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## Chinese Working-Class Lives

Hill Gates

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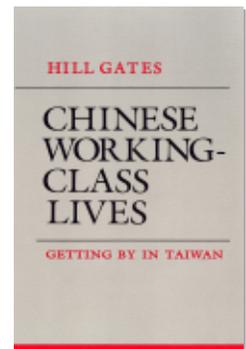
Gates, Hill.

Chinese Working-Class Lives: Getting By in Taiwan.

Cornell University Press, 1987.

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# A Note on Chinese Romanizations

English speakers traditionally transcribe Chinese characters with letters of the alphabet representing various Chinese sounds, some of which are not found in English. This process is known as “romanization.” The choice of letters to represent Chinese sounds depends on the connection the original romanizer made between her own variant of English and the variant of Chinese she was attempting to transcribe. While many systems of romanization are in use, only two are employed here. Words and names in Mandarin, China’s “national language” (as the Nationalist government calls it) or “common speech” (as the Communist government calls it), are rendered in a system known as pinyin. Pinyin, the official romanization for the People’s Republic of China, is growing in international popularity, although it is not used in Taiwan or in most pre-1970s sources on China.

The majority mother tongue in Taiwan is a south China language known as Minnanhua, or Taiwanese. Not a dialect, it is a separate language, not comprehensible to Chinese from outside of Taiwan and southern Fukien province. In this book, the few names and words given in Minnanhua are romanized according to the system of Nicholas Bodman (1955).

In pinyin, vowels are pronounced roughly as in Spanish and most consonants roughly as in English. Exceptions are *x*, pronounced *sy*; *q*, pronounced very far forward in the mouth as *ch*; *c*, pronounced *ts*; *zh*, pronounced *dj*; *si*, pronounced *sz*; *zhi*, *chi*, *zi*, *ci*, pronounced as if the *i* were an *r*; and *r*, pronounced like an English *r* with tongue flattened and teeth together.

In Bodmanized Taiwanese, vowels are also roughly like Spanish ones;

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final *q* is omitted; final *p*, *t*, and *k* are unreleased; *c* is pronounced *ts*; and other consonants are roughly as in English.

In this book, the names of Miss Guo, Miss Ong, Mr. Kho, Mr. Go, and Mrs. Lim are given in their Taiwanese form, except for Mrs. Lim's given name, which is a Japanese one. Most other Chinese names and words appear in their Mandarin pronunciation; the few exceptions are marked with "(T)."

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