

*"Leading the Natives to Civilization":
The Colonial Dimension
of the Taiwan Expedition*

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I. Introduction

In the fall of 1872 the Japanese government began to prepare for an expedition to southern Taiwan ostensibly to punish a group of aborigines who had murdered fifty-four people from the Ryūkyū Kingdom who were shipwrecked there late in 1871. After years of delay and considerable domestic political turmoil the government finally moved decisively to dispatch the expedition in the spring of 1874, and on March 5th the prime minister (*dajō daijin*), Sanjō Sanetomi, gave the military leader of the expedition, Saigō Tsugumichi, imperial orders (*chokushi*) that charged him with three responsibilities: to investigate the violence that had been committed in southern Taiwan against "our countrymen" (*waga kokujin*), to punish the parties responsible for said violence, and to ensure that such violence would not occur again in the future. In effect the imperial orders spelled out the publicly acknowledged purpose of Japan's expedition to Taiwan, namely, to punish the so-called savages of southern Taiwan who had murdered the Ryūkyūans. On the same day, however, Saigō received a set of special instructions (*tokuyū*) from Sanjō that reveal the goals of the expedition in more detail. The first clause of his special instructions told Saigō to persuade the natives (*dojin*) to submit peacefully whenever that was possible, but to use military force to suppress any armed resistance that might occur. The second clause explained that the purpose of the expedition was to "lead the natives to civilization" (*yūdō kaika seshime*) and establish a profitable enterprise (*yūeki no jigyō*) between the natives and the Japanese

government after southern Taiwan had been pacified.¹

What exactly did the instructions to "lead the natives to civilization" mean? The language of the document is not particularly difficult to understand, but the meaning of the phrase is far from transparent. To understand it we need to turn our attention to the broader objectives of the expedition and to the historical context in which the expedition was planned and executed, and towards that end this paper will propose four perspectives from which to reevaluate the historical significance of the Taiwan Expedition: colonialism, historiography, multilateral regionalism and mimesis. While the phrase "lead the natives to civilization" by no means encapsulates the entire significance of the Taiwan Expedition, it does provide a useful beginning point for examining how the expedition fits into the history of the early Meiji period, and at a minimum the phrase bears on three important issues: colonialist thinking in the early decades of the Meiji period, the connection between imperialism and the process of nation-building, and the connection between Japan's reception of Western imperialism and its reception of Western civilization.

II. Narrative of the expedition

Before proceeding to a discussion of these four perspectives it will help to offer a brief narrative of the expedition. For most historians the narrative begins on the eighteenth day of the tenth month by the lunar calendar in 1871, when four ships set sail from Naha, the capital of the Ryūkyū Kingdom, and headed for their respective home ports on the islands of

¹ Gaimushō Chōsabu, ed., *Dai Nihon gaikō bunsho* (Tokyo: Nihon Kokusai Kyōkai, 1939), vol. 7, 18-20.

Yaeyama and Miyako. On their voyage home the ships encountered a storm that blew them off course; one ship was never heard from again, two landed safely, one of them along the western coast of Taiwan, and the fourth foundered as it tried to land on the southeastern coast of Taiwan. Of the sixty-nine passengers and crew on board the fourth ship, sixty-six made it ashore safely. The following day, however, as they tried to cross the southern peninsula in order to reach the comparative safety of the Chinese settlements on the western coast, aborigines from a local village—Butan by most accounts, though some also implicated Kusakut—massacred fifty-four of them. The other twelve eventually reached the Chinese settlements and were repatriated safely to Naha several months later.²

The dramatic fate of the shipwrecked Ryūkyūans seems a fit place to begin the narrative of the expedition, especially since the Japanese government explicitly used the massacre as an excuse to dispatch a punitive expedition. The government's rationale poses a serious interpretive problem, however. As historians have ably demonstrated the government self-consciously intended to use the expedition as a way of asserting a new and controversial claim to Japanese sovereignty over the Ryūkyū Kingdom.³ To begin the narrative with the massacre of the shipwrecked Ryūkyūans consequently effaces the crucial question of whether they were in fact Japanese subjects. China persistently resisted

² "Seikansha yori no kikigaki," compiled by Ōyama Tsunayoshi in 1872. In *Miyakojima rekishi monogatari (1): Taiwan sōnan jiken*, ed. Miyaguni Fumio (Haeburu, Okinawa: Naha Shuppansha, 1998): 290-93.

³ Kō Sekai, "Taiwan jiken (1871-1874)," *Kikan kokusai seiji* 28.2 (1964): 38-52; Kinjō Seitoku, *Ryūkyūshobun ron* (Naha, Okinawa: Okinawa Taimusu-sha, 1978); Kuribara Jun, "Taiwan jiken (1871-1874 nen): Ryūkyūseisaku no tenki toshite no Taiwan shuppei," *Shigaku zasshi* 87.9 (1978): 10-85; Kobayashi Takao, "Taiwan jiken to Ryūkyūshobun (I & II): Rujandoru no yakuwari saikō," *Sekai keizai shigaku* 340-341 (1994): 1-16, 13-32.

Japanese claims to the Ryūkyū Kingdom and Ryūkyū itself reluctantly accepted integration into the Japanese polity, so the question should not be assumed. To avoid effacing it we need to select a different entry into the narrative.

A more revealing year to begin the narrative is 1867, because it exposes the important issue of Western influence on Japanese colonial thinking.⁴ In that year an American ship named the *Rover* sank just off the southern coast of Taiwan (see map). A group of aborigines from a village named Koalut massacred all but one of the survivors, and an intrepid American diplomat, Charles LeGendre, sought restitution for their murders. LeGendre, who served as the American consul at Amoy from 1867 to 1872, visited southern Taiwan several times as he tried to resolve the problems caused by the *Rover* Incident. In the course of his visits he engaged in several rounds of negotiations with the aborigines and secured an agreement with an influential aboriginal leader which promised an end to the murder of shipwrecked foreigners (meaning Westerners). At the same time LeGendre also engaged in extensive negotiations with Chinese officials who proved somewhat less cooperative than the aborigines. LeGendre wanted China to pacify southern Taiwan and to bring the aboriginal territory fully under Chinese administrative control. Arguing from international law, LeGendre contended that if China did not pacify the aboriginal territory it

⁴ The following narrative is based on a wide range of sources, including Charles LeGendre, "Notes of Travel in Formosa," 4 vols., unpublished mss, Papers of Charles William LeGendre, Library of Congress (LeGendre Papers); various other documents in the LeGendre Papers; the papers of Ōkuma Shigenobu at Waseda University Library ("Ōkuma monjo"); Saigō Totoku Kabayama Sōtoku Kinen Jigyō Shuppan Inkai, ed., *Saigō totoku to Kabayama sōtoku* (Taihoku: Saigō Totoku Kabayama Sōtoku Kinen Jigyō Shuppan Inkai, 1936); Gaimushō Chōsabu, ed., *Dai Nihon gaikō bunsho* (Tokyo: Nihon Kokusai Kyōkai, 1939), vol. 7; Waseda Daigaku Shakai Kagaku Kenkyūjo, ed., *Ōkuma monjo*, 6 vols. (Tokyo: Waseda Daigaku Shakai Kagaku Kenkyūjo, 1958); Nihon Shiseki Kyōkai, ed., *Ōkuma Shigenobu kankei monjo*, 6 vols. (Tokyo: Nihon Shiseki Kyōkai, 1932-1935); and various newspaper articles from 1874 in the *Japan Daily Herald*, *Kōbun tsūshi*, *Yūbin hōchi shinbun* and *Tokyo nichinichi shinbun*.

would be unclaimed territory, and as such any civilized power that undertook the burden of bringing civilization to the area would be justified in colonizing it. In effect, he argued that in order for China to prove its claim of sovereignty over the aboriginal territory it had to exercise active jurisdiction over the area. LeGendre left his post as consul at Amoy without having resolved the dispute with the Chinese government.

On his way back to the United States, LeGendre stopped off in Yokohama. There, he met the American minister to Japan, Charles DeLong, who introduced him to Japan's foreign minister, Soejima Taneomi. Soejima had already learned of the massacre of the Ryūkyūans, and was in the process of grappling with the question of how Japan should proceed with plans to annex the Ryūkyū Kingdom. LeGendre offered Soejima first-hand knowledge of the area in southern Taiwan where the Ryūkyūans had been murdered, he understood how Chinese officials were likely to respond to any diplomatic overtures that Japan might make, and he had formulated a persuasive argument based on Western diplomatic thinking that would justify Japan's annexing the aboriginal area of Taiwan. Soejima hired LeGendre as an advisor to the government in October, 1872, and LeGendre began to help the government plan a military expedition to southern Taiwan.

From the beginning, the plans that LeGendre helped draft envisaged the colonization of at least the eastern part of Taiwan, and they held out the prospect that Japan might in due course colonize all of Taiwan. The plans also assumed that Japan had an unchallenged claim to sovereignty over the Ryūkyūs and an implicit agenda of the expedition was to solidify Japan's claim to the Ryūkyūs. In one of his later plans, LeGendre indicated that the entire east coast south of Suau, at approximately 24° 33', would be colonized (see map). In

1873 Soejima traveled to China, accompanied by LeGendre and a number of other Japanese officials, partly in order to lay a legal—or perhaps more accurately a legalistic—foundation that would support subsequent claims by Japan that China did not exercise jurisdiction over the aboriginal territory. If Japan could demonstrate that China did not exercise jurisdiction, then according to LeGendre's logic Japan would be justified in colonizing eastern Taiwan.

Soejima resigned from the government in the fall of 1873 in the dispute over whether Japan should invade Korea, but Ōkuma Shigenobu with the support of Ōkubo Toshimichi continued Soejima's plan, and in the spring of 1874 the government began to carry out the plan and issued the orders cited at the beginning of this paper for Saigō Tsugumichi to lead the expedition to Taiwan. Last-minute opposition by the British and American ministers in Tokyo nearly blocked the expedition, but the forces departed Japan in late April and early May and landed near the town of Shaliao in southern Taiwan. The invasion force set up a camp just south of the town, and after a few fairly serious battles that culminated in a three-pronged attack on the aborigines in the villages of Butan and Kusakut in the early days of June, the expeditionary force managed to pacify southern Taiwan. After the area had been pacified, Saigō followed his orders and asked for permission to carry out the second clause in his special instructions, namely to begin leading the natives to civilization. He never received permission, though, and as the months dragged on nearly everyone in the expeditionary force contracted tropical diseases and several hundred troops died from illness.

Ōkuma, the civilian leader of the expedition back in Tokyo, probably wanted to give Saigō permission to proceed with the colonization, but the government decided to shelve its

plans to colonize eastern Taiwan because the threat of war with China had grown too ominous and because Yamagata Aritomo had warned them that the new conscript army was not yet ready to fight a major war and would probably lose. The government, led by Ōkubo Toshimichi, decided to press China for an indemnity instead, but it held the threat of colonization in the background until China finally relented and agreed to pay the indemnity. Having resolved the impasse peacefully, Ōkubo instructed Saigō to withdraw his forces from Taiwan, which he did early in December, 1874.

Almost every account of the expedition by Japanese historians ends the narrative here, but doing so effaces a revealing coda. Beginning in 1875, and specifically in response to the Japanese attempt to colonize the aboriginal territory, the Chinese government finally began a concerted effort to pacify the area and bring it under the government's effective political jurisdiction. Only after the Japanese expedition, in other words, did the Chinese government finally begin to act to foreclose the possibility that the aboriginal territory might be colonized based on the rationale that LeGendre had devised between 1867 and 1872 in response to the *Rover* Incident.

III. Four interpretive perspectives

Next I would like to return to the four perspectives introduced at the beginning of the paper in order to discuss a more comprehensive a context for interpreting the significance of the Taiwan Expedition.

Colonialism

Even from the brief narrative given above it should be clear that a good deal of evidence shows that the expedition in fact had an important colonial dimension. Let me add here three more pieces of evidence. First, the written plans for the expedition specifically mention colonization, using the modern Japanese word *shokuminchi*, and in some cases they include glosses that prove the English provenance of the word (such as *koroni*).⁵ There is no question, therefore, that the word *shokuminchi* really means colony, and that it is an example of an English word being introduced into Japanese political discourse. Second, some of the efforts to implement the plans for the expedition demonstrate a clear colonial intent. The Japanese government hired foreign personnel whose only function was to help establish colonies along the east coast of Taiwan, for example at a place called Pilam, quite some distance north of where the fighting took place (see map). Japanese spies were also dispatched to Taiwan and a handful of them established a post at Kilai, on the central east coast of Taiwan, in anticipation that the expeditionary force would move northward along the eastern coast in order to colonize the area.⁶ Third, and perhaps the most interesting piece of evidence, Saigō Tsugumichi and Ōkuma Shigenobu exchanged letters that took up the issue of whether Saigō might be permitted to "lead the natives to

⁵ Memo No. 22, submitted to Ōkuma Shigenobu by Charles LeGendre, March 13, 1874. In *Meiji seifu hon'yaku sōkō ruisan*, ed. Arai Hideo (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 1986), 12: 8.

⁶ LeGendre Memo No. 22; *Saigō totoku to Kabayama sōtoku* 314-322, 345.

civilization."⁷ Their letters make it clear that Saigō wanted to proceed with the colonization of eastern Taiwan immediately after the south had been pacified.

The phrase "lead the natives to civilization" in Saigō's special instructions needs to be interpreted in light of the totality of evidence about the planning and implementation of the expedition, which includes an understanding of the actual language used in the plans for the expedition, the efforts to implement the plans, and the desire of the expedition leader to proceed with colonization after the south had been pacified. When the phrase is interpreted from this perspective, there is little doubt that it refers to a persistent intent to establish colonies in the aboriginal territory of Taiwan.

Historiography

The second perspective from which to interpret the significance of the expedition is best elucidated through a discussion of historiography. One issue raised by the historiography of the expedition has to do with how the narrative begins. As discussed above, historical narratives of the expedition that begin with the murder of the shipwrecked Ryūkyūans implicitly accept the Meiji Japanese government's claim to sovereignty over the Ryūkyū Kingdom, and implicitly ignore the Chinese government's unequivocal rejection of that claim. Another issue is raised by the overwhelming tendency in the historiography to characterize the expedition as a bilateral diplomatic conflict between China and Japan. To

⁷ Saigō to Ōkuma, 6/7/1874, Ōkuma to Saigō, 6/28/1874, *Ōkuma Shigenobu kankei monjo* 2: 352, 396-99; Ōkuma to Saigō, 7/15/1874, *Shoban ruisan*, unpublished manuscript, National Central Library, Taipei, 8: 158. For a discussion of the correspondence between Saigō and Ōkuma, see Robert Eskildsen, "Meiji nananen Taiwan shuppei no shokuminchiteki sokumen," in *Meiji ishin to Ajia*, ed. Meiji Ishinshi Gakkai (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2001), 77-83.

be sure, the expedition did raise important diplomatic questions between China and Japan, but by framing the issues bilaterally the historiography has either overlooked or de-emphasized important aspects of the diplomatic conflict.

The first and most important of these has to do with the diplomatic intent that lay behind the expedition. The Japanese government, starting with Soejima but continuing with Ōkuma and Ōkubo, used the effort to send an expedition to Taiwan as a way of challenging China's diplomatic stature in East Asia and improving Japan's diplomatic standing with the West. By looking at the expedition in isolation, historians have tended not to pay sufficient attention to what it can tell us about regional diplomacy and geopolitics. At a minimum, the history of the expedition suggests that we need to rethink how historians have treated the debate over invading Korea (*seikanron*), but this need becomes apparent only if the expedition is explained in a broader regional context.

A second important issue of diplomatic history is the way the expedition helped clarify China's sovereignty over Taiwan. China articulated its claim to sovereignty over Taiwan in an ambiguous way, and the conflict helped push China towards clarifying its claim. At the same time, the Chinese government's actions immediately after the Japanese withdrawal from southern Taiwan demonstrate that it understood only too clearly the fundamental points that informed the Japanese negotiating position. The diplomatic conflict over China's claim to Taiwan thus hung not on misunderstandings of the issues at stake, but rather on Chinese refusal to accept certain premises of the Japanese argument, including the Western-based logic that informed it. The issue of sovereignty over Taiwan thus points to a much broader issue of differences in how China and Japan chose to address

the challenges posed by the Western system of diplomacy, and it implicates the narrow bilateral negotiations in a far broader and more important conflict over Western imperialism in East Asia.

Japan's claim to sovereignty over the Ryūkyū Kingdom raises a third issue of diplomatic history and points to a similar set of problems posed by Western diplomacy and imperialism. The government carefully concealed its aggressive assertion of sovereignty over the Ryūkyū Kingdom by folding its claim into assumptions that remained implicit in its negotiations with China. The Chinese refused to accede to Japan's claim, and so did the Ryūkyūans who continued to reach out to the Chinese for the symbolic assistance offered by tributary relations. Nor did the Japanese government itself pursue a consistent course, as it offered in 1880 to cede Miyako and Yaeyama in order to gain treaty concessions from the Chinese.⁸

These second and third issues of diplomatic history point to a fourth: the expedition helped clarify the modern political boundary between China and Japan. Here too, clarifying Japan's boundary can be seen as part of a long-term process through which the traditional diplomatic system of East Asia was replaced by the Western international system of diplomacy, but it also suggests the need to examine the significance of the expedition as it relates to a broader effort to clarify Japan's boundaries, particularly with Russia in the north and Korea in the southwest.

⁸ Gregory Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu: Identity and Ideology in Early-Modern Thought and Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 144-46. Nishizato Kikō, "Ryūkyūshobun to Karafuto-Chishima kōkan jōyaku," in *Ajia no naka no Nihonshi (IV): Chiiki to minzoku/etonosu*, ed. Arano Yasunori, et al. (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1992); 189-95.

Multilateral Regionalism

These four issues of diplomatic history suggest a need to examine the Taiwan Expedition in the context of East Asia as a whole rather than in bilateral terms. Indeed, a multilateral, regional frame of analysis opens up a number of important avenues for rethinking the historical importance of the expedition beyond issues of diplomatic history. For example, if we broaden our frame of analysis to include all of East Asia it becomes readily apparent that historians have paid insufficient attention to two important sets of participants in the incident, the aborigines—whose role has been virtually ignored—and Europeans and Americans.

The aborigines of southern Taiwan had a culture of their own, distinct from the culture of the Chinese settler population, their territory lay outside the administrative control of the Qing dynasty, and they neither recognized nor identified with what we might see as national governments. They murdered outsiders and defended their territory vigorously, and they did so on their own terms. Without the aborigines, the expedition would never have happened. The centrality of the role they played makes it all the more surprising that historians have virtually ignored them and have overwhelmingly depicted them in two-dimensional terms, describing them uncritically as violent or savage and thus fully deserving of being punished. The aborigines were indeed violent at times, but concerning their reputed savagery, scholars need to be cognizant of the discursive strategies that the Chinese, Westerners and Japanese used to create the category of savagery, rather

than simply to reproduce the category uncritically in their descriptions of the aborigines.⁹

A multilateral, regional approach also makes it easier to explain the role that LeGendre and other Europeans and Americans played in the conflict. China and Japan both employed foreign experts to help them put forward their diplomatic cases and to equip, train and even lead their military forces. These foreign experts often knew each other well, exchanged information almost without scruple, and their actions and interactions often relied parasitically on the existence of the treaty ports. Indeed, the treaty port system constituted a multilateral, regional field of play within which these foreign agents—and in many cases Japanese agents as well—operated, and the expedition could not have been carried without the infrastructure that the treaty port system provided.

The local orientation and independent nature of aboriginal society in southern Taiwan, the crucial support provided by foreigners, the expedition's parasitic reliance on the infrastructure provided by the treaty port system, and the ambiguous nature of sovereignty at the peripheries of China and Japan all point to the need to abandon the bilateral diplomatic frame of analysis that historians have favored in their explanations of the expedition and to adopt in its place a regional frame of analysis that takes into account the multilateral and fluid nature of the actions and interactions that took place in the interstices and across the boundaries of China and Japan.

⁹ For one critical attempt see Robert Eskildsen, "Of Civilization and Savages: The Mimetic Imperialism of Japan's 1874 Expedition to Taiwan," *American Historical Review* 107.2 (April 2002): 388-418. For an examination of the category of savagery as it applied to the aborigines of Taiwan in Qing discourse see Emma Teng, *From "Savage Island" to "Chinese Province": Taiwan in the Imperial Geography of the Qing Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Asia Center Publications, Harvard University, forthcoming), especially chapters four and five.

Mimesis

The fourth perspective from which to interpret the significance of the expedition is mimesis, which refers to Japan's strategic adoption and adaptation of Western civilization. Saigō's instructions to "lead the natives to civilization" only hint at the importance of the concept of civilization. Indeed, it informed profoundly how the expedition was conceived, planned, executed and justified, and for that reason it helps us understand both the internal logic of the expedition and how the expedition fits into the intellectual context of the early Meiji period.

The internal logic of the expedition rested on the belief that the so-called savages of Taiwan ought to be civilized. In his lengthy negotiations with Chinese authorities over the *Rover* Incident LeGendre argued that the Chinese had an obligation to civilize the aborigines, and Chinese failure to do so would constitute grounds for any civilized nation to colonize the aboriginal territory. LeGendre may have been cynical or idealistic in offering this rationale, or both, but irrespective of his motivations his rhetoric makes it clear that he did not see colonization as an end in itself. Rather, colonization rested on the imperative of bringing civilization to the aborigines, and until 1872 he thought that China ought to be the civilizing agent in Taiwan.¹⁰ After he began working for the Japanese government in 1872 he began to argue that Japan ought to be the civilizing agent, but the core of his argument remained unchanged.¹¹ In effect the Japanese government received LeGendre's colonialist

¹⁰ See for example No. 72, LeGendre to the General and Taotai of Formosa, June 22nd, 1867 (Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Amoy, China, 1844-1906, M100, roll 3).

¹¹ See LeGendre's memos to Soejima: memos No. 1-3, *Ōkuma monjo* 1: 17-33; memo No. 4, "Ōkuma monjo" A4424.

argument and adapted it for their own purposes, in order to expand the empire. Seen from this perspective, the phrase "lead the natives to civilization" in Saigō's instructions unmistakably serves as a code phrase that refers to the colonization of eastern Taiwan based on Japan's commitment to bring civilization to the aborigines.

More strikingly, perhaps, the concept of civilization was deeply embedded in the political discourse of the Meiji period, most obviously in the *bunmei kaika*. It cannot be an accident that the government undertook an overseas civilizing mission at precisely the same time that the internal civilizing mission of the *bunmei kaika* became a defining feature of Japan's domestic political discourse. None of the documentary sources about the expedition indicates an explicit connection between the civilizing imperative of the Taiwan Expedition and the *bunmei kaika*, but there must have been one.

If we look beyond the standard documentary sources about the expedition that historians have tended to use, and especially if we look at commercially published sources such as newspapers and woodblock prints, the connection becomes apparent.¹² Commercially published sources leave little doubt that many people in Japan, including people who had little or nothing to do with the government, interpreted the Taiwan Expedition at least partly through the lens of the *bunmei kaika*. Woodblock prints and book illustrations used explicit visual analogies to the *bunmei kaika* as a means of explaining the hierarchical relationship between the aborigines of Taiwan and the Japanese, thereby associating Japanese dominance over the aborigines to forms of dominance in contemporary domestic political relationships. The analogies relied at least in part on tropes that were

¹² For an elaboration of this argument see Eskildsen, "Of Civilization and Savages."

commonly understood to be appropriations from Western civilization and that were being used contemporaneously to explain the newly emerging political hierarchy of Meiji Japan. It is unlikely that many people outside the government were aware of the specific colonialist logic that informed Saigō's orders to "lead the natives to civilization," but the existence of these analogies in commercially published sources suggests a readiness to interpret Japanese dominance in Taiwan through the lens of Japan's appropriation and adaptation of Western civilization.

In short, the narrow colonialist logic of the expedition and the broader cultural reception of the expedition's purpose both relied on mimesis, and while they were not precisely the same the two mimeses were linked by their common reliance on the idea of appropriating and adapting selected aspects of Western civilization.

IV. Conclusions

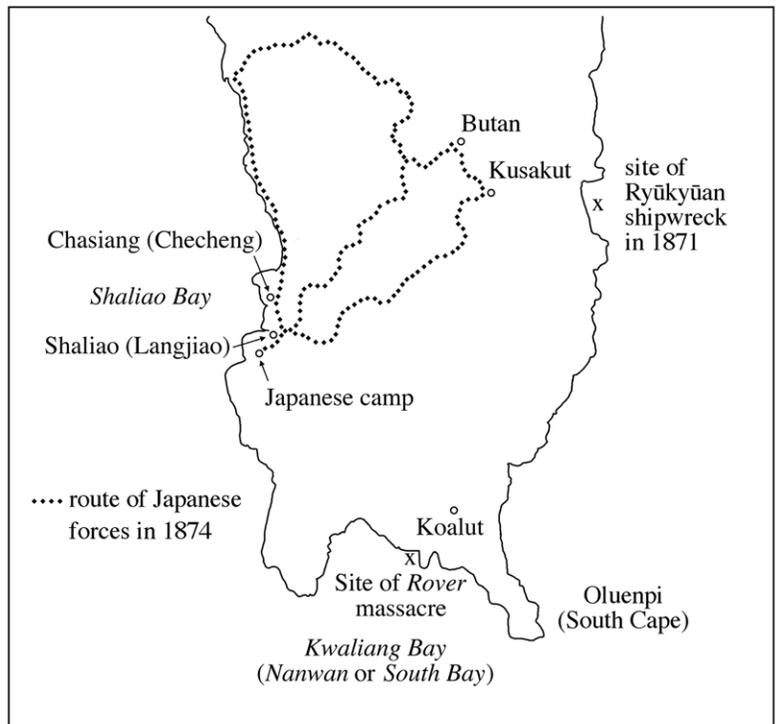
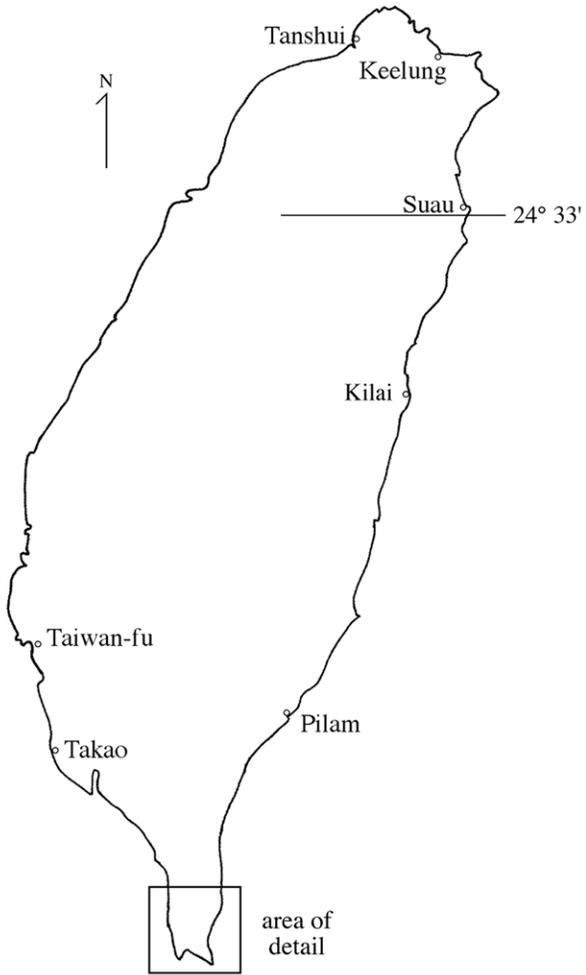
This discussion of the Taiwan Expedition leaves us with several new insights about Japan during the early Meiji period. To begin with, it shows us that people in Japan had begun to think seriously about colonialism decades before the Sino-Japanese War, and this fact alone should command our attention. Moreover, it suggests the need for us to think about why people in Japan were thinking so concretely and arguing so explicitly about colonialism in the early years of the Meiji period. Simply as a matter of timing, an early engagement in explicitly colonial thinking would suggest that Japanese imperialism did not emerge as a consequence of nation building in Japan, but rather it emerged as part of the process of nation building. In a recent review article, Andre Schmid has argued that

colonialism was part of the process of Japan's modernization, and not the result of it.¹³ The history of the Taiwan Expedition suggests the need to push this line of reasoning earlier into the Meiji period and to examine how colonial thinking influenced the creation of a modern nation-state in Japan.

We must also acknowledge, I would argue, that Japanese imperialism constituted an integral part of the way that Japan received, responded to and adapted Western civilization. In a sense, the *bunmei kaika* was an auto-imperialization of Japan where Japanese people rather than foreigners acted as the agents of cultural transformation. Under the circumstances it should come as little surprise that the intellectual tools of the *bunmei kaika* could be turned to other purposes, such as explaining and justifying Japanese dominance over other East Asian peoples. The *bunmei kaika*, I would argue, was from the very start deeply implicated in Japan's contradictory involvement in imperialism, hence we should not be surprised that it could be turned to the purpose of supporting colonialism.

Consequently, if we expand our frame of analysis and look at the Taiwan Expedition in the broader regional context of imperialism in East Asia during the second half of the nineteenth century, we learn that people in Japan began to think seriously about colonialism early in the Meiji period, that imperialism constituted an integral part of the process of building a modern nation-state in Japan, and that from the outset the *bunmei kaika* was profoundly implicated in imperialism.

¹³ Andre Schmid, "Colonialism and the 'Korea Problem' in the Historiography of Modern Japan: A Review Article," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 59.4 (2000): 951-76.



Map of Taiwan around the time of the Japanese expedition