

Vestiges of Japanese Colonialism in Taiwan

Nobue Homma

(Stephen Richmond せみ)

1. Introduction

As a result of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, Taiwan was ceded to Japan, and became its colony. Japan's governance of the island continued over approximately fifty years until 1945, at the conclusion of the Pacific War. In May 1895, Japan established its own Governor-General of Taiwan. Sukenori Kabayama became the first Japanese Governor-General of Taiwan, and began his colonial administration. After Gentaro Kodama became the fourth Governor-General of Taiwan, he appointed Shinpei Goto to head of civilian affairs. They created industries such as sugar production, pursued projects in education, agricultural reform and the eradication of opium addiction, and generally advanced the modernization of Taiwan. At the same time, the organization of colonial rule was established by effectively using the "carrot and stick" method of colonial administration. Although it was a golden opportunity for Japan, Taiwan was distant from the Japanese archipelago. Nevertheless, Japan had a profound effect on Taiwanese society.

When the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, the Japanese government saw Taiwan as an important resource provision base for Japan's war effort, and a policy of 'Tennoization', (that is, the process in which Japanese culture dominates, assimilates, or influences other cultures) was promoted by the governor-general's office. The Imperial policy was a movement to "Japanify" the Taiwanese, which consisted of laws which outlined language reform, name changes, a volunteer work system and laws regarding

religion and social customs. As Scholars such as Ito (1993) have pointed out, as a result of prolonged expansion, the human resources of Japan were drained at this point, and there was a definite need for the nation to depend on the resources of a colony.

In terms of language reform, Japan set built language schools in many regions and speaking Japanese was enforced all over the country. Taiwanese, Hakkanese, and native languages were oppressed and forbidden in the process. In addition, some words of Japanese origin arrived Taiwan where there remains the Japanese rule of Taiwanese today. This is one of the reasons behind the linguistic differences between Taiwanese and the languages of the Chinese mainland. Also, many signboards written in Japanese are still used in Taiwan. A typical example of this is the hiragana character "の" (no). Although it is originally written as "的" (de) in Chinese, many signboards seen in Taiwan still feature the Japanese hiragana "の" (no). This is widely used in the title of the signboards of stores, brand names, and also TV programs, and other names.

Taiwan is a geographically isolated island where conflicts had continued for many years between native Taiwanese, immigrants from Fujian and Wokou pirates. In the 17th century, the Dutch people colonized Taiwan. However, they set the native people against immigrants. Because of this, it was difficult to describe an original Taiwanese culture existing at this time.

After the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, Japan annexed Taiwan. The Japanese people felt proud of the first territorial acquisitions under the

Empire of Japan, but ultimately maintenance of Taiwan proved to be too much for Japan to handle (Ito, 1993). At the time, Taiwan was in crisis; it suffered from epidemics, and revolts by the native Taiwanese occurred frequently. The Qing dynasty of China gave up the idea of directly ruling Taiwan. At this point in time, Taiwan was a desolate land. The native people spoke different languages in each area, so communication problems were common. This often led to hostilities or even outright conflicts among the native people.

As has been pointed out by Wang (1983), the religion and customs of Taiwan were greatly changed under the influence of Japanese culture. Traditional Japanese culture such as hot springs, enka, sake, oden, and Bushido can still be seen in contemporary Taiwanese culture. In addition, Japanese karaoke, J-POP, comics, anime, video games and fashion have been introduced to Taiwan anew.

Young people who have a liking for Japan and its culture came to be called 哈日族 (Ha ri zu) in the late 1990s. Moreover, since many TV programs from Japan have been broadcast for many years, many people in Taiwan are familiar with Japanese people and places.

There are no formal diplomatic relations between Japan and Taiwan today. Unofficial negotiations through Interchange Association and Japan and the East Asia Relations Commission are charged with dealing with the business issues of these two countries. Traditionally, Taiwanese people place great importance on information supply and flow. Some Japanese language internet sites have been established and are visited regularly by Taiwanese. Few other countries produce as much information in Japanese as Taiwan.

In this essay, I would like to briefly introduce the history of Japan-Taiwan relations, describe some of the effects that Japan had on Taiwan during this time, and comment on the

future of relations between the two countries.

2.

2.1 Japan-Taiwan Relations

In 1895, Taiwan was ceded to Japan by the Shimonoseki Treaty. After that, Japan governed Taiwan until the end of World War II in September 1945. In 1951, Japan abandoned all the right, authority, and claims to Taiwan and Penghu under The Treaty of San Francisco. The following year, Japan concluded its peace treaty with the Taiwanese government. Since then, these two countries have maintained some manner of diplomatic relations. However, in 1972, Japan signed a joint declaration with the People's Republic of China to establish regular diplomatic relations. At the same time, Foreign Minister Ohira announced that in order to normalize diplomatic relations with People's Republic of China, Japan would have to pull out of the Treaty of Taipei, which then became void. The Taiwanese government immediately announced that it would break relations with Japan. As a result of that, diplomatic relations between Japan and the Taiwanese government ended. The Japanese government has abided by the Japan-China Joint Communique of 1972. At the same time, they have maintained working relations on a non-governmental basis with Taiwan. An example of this is Interchange Association of Japan, which is based in both countries, and Taiwan's establishment of both the East Asia Relations Commission based in Taiwan and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office, which is based in Japan.

In terms of trade between Japan and Taiwan in 2011, exports from Japan amounted to 52,200 million dollars and imports amounted to 18,200 million dollars. Taiwan became the fourth-largest trading partner of Japan. Furthermore, the investment from Japan to Taiwan of 2011 reached a record 441 points (Interchange Association, Japan, 2012, 28th May).

In 2011, approximately 1,290,000 Japanese nationals visited Taiwan. It was the highest number of Japanese visitors ever and in the return direction, Some 990,000 Taiwanese nationals came to Japan. Such frequent traffic is reflected in the regular flights between Japan and Taiwan which according to Interchange Association statistics numbered 268 per week as at February 2012.

With regards the relationship between Japan and Taiwan under the current Ma Ying-jiu administration, National Party President Ma Ying-Jiu was inaugurated as the Republic of China President on May 20th, 2008. Most recently, he visited Japan in July 2006 and November 2007. After he was elected as president on May 22nd, 2008, he held a press conference for Japanese reporters. This shows that he emphasizes relations with Japan. In the same way, Japanese government sent a celebratory message to President Ma through the Interchange Association on May 20th, 2008.

The Ma administration's actions can be seen as the promotion of a peaceful relationship and the economic and trade relations with Japan. In addition, they assign great value to security partnership of Japan and the United States. In particular, this is seen in actions such as requests to create Free Trade Agreement and Economic Partnership at an early stage, a demand of putting flights into operation between Taipei International Airport and Tokyo International Airport, moving into Chinese market by coordination with Japanese companies, and expanding interaction between Japanese young people and Taiwanese young people.

President Ma emphasized Japan's special role as partner to Taiwan at a meeting with Japanese reporters on September 19th, 2008. He openly aspired to develop strong working relations with Japan. On January 2009, Taiwan announced that 2009 was Taiwan-Japan special

partnership promotion year. Responding to this, Japan expanded business to Taiwan. Both countries gained great results from this step such as the implementation of the working holiday system, support from Japan to disasters of typhoon in Taiwan, establishing the research center for Japanese studies at National Chengchi University, and the agreement to run flights between Tokyo International Airport and Taipei International Airport. Since then, Japan and Taiwan have made concrete progress. On October 31st, 2010, a regular chartered flight service was launched between Tokyo and Taipei. It has contributed to expanding of the traffic between countries. Japan and Taiwan formed a strong bond in 2011. Taiwan provided every possible assistance to Japan when the Tohoku earthquake occurred in March 2011. Taiwan donated more than 20 billion yen and dispatched 28 aid workers to affected areas. In response to this, many politicians visited Taiwan and showed their gratitude.

2.2 Linguistic influence

A certain percentage of Taiwanese people are able to understand and use the Japanese language. In particular, people over 60 years of age who received their education during the period of Japanese rule speak Japanese quite fluently. In the summer of 1995, a movie titled “多桑 (Duo Sang : Father)” was released. The pronunciation of this title is from “Father (To-san)” in Japanese and has the same meaning as the Japanese. Also, Japanese is frequently spoken in this movie. For instance, “卡桑 (Ka Sang : Mother)” in Japanese “Ka-san”, “歐吉桑 (ou ji sang : Sir)” “歐巴桑 (ou ba sang : Madam)”. Those words are entrenched in the language of Taiwan.

Private universities in Taiwan such as Tam Kang University, Soochow University, Chinese Culture University and Tunhai University set great store on the teaching of the Japanese

language (Xu, 1996). Many professional schools have set up a department of Japanese Literature. However, these facts are relatively unknown to Japanese people. An example of this ignorance was demonstrated on the Japanese news program, "News Japan (FNN)". In this program, Taiwanese elders who sing Japanese *enka* (folk songs) were asked by a reporter if singing in Japanese was easy for them. They replied that they were used to speaking Japanese, and sing not only *enka* but also old Japanese army songs. It might be puzzling to understand why they sing Japanese songs despite going through many hardships under Japanese rule. One Taiwanese elder said that there was a world of difference between Japan and China. In other words, the Empire of Japan had been much better towards the Taiwanese than the Chinese National Party. Professor Ito Kiyoshi fills in the background as follows. The Republic of China adopted a "Non-Japanization" policy in education. They made use of educational facilities prepared by the Japanese government and enforced the policy of "Sinicization".

However, people who were born in Taiwan during the period of Japanese rule, known as 本省人 (Ben sheng ren) and Chinese people who moved to Taiwan after the war, known as 外省人 (Wai sheng ren) have different lifestyles and values. (Xu Guoxiong, 1996) These two groups clashed over these matters. Taiwanese people were mentally pent up under the control of Chinese people, who made up less than 13% of the whole population of Taiwan at the time. Moreover, the government officials of the Republic of China corrupted practices like occupation forces. In the end, people from both sides clashed on February 28th 1947. More than ten thousand Taiwanese people were cruelly killed. The "228 Incident", as it came to be known, led to going anti-Chinese sentiment and greater pro-Japanese feelings.

The native people of Taiwan divide themselves into nine regions and ethnic groups

such as the Atayal and the Ami. These two groups speak Japanese even now (Xu, 1996). Each used to speak its original language before Japan governed Taiwan. Japanese became a common language for them through the education of Japanese and this led to unification of the island. (Xu Guoxiong, 1996)

After Japan gave up its rights to Taiwan, Japanese culture was spread out over a large area in the country. After the end of World War II, Japanese culture diminished spontaneously or became limited through government policy to 'de-Japanize' Taiwan, and gradually lost its former effect. However, there are still reminders of the huge cultural influence of Japan in many areas of Taiwanese life. I would now like to introduce a few of the most obvious ones.

2.3.1 Architecture

During Japan's rule, the architectural styles introduced to Taiwan had two distinct patterns — one was Japanese, and the other was Western. The Japanese style is mainly typified by *Shoin-Zukuri* and the architecture of temples and shrines. The former is a style of residence which was built for Japanese officials. They are seen throughout Taiwan even now. In addition, Japanese style rooms are seen in apartments and cottages. Alcoves, hanging scrolls and paper sliding doors are used in contemporary houses in Taiwan. The latter took in shrine architecture and temple architecture. According to 1942 statistics, the number of Shinto shrines in whole of Taiwan reached a peak of 613 (Xu, 1996). After the war, most of them were rebuilt as National Revolutionary Martyrs Shrines. Taoyuan Martyrs Shrine is the only shrine which is perfectly preserved today. However, the government could not afford to completely rebuild the institution. For this reason, the appearance was preserved as a Japanese-style shrine. In 1985, this shrine was planned to be rebuilt for the reason that it had aged, but

architects and cultural heritage organizations opposed this proposal. At one time there were more than 200 major shrines in Taiwan (Xu, 1996), but all of these were removed through anti-Japanese policies put in place after colonization ended. For this reason, critics insisted that such features should be preserved. Most Japanese-style buildings ended up being preserved as shrines and old burial mounds.



Taoyuan Martyr's Shrine (Source : Wiki Commons)

2.3.2 Religion

The influence of Japan was not limited to building design. The religions Shinto, Buddhism and even Christianity were introduced to Taiwan from Japan. In particular, Shinto thought and practice exercised great influence over the colony Taiwan and Japanese rulers restricted Taiwanese people from following their original customs and practices. After the war, all the religions which came in with Japanese quickly faded away, with the exception of Tenrikyo. Tenrikyo is a monotheistic religion originating in revelations. Japanese colonists began to propagate Tenrikyo in Taiwan from 1897. After that, it gradually spread throughout the whole island. After the end of the war, the group applied to establish churches across Taiwan and local governments permitted this. In addition, this was authorised by the central government. According to 1992 statistics, there are 145 chapels and more than 29,000 congregations still active in Taiwan. (Xu, 1996)

2.3.3 Judo and Kendo

Under Japanese rule, most junior high schools in Taiwan were given a judo curriculum and students learnt this Japanese martial art. Later, it became more popular as a hobby amongst the populace. There are more than thirty training halls in Taiwan today, and it is said that more than 30,000 people practice judo. Kendo (Japanese fencing) was introduced to Taiwan during the Japanese occupation, in the same way as judo. According to the current estimate, approximately 10,000 people in Taiwan continue to practice this traditional martial art.

2.3.4 Japanese cuisine

According to academic Xu Guoxiong, the features of Japanese cuisine are a sense of the seasons, the beauty of arrangement and harmony between dishes and foods. These features were not predominant in Taiwanese food before the Japanese Occupation. Oil and spices are the key ingredients in Chinese cooking, from which Taiwanese cuisine drew its inspiration. After the war, Japanese food became popular in Taiwan for health reasons. Taiwanese envied Japanese peoples' comparatively long lifespans. This is part of the reason that facilitated the expansion of Japanese food in Taiwan. There are more than sixty famous Japanese restaurants in Taipei alone. Furthermore, Japanese rice is served widely in standard homes, rather than Chinese varieties. Taiwanese people have a taste for Japanese foods such as miso soup, *takuan* pickles and sweet redbean paste jelly, and these can be seen in many households. In addition, sushi and udon can be seen at supermarkets. These foods are common in Taiwan today.

Starting with cuisine, Japan's unique customs and culture have been passed through and for some time, prevailed in Taiwan. We can see the close ties between Japanese culture and Taiwanese culture in a variety of areas even now.

Conclusion

Japanese culture lives on in Taiwan, almost seventy years after Japanese colonists pulled out of the island. However, official relations between Japan and Taiwan have not always been easy. Japan does not maintain official diplomatic relations with Taiwan today because of the importance of its relationship with China. However, these two countries maintain unofficial relationships in a variety of ways. Looking at trends in tourism, entertainment and culture, it is clear that there are many Taiwanese people with an interest in Japan. Also, even today there are many people who can speak Japanese fluently and are familiar with Japan's culture and customs. It is possible for Japanese to feel somewhat nostalgic when they travel in Taiwan. This is because Taiwan still shows signs of the former Japanese influence in many areas of society.

Recently, there are difficult political and territorial issues between the governments of Japan and Taiwan. These issues might endure for the time being. However, Taiwan is one of Japan's closest East Asian neighbors and these two countries share values of democracy, freedom and human rights. Despite there being no diplomatic relations between two countries, they are deeply connected historically and have built sound relationships on economic and cultural exchanges. I believe that Japan has a strong bond with Taiwan and the two cultures can and will build even more robust relations in the future.

Although anti-Japanese movements were conducted after Japan left Taiwan, there are still many examples of Japanese culture protected by Taiwanese people. The facts that Japanese culture and language can be seen in Taiwan come from both historical connections and new cultural trends adopted by young people. The Tohoku earthquake in 2011 received

widespread attention from Taiwanese people. It was reported as widely in Taiwan as if it had happened in their country. Also, Japan received generous support from Taiwan in the aftermath of the disaster. In response to this, private Japanese citizens carried out a fund drive to run an advertisement in Taiwanese newspaper as a token of gratitude, which they called the “謝 謝台灣計畫 (Xie xie Taiwan Keikaku)”. At that time, the Japanese government did not formally express gratitude for Taiwanese help. This is an example of the continuing bond between Japanese and Taiwanese people. It might be seen then, that political connections are not as important for these two countries as cultural and human exchanges.

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