

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Lee Teng-hui, former president of Taiwan, announced on March 15 2007 his plan to visit Japan from May 30 to June 9 2007. Though, this is not his first trip, the announcement immediately reminded people of this politician's complex past and fueled his visit's controversy. Lee as former Nationalist Party (KMT) chairman and the President of the Republic of China claimed that the KMT government was an "outsider regime". Although it was he as president to have established the Unification Council, he proclaimed a "state-to-state" relationship between Taiwan and China. Such a statement not only angered the pro-unification KMT members but also China, who has long pursued a policy of "liberation" or "reunification with" Taiwan. These stances, however, were cheered by the island republic's people who want an independent Taiwan completely separate from China. In Taiwan Lee's political controversy was also complicated by his personal background. He once publicly proclaimed his Japanese background: having a father who served as a low-level Japanese police, having a Japanese name Iwasato Masao (岩里政男), being awarded a Kyoto Imperial University scholarship, serving in the Japanese military, etc. More than the above, Lee announced that his Japan visit would include a tribute at the Yasukuni Shrine to commemorate his brother who was killed while serving in the Japanese army and receiving the Goto Shimpei award. The Yasukuni Shrine is the place where Japan honors her soldiers killed during World War II. Yet, these were the two and a half million soldiers who invaded China and brought catastrophic damages to China. Not only that, the Shrine also has nameplates of the major war criminals who were convicted at International War Tribunal but proclaimed as heroes there. Thus, for China, Taiwan, North and South Korea, and other nations that suffered from Japanese invasion or imperial rule, the Shrine has become a symbol of Japanese fascism and extreme aggression. Any visits by high-ranking Japanese officials re-open the wounds inflicted by Japanese invasion. Moreover, during this visit Lee wanted to receive the Goto Shimpei award that was deliberately created for him. Goto Shimpei was Taiwan's colonial

governor. Although he laid down much of the island's transport, health and agriculture infrastructure, during Goto Shimpei also massacred many Taiwanese aborigines and subjected the Taiwanese to absolute inequality under Japanese colonial rule. Hence, receiving the award named in honor of this former Japanese colonialist would certainly be seen as controversial.

In Taiwan, Lee was also suspected by his own KMT members to have supported the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) candidate Chen Shuibian in the 2000 presidential election. Subsequently, Lee was blamed for the KMT's defeat and was forced to step down as chairman of the KMT, while later he was even expelled from the KMT for his political stance on the KMT and pro-independence policy.

Lee is such a controversial political figure that his visit became a disputed issue, arousing wide attention and discussion in both Taiwan and Mainland China. Taking into consideration the differences in the media systems across the Taiwan Strait, we assume that the event would be reported differently by newspapers of the two places and that there would be greater uniformity in Mainland China's newspapers than in Taiwan's. It thus appears significant and interesting for us to find out how exactly they resemble or differ. This is the purpose of the present research.

This research aims to provide a detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of Mainland China's and Taiwan's news coverage of Lee's visit. The first part examines the critical moments in Taiwan-China relationship, compares the media systems of Taiwan and Mainland China, and presents the significance and purpose of this study. The second part deals with the discussion of the existent researches on the media of the two banks, theories and conceptualizations about news content. The third part discusses the methods of data collection and analysis for this research. Finally, the findings are presented and followed by discussions and conclusions.

I. TAIWAN AND MAINLAND CHINA RELATIONSHIP

Journalism is always dependent on the political regime of a country. Furthermore, international news usually experiences much more influence from the official policy of a government toward another country. As the present research deals with the event that is important for both Mainland China's and Taiwan's governments and for a long time Lee Teng-hui has been a controversial figure in the Taiwan-strait relations, it appears imperative first of all to analyze Mainland China- Taiwan relations by recalling and examining some of the critical key moments in past decades.

In the basic of both societies, Chinese and Taiwanese share the same historical origin, language, and cultural resources. However, these two regions have taken different paths of development. Mainland China has been under Communist authoritarian rule since 1949. It has since 1979 been going through unprecedented economic reforms and social changes under the continued political control of the Communist Party. On the other hand, Taiwan has since 1987 gone through structural transformation from the authoritarian rule of the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, KMT) to a multi-party democracy. Journalists in these two societies have been doing their work in the midst of all these changes, incorporating the consistently changing features of the media systems and negotiating their professional ethics and beliefs in their works (Lo, Chan & Pan, 2005).

The historical discussion has to be started from the proclamation of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the formation of Republic of China in 1911 and its continuation in Taiwan since 1949. During the Mao Zedong era, China had two distinct policies towards Taiwan. From 1949 to the early 1950s, Mao was determined to liberate Taiwan through force. This liberation through force continued into the late 1960s when China started to propose negotiations with Taiwan, which dismissed these initiatives as propaganda. Nevertheless, the two sides did try to contact each other cautiously and secretly in order to work out some tentative proposals and arrangements for reunification, in a format similar to the "one country, two systems" formula

now being implemented in Hong Kong. This process, however, was aborted by China's tumultuous Cultural Revolution since 1966 to 1976 (Sheng, 2002).

From the late 1970s when the Deng Xiaoping era started, Beijing no longer talked about liberating Taiwan through force. It formed a new policy for "peaceful reunification". Subsequently, it launched a series of peaceful initiatives towards Taiwan. This was followed by a thaw in the mid-1980s in cross-strait relationship, which developed fast, but mainly in one-way unofficial economic relations. Tens of thousands of Taiwanese businessmen invested in and traded with Mainland China, but not the reverse, because the Taiwan Government has banned investment and restricted goods from Mainland China.

In September 1990, Taiwan set up the National Unification Council (NUC) as an advisory body to the President. In early 1990s, the two sides have conducted fifteen rounds of "unofficial" talks. Although the 1992 Hong Kong talks between China's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) and the Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) did not reach any concrete agreement, they did lead the two sides to agree to continue the dialogues. The efforts culminated in the 1993 historic meeting in Singapore between Taiwan's Mr. Koo Chen-fu, SEF Chairman, and China's Mr. Wang Daohan, ARATS Chairman. At this meeting, four agreements were reached, the "Agreement on the Use and Verification of Certificates of Authentication Across the Taiwan Strait," the "Agreement on Matters Concerning Inquiry and Compensation for [Lost] Registered Mail Across the Taiwan Strait," the "Agreement on the System for Contacts and Meetings between SEF and ARATS," and the "Joint Agreement of the Koo-Wang Talks." (Sheng, 2002)

But, then in the mid-1990s two events prompted a crisis in the cross-strait relationship. The first was the Thousand Islands Lake Incident (千島湖事件). In April of 1994, while sightseeing on Thousand Islands Lake in Zhejiang province, Chun'an district, 32 tourists from Taiwan and several tour guides were robbed and murdered. The Chun'an local government blockaded the news on this incident while the central Public Security Bureau Police very roughly

handled this case. The tragedy exposed the big gap between the people of the two banks. The number of people in Taiwan opposing to the PRC government abruptly increased with a sharp decrease in the number of pro-unification people. The second critical event happened on May 22 in 1995, when to the surprise of many, the United States suddenly granted a visa to then President Lee Teng-hui for a six-day “private” visit to his alma mater, Cornell University. This immediately prompted a crisis in China-U.S. and Taiwan-China relationships.

On the other hand, the 1993 Singapore meeting laid the foundation for the October 1998 Koo-Wang meeting in Shanghai. At this meeting the two sides reached a four-point consensus, among which was a planned return visit to Taiwan the following year by ARATS Chairman Wang Daohan. At this meeting the two sides also agreed to "enhance the dialogue to resume systematic discussions," "promote exchanges of visits between SEF-ARATS staff at various levels," "actively provide mutual assistance on cases arising from exchanges," and "arrange Taiwan visit for Mr. Wang at an appropriate time." “These two meetings were the high points of cross-Straits relations ever since 1949, and the agreements and consensus reached then are the best cornerstone for positive interaction between the two sides. Looking back, we can say that, if not for the 1992 Hong Kong meeting, there would have been no 1993 Koo-Wang talks, let alone the 1998 meeting”¹, said Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) Chairperson Jaushieh Joseph Wu at the Straits Exchange Foundation on October 14, 2004.

The other significant moment in the cross-strait relationship was the public announcement of Lee Teng-hui’s “Two States” comment. On July 9, 1999 in an interview with a German radio station Deutsche Welle, Lee Teng-hui, to the surprise of many, for the first time openly defined the relations between Mainland China and Taiwan as “between two countries or at least special relationship between two countries”. With this definition, he abandoned Taiwan’s previous position of China and Taiwan being “two equal political entities”, which, according to him, were actually equal to “two countries”. He also noted that there was no need for Taiwan to

¹ Mainland Affairs Council, EY.

declare independence again since it, as Republic of China, has always been an independent country since 1912².

After the Tiananmen incident of 1989 and the Soviet collapse in 1991, the world including Lee Teng-hui were expecting a follow-up collapse of the Beijing communist government. In fact, he reiterated this several times in 1996 and told Taiwanese businessman not to invest heavily in China, hence forming his China policy of *jieji yongren* 戒急用忍 (go slow and be patient)³. Such perception accounted heavily for Lee's highly provocative stance toward Beijing.

Since his election on March 18, 2000, Taiwan's new President Chen Shui-bian initially surprised many people by his flexibility in handling the tension across the Taiwan Strait. In contrast to Lee, he repeatedly appealed for improved relationship with Beijing. However, with the Kuomintang (KMT) government defeated by the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) for the first time after fifty-five years in power in Taiwan, many people in Beijing began to question the feasibility of China's existing Taiwan policy (Sheng, 2002). They asked:

- Whether the "peaceful reunification strategy" would still work?
- Whether the United States merely wants to maintain cross-strait stability, promote Taiwan's final independence, or use Taiwan not only to slow down China's rise but also to eventually dismember China?
- Whether China should continue to follow Deng Xiaoping's policy of keeping a low profile and avoiding conflict if this policy cannot stop the determined push from both Taiwan and the United States?
- Whether China's modernization would be better served by solving the Taiwan problem now or later?

² *Associated Press Newswire*, July 10, 1999; *Lianhe Zaobao* (Singapore), July 11, 1999, p.2; and *China Times*, July 11, 1999., «Taiwan Redefines China Relations».

³ *China Times*, August 14, 1996.

- Whether force can eventually be avoided in solving the Taiwan problem? If not, would it cost more to use it now or later?

Chen and DPP have so far refused to accept the notion of one China, even if they may and can interpret this “one China” as the Republic of China (ROC) instead of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Chen insists that “the summit should not be limited by preconditions”⁴, i.e., Beijing’s insistence on the “one China” principle.

Moreover, not only Chen, DPP, but also many people in Taiwan do not consider themselves as belonging to the same nation as the Chinese on the mainland, though, they recognize, as Chen said in his May 20, 2000 presidential inauguration speech that “The people across the Taiwan Strait share the same ancestral, cultural, and historical background”. Chen has not accepted China’s demand to say he is “中國人” (Chinese) which has a political connotation.

Not only the political regimes between Mainland China and Taiwan seem to further move away from each other, but also are the media systems of across the strait.

II. MEDIA SYSTEMS OF TAIWAN AND MAINLAND CHINA

Before reforms took place in the late 1970s in China, media were the mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). However, situation has changed in some way with the economic reforms. Mainland China now is trying to modernize itself via economic reforms under the continued control by the Communist Party. Economic reforms as reflected in the media sector evidenced in media’s commercialization without press freedom (Chan 1993; Lee, 1994). Though remaining state-owned and Party-controlled, the Chinese media have undergone important changes, resulting in co-existence of Party organs and media outlets that thrive by their appeal to the mass consumers (Chan, 2004; Pan & Chan, 2003; Zhao, 1998). Journalists pressed to tend both the party line and the “bottom line” (Zhao, 1998), improvising ways of doing “journalism” to stay afloat in the tide of commercialization and political uncertainty. The

⁴ Jonh Pomfret, «Taiwan's President Calls for Summit with China», *Washington Post*, June 20, 2000; and “China Cold to President Chen’s Call for Summit”, *Reuters Newsline*, June 20, 2000.

transition has rendered the Communist journalism paradigm in China in a state of flux, with the Party ideals of journalism intertwined with blatant commercialism and professionalism imported primarily from the outside (Pan & Chan, 2003; Pan & Lu, 2003).

Taiwan had almost half a century of authoritarian rule when the Kuomintang was in power. But this authoritarian rule started to be dismantled in the late 1980s when the ruling Kuomintang embarked on a liberalization and democratization program. Lifting the ban on press freedom and political parties opened up a new political environment for the independence-leaning DPP to develop its political muscle and culminate in its victory in the 2000 presidential election. During the political transition, while market mechanism gained new importance, the major TV stations remained susceptible to the influence of KMT, the military and the government (Lee, 1994). The board of directors and managers of each station were dominated by people who were closely affiliated with powerful political interests. The major dailies were also linked to the political parties ideologically, if not organizationally (Lo, Chan & Pan, 2005). However, now Taiwan's press has evolved during the past 20 years to become one enjoying great freedom among all the countries in the world.

It appears reasonable here to have an overview of the current conditions of the press in Taiwan and China, because: 1. newspapers have become very widespread communication channels on both banks of the Taiwan Strait; and 2. the state of press freedom in these two regions is very distanced from each other. While Taiwan has a FREE press, China has totally NOT FREE press. Comparing the news coverage of Lee's visit shall help us understand each's respective news and media system.

According to *Taiwan Yearbook 2006*, Taiwan has more than 100 newspapers with about 30 being published regularly. Each day about 4.5 million copies are printed. The major dailies are concentrated in metropolitan Taipei. National dailies are mostly general-interest publications run by business conglomerates. The *Liberty Times* 自由時報 has enjoyed steady growth and stable sales throughout Taiwan. According to AC Nielsen's quarterly readership surveys, it was

consistently the number one daily prior to 2005 with the *Apple Daily* 蘋果日報 contending for the number one spot. The *Liberty Times* is most popular among the 40-60 age group, while the *Apple Daily* is the preferred choice of those in the 30-34 age group. Its innovative and sensational approach to news presentation and layout design led to the two other major dailies, the *United Daily News* (UDN) 聯合報 and *China Times* 中國時報, slipping down the rankings. Following the closing of the *China Times Express* 中時晚報 in October 2005, the *United Evening News* 聯合晚報, the former's long-time rival, has been the sole operator in the evening market. However, the four newspapers of the biggest influence still are: the *Liberty Times*, the *Apple Daily*, the *China Times*, and the *United Daily News* (UDN) (Taiwan Yearbook 2006).

According to the *International Finance News* in China, China up to 2004 had more than 2,000 newspapers, more than 9,000 magazines, more than 1,000 radio stations and 200 TV stations, 2,900 TV Channels. While all the newspapers are controlled by the government and the Party, the major ones, *People's Daily* (人民日報), *Guangming Daily* (光明日報), *Beijing Daily* (北京日報), *Jiefang Daily* (解放日報) are the ones that are much more closely affiliated with the Party than the others.

Reporters Without Borders (RWB), a Paris-based international non-government organization that advocates freedom of the press, compiles and publishes an annual ranking of countries based upon the organization's assessment of their press freedom records. The 2006 list was published on October 24, 2006. The report is based on a questionnaire sent to partner RWB organizations (14 freedom of expression groups in five continents) and its 130 correspondents around the world, as well as to journalists, researchers, jurists and human rights activists. The survey asks questions about direct attacks on journalists and the media as well as other indirect sources of pressure against the press. RWB is careful to note that the index only deals with press freedom, and does not measure the quality of journalism. The ranking also takes into account pressure on journalists by non-governmental groups, or pressure groups that can pose a real threat to press freedom. A higher index indicates more restraints on freedom of the press.

As the table is too big, only the beginning (the list of countries with a “very” free press), the middle (where Taiwan is), and the bottom of the table (countries with the lowest degree of press freedom, where mainland China is ranked) are reproduced here.

Table 1.1 RWB Press Freedom Index

N°	Country	Score
1	Finland	0.50
-	Iceland	0.50
-	Ireland	0.50
-	Netherlands	0.50
5	Czech Republic	0.75
6	Estonia	2.00
-	Norway	2.00
8	Slovakia	2.50
-	Switzerland	2.50
10	Hungary	3.00
-	Latvia	3.00
-	Portugal	3.00
-	Slovenia	3.00
40	Italy	9.90
41	El Salvador	10.00
-	Spain	10.00
43	Taiwan	10.50
44	South Africa	11.25
45	Cape Verde	11.50
160	Ethiopia	75.00
161	Saudi Arabia	76.00
162	Iran	90.88
163	China	94.00
164	Burma	94.75
165	Cuba	95.00
166	Eritrea	97.50
167	Turkmenistan	98.50
168	North Korea	109.00

Source: <http://www.rsf.org/>

In this list of 168 countries in which press freedom has been assessed, Taiwan holds the 43rd place with an index of 10.50, while Mainland China with an index of 94.0 takes the 6th from the bottom place, leading only North Korea, Turkmenistan, Eritrea, Cuba and Myanmar. In their “*World Wide Press Freedom Index 2006*”, members of RWB underline that “China (163rd place in the list) has dropped four places. While China’s media outlets are more numerous and aggressive now, at the same time repression carried out jointly by the government departments of propaganda and public security bureaus has increased. The government of the world’s most populous country stresses that it wants to keep its monopoly on all news, mainly through the state-run Xinhua news agency. Censorship has been stepped up, penalties increased, many news websites were shut down and physical attacks have escalated. One journalist was killed by police”. RWB noted that “Taiwan continues to move up and is now just behind Spain”.

Similar to RWB, the New York-based Freedom House has surveyed press freedom worldwide and published each year an annual freedom index. The 2006 survey, which provides numerical ratings for 194 countries and territories, expands a process conducted since 1980. The findings are widely used by governments, international organizations, academics, and news media in many countries. Countries are given a total score from 0 (best) to 100 (worst) on the basis of a set of 23 questions divided into three subcategories. Assigning numerical points allows for comparative analysis among the countries surveyed and facilitates an examination of trends over time. The degree to which each country permits free flow of news and information determines the classification of its media. Countries scoring 0 to 30 are regarded as having "Free" media; 31 to 60, "Partly Free" media; and 61 to 100, "Not Free" media. The ratings and reports included in *Freedom of the Press 2006* cover events that took place between January 1, 2005, and December 31, 2005.

Table 1.2 Freedom House Press Freedom Index on Asia Pacific

Rank	Country	Rating	Status
1	New Zealand	13	Free
2	Palau	14	Free
3	Marshall Islands	15	Free
4	Australia	19	Free
5	Japan	20	Free
	Micronesia	20	Free
	Taiwan	20	Free
8	Vanuatu	25	Free
9	Tuvalu	26	Free
10	Fiji	28	Free
	Kiribati	28	Free
12	Hong Kong	29	Free
	Papua New Guinea	29	Free
	Samoa	29	Free
	Nauru	30	Free
15	Solomon Islands	30	Free
	South Korea	30	Free
18	Tonga	32	Partly Free
19	Mongolia	34	Partly Free
20	India	37	Partly Free
21	East Timor	39	Partly Free
22	Philippines	40	Partly Free
23	Thailand	50	Partly Free
24	Indonesia	58	Partly Free
	Sri Lanka	58	Partly Free
26	Cambodia	61	Not Free
	Pakistan	61	Not Free
28	Bhutan	65	Not Free
	Malaysia	65	Not Free
30	Singapore	66	Not Free
31	Bangladesh	68	Not Free
32	Afghanistan	69	Not Free
33	Maldives	70	Not Free
34	Brunei	77	Not Free
	Nepal	77	Not Free
36	Vietnam	79	Not Free
37	Laos	81	Not Free
38	China	83	Not Free
39	Burma	96	Not Free
40	North Korea	97	Not Free

Source: www.freedomhouse.org/

Table 1.2, showing the rankings of Asia Pacific countries, sheds light on the media situations in Taiwan and China. According to this survey, Taiwan rating is 20 with a FREE status, while China's rating is 83 with a NOT FREE status. The fact that Taiwan's press is free means that it can report and comment on events independently, as evidenced in the division of the "Pan-Green" and "Pan-Blue" groups and media. Different media cover events from different perspectives, especially on Taiwan Strait issues. Thus, it can be expected that in Taiwan its "free" press would be expressing different political views on Lee Teng-hui's Japan visit. While China's "not free" newspapers would most probably show high homogeneity in reporting Lee's visit. Differences in the political systems and media systems in Taiwan and China already suggest the present's study significance, which we shall turn to in the following section.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Mass media are regarded as a major information source about the outside world because people see foreign countries through the frames that mass media provide. It has also been found that news media's routines can greatly influence people's perception of foreign countries (Park, 2002).

This thesis provides analysis of comparison of news coverage of Lee Teng-hui's 11-day visit to Japan from May 30 to June 9, 2007 in Mainland China and Taiwan newspapers. As the only research analyzing the coverage of this visit by Lee to Japan it will provide a historical record of this highly controversial visit inside Taiwan and across the Taiwan Strait. It is known that Lee Teng-hui has always been considered a "political element struggling for the Taiwan independence" by the mainland China, while some Taiwan people do not like his pro-Japan views.

Moreover, this research contrasts with previous research on the comparison of Mainland China and Taiwan newspapers' coverage in that the present analyze not only deals with an issue that concerns China and Taiwan media and government, but also analysis the event that occurred

in the third place. Thus, previous works analyzed factors influencing both periods of journalist work: gathering information and writing it down in the article. This thesis, by analyzing coverage of the event by Mainland China and Taiwan dailies happened in the third region, excludes all the factors that can influence journalist during the period of gathering information, such as Taiwan or Mainland China government control, restrictions or limitations. Dailies from both sides of Taiwan Strait had equal opportunities in getting the same, provided by Japan or international news agencies, objective information. Hence, this analyze concentrates and examines only the factors influencing the part of reporter work that has been doing exactly and specifically in a news and editors room, analyzing the factors and their implement on choosing the angle in reporting the same event.

The interest and controversial aspect of issue lies also in the historical and political aspects among the three places. Research on this topic can bring to people more adequate understanding of the factors which influence the coverage of mainland China's and Taiwan's news, such as the use of news sources, different lexical and thematic constructions, etc. Thus, the findings can help us appreciate how political systems ideology frames impact on media performance.

For the author of this thesis, the present research is very important and very meaningful. During her studies for a Bachelor degree in Russia, she always paid much attention to the question of the two-banks across the Taiwan Strait. During her previous work she tried to collect historical knowledge on across the Taiwan Strait relation and mass media in two places. But of even greater significance for her was always the political, ideological, cultural, economical differences between the two banks as reflected in the news coverage of Taiwan's and mainland China's newspapers. Having the opportunity to refer to the greater volume of Taiwan and Mainland China's literature and press during her studying in Taiwan, she could not miss the opportunity to extend and widen her research.

IV. RESEARCH PROBLEMS OF THE STUDY

The focus of the thesis is the news coverage of former president Lee Teng-hui's Japan visit from May 30 to June 9 2007 in the major dailies in Taiwan and Mainland China. Coverage of Lee's visit was chosen because Lee is a known a controversial political figure in both places and still carries with him certain residual influence in Taiwan's domestic politics. Comparisons are aimed at unearthing data to demonstrate the differences of the dailies in either Taiwan or China and the extent of the changes that have been taking place in the two changing media systems.

Specifically, the thesis attempts to provide data to the following two major problems:

1. How does the news coverage of Lee's Japan visit in Taiwan and China differ in terms of size of coverage, use of photographs, news sources, and page locations in the chosen newspapers?

These editorial routines intend to help to reveal the extent and slant of the media's attention to the event.

2. How does news in the two places frame Lee's visit to Japan?

An essential use of language to reconstruct an event, framing, by way of the chosen thematic structures and the major actors in these themes as well as the lexical style and rhetoric in the news reveals how a news medium looks at an event, exposing its favors and biases.

It is expected that answers to these two problems can shed light on differences of the news coverage between the two places and among the newspapers themselves in each place. Moreover, they will shed light on the respective news system. Amid these comparisons, it is also expected that differences in the chosen Taiwan dailies shall be much greater than those in the chosen China dailies. Although greater homogeneity in China's coverage of Lee's visit is expected, there should be some differences between the more closely Party-affiliated dailies and the more market-oriented dailies. These findings shall also aid understanding of news making in

the two political systems. Review of theoretical conceptualizations of general news and international news content and discussion of sampling and data collection methods in Chapter II and III respectively provide the basis for making these remarks.