

# My fight for a new taiwan: one womans journey from prison to power book review

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



## **Introduction**

Lu Hsiu-Lien depicts her dreadful struggle for democratization in Taiwan in her political autobiography “ My Fight for a New Taiwan: One Woman’s Journey from Prison to Power.” The title of the book itself tells that this story is about a political journey of a common woman that she spent in prison and became vice president. She has released a fascinating memoir that tells her political life with humor in her recent book. It is considered as a rare political memoir that is presented with candid and self-aware. “ My Fight for a New Taiwan” narrates the Taiwan’s unique coalesce of autochthonic and Chinese culture. As Lu is a former vice president of the Republic of China, she explores her political journey and her painful struggle for the revolution in Taiwan from dictatorship to democracy. This memoir supports the story of Taiwan’s historic victory in 2000 that makes her to be the first female vice president and serves for over eight years until 2008.

“ My Fight for a New Taiwan” is not only the story about a historic political victory in Taiwan, but also the story of a girl who was an unwanted daughter, survived cancer and imprisonment, and self-made politician. As Lu has contributed a vital part in the Taiwan revolution, she has presented her personal experience in politic to better present the history, origins of culture that is blended of Chinese and indigenous culture, the identity of Taiwan in contemporary politics, and its relationship with China. Her struggles are not only for the political victory, but also for her unsatiated quest for gender inequality, political reform, and human rights. Thus, Lu Hsiu-Lien explores political problems, gender inequality that prevails in Taiwan for many

decades, and human rights in her recently released political autobiography “My Fight for a New Taiwan: One Woman’s Journey from Prison to Power.”

## **Origins of Culture**

As culture speaks the customs, ethnicity, and tradition of the people, the culture of Taiwan undoubtedly reflects the tradition and culture of Taiwanese people. Japanese colonial administrators and Chinese bureaucrats were ruling Taiwan. After the revolution that Lu had taken part, DPP (Democratic Progressive Party) had started governing Taiwan. As people who belong to different region and culture inhabit Taiwan, the culture of Taiwan too had highly influenced by the different lifestyle and cultures of people. Even though, the natives of Taiwan got success in getting freedom from the Nationalist Party, they could not come out of the influence of other cultures. Taiwan culture is blended with several cultures that are culture of Taiwanese aborigines, Japanese, American, European, and Confucianist Han Chinese. Chinese Nationalist Party that makes Taiwan to dwell in the influence of other suppressed Taiwan’s cultural expression. They did not let the growth of the Taiwanese cultural institutions. For a long period, Taiwan was under the rule of several nations such as Japan, China, and so on. Chinese Cultural Revolution makes the great impact in Taiwan as they were not allowed to practice their own native culture and were compelled to practice Chinese culture. There is a tremendous cultural difference between Communist China and Free China (Taiwan). After the change in the ruling party in 2000, Taiwanization emerges to make Taiwan practice the native culture, and Taiwan government has started promoting Taiwanization that was

suppressed by Chinese ruler so far. As a result of Taiwanization movement, one of the Taiwanese subcultures, Taikhe, emerges that culture helps to accentuate Taiwanese culture's uniqueness. During 1980s and 1990s, Taiwanization has been a tendency since democratization. Even though, Taiwanese culture has been influenced by several cultures, it has its unique culture to speak its pride for which Taiwanese are struggling to keep upright in the practice.

## **Identity in Contemporary Taiwan**

The Taiwanese people had to struggle to find their identity in their own land for several decades. Lu's love for her nation makes her to become the first female vice president of Taiwan under the presidency of Chen Shui-bian. In her memoir "My Fight for a New Taiwan," Lu has explored several political incidents that left marks in the history of Taiwan. For many decades, Taiwan was under the rule of several countries that creates great influence on rights, culture, religion, inequality, and lifestyle. When the Taiwanese started raising voice against the rule of Democratic Party, Lu has felt that their fight for freedom is not only for their rights, but also for finding their identity that sinks into the flood of other cultural influences. Native Taiwan people could not find their identity because they were completely suppressed by the previous rulers who were made to accept the culture and traditions of other nations. It was a long search for Taiwanese to search for their identity, which was the condition in many countries such as Africa and India who were under the rule of Portuguese and British.

Lu has clearly portrayed the longing hearts of Taiwan for finding their

identity in the clumsy Taiwan that was occupied by the people of various cultures and religion. The search for identity is vividly reflected in “ My Fight for a New Taiwan.” Lu has raised voice against the rule of Nationalist Party and imprisoned not for the sake of getting high office in Taiwan, but to find the identity of the Taiwan and to help finding democracy. In an assassination attempt, Lu was shot in her right kneecap. As a woman in the male-dominated society, Lu has to succeed detesting father, cancer, imprisonment, and political enemies. Lu life history is full of struggle, as she has to find her own identity in the male-dominated politics before searching for the identity of her nation. Even after the 2000 revolution, Taiwan could not find their own identity in the stagnant nation, which lost its grace due to invasion of several invaders and cultures.

## **Taiwan’s relationship with China in the Past, Present, and Future**

The People of the Republic of China and their supporters have attacked Lu heavily because she has been more vocal than Chen Shui-bian in favor of the independence of Taiwan. She has often disagreed with Chen regarding the Cross-Strait policy. She did not accept the compromising signals of Chen regarding this issue and passed instigative comments to media. She has been accused for her confrontational remarks that led newspapers in China to impeach against her for arousing “ animosity between the people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits.” She has been labeled as a “ scum of the earth” and “ insane” by the PRC state media. She insisted on peace that she has been awarded with the World Peace Prize of World Peace Corps Mission in the year 2001. During her visit to South Korea in 2010, she has preached

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Taiwan's use of "soft power," which means peaceful economic and political development because she has considered such practice as an example for the solution of international disputes. All these nature of Lu proves that she has a proud feeling for her nation and its practices and her aversion toward the Cross-Strait policy of China.

In her speech at George Washington University, Lu demanded the DPP to understand about Mainland China, as development and future of Taiwan depend on the growth of the Mainland China. She has given a new definition for cross-strait relations that insist to consider this relation as a near neighbor and not as a distant relative. In addition, Lu emphasized that there should not be any hatred or war between Mainland China and Taiwan. As she promotes peace everywhere, she wants to have industrial cooperation, cultural exchanges, and peaceful coexistence. In "My Fight for a New Taiwan," Lu has admonished on the silent appropriation of Taiwan into China. However, Lu is stubborn in her view that Taiwan can never be a part of China. She picked apart Ma Ying-jeou, ROC President, for making Taiwan to depend more on China. As a brave politician of Taiwan, she never gives up her idea of making Taiwan a democratic country, as she is always insisted on making it clear that Taiwan can never be part of any other country and will never depend on other nation for the growth. She wants to feel proud of her nation in every aspect.

## **Conclusion**

"My Fight for a New Taiwan" is not only the story about a historic political victory in Taiwan, but also the story that reflects the lifestyle, culture,

identity, and inequality in society. Her struggles are not only for the political victory, but also for her unsatiated quest for gender inequality, political reform, and human rights. Thus, Lu Hsiu-Lien explores political problems, gender inequality that prevails in Taiwan for many decades. Taiwan culture is blended with several cultures that are culture of Taiwanese aborigines, Japanese, American, European, and Confucianist Han Chinese; however, they could not come out of the influence of other cultures. Although Taiwan could not find their own identity in the stagnant nation, which lost its grace due to invasion of several invaders and cultures, Lu is not ready to let her nation to be dependent on other countries, especially China. Thus, Lu has explored culture, inequality, and rights of Taiwan through her political experience in “My Fight for a New Taiwan.”

## References

Hsiu-Lien, L. (2014). *My Fight for a New Taiwan: One Woman's Journey from Prison to Power*. S. I.: University of Washington Press.