

Torn Between Two Worlds: Rev. Shoki Coe, Domesticity and the Taiwanese Self-Determination Movement

I am now living on “borrowed time”. It is in “borrowed time” that I am now trying to write a memoir of “my” existence, which began in 1914 and may end any time. Is there a point in my trying to do this? It all depends on the philosophical and, for me, especially, the theological question “Is there any meaning at all in time and history?” Shoki Coe (1988).¹

Unborn generations will think it strange that the vastness, the completeness, the pervasive force of missionary enterprise, made so small an impression on the public mind [...] Like leaven, [the Christians] are hid among the people. They are the scattered lights of a country-side. In this village, where we stand, there is but one Christian. Yonder, half a mile to the north, live thirty worshippers; in a village two miles south, about a dozen; in that hamlet, half a mile to the east, are two Christian families.²

These words were written by Campbell Moody, a missionary of the Presbyterian Church of England (PCE), who arrived in Taiwan on 18 December 1895.³ His arrival coincided with a moment of great change not only for the mission enterprise but also for the island and its peoples. Only two months prior to his arrival had the Japanese formally declared the island pacified following its incorporation into the Japanese Empire as a condition of the Treaty of Shimonoseki.⁴

The growth and future influence of the Presbyterian Mission were largely underestimated by Moody. Following the 2-28 Incident [*ererba shijian* 二二八事件], according to Murray Rubinstein the church defined itself “as the self-anointed conscience of the Republic of China”.⁵ Broadly speaking, this transformation from “missionary enterprise” into “self-anointed conscience” occurred after an absence of mission during the war years (1940-45) but also as a reaction to a new political, cultural, and spiritual climate that followed the Chinese Nationalists’ loss of the mainland to the Communists in 1949. Collectively these two important moments would coalesce in the decision by church elders and pastors to “bind themselves to the cause of Taiwanese selfhood,” and more specifically to the peoples’ “sense of ethnic and provincial identity”.⁶ This collective binding was perhaps first evident in the efforts to “rescue” Peng Ming-min 彭明敏, a noted democracy activist and advocate of Taiwan independence.⁷

¹ Shoki Coe, *Recollections and Reflections* (Taipei: Formosan Christians for Self-Determination, 1991), 263.

² Campbell Moody, *The Saints of Formosa: Life and worship in a Chinese church* (London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1912; reprinted in Taipei, Ch’eng Wen Publishing Company, 1971), 13-14.

³ Niki J.P. Alsford, (ed.), *Chronicling Formosa: Setting the Foundations for the Presbyterian Mission, 1865-1876* (Taipei: Shung Ye Museum of Formosan Aborigines, 2015), 499.

⁴ Harry J. Lamley, The 1895 Taiwan War of Resistance: Local Chinese efforts against a foreign power, in *Taiwan: A study in Chinese local history*, ed., Leonard H.D. Gordon (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1970), 55.

⁵ Murray Rubinstein, Mission of Faith, Burden of Witness: The Presbyterian Church in the evolution of modern Taiwan, 1865–1989, *American Asian Review* 9:2 (1991): 88.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁷ Yoshihisa Amae, Pioneers in Taiwan’s Human Rights and Democracy: The role of the foreign missionaries of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, in *A Borrowed Voice: Taiwan human rights through international networks*,

It was through “exiled church leaders” that the beacon of self-determination was carried. Known as Formosan Christians for Self Determination (FCSD) *Taiwan renmin zijue yundong* 台灣人民自決運動, this band, which included Shoki Coe, Dr Ng Bú-tong [黃武東, *Huang Wudong*], Lim Chông-gī, [林宗義, *Lin Zongyi*], and the Rev. Dr. Sòng Chôn Sēng [宋泉盛, *Song Quansheng*], advocated for Taiwan in international settings.⁸

This paper looks at the history of one such man: Shoki Coe (1914-1988). However, rather than simply explore a biographical history of Coe, which has already been carefully done by both Shoki Coe and Boris Anderson in his memoirs, and by Jonah Chang in *Shoki Coe: An Ecumenical Life in Context*, this short essay will examine how Shoki (whether consciously or not) was torn between two worlds: those of domesticity and his contribution to the self-determination movement. Since the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan [*Tâi-oân Ki-tok Tiúⁿ-ló Kàu-hoē* 台灣基督長老教會] in 2015 marked its 150th anniversary of the arrival of the PCE on their shores, this paper seeks to (re)explore Shoki’s importance in creating an indigenously pastored church and any relevance he may still have on the continuing question of a Taiwanese selfhood.

The Foundations of a Presbyterian Mission

In discourse on the history of Christianity in China, the voice of the Chinese Christians is often silenced as the voice of the missionary is louder. Difficulties in locating primary material on these subalterns have often been overlooked due to the plethora of mission archives pushing them to the periphery. This is in no way meant to imply that foreign missionaries played no part, but to a periphery social historian working on Taiwan, the focus on an indigenous contribution is gratifying. What is more it is an honour to contribute to such important subject matter. Building on this, this section explores how the growth of the mission propelled the church to train indigenous clergy.

On 26 May 1865, James Laidlaw Maxwell, a young Scottish medical missionary, took up the task of establishing the first Protestant Church on the island since the Dutch in the seventeenth century.⁹ In spite of initially friendly greetings, Maxwell recounts that just two months after their arrival he, along with Carstairs Douglas, Niú-á [*niang zai*, 娘仔 (Aunty)], Ngó-á [*unknown*], and Gaw Bún-sui [*Wu Wenshui*, 吳文水] began to face hostility from the local population:

1960-1980, eds., Linda Gail Arrigo and Lynn Miles (Taipei: Social Empowerment Alliance, 2008), 176. On Peng Ming-min, see: Peng Ming-min, *A Taste of Freedom* (New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972); Christine Louise Lin, The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and the Advocacy of Local Autonomy, *Sino-Platonic Papers* 92 (1999): 35-44.

⁸ Zhang Canhu 張燦鑿, *Taiwan duli yundong sanshinian*, 台灣獨立運動三十年 [Thirty years of Taiwan Independence Movement] (Taipei: Avanguard, 1991), 447.

⁹ Edward Band, *Working His Purpose Out: The history of the English Presbyterian mission 1847-1947* (London: Publishing Office of the PCE, 1947; reprinted Taipei, Ch’eng Wen Publishing Co., 1972), 76.

Having shut, bolted, and otherwise secured the door, against which the crowds kept pressing, we commended ourselves, our helpers, and those who had stood by us since the riot commenced, in prayer to God, and waited patiently as we could for some news.¹⁰

In spite of the fact that they believed that there were sympathisers among the crowds, this incident forced them to relocate to Takao (present-day Kaohsiung).¹¹ By 12 August 1866 the PCE had baptised their first eight converts. The challenges endured by this small mission in its earlier years, instead of deterring them, in many ways encouraged their resolve.

With church activities expanding in the south, the FMC of the Canadian branch of the Presbyterian Mission sanctioned the appointment of George MacKay from Ontario to begin work in northern Taiwan.¹² Henceforth, the River Dajia 大甲 in Taichung became the dividing line between the two missions.¹³ MacKay's first discernment of the island's inhabitants was distinctly bitter. His portrayal of the north in 1875 recounts:

The Gibraltar of heathenism in North Formosa ... [where] the citizens, old and young, are daily toiling for money, money—*cash, cash*. They are materialistic, superstitious, dollar-seekers. ... [A]t every visit, when passing through the streets we are maligned, jeered at, and abused. Hundreds of children run ahead, yelling derisive shouts; others follow, pelting us with orange-peel, mud and rotten eggs.¹⁴

Notwithstanding these early impressions of the district, by 1893 MacKay was being paraded through its streets in a sedan chair as an honoured member of the community, a change perhaps reflecting his adroit leadership and willingness to compromise. As Murray Rubinstein has argued, British missionary pioneers actively sought the establishment of an *indigenous* church—one that could identify with the local community, delivering necessary social services as well as gospel preaching.¹⁵ The mission began to contextualise its congregation around the themes of “independent, [and] self-supporting”, where they “laid great stress upon [the] training [of an] indigenous clergy.”¹⁶

MacKay, a strong advocate of this practice, believed that that the work and success of the mission should reflect an “idea of a native ministry”¹⁷ and argued that the “mission lay not in foreign workers”¹⁸ but in the training

¹⁰ Donald Matheson, *Narrative of the Mission to China of the English Presbyterian Church* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1886), 58.

¹¹ George Williams Carrington, *Foreigners in Formosa 1841-1874* (San Francisco, CA: Chinese Materials Centre, Inc., 1977), 254.

¹² William Campbell, *Sketches from Formosa* (London: Marshall Brothers Ltd., 1915; reprinted by SMC Publishing Inc., 1996), 153; Harold Otness, *One Thousand Westerners in Taiwan, to 1945: A bibliographical [sic] and bibliographical dictionary* (Taipei: Institute of Taiwan History, Preparatory Office, Academia Sinica, 1998), 103; Band (1972), 90; and Alsford (2015), 12.

¹³ Also referred to as Tai-kah khe. See: Christine Louise Lin, *The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and the Advocacy of Local Autonomy, Sino-Platonic Papers* 92 (1999): 9.

¹⁴ George Lesley MacKay, *From Far Formosa* (London: Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier, 1896; reprinted by SMC Publishing Inc., Taipei, 2002), 164.

¹⁵ Robert Gardella, *From Treaty Ports to Provincial Status, 1860-1894*, in *Taiwan: A new history*, ed. Murray Rubinstein (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), 169.

¹⁶ Rubinstein (1991), 70-72.

¹⁷ MacKay (2002), 285.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 285-86.

of “evangelists, teachers, preachers, and pastors.”¹⁹ MacKay also alluded to practical and financial reasons for training a native ministry:

One reason for a native ministry...is that is by far the most economical, both as to men and money. Natives can live in a climate and under conditions where any foreigner would die, and they can be hale and happy where I would tremble with chills and fever. And the cost of a native preacher and his family is so much less, that the contributions of the churches can be made to support a very much larger staff than if foreigners alone were employed.²⁰

The outcome of this was, as argued by Robert Bickers, “that [the] missionaries found themselves generally working with, rather than over, Chinese Christians.”²¹ The integration of the mission into local life addresses a transnational interconnectivity that is central to how Shoki Coe mobilised foreign support for Taiwan during martial law. It simultaneously reflected upon both the *local* as well as the *global*. The amalgamation of this is represented in the narrative of early converts and is arguably best illustrated in the history of Gaw Bûn-sui who died in 1879.²² Known simply as ‘Elder Bun’, he worked tirelessly with Maxwell (arriving with him from Amoy) to establish the mission.²³ William Campbell, who spent three years with him, wrote that he presided as chapel-keeper and “speedily became the missionary’s right hand.”²⁴ What is more, “he became the constant referee in all matters of difficulty which arose amongst native brethren” and “was ever ready to speak of Christ—in the chapel, on the streets, in the Hospital, but most of all to individuals.”²⁵

To understand further how the practice of a “native ministry” characterised the mission on Taiwan, the following section will examine Shoki Coe’s early life.

“A Man Without Country”, A “Homeless Guru”: The Life of Shoki Coe²⁶

Shoki Coe was born 20 August 1914 in Changhua (central Taiwan), Shoka in Japanese. His grandfather Ng Leng-kiat 黃能傑, born in 1852, was the first in his family to convert. Ng (Romanised in Japanese as *Ko*) had been a practising Taoist priest and often spoke about his vow to commit his firstborn to the ministry. When his first son died in a shipwreck that promise was transferred to his second son, Shoki’s father.²⁷ Jonas Chang argues that it was perhaps the influence of the early missionaries that had most impacted Ng’s life. When Maxwell arrived Ng was only 12 years old but already a priest.²⁸ The first recorded contact with the mission was in 1885 during his

¹⁹ William Campbell, *Handbook of the South Formosa Mission* (Hastings: F.J. Parsons, Ltd., 1910), 52.

²⁰ MacKay (2002), 286.

²¹ Robert A. Bickers, *To Serve and not to Rule: British Protestant missionaries and Chinese nationalism*, in *Missionary Encounters: Sources and issues*, eds. Robert A. Bickers and Rosemary Seton, (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1996), 236.

²² Alford (2015), 15.

²³ Band (1972), 107; Also, Niannian buwang wenge, 念念不忘文哥 [Brother Wen that cannot be forgotten] *Taiwan Church News*, 2024 (16 Dec 1990).

²⁴ Campbell (1915), 366.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 366; and Alford (2015), 15.

²⁶ “A man without country” was said by Desmond Tutu and “a homeless guru” by Kosuke Koyama (Dean of Southeast Asian Graduate School of Theology, see: Jonas Chang (trans., Ching-fen Hsiao), *Shoki Coe: An ecumenical life in context*, by Jonah Chang (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2012), xvii.

²⁷ Ray Wheeler, *The Legacy of Shoki Coe*, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (2002): 77.

²⁸ Jonas Chang (2012), 3.

enrolment in the Gospel College (now the Tainan Theological College) at the age of 32. Shoki Coe lived exactly half of his life in Taiwan. Less than a year after he was born the family moved to Chiayi, where his brother Eng-hui 黃永輝 was born. Shortly after, they moved again, this time further south to Tainan. Here Shoki's father was appointed housemaster of a preparatory school attached to the Boy's Middle School [Chang Jung Boys' School, *changrong zhongxue* 長榮中學] at the request of Edward Band.²⁹ In 1920 when the prep-school closed they moved house but remained in Tainan. For the next seven years this "was the neighbourhood in which [he] lived and played [...] it was [his] world and [he] knew it intimately."

It was Christmas 1924 that altered Shoki's perception of life inside a home. He recounts:

We [Shoki and Eng-hui] did indeed have a glorious time. On Christmas eve, we two brothers sang some of the carols we had learnt at East Gate Sunday School to the applause of a packed church, and recited our Bible portions so well that the village folk were full of admiration. In short, as our auntie told us to our delight, we two brothers "had become the bright stars of the evening". But a day or two later, all was changed.³⁰

Following the boys return to Tainan, Eng-hui fell ill. He died 10 days later.

He was still smiling when I visited him that afternoon from school, but by the time I went back there to join father about nine o'clock, he lay completely still and peaceful, as if all pain was gone. He was dead.³¹

Later that night, Shoki recalls being startled as he woke to find his mother beside him. "Mother drew me close to her and wouldn't let me move". With the sudden realisation that following morning that his brother was no longer with him, Shoki describes the feeling as:

[A] blow [that] seemed somehow to come from within...no, no, even after more than sixty years have passed, I still don't know how to describe it...it was as if something had gone dead inside me.

Six months later Shoki's mother Kim Lim *Qin Lin* 親林 died.

In his *Recollections and Reflections* Shoki Coe quickly moves to discuss his life as "not completely taken up with family matters, or even with family and school interests." He goes on to say that he began to contemplate the bigger world and how that, as a Taiwanese, he felt that Taiwan "had a certain place in the world of nations." However, before engaging with Shoki Coe's *reflections* on self-determination for Taiwan, this chapter will explore his domestic life.

"Two Countries; One God; But Many Families": Domesticity and Shoki Coe

The separation between public and private spheres in the life of Shoki Coe reveals a kind of fluidity. In many ways it did take on a gendered form, yet without an absolute separation. Coe's wife Winfred (née Saunders) is perhaps most illustrative of this as she was active beyond the domestic sphere. She was born in Bristol on 17

²⁹ Coe (1993), 9.

³⁰ Ibid, 17.

³¹ Ibid, 17-18.

August 1913, one of nine children of an employee of the Great Western Railway. She attended Colston High School (then Shrewsbury) before joining the London Missionary Society (LMS).

The model of “woman at home” may have shaped the social relations of many across time and space,³² but things were slightly more complicated in Winifred’s context. When the two met in London in 1943 she was training to become a missionary. On 12 August 1946 they were married, proclaiming that “in Christ there is no East and West”. Yet the very need for such a message betrays the hidden prejudice in society towards mixed marriages. In early twentieth century Shanghai, for example, marriages with ethnic Chinese were feared, the resulting “Eurasianess” frequently condemned for “contaminating the race and diluting the boundaries that were believed necessary for the maintenance of a segregated colonial environment.”³³ Yet in spite of the Nazi atrocities being reported in England at the time, this prejudice continued unabated. Andrew Coe (the youngest son) believed that his grandparents (the Saunders family) disapproved of the marriage; Shoki refused to be drawn into a conversation about it when asked and Winifred was completely unforthcoming (though she remained in touch with all her brothers).³⁴

Their marriage was not received well at first by the mission committees either. Boris Anderson writes that “some were fearful that [their marriage] would make it harder for Shoki to settle back in Taiwan, and were uncertain too whether Winifred would be able to adjust happily to life as the wife of a Taiwanese pastor and daughter-in-law in a large Taiwanese family.”³⁵

Prior to their marriage Winifred’s career had, like Shoki’s, been interrupted by the outbreak of war; unable to leave for China, Winifred took up work as a “Church Sister”. Matters became more difficult for Shoki following the signing of the Axis Treaty between Germany, Italy, and Japan on 27 September 1940. As a Japanese passport holder, Shoki not only had difficulty finding work, but found that remaining in the UK was becoming increasingly complicated.

Coe and Rev. W.E. Montgomery (then principal of Tainan Theological College) were invited to attend a meeting of the Overseas Mission Committee (OMC) on 14 April 1940. The atmosphere was tense as they had to prepare for the evacuation of all foreign missionaries from Taiwan who were ordered to be repatriated by the end of 1940.³⁶ The committee unanimously agreed to keep Shoki in England; being neither a missionary nor a British subject, there was no channel from which he would receive “a call that would lead to ordination” and thus the OMC appointed him a mission educator.³⁷

Shoki Coe had just completed an assignment at the Presbytery in Newcastle and was at a speaking engagement in Edinburgh when, following the Japanese assault on Hong Kong just eight hours after their attack on Pearl Harbor and their landing at Kota Bharu in Malaya, he became an enemy alien and lost all freedom of

³² Deborah L. Rotman, *Separate Spheres? Beyond the dichotomies of domesticity*, *Current Anthropology* 47:4 (2006):

³³ Mark Gamsa, *Mixed Marriages in Russian-Chinese Manchuria*, in *Entangled Histories: The transcultural past of northeast China*, eds., Dan Ben-Canaan, Frank Grüner, and Ines Prodöhl (Heidelberg: Springer, 2014), 53.

³⁴ Andrew Coe, *Shoki and Winifred and some of their families!* SOAS (5 November 2015).

³⁵ Boris Anderson, *Marriage and Family, 1944-1974*, in, *Recollections and Reflections*, by, Shoki Coe (Taipei: Formosan Christians for Self-Determination, 1991), 103-104.

³⁶ PCE/FMC/6/01/62, Letter from the Rev. E. Band to the Rev. T.W.D. James (6 December 1940). This was also a similar case for missionaries in occupied areas of China and Korea. See: Archie R. Crouch et al, *Christianity in China: A Scholars’ Guide to Resources in the Libraries and Archives of the United States* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1989), 197; and Norman E. Thomas, *Classic Text in Mission and World Christianity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 290.

³⁷ Chang (2012), 61.

movement as Britain declared war on Japan. Church leaders in Edinburgh urged him to travel south to London. Shortly before leaving Scotland, Coe was questioned by the transport police, but fortunately for him Mr MacDonald (whose houseguest Shoki was while in Edinburgh) used his own name to book a berth on the night train.

Finding a place to stay was not difficult for Coe. Since his initial arrival in England he had been acquainted with the Landsboroughs of Redhill, Surrey, who functioned as Coe's guarantors. They had not long retired from mission work in Taiwan,³⁸ and their son David had been born in Changhua and served as officer in charge of the medical department at Chuanchow General Hospital in Quanzhou.³⁹

In London Coe found full-time employment teaching Japanese at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and occasionally worked with the BBC World Service. Rumour has it that he was also tasked to assist in cracking Japanese encryptions at Bletchley Park, although there is no record of him serving in this capacity.⁴⁰

In early 1947 Shoki, Winifred, and their son David left for Taiwan, each with their own excitement and apprehensions. For Shoki this had been 11 years in the waiting. He was apprehensive since his "native land [had] at last been liberated from 50 years of Japanese imperial rule"⁴¹ For Winifred this was to become a new land, her new home. As for David:

It was more the excitement of sailing in a big ship with so many soldiers about. For ours was a troop-ship with over 2,000 soldiers and a few civilians.⁴²

Their optimism and excitement suffered a setback when the ship landed in Hong Kong. Shoki became reacquainted with Chhoa Ai-ti (a former classmate from Tainan) who had travelled down from Shanghai "to warn him not to return to Taiwan".⁴³ Chhoa had returned to Taiwan in 1946 and witnessed first-hand the horrors of the 2-28 massacre. Coe was not dissuaded and on 27 September 1947, they arrived in Keelung and were greeted by Shoki's sister A-Siok [Ng Siok-eng 黃淑英]. To further understand how the events of 28 February affected not only Shoki Coe's political activism but also his theology, it is important to see how the church functioned as a channel through which he was able to express his feelings. Building on this, the following illustrates the connectivity between the PCT and Taiwan self-determination, and how Shoki through his own reflected experiences became a leading spokesperson for the cause.

"The Long Journey Home": Heavy Responsibility and Self-Determination

³⁸ See: Marjorie Landsborough, *Dr Lan* (London: The Presbyterian Church of England Publications Committee, 1957); Marjorie Landsborough, *In Beautiful Formosa* (Taipei: Ch'eng Wen Publishing Company, 1972); and Liu Zhaoren 劉昭仁, *Taiwan renyi di shenyinying*, 臺灣仁醫的身影 [Following the footprints of compassionate doctors in Taiwan] (Taipei: Showwe, 2006), 24-33.

³⁹ T.J. Liu, *Oral History of Dr. D. Landsborough IV* (Taipei: Institute of Taiwan History Preparatory Office, Academia Sinica, 2002), 305.

⁴⁰ A Roll of Honour, which lists signals intelligence personnel can be found at <http://rollofhonour.bletchleypark.org.uk/search/>, accessed 27 May 2015.

⁴¹ Coe (1993), 107.

⁴² Ibid, 107.

⁴³ Ibid, 108.

The two months between the Japanese Emperor's broadcast on 15 August 1945 and the arrival of Chinese Nationalist (Kuomintang, KMT) troops in late October were a period of uncertainty, but most accounts suggest that the Taiwanese welcomed the reintegration of the island under Chinese rule with only a minority calling for independence or UN trusteeship.⁴⁴ Disillusionment began in earnest in October with the arrival of Nationalist troops; George Kerr (a United States Diplomat) witnessed the disbelief with which many Taiwanese beheld the condition of the arriving soldiers compared to the departing Japanese.

Word soon spread, and lost nothing in telling. Formosans [Taiwanese] along the way laughed at the shambling, poorly disciplined, and very dirty Chinese troops. It was evident, they said that the 'victors' ventured in Formosa only because the United States stood between them and the dreaded Japanese. Much evil and many individual tragedies were to spring from these expressions of open scorn, for the mainland Chinese were losing face, dearer than life itself.⁴⁵

These "individual tragedies" climaxed in the 2-28 Incident,⁴⁶ probably best represented in Hou Hsiao-hsien's 侯孝賢 film *City of Sadness*. This incident is not only "historically relevant" to modern Taiwan as argued by authors such as Robert Edmondson and Stefan Fleischauer;⁴⁷ it is perhaps the origin of the desire for self-determination for many Taiwanese and in particular for the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, PCT.

The PCT, according to Murray Rubinstein, "looked upon themselves as a Taiwanese church that represented Taiwanese, Hakkas, and mountain people."⁴⁸ Since the KMT had shown itself hostile to Taiwanese aspirations following the 2-28 Incident, the PCT stridently opposed the government.⁴⁹ Although individual members of the church suffered as a result of the White Terror, the KMT were in no position to take on the church as a whole for fear of foreign intervention. It is perhaps because of this degree of safety that a number of the Tangwai or opposition movement (*dangwai* 黨外) were able channel their objections through the church. Most notable among them was Peng Ming-min.⁵⁰ In his memoirs he writes:

I was now often asked to talk to church groups. Hitherto I had been too preoccupied with academic affairs and had not shown much interest in the local Christian community although members of my family were extremely active in it. My late father, my mother, and my sister were officers in the Presbyterian church, an uncle was a pastor, and a cousin would soon become president of the Taipei Theological Seminary. Given my academic

⁴⁴ Denny Roy, *Taiwan: A political history* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 58; and Dafydd Fell, *Government and Politics in Taiwan* (London: Routledge, 2012), 13.

⁴⁵ George Kerr, *Formosa Betrayed* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 73-74.

⁴⁶ Lin Wenqi 林文淇, "Huigui", "zuguo", "ererba": baiqing chengshi zhong de Taiwan lishi yu guojia shuxing, 回歸、祖國、二二八:《悲情城市》中的台灣歷史與國家屬性 ["Return", "Motherland", "2-28": Taiwanese history and national identity in *A City of Sadness*], *Dangdai*, 當代, 106 (Feb 1995): 94-109.

⁴⁷ Robert Edmondson, The February 28 Incident and National Identity, in *Memories of the Future: National identity issues and the search for a new Taiwan*, ed., Stephane Corcuff (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 25-47; Stefan Fleischauer, The 228 Incident and the Taiwan Independence Movement's Construction of a Taiwanese Identity, *China Information* 21:3 (2007): 373-401.

⁴⁸ Murray Rubinstein, *The Protestant Community on Modern Taiwan: Mission, Seminary, and Church* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1991), 29.

⁴⁹ Lin (1999), 29.

⁵⁰ On PCT as a sanctuary for Tangwai activists, see: Amae (2008), 194-196.

background and connections, my appearance at church-sponsored meetings usually drew a considerable audience.

At one of these public meetings, early in 1962, I addressed an audience at the Tainan Theological College. This is the only school in Formosa where all instruction is carried on in the local Formosan dialect (Hollo) [*sic*]. I therefore chose to speak in Formosan rather than in the official Mandarin Chinese, and I found myself discussing the problem of Formosan self-determination, speaking more bluntly than ever before in an open meeting.⁵¹

It was perhaps the arrest of Kao Chun-ming 高俊明 (general-secretary of the PCT) following the Kaohsiung Incident on 10 December 1979 that not only brought the entire Presbyterian Church in Taiwan into the maelstrom of democratisation but also crystallised the KMT's view that it was a political entity.⁵² What is more, the rallying of "exiled church leaders" and the initiation of the Formosan Christians for Self Determination, on 20 March 1973, by Shoki Coe, Dr Ng Bú-tong, Lim Chông-gī, and the Rev. Dr. Sòng Chôn Sēng began to strengthen the Taiwan cause internationally.⁵³

Like Peng Ming-min, Coe also questioned his identity in the wake of martial law and in particular his position as a "Chinese Christian":

I began by saying that I knew I was 'A Chinese' – or thought I did – and that was one of the reasons why, six years previously, I had gone back from England to Taiwan; but after having been back there all those years and lived under the Chiang regime's martial law, I had begun to wonder whether I was really a Chinese, or just a Taiwanese.⁵⁴

The following section will take this notion of identity further to explore whether these 'historic moments' shaped Coe's theology.

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The transnationality of Coe's identity became clear in his account of leaving Hong Kong for Taiwan in 1947. Coe discusses the impact that both the end of the Second World War as well as the ensuing civil war had on the colony. Coe recalls an endless stream of refugees crossing the border. According to him, had it not been for David Landsborough who had 'shielded' him from the crowds that were trying to board the ship but were being held

⁵¹ Peng (1972), 123.

⁵² Chang (2012), 133; Also Lu Hsiu-lien, and Ashley Esarey, *My Fight for a New Taiwan: One woman's journey from prison to power* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2014), 137; and Hu Huiling 胡慧玲, *Shizijia zhilu: gaojunming mushi huiyilu*, 十字架之路: 高俊明牧師回憶錄 [Walking with the Cross: The memoir of Rev. Kao Chun-ming] (Taipei: Wangchunfeng chubanshe, 望春風出版社, 2001). It was not until the late 1960s did the PCT develop a strong democratic theology. Prior to this, Cheng-tian Kuo contends that its church members "followed the obedient political teachings of John Calvin, who proposed that Christians take a submissive stance toward the government, even if the government is a tyranny." Cheng-tian Kuo, *Religion and Democracy in Taiwan* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008), 39.

⁵³ Chang (2012), 126.

⁵⁴ Coe (1993), 172; and Lin (1999), 42.

back by “the whistling sound of police whips”, he would never have made it.⁵⁵ At this moment Coe felt both familiarity and difference. He anticipated a problem with the police because he looked similar to the refugees, whilst at the same time he felt different. At this moment he identified more with Landsborough, an antagonism which continued to persist after his arrival in Taiwan.

On 3 May 1949, Michael (the second son and first of three to be born on the island) was born. It was the start of a complicated period for both Shoki and Winifred which culminated in her returning to England with the children a decade later; it was not until 1965 that Coe was reunited with his family. The difficulties began when Shoki and Winifred visited the Registry Office in Tainan to register Michael’s birth. The following month they received a letter stating that unless Winifred ‘naturalised’ they could not legally register their son as this “was an official ruling from the Ministry of the Interior.”⁵⁶ The problem was that 1949 was a critical year in the history of the KMT; with the capital officially moving to Taipei on 7 December, it had been only a year since the Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of Communist Rebellion *dongyuan kan luan shiqi linshi tiaokuan* 動員戡亂時期臨時條款 came into effect which established martial law on Taiwan and curtailed civil liberties.⁵⁷ Winifred Coe was strongly advised by staff at the still-active British Consulate in Tamsui⁵⁸ not to relinquish her UK citizenship. The Consul accepted the birth certificate (signed by David Landsborough and Gretta Gauld) and inserted Michael’s name into Winifred’s passport, a process which was repeated when the other children were born.

Problems continued when Shoki needed to apply for a passport (then only valid for a year) and was listed on the document as being a ‘bachelor’ rather than ‘married’. He subsequently began receiving letters from the government instructing him to register the children as “Chinese citizens”. These letters continued to arrive unabated until Winifred and the children had left Taiwan and only then did they cease completely. It was in 1966 during the General Assembly that:

A rather ‘notorious’ minister got up to move an emergency resolution the purpose of which was to censure me for having lived with a woman without marriage and for having four illegitimate children by her!!! He was apparently shouted down, or removed. How a minister could sink so low is beyond my imagination. He must have got the information from somewhere that I had been travelling with a passport which described me as a ‘bachelor’.⁵⁹

Infiltration of the PCT was not uncommon and a number of pastors who had expressed opposition to the KMT were forced to sign “a confession of guilt.”⁶⁰

As a result of this, Coe’s concept of the role of the church changed. In June 1964 he initiated a plan for the “Religious and Social Survey of Taiwan”, in which he identified that the two decades since the end of the

⁵⁵ Coe (1993), 108.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 134.

⁵⁷ See, e.g., Roy (2003), 76-94; and Joseph Wong, Deepening Democracy in Taiwan, *Pacific Affairs* 76:2 (2003): 241.

⁵⁸ Britain switched recognition from the ROC to the PRC on 6 January 1950. In spite of this switch Britain maintained a consulate office in Tamsui until 1973.

⁵⁹ Coe (1993), 135.

⁶⁰ Lin (1999), 45.

Second World War had seen a period of massive upheaval for Taiwan. It had been “plunged into the maelstrom of industrialisation, population growth, and involvement with international affairs so characteristic of the mid-Twentieth Century.”⁶¹ In addition, the PCT was approaching its centenary and its celebration would be multi-denominational, under the theme “Into the Second Century Together”. A survey committee was formed, whose primary focus was “Total Community in Taiwan,” meaning that it sought to survey the following areas: (1) Demographic considerations, (2) the religious and cultural situation, (3) the family and social relations, (4) economic, occupational, and political factors, and (5) health, education, and welfare. Furthermore the survey would seek to identify the “relevance of the Christian mission to the human situation”, evaluate the present situation, and recommend future goals. With these new considerations in mind, Coe coined the term “contextualisation”,⁶² which for him was an interplay of Scripture and the changing context in which it must be interpreted.

In *Recollections and Reflections* Coe discusses having asked a critical question publically:

I am amazed that there is so much talk about Nationalist China and Communist China, but nothing about what the people in Taiwan hope for their future and the future of Formosa, their homeland. My question is: ‘Is a two-China policy a real option? I know the Nationalists in Taiwan wouldn’t accept it, though I don’t know what the Communist reaction would be.’ Why not one China and one Formosa, like one India and one Ceylon?⁶³

The publication of his “One China, One Formosa” policy in the work of D.T. Niles (a Ceylonese pastor) and his pro-Taiwan independence stance saw him in virtual exile after returning to England in 1965. Yet this exile, according to Jonas Chang, enabled both Shoki and Winifred to organise ecumenical and political movements from abroad.⁶⁴

Shoki Coe chose a church in Bromley, Kent for his Theological Education Fund office as it was close to Seaford, where Winifred and the children had settled. There both Shoki and Winifred sought to “indigenise” the church, a “missiological necessity” for Coe, whereby the “gospel moves from cultural soil to another and has to be retranslated.”⁶⁵ This is most interesting in the context of Shoki’s transnationality, and the expression ‘contextualisation’ is more fitting than ‘indigenisation’:

Indigenous, indigeneity, and indigenisation all derive from a nature metaphor, that is, of the soil, or taking root in the soil. It is only right that the younger churches, in search of their own identity, should take seriously their own cultural milieu. However, because of the static nature of the metaphor, indigenisation tends to be used in the sense of responding to the gospel in terms of traditional culture. Therefore, it is in danger of being past-oriented. Furthermore, the impression has been given that it is only applicable to Asia and Africa, for elsewhere it was felt that the danger lay in overindigenisation, an uncritical accommodation such as expressed by the cultural faiths, the American Way of Life, etc. But the most important factor, especially since the last war, has

⁶¹ PCE/FMC/6/01/87, Plan for the Religious and Social Survey of Taiwan (June 1964).

⁶² Wheeler (2002), 78.

⁶³ Coe (1993), 173.

⁶⁴ See Chang (2012), 121-134.

⁶⁵ Coe (1993), 270-271.

been the new phenomenon of radical change. The new *context* [own italics] is not that of static culture, but the search for the new, which at the same time has involved the culture itself.

This lengthy quote is important for a number of factors, not least because it is within this text that Shoki merges theology with activism. In Andrew Walls' essay "The Gospel as Prisoner and Liberator of Culture", he sees the 'indigenising principle' as rooted in the gospel but in tension with the pilgrim principle.

Along with the indigenising principle which makes faith a place to feel at home, the Christian inherits the pilgrim principle, which whispers to him that he has no abiding city and warns him that to be faithful to Christ will put him out of step with his society; for that society never existed, in East or West, ancient time or modern, which would absorb the word of Christ painlessly into its system...⁶⁶

In *Recollections and Reflections* Shoki Coe begins with the phrase "Oikoumene" (from the Greek οἰκουμένη or Oecumene, lit. 'inhabited') followed by "in Christ there is no East or West" (a Coe family phrase). If one takes this and his 'nature metaphor' into consideration it is clear that Shoki links the concept of 'habitation' with milieu. What is more, this social environment is not static and must be understood in terms of its context (contextualisation). It is here that Shoki expresses his political activism.

There is general agreement that it was at "the Bye" in Seaford, the Coe family home, that this interconnectivity of theology and activism were best expressed.⁶⁷ Jonas Chang writes that the family home doubled as a hostel with a room always set aside for visitors. "They might not provide big meals like Taiwanese and Americans who were accustomed to entertaining guests, but they did provide proper English family meals for visitors with sincere hospitality."⁶⁸ Collections of photos, both within and without the family's archives, show the 1930s detached property as a backdrop to every visitor. The sheer number of photographs demonstrates clearly the importance that Shoki attached not only to the Taiwan Presbyterian ministry but also to those involved in Taiwan self-determination.

Yoshihisa Amae argues that the "torch of Taiwanese self-determination lit by the PCT was carried on by the exiled church leaders". In March 1976, Shoki Coe, C.S. Song, Y. Chao *Zhao Youyuan* 趙有源, Daniel Beeby, and Boris Anderson were invited to testify on the 'Taiwan situation' before the UK parliament.⁶⁹ Moreover, Amae contends that the 1970s was a period in which exiled leaders and missionaries "felt that the Taiwanese church needed to speak on behalf of the 'voiceless' native Taiwanese who have been deprived of their political rights and basic freedom."⁷⁰

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⁶⁶ See Jonathan Parnell, Andrew Walls on Two Principles of the Gospel in Culture, *Desiring God* (22 Oct 2010), accessed 30 June 2015, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/andrew-walls-on-two-principles-of-the-gospel-in-culture>.

⁶⁷ Zhang Reixiong 張瑞雄, *Taiwanren de xianjue: huangzhanghui*, 台灣人的先覺:黃彰輝 [The Pioneer for the Taiwanese: Shoki Coe] (Taipei: Wangchunfeng chubanshe, 望春風出版社, 2004), 318-326.

⁶⁸ Chang (2012), 135.

⁶⁹ Amae, (2008), 190.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 180.

On 28 July 1987, thirteen days after Chiang Ching-kuo ordered the lifting of martial law, Shoki Coe arrived back in Taiwan.⁷¹ Whilst in Taipei, Coe stayed with his former student Kao Chun-ming who had served four of his seven years' imprisonment for hiding Shih Ming-teh 施明德 and his then-wife Linda Arrigo.⁷² Having heard that Coe was staying with Kao, leaders of the newly formed opposition party the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) "made a special trip to see this forerunner of the Taiwan democratic movement."⁷³

In 1988, both Shoki and Winifred passed away. To the PCT he is "a rare and precious person."⁷⁴ In the field of bible translation and interpretation he is best known for coining the term "contextualisation" as a process of interpreting the social environment in which a text is understood or an action carried out. His contribution to missiology, according to Wheeler, offered "a model that moved significantly beyond indigenisation".⁷⁵ For Coe, the hermeneutics of the political situation of Taiwan was contextualised in biblical texts. It attempted to present the gospel in culturally relevant ways by recognising the differences that exist between them. In so doing it observed indigenous expressions of the gospel. It met their goals and worshipping patterns. His conviction towards contextual ministry was set about by his own experiences. In Taiwan the pace of urbanisation, the political struggles, and the ethnic differences found throughout the island influenced the identity of the church. For Coe the indigenisation of the church was not simply to accommodate difference, but rather it meant that through contextualising the gospel the ultimate aim was to 'transform the cultural context itself.'⁷⁶

Outside of Taiwan missiology, for scholars on Taiwan's democracy and identity⁷⁷, Shoki Coe gets but a passing mention, footnoted only as among those who championed the cause of independence. Lim Iong-iong's documentary "Is Time Still on Our Side" [*Shijian haizhanzai women zhebian ma?* 時間還站在我們這邊嗎?] reflects on Shoki Coe's "great disappointment" as self-determination was never realised in his lifetime, and the Taiwanese continue to battle with issues of identity.⁷⁸

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Shoki Coe did much to shape Christianity in a Chinese context. His ideas of contextualisation, though not followed up well in the motifs of the Chinese church, do, according to John Bailey, assist in removing the

⁷¹ On 4 June 1991, Lee Tung-hui 李登輝 abrogated the arrest warrants of 7 people living in exile including Peng Ming-min. Peng returned to Taiwan on 1 November 1992. Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *Lee Teng-hui and Taiwan's Quest for Identity* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 183.

⁷² *Ibid*, 244.

⁷³ Chang (2012), 142. On the election of Kao into the DPP, see: Shelly Rigger, *From Opposition to Power: Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner Publishers, Inc., 2001), 23.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 151.

⁷⁵ Wheeler (2002), 79.

⁷⁶ Wheeler (2002), 79.

⁷⁷ For a comprehensive study on scholars working of Taiwan democracy, see: Shelly Rigger, Political Science and Taiwan's Domestic Politics: The state of the field, *Issues & Studies* 38:4:1 (2002): 49-92; also Murray Rubinstein (ed.), *The Other Taiwan: 1945 to the present* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1994) especially chapter 3-5.

⁷⁸ For a well edited volume on Taiwanese identity see, Gunter Schubert and Jens Damm (eds.), *Taiwanese Identity in the Twenty-first Century: Domestic, regional and global perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2011). On Coe's quest for identity, see: Is Time Still on Our Side [*Huang Zhanghui rongyan jilupian* 黃彰輝容顏紀錄片], Shoki Coe blog 黃彰輝, accessed 25 June 2015, <http://shokicoe.blogspot.co.uk/2012/09/is-time-still-on-our-side.html>

certain unnecessary ‘stumbling blocks’ to genuine faith.⁷⁹ One example of this is arguably prayer and the manner in which it is carried out. Other hurdles may include the veneration of the dead and the use of the circular ichthys symbol or ‘sign of the fish’ and the cross. Courtney Handman’s research on the Guhu-Samane Christians in rural Papua New Guinea explores this ‘obstacle-removal-technique’ much further by examining the manner in which the indigenous church produces an indexical and genealogical connection to biblical Judaism in order to discover certain prophetic revelations about their Christianity.⁸⁰ The impediment for some is historiographical. The notion that ‘we black people’ do not feature in the Bible is, therefore, by extension, an argument that ‘the Guhu-Samane [people] are not accounted for in the histories of the Bible, [and as such they] are not Christian and maybe should not be’.⁸¹ To counter this many believe that they are descendants of ancient biblical Jews and so are rightfully connected to an anticipated future Christianity. This is not unique to Papua New Guinea, some African Americans, since the nineteenth century, have established communities of Black Israelites.⁸² In the Chinese context the Jewish association is best represented among the Kaifeng Jews. However, this small community does not contextualise Judaism as being a precursor to Christianity but rather as one of the lost tribes. It is in Confucianism that this pathway to Christianity has been made. Confucius is perceived as a wandering sage, and his *Analects* have been compared to teachings of Jesus and the gospels.⁸³ Li Chungsheng 李春生, a Taiwan Christian at the turn of the century, took this further by arguing that Confucianism itself is an uncorrupted form of Christianity.⁸⁴ It was not just Coe’s theology that has shaped Christianity in the Chinese speaking work. His own political activism and that of the PCT in general has in many ways—either directly or indirectly—fashioned certain forms of Christian activism in mainland China. The most recent case was the imprisonment of Hu Shigen 胡石根, a leader of the underground Church movement, for subversion.⁸⁵

It is perhaps his transnational identity that marks Coe out as having truly shaped Chinese Christianity. The different identities that Coe espoused and the manner in which he contextualised them translates for many as an idea that being Christian and Chinese can be synonymous and are for them two sides of the same reality. For Shoki Coe, it is within the metamorphosis of his name that the transnationality of his identity is most visible. He was an advocate of self-determination but argued that this came at a cost. At the very centre of both his ecumenical and political life was Winifred Coe, who in many ways held the family together. While he was still in Taiwan and she alone with the children in England, she often wrote to people on his behalf.⁸⁶

⁷⁹ John Bailey, What is Contextualization and is it Biblical? *Asian Mission* (September, 2007), 5.

⁸⁰ Courtney Handman, Figures of History: Interpreting Jewish pasts in Christian Papua New Guinea, *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 6:1 (2016): 237-260.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 238.

⁸² See: Jacob S. Dorman, *Chosen People: The rise of American black Israelite religions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁸³ Ralph R. Covell, *Confucius, the Buddha, and Christ: A history of the gospel in Chinese* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004), 117.

⁸⁴ Li Chunsheng 李春生, *Li Chunsheng zhuzuoji 李春生著作集 [Li Chunsheng: Collection of Works] Vol.2* (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 2004), 90-94.

⁸⁵ Stuart Leavenworth, Christian Church Leader Jailed in Chinese Human Rights Crackdown, *The Guardian* (Wednesday, 3 August 2016), accessed 4 August 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/03/christian-church-leader-hu-shigen-jailed-chinese-human-rights-crackdown>.

⁸⁶ For e.g., see: PCE/FMC/6/01/87, Winifred to Mr Fenn (23 May 1961).

As the PCT celebrated its 150th anniversary the political situation is gladly ‘contextually’ different, unlike its 100th when “a parade would be permitted, but there shall be no sound; During the parade no hand-out of documents will be permitted; there are quite a few ruffians in Tainan, there must be no contacts or fights with them; all activities must end by 11 p.m.”⁸⁷. The campaigning for selfhood continues in earnest. The ‘between two worlds’ of domesticity and activism transcends the shaping of Christianity in Taiwan and by extension the whole Sinophone world. Shoki Coe’s message of civic activism can be found in the leaders of all social movements on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.⁸⁸ From the Kaohsiung Eight in 1979 to Tiananmen Square ten years later. From the democratic movements of the Wild Lily Movement in 1990, the Wild Strawberries Movement in 2008, to the Sunflower and Umbrella movements of 2014 in Taiwan and Hong Kong, to the continued struggles of Chinese Christians in the Peoples’ Republic of China (PRC) today. Yet what is perhaps most important is that behind every great figure there are those who remain hidden; private; domestic, that play an equally, if not more, influential role.

⁸⁷ Chou Lien-hwa, *Memoir* (Taipei: United Literature, 1983), 271-72; also Chang (2012), 117.

⁸⁸ See, e.g., Fan Yun 范雲, *Jingmozhong gengyun xijie de fuyun gemin*, 靜默中耕耘細節的婦運革命 [The Silent Development of the Women's Movement] in *Zhixu binfen de niandai: yijiujiuling – erlingyiling*, 秩序繽紛的年代：1990-2010 [*The Era of Colourful Order: 1990-2010*], eds., Wu Jiemin 吳介民, Gu Erde 顧爾德, and Fan Yun 范雲 (Taipei: Rive Gauche Publishing House, 2010); Fan Yun 范雲, *Shuogushi yu minzhu taolun: yige gongmin shehui neibu zuqun duihua luntan de fenxi*, 說故事與民主討論：一個公民社會內部族群對話論壇的分析 [Story-telling and Democratic Discussion: An Analysis of Ethnic Dialogue Workshop in Civil Society]. *Taiwan Democracy Quarterly*, 7: 1 (2010): 65-105; Ming-sho Ho, Taiwan’s State and Social Movements under the DPP Government, 2000-2004, *Journal of Asian Studies* 5 (2005): 401-425; Ming-sho Ho, Weakened State and Social Movement: The paradox of Taiwanese environmental politics after the power transfer *Journal of Contemporary China* 14:43 (2005): 339-52; and Stephen Phillon, The Impact of Social Movements on Taiwan’s Democracy, *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 39:3 (2010): 149-63.