

James Lin
AACS Meeting 2019
NOT FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION – DO NOT CITE

In the Vanguard: Taiwanese Agricultural Development in Vietnam and Africa, 1959-1971

The colonial powers can no longer use the methods of the past to continue their plunder and oppression. The Asia and Africa of today are no longer the Asia and Africa of yesterday. Many countries of this region have taken their destiny into their own hands after long years of endeavours.

- Zhou Enlai', Premier of the People's Republic of China, in 1955 speech to the Bandung Conference

Introduction

On a chilly December evening in 1978, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Yang Xikun (楊西崑, Yang Hsi-kun) presided as the flag of the Republic of China was lowered amidst a light drizzle in the grounds of the ROC embassy, Twin Oaks, in Washington, DC.² An 18-acre estate located in the wealthy Cleveland Park residential neighborhood of Washington, Twin Oaks served for over forty years as the residence of the ROC diplomat to the United States from 1937 to 1978. In 1979, with the severance of diplomatic relations between the ROC and the United States, Twin Oaks ceased to serve as the official embassy for the ROC.

Yang's presence at that fateful moment was befitting of the irony of the ROC's 1970s international history. Taiwanese and African newspapers dubbed Yang "Mr. Africa" (非洲先生 *feizhou xiansheng*), a reference to the internationalization diplomacy of Taiwan during the 1960s, aimed at obtaining United Nations allies among the newly decolonizing and vote-carrying nation-states of Africa and Asia. On the ground, this diplomacy consisted of the ROC sending agricultural technical teams abroad, beginning with South Vietnam in 1959. Like most later missions, this one began modestly—just over a dozen technicians, specializing in plant breeding, irrigation, fisheries and farmers associations, who were then tasked with helping Vietnamese state-led efforts at crop improvement and rural welfare. In Taipei, however, this diplomacy was a concerted effort by the ROC to leverage its success at agricultural technology and science as a form of soft diplomacy, buoying its international prestige via humanitarian action.

¹ 1898-1976 Zhou Enlai, *Main Speech by Premier Zhou Enlai, Head of the Delegation of the People's Republic of China, Distributed at the Plenary Session of the Asian-African Conference* (History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, 1955), <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121623>.

² "ROC Flag-Raising Ceremony Held at Twin Oaks in D.C., First Time in 36 Years," Kuomintang News Network, accessed February 1, 2016, <http://www1.kmt.org.tw/english/page.aspx?type=article&mnum=112&anum=15631>.

In 1961 these efforts were organized into “Operation Vanguard” (先鋒案 *xianfeng an* or 先鋒計劃 *xianfeng jihua*) under direction of the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)³. These newly emerging “Third World” allies were crucial for the ROC’s continued international existence. When the ROC regime was defeated by Communist forces in 1949 and retreated to the mainland, it continued to be recognized as the legitimate government of all of China and thus retained control of its crucial seat in the UN. Almost immediately after its victory, the PRC, led by Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai, sought that UN seat. Albania, at the time one of the closest international communist allies of the PRC, continually introduced resolutions in the UN to recognize the PRC as the official representative of China, which would delegitimize the ROC and force the ROC to forfeit the seat it held. This led to a unique global Cold War battled between the PRC and ROC, waged culturally, economically, and developmentally in order to win influence among vote-carrying nations that would support their respective UN positions. Yet efforts to curry favor among African and Asian nations ultimately proved a failure for the ROC; in 1971, the ROC lost its seat in the United Nations, and by 1979, the United States formally extended diplomatic recognition to the PRC in lieu of the ROC.

The efforts of the ROC amidst a diplomatic proxy war with the PRC is largely told as one of states and statesmen—secret deals made behind closed mahogany doors, Nixon and Kissinger, and Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping. Though the Cold War is crucial throughout this history, what is lost in this narrative of high diplomacy was a little known yet robust development campaign launched on the part of the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs to secure its international position. This campaign of development diplomacy reached over two dozen African and Asian nations at its peak, and continues until the present. American dollars secretly funded these efforts, postcolonial leaders across the Third World welcomed Taiwanese technical missions, and all the while, Taiwanese technocrats outlined a vision of the developing world as following in the footsteps of Taiwan’s own modernization.

This chapter recovers a lost history of Taiwan’s development — its agricultural technical missions abroad to the developing world. It focuses specifically on the agricultural technical missions to Africa and Vietnam, “Operation Vanguard,” and it discusses the visions of modernity contained within the missions as shaped by the Chinese technocrats in charge of their implementation. The chapter simultaneously explores the international and global circumstances constraining the actions of the ROC leading it toward “development diplomacy” as well as on the ground consequences of this diplomacy. In other words, it is necessary to unpack the meanings of modernity, the Third World, and the Cold War in order to understand how they influenced what types of agricultural technologies and practices Taiwanese technicians were implementing in places like Chad, Cote d’Ivoire, and Vietnam. It argues that ROC foreign policy and science officials packaged elements of Taiwan’s agricultural development history into a Taiwanese model

³ Eventually these technical assistance missions abroad became institutionalized under a separate entity, the International Cooperation and Development Fund.

that they portrayed as being better suited for the tropical and subtropical agrarian societies of Africa and Southeast Asia. And that this portrayal became essential to the ROC's search for an identity after losing the mainland.

The history of Taiwan's development missions abroad is important for our understanding of the waging of the Cold War on the ground, the transformation of development toward South-to-South connections, and the evolution of international worldviews among postcolonial societies like Taiwan. Funded by US dollars, Operation Vanguard was a form of soft power exertion by the United States in order to obtain better diplomatic conditions for its ally, the ROC. As a secondary benefit, the United States also sought to bring decolonizing nations into its orbit and away from the allure of communism. In the early Cold War, programs like Point Four, the Economic Cooperation Administration, and its later iterations brought direct US technical aid to nations in Africa and Asia. Vanguard represented a step forward, moving from a hub-and-spokes model with the US in the center to a distributed web of development with US allies aiding one another (albeit with US clandestine funding). Taiwan served as a front, a guise under which the US could attain its Cold War objectives.

However, Vanguard serving as a proxy for funneling US dollars did not detract from the robustness of the theories and practices embedded within Vanguard missions, nor did it remove the agency of Taiwanese development practitioners who co-opted Vanguard to demonstrate the superiority of Taiwanese development. Since its funding status was kept secret, Vanguard planners possessed significant leeway to exercise intellectual freedom in constructing their model of development. Drawing upon their own technical expertise, Taiwanese development goals reflected an idealized image of Taiwan itself. This reflection was deeper than a matter of technical comparative advantage. Many of the Taiwanese elites who had overseen the rapid growth in agricultural production in Taiwan took particular pride in its success, especially vis-a-vis other decolonizing nations internationally. Furthermore, by the 1960s, Chiang Kai-shek's repeated rhetoric of retaking the mainland began to appear increasingly unrealistic as the PRC consolidated its regime and built up its military force. The reality of possible permanent separation from the mainland began to set in. In staking their international interactions upon a rising international standard of nation-building—economic development—Taiwanese intellectuals were beginning to locate a postcolonial identity through South-to-South aid.

Despite the importance of Vanguard to Taiwan and US Cold War interests, relatively few scholars have written about this episode of international history. PRC missions have been examined by scholars such as Deborah Brautigam (examining agricultural technical assistance) and Gregg Brazinsky (in the context of Sino-American competition during the Cold War).⁴ Historian Simon Toner has written about how Vietnamese state officials

⁴ Deborah Brautigam, *Chinese Aid and African Development: Exporting Green Revolution*, International Political Economy Series (Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1998). Gregg A. Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World: Sino-American Rivalry during the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

looked to Taiwan and South Korea as potential development models.⁵ In the English language literature, political scientist John Garver had written about ROC assistance to Vietnam in his book, *The Sino-American Alliance*, albeit only briefly and largely within a political context.⁶ Geography scholars Kathleen Baker, Richard Edmonds, and Shih-Shen Chien have written about more contemporary Taiwanese overseas development assistance, but have not discussed these from a historical perspective, and most importantly the reasons for the genesis of Taiwanese development.⁷

The most thorough analysis of the Vanguard missions come from Philip Hsiao-pong Liu's (劉曉鵬) doctoral dissertation, a diplomatic history of the Vanguard missions to Africa.⁸ In the Chinese language literature, historian Wang Wen-lung (王文隆) has similarly written of the Vanguard missions to Africa.⁹ Though the diplomatic history is key to understanding the rise of Vanguard, this chapter seeks to examine not just foreign policy and geopolitical calculations, but also the content of Vanguard missions and what they meant to those practicing development. Within the policy blueprints, mission reports, and even propaganda articles and speeches, a picture emerges of Taiwan's efforts at utilizing its development expertise as a means of postcolonial identity. This chapter illuminates why development and post-colonialism converged in this era, and what it meant for the evolution of development history and Taiwan.

The United Nations

The founding of the United Nations in 1945 from the ashes of World War II saw the Republic of China included as one of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. Serving as a permanent member on the Security Council proved valuable to the ROC's international interests. In 1955, the ROC used its Security Council veto power to prevent the admission of Mongolia as a member of the United Nations, pursuant to its claim over Mongolian territory from the founding of the ROC in 1911 as a

⁵ Simon Toner, "Imagining Taiwan: The Nixon Administration, the Developmental States, and South Vietnam's Search for Economic Viability, 1969–1975," *Diplomatic History*, March 7, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/dh/dhw057>.

⁶ John W. Garver, *The Sino-American Alliance: Nationalist China and American Cold War Strategy in Asia* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1997).

⁷ Kathleen M Baker and Richard Louis Edmonds, "Transfer of Taiwanese Ideas and Technology to the Gambia, West Africa: A Viable Approach to Rural Development?," *Geographical Journal* 170, no. 3 (2004): 189–211, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0016-7398.2004.00120.x>. Shih-Shen Chien, Tzu-Po Yang, and Yi-Chen Wu, "Taiwan's Foreign Aid and Technical Assistance in the Marshall Islands," *Asian Survey* 50, no. 6 (November 1, 2010): 1184–1204, <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2010.50.6.1184>.

⁸ Hsiao-pong Liu, "The Making of an Artificial Power: American Money and 'Chinese' Technicians on African Soil, 1961–1971" (Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Chicago, 2006). Liu also authored an article in the *China Quarterly* derived from his dissertation. Philip Hsiao-pong Liu, "Planting Rice on the Roof of the UN Building: Analysing Taiwan's 'Chinese' Techniques in Africa, 1961–Present," *The China Quarterly* 198 (2009): 381–400, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741009000368>.

⁹ Wen-lung Wang, 外交下鄉·農業出洋：中華民國農技援助非洲的實施和影響 *Waijiao Xiaxiang, Nongye Chuyang: Zhonghua Minguo Nongji Yuanzhu Feizhou de Shishi He Yingxiang [Diplomacy Goes to the Countryside, Agriculture Goes Abroad: The Practice and Influence of the Republic of China's Agricultural Assistance to Africa]* (Taipei: National Cheng-chi University, 2004).

continuation of Qing territory. In 1949 after the Communist victory over the Guomindang (GMD), the Republic of China became a government-in-exile, exercising de facto governance over the island of Taiwan, and governing the rest of China only in name. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) established the People's Republic of China on the mainland. Despite losing control of the majority of its previously governed territory, the ROC retained its seat in the United Nations, though this would not last long.

Shortly after the establishment of the PRC, beginning in January 1950, Chinese Foreign Minister (and later also Premier) Zhou Enlai sent messages, relayed via Communist nations like Yugoslavia, contesting the legitimacy of the Guomindang ("Chinese Kuomintang reactionary remnant clique")¹⁰. By the 1960s PRC ally Albania began submitting resolutions to the United Nations General Assembly to recognize the PRC in lieu of the ROC. These received the support of the communist bloc of nations. In 1961, in response to this, the United States and its allies in the United Nations put forth UN General Assembly Resolution 1168, which dictated that any change stemming from two governments contesting legitimacy over a seat be regarded as an "important question," thus requiring a supermajority vote of two-thirds of the General Assembly before any action is taken.¹¹

Resolution 1168 gave the ROC a temporary respite, but with decolonization coming into full force, new nations among the former European colonies in Africa were joining at a rapid rate. Western nations that voted predominantly with the United States and that outnumbered the communist bloc, in contrast, were fixed in number. Given the arithmetic reality, ROC Foreign Ministry planners understood that they needed votes among the newly decolonizing nations in order to prevent a supermajority from forming on behalf of Beijing to oust the ROC.

¹⁰ "United Nations Security Council Document S/1462; Letter Dated 21 February 1950 From the Representative of Yugoslavia to the Secretary-General," accessed February 8, 2016, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/NL5/014/62/PDF/NL501462.pdf?OpenElement>.

¹¹ United Nations, *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixteenth Session: Annexes*, 66, accessed February 8, 2016, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/1668\(XVI\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/1668(XVI)).

AFRICAN VOTE SHIFT ON CHINESE REPRESENTATION

(Resolution calling for expulsion of GRC
and seating of the Chinese Communists)

<u>1963</u>			
<u>Country</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Burundi	x		
Cameroon		x	
Chad		x	
Congo (L)		x	
Dahomey		x	
Libya		x	
Rwanda		x	
Senegal		x	
CAR		x	
Congo (B)		x	
Ethiopia			absent
Nigeria			x
Mauritania			x
Sierra Leone			x
Tunisia			x

<u>1965</u>			
<u>Country</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Burundi			x
Cameroon			x
Chad			x
Congo (L)			absent
Dahomey		not participating	
Libya			x
Rwanda			x
Senegal			x
CAR	x		
Tunisia			x
Congo (B)	x		
Ethiopia	x		
Nigeria	x		
Mauritania	x		
Sierra Leone	x		

NEW STATES (1965)

<u>Country</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>
Kenya	x		
Zambia	x		
Gambia		x	
Malawi		x	

Photograph: State Department document showing projected votes among African nations on UN resolution calling for the expulsion of the ROC and replacement with the PRC.¹² At the bottom there is a list showing new states joining the UN that had the potential to shift the balance of votes.

Vietnam

In 1955, Ngo Dinh Diem took power as prime minister of the newly established Republic of Vietnam (RVN). The RVN was established by the partitioning of Vietnam to a communist north (the Democratic Republic of Vietnam) and a non-communist south

¹² "African Vote Shift on Chinese Representation," undated (1965?). Folder "Vice Minister Yang Visit December 1965"; Box 2; Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs, Office of ROC Affairs, 1951-1978; Records of the State Department, RG 59; NACP.

supported by the US. By then, US aid had been increasing after French losses to communist insurgency in Indochina, and Vietnam was seen as a crucial territory that required US guidance and tutelage.¹³ Several prominent American development experts were appointed to serve in Vietnam, including the land reform expert attached to the US Department of Agriculture, Wolf Ladejinsky (see Chapter 4). As historian Edward Miller has observed, experts like Ladejinsky and others who determined technical aid and rural reconstruction policy in Vietnam all had prior experience in other Asian countries¹⁴. This was certainly the case for William H. Fippin, director of agriculture for US Operations Mission to Vietnam (USOM/Vietnam).

Before he served as USOM Director of Agriculture in Vietnam, William H. Fippin was one of two American commissioners from 1952 to 1957 for the Sino-American Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (JCRR) in Taiwan. Beginning in 1949, JCRR was the highest-level agricultural policy making body for the island. Fippin was a specialist in farmers organizations who had overseen several of the farmers association reforms in the early years of JCRR tenure.¹⁵ As a result of his five years in JCRR, Fippin was not only intimately familiar with the operations and speciality of JCRR in farmers associations, but also held that Taiwan was a particularly successful case of agricultural development. In 1957, the International Cooperation Administration (one of the predecessors to the modern-day US Agency for International Development) moved Fippin to Vietnam, an area of increasing security concern. For Vietnam in particular, agricultural development became a key concern of not just the Americans in Vietnam and in Washington, but also for the Diem government. Shortly after his arrival, Fippin wrote to former colleague JCRR Commissioner Shen Zonghan that “the agricultural program is the largest and in their eyes most important (except of course the military)” for the Vietnamese, especially in the context of seeking American aid to fight the growing communist threat.¹⁶

On April 4, 1959, in a memorandum to the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, a Taiwanese Foreign Affairs official in Vietnam wrote that “in discussion with USOM Agricultural Director Fippin and Vietnam Agricultural and Forestry Minister Le Van Dong, the US has prepared \$300,000, to invite twenty or thirty foreign agricultural experts to lead assistance (協助 *xiezhù*).¹⁷” The initial decision to invite Taiwanese experts was largely

¹³ Edward Garvey Miller, *Misalliance: Ngo Dinh Diem, the United States, and the Fate of South Vietnam* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2013), 72.

¹⁴ Miller, 79.

¹⁵ Jiang Menglin to W.I. Myers, May 23, 1951; Archive Number 034000000351A; Folder “Myers, W.I.” in “Shen Zonghan Letter Drafts” [沈宗瀚文件稿]; Council of Agriculture, Executive Yuan Collection [行政院農委會]; Academia Historica Archives 國史館, Taipei, Taiwan.

¹⁶ August 31, 1957. Letter from William H. Fippin to Shen Zonghan. Archive number 034000000337A, “沈宗翰文件稿 (4箱)” [Shen Zonghan Document Drafts (“Fippin, W.F.”)], Council of Agriculture, Executive Yuan, Academia Historica Archives, Taiwan.

¹⁷ [“與美援署USOM之農業方面主持人菲平及越南農林部部長Le Van Dong商談。目前USOM已備有三十餘萬美金可資聘請外籍農業專家二三十人前來指導協助”] April 4, 1959, “Agricultural Technicians in Vietnam,” Folder 020000030452A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica Archives. 入藏登錄號 020000030452A, 「駐越農技團」, 外交部文件史料, 國史館, 台北市, 台灣。

made at the behest of Fippin, stemming from his experience as JCRR commissioner. The Taiwanese official in Vietnam continued, “Because of Fippin having been in Taiwan for many years, and having worked well with many people within our agricultural circles, he has strongly advocated to invite [experts] from our side. The Vietnamese Agricultural and Forestry Minister, however, is interested in hiring French experts.”¹⁸ The Vietnamese preference for French experts was unsurprising given the long colonial relationship between France and Indochina. The decision to choose Taiwanese experts was a bit more unusual.

Vietnamese officials within the State of Vietnam (1945-1954), the predecessor to Ngo Dinh Diem’s Republic of Vietnam government, had as early as 1949 been observing the developments of JCRR in China and Taiwan. In a document from the State of Vietnam Ministry of Public Works and Transportation (Bộ Công Chánh và Giao Thông), possibly a translation of an American publication by Vietnamese officials, JCRR was described as focused on “bringing earnings to the rural population” and “also recognizing the value of long term research and education.”¹⁹ It goes on to explain that JCRR was not a program designed to funnel large amounts of US currency “because experience has shown in Asia, it was difficult, at least in the beginning, to expend large sums quickly and in a reasonable (wise) manner. On the contrary, it is a lively, dynamic program that begins by finding what is necessary for an ordinary farming family.”²⁰ Though it is not entirely clear where this translation originated, it was most assuredly read among officials of the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation, and likely became increasingly important as US support for Vietnam increased under the Diem regime and Vietnamese planners looked to potential joint development projects with the US. In contrast with development programs that are seen as highly capital intensive, a picture emerges of JCRR as being more attuned to the needs of the rural peasant.

¹⁸ [菲平因在台多年，與我國內額多農業界人士相處甚洽，極力主張向我方聘請。越南農林部長則有意聘法供人] April 4, 1959, “Agricultural Technicians in Vietnam,” Folder 020000030452A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica Archives. 入藏登錄號020000030452A, 「駐越農技團」, 外交部文件史料, 國史館, 台北市, 台灣。

¹⁹ “à apporter des revenus à la population rurale...reconnait aussi la valeur des programmes à longue portée de recherches et d’éducation.” Programme de la Commission Mixte Pour la Reconstruction Rurale en Chine [Program of the Joint Commission for Rural Reconstruction in China], 1949, Folder 02 - Tài liệu về chương trình tái thiết nông thôn Trung Quốc năm 1948-1949 (Program about the Joint Commission for Rural Reconstruction program 1948-1949), Bộ Công Chánh và Giao Thông (Ministry of Public Works and Transportation), Trung Tâm Lưu Trữ Quốc Gia II [National Archives Center II], Ho Chi Minh City.

²⁰ “Car l’expérience avait montré qu’en Asie, il était difficile, au moins au début, de dépenser de grosses sommes rapidement et de façon raisonnable (sagement). Au contraire, c’est un programme vivant, dynamique, qui a commencé par chercher à trouver ce qui est nécessaire à une famille ordinaire d’agriculteurs.” Programme de la Commission Mixte Pour la Reconstruction Rurale en Chine [Program of the Joint Commission for Rural Reconstruction in China], 1949, Folder 02 - Tài liệu về chương trình tái thiết nông thôn Trung Quốc năm 1948-1949 (Program about the Joint Commission for Rural Reconstruction program 1948-1949), Bộ Công Chánh và Giao Thông (Ministry of Public Works and Transportation), Trung Tâm Lưu Trữ Quốc Gia II [National Archives Center II], Ho Chi Minh City.

Nonetheless, the decision to invite Taiwanese development experts in 1959 should mostly be attributed to the presence of William Fippin. Fippin's position as head of USOM/Vietnam Agriculture and as former head of JCRR gave him a direct link to the Taiwanese, but there were also intellectual reasons behind the choice beyond mere coincidence and convenience.

The issue with Vietnam's agrarian "problem" was deep-rooted and structural. The countryside was where the National Liberation Front (Viet Cong) operated and drew support. Both the RVN and the US thus targeted rural areas, hence later campaigns such as "pacification" and Strategic Hamlet that focused on rural areas. But approaches for programs to counter communist insurgency differed between the two allies. Fippin and other US officials realized that Diem's demands were centered on amassing as many US dollars with as few strings attached as possible. Fippin sought to discourage this by emphasizing low-cost, high-impact solutions that could be realistically achieved with American assistance. Translated into policy, this meant focusing on projects that could be easily implemented and would not require significant capital or labor resources. "Water," he wrote, was the "biggest, and most difficult problem, but one that we can do relatively little about. Problem is too large. Have seen an old French estimate that control of the Mekong would run to the magnitude of several billion US dollars. Will be a long, long time before anything much is done in that direction so all we can do is a dab here and a dab there."

Instead, Fippin chose to focus on aspects that the Taiwanese excelled at: "And because of lack of water control we are limited in what can be done about varietal improvement, fertilization, pest control and cultural practices." Coincidentally, these four were the core of JCRR practices dating back to the Cornell-Nanking cooperation and National Agricultural Research Bureau in Republican-era mainland. Taiwan benefitted from an extensive hydrological legacy left by Japanese colonialism—a network of canals that allowed for irrigation—and water infrastructure projects, such as the Shimen reservoir (石門水庫 *Shimen shuiku*) and dam, continued under JCRR with US funding. However, Taiwan's innovations in more easily transferable forms of development were arguably equally if not more important for its production capabilities, and certainly noteworthy for Fippin. Finally, Fippin also observed that "very much of the southern area floating rice is all that can be grown, and yields are pitifully low - slightly over one metric ton per hectare. One crop."²¹ This single cropping culture coincided with Taiwan's innovations in rice selection and breeding.

From a broader historical perspective, the commencement of missions abroad marked a significant evolution in Taiwan's agricultural development. By 1975, it had become one of the core objectives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Council for International Economic Cooperation and Development (CIECD) (*guoji jingji hezuo fazhan weiyuanhui* 國

²¹ August 31, 1957. Letter from William H. Fippin to Shen Zonghan. Archive number 034000000337A, "沈宗翰文件稿 (4箱)" [Shen Zonghan Document Drafts ("Fippin, W.F.")], Council of Agriculture, Executive Yuan, Academia Historica Archives, Taiwan.

際經濟合作發展委員會 or *guo he hui* 國合會) of the Executive Yuan, the highest policy making body for international economic cooperation. The CIECD outlined four objectives:

1. Invite economic development officials and technicians from technical cooperation partner nations to observe and study in Taiwan in order to understand our nation's economic development measures.
2. Dispatch ROC experts to technical cooperation partner nations to observe and study in order to discuss possible steps and means of implementing cooperation.
3. Dispatch ROC technicians to technical cooperation partner nations to explain our nation's technical experience and methods with regards to agriculture and industry.
4. Invite technical cooperation partner nations to send technicians to the ROC to participate in lectures, practice, and training.²²

This four-part strategy was first established with Vietnam, which had sent parties of development experts and technicians to Taiwan since the mid-1950s. By the mid-1960s, Chiang Kai-shek saw technical assistance to other non-Communist Asian regimes as a means to stop Chinese Communist advances, reflecting his belief that North Vietnam was “completely controlled” by the PRC regime, and also that direct military aid as opposed to technical assistance would instead generate backlash.²³ Chiang viewed actions in Vietnam as part of a greater international anti-Communist effort that could not be limited to the borders of any one country.

In December 1959, the scope of ROC efforts abroad expanded when it sent technical aid missions to Vietnam. The Vietnam missions consisted initially of technicians and scientists in farmers organizations (associations and cooperatives), crop improvement, fisheries, and sugarcane. Over the course of its roughly fifteen years, it expanded to include plant breeding, veterinary medicine, entomology, soil science, and irrigation.

A major portion of the 1959 mission focused on crop improvement, with renowned plant breeder Ma Baozhi (馬保之, Paul C. Ma) at its head.²⁴ Ma began his career as an agricultural scientist in China, graduating in 1929 from one of the preeminent centers of agricultural science, Nanking University (*jinyin daxue* 金陵大學), followed by his

²² 「一，邀請技術合作國家經建官員及技術人員來華考察，以瞭解我國經建措施。二，由中華民國派遣專家赴技術合作國家考察，以研討可能進行合作之項目及方案。三，中華民國派遣技術人員赴技術合作國家，介紹我國農，工等業之技術經驗與方法。四，邀請技術合作國家派遣技術人員來華參加講習接受訓練。」 April 1975, “Republic of China Foreign Technical Cooperation,” Folder “Foreign Propaganda Magazine (Color Version), Chinese-Japanese Economic Newsletter, Operation Vanguard: Third Country Training” Volume 2, Archival Collection Number 36-01-006-025, Academia Sinica Modern History Institutes Archives, Taipei, Taiwan. 「中華民國對外技術合作」，「對外宣傳彩色專刊—中日經濟簡訊、先鋒計畫第三國訓練」第二冊、館藏號36-01-006-025，中央研究院近代史研究所檔案館，台北，台灣。

²³ Though this belief was relayed via the US embassy in Taipei, and not a direct quote of Chiang's words. Telegram, “President Appreciation for Actions of Non-Communist Asian Peoples in Vietnam,” 7/27/65, #13, “China,” Country File, NSF, Box 238, LBJ Library

²⁴ April 1975, “Republic of China Foreign Technical Cooperation,” Folder “Foreign Propaganda Magazine (Color Version), Chinese-Japanese Economic Newsletter, Operation Vanguard: Third Country Training” Volume 2, Archival Collection Number 36-01-006-025, Academia Sinica Modern History Institutes Archives, Taipei, Taiwan. 「中華民國對外技術合作」，「對外宣傳彩色專刊—中日經濟簡訊、先鋒計畫第三國訓練」第二冊、館藏號36-01-006-025，中央研究院近代史研究所檔案館，台北，台灣。

doctorate in plant breeding at Cornell University on fellowship and finally a year researching at Cambridge University.²⁵ Upon returning to China in 1934, he took a position with the National Agricultural Research Bureau (NARB, *zhongyang nongye yanjiu shiyansuo* 中央農業研究實驗所), in charge of operating the NARB Guangxi Extension Station. In 1944 he was appointed the head of the Agricultural Division within the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MOAF, *nonglin bu* 農林部) of the Republic of China, as well as later the Deputy Chief for the Agricultural Rehabilitation Commission established by the MOAF to work with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration in China. After moving to Taiwan with the Nationalist regime, he became the dean of the College of Agriculture in the flagship National Taiwan University. In choosing Ma as the leader of the first Crop Improvement Mission to Vietnam, the ROC was indicating the importance that the technical mission to Vietnam held. A deeply experienced and well traveled scientist, Ma was likely as highly regarded as far as Chinese officials went (and later continued onward with an appointment as the Dean of the College of Agriculture in the University of Liberia at the request of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization).

Under Ma's guidance, the Crop Improvement Mission produced lengthy reports on the state of Vietnamese agriculture. One of the key reports was published in February 1960, titled "Rice Seed Production in Vietnam."²⁶ It detailed the full agricultural system of rice production, beginning with production and following at all steps from production to district farmers, including inspection, storage, distribution, financial subsidies, and dissemination of information. The focus on the full cycle of production to consumer reflected lessons learned from the JCRR experience on Taiwan: basic science was inseparable from the society in which it operated. Thus the application of science also took into account new ideas of applied economics and agricultural extension that worked hand-in-hand with policymaking and social observations. Most of the report recommendations fell into this category.

The primary source of concern was derived from Ma's specialty, plant breeding. The Crop Improvement Team observed that Vietnamese annual rice crops originated from government-run "primary seed multiplication farms." The rice produced from the primary farms would then be sent onward to secondary seed multiplication farms that then produced enough seed to go onward to farmers to plant for the season. The issue is that at the primary level, multiplication seed was only filtered for off-types, those rice varieties that were not intended for distribution onward. As a result, the Team wrote that "the

²⁵ 1933, July 15. Announcement of the Graduate School, Official Publication of Cornell University, Vol. 25. Page 141.

1934, July 15. Announcement of the Graduate School, Official Publication of Cornell University, Vol. 26. Page 157. Cornell University Library.

²⁶ Tài liệu của phái bộ kỹ thuật Trung Hoa dân quốc ở Việt Nam về việc sản xuất lúa giống ở Việt Nam năm 1960 [Recommendations of the Chinese Technical Team in Vietnam on Rice Production 1960], February 1960, folder 1313, Nha Canh Nông (Directorate of Agriculture), Trung Tâm Lưu Trữ Quốc Gia II [National Archives Center II], Ho Chi Minh City.

desirable level of purity can hardly be thus maintained.”²⁷ Furthermore, selection for the primary seed multiplication farms was done fifteen years prior to the report, in 1945, and no further selection was done on a regional basis at the secondary seed multiplication farm level. The Team suggested instead that the government agencies responsible for rice breeding thus work closely with the seed multiplication farms in order to select and produce seeds that were suitable for the local regions they supplied.

Furthermore, the ROC team recommended a series of measures centered on agricultural extension. First they suggested the creation of demonstration fields for proper planting and care of seeds selected by the state. Next, they argued for providing training in conjunction with 4-T, the Vietnamese equivalent of 4-H in the United States that was also funded by US agricultural development missions in Vietnam. 4-T and 4-H were both rural organizations that integrated agricultural and public health practices as a means of community youth activity (see Chapter 2). In the context of the ROC recommendations, 4-T club members would be utilized along with village leaders to disseminate information about seed planting. Other suggestions to help knowledge dissemination included printed materials, similar to the Harvest magazine that was introduced by JCRR in Taiwan (see Chapter 2) and contests for the highest per-unit area of rice production, where the “winning farmer will receive [an] award and will be asked to tell other farmers the ways and means by which he achieve[d] [his] goal.”²⁸

Ma departed as the head of the Crop Improvement Mission after a year in 1960 and was replaced on a more permanent basis by Jin Yanggao (金陽鎬 Yang-kao King), another prominent agronomist from the University of Nanking and protege of Shen Zonghan. In a report to JCRR authored after the end of the Vietnam mission in 1972, Jin wrote of the initial ideas regarding Taiwan’s first development mission to Vietnam. “Vietnam’s agricultural environment, cultivation methods, and cultural habits on the whole are very close to that of Taiwan’s those who are knowledgeable on the issue all believe that to develop agriculture one must (必須 *bixu*) draw upon the experiences of Taiwan (以台灣為借鏡 *yi taiwan wei jiejing*).”²⁹

²⁷ Tài liệu của phái bộ kỹ thuật Trung Hoa dân quốc ở Việt Nam về việc sản xuất lúa giống ở Việt Nam năm 1960 [Recommendations of the Chinese Technical Team in Vietnam on Rice Production 1960], February 1960, page 21, folder 1313, Nha Canh Nông (Directorate of Agriculture), Trung Tâm Lưu Trữ Quốc Gia II [National Archives Center II], Ho Chi Minh City.

²⁸ Tài liệu của phái bộ kỹ thuật Trung Hoa dân quốc ở Việt Nam về việc sản xuất lúa giống ở Việt Nam năm 1960 [Recommendations of the Chinese Technical Team in Vietnam on Rice Production 1960], February 1960, page 21, folder 1313, Nha Canh Nông (Directorate of Agriculture), Trung Tâm Lưu Trữ Quốc Gia II [National Archives Center II], Ho Chi Minh City.

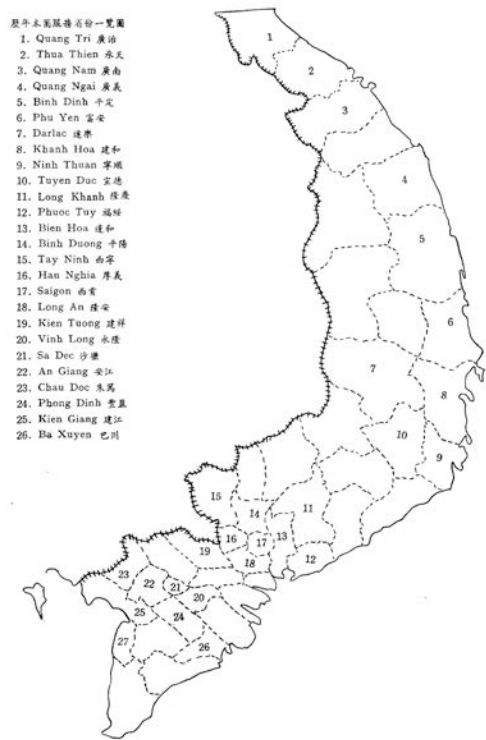
²⁹ [越南之農業環境，耕作方法以及風俗習慣，大體與台灣相近，識者均認為發展農業必須以台灣為借鏡。] Jin Yangguo, “Twelve Years in Vietnam” (十二年越南), June 1973, Page 4. Joint Commission for Rural Reconstruction. Council of Agriculture Library, Executive Yuan, Taiwan.



會健四省和達問訪長院蔣

Photograph: Chiang Ching-kuo (蔣經國 Jiang Jingguo), Premier of the ROC and son of Chiang Kai-shek, visits a 4-H chapter in Bien Hoa province, Republic of Vietnam.³⁰

³⁰ [越南之農業環境，耕作方法以及風俗習慣，大體與台灣相近，識者均認為發展農業必須以台灣為借鏡。] Jin Yangguo, "Twelve Years in Vietnam" (十二年在越南), June 1973. Joint Commission for Rural Reconstruction. Council of Agriculture Library, Executive Yuan, Taiwan.



Map: The Republic of Vietnam showing provinces where Taiwanese technical assistance was rendered from 1959 to 1973.³¹

The Vietnam mission was not just focused on the agricultural sciences—among the greatest needs of Vietnam were perceived to be social in nature. With the expansion of the Vietnamese Communists in northern Vietnam, the Republic of Vietnam prioritized the needs of its farmers, the most vulnerable to communist organization. Despite attempts to replace French colonial administrators with Vietnamese administrators under Diem’s government, rural Vietnamese largely found little difference in their lives. Americans and Vietnamese alike both sought to rectify this problem by focusing on improving life for those living in the countryside.

In 1959, Tran Ngoc Lien, the Vietnamese Director General of the Plan Commission, the central commission charged with economic planning, traveled to Taiwan with several other Vietnamese officials to observe Taiwanese farmer’s associations firsthand. Afterward, Tran wrote to Fippin requesting Taiwanese experts in farmers’ associations and cooperatives. As a result, ten Taiwanese agricultural experts were requested to be sent to Vietnam on a six

³¹ [越南之農業環境，耕作方法以及風俗習慣，大體與台灣相近，識者均認為發展農業必須以台灣為借鏡。] Jin Yangguo, “Twelve Years in Vietnam” (十二年任越南), June 1973. Joint Commission for Rural Reconstruction. Council of Agriculture Library, Executive Yuan, Taiwan.

month provisional basis, to “work especially at village levels, he said, encouraging, guiding, training, and assisting Vietnam’s newly formed farmers associations to get firmly established and operating.”³² Along with teams from other “Free World” nations brought in through US mediation, the work of the Taiwanese technical mission would help form the basis of counter-Communist insurgency efforts that were designed to win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese peasants.

Republic of Vietnam Vice President Nguyễn Ngọc Thơ on October 27, 1959 sent to eleven provincial governors the objectives and scope of the Taiwanese assistance mission in farmers’ associations.³³ The October agreement increased the Taiwanese technicians to eleven, among which eight were to focus on establishing farmers’ associations and cooperatives; two on fisheries and crop cooperatives; and the final one on training. The eight were split into three teams and responsible for vast territories of central and southern Vietnam, roughly 4 to 5 provinces per team. After familiarizing themselves with local conditions, the RVN regime placed the onus upon local governments “to let these specialist conduct their activities without hindrance” and furthermore “must have new ideas and make clear problems that require specialists’ help and investigation” to send up to the Central Farmers’ Association Committee and central government authorities.³⁴ Though spread thin, the Taiwanese advisors were meant to encourage new ideas within the local governments that would be actionable, and thus contribute toward the South Vietnamese regime’s efforts in a national rural policy.

From the Taiwanese side, these objectives needed to be translated from diplomatic objectives, defined by the realities of anticommunist warfare, into development policy objectives, defined by organizational directives. On April 9, 1959, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a memorandum to the Ministry of Economic Affairs, which oversaw JCRR and agricultural development policy in Taiwan. In the memo, MOFA outlined the work details. First, “work comes into contact with broad social strata, including central and local, to the lowest stratum of village farmers associations.”³⁵ Following that, “work scope includes matters related to leading, extension, and training, with achieving farmers association self

³² “Agricultural Technicians in Vietnam,” April 3, 1959, Folder 020000030452A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica Archives. 入藏登錄號020000030452A, 「駐越農技團」, 外交部文件史料, 國史館, 台北市, 台灣。

³³ Tài liệu của văn phòng phó Tổng Thống, bộ Công Chánh và giao thông về chương trình hoạt động của chuyên viên Đài Loan về hiệp hội nông dân và giai đoạn thực hành các cấp hiệp hội nông dân liên hệ đến bộ Công Chánh năm 1959 [Documents from the office of the President, Public Works and Transportation, about the programs and activities of the Taiwanese specialists with farmers’ associations 1959], October 27, 1959, folder 202, Bộ Công Chánh và Giao Thông (Ministry of Public Works and Transportation), Trung Tâm Lưu Trữ Quốc Gia II [National Archives Center II], Ho Chi Minh City.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ “工作接觸階層甚廣, 包括中央與地方, 至最底層之鄉鎮農會” Memo from Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs, April 9, 1959, “Agricultural Technicians in Vietnam,” Folder 020000030452A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica Archives. 入藏登錄號020000030452A, 「駐越農技團」, 外交部文件史料, 國史館, 台北市, 台灣。

sufficiency and independence as the objective.³⁶ These objectives were supplemented by goals of the farmers association to “produce agricultural products.”³⁷ The focus on the lowest levels of Vietnamese social strata reflected the rural emphasis of development from the Taiwanese model and also the diplomatic desire to engage at the village level. The Taiwanese success at organizing farmers associations and using them as the unit by which to distribute fertilizers and engage in distribution of knowledge via extension in this case dovetailed with Vietnamese and American objectives.

In defining how these projects would be carried out, Taipei chose a different approach from the US. Whereas the ICA and its predecessors chose to send experts with extensive scientific training for its missions abroad, MOFA instead requested blue collar technicians. The same April 9 memo continued that “workers do not require higher education, but rather require long term service in farmers associations or related organizations as well as wide ranging practical experience managing farmers associations or related organizations.”³⁸ This change was pragmatic, reflecting the importance of on-the-ground experience interacting with “the lowest stratum” of rural society. It also saved on costs—technicians received significant hardship bonuses for working abroad in Vietnam, and many were eager to take the salary bump.

Taipei was also the center of policy determinations for their missions, and thus the source of intellectual visions for what those missions would entail. Taiwanese missions were subject to the strict scope as outlined by higher officials within MOFA, MOE, and JCRR, meaning that technicians on the ground did not have as much leeway to make policy on the ground or deviate too far from centrally defined objectives. This was, in effect, a limitation of the politically-motivated nature of Taiwanese international development that would become more obvious in the later missions to Africa.

Representing Vanguard at Home

In Taiwan, the continued demand for Taiwanese development assistance abroad was continually reported on domestic news outlets. On a regular basis from 1959 until 1974, newspaper articles delivered updates on the progress and incidents of the Taiwanese team in Vietnam. Though often short, they compensated for their brevity with regularity. Changes in team leadership, project accomplishments, and particularly contract renewals were all reported on by major Taiwanese newspapers. These newspapers, which at the time were run by or closely affiliated with the Guomintang regime, served official state interests, to report on the efforts of the ROC abroad helping other developing nations.

³⁶ “工作範圍包括指導，推動及訓練各項有關事宜，以達到農會能自動自主為目標” Memo from Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs, April 9, 1959, “Agricultural Technicians in Vietnam,” Folder 020000030452A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica Archives. 入藏登錄號 020000030452A, 「駐越農技團」, 外交部文件史料, 國史館, 台北市, 台灣。

³⁷ “以生產農貨”

³⁸ “工作人員無需高深學歷，然而需有長期在農會等有關機構服務卻有廣泛實際管理農會等有關機構之實際工作經驗” Memo from Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs, April 9, 1959, “Agricultural Technicians in Vietnam,” Folder 020000030452A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica Archives. 入藏登錄號 020000030452A, 「駐越農技團」, 外交部文件史料, 國史館, 台北市, 台灣。

One particular incident in 1963 involving the death of agricultural technician Zhang Dusheng (張篤生, Chang Tusun) demonstrated the importance of Vanguard to ROC foreign policy officials. Zhang Dusheng was an Taiwanese rice technician who was killed in the line of duty by Vietnamese communist forces near Saigon. Zhang was born in 1935 and raised in Tainan, in southern Taiwan. After graduating from Tainan No. 1 High School, he enrolled in the Taiwan Provincial Agricultural College in Taichung (today National Chung Hsing University 國立中興大學) for his secondary education. Upon graduation, he underwent training as a reserve officer, and was assigned to grassroots political organization work. After completing his military service, he taught at the Yuanlin Agricultural School (員林農校 Yuanlin Nongxiao) briefly in 1961 before moving on to work at the Taichung District Agricultural Improvement Station (台中農業改良場 Taizhong Nongye Gailiang Chang) where he worked for two years in rice improvement. On October 10, 1963, he left Taiwan to join the Taiwanese Agricultural Technical Assistance Team to Vietnam.

On November 13, 1963, Zhang was in a jeep returning to Saigon after visiting a rice experiment station approximately 40 *li* (kilometers) outside of Saigon, when his convoy was ambushed by Vietnamese communist forces and Zhang was killed (“遭越共伏擊死亡”) along with a Vietnamese translator.³⁹ Based on an interview I conducted with a Taiwanese rice technician who had also participated in Taiwan’s later development missions abroad, it seems that Zhang’s incident was less likely the cause of an aggressive and purposeful ambush but rather a tragic accident. Taiwanese technicians would on occasion be caught in the middle of military operations. Indeed, another incident involving three Taiwanese technicians being surrounded by Vietnamese communist troops occurred in Hue in 1968, but usually the Taiwanese technicians emerged without issue due to intervention by allied forces.⁴⁰ My interviewee expressed it was likely that Zhang’s group may have panicked upon being ambushed by Vietnamese communists, who usually did not explicitly target Taiwanese agricultural technicians for attacks, and was unfortunately killed as a result of panicking and attempting to flee instead of surrendering and being taken prisoner. One memorandum sent by the Taiwanese technical team to a Vietnamese agricultural official referenced “Vietcong snipers” as being responsible for Zhang’s death.⁴¹

³⁹ “農夫會定期追悼張篤生,” 聯合報 United Daily News, November 20, 1963.

⁴⁰ Shen Zonghan to Austin B. Sanford, April 26, 1968; Archive Number 034000000357A; Folder Document Drafts “S” in “Shen Zonghan Letter Drafts” [沈宗瀚文件稿]; Council of Agriculture, Executive Yuan Collection [行政院農委會]; Academia Historica Archives 國史館, Taipei, Taiwan. Shen Zonghan to Willie Cook, April 26, 1968; Archive Number 034000000330A; Folder Document Drafts “C” in “Shen Zonghan Letter Drafts” [沈宗瀚文件稿]; Council of Agriculture, Executive Yuan Collection [行政院農委會]; Academia Historica Archives 國史館, Taipei, Taiwan.

⁴¹ “News releases regarding death of JCRR technicians by Vietcong snipers,” Office Memorandum, Dec. 2, 1963, From the Chinese Technical Mission to Vietnam on Crop Improvement to Doan Minh Quan, Chief, Rice Service. Folder 842 - Bản dịch các bài báo Taiwan liên quan đến cái chết của ông Tu-Sun-Chang, thành viên phái đoàn kỹ thuật canh nông Trung Hoa Dân Quốc đến Việt Nam năm 1963 (Translation of Taiwan newspapers concerned about the death of Tusun Chang; he is a member of the Chinese Agricultural Mission to Vietnam 1963), Nha Canh Nông (Directorate of Agriculture), Vietnam National Archives II, Ho Chi Minh

Yet newspaper portrayals of the incident left out details of the incident, instead pointing to the patriotic nature of Zhang's work and the work in general conducted by the Taiwanese agricultural technical teams.

Newspaper editorials, especially those from Guomintang-affiliated papers, United Daily News (聯合報 *Lianhe Bao*) and Cheng Hsin Daily News (徵信新聞報 *Zhengxin Xinwenbao*, which later became China Times 中國時報), provided venues for the Guomintang to use development as a means of propaganda.

One United Daily News article cited Provincial Department of Agriculture and Forestry Director Zhang Huiqiu (張慧秋, H.T. Chang), who after being interviewed following Zhang Dusheng's death, stated that Zhang Dusheng was "exactly the type of youth that our country needs (正是國家所最需要的)." Elaborating further, Zhang Huiqiu explained that young technicians like Zhang Dusheng served a crucial role. Since 1953, Taiwan's agriculture "had primarily relied on practical and relatively simple experimental research results (主要依賴實用性的比較簡單的試驗研究的結果)," but by 1963 "had already attained such high levels, that in order to further develop, it requires engaging in even more refined and profound research (但現在本省的農業已達到很高的水準，再要改進，必須從事較精密高深的研究)." Thus, going abroad to Vietnam represented positive opportunities for experts like Zhang, where work in Taiwan was often poorly compensated ("待遇菲薄") such that they could "on the one hand accomplish our national mission of assisting our allies, and on the other hand, after accumulating savings, return home to work with peace of mind (一方面達成我國協助友邦的任務，一方面可於略有積蓄後返國安心工作。)"⁴²

Zhang Huiqiu's goal in emphasizing aspects of pragmatism and advanced research not only reinforced that Taiwan possessed unique and useful expertise (see Chapters 1 and 2), but also informed the domestic Taiwanese audience why Taiwanese youth needed to be abroad in Vietnam, to benefit both their own careers and their nation. Though Zhang Dusheng's status as *benshengren* (本省人), or native Taiwanese, was not explicitly mentioned in these accounts (as official accounts would not acknowledge such ethnic divisions), his birthplace of Tainan was mentioned on occasion. Many of the blue collar technicians who worked in rural areas in Taiwan and then were sent abroad to Vietnam and other foreign locales in the 1960s were *benshengren* like Zhang Dusheng, as opposed to the bureaucrats and scientists in positions of power like Shen Zonghan and Ma Baozhi, who were *waishengren* (外省人, mainlanders). This common background perhaps made international development more sympathetic to *benshengren* audiences, tying in the political and diplomatic objectives of the *waishengren* Guomintang with the sacrifices made by *benshengren* on behalf of representing Taiwan abroad.

In another instance, Cheng Hsin Daily News published an editorial obituary that was then translated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and sent to the Vietnamese Directorate of Agriculture:

City.

⁴² "張篤生在越殉職," 聯合報 United Daily News, November 16, 1963.

[Zhang] is one of the many technical experts who are away from their homes to help foreign nations, as under-developed as or more under-developed than ours, in developing their resources. ... They have enabled many of them to understand more correctly of the industrious spirit and the scientific knowledge of our countrymen... Their contribution in foreign countries are as great as in their own country.⁴³

The language of development is wrapped up in humanitarian principles, demonstrating both camaraderie as well as expertise. The need for Taiwanese aid abroad and Taiwanese willingness to put their lives on the line to help other nations gave the Taiwanese a sense of nationalistic pride, demonstrating superior Taiwanese qualities of “industriousness” and “scientific knowledge.” And though the primary audience was for a domestic audience, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also sought to demonstrate the importance of Taiwanese-Vietnamese friendship.

In Vietnam, the Taiwanese-Vietnamese alliance was framed in similar terms. A 1960 document from the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation (Bộ Công Chánh và Giao Thông) likened the two nations as being “ethnicities that share a lot in terms of culture, which have been currently under the threat of communism.” It furthermore favorably compared the nationalist ideologies of the Chiang Kai-shek and Ngo Dinh Diem, the Three Principles of the People (sanminzhuyi 三民主義) espoused by Sun Yat-sen and Diem’s own Personalism (or Personal Dignity Theory, Thuyết Nhân vị), as well as the accomplishments of the respective revolutions under the Guomindang and Diem’s RVN.⁴⁴ In a framing of Third World anti-communist solidarity, the struggles of the free peoples of Asia became a point of pride.

The Vietnam mission proved to be, at least in terms of continued demand, a success for the Taiwanese. The original six month mission was extended to three years. In 1961, JCRR attempted to reassign the leader of the farmer’s association team, Yang Yukun (楊玉昆, Y.K. Yang) back to Taiwan, where farmer’s association work needed his attention. But this resulted in a deeply impassioned plea from Lien to JCRR Chairman at the time, Jiang Menglin:

The establishment of numerous Strategic Hamlets has greatly improved security conditions in the rural areas and will afford greater opportunities to more effectively expand the services of our [Farmers Associations]. This situation intensifies the urgent need of the specialists who have become familiar with our conditions... Mr Chairman, I must earnestly request that you reconsider your three year service policy in the light of the

⁴³ “Condolence to Tusun Chang,” Cheng Hsin Daily News, Taipei. November 17, 1963. Translated document located in Folder 842 - Bản dịch các bài báo Taiwan liên quan đến cái chết của ông Tu-Sun-Chang, thành viên phái đoàn kỹ thuật canh nông Trung Hoa Dân Quốc đến Việt Nam năm 1963 (Translation of Taiwan newspapers concerned about the death of Tusun Chang; he is a member of the Chinese Agricultural Mission to Vietnam 1963), Nha Canh Nông (Directorate of Agriculture), Vietnam National Archives II, Ho Chi Minh City.

⁴⁴ Hồ sơ về việc Tổng Thống Việt Nam CH viếng thăm Đài Loan năm 1960 (The visit of President of Vietnam to Taiwan, 1960), Undated (1960?), folder 1161, Bộ Công Chánh và Giao Thông (Ministry of Public Works and Transportation), Trung Tâm Lưu Trữ Quốc Gia II [National Archives Center II], Ho Chi Minh City.

present situation in Vietnam. We are deeply engaged in an active war, and our resources are stretched to the maximum. The focus of this war is in the country-side and among the rural people. Experienced direction and leadership is of special importance at this time.⁴⁵

With the implementation of the Strategic Hamlet program that sought “pacification” of rural villages by increasing support and thus ostensibly lessening rural ties with communist insurgents, the Republic of Vietnam sought Taiwanese expertise in rural organization.

By 1968, the “miracle rice,” IR-8, developed out of the International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines was being distributed to Vietnam. Taiwanese technicians participated in demonstrating how to plant and cultivate IR-8. Assistant Director for USAID/Vietnam, James P. Grant, who was born and raised in Beijing as the son of Canadian missionaries and became a longtime development advocate, wrote to Shen Zonghan of his visit to a Taiwanese demonstration plot near Bien Hoa where IR-8 was being planted. He remarked of “the fine work done by your JCRR technicians in Vietnam” in helping to transform the formerly “crude demonstration plot” to “a major rice research center” on his second visit a year later. He included to Shen a New York Times clipping showcasing the gift of IR-8 from Vietnam to the United States, a symbol of its gratitude as appreciation for the US introducing the new cultivar in Vietnam.⁴⁶

By 1970, the US had expended \$2,036,088 (USD) for the Taiwan missions, paying for capital costs involved in technical assistance.⁴⁷ In a 1972 evaluation of the contract with the ROC, USAID Deputy Associate Director for Food and Agriculture in Vietnam, Ralph Gleason, described the Taiwanese mission as attaining mission goals “in a very practical manner...for instance, demonstration fields were elaborately set up and operated by the contractor as an intermediate goal towards attainment of the final goal of widespread extension of improved varieties and cultural practices.” As a result, “farmers benefiting from CATG assistance have experienced substantial increases in income through increased harvests of crop produce of high value.” However, Gleason cast doubt on the ability of the Republic of Vietnam to fulfill its end of the agreement, stating that “final goal of nationwide extension rests in the capacity and competence of the cooperating country,” and then ended by lamenting that “more could have been accomplished if host country support were more adequate.” In a matter of a few years, Gleason was proved right.⁴⁸ Despite the “intermediate” success of the Taiwanese technical mission in realizing higher incomes and

⁴⁵ “Agricultural Technicians in Vietnam,” November 17, 1961, Folder 020000030453A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica Archives. 入藏登錄號020000030453A, 「駐越農技團」, 外交部文件史料, 國史館。

⁴⁶ James P. Grant to Shen Zonghan, November 25, 1968; Archive Number 034000000339A; Folder Document Drafts “G” in “Shen Zonghan Letter Drafts” [沈宗瀚文件稿]; Council of Agriculture, Executive Yuan Collection [行政院農委會]; Academia Historica Archives 國史館, Taipei, Taiwan.

⁴⁷ Contract Evaluation, May 3, 1972, Folder 3832 - hồ sơ kiểm soát ngân khoản hợp đồng với phái bộ hợp tác tái thiết nông thôn- Trung Quốc về yểm trợ tổng quát canh nông cho Việt Nam năm 1969-1973 (Auditing financial contracts with the Joint Commission for Rural Reconstruction about general support for agriculture in Vietnam in 1969-1973), Cơ quan phát triển quốc tế Hoa Kỳ (USAID), Trung Tâm Lưu Trữ Quốc Gia II [National Archives Center II], Ho Chi Minh City.

a system of extension and demonstration, these efforts were ultimately unable to save the Republic of Vietnam regime. Taiwanese missions were continually renewed until 1974, until the fall of Saigon and the demise of the Republic of Vietnam ended Taiwanese missions to Vietnam.⁴⁹

Africa

In 1961, the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs officially inaugurated its various international development missions under the Operation Vanguard project. Officially it consisted of technical missions, like the one to Vietnam, except under Vanguard it had expanded its scope from one mission to one country to what would eventually be over two dozen. Unofficially, with the rise of the People's Republic of China as an international power and the scant likelihood of the GMD wresting the mainland back from the Communists, the Vanguard program was the Foreign Ministry's attempt at agricultural development diplomacy. It offered technical missions, with Taiwanese technical expertise and American funding, to African nations in exchange for diplomatic support, especially in the emerging global Cold War against the Soviet Union and PRC. The US funded Vanguard with the hopes of using its proxy ally to build an alliance among developing nations – a Global South ally in the Global South. This means of currying international favor became more important as the Communist bloc in the United Nations attempted to replace the seat of the Republic of China with that of the People's Republic of China on the mainland, which was increasingly being viewed as the legitimate and rightful representative of China.

Based on oral history interviews with many Taiwanese agricultural technicians who worked on the ground in Africa, ranging in two to over two dozen years of experience, as well as archival documents from the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United States National Archives, a picture emerges of attempts to bring a unique Taiwanese experience, rooted in science, in practical, low-capital methods, in the bootstrapping ethic of hard work, and free from the colonial trappings and elite-centered development legacies from the West.

In Africa, Taiwanese teams met political circumstances in which they could take advantage of their status as outsiders with no colonial legacy. ROC Foreign Minister Shen Changhuan (沈昌煥 Shen Chang-huan), recounted an anecdote to US Vice President Hubert Humphrey. In 1963, Shen was near Brazzaville. He was crossing the Congo river,

⁴⁸ Auditing Report of JCRR, November 14, 1970, Folder 3832 - hồ sơ kiểm soát ngân khoản hợp đồng với phái bộ hợp tác tái thiết nông thôn- Trung Quốc về yểm trợ tổng quát canh nông cho Việt Nam năm 1969-1973 (Auditing financial contracts with the Joint Commission for Rural Reconstruction about general support for agriculture in Vietnam in 1969-1973), Cơ quan phát triển quốc tế Hoa Kỳ (USAID), Trung Tâm Lưu Trữ Quốc Gia II [National Archives Center II], Ho Chi Minh City.

⁴⁹ "Agricultural Technicians in Vietnam," November 13, 1971, Folder 020000030454A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica Archives. 入藏登錄號020000030454A, 「駐越農技團」, 外交部文件史料, 國史館。

when he had been stopped, presumably by non-government armed personnel, and “would have been shot had he not been able to point out that his skin was neither white nor black.” The lesson of this anecdote, Shen related, was that everywhere in Africa “he found suspicion of all white people.” There was also little patience for “American red tape and other difficulties” that produced results too slowly. Instead Shen saw an appreciation for “such things as 10,000 cakes of soap, matches and the like--small things but quickly available for all to see.” Humphrey replied that “cultural, technical assistance and information activities are not expensive and the [Republic of China] can perhaps do better in these activities than the U.S.”⁵⁰ It was this postwar moment that the ROC hoped to take advantage of, where the development plans of American experts carried the legacies of colonialism, and provided an opportunity for Taiwan to seize the global stage.

The Vanguard program sent technical missions to over a dozen African nations, beginning in 1960 with Liberia.⁵¹ In the 1975 document on technical cooperation, Vanguard missions were described as following five steps:

1. Land Reclamation Work: Reclaiming a predetermined area of jungle, swamp, wilderness, hills, inside the city into usable farmland for tillers.
2. Experimentation Work: In accordance with local climate, water resources, land type, and other natural environmental factors, implement variety, planting season, fertilizer amount, and planting methods comparative experiments. Use these selected improved varieties, most suitable planting seasons, and appropriate planting methods for the usage of demonstration and extension.
3. Demonstration Work: Using improved varieties, appropriate planting techniques, and new agricultural implements to perform demonstrations of plantings. In order to increase production results, farmer viewing and emulation meetings are held to initiate local farmers' interests and to build their confidence.
4. Training Work: Our tilling teams in Africa utilize a “learning while doing” method, while working on a field, using practical manual work methods, leading African farmers in using agricultural implements, and to familiarize them with our planting methods.
5. Extension Work: Uses the agricultural production techniques and experience obtained from each step of experimentation, demonstration, and training, to encourage African farmers to practically adopt these in order to improve farmers' lives and agricultural development.⁵²

⁵⁰ Memos Vol. II, “US ROC Relations,” 2/15/65, #73a, “China,” Country File, NSF, Box 238, LBJ Library

⁵¹ Shih-Shen Chien, Tzu-Po Yang, and Yi-Chen Wu, “Taiwan's Foreign Aid and Technical Assistance in the Marshall Islands,” *Asian Survey* 50, no. 6 (November 1, 2010): 1184–1204, doi:10.1525/as.2010.50.6.1184.

⁵² 「開墾工作：係將預定區域內的叢林，沼澤，荒野，和丘陵地予以開墾，使成為可作農耕之用的田地。試驗工作：根據當地氣候，水源，土環等自然環境，進行品種，植期，施肥量及栽培方法等之比較試驗，用以選擇優良品種，決定適當植期與妥善栽培方法，以供示範推廣只用。示範工作：將優良品種，用適當的栽培技術，新的農業器材作示範栽培，以顯示增產效果，耕觀摩會的舉行來引發當地農民的興趣並建立他們的信心。訓練工作：我駐非農耕隊採用「做中學習」的方法，在耕作現場上，用實際操作的方式，指導非洲農民使用農機具，熟悉我們的栽培技術。推廣工作：是把試驗示範和各階段所獲得的農業生產技術與經驗，鼓勵非洲農民實際採用以改善農民的生活和農業的發展。」 April 1975, “Republic of China Foreign

Methods 2 through 5, laid down in 1975, mirrored the same principles that underlay agricultural development stretching back to 1920. The agricultural development plan that Taiwanese planners had laid out for Africa were the same methods that Chinese and Taiwanese development planners themselves had touted at home. A focus on experimentation that produced both seeds and practices followed by demonstration and extension to rural farmers dated back to the Cornell-Nanking program and the National Agricultural Research Bureau.

In reality, missions differed greatly depending upon the specific needs of the government receiving assistance, the social and economic conditions, environmental and ecological considerations, as well as diplomatic negotiations between the ROC and their African counterparts. Given that most of the missions were often limited in terms of capital and human resources, with most teams averaging between a half dozen and a dozen members, Taiwanese leaders chose to focus on demonstrating the potential of newly introduced Taiwanese varieties or Taiwanese-selected local varieties of crops as well as Taiwanese methods of planting, fertilization, harvesting, etc. The overall goal was to show first of all that Taiwanese methods could grow far more quantities of crops through demonstration farms, and that once local farmers saw firsthand the results, would then be open to learning about these techniques through extension. Interviews with Taiwanese agricultural technicians reveal that local African farmers were often intrigued by the results of Taiwanese demonstration farms, and many eager to likewise reproduce those results on their own farms.

Most of these Taiwanese technicians came from modest backgrounds in Taiwan. When the Vanguard Program first began, it rolled out a call for technicians across agricultural experimentation stations and the Taiwan Sugar Corporation across southern Taiwan. (At first this was limited to southern Taiwan with the belief that southern Taiwanese climate made technicians hailing from the south more able to acclimate to the tropical climates of sub-Saharan Africa). The call limited candidate ages from 25 to 35, again due to the understanding that work in the Vanguard missions would involve significant physical hardship that required good health and endurance. These technicians also needed to have graduated from technical agricultural schools, which were set up to prepare agricultural technicians to do the work of experimentation, farming, and extension work. However, unlike work in Taiwan, where monthly salaries for young technicians was often limited to 350 NTD per month, Vanguard salaries offered at least 270 USD per month (this would increase each year that Vanguard operated), which at the exchange rate of the time, was approximately 10000 NTD, or a thirty fold increase in salary. Despite the hardship, young Taiwanese technicians jumped at the opportunity.⁵³

Technical Cooperation,” Folder “Foreign Propaganda Magazine (Color Version), Chinese-Japanese Economic Newsletter, Operation Vanguard: Third Country Training” Volume 2, Archival Collection Number 36-01-006-025, Academia Sinica Modern History Institutes Archives, Taipei, Taiwan. 「中華民國對外技術合作」，「對外宣傳彩色專刊—中日經濟簡訊、先鋒計畫第三國訓練」第二冊、館藏號36-01-006-025，中央研究院近代史研究所檔案館，台北，台灣。

⁵³ Interviews with Chen Shengyi and Shi Minnan.

In Africa, Taiwanese technicians indeed faced significant challenges. In many Vanguard missions, including the first 1961 mission to Liberia, Taiwanese were sent to rural areas that lacked infrastructural development. The Liberian Vanguard team on arrival was thus forced to begin with the difficult work of land reclamation, clearing forested jungle to develop suitable land for agriculture. It was only after a full season of clearing land, planting crops, and nearing harvest that the Vanguard team was able to begin its demonstration work for neighboring villagers. Most Vanguard teams operated in rural areas without electrification, running instead on generators, which limited their usage of irrigation pumps to gas-powered generators, as well as requiring all of their irrigation infrastructure to be constructed by their own teams. This extended to personal living conditions too, where many Vanguard teams depended on generator-powered electricity, if at all, in their dormitories. If lucky, some teams were given pre-fabricated accommodations by the local government. In the case of Liberia, the Vanguard team was considered lucky having chosen a location where an American agricultural team had recently built a small dormitory and abandoned it just prior to the Taiwanese arrival, which then the Taiwanese promptly took up as their own. In their free time, Taiwanese technicians resorted to basic activities of playing cards or basic outdoor sports for their leisurely activities (in some cases, these activities included mingling with locals, where Taiwanese technicians, all men, fathered a number of mixed race children)⁵⁴. For the most part, Vanguard technicians operated as farmers would in Taiwan, with the goal of demonstrating how farming techniques from Taiwan could help their African counterparts.

For the agricultural scientists in JCRR who were tasked with planning the missions, the Vanguard program became a point of pride. Taiwan was, like many of its Vanguard targets, a colony just three decades prior to the start of Vanguard. But in the eyes of the development planners, Taiwanese ingenuity, determination, and skill allowed it to not only resume exporting agricultural products, by the late 1960s becoming a heavyweight exporter in canned fruits and mushrooms, but also to have the unique insight of what it is like to rapidly succeed as a developing, decolonizing nation. JCRR Commissioner Shen Zonghan, in correspondences with his American agronomist colleagues, would often reiterate proudly that Taiwan had a lot to teach the world. In the context of the ongoing Cold War, this representation of success was necessary in order to contrast its model of development with the communist model from the PRC, which also competed on the notion of Third World solidarity. As a consequence, Taiwanese technical missions attempted to duplicate the Taiwanese agricultural miracle.

This became evident in the Sino-African Agricultural Technical Cooperation Conference (SAATCC) (*Séminaire Afro-Chinois pour la Coopération Technique Agricole*), hosted from July 26 to 30, 1965, in Ivory Coast. Organized by the ROC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it invited agricultural experts and bureaucrats from Taiwan and over a dozen African nations, including Ivory Coast, Liberia, Cameroon, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Congo,

⁵⁴ Interviews with Wu Lingde and Chen Shengyi.

Gabon, French Upper Volta (Haute Volta, today Burkina Faso), Congo-Leopoldville (Zaire), Madagascar, Niger, Rwanda, Chad, and Togo. ROC officials included Shen Zonghan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs diplomats, as well as various other heads of experiment stations, crop improvement stations, and fertilizer associations in Taiwan. Also included were the Taiwanese team leaders of the various Vanguard missions, including Vietnam Crop Improvement Mission head and later FAO official Ma Baozhi, and his successor as the Vietnam Mission head, Jin Yanggao.

The conference began with an opening speech by an ROC diplomat describing the importance of agriculture, both for humankind and for their respective nations. The speech began with hope and praise: “Africa is expansive and possesses ample resources, its soil fertile, and possesses optimal conditions for agricultural development; that is to say, it possesses the fundamental conditions to build a strong and prosperous nation” (建立富強國家的基本條件).⁵⁵ He further exhorted that if Africa were to “increase research and improvement in agricultural techniques, each African ally’s future would be limitless.”⁵⁶ The ROC’s goal was to “contribute all of its agricultural knowledge, experience, and techniques...under a common desire and objective, to assist our African allies to fully utilize their own manpower, intelligence, and resources, to increase production, improve the environment, and raise citizen living standards.”⁵⁷ Under the Vanguard program, Taiwan emphasized its friendship as well as its experience, using its role to educate and lead African nations toward self-reliance and success.

After establishing their vision for how Taiwan would benefit African nations seeking to improve their respective citizens, Taiwanese leaders then moved on to qualify Taiwan’s bona fides and to describe what constituted Taiwan’s success in agrarian development. Shen Zonghan, who in 1965 had recently been promoted to Chairman of JCRR after the passing of Jiang Menglin, presented a detailed analysis of Taiwan’s development history as an introduction for African dignitaries in the first substantive speech of the conference. Shen began immediately with drawing parallels, pointing out that Taiwan’s “environment and agricultural development are, in many respects, similar to those of the African countries.”⁵⁸

Shen continued on to describe most tropical and subtropical countries in the world as “confronted with somewhat similar problems,” that “they have not yet adequately

⁵⁵ “非洲地大物博，土壤肥沃，都具有發展農業的優良條件，也就是說具有建立富強國家的基本條件” 中非農技合作討論會 [Sino-African Agricultural Technical Cooperation Conference], July 16, 1965, Page 1828, Archive Number 020000039124A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica.

⁵⁶ “如果能在農業技術上加以研究改進，則非洲各友邦之前途實不可限量” 中非農技合作討論會 [Sino-African Agricultural Technical Cooperation Conference], July 16, 1965, Page 1828, Archive Number 020000039124A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica.

⁵⁷ “貢獻所有之農業知識，經驗及技術...在一個共同願望及目標之下，協助非洲友邦充分運用自己的人力，智慧和資源，增加生產，改善環境，提高國民生活水準” 中非農技合作討論會 [Sino-African Agricultural Technical Cooperation Conference], July 16, 1965, Page 1828, Archive Number 020000039124A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica.

⁵⁸ 中非農技合作討論會 [Sino-African Agricultural Technical Cooperation Conference], July 16, 1965, Page 1866, Archive Number 020000039124A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica.

developed their natural resources and their economies are primarily agricultural.” As a result, “poor and dissatisfied, they are easily taken in by Communist propaganda.” Shen was referring obliquely to the rival diplomatic efforts by the PRC and by the USSR to likewise sway the Third World.⁵⁹ In associating communism with propaganda, he was dismissing the legitimacy of communist methods in actually creating better livelihoods: “Only with increased farm production and increased income can their livelihood be bettered and the social and political order be stabilized and democratic institutions strengthened.”⁶⁰ Discrediting communist methods were important to Shen, as in fact many of the reasons to which Shen would later appeal regarding the suitability of Taiwanese methods in some respects appeared similar to communist agricultural development. Specifically, themes of self-reliance, low capital investment, and utilization of native resources and labor resembled agricultural development policies in the PRC.⁶¹ Taiwanese officials pointed out that communist methods were often far more violent and radical, relying on forced collectivization and sometimes the loss of lives, though these were more often raised in discussions of land reform as opposed to agricultural development (see Chapter 4).

Following a history of agriculture in Taiwan first under Japanese colonialism and then under the transition to the Nationalist government, Shen went on to describe the contributions of JCRR and its role in guiding agricultural development, starting by:

[building] up a small but highly qualified technical staff, put its fingers on the most important production and marketing problems, established priorities among them, and made grants to stimulate the expansion of agricultural research, education and extension in order to solve those problems. It has also assisted the government in implementing land reform, reorganizing farmers' associations, and planning and coordinating agricultural programs for the economic development of Taiwan.⁶²

This story of agricultural development being led by certain state policies focusing on research, education, and extension, as well as focusing substantively on land reform and farmers associations, reflects the unique aspects of the Taiwanese approach to agricultural development. These aspects were indeed grounded in reality (see Chapter 2), but by the 1960s these characteristics began to be solidified into what I have termed “Taiwan model” that was packaged and marketed throughout the Third World, at conferences like SAATCC, by officials such as Shen Zonghan.

⁵⁹ See Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World*. and Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015). for more on the Sino-US and Sino-Soviet competition, respectively, for the Third World.

⁶⁰ 中非農技合作討論會 [Sino-African Agricultural Technical Cooperation Conference], July 16, 1965, Page 1866, Archive Number 020000039124A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica.

⁶¹ For a superlative history of these ideas within PRC agricultural development, see Sigrid Schmalzer, *Red Revolution, Green Revolution* (University of Chicago Press, 2016).

⁶² 中非農技合作討論會 [Sino-African Agricultural Technical Cooperation Conference], July 16, 1965, Page 1868, Archive Number 020000039124A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica.

Shen laid out the benefits of the Taiwan model. Complemented by graphs and projections, Shen listed off the impressive statistics of the Taiwan miracle. “Aggregate agricultural output of crops, livestock, fisheries and forest products in 1964 almost doubled that of the 1950-1952 average or that of the prewar peak year. The average annual growth rate of agriculture was 6.0 percent under the First Four-Year Plan, 4.6 percent under the Second, and 4.9 percent under the Third.” Most impressive was the growth in rice productivity, which increased in “per hectare yield from 1,998 kg. of brown rice in 1952 to 2,937 kg. in 1964.” These figures supported “an expanding population” as well as the maintenance of “a large military force.”⁶³

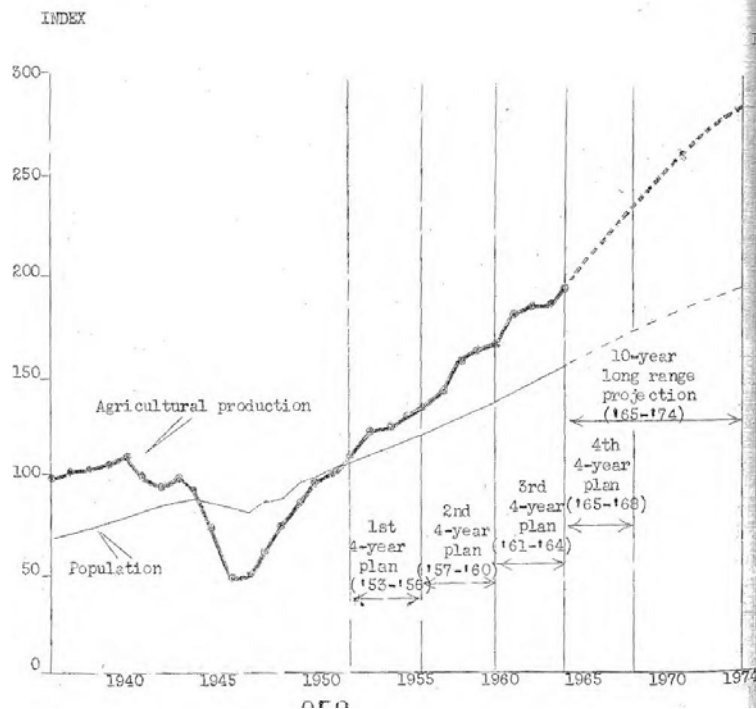
⁶³ 中非農技合作討論會 [Sino-African Agricultural Technical Cooperation Conference], July 16, 1965, Page 1868, Archive Number 020000039124A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica.

1875

Figure 1

TREND OF POPULATION & AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN TAIWAN

(1950-52 = 100)



Graph: Agricultural production from prewar (under Japanese colonialism) to postwar (under the Guomintang) as well as projected production figures into the future. Included and likely shown to audience members in Shen Zonghan's speech to the Sino-African Agricultural Technical Cooperation Conference held in Ivory Coast from July 26 to 30, 1965.⁶⁴

Shen attempted to collate the concrete steps of the Taiwan development model that would be replicable for his African audience, breaking them down into "(1) resources

⁶⁴ 中非農技合作討論會 [Sino-African Agricultural Technical Cooperation Conference], July 16, 1965, Page 1875, Archive Number 020000039124A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica.

endowment, (2) technological factors, (3) organizational factors, (4) economic incentives, and (5) human incentives.” Among these, Shen honed in on those aspects that once again characterized the Taiwan model. Resource endowment Shen rapidly dismissed, even going so far as saying that the resource endowment of Taiwan “is only moderate,” which was a fair assessment. Technological factors were attributable to basic and applied research, in improved varieties of plants and livestock, cultivation, fertilizer, and pesticide methods, and usage of irrigation and soils. Organizational factors reflected the other end of the Taiwan model spectrum, also dating back to the Republican-era in China, where special focus was paid to social organizations such as farmers organizations and extension “for channeling the resources and the technology down to the village and farm level for increasing output.”⁶⁵ In other words, Shen was describing the marriage of science and society that was at the heart of the Taiwan model.

Economic incentives demonstrated the qualities of Taiwan’s state-capitalist approach to development that more sharply divided it from communist development. Shen elaborated that economic incentives involved capitalistic mechanisms that provided stable markets and subsidies for farmers, including “land reform,” “supported...guaranteed, or negotiated prices,” “improved marketing systems of export crops,” “adequate supply of farm requisites such as fertilizers, pesticides, farm implements, and feeds,” and “the supply of agricultural credit.”⁶⁶ These were all elements of Taiwan’s approach to state-sponsored capitalism, combining elements of free market principles, such as credit mechanisms for private farmers and compulsory but financialized sales of land holdings (see Chapter 4 for more on the capital raising techniques used in Taiwan’s land reform), combined with state subsidies, aid, and regulatory oversight in order to provide stability and availability of critical supplies and market access.

The final element, human incentives, conveyed something that the previous elements did not, which was the closest to a direct political intervention into the state level. Though the state was closely involved in setting economic incentives and structuring markets, these policies are set from the top-down or laterally across political-social organizations. In contrast, in describing human incentives, Shen began to describe how a developmentalist state is comprised: “a progress-oriented stable government,” “a small group of agricultural leaders with advanced training and long experience,” “a large number of graduates from agricultural colleges and vocational schools working in government and private organizations,” and “an intelligent and literate farming population.”⁶⁷ These factors were indeed crucial for Taiwan’s own miracle, and what is ironic about Shen’s list of “human incentives” is that the African audience members were likely imagining that these “incentives” were in fact the resource endowment that Taiwan had been lucky to possess.

⁶⁵ 中非農技合作討論會 [Sino-African Agricultural Technical Cooperation Conference], July 16, 1965, Page 1872, Archive Number 020000039124A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica.

⁶⁶ 中非農技合作討論會 [Sino-African Agricultural Technical Cooperation Conference], July 16, 1965, Page 1872, Archive Number 020000039124A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica.

⁶⁷ 中非農技合作討論會 [Sino-African Agricultural Technical Cooperation Conference], July 16, 1965, Page 1872, Archive Number 020000039124A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica.

Addressing these were likely the most difficult to accomplish and least technical in nature, as they involved significant changes to both the nature of the state and of society and culture surrounding education, literacy, and wealth, that Shen's audience likely lacked the capability, and in many cases, the desire, to address. Instead, here and in other instances of development, these issues are depicted as technical or economic or educational, when in fact they are fundamentally political and require reform at deep, structural and cultural levels.

Wrapping up his speech, Shen pointed to the signs of success and encouragement from the missions established in the early 1960s up until 1965. In Ivory Coast, he proudly presented results of the Taiwanese assistance team planting 93.97 hectares of rice "according to Chinese cultural practices," with some teams even reporting "that the per unit area yield of various crops planted in the demonstration fields is even higher than the highest per unit area yield achieved in Taiwan itself." Shen attributed this to "to the fact that most of your lands are virgin lands which have never been cultivated before and, therefore, are rich in plant nutrients." This was cause for immense optimism for Shen, who added that "Such being the case, if your lands properly utilized, their productivity will certainly be very high." Thus, Africa's natural fertile soils, its "plentiful supply" of labor, combined with Taiwanese guidance to bring an "emphasis on trial and extension so as to make it easier for the local farmers to accept Chinese cultural practices" would bring "very bright" prospects. Taiwanese methods, combined with the natural African abundance of fertility and labor, could overcome other obstacles, such as the lack of capital, since in "the initial stage of agricultural development not much capital is needed anyway."⁶⁸ For Shen, the Taiwan model was the pathway for Africa to greater productivity and better livelihoods, as its strengths suited the strengths of Africa, and its low-capital methods compensated for its weaknesses.

By 1969, Operation Vanguard missions were ongoing in 20 African countries: Liberia, Ivory Coast (Côte d'Ivoire), Gabon, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Niger, Cameroon, Upper Volta (Haute Volta, today Burkina Faso), Chad, Togo, Malawi, The Gambia, Congo-Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Dahomey (Benin), Malagasy Republic (Madagascar), Botswana, Lesotho, Central African Republic, and Ghana. Vanguard at that point also included four missions to Latin America (Chile, Brazil, Dominican Republic) and Asia (Thailand), with annual PL480 allocation from the United States exceeding \$650 million New Taiwan Dollars.⁶⁹ Behind the scenes of Vanguard was the tireless politicking of Yang Xikun, the famous "Mister Africa." Yang had studied international relations at Columbia University and then served as a bureaucrat with the Guomindang in various roles within the foreign service. By 1958 he was participating in the ROC delegations to the

⁶⁸ 中非農技合作討論會 [Sino-African Agricultural Technical Cooperation Conference], July 16, 1965, Page 1873-1874, Archive Number 020000039124A, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Collection, Academia Historica.

⁶⁹ "Project Agreement between the Department of States, Agency for International Development, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an Agency to the Government of the Republic of China." November 25, 1969. Archive Number 055-431-3-0009, Folder 中美資源交換計畫先鋒案部分, Taiwan National Archives (國家檔案管理局), Taipei, Taiwan (ROC).

United Nations, and by 1959 was appointed Director of the West Asian Department of the MOFA, then Director of the African Affairs Department. American observers in the State Department credited Yang as the “initiator and executor” for the MOFA’s United Nations diplomacy strategy in Africa.⁷⁰

In 1969, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Yang Xikun penned two letters, the first to the Taiwanese agricultural experts, copying several important technocrats in JCRR and across ROC government bodies, expressing his appreciation and reflections on the value of the Vanguard missions. On May 24, 1969, Yang wrote that Vanguard missions “were not only establishing a historical example by the Chinese people for the African people...but furthermore have redressed the mistaken impressions of the Chinese people due to the infiltration and subversion caused by the invasive nature of the Maoist bandits (毛匪).”⁷¹ To that end, he wrote a second letter directed to the agricultural development team leaders and technicians on the ground in Africa to further encourage their work in assisting their “African allies.”

The internal letter to the agricultural technical teams repeated several of the principles that Shen had presented to his African audience: the uniqueness of Taiwan’s contributions, the importance of their work, and the success they achieved. Yang emphasized that “industriousness and frugality (克勤克儉)” was a “traditional virtue of us Chinese people,” and that since “African countries were just like ours, we are all developing countries,” it was necessary to practice the same industriousness and frugality agricultural work in Africa. The goal was to “spend as little in order to achieve the greatest results” so that “after leaving Africa, our African friends could also accomplish what we did.”⁷² These points emphasized the uniqueness of Taiwan’s development approach, and also reiterated that Taiwan’s successes made that approach more easily taught and implemented in other similar developing contexts.

The letter also revealed Yang’s insight into the purpose of agricultural technical cooperation, and how it benefitted Taiwan as well as a greater humanitarian mission. He wrote:

We are a developing nation (開發中的國家). In these past few years, that we can unexpectedly participate in the economic development of other developing countries, especially with regards to agricultural productivity, and serve the people of our allied African nations, win their trust, and furthermore attain such ardent support and

⁷⁰ “Yang, Hsi-kun (Yang, H.K.),” 1973. Folder Visits 1973; Box 13; Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs, Office of ROC Affairs, 1951-1978; Records of the State Department, RG 59; NACP.

⁷¹ “不僅為中國人民與非洲人民建立了史無前例...而且還糾正了由於毛匪侵略成性，滲透顛覆的劣跡在非洲所造成對中國人民的錯誤印象。” Zhang Lixing 張力行. Yang Xikun yu Feizhou 楊西崑與非洲 [Yang Xikun and Africa]. Taipei: Zhonghua Wenwu Publishers [中華文物出版社], undated, p. 2.

⁷² 克勤克儉是我們中國人的傳統美德，也是創立任何事業的必要條件。我們在非洲工作，也必須牢記這一點。非洲國家，跟我們中國一樣，都是發展中的國家，我們一方面固然要【勤】，另一方面也必須要【儉】。。。。我們在非洲為非洲友邦服務，隨時要把握我一個原則，那就是，花最少的錢以求收到最大的效果。只有這樣，我們能做的事，在我們一旦離開非洲以後，非洲友邦也能做，這是一點不錯的。 Zhang Lixing 張力行. Yang Xikun yu Feizhou 楊西崑與非洲 [Yang Xikun and Africa]. Taipei: Zhonghua Wenwu Publishers [中華文物出版社], undated, p. 8.

approval in our country and abroad, ought to be the greatest honor that all of those working in agriculture can hope to achieve.⁷³

Yang appealed directly to the sense of pride among the Taiwanese for working from humble beginnings and with modest resources to accomplish enormous tasks abroad. These tasks were not merely to further diplomatic objectives, but also to serve the betterment of peoples internationally, and to bring meaning to agricultural work.

However, in many of its African missions, the replication of the Taiwan experience met significant obstacles. As historian Philip Hsiaopong Liu has written, with faith in the production capabilities of its rice seed and technology, one Taiwanese MOFA official wanted to replace African diets of maize and cassava with rice. For the average Taiwanese, rice formed the backbone of daily diet. But Taiwanese rice, usually of the starchy, sticky ponlai (蓬萊 *penglai*) variety, was bred for a Taiwanese consumer, meaning that it suited Taiwanese cultural taste preferences. When Taiwanese technical teams produced rice in Liberia, for instance, local market conditions meant that imported rice was often cheaper than the rice that the Taiwanese were able to produce locally.⁷⁴ This was a consequence of both the low cost of imported rice and its higher demand vis-a-vis rice brought over by the Taiwanese for local production. Cultural affinities for particular foods and its effect on food markets have of course been an issue in China, Taiwan, and elsewhere in the world for centuries, including in reaction to the Green Revolution and monocultures, and should not have come as a surprise for the Taiwanese teams in Africa.⁷⁵

Furthermore, the success of Taiwanese rice depended in part upon conditions that were fairly unique to Taiwan's economic and social circumstances: the availability of capital to purchase agricultural machinery and chemicals and a relative surplus of available agricultural labor that allowed for cheap, labor intensive processes like planting and harvesting rice. Without the ability that JCRR had possessed to shape the political economy through state policies and access to the top echelons of government to implement changes and intervene in society, Taiwanese technical missions could only rely upon success within their small, contained demonstration plots. Taiwanese teams tended to cherry-pick locations with high fertility potential for their demonstration funds, and with an abundance of American funding through Vanguard, they were able to purchase irrigation pumps, fertilizers, pesticides, and labor that would not have been sustainable for locals without access to foreign capital. Thus, after Taiwanese teams left and equipment were taken with them or fell into disrepair, many of these demonstration farms reverted to old farming methods prior to Taiwanese arrival.⁷⁶

⁷³ “我們也是一個開發中的國家，這幾年來，我們居然能夠參加其他開發中國家的經濟建設，特別在農業增產方面，能為非洲友邦人民服務，得到他們如此的信任，並獲得國內外如此熱烈的支持和讚譽，這應該是各位從事農業工作者在職業上所能希望得到的最高光榮。” Zhang Lixing 張力行. Yang Xikun yu Feizhou 楊西崑與非洲 [Yang Xikun and Africa]. Taipei: Zhonghua Wenwu Publishers [中華文物出版社], undated, p. 6.

⁷⁴ Liu, “Planting Rice on the Roof of the UN Building,” 391.

⁷⁵ See, for example, Seung-Joon Lee, *Gourmets in the Land of Famine: The Culture and Politics of Rice in Modern Canton*, 1st edition (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2011).

⁷⁶ Liu, “Planting Rice on the Roof of the UN Building,” 390.

In other instances, Taiwanese teams achieved limited success. Liu provided Rwanda as a counterpoint, where a relatively cheaper cost of agricultural labor and the use of Malagasy rice as opposed to Taiwanese rice allowed for more successful rice production.⁷⁷ In another example, Foreign Minister Shen Changhuan, related how the Taiwanese team to Dahomey allowed it to “save \$500,000 a year by producing itself materials for packing bags which it had previously had to import.”⁷⁸ Yet productivity gains and cost savings often did not translate to lasting impact or long term improvement in livelihood. Former JCRR Commissioner Bruce Billings reported on his trip to Africa in 1969 that successes were often complicated. In Sierra Leone, the farm supervised by Taiwanese technicians was “able to sell veg[etables] at a lower cost than those produced on other native farms” which led to native farmers being “not happy” with the Taiwanese for introducing unwelcome competition. Because Taiwanese teams were limited largely to supervising a handful of farms for demonstration purposes, they were not able to extend the technologies and methods on a broad scale to insure equitable distribution like in Taiwan, and conversely inspired counterproductive jealousy.⁷⁹

In Ivory Coast, politics and diplomacy also limited the ability of Taiwanese teams. From 1964 to 1965, Ivory Coast was one of the rotating temporary members of the UN Security Council, and thus a particularly important target for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Like most Vanguard missions, the Ivory Coast mission was limited in resources and manpower. In part because of these limitations, the Vanguard mission selected the personal farm of Ivory Coast President Félix Houphouët-Boigny as a model farm. Billings argued this was because “the fact that the President does have a farm with Chinese technicians is important in gaining the cooperation of the natives.” However, this justification obscured the ultimate goal of the Vanguard missions, which were fundamentally political in nature—to secure votes for the ROC in the UN. In Ivory Coast, the benefits brought by Chinese techniques were not seen by Ivory Coast farmers. “The rice produced by the presidential farm is given over to the Army,” or in other words, directly supported President Houphouët-Boigny’s regime. Billings furthermore wrote that most farm labor in Ivory Coast was imported from Mali “due to the affluence of the natives,” referring to the relative wealth of Ivory Coast compared to its poorer neighbors.⁸⁰ Though investments in agricultural cash crop exports continued to bring wealth to Ivory Coast in decades to follow, Taiwanese development did not always bring techniques to the bottom rungs of subsistence farmers as might have been implied when Vanguard was reported by the media within Taiwan.

Indeed, though development proved to be successful in raising wealth among Taiwanese farmers, increasing caloric intake among Taiwanese rural populations, and

⁷⁷ Liu, 392.

⁷⁸ Memos Vol. II, “US ROC Relations,” 2/15/65, #73a, “China,” Country File, NSF, Box 238, LBJ Library

⁷⁹ “Meeting on October 14 with Dr. Caton,” Folder “Comments and Reports - Bruce Billings,” Bruce Billings Personal Papers.

⁸⁰ “Meeting on October 14 with Dr. Caton,” Folder “Comments and Reports - Bruce Billings,” Bruce Billings Personal Papers.

freeing up agricultural labor for industrialization, in Africa these long term changes were far less pronounced. Vanguard missions were hamstrung by politics in most instances, where the supposedly apolitical techniques taught by Taiwanese teams could not overcome structural issues such as inequitable distribution of resources, limited native government support, and the politics of diplomacy. The United States also limited the scope of Vanguard mission, discouraging its providing technical assistance outside of agriculture.⁸¹ Billings also lamented this, implying that “if the Vanguard project could include projects other than those directly tied to agriculture” then perhaps even greater results could have been achieved.⁸² As described by anthropologist James Ferguson, this “anti-politics machine” of development touted its technical ability to transcend politics, but successful development more often than not required not just technical capability but also political will and reform.⁸³

By 1971, support for the PRC taking over the seat of the ROC as “China” gained enough traction such that the ROC no longer could trade favors for votes. The pro-PRC bloc gained a supermajority, and the US, the ROC’s staunchest ally, had acquiesced to this reality. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2758 passed, formally recognizing the PRC as the legitimate government of China. The ROC had withdrawn its representative just prior to the vote, due to Chiang Kai-shek’s perception that withdrawing would save face and prove less damaging to the international prestige of the ROC than being forced out by a vote, effectively ending its campaign to remain in the UN.⁸⁴

As a consequence of the resolution, the US ceased to fund the Vanguard program through its PL480 counterpart funds. Missions to most Vanguard nations were withdrawn or significantly reduced, though they would continue for certain allies who continued diplomatic recognition of the ROC under a different government agency, the CIECD.

Conclusion

Despite the short-lived status of Vanguard, its efforts nonetheless marked an interesting turn in light of greater histories about decolonization, the global South, development, and knowledge. By the 1960s the Chinese elite of the Guomindang had begun to lose sight of regaining the mainland. For Chiang Kai-shek, military reconquest was always at the fore, but for the mid-level bureaucrats in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and JCRR, Taiwan had become a new home and governing reality. The Vanguard missions provided an opportunity to expand that horizon. Abroad, they provided proof of national greatness, that Chinese techniques and technology were as useful, if not more useful, than those practiced by the United States or Japan. ROC missions abroad dedicated to these

⁸¹ 中美資源交換計畫先鋒案部分 [Sino-American Resource Exchange Plan Vanguard Section], December 10, 1966, Archive Number 055-431-3-0009, Taiwan (ROC) National Archives 檔案管理局.

⁸² “Meeting on October 14 with Dr. Caton,” Folder “Comments and Reports - Bruce Billings,” Bruce Billings Personal Papers.

⁸³ James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: “Development,” Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁸⁴ Cable, “Nationalist China’s Position in the UN,” 4/16/64, #68, “China,” Country File, NSF, Box 237, LBJ Library

technologies could put these to use for those nations and peoples who needed them because hunger and poverty still plagued them. These humanitarian actions reinforced the notion that because the ROC could afford to be a donor abroad, that it had conquered these issues at home. And carving out this international niche as a groundbreaking nation in agricultural development allowed the ROC to perceive itself as being in the international “vanguard.”

The home front was perhaps even of greater importance for many of these intellectuals and bureaucrats. By pointing to the demand for ROC technical assistance abroad, and by reinforcing its position as one of humanitarian goodness, agricultural technology became a means of proving the success of the ROC state to a domestic audience. No longer was Taiwan a sleepy colonial backwater that planted rice for others abroad. It became the producer of technologies, the model for others to follow. This sense of legitimacy provided immense propaganda value for a regime that needed continued support from the average citizen to justify its authoritarian rule and Chiang’s continued quest for military build-up. It also provided a sense of nationalism for the GMD elites, which by the 1960s, after growing increasingly disillusioned about the prospects of retaking the mainland, also began to show signs of agitation against Chiang.⁸⁵

The idea of being in the vanguard and providing a model for others to follow was also unique from a historical perspective because of the Cold War in Asia and the state of development at the time. Unlike the Cold War in Europe or in the United States, Taiwan’s Cold War was waged primarily for its international legal status, an almost existential question of whether it was a state at all. Development was one field in which this unique Cold War produced rival scientific and technical regimes between the ROC and PRC. While development had largely been practiced by what were considered “First World” and “Second World” powers like the US and the Soviet Union, the engagement of a former colonial territory like Taiwan in the field marked a significant shift. Today South-to-South cooperation is far more commonplace, but in the 1960s Taiwanese aid to Third World countries was novel and a source of pride for both Taiwanese and Americans (who saw Taiwan as an Agency for International Development “graduate”). The introduction of practices from a former colonial space also meant technologies and practices evolved from social settings quite different from US and Soviet development. Thus, emphasis on farmers associations, for example, proved to be a unique area of contribution in many Vanguard missions. Taiwan’s contribution in farmers associations, combining top-down and bottom-up knowledge techniques, demonstrate that knowledge can coalesce in different ways when constructed in South-to-South networks.

⁸⁵ “The Taiwan Situation,” April 15, 1965, Memo, #14, “China GRC 1964-1965-1966, Box 15, Komer Files, NSF, LBJ Library.