

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

It is of no surprise that China's press gave less attention to Lee's visit than Taiwan press did. For one thing, Lee Teng-hui is no longer the president, thus became much less influential political figure than before for Mainland China. In Taiwan he remains one of the persons that media always pay attention to. However, both bank's media still consider him and his Japan visit in 2007 as highly controversial issue.

Analysis of the lexical and syntactical styles found that all 14 newspapers covered Lee Teng-hui's visit in two pairs of overlapping frames: on the one hand, it is the pair of a betrayer and a problem-maker frames, while on the other hand it is the pair of nostalgia and humanitarian frames. All Mainland China dailies castigated Lee Teng-hui as a traitor for his visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, where tens of thousands of Japan soldiers and convicted war criminals who fought China were worshiped as heroes. Also, one of the most widespread persuasions in coverage by China media was that the claimed reasons for the visit by Lee Teng-hui and Japan politicians were not nostalgia or humanitarian motives, but the promotion of Taiwan independence. According to Mainland China dailies, Lee deliberately creates problems by raising controversial issues as he visits the Yasukuni Shrine and receives the Goto Shimpei award just for the sole reason of gaining personal attention. Knowing that these activities would provoke much political criticism to attract media attention, he expected to have a "political arena" for proclaiming his political stances toward Taiwan independence issue. The nostalgia and humanitarian frames appeared in only four Mainland China newspapers, such as *Global Times*, *New Express*, *Information Times* and *China Youth Daily*. Still, the main message in these newspapers was that: nostalgia and humanitarian motives for going to Japan were just fabricated by Lee himself as an excuse to cover up the real purpose of the visit.

On comparison, the two Taiwanese newspapers employed more frames in covering Lee's visit. Even though *China Times* used both pairs of frames, the betrayer and the problem-maker

frames appeared only in the context of referring to the criticism. *China Times* attributed to the humanitarian motives as the major reason for visit and for paying respect to his brother. On the other hand, personal nostalgia motives accounted for this Lee's probably last visit to Japan. The high controversy of the Yasukuni Shrine and the Goto Shimpei award explained the betrayer frame. In contrast, the problem maker and the betrayer frames were absent in the *Liberty Times*. This daily framed Lee's Japan visit just from the nostalgia and the humanitarian motives.

The present thesis also confirmed the findings of Hsu's (2003) research that the Chinese and Taiwanese Press covers political issues in frequently diametrically different ways. Hsu found that the Chinese press more than the Taiwanese press tended to report the issues along with the government stances. Chen (2005) also found a strong link between government policy and news in China. These close relations can be seen in reporting on Lee's receiving Goto Shimpei award. Since there was no official Chinese Government or Party comments on this award, no China newspaper reported this event.

Hsu (2003) found that few market-oriented newspapers in China were adopting a capitalist mode on reporting within the confinement of official government's policies. This was also the case in this present analysis. Three China dailies, *New Express*, *Information Times* and *Global Times*, exhibited differences in coverage of Lee's visit in comparison with other dailies. All these three papers are published in the more "open" cities. *New Express* and *Information Times* are located in Guangzhou, and they together with the *Global Times* are also more market oriented dailies. According to the *China Journalism Yearbook (2003)* research conducted in different cities in China on the interest of people in news about Taiwan, Guangdong province has the highest percentage of interest. 20.1 % of the Guangdong people are interested in such news- this number is almost three times higher than the percentages in other cities in China. *New Express*, *Information Times* and *Global Times* mentioned the purposes of Lee Teng-hui's visit as given by Lee not just how China understood them. The average size of articles in these three market-oriented newspapers was also longer than that in others. The most "open" in its views on

international news was *Global Times*, which in addition to official Xinhua release, referred to Taiwan and Japan comments.

As we know, and it was discussed in details in the conceptualization and theorization part, propaganda model (Pochepcov, 2001, Kara-Murza, 2000) considers the news source as a very important part of the message. The information source provides us the understanding from where this assumption is growing, and who wants to receive a benefit from it. Lee Teng-hui's visit took place in a third country, one would assume that international news agencies would naturally be used in reporting the event. However, our study once more confirmed the finding by Hsu (2003) and Chen (2005) that the Chinese Xinhua new agency dominated. Only *New Express*, *Information Times* and *Global Times* used other news sources to provide a more comprehensive picture of the visit. They also referred to Lee Teng-hui as a "former Taiwan president" or an influential politician.

On comparison, the two Taiwanese newspapers were definitely more diversified in their coverage and opinions. For obvious reason, they paid much more attention to Lee Teng-hui's visit. From Lee's day of departure, at least one article each day was devoted to this topic. Furthermore, each newspaper dispatched a special correspondent to Japan to cover Lee Teng-hui's visit. The average size of the articles was also quite big. In contrast with China's papers, the daily coverage was also accompanied by generally very positive photos.

The *Liberty Times*, which usually supports DPP, said more positive things about Lee Teng-hui's visit and his attribute to his brother. Meanwhile, the *China Times*, which usually supports KMT or neutral in its position, was more critical of this visit. The *Liberty Times*, in comparison with its counterpart, had more and longer articles, and used more its special correspondent as a news source. The paper also used specific lexicons in defending Lee Teng-hui by underlining that "everyone is free to decide" what needed to be done, that this visit was "nothing extraordinary" but a private issue. Meanwhile, *China Times* was sometimes very harsh toward Lee Teng-hui in its choice of words and criticism.

Thus, the propaganda model is still the main factor having a big impact on the framing of events by Mainland China newspapers. While some dailies step toward a small degree of press freedom, they are still doing their job within rigid government boundaries. Meanwhile, in Taiwan media are free from the government propaganda of official point of view, but the island's political climate obviously has its impact on how certain issues would be covered, especially such controversial issue as Lee' Teng-hui's visit to Japan in 2007.

Historical events and facts contain little meaning in themselves (Kellner, 1989), historians connect them together to establish meaning. So do journalists, who are not more chroniclers. They do not simply record an event, they write stories (Bell, 1991) and interpret events (Schudson, 1995). Narrative in news stories connects events together and "create consequence out of sequence" in a meaningful and understandable way (Fiske, 1987, pp.129). Therefore, journalists mold facts within a limited number of "narrative frameworks" (Olasky, 1991) to the purpose of promoting certain social values. A journalist's rhetoric decisions are never neutral (Mumby, 1993). His or her literary techniques inescapably carry political and ideological implications (Gonzalez, 1993). Every story teaches or confirms certain moral values, or "moralize reality", as White (1981) argues. Ideology has inescapably been behind the choice of what to include and what to leave out in a story.

This research on coverage of Lee's visit to Japan in China and Taiwan newspapers has once more confirmed all these observations. On the other hand, as China's media reform has been in place for about 30 years, the Party remains its tight or full control of the information or views it wants the people to know. However, more market-oriented dailies have shown signs in attempting to do more than just reprinting official news release by providing more details from different sources within government guidelines.

Although the thesis has chosen 12 China dailies and 2 Taiwan dailies for analysis, it did not include any Japanese newspapers in its samples. Considering Lee's cross-strait controversy in the past and his potential impact on Japan-China and Japan-Taiwan relationship, it will be of

both political and academic interest to see how major Japanese dailies as *Mainichi Shimbun*, *Asahi Shimbun* and *Yomiuri Shimbun* covered “Japan’s favored son” who was at the same time “China’s arche eyesore” and “Taiwan’s most debated politician”.