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ETHNIC IDENTITY AND SOCIAL CONDITION OF VETERAN-MAINLANDERS IN TAIWAN

No matter how ambiguous the term "ethnic" is, it proves useful in distinguishing groups, each consisting of members with shared interests and values in a larger social context. Ethnicity, like a modern substitute for totemism revealed by Levi-Strauss as a classification system (1962), demarcates groups and maintains boundaries (Barth, 1969). But ethnicity is more than a system of classification, it is entangled with sentiments. As Daniel Bell claims, "Ethnicity has become more salient [than class] because it can combine an interest with an affective tie" (1975, p. 169).

But in the tradition of British and French Anthropology, the analysis of conscious or unconscious social structures has been the central concern, whereas research focusing on sentiments or emotional attitudes remains peripheral. American anthropologists, except some from the "culture and personality" school, also tend to neglect the emotions and sentiments of their subjects. Gregory Bateson's *NAVEN* (1936) is an exception. In order to explain naven ceremonies, Bateson not only examines structural relations of Iatmul society, but also the affective aspects of the individual's psychology as well as the culturally standardised system of emotional attitudes (ethos). Such an approach adds depth to the explanation.

While dealing with ethnic identity of veteran-mainlanders in Taiwan, I find that structural approach alone can not bring us to the heart of this phenomenon; we have to take sentiments or emotional attitudes into consideration.

In Taiwan, the study of veteran-mainlanders has been considered a sensitive topic. Despite the fact that they are a population of around 600,000 persons and are recognized as a subethnic group, no research has been done on them. What makes this research subject so sensitive? Conquering unnamable feelings of fear and uncertainty, I started to collect data on veteran-mainlanders two years ago but at a slow pace.

Last year (1987), after the lifting of martial law and the loosening of restriction on new party formation, many political and societal taboos were broken; sensitive problems became normal ones. This sudden change has facilitated my study. A self-salvation organization of veteran-mainlanders with more than 10,000 members emerged and protested unjust treatments in front of the ruling party's head-

quarter and Legislative Yuan.¹ The problems of this ethnic group can no longer be hidden from the public. Through my observation of veteran-mainlanders, I discovered a theoretically interesting direction with regards to the study of ethnic identity.

Ethnic Categories in Taiwan

Taiwan lies about 120 miles east of the coastal regions of mainland China. Before the coming of the Chinese immigrants, the aborigines of Malayo-Polynesian stock were scattered on the plains and mountains. The plains aborigines could be divided into fourteen ethnic (tribal) groups, and the mountain aborigines could be divided into nine. Ethnic distinction was mainly along tribal lines.

While Chinese settlement in Taiwan dates back to the 12th century, it was not until the 17th century that Chinese, mostly southern Fujianese, arrived on this island in large numbers. From 1624 to 1662, the Dutch occupied southern Taiwan, established a trading station, and encouraged the in-migration of Chinese laborers. The Dutch population in Taiwan did not exceed 2,800, of whom 2,000 were soldiers. The Dutch, the Chinese and the aborigines formed three ethnic categories.

Ever since Zheng Chengkong, a loyalist of the Ming dynasty, took the island from the Dutch in 1662 as a basis for resisting the Chinese Qing dynasty, the flow of Chinese immigrants increased significantly. Zheng settled about 25,000 soldiers to cultivate the land. When Taiwan was incorporated into the Chinese Empire in 1683, the Chinese population was estimated at 100,000. Conflicts between the two main ethnic categories, the Chinese and aborigines, became more frequent. The plains aborigines were either forced to migrate or were sinicized. The Chinese settlers were further divided into subethnic groups, the Hoklo (from Fujian) and the Hakkas (from Guangdong). The Fujian speakers were further divided into rival Chuanzhou and Zhangzhou subethnic groups (cf. Lamley, 1981).

After two centuries of Chinese rule, Taiwan was ceded to Japan in 1895. Except for the Japanese brought in Taiwan by the colonial government, all permanent settlers in Taiwan, including aborigines and the Chinese were categorized as "the Taiwanese". According to the 1948 census, there were 316,642 aborigines; 5,523,912 permanent Chinese settlers; 46,190 mainland Chinese in Taiwan. Among the Chinese settlers, the Fujianese constituted about 76 per cent and the Hakkas from Guangdong 14 per cent (Chen Shao-hsin, 1979; Chen Cheng-siang, 1982).

¹ The central government of the Republic of China in Taiwan consists of five Yuan: the Executive Yuan, the Legislative Yuan, the Judicial Yuan, the Examination Yuan, and the Control Yuan.

In the aftermath of World War II, Taiwan was returned to China. Chen Yi was appointed chairman of the "Provisional Government of Taiwan Province". His military government carried out systematic looting at all levels, which led to the rebellion of February 28 in 1947. When Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist government arrived in 1949 to seat itself in Taiwan with about one million refugees from mainland China, some antagonistic feelings were harbored against the newcomers. Two contrasting ethnic categories, the Taiwanese and the mainlanders, emerged. Among the mainlanders, more than half of them (around 600,000) were soldiers. After retiring from the army, they were honored by president Chiang Kai-shek as *rongmin* (glorious citizens) and formed an unique subethnic group.

Veteran-Mainlanders as a Subethnic Group

Since 1945, the ethnic categories of the "Taiwanese" and "mainlanders" have persisted. Taiwan's situation supports Fredrik Barth's assertion that ethnic "boundaries persist despite a flow of personnel across them. In other words, categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact, and information" (1969:9). In the government's records, "mainlanders" not only include those arrived in Taiwan after 1945 but also their Taiwanese wives and children. But it is interesting to note that in recent years while some second-generation and even first-generation mainlanders claim that they have become Taiwanese, they are still identified socially and politically as mainlanders. The Taiwanese unlikely become mainlanders unless they marry male mainlanders. Although these women are legally registered as "mainlanders", the Taiwanese recognize them as Taiwanese and the mainlanders accept them as mainlanders in the social arena.

What makes the Taiwanese and the mainlanders different? Hill Gates (1981) points out that many people in Taiwan perceive their society as one in which mainlanders have superior status and culture to that of the Taiwanese, but this perception has been modified along with societal development. The distinction of these two ethnic groups has been affected, but not determined by their political and economic status. Both ethnic groups can be subdivided into an upper, a middle, and a lower class. While mainlanders have been overrepresented in the central government, the Taiwanese have predominated at provincial, county and municipal levels. Economically, while more and more Taiwanese people have moved to the middle and upper classes quite a few veteran-mainlanders remain in the low class. Hill Gates notices that these veteran-mainlanders are "isolated by prejudice, language, lack of kinsmen, old age, and ill health" (1981: 258).

Do all veteran-mainlanders belong to the same social class? We will find that they are neither of the same class nor of the same occu-

pation. But they are all called *rongmin* (glorious citizens), a title bestowed upon them by president Chiang Kai-shek. Most Taiwanese people's image of *rongmin* is veteran-mainlanders in the low social stratum. They often describe *rongmin* as old soldiers retiring at low military rank; engaging in unstable and unskilled jobs; remaining single or marrying late; living in "homes of *rongmin*" or scattering all over Taiwan. As to veteran-mainlanders with high military rank and transferring to other public institutions, people usually exclude them from the category of *rongmin*. On the other hand, some better-to-do veteran-mainlanders tend to conceal their status as *rongmin*, although they also have the special identification cards of *rongmin* and enjoy some benefits. Therefore, the boundary of *rongmin* is moving under different conditions.

My research points out that all veteran-mainlanders classified as *rongmin* not only form an ethnic group with distinguishing cultural characteristics, but also look like a "totemic" kinship group whose members unite under a "totemic" emblem. This emblem "inspires religious sentiments" and is the collective representation of its members' sentiments (Durkheim, 1915). There are "ritual relations" between persons and their totemic emblem (Radcliffe-Brown, 1929). The "totemic" sentiments expressed through rituals constitute the main feature of this subethnic group and define the boundary of *rongmin*.

In the process of data-collecting, I gave special attention to the repetitive "ritual" behavior and language of veteran-mainlanders in daily life and protest movements. I visited various types of communities of *rongmin* and collected more than one hundred life histories. But this article will not give detailed description of any community. The focus is on the ethnic ("totemic") identity and social conditions of veteran-mainlanders.

A Privileged or A Disadvantaged Group?

Among the estimated 600,000 soldiers from mainland China, around 573,000 persons had retired by the end of 1987. Of them, about 485,000 are alive (according to the statistics of Assistance Commission for Retired Servicemen).

The nationalist government always claims that Taiwan has the best assistance system for veterans. In comparison with other citizens, such as laborers, civil servicemen, and farmers, *rongmin* have enjoyed more social welfare. Long before the promulgation of the first social welfare act in 1973, the Vocational Assistance Commission for Retired Servicemen (VACRS) was established under the Executive Yuan in 1954, resulting from the late President Chiang Kai-shek's concern for his old subordinates in the armed forces. VACRS's main mission is to assist veterans in employment, medical care, home care, schooling and vocational training. From 1956 to 1964, Chiang

Kai-shek's son Chiang Ching-kuo was the chairman of VACRS. During his tenure of office, Chiang Ching-kuo, with replacement fund from the United States, set up many affiliated organizations, including agricultural, forest, industrial, and engineering agencies, to meet the requirements of placement.

In 1964, the Legislative Yuan enacted privileged regulations to facilitate veterans' placement. Based on the regulations, special examinations were held to transfer more than 60,000 veterans into the civil service; VACRS' affiliated companies and institutions have advantages in obtaining land, loans, government construction works, etc. In 1986, there are about 20,000 veterans employed in these institutions; and around 70,000 early-retired, low-income veteran-mainlanders are being settled in homes of *rongmin* (either living inside or outside the veterans' dormitories) obtaining monthly subsidies. In addition, according to the statistics of 1986, there are about 240,000 veteran-mainlanders with life-long pensions. All veteran-mainlander can get free medical care in the *rongmin* hospitals. It seems that veteran-mainlanders have been well treated. They are the privileged, rather than the disadvantaged people in Taiwanese society. But why are there so many of them remaining in the low social stratum? What are the reasons for the emergence of their self-salvation movement?

In the group of veteran-mainlanders, people have been conscious of the distinction between pensionary (*zhongshen feng*) *rongmin* and self-dependent (*zimou shenhou*) *rongmin* who retired with once-and-for-all pay or without pay.

After examining the policy of retirement, I found that the rank-and-file soldiers who retired before 1961 did not get reasonable payments. Under the policy of disarmament, "the old and the sick" soldiers were allowed to retire. Each of them got three months' salaries no matter how long they had served in the army. At that time, Taiwan's economy was in bad shape, and soldiers' salaries were extremely low. There were about 100,000 rank-and-file soldiers and 50,000 officers retired before 1961. Some of them feigned illness in order to leave the troops. Low-rank soldiers could either accept VACRS's placement or find their own employment. The retired officers were treated much better than the rank-and-file soldiers. They could choose between life pension and once-and-for-all retired pay based on their rank and years of military service.

New regulations for military retirement were promulgated on June 30, 1961. Since then, both rank-and-file soldiers and officers have been qualified to get life pension; their dependents continue to enjoy a food supply, their children get educational subsidies, and their families only pay for half of their electricity bills. While VACRS has shown little concern towards early-retired, self-dependent *rongmin*, it has assisted many pensionary veterans in finding jobs in its affiliated companies and institutions if they agree to suspend their life pensions. Although VACRS emphasizes that those self-dependent

rongmin voluntarily left the army without requesting placement and that they also enjoy certain benefits such as medical care, and that "old and poor" self-dependent *rongmin* can get subsidies from homes of *rongmin*, many self-dependent *rongmin* feel that they are the disadvantaged group.

As mentioned before, rank-and-file soldiers retired before 1961 have been unfairly treated by retirement systems. Many of them have remained in the low social stratum, becoming the typical *rongmin* in ordinary people's image. More careful examination reveals that not only do these rank-and-file soldiers, retired before 1961, show dissatisfaction, but so do many self-dependent officers and those retired after 1961 who participate in the protest movement.²

The system of retirement has set self-dependent *rongmin* and pensionary *rongmin* apart from one another. But the analysis of system can not offer consistent explanations for veteran-mainlanders' behavior and attitudes. Emotions and sentiments are important factors to be considered. We will find that veteran-mainlanders of different types have expressed similar "totemic" sentiments and thought patterns in their ritual performances, in daily life and street protest.

Chiang Kai-Shek's Son Soldiers

Many veteran-mainlanders repeat a sentence: "We are the old president's son-soldiers." This concept emphasized in military education could be only a slogan in order to smoothe soldiers' pain of homesickness. Chinese style of leadership tends to build father-son type relation. But in "ritual performances", deceased old president Chiang Kai-shek is more than a "father" for veteran-mainlanders. He has become an ancestor, a spirit guardian, a "totemic" figure for the group of *rongmin*. In this "kinship" group, veteran-mainlanders may identify other military or political leaders as "family heads". Nonetheless, they consider the old president the biggest "family head" and the "father" of this unusual "glorious" group. Toward this "totemic father" they have ambiguous emotions and sentiments. On the one hand, he brought them to Taiwan giving them special concerns and benefits. On the other, he promised to bring them back home but failed to do so, and had prevented them from contacting mainland relatives for more than 30 years. The "totemic" emotions and sentiments have been vividly expressed in the "ritual performances" of veteran-mainlanders' self-salvation movement.

Compared to other street protest activities held by voluntary groups of workers, farmers, aborigines, women, etc., the self-salvation

² In August, 1986, an organization called "Self-dependent Veteran-mainlanders' Self-salvation Association" was established in Taipei city. Within seven months, the registered members of this association increased to about 15,000 people. Successive protest activities were held to fight for the rights of self-dependent veteran-mainlanders.

organization of the self-dependent *rongmin* is the only group fighting for rights with resort to close "kin" relations with Chiang Kai-shek. Their ambivalent sentiments towards Chiang Kai-shek were evidenced in their "ritual performances" of petitions and protests:

—In August, 1986, the self-dependent veteran-mainlanders' association sent a petition letter to president Chiang Chin-kuo: "We treat the old president as our father and treat you as our brother, ... but loyalty did not bring us good life...."

—In October, 1986, about 400 self-dependent *rongmin* gathered in front of Chiang Kai-shek's Memorial Hall in order to hold a "loyalty conference" on the old president's birthday. After bowing to the old president's picture, they poured out all troubles and complaints in VACRS's activity center.

—In January, 1987, they went to VACRS to ask for compensations. The big banner wrote: "yesterday's son soldiers, today's petitioners".

—In November, 1987, more than 1,000 veteran-mainlanders participated to the grand petition in the Executive Yuan. As their requests did not get replies, the representatives knelt down in front of Chiang Kai-shek's picture, crying for the help of his spirit.

In these "ritual performances", veteran-mainlanders might exaggerate their actions and emotions, and utilize their relations with the old president to obtain advantages. Nonetheless, the key symbol used in ritual performances has significant meaning. It stimulates people's sentiments (pure or ambivalent), and is the most noticeable characteristics of this group.

Veteran-mainlanders' strong emotions attached to the old president has attracted my attention. Their protests also emphasize kin ethics of Chinese society. In the kinship group, sentiments are considered more important than laws. This is why some of the requests raised by self-dependent *rongmin* sound unreasonable if we examine them from the legal point of view. For example, self-dependent *rongmin* have kept on asking for life pensions. I mentioned before that only rank-and-file soldiers retired before 1961 were not considered for life pensions no matter how long they had stayed in the army. Other soldiers and officers retired under the regulations of military retirement were allowed to choose between life-long pension and once-and-for-all pay if their years of service were over 20 years. Why do most self-dependent *rongmin* in the salvation movement think that they should also get life pensions?

About 50 life histories of self-dependent *rongmin* reveal that although they might have used up their retirement pay in a short period, they still had far better chances to earn money compared with those who stayed in the army in 1950s and 1960s. But many illiterate veteran-mainlanders were engaged in unskilled work, such as selling vegetables, serving in restaurants, temporary labor, door-watching, farming, collecting garbage, etc. While growing old, many of

them were eliminated through competition (especially with pensionary *rongmin* who would do the same work for lower salaries) and remained in low social stratum. Notably, some better-off self-dependent *rongmin* also show great dissatisfaction. Their complaints were focused on the unfairness in the "kinship" group. They would reiterate the following sentences:

... old president's son-soldiers should be treated equally. If other veteran-mainlanders get life pensions, we should also have them for we also shed blood for the country.

... Are pensionary *rongmin* born from the big wife and self-dependent *rongmin* from the little wife? If this is so, the father is too prejudiced.

The logic underlying these sentences is that in the Chinese "kinship" group, wealth should be shared equally among sons. The pensionary *rongmin* and the self-dependent *rongmin* regard their situation as that of a family where one son has left the family early, taking little money, to find his own living; while another son stayed at home and has benefited from the economic improvement of the family. The return of the first son asking for his share of the family wealth has its rationale within this kinship group.

The pensionary *rongmin's* reactions towards self-dependent *rongmin's* request for life pensions can be exemplified as follows:

— They are stirred by the Demographic Progressive Party.³ The old president's son-soldiers shouldn't be stirred by others.

— In the early period they tried all ways to leave the army. We envied them. Now those who ended in failure in the old age envy our steady pension. What does fairness mean? But the government should help them in maintaining basic life.

Pensionary *rongmin* have shown greater satisfaction. Their strong emotional attachments to the old president were reflected in words and deeds. They often hang the old president's pictures in their living rooms. Some of them even put the picture on the altar worshipping the old president alone or along with ancestors. "He brought us to Taiwan and left us before returning to the mainland. All veteran-mainlanders cried on his death. He took good care of us. We have been grateful." Although there is bitterness in their words — for the old president failed to bring them back to the mainland — they do recognize their close "kin" relations with Chiang Kai-shek. The "totemic sentiments" have been maintained, and even strengthened after the old president's death through rituals.

³ The Demographic Progressive Party is the first opposition party in Taiwan. In 1987, one year before president Chiang Ching-kuo's death, Chiang proposed three big changes: the lifting of martial law, abolishing ban on the visits of relatives on the mainland, and the legalization of opposition parties. As a matter of fact, the Demographic Progressive Party has been unofficially in existence since September 28, 1986. Chiang Ching-kuo's announcement has moved obstacles for the legalization of this new party.

Promised Land: Symbol of Sacrifice

Despite the request for life pension, the self-salvation movement of veteran-mainlanders has earnestly asked the government to buy back "soldiers' land-awarding certificate" (*zhanshi shoutianzheng*). This request would sound unreasonable if we check the "Regulation of Land-awarding for Soldiers Devoting to Anti-Communism and Anti-Soviet Unions Wars" promulgated in 1951 by Chiang Kai-shek. According to this Regulation, soldiers serving in the army over five years are entitled to get "land-awarding certificate" which will be changed into land deeds after recovering the mainland. Each soldier will get land in his hometown with capacity of producing 2,000 catties annually.

Defense Administration, Executive Yuan, and VACRS all consider that the request for buying back "land-awarding certificate" has no legal basis. Such reply irritates many self-dependent *rongmin*. They bitterly emphasize the following points:

1. "Land-awarding certificates" are the promise of the old president. Veteran-mainlanders should not be responsible for the failure of recovering mainland China. Since the policy has changed from "recovering mainland China" to "unifying China under the three principles of the people", the promised land should be realized.
2. They left families and followed Chiang Kai-shek in fighting the Japanese and the Chinese communists. The best years of their life have been devoted to and sacrificed for the country. Now they are too old to wait for promised land. The government should substitute money for land.
3. Taiwan could not have today's economic achievement if veteran-mainlanders hadn't shed blood during severe warfare in the 1950s to guard Taiwan from the Chinese communists' takeover. A rich Taiwan with 70 million U.S. dollars in foreign exchange reserves should compensate old soldiers' losses.

"Sacrifice and devotion" could be another slogan used in the army. As veteran-mainlanders are constantly mentioning this concept, it has ritual and symbolic meaning.

John Beattie points out that "sacrifice" in Latin means "to make holy or sacred" (1980). Hubert and Mauss indicate that in every sacrifice an object passes from the common into the religious domain; it is consecrated" (1964:9). Evans-Prichard (1956: chap. 8) distinguishes four main stages of Nuer sacrifice. The Nuer first tether the animal to be sacrificed to a peg; then comes consecration to sacralize the animal: followed by an invocation explaining what the sacrifice is for; and finally comes immolation, the slaughter of the victim.

The veteran-mainlanders are, in a sense, "sacrificed". No matter whether they entered the armed forces voluntarily or forcedly,

(many were dragged by troops), they have been confined to the rigid military environment for a long period fighting "sacred wars" against Chinese communism. Their leader Chiang Kai-shek elevated them from ordinary citizens to "glorious citizens" to "make them holy". All their blood-shedding sacrifice was for the country and the "sacred mission" of recovering mainland China.

"Sacrifice" is a state above normal. These veteran-mainlanders didn't really sacrifice their lives. What they have sacrificed most are normal lives and families.

It is astonishing to discover that at least one third of the veteran-mainlanders remain unmarried in Taiwan. Among 14,000 *rongmin* in the eastern Hualian county, two third of them remain single in Taiwan. According to VACRS' statistics of 1984, 68 percent (36848/54100) of the self-dependent *rongmin* registered in "homes of *rongmin*" have no families in Taiwan. Another statistic of 1987 indicates that 82 percent of the self-dependent *rongmin* unregistered in "glorious citizens' homes" have no family dependents in Taiwan. If we check the General Report of the 1960 Census of Population and Housing, unmarried males above 50 were 163,596 and unmarried females were 8055. I believe that the exceeding number of males consists mainly of veteran-mainlanders.

What are the reasons for remaining single in Taiwan? Except high-ranking officers, most soldiers in the ground force could not bring their families with them. Military servicemen in the navy and the air force were allowed to bring wives and children to Taiwan. Before 1956, only officers over 28 years old could get married. Since 1961, all soldiers over 28 and officers over 25 years old were not restricted for marriage. But by 1961, many soldiers exceeded 30 or 40 years old. Some of them had wives on the mainland and kept the hope of returning home. Others hesitated in getting married because their salaries were too low and they had difficulties in finding wives in an unfamiliar environment. Quite a few early retired veteran-soldiers with little retired pay could not think of marriage until they had some savings.

Except those who came with family dependents, it has been a general phenomenon that veteran-mainlanders either remained single or married late. Some bought young girls as wives from poor farm or aboriginal families. "Old husband, young wife" is the common pattern. They also married widows, and some even married mentally retarded or physically handicapped women. Pensionary, veteran-mainlanders' marriages are comparatively more stable. Self-dependent *rongmin* in the low social stratum have built many unhappy, questionable families.

The sacrifice of normal lives and families is one main reason underlying the request for the purchasing back "land-awarding certificates". The land certificate symbolizes Chiang Kai-shek's promise of recovering the mainland. For that purpose, they were confined in

the army for a long period; prevented from contacting relatives in the mainland and establishing normal families in Taiwan.

I interviewed both pensionary and self-dependent *rongmin*, they all emphasized that "land-rewarding certificates" are Chiang Kai-shek's promise. The requests of unmarried self-dependent *rongmin* have been the most urgent. They feel that each certificate deserves more than one million NT dollars (about 40,000 US dollars). The incredibly over-estimated price is unacceptable by other citizens in Taiwan. Married pensionary *rongmin's* attitudes toward "land-rewarding certificates" were more moderate for their sacrifice has somewhat been compensated by life pensions, and their families in Taiwan have given them comforts. They are more willing to keep the symbol of Chiang Kai-shek's promise and wait for the reunification of China.

Conclusion

In the process of studying veteran-mainlanders, I have been trying to find the main characteristics of this group. As a sub-ethnic group of mainlanders in Taiwan, veteran-mainlanders do not belong to the same social class, nor the same occupation. They retired at different time and live under different social conditions. This study reveals that although there is structural distinction between pensionary and self-dependent veteran-mainlanders, they share common "totemic sentiments" and emotions which set them apart from other ethnic groups in Taiwan.

I use the word "totemic" in the sense that there is a "totemic" emblem in a "kinship" group, whose members' sentiments towards this totemic figure are expressed through ritual performances. The "totemic" sentiments as a distinctive feature can define the boundary of this group.

In the "ritual performances" of the self-salvation movement and of daily life, veteran-mainlanders emphasize, genuinely or instrumentally, that they are son-soldiers of Chiang Kai-shek, who bestowed them the honorific title *rongmin* (glorious citizens) and granted them some special privileges.

The relations between Chiang Kai-shek and veteran-mainlanders have gone beyond the social level and into the ritual and symbolic realm. He is not only a "father", but also a guardian spirit for the group of veteran-mainlanders. Those self-dependent *rongmin* having been neglected in the system of retirement and assistance have resorted to using Chiang Kai-shek's name and picture for benefits. Pensionary *rongmin* have also attributed their stable life to the mercies of Chiang Kai-shek.

What are the conditions for the emergence of strong "totemic" sentiments toward Chiang Kai-shek?

Radcliffe-Brown asserts that the totemic object is selected for it has important effects upon the well-being (material or spiritual) of the group (1952:129). In the thoughts of veteran-mainlanders, they left families and followed the leader Chiang Kai-shek to fight against the Japanese and the Chinese communists, finally arriving in Taiwan. Chiang Kai-shek's decisions decided their fate. They were taught to be loyal to the leader Chiang Kai-shek, and treated him as the big family head in the army. Long separation with natal families on the mainland and delayed marriages or failure in marriage have enhanced the father-son relation between Chiang Kai-shek and veteran-mainlanders. In other words, weak family connection provides the condition for the emergence of strong "totemic" sentiments. And due to 38 years (1949-87) restriction on visiting mainland relatives, it is understandable that veteran-mainlanders have ambivalent "totemic" sentiments towards Chiang Kai-shek.

Before the lifting of martial law, Chiang Kai-shek and his son were the absolute authority. Taiwanese residents were prevented from criticizing the "holy" authority. Veteran-mainlanders' close "kin" relations with Chiang Kai-shek in the "totemic" group might make other people feel uneasy and fearful. *Rongmin's* general image of low status might shame this kinship group. Probably this is why the study of *rongmin* was a sensitive topic.

Compared with other mainlanders and the Taiwanese, veteran-mainlanders' "totemic" sentiments have become the distinguishable feature of this subethnic group. While studying ethnic identity of veteran-mainlanders under different social conditions, I was gradually aware of the importance of the expression of emotions and sentiments which were often neglected in the study of ethnicity.

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