

## **Cultural Relations of China and Taiwan: An Examination of Three Stages of Policy Change**

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### **Introduction**

A great many studies on economic and political relations between China and Taiwan have been conducted by scholars and policy-makers across the world. This is understandable. Although there have been bitter disputes between the two Chinese societies, both are still claiming that eventually they will be integrated. Thus their ongoing political integration/national unification is not only an important event of the two themselves but also the Asian and Pacific region and the world as well. Economically, the convergence of the two plus Hong Kong, according to the World Bank, would form another economic superpower that may be stronger than any other single nation in the world except the United States. And politically, the integration, as some studies point out, may create a new, very powerful political center or hegemony to challenge the global political structure.

While economic and political relations between the two have been undergoing noticeable changes, so have been their cultural relations. But the latter has not received as many examinations as the former has. Nevertheless, changes in cultural relations between China and Taiwan also deserve thorough studies at least because of three reasons. First, changes in cultural relations have been very significant in the last ten years. Cultural policies in the both societies have experienced several stages of change. The much improved cultural relations now have a great influence on the people's daily life as well as on their thinking. Second, in both China and Taiwan media and culture are one form of political culture which, in Almond and Powell's words, is "a particular *distribution* of political attitudes, values, feelings, and information about a political system" (1980, p. 42). Therefore, changes in the two's cultural relations are virtually a

reflection of changes of their political agenda. Third, last but probably most important, the cultural factor, according to Shambaugh (1993), may be the most vital force for the emergence of "Greater China," a unified form of China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

Until the early 1980s, for nearly forty years there were virtually no media/cultural exchanges between China and Taiwan. Since then China has imported a growing amount of media/cultural products from the West in general and from Taiwan and Hong Kong in particular. In the meantime, Taiwan has also imported media/cultural material from China. Media/cultural products with distinctive characteristics of different social systems were thus penetrating each other's society. Especially, since the early 1990s along with increasingly growing economic and political activities between the two, media/cultural exchanges have reached an unprecedented level.

The rapid changes in the two's cultural relations reflect a global communication trend that flows of media/cultural products worldwide have been greatly increased and have been occurring among all countries. The changes also reflect another global trend that there are increasingly more and more flows of media/cultural products within regions. Nevertheless, even though the increasing flows of media/cultural products are a universal phenomenon, changes in cultural relations between China and Taiwan have some important uniqueness, that is cultural relations are both a reflection and a result of political relations: changes in cultural relations are closely related to changes in the two's economic and political relations and often the former appears as a consequence of the latter.

This paper examines changes in cultural relations between China and Taiwan in the last ten years or so. Media/cultural exchanges in this paper refer to both trade activities and flows. While trade activities usually bear an explicit economic or political-economic dimension, flows usually bear an implicit cultural or political-cultural dimension. Nevertheless, trade activities and flows are often integrated and interrelated. Specifically, this study discusses the three stages of policy changes, motivations for the changes, implications of the changes, and the trends of the two's future cultural relations. The purpose of this study is to continue exploring the complicated relationship between cultural relations and political relations.

Cultural exchange activities researched in this study includes both information and entertainment items. Based primarily on the author's recent research trips to China and Taiwan, the study uses much first-hand data. Most of the sources are from interviews with government officials/media professionals and government documents.

### **Cultural relations before the 1980s**

Cultural relations between China and Taiwan before the 1980s were probably one of the worst in the world. Three things may be used to justify this judgment. First,

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for nearly four decades--from 1949, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rose to power and the Kuomintang (KMT) was ousted to Taiwan, to the late 1970s and early 1980s, when China began to open itself to the rest of the world, including Taiwan, there were virtually no normal media/cultural exchanges between the two--a socialist society on one hand and a political enemy with a capitalist system on the other. Second, cultural relations were prohibited by the both authorities. Anyone reading, listening to, or watching the other one's media/cultural items which were "smuggled" or obtained through "illegal" ways would result in being prosecuted and put in jail. And third, until the mid-1980s, China's media treatment of Taiwan had been limited to criticism and attack. Likewise, the view of China from Taiwan was the same. Cultural relations between the two manifested a typical "cold war" pattern.

While media and culture in China and Taiwan do share some similarities, their political, economic, and ideological functions are substantially different. Particularly, although using the same language and rooting in the same culture, their media/culture belong to two sharply different models. Their media/culture policies, systems, and operations are derived from different political systems, social structures, and philosophical frameworks.

Media/culture in China represent a typical Soviet communist model: they are virtually the Communist Party's organ and the state apparatus, media/cultural products are used mostly for political propaganda, and media/cultural activities are normally generated by ideological motivations. Media and culture at large are units of the Party's socialist infrastructure, and content generated outside the Party's control is not allowed, either in the news or in entertainment content.

According to Chen and Chaudhary (1991) in Asia, along with North Korea, Vietnam and Mongolia, China "follow the Marxist-Leninist concept of total integration of press and government". The history of China's media shows news is any information that serves the Party and the state. The Maoist dictum "Thought determines action" means that people must receive correct information in order to think and in turn act "correctly." These concepts and principles have resulted in, among others, two important phenomena. First, due to the absolute and rigid control of media for decades, media were severely underdeveloped. Second, fearing of importation of "incorrect" information, the authorities closed the doors to the foreign media. Foreign media including those of Taiwan were often accused of "concocting rumors" about troubles in China, and "distorting the facts and attempting to denigrate" the country (*Reporters Sans Frontieres 1992 Report*, 1992).

Media/culture in Taiwan represent a semi-authoritarian and semi-market model: they combine both the characteristics of the libertarian and authoritarian media/culture models, and these two different media/culture concepts co-exist in the island. Until the late 1980s Taiwan also had government-controlled news media/culture that were ardently anticommunist. But Taiwan's successful capitalist

economy had been relatively open in other respects--including the entertainment media/culture--for many years.

Taiwan media/culture are therefore called "well developed" but "partly free" (Chen and Chaudhary, 1991). Until recently media/culture in Taiwan have followed the concept of guidance. Three topics have long been taboos: Taiwanese independence, communism or China if treated favorably, and the private lives of political leaders. However, while the Taiwanese authorities maintain a tight control on key media/culture institutions and strict restrictions on media/cultural products and activities which are political in nature, its media/cultural infrastructure is allowed to operate within a market model. What should be noted is that, during different historical periods, either politics-oriented media/cultural policies or market-oriented media/cultural policies were chosen to serve Taiwan's ruling party and the government's purposes ( Lee, 1991).

The differences in the media and culture of the two societies are vivid reflections of the differences in their political systems and social structures. However, regardless of the significant differences in their political, economic and media/culture systems, the two do share the rich, traditional culture and long history of the Chinese nationality. This linguistic, cultural and historic common ground is central to understanding the nature of the rapid changes in their cultural relations.

### **Three stages of policy change**

In the last ten years or so, changes in the cultural policies of China and Taiwan towards importing media/cultural products from the other side can be divided roughly into three stages.

#### *The first stage of change: from resistance to acceptance*

The first stage of change in the policies towards the cultural relations between China and Taiwan occurred in the mid-to-late 1980s. The change was resulted from China's initiative for openness and Taiwan's decision to end its martial law in the late 1980s. The main feature of this stage was the change from resistance to acceptance of media/cultural products from the other society.

China first opened its door to Hong Kong's mass culture products in the late 1970s. Mass popular culture, as Gold (1993) states, in contrast to politically contrived culture, refers to cultural products for the mass market, which reflect market-determined popular taste and are mainly for entertainment. To the Chinese authorities, mass culture products are relatively less ideological and safer to the political regime. But even so, among all foreign mass culture products Taiwan's were the last to be allowed to enter China, far behind Japan, Western European countries, and even the

leading capitalist country, the United States.

However, in the mid-1980s Taiwan's media/cultural products were eventually allowed to enter China. According to Lin (1995), Assistant Director of Department of Planning & Evaluation, the Information Office of Taiwan Government, the first of those products entering China was music tapes. The late Taiwan's most popular singer, Teresa Teng, also became the most popular singer in China. As a *New York Times* report said, in China "even peasants in the countryside were familiar with her songs" (WuDunn, 1995). After Teng's love songs, Taiwan's "campus songs" became the most fashionable among the Chinese youth. Second was books. In particular, love-story novels by Qiong Yao and San Mao and essay collections by Bo Yang, Taiwan's most well-known dissident writer, were best-sellers in China for years. Third was movies and television series. Two kinds of movies and television series were especially welcome. One was about ordinary people and family life, and the other about China's history. The explanation was that, even in the mid-1980s, these stories were still rarely given treatment in China's movies and television.

As well, during the 1980s China's media/cultural products also entered Taiwan. According to S. Wang (1995), Research Fellow of Shanghai Social Science Academy, media/cultural products entering Taiwan from China were mainly of three categories: books such as historical novels and collections of ancient, modern and contemporary great Chinese writers; movies produced by the country's well known "Fifth Generation" directors such as Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige; and television series such as those based on classic novels of *Dream of the Red Chamber* and *Pilgrimage to West*.

The change was indeed a historical breakthrough, but there were many restrictions during this stage. First, the cultural exchanges were very limited in terms of the volume. Second, both governments heavily conducted tough censorship on content of importation. Third, it was the ruling political parties and governments that virtually controlled the cultural exchanges. In other words, media and cultural institutions, as well as any individuals or commercial organizations in both China and Taiwan could not do cultural exchanges with the other part unless they were permitted by the authorities.

*The second stage of change: from many restrictions to less restrictions*

The second stage of change in cultural relations between China and Taiwan started in the early 1990s after China's "Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits" and Taiwan's "Straits Exchange Foundation" were established. These two are by nature government agencies but under the disguise of civil organizations. Since the establishment of these two offices, both China and Taiwan again had a shift in their cultural policies (*The Basic Principle of "Peaceful Reunification and One Country,*

*Two Systems*", 1992). Ever since, the orderly entry of media/cultural products from each other became semi-official and relatively stable, restrictions on

importing media/cultural products from the other side have been loosened, and cultural exchanges have become part of their mutual agenda.

As a result of this further change, Taiwan's exports of media/cultural products to China grew swiftly, and it was especially outstanding in its exportation of television programming. For instance, in 1992 China was ranked the sixth in the volume of Taiwan Television's (TTV) programming sales, behind North America (U.S. and Canada), Malaysia, Singapore, Europe, and Australia. In 1993, China became the third, only after the North America and Malaysia, and the exports to China were doubled (*Television Yearbook of Taiwan 1992-1993*, 1994). At the same time, Taiwan's programming showing in China was increasing steadily. According to Xiong (1995), Director of External Department of China Central Television (CCTV), Taiwanese programming broadcast on CCTV reached about eight percent of the total programming in 1994, compared to less than one percent three years ago.

The same pattern of rapid changes was also shown in the exportation of China's media/cultural products to Taiwan. According to Wu (1995), Deputy Director-General, the Information Office of Taiwan Government, when the import from China was almost zero before 1990, in 1991 alone 264 television programs and 390,779 books from China entered Taiwan. In 1992, the numbers became 422 and 894,238, respectively, both having a very significant increase. In 1993, 1,571 Chinese television programs were exported to Taiwan, which more than tripled the past year's number. In the same year, 1,464,456 Chinese books were exported to Taiwan, which almost doubled the number of the past year. In 1994, while the quantity of book importation remained the same, more Chinese television programs were imported by Taiwan. The number reached 2,685, getting a 72 percent increase over the total amount of the past year.

One of the most important events that occurred during this stage was the exchanges of news/information products. In the first stage, the cultural exchanges were mostly of entertainment content. Information-related exchanges did not reach the high levels seen during the 1980s for entertainment items. According to Feng (1995), Managing Editor, *Central Daily News*, the official newspaper of KMT, this was due to China's restrictive attitude because China was afraid that the exchanges of news and information content would bring the "truth" to the Chinese people.

Logically, the information-related exchanges that did occur were perhaps more profound. According to X. Chen (1995), an official of the Foreign Affairs Office of China's Radio-Film-TV Ministry, in the mid-1980s soon after China and Britain signed the agreement that returns Hong Kong to China in 1997, China and Hong Kong exchanged reporters and opened additional press offices. But the exchange of news

and information products and journalism personnel between China and Taiwan began much later. Especially, in 1986 after two Taiwanese reporters visited China without permission from the Taiwanese authorities, they were later charged with criminal offenses and prosecuted.

This situation was nevertheless changed during the late second stage, and one of the most significant developments in this stage was the officially sanctioned broadcast of newscasts on each other's television. According to Y. Wang (1995), Professor of Beijing Broadcasting Institute, in the early 1990's for the first time, CCTV, China's official and only network, broadcast a six-hour documentary about Taiwan which was produced by a Chinese American broadcaster from the United States. The show introduced Taiwan's economy, culture and politics, and even included an interview with Taiwan's President Li Denghui. In return, according to T. Chen (1995), Vice President of Taiwan Television (TTV), the Taiwanese government agreed to consider a request from Taiwan's three networks (TTV, CTV, and CTS) to lift a ban on direct satellite transmissions from China. Since then, Taiwan's television started broadcasting newscasts about China transmitted from China to Taiwan via satellite.

Although journalism personnel exchanges were still the most difficult one among the two's cultural exchanges due to the existing restrictions of the two, during the past several years hundreds of reporters from Taiwan have flocked to China. They have been covering China's People's Congress and Party Congress for years. On the side of China, in 1991, for the first time, two Chinese reporters visited Taiwan. So far, dozens of reporters from China have traveled to Taiwan (*Annual Report of Cultural Exchanges of China and Taiwan*, 1995).

#### *The third stage of change: separating cultural relations from political relations*

The third stage of change was the most recent effort of China and Taiwan to separate their cultural relations from the shadow of the two's gloomy political relations. As a consequence of this new effort, although the two's general relations have been deteriorating and even military tensions have arisen, their media/cultural exchanges have not been seriously affected. Instead, unlike before when tensions arose media/cultural exchanges were often reduced, this time media/cultural exchanges have kept a steady increase while political relations have been suffering major setbacks.

Both China and Taiwan recently pledged to overcome obstructions caused by political factors and to further develop their cultural relations by separating media/culture from politics. This new stance implies that ups and downs in the two's future political relations should not affect media/cultural exchanges. A senior official of China's Culture Ministry expressed that, in spite of the political and military tensions, one of the major tasks of the Culture Ministry is still to expand cultural relations with Taiwan (Chen and Chen, 1996). Likewise, Su, Vice Chairman of China

Affairs Council of Taiwan Government, also vowed to promote media/cultural exchanges with China regardless of the two's "political weather" (*World Journal*, Jan. 4, 1996). Under this new policy, media/cultural products are now entering each other's society through all kinds of ways and in all kinds of formats. Most typically, China has recently allowed Taiwan's reporters to temporarily station in Beijing, and Taiwan has lifted its last restrictions on showing China-made feature films on the island (*World Journal*, Feb. 7, 1996).

### **Motivations and implications of policy change**

The profound changes in cultural relations of China and Taiwan have accompanied strong political and/or economic motivations.

China was motivated largely by macropolitical, strategic considerations when it allowed the importation of media/cultural products from Taiwan. In its relations with other countries, economic affairs have often been used to serve political purposes. China has been using its huge market to lure the economic power brokers of Taiwan, and has embellished relations with them by giving them privileges to help secure their political loyalty in the process of the two's political integration. The case of media/cultural importation has also reflected this paradigm. In the past decade a great many pop singers from Taiwan were invited to give performances on CCTV. In giving this exposure, China was able to make a friendly and profitable gesture to Taiwan, as well as to the world, that Taiwan ultimately is an inseparable part of China.

Economic consideration was also a big reason. To China, buying media/cultural products from Taiwan was much cheaper than producing programming domestically and buying programming from Western countries. This fact has led, in part, to the situation that many Chinese media institutions were pursuing every possibility to get media/cultural products from Taiwan and Hong Kong. As said Zhuang (1995), Head of the Chief Editor's Office of the Shanghai-based Oriental Television, China's newly-established, exploratory commercial television station, media/cultural products from Taiwan and Hong Kong were very attractive not only because they were sold to China at a much lower price, but also because they did not need another "post-production"--dubbing, thus saving considerable extra expenses. So, the exchanges were also resulted from a push-and-pull relation.

Instead, Taiwan was motivated by a combination of both economic and political considerations when it began to open cultural relations with China. Economically, Taiwan's media/culture have begun to compete in an economic marketplace and strive to generate a profit. Politically, its media/culture have remained sensitive to political constraints stemming from its long-standing with China. Because Taiwan was later than Hong Kong to enter the China market, the former was eager to expand its business there. In addition to the immense economic incentives involved, the

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Taiwanese authorities also saw a political dividend: exporting media/cultural products to China might impress the Chinese audience with Taiwan's affluence, high living standards, modern lifestyle, and liberal social environment, and these are good, effective propaganda. In an interview with Huang (1995), Chairman of China Affairs Council of Taiwan Government, he said he believes that the exportation of media/cultural products to China will give the people in China a better understanding of Taiwan, and in a long run it will help realize the national unification of the two based on the "spiritual principles" put forward by Taiwan.

Changes in cultural relations between China and Taiwan in the last ten years have also had significant implications for the overall relations between the two. Three major ones are worth noting.

First, while political and/or economic motivations were the main causes for the changes, the rapid development also resulted partly from the two's newly adopted realistic and pragmatic guidelines.

The new policies were formed on the basis of both the changing situations of the two societies and the re-structuring regional and global environment. Part of this process towards openness and pragmatism has been the gradual de-linking of media/culture from political imperatives. In recent years, to a different extent Taiwan as well as China have informally adopted a "no intervention, no promotion" guideline. According to Zhou (1995), Director of Programming Office of CCTV, except for content considered of crucial political significance, both the governments have engaged in the practice of "open one eye, close one eye". Especially for mass culture products, most of the exchanges were conducted as commercial business with little political color. In fact, "no intervention" did not really mean there was no intervention. What it did mean was that there was less direct political intervention. Likewise, "no promotion" did not really mean there was no support at all. "No intervention" should be interpreted as a green light. Obviously, higher exchanges of media/cultural products would not have been possible without a supportive attitude from both the authorities.

Second, the development of cultural relations has also shown a cultural interdependency between the two.

Although the development of cultural relations was indeed very much attributed to economic and political motivations, it also has much to do with the two's cultural needs. On the one hand, popular culture products from Taiwan and Hong Kong represented modern Western popular culture, which was new, fresh, exciting, and mysterious to the Chinese audience. But moreover, popular culture products of Taiwan and Hong Kong were not just Western popular culture products--they were local, Chinese editions of the Western culture. As Chan (1994) states, because of frequent interaction and geographical proximity, media/cultural products from Taiwan and Hong Kong stood out as China's major sources of foreign influence. The same written language, similar tastes, commonly-shared life habits, family ties, and a strong folk

heritage have all made derivative popular culture from Taiwan and Hong Kong more welcome in China than other Western ones.

More importantly, China and Taiwan are rooting in the transferability of shared cultural roots. According to Dai (1995), an official of China's Culture Ministry in charge of cultural exchanges with foreign countries, China's cultural products have been very popular in Taiwan because of their high cultural and artistic qualities. Especially, the demands for masterpiece movies, big television productions, and publications of great writers have been very high. People in Taiwan consume these products to maintain their cultural roots in the Chinese history of five thousand years.

This cultural exchange, as Shambaugh (1993) points out, has implied an interdependent cultural relationship. In recent years, joint ventures have taken place in movie production, advertising, cable network formation, and video and television program production. After entering the 1990s, this tendency of cultural interdependency and cooperation has become more vigorous. According to Ma (1995), an official of China's Radio-Film-TV Ministry in charge of overseas cooperation, in 1990 a total of 26 Taiwanese television/movie teams went China for production. The number became 51 in 1991, and jumped to 73 in 1992. In 1993 alone, Taiwan jointly produced hundreds of television series with China. In 1994, more than 400 television personnel from Taiwan went to China for production (*China Radio & Television Yearbook 1995, 1996*). China "has become a hot place to the media industry of Taiwan" (*People's Daily*, Dec. 27, 1994). In the meantime, China also sent some teams to Taiwan for production. In 1991 three Chinese television/movie teams went to Taiwan, compared to zero in 1990. The number jumped to 43 in 1992, and maintained around 30 in the following years (*Abstracts of Statistics of Exchange Programs of Two Sides of the Taiwan Straits, 1995*).

Third, the two's still somewhat prudent policies on cultural relations have nevertheless reflected their fears of the other's ideological and political influences.

This was most obvious in China's reactions because the exchanges were seriously unbalanced. In Shambaugh's (1993) words, "Anyone who walks the streets of Mainland Chinese cities, or even the dusty roads of interior rural villages, cannot help but be struck by the pervasiveness of what might be called a Greater Chinese popular culture; Karaoke bars, MTV, KTV, discos, pornography, rock and rap singers and film stars from Hong Kong and Taiwan have all penetrated the consciousness of mainland China's youth" (p. 658). Clearly, popular culture products from Taiwan and Hong Kong have claimed a substantial share of the market and loyalties of Chinese media/culture consumers. Not only were music tapes, movies, television shows, literature, advertisements, decor, attire and leisure from Taiwan and Hong Kong everywhere in the country, but China's own media/cultural products have increasingly come to resemble the styles of Taiwan and Hong Kong. As Gold (1993) sees,

bourgeois-styled popular culture of Taiwan and Hong Kong has exerted a strong, large-scale influence on communist China.

The abundance of the popular culture from Hong Kong and Taiwan in China has made the Chinese leaders feel uneasy. The situation has posed a dilemma facing the Chinese authorities: although the economic prices of media/cultural products from Taiwan and Hong Kong were low, the imports have become a serious challenge to the communist ideology. As a consequence of this fear, while permitting the importation, ironically the authorities in China have also severely condemned the products from Taiwan and Hong Kong. Since the early 1990s, a number of actions have been taken to reduce the degree of the seriously unbalanced exchanges. Moreover, since 1993 several campaigns have been initiated to combat the influence of foreign popular culture, particularly those from Taiwan and Hong Kong. China has also thereafter enacted a number of new regulations to control and reduce the importation, particularly to prohibit unauthorized importation or broadcast of Taiwan and Hong Kong movies and television programs. An editorial of the *People's Daily*, the official medium of the Communist Party, warned that the pervasiveness of low-quality cultural products from Taiwan and Hong Kong had reached an intolerable level. The article called for a halt in the flows, saying the excessive availability of these products would not only affect China's domestic media/cultural production, but more importantly, would also have a strong, unhealthy impact on the society (*People's Daily*, Dec. 13, 1989). In a much more explicit and stern tone, Ai, China's former Radio-Film-TV Minister, said the majority of Taiwan and Hong Kong programs available in China were in poor taste, being concerned mainly with sex and violence; the proliferation of such media/culture fare was part of a "Western conspiracy" to transform China through "peaceful evolution" (Ai, 1993).

Taiwan also has had the same fear. Taiwan has been putting political considerations as the first priority when importing media/cultural products from China. As Gold (1993) remarks, the party-state strictly controls production or importation of works that may challenge its hegemony, raise questions about its past legitimacy, or spread communism. With these regulations, by nature Taiwan too has still maintained a somewhat reluctant attitude towards the imports from China. In the explanation of M. Chen (1995), Deputy Director of China Affairs Central Committee of KMT, he said "Taiwan has to be cautious because China is too big and Taiwan is too small."

### **Prospects of cultural relations**

Based on the above analyses, it is possible to draw some trends that come next as these two societies try to reconcile a common culture with drastically different sociopolitical systems.

First, due to the two's mutual and various needs--political, economic, etc., their cultural relations would continue to develop.

Despite the fact that disputes and even military tensions between the two have never disappeared, their overall relationships have been improving. Interaction and cooperation in almost all aspects have been seen. Economically, the trade between the two in 1987 was \$1,500 million, but in 1995 it jumped to \$20,000 million (Hua, 1996). In 1995 alone, Taiwan's investment in China reached \$1,100 million, posing a 13.6 percent increase over the previous year (*Investment from Taiwan Increase Rapidly*, 1996). The exchange activities have been expanded to almost all the areas, including science, education, arts and literature, law, agriculture, religion, youth, sports, and so on.

By the mid-1990's, media/cultural exchanges had already become a daily business in the two societies, and exchanges of mediated information had become an accepted part of their economic and political routines. This has allowed people in Taiwan to learn more about China. The regular audiences of China's television programming in Taiwan have increased from 1.4 percent of the total viewership in 1991 to 9.8 percent in 1994, reaching more than two million people in the island (*China Radio & Television Yearbook 1995*, 1996). In the meantime, the exchanges have also promoted China's media development by influencing media restructuring and style and advancing the levels of media operation skill and production capability (Ca, 1994).

On the other hand, the media/cultural interdependency between the two would prove to be self-generating. That is, more mutual economic activity would not only require more media/cultural interdependence, but would also generate additional interdependence. Each of the two is among the fastest growing economies in the world, and trade relations between them are significant and expanding. As the two economies grow more interdependent, media/cultural interdependence should increase apace. As Sheng (1991) notes, the linking of economic development and provision of economic information is a necessary precondition for the establishment of economic relations and continued economic cooperation, and the media/cultural interaction has been playing a "linking up" function.

Moreover, the cultural markets of the two, particularly that of China, are expanding, and the demands for media/culture content are increasing. In Taiwan, there exist big demands for China's media/cultural products, and in China, a new middle class is just being formed that would demand ever more sophisticated media/culture content. Moreover, according to Yang (1995), Research Fellow of Institute of International Relations of Taiwan's National Chengchi University, Taiwan has recently set the goal to become another cultural production center of the Asian and Pacific region, in addition to Hong Kong. In order to reach this goal, Taiwan would

have to very much rely on both China's media/cultural resources and market.

Therefore, the increased exchanges of media/cultural content--both entertainment and information--are unlikely to revert to their former low levels. Although the initial surge of entertainment content seems to have passed and news and information content has still remained relatively restricted, the future is promising. It may be true that there would still be various obstacles in their relations, the odds are that the exchanges would increase over time, becoming more vigorous with a faster speed, an expanded scale, more breakthroughs, and less forbidden areas, even if China has moved in the short term to throttle some entertainment programming and has continued to restrict news and information more tightly than entertainment.

Second, the the nearly unidirectional or seriously unbalanced exchanges would be alleviated gradually.

According to a speech of Z.G. Wang (1993), Minister of Taiwan Affairs Office of China's State Council, until 1992 the so-called exchanges between China and Taiwan in both economic and cultural relations were not a two-way interaction. Media/cultural exchanges were especially unbalanced, and for quite a few years they may be called almost unidirectional. The outward flows from China to Taiwan were apparently differed from the inward flows. Comparatively, much less Chinese media/cultural products entered Taiwan. Moreover, Taiwan was more selective than China: Taiwan imported only what they wanted from China, but exported all kinds of media/cultural products to China.

It was only until after 1992 the nearly one-way flow started to gradually become a two-way exchange. This trend has been maintained in the last several years. Particularly, for the first time in the past ten years in 1995 China sent more people to Taiwan for cultural exchanges. According to Xin (1996), in 1995 a total of 1884 people from China visited Taiwan for 198 cultural programs, while 1162 people from Taiwan visited China for 74 cultural activities.

As China moves towards a market economy, its media/cultural industry would presumably become more productive and competitive, and the demands for the Taiwan and Hong Kong versions may fall. In a long term China conceivably even could become an exporter of popular culture items to Taiwan. On the other hand, Taiwan's media/culture are too in a transition towards being more open and liberal. Thus, it would be reasonable to assume that more media/cultural products from China could be expected to enter the island. At least one thing is certain that there will be a great opportunity for the interaction of the "gray" media/cultural products, namely, those which have less political elements. Of course, entertainment production should continue to skirt the kind of conflict that might develop over news media.

Third, the two's cultural relations would still be influenced overtly or covertly by the their overall relationships, particularly political ones.

Political obstacles would still exist in cultural relations; according to Yang and

Li (1992), in the past ten years media/cultural exchanges were often influenced by both societies' strategies on the "Taiwan Straits affairs" and the "political weather" between the two. The speed and scale of media/cultural exchanges were fluctuated and there have been ups and downs. This phenomenon would continue to exist, although the extent and the pattern may be altered. In the near future, it would be unrealistic to expect a series of near-term, significant breakthroughs pertaining to the media/culture in either of the two societies. Neither of them would be likely to quickly terminate its political system, which implies that the nature of their media/culture would be slow to change. The most likely outcome in the future is continuity that would see the media/culture systems maintained fundamentally as they are even though as they begin to move towards accommodation with each other.

China's 15 years of reform has not changed the central fact that the media/culture are still an ideological state apparatus and an instrument of the Party. A Western-styled, free media/culture system seems unlikely in the foreseeable future (Shung, 1991). As for Taiwan, the media/culture would still be somewhat controlled by the government. As some Taiwanese scholars criticized, since the martial law was lifted in 1987 many fields in Taiwan have been moving towards internationalization, democratization and liberation, but it was not the case of Taiwan's broadcast industry (Chang, 1992). Even today, publicly and officially, the authorities in Taiwan still insist on its "Three No's Policy"--no contact, no compromise, and no negotiation with China. Taiwan also opposes China's proposal for "Three Direct Exchanges"--direct exchange of mail, direct exchange of trade, and direct exchange of air and shipping service. Due to these facts one should not be too optimistic about a quick and complete change from Taiwan as well.

## **Conclusion**

During the last ten years or so, caused by a variety of factors, domestic, regional, and international, as well as economic, political, and cultural, the penetration and interaction of media/cultural content between China and Taiwan developed from a base of zero to a soaring amount. But while the exchanges of media/cultural products have become an indispensable part of the two societies' economic, political, and cultural lives, the penetration of Taiwan's material, especially the huge volume of entertainment imports, has also produced a serious challenge to the communist ideology and raised big concerns among China's leaders. The point of view of each society towards the media/cultural exchanges parallels the society's political and economic systems. As a result, to a different extent both China and Taiwan have been still somewhat cautious. As Sheng (1991) analyzes, the existence of a wide diversity in terms of social system, political interest and ideological concept makes it hard to decide on a proper course.

To China, media and cultural products from Taiwan have posed opportunities and pitfalls. Imported entertainment content has generated economic opportunity and provides satisfaction to the public, but it also has generated unreasonable expectations and ideas incongruent with political goals. Therefore, while China's economic opening is continuing, there are signs that important restrictions would remain in place regarding importing media/cultural products. To Taiwan, regardless of how much entertainment programming is exchanged with China, the unresolved question of which society is the legitimate heir to the whole China would make it difficult for Taiwan to tolerate uncontrolled media/cultural content from China. This fact is complicated by Taiwan's efforts to compete with Hong Kong as a source of cultural imports for China.

Basically, the three stages of cultural policy changes have been symbolic of the two's improved relations. Changes in cultural relations carry an important and positive function. It has been serving, and will continue to serve, to improve their overall relationships and promote a better understanding. As Gold (1993) puts it, "the spread of a common popular culture among Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Mainland is an additional force for the formation and integration of a Greater China" (p. 923). Shambaugh (1993) points out more clearly that the Chinese popular culture now being shared among all three societies "has become a vital component linking Greater China together" (p. 659).

By and large, media/culture in China and Taiwan would still be used as a political tool to first serve each's political interests and as a propaganda weapon to channel each's own ideology into the other's. The development of media/cultural interaction would not be able to clear these obstacles caused by the differences in the two's political agendas, considerations and interests. Politics would still often get in the way of cultural relations.

What should be noted is that the so-said separation of media/culture from politics is just one more example of a close relationship between media/culture and politics. Media/culture are used as a political instrument and a bridge of connection of the two. When the two's political relations get worse, they would still have a way to maintain their overall relations and have a channel for expressing political gestures. Media/culture thus become just a practical substitute of politics.

Although various constraints would often accompany the cultural relations between China and Taiwan, overall, the period ahead promises to be one in which political leaders seek stability even as the increasing interaction of media/culture content begins to alter public perceptions of their cultures. This tug-of-war between culture on the one hand and politics and economics on the other is clear in the current relations between the two Chinese societies today and would continue in the years to come. Therefore, the two's policies on cultural relations are still expected to often be altered to follow suit their complicated, overall relations.

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