

## **Being Both Chinese and Taiwanese**

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As of when did “being a Chinese person” become a taboo in Taiwan, I do not know, yet I find this situation to be intolerable: when one’s heart is immersed in their self-identification as Chinese, one swallows one’s words reflecting such immersion and hesitates to pronounce them, while one is checking one’s surroundings cautiously — one is deeply fearful since such words might provoke some angry and discontented looks. I teach Chinese; what I read are mostly archaic books of China. I have a fervent love toward the culture of China. I care about the density of China. Why should I be so timid and so frightened that I stop speaking out that “I am Chinese”? Has not there been a saying: “Nobody should apologize for their identities”? Why do some people refuse to allow my self-identifications?

I am from Xinzhu. Xinzhu is a Taiwanese city, therefore, undoubtedly, I am Taiwanese. Taiwan is a province of the Republic of China. While being Taiwanese, why cannot I say “I am Chinese”? From my childhood to my adulthood, I have been taught and instructed that my state is the “Republic of China,” abbreviated “China,” which has been in accordance with the Constitution. How could my mindful obedience to laws ever become a crime?

I know that on another side of the strait, there is a “People’s Republic of China,” also referred to as “China.” The “Republic of China” is my “mother state”; my mother state’s name is “China.” In the same way by which I call my mother, who has given birth to me and raised me, as “mother,” the commoners on the other side of the strait also have mothers whom they call “mothers.” Has there been any reason for us to stop calling our mothers because other people are calling “mothers”?

Since I was little, I have been experiencing and identifying the situation in which my veins have been flowing with the fresh red blood of “China.” Although because

of the repeated political disruptions, this “China” has different names, nothing could ever change the truth of my bloodlines. I was born and I have grown up in Taiwan; therefore, I love Taiwan. The blood of China flows within me; therefore, I love China. The political difficulties and obstacles do not make me separate one from another since I know that my heart turns to the same and the one “China.”

This “China” has the flourishing beautiful Taiwan, which is also called “Formosa,” in addition to the strong, powerful, and mighty China possessing vast lands, various ethnic groups, magnificent and beautiful rivers, mountains, and natural landscapes, in addition to an extensive history. For me, both of them are equally important, adored, loved, and longed for.

I still remember that in 1990, I took a train from Hong Kong to Guangzhou. At the checkpoint of the train station, for the first time, I stepped on the earth of “China” that has been separated from me for several decades, about which I often — repeatedly — dreamed about amidst the archaic books and the history. I was immersed in the exact joy that a voyager, who has long been troubled by their unsettlement, is immersed in when they ultimately return to their native land. It was lamentable that my feet were stepping on an ice-cold concrete floor. Otherwise, I would have picked up a small batch of soil, embraced it and treasured it inside my heart.

At this point, the melody of “Giving You a Batch of Soil” sang by Fei Yuqing in 1981 haunted my hearing — “This batch of soil, this batch of soil / Has been struck by spring thunders, immolated by wild flames, / And covered by layers of azaleas descended from the above with breezes.” In fact, far beyond the spring thunders, the wild flames, and the azaleas — for how many years, and for countless times, my mornings and evenings have been spent in my yearning for this soil — for countless times, I have craved for this soil in my dreams!

I consider my being Taiwanese as an honor since this is the land on which I was born, and which has raised me; here, I have sweated, I have wept, I have experienced bitterness, and I have tasted joys. Nobody is qualified to ask me to be out of her arms. I am also proud of being Chinese since China is the source of my blood and the cultural fountain — in which I have been immersed — of my acts, behaviors, views, and ideologies. China — for her, I have wept, laughed, and mourned; for her, felt outrage and passion; for her, boldly, and sorrowfully sung; for her, optimistically hoped. How could anyone be ever qualified to deny my profound care and yearning for her?

I am Taiwanese. I love this land on which I was born, and which has raised me. I hope that everyone living on this land can be immersed in a harmonious bliss in addition to peaceful joys, while having beneficial future developments within a boundless brilliance. However, how could this hope ever interfere with my conviction as a Chinese person rejoicing that on the other side of the strait, that vaster land gradually becomes wealthy, abundant, and strong? I firmly guard my duties bound to my identity as a Taiwanese person: I am willing to devote my entire heart and my full energies for Taiwan. It is also delightful for me to selflessly devote myself to the prosperous power of the future “China.” The reason is very simple: because I am Taiwanese, and Taiwanese people are Chinese people.

During Ma Ying-jeou’s visit to the mainland, he returned to his ancestral home where he offered reverent ceremonies in veneration of his ancestors; he sobbed several times. An orchid blossom which has lost its roots is now returned to its native land — how could this not make people tearful and weep in quietude? Ma’s ancestral home is Xiangtan, yet he has grown up in Taiwan — both Chinese and Taiwanese. The skeletons, the flesh, as well as the bloodlines — despite regional differences, these remain the same. This could never be cut off or abandoned; and why should anyone ever attempt to cut off or to abandon?

In the past, my father repeatedly told me: my ancestral home is Raoping, Guangdong. More than three hundred years ago, my entire family arrived in Taiwan to farm. Ultimately, my family settled in Liujia, Xinzhu. We began to possess massive household properties. Yet, the Raoping Hakka tongue has remained to be passed down consecutively through generations. Ten years ago, I had the honor to visit the Yellow Emperor Mausoleum in Shanxi where I participated in the magnificent ceremony in veneration of the Yellow Emperor. I saw higher and lower mountains resembling massive waves, as well as woods extended into a profound, flourishing greenness — my heart and my reflections soared across grand mountains, plains, flowing creeks, as well as cities and rural regions. I have not yet returned to Raoping. However, I know that this was where my ancestors used to live. Southwards, there is the land alternatively called the island of beauty, where my family has lived, rested, and been nurtured for more than three hundred years.

When hearts and hearts are in a connection and are bound together by the same thread, who cares about the shorter or the longer time of the relocation or the

changes of the political powers? I only know that from my bones, blood, and veins, I am absolutely both Chinese and Taiwanese.