

Introduction

The presented monograph: *The Taiwan Issues* is a valuable result of the project *Taiwan Studies Center*, inaugurated and conducted during the academic year 2011/2012 at the Institute of the Middle and Far East of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków.

The project's goals comprised academic teaching, research and exchange between Poland and Taiwan; increasing the awareness about Taiwan, its cultural and historical heritage; and developing a better understanding of Asia among the Polish academia.

The project itself has resulted from an increasing interest in Asian culture, society, politics, and economy. Meeting this interest of Polish scholars and students has been the prime direction in the Institute since its institutionalization in 2001 (first as the Department of Middle and Far East, later, i.e. in 2010, advanced to the Institute).

With undisguised joy we notice that the recognition of various studies and research activities focused on Asia has consequentially developed in recent years. This situation brings continuous encouragement to several members of the Institute's academic staff to share their passion of promoting the understanding of Asia. Our interest in Taiwan is not unusual which is proved by this project, however for many of us, both students and scholars working at the Institute, it is of exceptional importance. While some of us are bound with Taiwan through principal or subsequent research projects, the others explored the island improving their language skills. We all share alike appreciation of the people of Taiwan, who continuously sustain our attention focused on their issues.

The Taiwan Issues is a result of cooperation between the Institute's staff and the researchers who are interested in the issues connected with Taiwan. This collaboration grew to an exceptional importance in the academic year 2011/2012, when Kraków was visited by three experts from Taiwan. Professor To-hai Liou from the Department of Diplomacy of the National Chengchi University conducted a series of lectures focusing on the relations between Taiwan and the region of East Asia, whereas Jenn-jaw Soong, Distinguished Professor from the Department of Political Science and Graduate Institute of Political Economy of the National Cheng Kung University, deliberated upon the developmental challenges of Taiwan. The Institute also had the pleasure to host Associate Professor Chin-fu Hung from the same institution. In his lec-

tures, he focused on the meaning of Internet policy in China. The lectures of the Taiwanese scholars, meetings, and animated and productive discussions were exceptionally valuable to us. These events undoubtedly contributed to the further development of the scientific, research, and educational potential of the Institute, the current state of which is presented in *The Taiwan Issues*.

The issues presented in the volume are concentrated on two cardinal problems that shape the situation of modern Taiwan: challenges of political transformation, which led to the development of vibrant democracy (first three chapters), and various aspects of the situation across the Taiwan Strait, i.e. between Taiwan and China (three latter chapters). All topics share the same rationale of historic legacy: dramatic situation of the civil war, which as the final point caused the division of China in 1949, and the hostile relations across the Taiwan Strait until the 1980s. For most aspects of Taiwan's development those events were crucial. They heavily shaped the ruling party's (Kuo-mintang, KMT) policy in every aspect of people's life, starting from education, through Taiwan's indigenous people rights, to contacts with the relatives who stayed in the mainland China. The martial law was the embodiment of KMT's ruling methods in Taiwan. With time, the precise and rigorous framework of Taiwan's development, although resulting in spectacular economic achievements which opened many new doors for the Taiwanese, were no longer a priority, since the Taiwanese dream of democracy has come true. How was it possible? What were the consequences for further transformations of social and political life in Taiwan, and the relations with China?

The opening chapter of the monograph, authored by Adam W. Jelonek, invites us to the debate on democratization process in Taiwan in a wider, i.e. regional, perspective. The problem of the influence of 'Asian values' on political transformation processes serves here as a presumption to analyze the impact of traditional systems of values on the dynamics of democratization. Interesting findings resulted from the research taken up by Jelonek in Vietnam and Taiwan, as well as from pointing out references to the system of values in the West, represented here by the Polish society. On this basis, the Author verifies the theoretical perspectives of modernization, cultural relativism, or communitarianism. In Jelonek's research, Taiwan's democracy was shaped by western values, and so he concludes, suggesting that the traditional system of values will not, however, become a significant barrier for ensuring democratic changes.

As Jen-jaw Soong and Andrew Papadimos emphasize in Chapter Two, the 'political miracle' in Taiwan resulted from "a strong foundation of human capital that was developed due to its 'economic miracle.'" The authors discuss the concept of democratization model, pointing out the readiness of the Taiwanese to track the 'social miracle.' Their emphasis on conditioning of this process

and the outcomes of the in-depth research, require not only recognition in the field, but also constitute an introduction to a better and deeper understanding of changes in Taiwan, and its future challenges.

The authors of the third chapter, Hsiang-yi Yeh and Chin-fu Hung, through the analysis of the 'fourth estate' in Taiwan, investigate the emerging citizen journalism. Discussing its impact on ensuring democracy, they develop a concept of 'media access.' The authors argue that after the political transformation, and as a result of the ongoing development in Taiwan, the real access to the media was not acceptable. Moreover, according to them, relative freedom of the modern Taiwan's press shaped a unique attitude among the Taiwanese society towards the news media.

Among a variety of challenges, which shape Taiwan's development, it is Taiwan's status that eclipses all other issues. This problem is considered to be one of the most absorbing for the political science, no matter what aspect the research focuses on, i.e. either its political transformation and 'economic miracle,' or its relations with China or with the United States. Explanatory research results in this field are presented by Anna Rudakowska. In Chapter Four, she tackles the problem of the European Union's (EU) policies towards China and Taiwan. She also investigates the role of values of human rights and democracy in the EU's strategy towards China and Taiwan, emphasizing not only its difference to the United States' approach, but also the EU's self-representation contrariety to its economic and strategic gains, which are inevitably pragmatic and crucial when considering its trade with China and Taiwan. Through the discourse analysis of the debate on the arms embargo in the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers between 2003 and 2005, Rudakowska contemplates upon the possible future direction of the EU's relations with China and Taiwan.

The attempt to untie the knot of the political dimension of cross-Strait relations is presented by Łukasz Gacek in the fifth chapter, while Ewa Trojnar explores the matter from the socio-economic point of view on the pages of the last chapter. Both the authors discuss the possible course of events between China and Taiwan in the future, referring to historical developments of this phenomenon. Despite many tensions, neither China has invaded Taiwan, nor Taiwan's independence has been proclaimed – here are the two extreme scenarios. Instead, both the partners, sharing common cultural heritage and engaging in the development of economic relations, suggest the acceptance of increasing interdependency between both economies, claims Trojnar. At the same time, democratization process in Taiwan has not induced the West to broadly support its independence, nor has it enhanced the transition of the political system in China. Nevertheless, as Gacek concludes, the American fac-

tor still hampers the attempts to pass through a strategy for ensuring cultural and economic links.

Finally, it is my honor to thank the Authors for their contributions to this volume. They all share the research passion in exploring various Taiwanese issues, and undoubtedly improve peaceful and promising developments on this island, unique in the world. Last but not least, special appreciation goes to the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy. Without its financial support the publication of this monograph would have not been completed.

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