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The Early Period of Japanese Colonization in Taiwan: The Process of Armed Resistance Against Japanese Rule (1895-1915)

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Abstract

In 1894, during the First Sino-Japanese War, the Qing dynasty ceded Taiwan and the Pescadores Islands to Japan. In the first twenty years of Japanese colonization (from 1895 to 1915), various armed resistance events against Japanese rule erupted across Taiwan, which can be roughly divided chronologically into three phases: the first phase occurred during the Sino-Japanese War from May to October 1895; the second phase happened immediately after the Sino-Japanese War, lasting until 1902; and the third phase spanned from 1907 to 1915, marked by the Xilai'an (Jiào Bā Nián) Incident (also known as the Yu Qing-fang Incident). In the first and second phases, the people of Taiwan developed a sense of national identity linked to the Qing dynasty (China), viewing it as the legitimate governing authority and defending against foreign rule. In the third phase, they faced discrimination and unequal treatment, compounded by economic pressures and religious superstitions, significantly influenced by the Xinhai Revolution (1911). During this time, Liang Qi-chao (梁啟超) advised Taiwanese intellectuals, including Lin Xian-tang (林獻堂), that Taiwan should seek sympathy and support from moderate and liberal factions in Japan, proposing a non-violent solution: Taiwan's parliamentary autonomy.

Keywords: *Sino-Japanese War, Taiwan Governor-General's Office, Armed Resistance Against Japan, Liang Qi-chao, Colonial Strategy*

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1. Japan's Demonstration of Strength to the International Community During the Meiji Era (1868-1912)

1.1 Japan's Foreign Expansion Policy

During the Meiji period, Japan began to emulate Western countries and was determined to stand alongside major powers as a first-rate nation. By the end of the 19th century, Japan believed that possessing colonies was a necessary condition for becoming a first-class power, and Taiwan served as Japan's initial colonial experimental ground, obtained as a spoil of war from the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895. Japan's foreign expansion was dominated by two factions: the continental clique and the southern clique (Kerr, 1974: 14, 20). The continental clique advocated for Japan to expand westward through the Korean Peninsula into China's Manchuria, North China, and Mongolia, aiming to occupy vast, sparsely populated areas rich in resources. The southern clique, on the other hand, supported advancing southward along Japan's maritime islands to reach South China, Southeast Asia, and the Indian Archipelago, aiming to seize the wealth and mineral resources that Europeans were exploiting in those regions; control of the South China region would give Japan leverage over China's maritime trade resources. In April 1895, Russia, France, and Germany expressed their desire to curb the continental clique's ambitions to occupy the Liaodong Peninsula, Manchuria, and North China, viewing Japan as a threat to their interests in the area. Regarding the occupation of Taiwan, Nakamura Junko (中村純九郎, なかむら じゅんくろう) vigorously expressed to Kabayama Sukenori (樺山資紀, かばやま すけのり) that Taiwan was situated at the chokepoint of the South China Sea and that its incorporation as a “stone aimed at the south” was a crucial initial step towards realizing a grand national project, emphasizing Japan's determination to annex Taiwan.

1.2 Japanese Military Reception of Taiwan in the Year of Yiwei

The First Sino-Japanese War marked a significant watershed in the modern history of the Qing dynasty (Tian & Song, 2014), and Liang Qi-chao (梁啟超) perceptively remarked, "The awakening of our nation's great dream of four thousand years truly began with the First Sino-Japanese War!" This event also influenced vital ideologies in China's national development (Chung, 2015). According to the Treaty of Shimonoseki signed after the war, the Qing dynasty ceded Taiwan to Japan. In 1895 (the Year of Yiwei), Japanese troops arrived to take over Taiwan but faced opposition from a populace resolutely unwilling to fall under Japanese rule, leading to a series of conflicts known as the Yiwei War (Guo, 2020). The Taiwanese people harbored a complex mix of defiance and resentment, along with a sense of being abandoned by their own nation. This ressentiment was further compounded by their awareness of being outcasts amidst national neglect. With no other options available, they sought a way out. Taiwan's governor, Tang Jing-song (唐景崧), established the “Republic of Taiwan” and called for armed resistance against Japan as a last-ditch effort at self-preservation. This marked a shift from the Qing dynasty's hope for a peaceful transition to Japan's forcible takeover of Taiwan. Although Taiwan ultimately failed to resist Japan's occupation, the tragedy of the entire event was shouldered solely by the Taiwanese people (Fang, 2024).

On April 18, 1895, the Qing government sent a telegram to Taiwan's governor, Tang Jing-song: "Issue a warning to the gentry and people of Taiwan not to act out of a moment's anger... as it impedes the overall situation." The message explained that the decision to cede Taiwan was a last resort: "Although Taiwan is important, compared to the capital, it is of lesser significance. If Japan, taking advantage of its victory, directly attacks Tianjin or Dagu (大沽), the capital will be in immediate danger. Moreover, Taiwan is isolated overseas and cannot be defended in the long run." The idea of ceding land for peace was a painful blow to the people of Taiwan. In response, they gathered in large numbers around the governor's office, angrily questioning Tang Jing-song: "What crime have the people of Taiwan committed to deserve such discrimination?" The anger and resentment were palpable ([Qing] Luo, n.d.: 33, 44). The Qing government's stance was to peacefully hand over Taiwan to Japan in order to prevent further Japanese incursions into Beijing, similar to Germany's peaceful acquisition of France's Alsace-Lorraine territory in 1871 (Jallat, Stumpp, & Fuchs, 2018) or Japan's 1875 agreement with Russia over the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin.

Zhang Zhi-dong (張之洞) once expressed his opposition to the cession of Taiwan in a letter to Li Hong-zhang (李鴻章), the Governor-General of Zhili and Minister of Beiyang. He suggested granting Britain and Russia commercial rights in Taiwan to counter Japan's demands (Xu, n.d.). Later, through the Chinese ambassador in London, he attempted to use Taiwan as collateral for a loan from Britain to prevent its cession, but the British rejected this proposal (Yang, 2008). Chen Ji-tong (陳季同), a former diplomat in France, arrived in Taiwan to meet with Tang Jing-song to discuss strategies for saving Taiwan. French General Dereni remarked, "It is difficult to reclaim Taiwan for the Qing government, but it is easy to protect Taiwan. Taiwan must become self-sufficient, with its own right to autonomy... Only if Taiwan is self-sufficient can it justify protection" (Wang, 1970). On May 21, 1895, the Qing government sent an order to Tang Jing-song, stating that a vacancy had been created and that all civil and military officials in Taiwan were required to return to Beijing with the governor to assume new posts. The message also stated, "The provincial officials, both civil and military, are to be notified by Tang Jing-song to proceed to Beijing" ([Qing] Jiang, n.d.: 9). The Qing government indicated that it did not want the handover process to escalate and would not intervene to obstruct Japan's occupation of Taiwan.

On May 23, 1895, Tang Jing-song and other officials, along with the local gentry, issued the "Taiwan Republic Declaration of Autonomy" in the name of "all the local gentry and officials of Taiwan," attempting to follow the French suggestion to establish a form of autonomy and resist Japan's occupation with Taiwan's own strength. The declaration was sent to the capital, stating, "The people of Taiwan, unwilling to serve the Japanese, wish to become an island nation, forever loyal to the Holy Qing" ([Qing] Luo, n.d.: 81). On May 25, the "Republic of Taiwan" was formally established. In his message to the capital, Tang Jing-song clearly stated that the formation of the "Republic of Taiwan" was not his intention, but rather a means of seeking foreign support through France to resist Japan's occupation while using independence as a diplomatic strategy, thereby giving France the justification to intervene and protect Taiwan. This approach was reminiscent of how France had occupied Vietnam during the Sino-French War. To reinforce the anti-Japanese resolve of Taiwanese officials and civilians, Tang Jing-song, upon assuming the presidency, promptly issued an order to all local officers and soldiers: They were given a three-day grace period, expiring on May 27, during which those

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who wished to return to mainland China were free to do so at their own discretion. Those who chose to remain would be enlisted and granted double pay. However, anyone seeking to leave after the deadline would face military punishment (Huang, 1992: 133).

In his work, *The 1895 Taiwan Republic: A Significant Episode in Modern Chinese History* (Lamley, 1895), Lamley points out that the formation of the Republic of Taiwan was driven by the national humiliation caused by the Treaty of Shimonoseki and anger over Japanese aggression. This led Taiwanese officials, gentry, and the public to feel resentment and resistance, prompting them to follow the French suggestion to form an independent government that would not endanger the Qing dynasty and aimed to resist foreign rule while protecting the Qing's original interests. Huang (1992: 330) also notes that the establishment of the Republic of Taiwan was merely a stopgap measure, with a weak and limited foundation, aimed at seeking intervention from a third party to prevent Japan from occupying Taiwan. Huang (2005: 217-228) states that the Republic of Taiwan was primarily composed of local gentry and Qing officials, with the goal not being true independence, but rather resisting Japan's occupation of Taiwan.

After Japanese troops landed on Taiwan's northeastern coast, Tang Jing-song, who initially insisted on never yielding to Japan's powerful forces and actively sought to assume responsibility (requesting to take office) from the Qing court, was mockingly referred to by historians as the "Ten-Day President" (Li, X. F., 1995). He fled to Xiamen that night, abandoning the Taiwanese people and the anti-Japanese volunteer forces without concern, demonstrating that the difference between a hero and a coward is often a matter of a moment's thought. The Taiwanese people's identification with their motherland (the Qing dynasty) and their resolute unwillingness to fall under Japanese rule led to six months of bloody warfare against Japanese troops from north to south, ultimately resulting in the collapse of the armed resistance groups of the Taiwan Democratic Republic and partial Japanese control over Taiwan, alongside the death of one of the Japanese commanders, Prince Kitashirakawa Yoshihisa (北白川宮能久親王, きたしらかわのみや　よしひさしんのう). The Taiwan Yiwei Armed Resistance (May 29, 1895 - November 18, 1895) was the largest anti-Japanese action led by the Qing dynasty in Taiwan's history; "Yiwei" was named because it coincided with the Year of Yiwei, and it was also referred to as the "Yiwei War," "Yiwei Conflict," "Japanese Expedition to Taiwan during the Year of Yiwei," and the "Yiwei Incident." The Japanese side called it the "Taiwan Pacification Operations," "Taiwan Settlement," and "Taiwan Campaign," among other names (Li, J. Y., 2015).

1.3 Japan's Colonial Policy Towards Taiwan

The colonial territories acquired by Western imperial powers were all situated beyond Europe, whereas Japan colonized Taiwan—an island directly south of its mainland. As Japan's first colony, Taiwan raised a critical question: What colonial strategy should be implemented? British colonial policy prioritized governance tactics and political maneuvering over ideological indoctrination, violent repression, or a dominion system. Administratively, Britain transplanted its domestic political and legal frameworks into its colonies while co-opting local power structures (or local elites) to maintain efficient control with a minimal bureaucratic presence. Economically, it bolstered colonial development through British enterprises and addressed social issues to mitigate unrest among the colonized populace. In contrast, European countries like France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain often aimed for a permanent presence in their colonies, even classifying them as overseas provinces of the nation, which led them to use more violent and oppressive measures during their rule (Yan, 2013).

Japan adopted an assimilation strategy similar to France's colonization of Algeria, believing that Taiwan, under Japanese rule, could be assimilated through education as part of the Asian region. The first three governors stationed in Taiwan (Kabayama Sukenori, Katsura Tarō, and Nogi Maresuke) did not implement a clear colonial policy and merely enforced transitional security administration. Although they claimed to follow the French model in Algeria, the reality was somewhat different. The French assimilation policy in Algeria was based on principles of liberty and equality, granting the colonized the same rights and freedoms as French citizens. In contrast, Japan practiced unequal and despotic measures toward Taiwan. For instance, in March 1896, Law No. 63 (the "L63 Law") was issued, emphasizing that Taiwan, as a colony, could not be governed by domestic Japanese laws and needed to follow special regulations. The Taiwan Governor-General's Office became Japan's highest administrative body in Taiwan, characterized by personal governance where the governor held unquestionable authority, controlling all aspects of administration, legislation, judiciary, and military, and could appoint colonial officials (Li, 1994). Hara Naikaku (原敬, はらたかし) once advocated treating Taiwan similarly to France's approach to Algeria by extending domestic laws and establishing a Minister of Taiwan Affairs to oversee the governor while allowing local military, communications, railways, customs, and judiciary affairs to be managed directly by respective mainland authorities; however, this suggestion was not adopted by Japan's militarists at the time (Itō Hirobumi ed., 1936: 32-34).

Furthermore, during Qing rule, Han people and ethnic groups within Taiwan were referred to as "Tái Mín," (台民) whereas early in the Japanese colonization of Taiwan, they were referred to as "Tǔ Mín," (土民), viewing the Taiwanese simply as subjects of Japanese rule, culturally inferior, and backward. Japan continuously promoted the narrative of progressive governance in Taiwan under Japanese rule but did not afford "Taiwanese people" equal treatment through the Taiwan Governor-General's Office; instead, they suffered discrimination and unequal treatment, with a stark awareness of the differences between the Taiwanese and the Japanese colonizers. The Japanese government expressed discomfort over the term "Tǔ Mín," instructing official media to cease using derogatory terms and instead refer to Taiwan's inhabitants as "Běn Dǎo Rén" (本島人). Yet, the inherent national identity that Taiwanese people had evolved awakened a refusal to accept the name "Běn Dǎo Rén" bestowed by their colonizers (Chen, 2020). The term used by the Japanese to describe Taiwanese referred to Han people and the Shú Fān (熟番) within administrative regions but excluded the indigenous highland tribes, Shēng Fān (生番). Japan adopted a policy of "separate governance for Han and indigenous peoples," managing both under different administrative systems and limiting their opportunities for interaction.

2. Armed Resistance against Japan in Three Stages

Although the Japanese military swiftly dismantled the Republic of Taiwan established by Tang Jing-song, sporadic armed resistance persisted across Taiwan throughout the first two decades of

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colonial rule (1895-1915). These uprisings can be chronologically categorized into three distinct phases:

Phase 1 (May-October 1895): The Yiwei War. Taiwan's first large-scale armed resistance against Japanese occupation.

Phase 2 (1895-1902): Systematic Suppression. Japanese forces targeted remaining Qing loyalists, local militias, and grassroots bandit groups who refused to surrender.

Phase 3 (1907-1915): Resurgence of Uprisings. This period witnessed a wave of rebellions, including:

- The Beipu Incident (November 1907)
- The Tainan 28 Constellations Society Incident (August 1908)
- The Zhima Case Incident (May 1909)
- The Linqipu Incident (March 1912)
- The Tuku Incident (June 1912)
- The Miaoli Incident (January 1913-March 1914)
- The Malipu Incident (July 1913)
- The Liujia Incident (July 1914)
- The Xinzhuang Incident (February 1915)
- The Xilai'an (Jiào Bā Nián) Incident (also known as the Yu Qing-fang incident) in 1915 (Zhou Zongxian, 2009).

The three phases of armed resistance against Japanese rule were fundamentally shaped by three key dimensions: the "concept of civilized Chinese versus barbarians," "social and economic discrimination," and "religious and superstitious beliefs." In the first and second stages, the Taiwanese people, primarily of Han ethnicity, maintained their allegiance to the Qing dynasty, viewing it as the legitimate authority. As such, they engaged in armed resistance against Japanese colonization as a form of national self-preservation (Weng, 2007: 8). This primarily highlighted the distinct ethnic struggle of the Taiwanese against the Japanese. The third stage saw influences from social and economic discrimination, as well as from religious and superstitious beliefs, significantly impacted by the 1911-1912 Xinhai Revolution in China, which overthrew the Qing dynasty's autocratic regime and established a democratic republic. This led to the Miaoli Incident in 1913, led by Luo Fu-xing (羅福星). The Xilai'an (Jiào Bā Nián) incident was particularly influenced by themes of religion and superstition, where participants were encouraged to believe that divine prophecies or talismans could repel Japanese gunfire, thereby boosting their morale.

The Japanese military's fundamental approach to suppressing anti-Japanese resistance was to employ a "burn all, kill all" strategy, systematically eliminating suspected insurgents. Between 1895 and 1915, an estimated 400,000 Taiwanese civilians were massacred (Yin, 2006). Official records from the Japanese colonial government in Taiwan, such as the *Police Evolution Chronicle*, state: "From the Beipu Incident of 1907 (Meiji 40) to the Xilai'an Incident of 1915 (Year 4 of Taisho), [...] most [rebellions] were instigated by cunning agitators who exploited spells and prayers to manipulate the ignorant and uneducated, inciting them to reckless acts" (Wu, 1995: 791). Similarly, *Taiwan's Bandit Uprisings* describes how rebels "used superstition to rally violent mobs... It's like a fool who doesn't know the heat of fire" (Akisawa Jiro, n.d.: 7). Chen (2020) notes that Taiwan's population at the time was approximately 3.5 million, with a mere 3.9% literacy rate.

Weng (2007: 138-141) contends that During the Qing dynasty's rule over Taiwan, the imperial administration never established effective governance throughout local society. Consequently, regional power structures dominated by local strongmen and landlords—with their entrenched traditions of autonomy and resistance to centralized authority—persisted into the initial phase of Japanese colonial rule. When combined with the violent repression and economic plunder of Taiwan by the Japanese colonial government, these local elites—whether acting out of self-preservation or Han ethnic solidarity—mobilized armed opposition against Japanese occupation under the guise of homeland defense. This era of decentralized anti-Japanese resistance movements ultimately concluded with the 1915 Jiào Bā Nián Incident. In the early colonial period, Japanese authorities systematically regarded Taiwanese residents as forsaken Qing subjects—intrinsically inferior and unworthy of equitable treatment. This institutionalized discrimination heightened the Taiwanese population's consciousness of their separate cultural identity, distinct from Japan's Yamato ethnic majority. It was precisely this collective perception of a distinctive historical fate that instilled in the Taiwanese a profound awareness of their distinct identity from the Japanese Yamato people, leading them to engage in a struggle for survival against their colonizers.

3. Armed Resistance Against Japan in Taiwan

3.1 First Stage of Armed Resistance Against Japan (1895, Year of Yiwai)

The first stage refers to the period between May and October 1895 during the Yiwai War. Japan continuously reinforced its military presence, and on July 20 of that year, Major General Yamane Nobunari (山根信成, やまね のぶなり) arrived in Taiwan from Dalian, Liaoning, under orders from Governor Kabayama Sukenori. He was instructed to punish the stubborn and cunning Tǔ Mín (Han people and Shú Fān). That same month, the "Sanying Corridor Massacre" took place (around present-day Yingge and Sanxia), where thousands of homes were torched, leaving the surrounding region—spanning miles—completely depopulated (Yang, 2018). As Japanese forces pushed southward, they employed a "burn all, kill all" strategy, systematically massacring local civilians. For example, in Taoyuan's Kekan (粿崁) (modern-day Daxi), they spent three days burning and slaughtering residents. On August 30, they perpetrated the "Dapulin Village Massacre" in Chiayi. On October 10, the "Xiaolong Massacre" occurred in Jiali, Tainan. After entering Tainan City on October 18, the troops began rounding up and executing 10,053 people accused of being "bandits" or anti-Japanese resistance fighters from October 22 onward. An additional 3,043 were imprisoned, while 5,813 houses were razed. This atrocity later became known as the "Tainan Massacre."

The Japanese military's designation of so-called "bandits" comprised three distinct categories: first, remnants of the Republic of Taiwan's Qing-loyalist forces remaining in Taiwan; second, genuine bandits operating from mountain strongholds with regional influence; and third, innocent civilians erroneously killed during initial clearance operations due to identification challenges (Yin, 2006: 48-60). Historical accounts confirm the occurrence of the "Tainan City Massacre," but there is no record of a comparable "Taipei City Massacre." Yang (2007: 77-80) observes that The *Biography of Gu Xian-rong* (辜顯榮傳) suggests that Japanese forces, lacking local guidance, were incapable of differentiating between bandits and civilians—a scenario that might have precipitated the wrongful execution of thousands, potentially tens

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of thousands, of innocent people. In Taipei, Gu Xian-rong assisted the Japanese military in identifying bandits and civilians; however, similar guidance was lacking in Tainan, resulting in the massacre of tens of thousands. The "Tainan Massacre" highlighted Gu Xian-rong's decisions at that time, yet his actions remain controversial in history, marking the beginning of a life filled with disputes, and his reputation has remained mixed.

Before the Qing dynasty ceded Taiwan, the people of Taiwan did not form a collective consciousness of their fate. The Yiwai Resistance gradually instilled a sense of differentiation between the Taiwanese and Japanese among the people, evolving into a strong sense of Han ethnicity, with Han people regarded as the "in group" and Japanese seen as the "out group." This fostered a collective consciousness of resistance against Japan among the Taiwanese Han people (Huang, 1992). Chen Cuilian noted that national identity is not only emotional but also incorporates rational perspectives related to individual reasoning, collective interests, resource allocation, and rights protection (Chen, 2008: 337-338). Consequently, the Taiwanese Han people developed a shared awareness of their fate.

3.2 Second Stage of Armed Resistance Against Japan (1895-1902)

During the initial period of Japanese colonization, sporadic armed resistance activities occurred throughout Taiwan. The Taiwan Governor General's Office issued the "Military Offenders Punishment Order" and the "Punishment Order for Taiwanese People," perceiving these outbreaks as “bandit disturbances,” and adopted harsh repression measures using military police. Notable events included the Yunlin Massacre and the Yunlin Red-White Flower Surrender Induction Massacre, which reflected the extreme violence and repression at the onset of Japanese rule and revealed the impact on the Taiwanese populace.

3.2.1Japanese Army's Suppression and Yunlin Massacre (1896)

In January 1896, a year following the Yiwai War, Jian Da-shi (簡大獅) initiated an armed anti-Japanese rebellion in northern Taiwan, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Japanese soldiers throughout Taipei City and its surrounding villages. The Japanese military responded with a six-week campaign of violent suppression across the northern territories. Six months later, at the anti-Japanese base in Tieguo Mountain (鐵國山) (now part of Gukeng in Yunlin), Jian Yi (簡義) and Ke Tie (柯鐵) led over 600 people in a swift assault on Nantou City and Yunlin, inflicting heavy casualties on Japanese troops and sparking resistance activities throughout the area. When Japanese reinforcements arrived, Jian Yi and others retreated to Tieguo Mountain. After failing to quell the resistance there, the Japanese military retaliated against nearby villages. Yunlin branch chief Matsumura Yūnosuke（松村雄之進, マツムラ ユウノシン) stated, "There are no good citizens under the jurisdiction of Yunlin," causing the Japanese to regard nearby villages as bandit strongholds and to engage in indiscriminate shootings and arson—a campaign historically recognized as the Yunlin Massacre. Imamura Hirazo (今村平藏, いまむら ひらぞう), the official recorder of the Yunlin branch, documented in his *Mán Yān Zhàng Yǔ Rì Jì* (蠻煙瘴雨日記, ばんえんしょううにっき) the devastation left in the wake of the Japanese forces, with over ten thousand innocents killed (Qiu, 1993; Imamura, 1955). The Taiwan Japanese Research Institute recorded over 6,000 fatalities (Xu, 2004), while Liu Zhiwan estimated the death toll to be around 30,000 (Yin, 2006).

Regarding the Yunlin Massacre (which included Nantou and Jiji), official reports from administrative officers Tomosaburo Sano (佐野友三郎, さの ともさぶろう) and Tamura Kan'ichi (田村寬一, たむら かんいち), commander of the Mixed 2nd Brigade stationed in Taichung, were based on Taiwan Governor General's Office orders to "root out the bandits' nests and completely destroy them" (Governor's Office Archives V00093/A005-14) (Chang, 2021).

The "Yunlin Massacre" was disclosed to the international media by expatriates in Taiwan, shocking the world. This led to international public outcry, with expatriates and missionaries in Taiwan unsuccessfully pleading with the Taiwan Governor General's Office. They subsequently wrote letters to major newspapers in Hong Kong, Japan, and the UK, with reports appearing in the *China Mail* and *Hong Kong Daily Press.* On July 14, Duncan’s dispatch stated: "The Japanese are annihilating the Taiwanese people... Their homes are burned, ancestral graves desecrated, women violated—the fury has reached its peak..." (Governor's Office Archive V00076/A037 appendix).

Tokyo media reported the events throughout Japan. To quell international opinion and domestic pressure, the Taipei Civil Affairs Bureau lodged a protest with the military, leading Governor Katsura Tarō (桂太郎, かつら たろう) to dismiss Matsumura Yūnosuke (松村雄之進, マツムラ ユウノシン) for claiming, "there are no good people in the Yunlin area, categorizing all villages as bandit dens for the military to burn" (Document V00117/004 Archive) (Yin, 2006). Due to the inhumane massacre committed by the Japanese military in Yunlin, public sentiment in Taiwan underwent a profound shift, prompting the Governor-General’s office to adopt conciliatory measures, dispatching figures like Gu Xian-rong and Chen Shaonian (陳紹年) to assist in negotiations and persuade Jian Yi to surrender. The Japanese Imperial family indirectly condemned the stationed troops, providing symbolic financial aid to the affected regions, while the Governor's office sent Furushō Kamon (古莊嘉門, ふるしょう かもん), the Minister of Interior, to Yunlin to provide comfort and relief and establish temporary shelters. However, this gentle yet ineffective reprimand was not accepted by the Taiwanese people, who remained resistant to Japanese colonization. In November of that same year, the "Changhua Massacre" and "Kaohsiung Massacre" (referred to as the "Grand Punitive Expedition" by the Japanese) also occurred.

Despite numerous Japanese citizens protesting against the military's massacre of Taiwanese people, such events had no effect on the Taiwan Governor General's Office and military authorities, who treated Taiwan as an alien territory and its people as inferior, leaving many well-meaning Japanese citizens and missionaries feeling regretful (Kerr, 1974: 27-28). Foreign observers in Taiwan condemned Japan's implementation of brutal and inhumane military campaigns against the civilian population. Far from suppressing dissent, these oppressive measures galvanized Taiwanese resistance and gave rise to multiple organized anti-Japanese guerrilla movements. In this chaotic and unstable environment, local bandits capitalized on public discontent under Japanese oppression, claiming to be leaders of anti-Japanese guerrilla groups with the responsibility of protecting villagers from

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Japanese oppression, thereby gaining personal benefits and intimidating residents.

3.2.2 The Governor General's Office Changes Its Policy of Recruiting Surrenders (1898-1900)

To resolve the issue of armed banditry quickly, the Taiwan Governor General's Office, after the appointment of the fourth governor, Kodama Gentarō (兒玉源太郎, こだま げんたろう), and Civil Administration Chief Gotō Shinpei (後藤新平, ごとう しんぺい), attempted to replace military repression with a conciliatory rewards system. They issued the “Bandit Penalty Order,” enabling their “surrender-inducement policy” through offers of amnesty for those who agreed to surrender and pledge loyalty. Anyone who complied would receive temporary economic assistance, job counseling, or startup funds in exchange for their allegiance. At the same time, the Baojia system established during the Qing dynasty's governance of Taiwan was modified (Kerr, 1974: 55) to rectify social order in Taiwan and address the issue of bandits by taking drastic measures. At that time, many civil and military officials in the Taiwan Governor General's Office opposed this policy of surrendering and pacifying bandits (Yin, 2006).

The following year, Gotō Shinpei discovered that many who surrendered were secretly providing assistance to those who had not complied, causing anti-Japanese guerrilla activities to show no signs of abating. Compounded by the potential outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, instructions were given to police chief Ōshima Kumazi (大島久滿次, おおしま くまじ) and Major General Nishijima Yoshisuke (西島義助, にしじま すけよし) of the Third Brigade to take immediate measures, culminating in the Red-White Flower Surrender Induction Massacre in May 1902.

3.2.3 The Red-White Flower Surrender Induction Massacre (1902)

In May 1902, following persuasion from local gentry and reaffirmation of the 1898 amnesty agreement by Japanese civil officials, hundreds of armed anti-Japanese figures expressed their willingness to surrender. The Taiwan Governor General's Office decided to hold surrender ceremonies on May 25 at six locations in Yunlin, including Linjiepu (present-day Zhushan), Tuku (present-day Toku), Kantoucuo (present-day Gukeng Township), Talimu (present-day Dou-Nan Township), Douliou, and Hsiakou (present-day Hukou). Envoys included leaders Zhang Da-you, Zhang Lu-liang, Liu Rong, Zhang Yong-zhi, Yuan Wan-zhi, Shen Teng, and Zhang Zong, totaling 266 participants (Shen, 2023).

This surrender ceremony diverged from past practices, wherein surrenderers could bring weapons to negotiations, maintaining an equal stance in peace agreements. This time, however, the Taiwan Governor General's Office required surrender leaders and their subordinates to be separated and held at six different sites without weapons. White flowers represented the surrenderers, while Japanese officials wore red flowers for identification. At the ceremonies, a total of 265 surrenderers were executed by the Japanese, an event referred to as the "Surrender Venue Incident" by the Japanese and known as the "Red-White Flower Incident" in Taiwanese history. Jian Shui-shou (簡水壽) from Tieguo Mountain distrusted the Japanese, left the site early, and thus escaped catastrophe. The next day, 15 local gentry members, including Liao Jing-chen (廖璟琛) and Zhang Shui-qing (張水清), who assisted in the surrender, were arrested by the Japanese on charges of "espionage" and executed without trial. Following this, the Taiwan Governor General's Office summoned the local militia to search for anti-Japanese figures again; by August of that same year (1902), they executed 480 suspects (Guo, 2005). Ultimately, this method led to the deaths of over 4,000, severely impacting the local populace and exacerbating social unrest. The Japanese media reported on the execution of surrenderers, and opposition members in Tokyo sharply criticized this treachery towards the Taiwanese people, arguing that it shattered any remaining trust the Taiwanese had in the Emperor.

3.2.4 Anti-Japanese Heroes or Grassroots Thugs?

Historically, education in Taiwan has often employed a binary approach to teaching "the perception of anti-Japanese history," suggesting that anyone opposing the Japanese colonial government is considered an anti-Japanese hero. However, this simplistic good-versus-evil dichotomy is inadequate for critically evaluating historical figures and their impacts. Weng (2007: 149-150) pointed out that the "three fierce anti-Japanese figures," Jian Da-shi from the north, Ke Tie-hu (柯鐵虎) from the central region, and Lin Shao-mao (林少貓) from the south, did not fight against the Japanese military during the Yiwai War and even welcomed Japanese forces. They represent local leaders or gang bosses, boasting support from their communities while insisting they could confront the Governor-General of Taiwan to become local powers. For example, Ke Tie-hu billeted troops in the mountains, collecting taxes under the pretext of "safeguarding local peace"; however, the terms of their negotiations with the Japanese often included assurances not to engage in wrongdoing, indicating their involvement in illicit activities.

Research by Li (2005), Weng (2007: 149-150), and Kerr (1974: 60) indicates that many leading figures in various anti-Japanese incidents exhibited strong grassroots characteristics, lacking discipline within their organizations, which often led to disorder and illegality in their actions. They had no political aspirations, no overseas support, no unified leadership, and did not intend to connect with the Qing government. Their chaotic and self-serving behaviors included hiding, avoiding capture, and even mutual killings; some accepted clan support, extorted villagers, engaged in pillaging, and resorted to killing any locals accused of working for the Japanese, embodying characteristics of bandits and robbers that undermined their claims of strong national consciousness.

The Taiwanese were caught between the bandits and the Taiwan Governor General's Office, facing brutal reprisals from the bandits (terrorism) or having to cooperate with the Japanese. Some mountain bandits and bandit leaders considered themselves knights and rangers, protectors of the people who simply wanted to return to the chaotic state of occupying the mountains as kings during the Qing dynasty's rule in 1895 and negotiate compromises with local officials. In fact, many of them were just rural bandits fighting for territory and killing each other or demanding protection fees from clans or landlords. Now, they were facing not Qing dynasty local officials but Japanese imperial soldiers determined to become the hegemon of East Asia. Hence, during the authoritarian educational period of the Kuomintang (1949-1989), the "Three Fierce Anti-Japanese Heroes" praised in textbooks and media should perhaps be examined more closely from a social role perspective rather than merely from a political standpoint. Furthermore, the narrow-mindedness and limited understanding of the larger context and international situation among these local leaders are evident. After the Meiji Restoration, Japan sang about “breaking away from Asia and joining Europe” and had a set of plans for its colonial rule over Taiwan. Under its modernized administrative system, it did not

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allow for the emergence of the situation of bandits occupying the territory under its colonial rule.

3.3 Third Stage of Armed Resistance Against Japan (1907-1915)

The third stage spans from the Beipu Incident in 1907 to the Xilai'an Incident (also known as the Yu Qing-fang Incident) in 1915.

3.3.1 Forcibly Expropriating Forests and Wild Land and Religious Superstitions (1907-1912)

The Beipu Incident in November 1907 involved Governor Sakuma Samata's (佐久間左馬太, さくま さまた) forced conscription of local militia to suppress indigenous people in Daxi (大溪), leading to conflict between the conscripts and Japanese military police when they refused to comply. In August 1908, the "Twenty-Eight Constellations Society Incident" occurred in Tainan. Ding Peng (丁鵬), a grocer by trade, claimed to possess "magic talismans" and propagated feudalistic notions among his followers that he would become Taiwan's new emperor following a successful anti-Japanese rebellion. However, the plot was uncovered by the Taiwan Governor General's Office before the uprising could be initiated. In May 1909, the Shima Incident angered local villagers, leading them to besiege a police station, which retaliated brutally against the villagers.

The March 1912 Linqipu Incident involved Liu Gan (劉幹), a diviner who made a living through fortune-telling and spread anti-Japanese sentiment among the villagers through the divination and religious systems of the Zhāi (Zhai) sect. At the same time, after the Taiwan Governor General's Office carried out land surveys in Taiwan, it proceeded with investigations of forested areas. The Linyipu forest area was categorized as government-owned and leased to the Mitsubishi Corporation, leaving only a small portion for the so-called local "gentlemen" of the village. This restricted the villagers' free access to the forest, which was crucial to their livelihoods. The villagers, unable to tolerate this and influenced by Liu Gan's anti-Japanese teachings, eventually led to the eruption of the incident.

Forests typically provided abundant natural resources, including timber and non-timber forest products (such as fruits, nuts, medicinal plants, crops, grazing, or fertilizer), all of which were essential to the villagers' subsistence. In June 1912, during the Tuku Incident, Huang Chao (黃朝) and Huang Lao-qian (黃老鉗), utilizing the power of belief in deities, proclaimed that "China will send a million troops to aid" and called for a plan to overthrow Japanese rule. After being reported by local headmen and village officials to the Japanese authorities, they were all arrested.

3.3.2 Luo Fu-xing Anti-Japanese Incident in Miaoli (1913)

Between 1913 and 1914, several uprisings occurred, including the Luo Fu-xing Incident (羅福星事件), the Tainan Guandi Temple incident involving Li A-qi (李阿齊), the Malipu Incident (馬力埔事件) in Taichung Xinshe, the Lai Lai Incident (賴來事件) in Taichung Dongshijiao, the Shen Arong incident (沈阿榮事件) in Nantou, the Zhang Huo-lu incident (張火爐事件) in Dahu, and the Luo Chou-tou incident (羅臭頭事件) in Liujia (六甲). Particularly, the incidents led by Luo Fu-xing, along with those initiated by Li A-qi, Lai Lai, Shen A-rong, and Zhang Huo-lu, were considered interconnected by the Taiwan Governor General's Office, prompting them to consolidate the legal proceedings against the implicated individuals at the temporary Miaoli Court. Thus, this series of events is termed the "Miaoli Incident". The educational backgrounds and experiences of the leaders, along with the influence of the 1911 Revolution on Taiwan and the unique characteristics, scale, and historical significance of these incidents, rendered them particularly distinct (Zhou, 2009). Luo Qiu-zhao, the granddaughter of Luo Fu-xing, reported that 20 individuals were sentenced to death and 285 received prison sentences. Luo Fu-xing was executed by hanging at Taipei Prison on March 3, 1914, at the young age of 29 (Luo, n.d.). The incident led foreign media to criticize Taiwan Governor General Sakuma Satsuma; however, he faced only reprimands and was not recalled. Once again, it is evident that the Japanese army under militarism was essentially untouchable. Wang Yunsheng's Taiwan Historical Narratives noted that after the suppression of the Luo Fu-xing Incident, 1,211 individuals were arrested, with 221 sentenced to death and 285 receiving prison sentences (Wang, 1978: 75-76). While specifics may vary across historical accounts, the event's impact on Taiwan's anti-Japanese history remains significant.

3.3.3 The Xilai'an Incident in Tainan (1915)

In July and August 1915, Yu Qing-fang (余清芳) and others, dissatisfied with the confiscation of forested areas by the Taiwan Governor General's Office, gathered at the Xilai'an (西來庵) (Jiào Bā Nián, known in Japanese as tamai) Wangye Temple, invoking religious reverence and concepts of karma to rally anti-Japanese sentiment among villagers. They secretly conspired with individuals like Luo Jun (羅俊) from Taichung and Jiang Ding (江定) from Nanzi to overthrow the ruling Japanese Empire, which was detected by the Taiwan Governor General's Office. In response, a military-police action was launched to suppress this anti-Japanese movement in the mountains, leading to an armed confrontation that symbolized the Taiwanese people's dissatisfaction and resistance against the new Japanese rulers. Despite their failure to change Taiwan's fate under Japanese rule, it concretely illustrated the resistance and resilience of the Taiwanese people against foreign domination, reflecting their struggles as one of the anti-Japanese incidents. The Taiwan Governor General's Office attributed the initiatory spark of the incident to cunning individuals exploiting religious superstition for their influence (Akisawa Jiro, n.d.: 7).

Though the Xilai'an Incident seemed to hinge on religious superstition, it originated from intensified anti-Japanese activities due to the 1910-1914 forest surveys conducted by the Taiwan Governor General's Office that reassessed lands and confiscated unproven forest lands. This changed the local villagers' livelihoods entirely, requiring Japanese permission to harvest products like camphor and ramie, leading to disappointment and dissatisfaction with the Taiwan Governor General's Office. Moreover, the severe typhoon disasters in 1913 and 1914 damaged crops, driving up rice prices and worsening the villagers' living conditions, thus laying the groundwork for movements that utilized religious influences, extending beyond mere superstition (Zhou, 2009). In fact, the villagers exhibited no inherently strong anti-Japanese sentiments; instead, their primary concern was survival, with the unfortunate state of affairs giving rise to an anti-Japanese event fueled by religious belief. Following the Xilai'an incident, the Taiwan Governor General's Office further deepened the integration of local militia systems and police regulations while attempting to

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indoctrinate and assimilate the Taiwanese people, gradually quelling armed anti-Japanese actions within society.

Many relevant literature points out that people who experienced Japanese rule or participated in the anti-Japanese movement have memories. For example, in 1907, Lin Xian-tang (林獻堂) met with Liang Qi-chao during his visit to Nara, Japan. Liang Qi-chao advised Taiwan to confront Japan and hoped that the Qing dynasty would be useless; on the contrary, efforts should be made to win sympathy and support from moderate and liberal factions in Japan. Four years later (1911), when Lin Xian-tang invited Liang Qi-chao to visit Taiwan, Liang Qi-chao pointed out that China was preoccupied with its own affairs and unable to save Taiwan. Therefore, it could refer to the struggle of Ireland against Britain and use parliamentary autonomy to fight for rights. He also warned once again to seek a change in the strict policy of the Taiwan Governor General's Office towards Taiwan's colonization, and to adopt a moderate and non-violent or armed resistance attitude. In addition, under the strict control of the legitimate and powerful Taiwan Governor General's Office, the tragic sacrifice in the Xilai'an Incident shocked the Taiwanese people. Considering the situation, the people deeply realized that military confrontation would inevitably be futile, and thus transformed into a political movement form of non-military resistance. Liang Qi-chao's suggestion pointed out a practical way out for Lin Xian-tang and Taiwanese intellectuals at that time—Taiwan parliamentary autonomy (Li, Ding, & Xu, 2019).

Fanon, in The Wretched of the Earth, pointed out that colonizers, wielding cultural and military power, erase the cultures of the colonized and negate their national existence, imposing new legal frameworks through military occupation that marginalize colonial society and practices. The colonized respond diversely: many maintain traditional lifestyles while fewer passionately absorb the conquerors' culture, often devaluing their own. The legal frameworks established by colonizers systematically oppress, enslave, and exploit the colonized populations (Fanon, 1965: 236-238). Colonization thus encompasses tensions between civilization and barbarism, identification and non-identification, enslavement and freedom, power and vulnerability.

4. Conclusion

During this period, the people of Taiwan experienced a profound sense of despair and helplessness following the cession of Taiwan by the Qing dynasty. They found themselves in a state of isolation, akin to the existential anguish portrayed in Sartre's No Exit (Huis-clos) (Sartre, 1974). In resisting Japanese colonial rule and seeking a path to independence, they pinned their hopes and identity on the Qing dynasty. The Qing government tacitly permitted officials such as Tang Ching-sung and Liu Yongfu (劉永福), along with members of Taiwan's gentry class who had passed the imperial examination, to leverage external forces to defend the national territory and establish the "Republic of Taiwan." They clung to the illusion that Western powers would come to Taiwan's aid. However, after Japanese troops landed in Aodi (澳底) and advanced to Keelung, President Tang Ching-sung fled back to Qing territory without resistance, earning him the derisive nickname "Ten-Day President." Although it brought war and suffering to Taiwan, this event marked the starting point for the formation of a consciousness among the Taiwanese people to resist the Japanese colonial regime—creating a distinction between "our group" and "other groups." During the first twenty years of Japanese colonial rule, the foundation of the Taiwanese people's communal identity stemmed from their inherent and indispensable heritage—rooted in bloodlines, ethnicity, and traditional Chinese culture.

However, individuals with a sense of national territory and Taiwanese consciousness coexisted with others in Taiwan, coming from various parts of the country and different ethnic groups: Hoklo (e.g., Hou Xi-geng, Lin Kun-gang), Hakka (e.g., Qiu Feng-jia, Wu Tang-xing), Sichuanese (e.g., Li Pin-san), Taiwanese (e.g., Lin Chao-dong, Lin Shao-mao), Cantonese (e.g., Wu Peng-nian, Luo Fu-xing), Guangxi natives (e.g., Liu Yong-fu), and Indigenous peoples (e.g., Jian Da-shi, Mona Rudao).

For the next 51 years, the people of Taiwan suffered discrimination and exploitation under Japanese colonial rule. Through assimilation policies, Japan gradually compelled them to make sharper choices and take more decisive actions regarding their national identity. This history, whether consciously acknowledged or not, fostered a sense of shared destiny among the Taiwanese people, imprinting upon them—whether lightly or deeply—markers of ethnicity and identity. After the failed defense of Taiwan, it is notable that the Qing government did not hold Tang Ching-sung accountable for "treason." Instead, he was allowed to live peacefully in Guilin, Guangxi, where he built the Wumeitang Villa on the south bank of the Rong River and dedicated himself to reforming Guilin opera (Guiju), ultimately becoming one of its founding figures.

Looking back on this period of history, we can observe a stark contrast between Japan's proactive approach and the Qing dynasty's passive stance in handling international affairs, as well as the resistance of the Taiwanese people against foreign colonial rule. Even today, during field research, scholars frequently encounter—not just historical memories among residents of western Taiwan—but also personal family accounts of lived experiences. These memories, transformed into legends, carry both cognitive (recognition) and identificational effects (Jansen, 1978: 143). The key lies not merely in self-perception or external narratives, but in the deeply rooted legends embedded within collective memory (Abrahams & Kalčik, 1978: 223-236).

From the perspective of the Taiwanese people, there was a profound realization that armed resistance against Japan would be futile. As a result, their strategy shifted toward moderate, nonviolent forms of resistance. Submission to Japanese rule was often a reluctant act, a means of surviving in a turbulent era. Emotionally and culturally, however, their loyalties remained with the Qing dynasty, and their attachment to Han Chinese identity held steadfast.

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