

# "Taiwanese way to integration"

Contributed by Lachlan  
Sunday, 22 July 2007

TAIWANESE WAY TO INTEGRATION  
BY Chloe Groser

The Dominion Post, Wednesday September 11, 2002

Taiwanese woman Helen Tung thinks she should explain why so many Taiwanese adopt English names here. Mandarin is a tonal language and one false tone could completely corrupt the meaning of a word. Miss Tung, whose Taiwanese name is Hsulun, recalled one misunderstanding she had with a male university student who was studying Mandarin. One night she invited him over to have some dumplings. "It sounds almost exactly the same as going to sleep. He was a bit embarrassed, he probably thought "Oh this woman, you are very open, aren't you?" Fellow Taiwanese woman Linda Wong took on her English name when she arrived in 1971. Her name, if slightly mispronounced, sounds like a type of dim sum. But she has reached a compromise and slips her Taiwanese initial between the Linda and Wong. Even in Taiwan pronunciation caused confusions, said Miss Tung. There was a huge diversity of Mandarin speakers who had come to Taiwan at different times - and from different places. Their accents reflected their heritage, she said. There were the Chinese who fled China, after World War II, those educated while Taiwan was under Japanese occupation and indigenous Taiwanese. Mrs Wong said Taiwan had strong links with mainland Chinese culture, although differences existed. "China had been Communist for so long that people developed a different nature-And Mandarin is, spoken differently, it seemed softer, more like singing?" Miss Tung said divisions existed between Chinese and Taiwanese, but any animosity was left behind by new arrivals to New Zealand. "From, a young person's viewpoint, history is history. Culturally we share the same roots. And when I left Taiwan I was most happy to meet a Chinese person down the street. Miss Tung said she went through a period of adjustment after arriving in her late teens. As a Canterbury University student, she made mammoth efforts to fit in. She started shopping at second-hand clothing stores, tried without success to dreadlock her hair and wore rugby jerseys. But after a year, she grew out of the phase and settled into university life much to the relief of her parents. Dianne Shee also found negotiating teenage life with a traditional Taiwanese family life tricky. She moved, to Christchurch in 1990, aged 11, after her father came here on holiday and fell in love with the country. Her first day at intermediate school threw her. "It was really daunting for me. English is compulsory in Taiwan, but not at primary school I knew a little bit of English, really simple things, but other than that, I knew nothing. Miss Shee said the Kiwi education system, unlike the Taiwanese system, taught students to think for themselves - a concept potentially at odds with traditional Taiwanese parenting, where obedience to the family was paramount. flatting was out of the question while there was a family home she could live in so she moved to Wellington. Mrs Wong and compatriot Lily Cheung, as mothers, have a different viewpoint. Mrs Wong said she told her husband, a third-generation Taiwanese Kiwi, that she planned to bring their children up the Taiwanese way. "I said to my husband: Don't interfere with the way I teach my kids." Good study habits were a priority. HomeWork had to be done straightaway, with more, freedom for high marks. Both mothers agree their children were brought up quite nicely with a little bit of both cultures.

Happy with their lot: Taiwanese women from left, Linda Wong,

Lily Cheung, Dianne Shee and Helen Tung