



ARTIKEL



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ECONOMIE



ECOLOGIE

Epilogue

1988, in 'Taiwan 2000'

I feel very grateful and honoured to have been invited to write this epilogue on the history of Taiwan 2000. The idea for such a study was born on a beautiful Indian summer day in Autumn 1983. I was sitting under a 400-year-old oak tree in the garden of a house in Riverdale, New York. My host was Father Thomas Berry, a cosmic historian, environmentalist, and one of the founders of the new bioregional approach to economic-ecological development in the United States. We were discussing the evolution of our planet and the mounting problems created by human beings interfering with nature.

I told Tom about a recent visit to Taiwan and how impressed I was both with the strong economic growth of the island and with the very apparent and frightening strain on the quality of its natural environment. As we talked it occurred to both of us that this island was an ideal place to apply the concepts of bioregional development. With an area of roughly 36,000 square kilometres, only limited environmental influences from neighbouring countries, and an exceptionally varied and beautiful nature, Taiwan could provide a unique model of a comprehensive, well-managed bioregion.

A study of scenarios for the future development of the economic and ecological systems of Taiwan could be beneficial not only for the island's people but as a model for nations around the world. It could contribute to a greater awareness of the criticality of the current phase in our planet's evolution and of the special responsibility of humankind for this phase. It seemed to us, moreover, that the thousands of years of Chinese tradition of respect for nature could provide the right cultural setting for such a project.

To explore this idea further, I visited Dr. Gerald O. Barney in Washington. Dr. Barney directed the U.S. "Global 2000 Report to the President" for President Jimmy Carter and later founded an independent, nonprofit, nongovernmental organization – the Global Studies Center – to promote and assist "Year 2000" studies of the kind we had in mind. He gave me some good advice.

After some further research, I outlined a proposal for a Taiwan 2000 study and set up the Trans-Form Foundation as a vehicle to facilitate such a study. In early 1985 I left for Taiwan to see if there might be interest there.

The foresight and inspiration of Dr. Sheldon R. Severynhaus was critically important at this time. As The Asia Foundation's Representative in Taiwan for the past eight years, he had extensive knowledge of the society and quickly understood the potential of a Taiwan 2000 study. He introduced us to top-quality scholars interested in this kind of study.

In the summer of 1985, an institutional base for the project was established at the Department of Geography, National Taiwan University. A Steering Committee was then set up consisting of Professors Peng-Chi Chiang, Yung-Peng Chu, Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao, Lucia Liu Severynhaus, and Chang-Yi David Chang, Chairman. From 1988, Hsin-Huang Michael Hsiao succeeded as Chairman responsible for the final publication task.

The pace of development accelerated. In October The Asia Foundation supplied a grant so that work could begin. The first step was to assess the present environmental status of the island.

In May 1986 the Council for Economic Planning and Development (C.E.P.D.) made a grant for the project. This provided funding to invite foreign experts to share experiences from the West on ecological issues and methodologies for analysing such issues. Shortly thereafter the Council for Cultural Planning and Development made a grant as well. By September 1986 several foreign experts were actively engaged in working with the local team in a truly international, interdisciplinary, and congenial spirit. Through a grant from Philips Taiwan, it was possible to finalize the work in a two-week international workshop and symposium in July 1987.

The Taiwan 2000 Study has turned out to be a unique and exciting venture. The expertise and dedication displayed by the Chinese and foreign teams deserve the highest respect. I am hopeful that this report will provide a basis for integration of ecological considerations in future economic planning of Taiwan. I am also hopeful that it will inspire other nations to undertake similar studies, and that together these efforts will contribute to an improved understanding of the importance of environmental protection to the welfare and security of people everywhere.

I also want to acknowledge the assistance and support of several friends, especially those at KLM Taiwan, Philips Taiwan, and Zekins International.

Edited by the Steering Committee Taiwan 2000 Study, Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China