James Evans: Welcome to the Harvard on China Podcast. I'm James Evans at the Fairbank Center for Chinese studies at Harvard University. Today I'm speaking with Professor Margaret Lewis, professor of Law at Seton Hall University, who researched law and criminal justice in mainland China and Taiwan. Professor Lewis received her JD from the New York University School of Law and her Bachelor's from Columbia University. She's practiced law in New York and California and was recently a public intellectuals program fellow with the National Committee on US/China Relations. She's the author, with Jerome Cohen, of the book Challenge to China: How Taiwan Abolished its Version of Reeducation Through Labor, and she's a renowned expert on Taiwanese law and politics. Professor Margaret Lewis, welcome to the Harvard on China Podcast.

Margaret Lewis: Thank you.

James Evans: So, your talk at the Fairbank Center is entitled Why Law Matters in Taiwan. Why did you pick this title, and why wouldn't law matter in Taiwan?

Margaret Lewis: It's first a play on the title of the great book by Shelley Rigger, Why Taiwan Matters, because so much, I think, of doing Taiwan studies is explaining to people why Taiwan is important, not just to people who are living there but for people outside of Taiwan. And so, my point, as a legal scholar, is it's not just that Taiwan matters, but when you look within Taiwan and you see how many issues are right now bubbling up in society, that law is a critical component of that discussion.

James Evans: So, if anything, it's a call to go beyond the black box of the state and actually look at what's happening domestically in Taiwan.

Margaret Lewis: Exactly. We have, I think, a very important presidential election coming up in January 2020. We had important local elections just this last November, and of course, cross-strait relations, international relations were a component of those. But a lot of what people care about is their day-to-day existence, getting their kids to school, going to their jobs, buying groceries, where does their energy come from? And these are local issues.

James Evans: So, is this such a thing as Taiwan law?

Margaret Lewis: Yeah. The really interesting thing here, from a more wonky legal aspect, is the constitution is still the Republic of China constitution. If you go to Taiwan and you happen to be there on October 10th, you will be there for the big celebration of Double Ten Day, which celebrates the founding of the Republic of China. Years are still counted from that day, so you always have to "jia shi yi" you have to add 11 onto the official government date to figure out what year it is in the more standard calculation. So, the Republic of China is still very much important to the basis of the legal system, and you don't have laws emanating from the government of Taiwan. You'll have sometimes agreements signed by the Republic of China, parentheses Taiwan, but Taiwan itself, it's an island, it's a
concept, but it's not a government that issues legal proclamations in the name of Taiwan itself.

James Evans: There seems to be a distinction in casual use, that we've seen more references to Taiwan under the current DPP government than we have before under Ma Ying-jeou for example. Is there an attempt to shift the dialogue away from Republic of China in common parlance and towards Taiwan?

Margaret Lewis: Yeah. And I think when I went to Taiwan in 2017 to spend a year on a Fulbright at National Taiwan University, I went having spent time in Taiwan before but not having lived there for an extended period of time. And one thing I learned is, you cannot do anything with studying Taiwan without coming back to the issue of identity and what does it mean? What is this of being Taiwanese or being Chinese? Is that ethnicity? Is that national identity? And there's no doubt that this idea of being Taiwanese is very much something that is felt by the people who live there. The question is, how much they also identify as being Chinese. And again, how much of that is an ethnic issue as compared with a relationship with a sovereign state?

Margaret Lewis: When you look at the government rhetoric, so for example, there was a big legal reform conference that Tsai Ing-wen called shortly after she became president. And when you look at the report coming out of that, the only time the Republic of China is mentioned in this report is for the years, and for the Republic of China constitution, but everything else is about Taiwan. And so, there is very much this idea that you still have this entity of the Republic of China, that is the entity with which, I think we're at 16 now, states have formal diplomatic relations and the Holy See, but the real conversation is about Taiwan.

James Evans: As you mentioned the importance of identity, we've just published a new book with the Asia Center Press here called Becoming Taiwanese: Ethnogenesis in a Colonial City 1880s-1950s by Evan Dawley, that is now available for sale. The Asia Center Press will be very happy that I have plugged their new book.

Margaret Lewis: And he's fantastic, really interesting work. Because I've spoken with him because I'm more interested in contemporary issues of identity, but you can't just separate that from this very complex history of Taiwan and how you look back at the influence of the Japanese colonial period, which was hugely influential also on the legal system, all the way back to the importance of the indigenous peoples and their now current push to try to get greater recognition and greater rights. There's historical reasons for so much of this.

James Evans: And I guess a lot of these issues are more politicized under a DPP government than they would be under a KMT government. We've seen under Tsai Ing-wen that there's been more emphasis on questions of indigenous rights, the idea of transitional justice, people talking about same sex marriage. How does legal reform and transitional justice create that identity?
Margaret Lewis: Yeah. And transitional justice, when that said, the immediate thing people think of is transitional justice as dealing with the authoritarian, period. That you had this time of martial law beginning in the late 1940s and stretching all the way to 1987, and I think a lot of, at least, Americans are very surprised when I tell them that, because Chiang Kai-shek did a fantastic job of PR and promoting Taiwan as free China. But really, just not communist China, and because of the political realities of that period, that he got a fairly free pass to engage in extremely repressive and harsh practices.

Margaret Lewis: And so, you've only had since 1987 that we had the end of martial law, and so there's this massive chunk of time and a lot of people who are still alive today, or at least people who are the children of people who suffered during that period. So, how do you deal with just getting information, first of all, of what happened to relatives during that time period? Questions about should there be individual responsibility for wrongs and the more time that passes, the less important that is just because of that generation is dying out, of those who are actually engaged in the torture and the disappearances? Issues of money, this is hugely important. KMT made a lot of money during that time, and not just the KMT directly, but associations closely affiliated, the women's groups associated with the KMT, are those ill gotten gains that should be removed at this point from their coffers.

Margaret Lewis: And then, also, this huge issue of symbolism. What do you do with Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall? What do you do with all of these statues? And so, one of the things is there's actually a park in Taiwan where a bunch of these statues have been put. I want to go. Because on the one hand, this is Taiwan's history and so you don't want to erase it, but it, of course, is fraught. So, there's that aspect of transitional justice. But as you mentioned, there's also this issue about the indigenous peoples and their rights, and Tsai Ing-wen in 2016 was the first president to issue an apology. There's been mixed reviews about how she's followed up since then and her government, in acting on protecting indigenous rights, but you do have, in the legal system, for example, indigenous courts now, which try to have judges who are trained to deal with cases involving indigenous peoples, like hunting rights, involving some of the more indigenous practices and taking those into account. There's some really interesting work going on studying those courts right now.

Margaret Lewis: And you also have transitional justice issues going back to the Japanese colonial period. For that, too, there's a... Travel advice, if anyone's in Taipei, there's a wonderful museum on Dihua Jie on Dihua street called the Ama Museum, and it's specifically made to have the oral histories and other stories and documentation of Taiwanese women who were comfort women, were sexual slaves during World War II. But more generally, the museum also deals with sexual violence and particularly in wartime, and it's a powerful museum and it's well worth a visit.
James Evans: And I guess, in many ways, this ties in with a lot of contemporary topics that people are talking about in American politics to do with reparations. That's a big part of the 2020 presidential campaign for some of the candidates, the idea of what do you do with statues of people from the past, how do you deal with that past? And so, I guess in some ways, Taiwan presents an ultimate experience of these questions in a different context of the United States.

Margaret Lewis: Yeah. I think with Taiwan, you have to... What is Taiwan today? Where is it going? You can't figure that out without grappling with this complex history. In some ways, Taiwan is a pretty diverse society. You have, as I said, a small group but an interesting and important group of real indigenous peoples who go back thousands of years, and then you had the immigrants who came over from mainland China hundreds of years ago. The "bensheng ren" and they were there before the 1940s, and of course the group that came over a couple million with Chiang Kai-shek and KMT and the late '40s. You get now more recent immigrants, whether they be temporary or more permanent immigrants, coming from Southeast Asia, intermarriage, a push now to try to bring in more international representation from all over the world, trying to find ways to incentivize highly educated people from US, Europe. So, it's become, while not maybe as diverse as when I walk down the streets of Manhattan, but it's still, I think, is a more diverse place than many people recognize who have not spent time there.

James Evans: I have a slightly odd question for you. What are dinosaur judges?

Margaret Lewis: Yes. I love this "konglong faguan". And when I first heard this, this is one of those times where like, "Is my Chinese failing me?" No. And it was like we meant dinosaur judges, and I've been to protests on the streets of Taipei where people are literally dressed up in full on Jurassic Park wear. And the idea there is, it's obviously a criticism, this is not something that the judges say about themselves, and it's not as much about the age of the judges. There are certainly judges who are older and have been in the positions for decades and seen as vestiges of the authoritarian era, but more that the judges are seen as being out of touch with the person on the street. And this has a lot to do with the way that judges are selected.

Margaret Lewis: Taiwan's still a very exam focused system. You still have the examination UN, branch of the government focused on exams. This idea that you achieve and you get these very selective posts by undergoing an extremely rigorous and just grueling examination process. And what that means for being a judge is you go from usually a fairly elite law school to being, then, a judicial trainee in a fairly cloistered setting, to being on the bench. So, this idea that judges are from another era, they don't get it. And the other criticism you hear sometimes of judges is that they're baby judges or this "wawa faguan" because they haven't been out being lawyers, being business people, and then put on the bench. So, again, this, "Are you out of touch?" which is led to a push to see about whether
there should be some more citizen participation actually in the decision making process for serious criminal cases.

James Evans: Is there an ideological dimension to the dinosaur judges? Are they considered to be too one way or another compared to the citizens?

Margaret Lewis: In some ways they're just seen as being, I think, conservative and they don't know what's happening, but the other hand, there's the criticism that judges get, too, is that they're in fact too protective of human rights and they're too lenient on their sentencing. And the death penalty is still used in Taiwan, it's infrequently, but there has been an execution under Tsai's government and there's over 40 people still on death row. So, there's still this strong retributive atmosphere, so I think judges feel like they can't win.

Margaret Lewis: And you look at the constitutional court, which, in many ways, is a pretty conservative body. These are mostly legal academics, people who have been career judges, and yet they came out in 2017 with this ruling saying that the ROC constitution demanded same sex marriage. And there's 15 judges, one recused himself because of a personal relationship with a member of the legislature who herself was very pro marriage equality, but they only had one pure dissent and one partial dissent. So, that was a really amazing sense of cohesion amongst these judges saying that you needed to have same sex marriage, which was very progressive.

James Evans: We're currently recording this in May, 2019, and later this month that law will come into effect and same sex marriage will make Taiwan the first country in Asia to have same sex marriage, which they are really playing up as a big PR campaign of, "Look how progressive we are." We often see that countries will legislate in favor of same sex marriage more as a signal to the international community than domestically, in some ways. It also, I guess, plays into this question of dinosaur judges because there's been quite a lot of pushback to the same sex marriage law, and there was a referendum in part of the local elections last year where it was nonbinding but same sex marriage was rejected by the majority of voters. How is this playing up in domestic Taiwanese politics?

Margaret Lewis: And one of the interesting things as of today, I feel like I should check the news before I say anything because this is a moving target, but that there is no law going into effect on May 24th. And that's the real question because what the constitutional court did, and they've done this in other cases in the past, too, it's not unique, is essentially give the legislature a runway. They said, "Okay, you have two years from the date of our ruling saying that you need to have same sex marriage, and right now the civil code foundational law is in terms of a man and a woman. You have two years to figure it out, legislature. Get it together." And this is a, as you said, highly contentious issue. And under the constitutional rights, you need to have same sex marriage, but what the court didn't say is the exact legal mechanism to make that happen.
Margaret Lewis: So, there were choices. Do you actually revise the civil code itself and make it so it's not gender specific, which I think would be the preferred result from some of the more pro marriage equality camps. Do you create a separate law, a sense of separate but equal, which is problematic as far as saying, "Well, then it's not real marriage." And that seems to have been the compromised position that the Tsai Ing government has tried to pursue. They had a draft law that hasn't been enacted. And then, when you had this referendum, it was like a couple of referenda, there these were nonbinding because they couldn't change the constitutional ruling, but it was more I think of a litmus test of where the population was. And of course, the legislature is very keen in understanding that because they have their elections coming up in January 2020, as well. They're the people who actually have to go out and get the votes.

Margaret Lewis: But what happened there was the population saying, "We're not so sure about this same sex marriage." And so, now you've got this real tension of some very progressive forces. You have the largest gay pride parade in Asia in Taiwan. President Tsai has marched in it. Then you have these very conservative, more traditional forces. And so, as an American, this feels familiar. It's not just about marriage. I mean, some people get married just because they want to get married, but a lot of people get married, in part, because I want to have a family, right? They want to have kids. And that gets even more complicated because the constitutional court ruling said nothing about children. There's surrogacy, last I heard is still not legal in Taiwan, there's real issues about use of assisted reproductive technology, and for example, how sperm donors might or might not have ability to later find out if they actually have children. And there's this whole host of legal issues that haven't been fleshed out. So, the LGBT community that's interested in, "Well, how do we have families under this legal structure?" is grappling with some very, very emotional and complicated issues.

James Evans: Yeah. And I will say it's not the first time that same sex marriage has been passed either by a court or a legislature and then rejected in a national referendum. The same thing happened in Slovenia a few years ago, so it also, I think, speaks to this tension between in an elite political class and then what people not of that elite class might feel is a change in their society that's happening too quickly.

Margaret Lewis: And you see separation of powers and this idea that you do very much have the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch all playing a really important role here and different roles. And the judges, they're saying, "Our role is to interpret the constitution." They were very cognizant that this was a very delicate and contentious issue. One thing that was interesting even about the way the decision was made is the constitutional court often doesn't even have an oral hearing. They often just decide based on the written submissions. They called in experts and professors from National Taiwan University, others, they have press conference, they issued a press release, they actually broadcast this oral hearing, and and so, there, there was a real recognition that this was not a decision that should be made behind closed
doors. And I think this idea of greater transparency and clarity and participation are these foundational principles that are increasingly being infused into the legal system.

James Evans: You mentioned that you yourself have attended protests in Taiwan as an observer, and protesting seems to be an enduring feature of the post-authoritarian Taiwanese political scene. And most recently, I’m sure listeners will be aware of the Sunflower Movement that kicked off in 2014, where a lot of students took over the physical building of the Legislative Yuan. And so, the idea of the Sunflower Movement was for the Ma Ying-jeou government to cancel a planned trade agreement with mainland China, in a move that a lot of supporters of the Sunflower Movement thought would bring Taiwan and the mainland closer together in a way that they did not want to see. How are recent protests in Taiwan dealing with or struggling with this legacy of protest?

Margaret Lewis: Yeah. And I think when you look at Taiwan, it’s hard to spend any time there and not run across some kind of protest. If nothing else, it’s fun to congruent and all. It’s like, "What’s going on here?" And as someone who has spent my early career, and I continue to spend time working on China, I just get excited that there is a protest. So, when I was in Taiwan, when I first got there in the fall, late summer of 2017, it was when the Li Mingzhi case was heating up. And so, here we have a Taiwanese citizen who was involved in peaceful conversations with people in the mainland about democracy and human rights and had had Facebook posts and other communications, and when he was physically present in mainland China, was arrested, subsequently charged and convicted for subversion, and is now serving a five year sentence.

Margaret Lewis: This raised concern, it wasn't like widespread. If I had gone and asked every person on the street they wouldn't know, but certainly there was a lot of concern in Taiwan about his fate and in particular because of his conviction being for what looked like free speech. So, I went to a protest, and it was a lovely day in a park in Taiwan and they had their signs to free Li Mingzhi and they had a drone taking photos from above. And there were some police standing by, and so I went and talked to the police and I’m like, "So, how is it being a police officer with this protest?" Like, "Oh, this one's easy, they're just taking photos. We're used to much more raucous." But this idea that the police were doing exactly what they should be doing, there was a protest, they were in the vicinity to make sure if anything needed to be dealt with, and that was a very peaceful protest.

Margaret Lewis: More recently, and other times, you’ve had actual confrontations between the police and protestors, concerns about police using too much force against those protesters. You've had very big protests. For example, the pension reforms, illicit labor law reforms, nuclear energy, all of these different issues. And I see the protests as complimentary to the more dry legal debates going on about, "Well, what should the laws look like?" that this is the public expression of some of those more esoteric debates going on. And one thing, too, that's when you
look back at the Sunflower and before that, you had the Wild Strawberry
Protests, Wild Lily, they all have these great names.

Margaret Lewis: And the Wild Lily Protest is particularly interesting today, and here we are in
May of 2019, because that was in 1990, so shortly after the Tiananmen protest
and massacre across the street. And there, with the Wild Lily, you had, again, it
was a student led protest, took over a massive, one of the most important
public space, really, in Taipei. It could have gone south. It was after martial law,
but it was still when there was a transition period where there was still quite a
bit of power concentrated in the government. But the protesters were
welcomed into the presidential palace, and in fact, the KMT acceded to a lot of
their demands. When you see history can cut different directions, and that was
a critical juncture, and moving towards more of a representative democracy
that reflected the reality that Taiwan really only controlled the island of Taiwan
and some of the small outlying islands, like Orchid and the Pescadores, and no
longer should have representation for Sichuan. Yeah.

James Evans: In January, 2020 we have a presidential election in Taiwan, the same year as the
US presidential election, albeit a few months earlier. And we've had a flavor of
the current political mood in Taiwan based on the local elections last year. In
the 2020 election, it seems like we have a smorgasbord of candidates, and Tsai
Ing-wen is running for reelection with the DPP party. But we've seen some real
characters flare up in this election. Who are some of the main players, and what
are they standing for?

Margaret Lewis: Yeah. It's a crowded field. It's not as crowded as the democratic field in the US. I
don't think we're up 20. But there's also, in Taiwan, there's a group of actually
declared candidates, and then there's a group of in the winds, putting their toe
in the water. But on the DPP side, Tsai Ing-wen, yes she is the incumbent, she
will run again. That's clear. But you also have a William Lai, Lai Ching-te, who
was her Premier for a little over a year. He stepped down, he was stopping
Premier in January of this year, and he's also DPP and he has, generally, a more
pro-independence, deeper green, he's not as centrist as Tsai Ing-wen is. And so,
that's interesting as far as how much that might pull her deeper green for the
primaries, and then she'd have to try to move back more towards the center.
So, there is the intra DPP tensions, which I can't help but think the KMT is happy
about because the more that you have that infighting within the DPP, the more
vulnerable it makes them.

Margaret Lewis: You also then have on the independent side, the mayor of Taipei, Mayor Ko, and
he is an independent, but he tends to pull people away from the DPP. So, if he
decides to run, he hasn't declared, but that could be another factor because it's
who gets more votes. You could have a DPP candidate, a KMT candidate, and
one or more independent candidates. On the KMT side, yeah, it's not your
grandfather's KMT anymore and sort of the traditional deep blue Ma Ying-jeou
candidates. You have some of that there. So, you have Eric Chu, who lost to Tsai
Ing-wen in the last election, and so he's in the mix and he would be more, I think, of the traditional KMT.

Margaret Lewis: But then you throw in there, Terry Gou, founder of Foxconn, who is this Trump-esque character. He's a businessman. He's not a politician by training. He's the wealthiest person in Taiwan. He puts himself out there as being different and brash, and he's a problematic character in many ways, partially because he does have such strong personal financial investment in China that you have to wonder to what extent he can separate out his business from the politics of what's best for Taiwan. Speaking particularly as a woman, he has made comments to female members of the Legislative Yuan and others that are flat out misogynistic. So, I think there's a number of reasons that he's a challenging individual to think of being in this delicate position of being president.

Margaret Lewis: And then, you add onto that the mayor of Kaohsiung, Han Kuo-yu, who is not declared, but he's taken this position of, "If the KMT can't figure this out, I will graciously step in as a compromise candidate," essentially. He hasn't ruled out the possibility of coming in. And he came on the scene very quickly. He's KMT, but again, he's not traditional KMT. He's much more of this populist personality getting tremendous amount of air time om Taiwanese TV, and he wasn't even expected to win mayor and he did. And he is on a much more pro-economic integration with the mainland, seeing as he was there actually visiting, which was interesting, and also went to Hong Kong and tries to play this as, "I'm just here selling our mangoes. It's about economics." But I think it's unrealistic to say you can just talk about economics without talking about everything that comes with that.

James Evans: Money is politics.

Margaret Lewis: Money is politics. Yeah.

James Evans: Yes. And in fact, both Mayor Ko of Taipei and Mayor Han of Kaohsiung, recently visited the Fairbank Center to give closed door meetings, so I'm sure the election will be very interesting in 2020.

Margaret Lewis: And I always say I want people to pay attention to Taiwan because I think it's important, but at the same time, I don't want Taiwan to be on the front pages of the New York Times, Washington Post, The Guardian, because that's probably not good for Taiwan. If Taiwan is on the front page, it's usually because of some level of crisis, and I think for so long we've had this status quo, which is this uneasy, but yet it's worked, unresolved question of cross-strait relations. And I hope that can continue because, right now, I think the status quo is essentially the best that Tsai and her government can hope for.

James Evans: So, you're trained as a legal scholar. There are relatively few people in the United States who do both legal studies and China or Taiwan. How does
Why Law Matters in Taiwan, with Margaret K (Completed 01/14/20)

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studying Taiwan help change your approach to the field of legal studies here in the United States?

Margaret Lewis: We're a small group, but we're a great group. There are a number of law schools that have someone who writes and studies China, very few who do work on Taiwan. But we also, all of us, teach other things as well. I teach US criminal law, criminal procedure, other friends who teach constitutional law, which in some ways is great because it keeps us integrated with our US focused colleagues, and I think part of our advantage is to bring a comparative perspective, which you need to then understand your own legal system. But in general, law schools don't do much with area studies, and in fact, that seems to be a, "Why would we need an area studies person?" And that is, I think, not limited to law schools, but just area studies in general has been disfavored in recent years, which I think is a mistake. Whether you're doing sociology or law or political science, you need to understand the place, and that requires a really deep appreciation.

Margaret Lewis: So, I was just, in March, at the Association for Asian Studies, which is one of my favorite conferences because I can hang out with the historians and the people who are doing, yeah, gender studies and all these different areas which intersect with laws. There's people, for example, Mary Gallagher at Michigan who, she's not a lawyer but she writes about labor law, and Liu Sida who, he does have a law degree, but he's really, now, he's a sociologist. That's how he identifies himself. But we include him in our legal world. So, I think it's a pretty inclusive group as far as realizing that you need to be interdisciplinary to understand law, and that goes for both Taiwan and for China and probably for most countries out there.

James Evans: And I know a lot of our listeners will either be in the Regional Studies East Asia Program here at Harvard University or graduates of it and will be thrilled to hear that you are saying regional studies is definitely something we should pay more attention to.

Margaret Lewis: And maybe I'm just brainwashed. I was an East Asian Studies major at Columbia, and my teacher was Ted Barry, who I just loved to pieces, and so I grew up with this idea that you need to understand the context. I'm involved with National Committee on US/China Relations Public Intellectual Program, and one of the great things about that program is recognizing that, as people have become more specialized in part because of the pressures of getting tenure, that we become siloed, stovepipe, pick your "tong", your cylindrical object, but we don't reach out across disciplines as much as I think prior generations did. In April I wrote a piece with Jeff Wasserstrom and UC Irvine, and he's a historian. It was fantastic because it brings a very different perspective to similar events that I've studied from a legal perspective, and I think that kind of collaboration is really enriching for the field.

James Evans: Yeah, and I think it's a valid point you raised, that we talk a lot about multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary research, but actually, the reality is often of
the Academy, you mean that people have to forefront a certain discipline. One of our professors here, for example, is very candid in her, even though she studies East Asia, she says, "I am of my discipline first and I study East Asia second, and that's how I get by in the Academy."

Margaret Lewis: Part of that is once people do get tenure, I think they're in a position more to say these norms that are becoming a little bit, I think, too entrenched, should be at least reevaluated. And there's good reasons, too, for having people who, for example, if you're poli sci, to understand the quantitative methods that are being used, but it's not an either or. I think that you can have that complementarity.

James Evans: And so, to finish up, we have a quick fire round. It's called the Fairbank Five.

Margaret Lewis: Do I get points or money or something for that?

James Evans: No, no whammies. So, our first question is, what is your favorite Chinese food?

Margaret Lewis: Oh, favorite Chinese food. Well, then, we're talking about Taiwan.

James Evans: Or Taiwanese food.

Margaret Lewis: I have to go with mango shaved ice because it is, I mean, not only when it's a hundred degrees Fahrenheit and it's humid, it's just so refreshing, but it's also the main reason my children want to go back to Taiwan is that they know that we're going to get... And this is fresh mangoes, Taiwanese mangoes, and you get a mango in the US and it shouldn't really be called, most of the time, a mango. It's not the same thing.

James Evans: Your favorite place in China or Taiwan.

Margaret Lewis: Taiwan's fun to travel around because it isn't that big so you can see a lot of things. I really recommend going to Alishan in central Taiwan. It is a shan it's a mountain, and it feels a little bit like the Northern California Redwoods. I went to high school in Portland, Oregon, have Pacific Northwest ties, and being up in the mountains with these huge trees and there's this cute little train. Again, that was a big draw for the the young kid set. But I think that a lot of times people focus on the coast when they go to Taiwan and they don't go to the interior, and it's not easy to access. There are trains but the drive is a little harrowing, but it's worth the effort.

James Evans: I feel like you should do a child-friendly guide to tourism in Taiwan.

Margaret Lewis: I have spent a lot of time talking to friends who are saying, "I'm going to Taiwan with kids." I'm like, "It's great," but there are tips and tricks.
James Evans: Yeah. A saying in Chinese that encapsulates a feeling you have about the region.

Margaret Lewis: I think one phrase in Chinese that I've always thought was interesting was the "ou duan si lian" that you can break the lotus root but strands remained and this idea about romantic relationships. Because if you do have a refresh lotus root, it does have this fibrous strands that, when you break it, they connect, and that even though you break off relationship, there might still be some lingering emotions. But I think it's interesting thinking of that in the context of cross-strait relations because you still, you have all these ties, personal ties, historical ties, economic ties, and it's complicated.

James Evans: It's complicated. That's the relationship status.

Margaret Lewis: It's complicated.

James Evans: A book that you've recently read on China or Taiwan that you would recommend.

Margaret Lewis: As I said, I think if you want the primer on what's going on in Taiwan, someone's going and they're like, "I just want to understand the context," I think Shelley Rigger's work is fantastic. One book that I recommend when people are going, as their plane reading, is a novel called Green Island by Shauna Yang Ryan, and Green Island, of course, refers to Ludao, this little island off the East coast that became infamous as where hooligans, the Liumang and political prisoners were sent during the authoritarian era. It's since turned into a place that is a lovely tourist destination. It has a museum that is addressing the human rights violations of that era.

Margaret Lewis: But the novel traces a family that... It starts around the time of the 2/28, the February 28th, 1947 incident, where a woman selling cigarettes was beat up by the KMT forces. This then let loose a lot of tensions that had already built up from the people who are already in Taiwan population, and then the incoming KMT, and brought in these decades of the White Terror. So, it follows a family that is a bensheng ren a Taiwanese family through this 40, 50 years. And one thing I like is it's got a pretty good description of the historical events, but more than that, it shows the emotional toll on people who were living under that constant stress. And it does so from the perspective of a female protagonist, and it also connects to the US and how you had Taiwanese who would come to the US but they still didn't feel safe, which was clear from, I mean, the Henry Liu murder and San Francisco in the early '80s, that you had a dissident population that felt threatened even when they were within the borders of the US. So, it's a really a powerful, a good read.

James Evans: Then our final question is a class that you have either taken or taught that changed your thinking about China or Taiwan in some way.
Margaret Lewis: Thinking of Columbia, I'm going to go way back, way back to 1990s, taking East Asian Humanities as an undergrad at Columbia, reading Confucius and Mencius and the Neo Confucians, and it was an East Asian course that we also read from Japan and Tale of Genji. But I really appreciate digging into that history. I was just reading on the China Channel, the review of a exhibit right now in DC on empresses that Tobie Meyer-Fong, a historian at Johns Hopkins, was writing, and she's great and-

James Evans: In the Los Angeles Review of Books-

Margaret Lewis: Yes.

James Evans: ... China Channel?

Margaret Lewis: Yeah, the LARB. And the review itself is worth reading, but now I really want to get there when the exhibit is going on. And so, I think that's really fun, as much as I'm a lawyer dealing with contemporary issues, is not losing sight of that humanities background.

James Evans: Of the strands of the lotus.

Margaret Lewis: There it is.

James Evans: Well, Professor Margaret Lewis, thank you so much for being with us today.

Margaret Lewis: Thank you for having me.

James Evans: Don't forget to subscribe to the Harvard on China Podcast on iTunes, SoundCloud, Stitcher, Podbean, or wherever you get your RSS feed.