocated and able scholars were invited

(1) Types of study as analysed by C. Selltitz, M. Jahoda, M. Deutsch and S.W. Cook in their *Research Methods in Social Relations*, revised one-volume edition, 1959, p. 50.

from Japan. Taiwan's aborigines were also surveyed and studied. The work continued until 1915, and the many volumes of the report contain much valuable data.

On the Mainland, even the population of a town is often difficult to get. In books by Martin Yang and C. K. Yang, for example, the populations of the villages they surveyed in respective years are only estimated. In Taiwan, the size of population and the number of births and deaths of each township for each year have been recorded since 1906. The system of household registration is a wonder to many western demographers. Such details as the area of land, of cultivated land, and the output of main crops in each township are also available. There are detailed maps of the whole island and of each locality. Eight population censuses were taken (seven during the Japanese rule, one after Taiwan was restored to China) and three complete life tables were computed (two during the Japanese rule, one after that). With these data studies can be made of population change and life expectancy of an integral part of the Chinese population. The census of agriculture and the census of industry and commerce were also carried out after Taiwan was restored to China.

What kind of research could be undertaken with these data? Here we will give an example. Using vital statistics Mr. Tseng-lu Li of the Department of Sociology, National Taiwan University, computed 11 successive abridged life tables from 1906 to 1962. From these tables we can see that the prolongation of life expectancy is a precise indicator of social change in Taiwan. The abridged life table of 1906 is particularly valuable as it is a life table of a society at its initial stage of modernization and this type of data is not easily available. Utilizing the 1960-1962 statistics, Mr. Li also computed 22 abridged life tables of respective administrative divisions in Taiwan which enable us to compare many aspects of regional differences. Three abridged life tables by settlement pattern: the city, the town, and the village, were also computed by him.⁽¹⁾ The local land bureau has the registration of every piece of farm land and its map. In the Provincial Land Bureau some parts of the data of the land survey carried out by Ming-ch'uan Liu, and the data of the land survey by the Japanese colonial government are still kept, and if you will, you can make a study on whether a Chinese proverb: "A piece of farm land will have eight hundred owners within one thousand years" is true or not. Utilizing these data, Professor Edgar Wickberg of the University of Kansas is carrying on a research project, and he has commented favorably on the abundance and quality of them. There are many data in Taiwan which will allow us to make systematic and comprehensive studies.

While on the Mainland even the population of a town is often not easy to get,

(1) Li, Tseng-lu: "Abridged Life Tables for Males and Females in Taiwan, 1906-1962." *Taiwan Wen Shian*, Vol. XVI, No. 4, Taipei, 1965.

in Taiwan even census and complete life tables are available. With such scientifically prepared and extensive data in Taiwan, the results of complete studies of Chinese society and culture can serve as a very good frame of reference for the study of the Mainland. In addition to having more scientifically accurate data available for research, Taiwan also possesses certain characteristics which make it an even more advantageous subject for study. Although smallness of area and brevity of history are drawbacks to Taiwan as representative of China, at the same time, these are factors which enable scholars to comprehend the configuration more easily. In this small piece of land, there was a convergence of Chinese, aboriginal, Dutch, Spanish and Japanese cultures. Before and after the Japanese occupation there was frequent and abundant migration of population between Taiwan and the Mainland, but during the half century of Japanese rule (1895-1945) the colonial government strictly regulated migration and the Chinese in Taiwan were a "closed population." Under these circumstances, Taiwan can be viewed as an ideal laboratory for experimental study of change of Chinese population and society. This is an invaluable treasure-house which social scientists should not fail to realize and to take advantage of in their study.

In this resourceful "laboratory" the process of a series of Chinese socio-cultural changes can be traced: from a premodern stage to a stage of initial modernization, then to a stage of colonialistic development and lastly a stage of autonomous development.

Before the Japanese occupation in 1895, Taiwan was a premodern peasant society. Usually social survey or research is possible only after an area has achieved a certain degree of development. So, for the research to begin, the area must have already passed its initial stage of development. This is what G. W. F. Hegel described as "die Eule der Minerva beginnt erst mit der einbrechenden Daemmerung ihren Flug." The situation in Taiwan was somewhat different. Though the local people could not engage in research themselves, the Japanese colonial government did it earnestly and systematically. As a result the situation of the premodern stage or that of the stage of initial modernization were recorded in detail. This type of data is hard to find, and it is fortunate that we have it for this part of China. From this viewpoint it is fair to say that Taiwan is one of the best places for the study of Chinese social history.

It is an undeniable fact that under the half century of Japanese rule (1895-1945) Taiwan had achieved a certain degree of development in material construction and administrative system. The development was forced upon the people from the above (von Oben), so it was quite "effective," but it was not a natural development from the base (von Unten), it was not a balanced development. After the end of World War II, Taiwan was restored to China in 1945. The forced development

from the above was soon replaced by voluntary development from the base. In other words, the colonialistic modernization gave way to autonomous modernization. Certain remarkable changes took place in Taiwan after the end of the War will demonstrate the contrast between these two types of modernization. During the Japanese rule, Taiwan was a market for consumer goods and a supplier of agricultural products for Japan, and the development of industry was discouraged. After 1945 the development of industry mushroomed. Primary and vocational education was fairly advanced during the Japanese rule, but higher education was discouraged. The change in overall emphasis on higher education was one of the most spectacular transformations after the end of the War. Although the living conditions of the Taiwanese were improved under the Japanese rule, the people were not allowed to organize and to govern by themselves, but now the principles of government of the people, for the people and by the people are being promoted. The experience in Taiwan is a good reference for the development planning of many areas which were colonies in former times.

Why China had not or could not be modernized has been a subject for polemic among social scientists. For interpretation some of them had recourse to religious sociology and Calvinism and Confucianism were contrasted. If the existence of Taiwan is not forgotten, and the fact that a part of China, Taiwan, has been modernized since the first part of the twentieth century is not overlooked, then the well-known premise of Confucianism inhibiting modernization of Chinese society should be reevaluated completely. The fact of Taiwan is a challenge to this sector of Sinology, and from this viewpoint, Taiwan holds a very important place in the study of Chinese society and culture.

Not a few western social scientists have come to Taiwan and taken it only as the "inevitable" substitute for their study of Mainland China. As they proceeded with their research, however, they gradually realized that Taiwan was a favorable place, and in some respects a more favorable place than Mainland China itself, for the study of Chinese society and culture. In a personal letter to the present writer a well-known American scholar stated: "In my opinion, Taiwan is a most fascinating place for historical study." It is nice that the merits of the invaluable "laboratory" for the study of China are gradually being recognized. If the significance of the "laboratory" is duly realized and if a substantial project for the study of China in Taiwan and through Taiwan could be carried out, I believe that not only will the study of China be greatly promoted, but at the same time, social science will benefit immensely from it.

中國社會文化研究的實驗室——臺灣

陳 紹 馨

近年來有不少歐美學者，對中國社會、文化的研究，甚感興趣。一些社會科學家欲前往中國大陸做調查研究，由於目前未能進入“鐵幕”，故不得不以香港或臺灣為“代用品”，來研究中國社會。但由代用品，是否能達成其目的？下文擬探討：在臺灣是否能從事有關中國社會的調查研究？

鑑於臺灣曾經日本統治五十年，中間曾發生不少變化，因此有一些外國人，以為臺灣已成日本化的社會。印度經英國統治一百八十餘年；印尼經荷蘭統治一百二十年，但前者未曾英國化；後者也未荷蘭化。中國經蒙古人統治八十八年，經滿洲人統治二百六十八年，但也並未蒙古化或滿洲化。由以上諸事實得悉，雖經長期統治，統治者並不一定能把被統治者同化。

由統治者帶來之物質上的建設或行政制度，對被統治者當然有各種影響，但被統治者的社會與文化，他們的生活方式、家庭生活、宗教或民間信仰、人民的態度等，是不容易變化的。此等是涂爾幹所謂的“社會事實”存在於人們的心中，欲藉外力把它改變是不容易的。如果沒有被統治者之“態度的變化”來響應外來的刺激，則物質上的建設與行政上的改變，只能有膚淺的影響而已，並不能把社會、文化的“全形”改變。原始基督教派的 Amish 人，雖多年生活在最現代化的美國，但還保持着他們的古老傳統。

統治者的壓迫與榨取，自然引起被統治者的反抗，進而促進他們的團結與固守傳統。在某些情形下，被統治者也會發生態度的變化，因而發生顯著的社會、文化變遷，而這就是在第一次世界大戰後發生於臺灣的事實。大戰把臺灣捲入近代經濟循環中，大戰中的景氣與大戰後的不景氣，影響到每一個人民的收入與家計。這是未曾嘗過的新經驗，激烈的變化促使人民不再固守古老的傳統而採取新文化因素。同時，大

戰後在大陸發生的五四運動與在日本發生的民主主義自由主義運動，由留學生帶回臺灣，掀起熱烈的文化運動、反殖民主義運動。此等經濟上、心理上與文化上的變化，促進人民改變態度，主動接受新文化，因而引起顯著的社會、文化變遷。有一個例子可使我們了解此等情形。臺灣人自古以來採用農曆，以陽曆的新年爲“日本的過年”。殖民地政府鼓勵，甚至強迫人民過陽曆新年，但未能成功。當臺灣留學生在“文化講演”時，對其同胞說：“陽曆比陰曆進步，世界上的文明國家大多採用它，而日本已採用它，所以陽曆的過年並不是‘日本的過年’；我們不應因日人採用它，就不採用；凡是好的，進步的，我們都應該採用。”同胞的勸說與統治者的強迫畢竟不同，因而多數人民自願採取許多新文化因素。

清領末期，劉銘傳曾經有偉大的維新措施，但因當時的社會過於保守，故未能成功。日據後，日人以警察力量推行其各種“改良”，故效果甚著。大概如此，人們常以爲臺灣的現代化是由日人推行的。但是我們應知道，劉銘傳未能成功而日人成功，是物質上的建設與行政制度的改進，而不是社會、文化的改變。社會、文化的改變，等於古來所謂的“移風易俗”，必須人民從心裏主動響應，就是態度的改變，才能實現；如無態度的改變，則雖有物質上、行政上的變化，社會文化也不會改變，一如印度、印尼，或美國的 Amish。

因爲新文化因素是經日人傳入的，而事實有一些自由主義的日人，幫助臺灣人抵抗不合理的殖民統治，所以臺灣的社會變遷不得不帶着一些日本色彩。無可懷疑，這是使人發生“臺灣的日本化”之誤會的原因。事實上臺灣人所採取的，並不是日本的，而是西方的現代文化因素，而日本也不過是不久以前才採取此等因素。臺灣人並不是盲目接受外來文化，而是從自己的立場，自主挑選以後才接受的。日本正在現代化，而臺灣也正在現代化，這絕不是臺灣的日本化。雖曾經顯著變化，但臺灣社會還是中國社會。

臺灣社會雖是中國社會，但它能否代表中國？這是難以回答的問題，而同一問題可以自浙江、河南或其他地方產生。無論如何，臺灣是中國的一部份，而大概我們應研究中國的許多部份以後，才可以提出那些因素或地方可以代表中國的問題。雖然如此，在整個中國裏，臺灣的確有其特徵。就面積而言，臺灣只佔全中國的百分之0.37

而已，從人口觀點，則佔百分之 1.52。大陸有悠久的歷史，但在臺灣，可靠的記錄則始於第十七世紀初年陳第的東番記（1602年）。大陸有高雅淵博的學藝思想，但臺灣則只有粗淺的民間文化而已。大陸各地的風土人情殊異，但臺灣則很單純。誠然，與光輝燦爛的大陸比較，臺灣是微不足道的，所以由這個“代用品”來研究中國，似乎難能達成其目的。

對此問題，還有一些值得推敲的餘地。我們要研究中國社會，那麼“研究”究竟指什麼？假如“研究”的重點，在於事實的記述，那麼在中國研究中就場地而言，臺灣是不足掛齒的。但“研究”應着重理論分析與解釋，而從此觀點就能有不同的看法，雅典或羅馬，雖是光輝燦爛記錄的好對象，但不一定是社會科學分析的最好對象。相反的，Robert Redfield 所研究的幾個墨西哥鄉村，雖然不值得注意，但如研究得法，可從它導致寶貴的社會科學理論，例如 Redfield 的 Folk society 的理論。為理論分析，單純的社會比複雜的社會，時常是更適宜的對象。由此觀點言，臺灣雖不是燦爛描述的好對象，但可以或為中國社會研究的好對象。

世界上有很多可供研究的資料，但資料的存在與“可供研究”是不同的。為供研究，必先搜集資料，再經整理以後把未加工的資料（raw data）變為研究資料。研究資料有各種不同的類型，而因應用的資料不同，研究也有不同的類型。在未經探討的初民社會，資料的搜集多靠觀察與田野工作。此等資料的範圍，並不廣大，而其妥當性（validity）的審定也不容易。農業社會常有年代記、方誌、或其他文藝作品。此等資料雖寶貴，但大多不以現代科學意識編輯，通常必須經審察以後才可使用。在現代社會則有以科學意識編輯的各種報告、統計，以及社會科學的調查報告，應用此等資料，可做廣範圍的、有系統的研究。以第一及第二類資料，只能做“探討性”的研究而已，但以第三類資料，則能做“記述性”的研究。在大陸，有關社會、文化的資料，大都屬於第二類；但臺灣，自日據以後，有不少第三類資料。此等資料，對中國社會的研究，能有不少貢獻。

在臺灣，自第十七世紀初年以後，就有中文、荷蘭文、西班牙文、葡萄牙文、日文等文獻。清代的中文文獻，可說不少，而其大部份已經由臺灣銀行經濟研究室或其他機構整理出版，利用甚為方便。此等資料均屬第二類。日據以後，有土地、人

口、農業、商業、工業、交通、運輸、公共衛生、教育、宗教、犯罪等等的詳細調查報告書與統計。後藤新平對這方面有不少貢獻。後藤是一位醫生，重視“科學的行政”。「爲推行有效的行政，必須先了解土地與人口」，是他的信念，因而排除萬難，舉辦大規模的土地調查與人口普查。此外，他還舉辦舊慣調查，不惜經費，動員日本一流學者，調查臺灣法制、行政、經濟、社會、習俗等事項。

在大陸，一個鄉鎮的人口，有時都不容易知道；但在臺灣，自1906年以後，一個鄉鎮的人口數、出生數、死亡數，都有記錄。戶籍制度的完整，常令西方學者驚訝。不但每一個鄉鎮的總面積，連耕地面積以及主要農產品的年收量，都有記錄。全省與各地，都有各種詳細的地圖。有八次的人口普查與三次的完整生命表，由此可計算一部份完整中國人口的變遷與生命現象。光復以後，還有幾次農業普查與工商普查。利用此等資料，可做中國社會之完整透澈地研究，這點在大陸，目前是還不能實現的。臺灣雖爲中國之一小部份，但就此部份所做之完整透澈的研究，對今後大陸社會、文化的研究，必定有很大的貢獻。換一句話說，目前的大陸，只能做“探討性”的研究，但在臺灣，則能做“記述性”的研究，而以後者來幫助大陸的研究，其功效必定很大。舉例來說，現代化以前的中國人出生時平均餘命若干，隨着現代化，中國人的平均餘命可延長到何種程度，只靠大陸的資料是無法知道的，但利用臺灣之資料，就可算出具體的數字，而此等數字，可使我們切實了解中國社會的情形。

除了完整的資料以外，臺灣還有其他特色值得我們注意。地域狹小、歷史短暫，是臺灣的短處，但同時也是其長處，因小與短，致概觀與概括較容易。在此小地域，除了中國文化以外，還有山胞、荷蘭、西班牙、日本等諸文化的湊會。日據前與日據後，臺灣大陸間經常有人口與文化交流，但在日據半世紀間，因日人嚴格管制臺灣與大陸間的交流，在臺灣的中國人成爲“封閉性人口”，在這種情形下，臺灣成爲一個“實驗室”，經此可觀察中國人口與社會的演變。這是社會科學研究上的寶庫，社會科學家不應不注意，且該把它善爲利用。

在此“實驗室”裏，我們可以追尋一連串的中國社會、文化變遷：從近代以前的階段，經現代化開始期，以至殖民地式現代化、自主性現代化的階段。

日據以前，臺灣是一個農業社會。一般而言，一個社會須在現代化到某一程度以

後，才能做調查研究，然而等到能做調查研究的時候，“現代化以前”的情形已經消失。這是歷史哲學家黑格爾所指明的事理，但臺灣却是此常理的一個例外。在此階段，臺灣人本身雖不能做調查研究，但有後藤新平其人，拼命去做各種調查，所以剛開始現代化或未開始現代化的時候之情形，也都能詳細記錄下來。例如1905年的第一次人口普查或1906年以來的生命統計，都是罕有而寶貴的社會史資料，對中國的研究，實具有絕大的價值。

日據期間，臺灣的確有一些“進步”，但所謂進步是從「上面」迫成的，而非從“下面”釀成的。第二次世界大戰以後，即臺灣光復後，迫成的進步變為自動的進步，殖民地式現代化變為自主性現代化。光復以後之若干變化，可使我們了解上述兩個類型之現代化的不同。日據時期，臺灣是農產品的供應地與工業產品的消費市場，還談不上工業的發展；但光復以後，工業飛躍發展，把殖民地經濟變為自主性經濟。小學教育與職業教育，在日據時期就有相當的規模，但高等教育被限制得很嚴；光復以後高等教育的發展，的確是值得驚異的現象。日據期間，臺灣人的物質生活雖有一些進步，但沒有結社的自由；與臺灣光復以後，以民有、民治、民享為原則的自治，已普遍推行到鄉間。上列光復前與光復後的對照，顯示殖民地式現代化與自主性現代化之所以不同的地方。臺灣的經驗，可供以前曾為殖民地的其他地方，擬定開發計劃的參考。

為何中國不現代化，或不能現代化？這是西方社會科學家所喜歡討論的一個問題。有人以宗教社會學來說明此問題，將儒教與Calvinism作比較討論。但是如人們不忘記臺灣的存在，不忽略中國的一部份——臺灣，已自第二十世紀初年逐漸現代化，那麼，對上述社會科學上的大題目，我們就應該重新加以檢討。從這個觀點來說，臺灣在中國研究上是一個具有重大意義的地方。

目前有不少西方的社會科學家，在臺灣從事調查研究工作。本來他們只把臺灣視為不得已的“代用品”，但在研究過程中，逐漸發現其優越條件，漸漸了解，不但在臺灣可以研究中國，在某些方面，臺灣比大陸具備更好的研究條件。有一位美國知名的學者，在其致筆者的私函中曾經說過：“據我的意見，臺灣是歷史研究上引人入勝的地方”。這個“實驗室”對中國社會、文化的研究有何意義，似乎逐漸被認識。如

能有整套完整的研究計劃，則在臺灣或透過臺灣對中國的研究，不但能促進整個中國的研究，而且對社會科學本身，也必定有不少的貢獻。