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Between Assimilation and Independence
Taiwanese Political Aspirations
Under Nationalist Chinese Rule, 1945–1948

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The Chiang Kaishek Memorial Hall in Taipei.
Japan's fifty years of colonial rule over Taiwan ended on October 25, 1945. At a brief ceremony in Taipei, the island returned to China, then governed by Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Party. The simple transfer of sovereignty accomplished in a single day, however, belies the complexity and contradictions of the 1945 to 1948 period, which blended a troubled decolonization with an abortive reintegration into China. Even after 1945 the colonial experience remained an important factor in determining the course and content of political activity on Taiwan. The Taiwanese relied upon their collective memory of Japanese rule to create frameworks for evaluating and interacting with the Nationalist government. They also invoked positive aspects of the colonial experience, such as economic development, in order to justify their criticism of the state. The colonial legacy, however, was a double-edged sword. Taiwanese had to legitimize their political activity by proving that they had become loyal citizens of China who had not been "Japanized" by collaboration with their former overlords.

Reintegration of Taiwan into China, which had ruled the island from the late 1600s until 1895, was no simpler than decolonization. Although the mainland, sometimes called the motherland (tsu-kuo), was the source of most of the island's population, the legacy of Japanese rule assured that reintegration was marked by ambiguity, then conflict. Furthermore, both Taiwan and mainland China had changed so much between 1895 and 1945—politically, socially, and economically—that the retrocession was less the restoration of historical ties than the attempt to forge an entirely new relationship. Because of their limited knowledge of Taiwan, well-justified animosity toward all things Japanese, and the pressures of reconstruction and civil war on the mainland, the Nationalists sought tight control over the economic and political life of the island. The central government delegated this responsibility to a provincial administration staffed almost exclusively with mainlanders. As they had during the colonial era, the Taiwanese attempted to maximize the island's autonomy within a larger political entity, in this case, the Republic of China. The islanders' call for reform under the broad heading of self-government represented a middle ground between independence and complete assimilation into the Nationalist polity and a troubled China.

Decolonization and reintegration began with the interregnum, two months of uncertainty between Japan's surrender in mid-August 1945 and the formal Nationalist takeover in late October. From late 1943 through mid-1946 the Nationalists attempted to solidify their control over the island, causing considerable hardship and increasing tensions between the provincial administration and the local population. The Taiwanese, even as they broke with their past in the process of decolonization, consciously and unconsciously recalled Japanese rule as they navigated their way through this extraordinarily difficult period. Islanders wrestled with two interrelated problems: Where did they fit in the nation of China? What was their place in the Nationalist state? To many, China appeared chaotic and backward—a potential drain on the island's resources and a threat to
its stability. The Nationalist state failed to meet many standards of acceptable governance that the Taiwanese had formed under the previous regime. Increasingly, they saw the mainland government and its representatives on the island as new, yet less competent, colonial rulers. Reintegration became, to many of them, recolonization. Taiwanese criticism of the state mirrored calls for expanded provincial autonomy.

In early 1947, simmering tensions between state and society exploded in what became known as the February 28 incident. Taiwanese quickly took control of the island from an ill-prepared provincial administration. Although the elite did not lead the uprising, they used this opportunity to demand a larger role in governing the island and controlling its resources. After a week of tense negotiations, military reinforcements arrived from the mainland, crushing all opposition and massacring thousands of the island’s inhabitants. The process of decolonization made a quantum leap forward as those who had invoked the memory of the Japanese era to justify political reform were killed or cowed into silence. After the incident, the state dominated debate over Taiwan’s place in China and the Nationalist polity. Subsequent changes in the political and economic spheres came from and through the regime, not as a result of requests from the Taiwanese themselves. The high point of reintegration was 1948. By the end of that year, the collapsing Nationalist regime had begun to retreat to the island. Communist victory and U.S. support for Chiang’s regime assured that, by mid-1950, Taiwan was isolated more completely from the mainland than at any time under Japanese rule.

Creating an Ambiguous Colonial Legacy

An understanding of Taiwanese political activity after the retrocession must begin with the colonial era. After a devastating defeat in the first Sino-Japanese war, China’s beleaguered Ch’ing dynasty ceded Taiwan to Japan. The Japanese quickly crushed armed resistance as the inhabitants of the island were poorly armed and led, and divided among themselves. The Taiwanese had little prospect of rejoining the mainland until World War II drew to a close fifty years later. Considering the whirlwind of anti-Ch’ing revolution, imperialist pressure, warlord struggles, civil war, and finally Japan’s outright invasion of the mainland, however, the island enjoyed relative peace and order. Taiwan’s colonial masters also made major improvements in areas such as sanitation and education. The Japanese unified measurements and currency; created postal, banking, and telegraph systems; built infrastructure including harbors, railroads, and power plants; and developed industry in areas such as sugar, aluminum, cement, iron, chemicals, textiles, and lumber. The Taiwanese paid a huge price for this progress: life in a brutal police state, second-class citizenship, economic exploitation, and constant uncertainty over their place in the world. In particular, many Taiwanese viewed their island as “Asia’s Orphan” (Ya-hsi-ya te ku-erh), a place cast off by China and accorded second-class status by Japan.
The colonial administration set the stage for Taiwanese political movements and demands—experiences that would influence events profoundly after 1945. Law 63 established the framework for Japanese rule by giving a series of military governors-general (sōtoku) broad powers over the military, administrative, legislative, and judicial organs on the island, with only limited interference from Tokyo. In 1918, the first of a string of civilian bureaucrats held governor-generalship, symbolizing the slight liberalization of colonial policies in Taishō-era Japan. After 1937, only military officers held this post as the island mobilized for Japan’s war effort. The Taiwanese directed much of their political activity toward curbing the power of the governor-general and the bureaucracy under him.

Japanese education and economic policies fostered a Taiwanese elite. Imperialism required a compliant local elite to work in the middle and lower levels of business and industrial enterprises, hospitals, schools, and the colonial police force and bureaucracy. The island’s elite, born during the last years of Ch’ing rule or the first decades of colonial rule, would eventually mold the memory of the Japanese era as part of its own political activities, especially the drive for local autonomy, after 1945. The education system sought to build a loyal population with technical skills to support the colonial economy. Primary school enrollment of Taiwanese increased from 21 percent of males and 4 percent of females in 1917 to 81 percent and 61 percent, respectively, by 1943. Instruction above the high school level often meant travel to Japan and was available only to a select group of relatively wealthy and extremely hardworking youth from the families of landlords, businessmen, or professionals. In 1922, 2,400 Taiwanese were studying in Japan; by 1942 this increased to 7,000. The two most important fields were medicine and education—the Japanese discouraged the study of topics they feared likely to lead to political activity such as history or literature. The Japanese also established the first modern institutions of higher education on the island. Taipei Normal School trained thousands of the island’s teachers, and Taipei Imperial University grew from 20 Taiwanese students in the 1930s to about 170 by 1944. The colonial bureaucracy and economy provided these educated youth with careers. The island served not only as a market and source of agricultural products and raw materials for Japan but also as the base for the empire’s expansion into South China and Southeast Asia.

In a pattern common to colonies, the very people who obtained education, wealth, and status under the Japanese led movements resisting that regime. Calls for reform developed mainly as a reaction to the autocratic powers of the colonial administration under civilian and military governors-general, beginning with opposition to Law 63. From the 1910s through the 1930s, the Taiwanese elite formed a variety of political organizations. The drive for greater self-government at all levels of the administrative system became a common theme of this activity. First, they sought to increase the island’s autonomy vis-à-vis Japan and the governor-general. Second, the Taiwanese advocated expanding their influence at the
city, district, and town levels. Responding to requests for increased self-government by the Taiwanese and the currents of Taishō Democracy in Japan, in 1920 Governor-General Den Kenjiro reorganized the local administration and created assemblies at the city, district, street, and neighborhood level. He also established an islandwide body called the Taiwan Governor-General’s Consultative Assembly (Taiwan Sōtokufu Hyōgikai) in 1921. These reforms were cosmetic, as the governor-general selected the assembly members (most were prominent Japanese residents or officials) and participants could only question officials—they lacked decision-making power or control over local budgets and administration. Taiwanese criticized these measures as “false,” “half,” or “in name only.”

The first half of the 1930s marked the high point of Taiwanese agitation for self-government under Japanese rule. A group of prominent islanders formed the Taiwan League for Local Self-Government (Taiwan Chihō Jichi Renmei) in 1930. The leaders and members of this movement took a middle position—they dared not attempt and probably did not desire to overthrow Japanese rule, but they did seek greater influence over the island’s affairs. Voicing themes that became common in disputes between the Nationalist state and the Taiwanese after 1945, indigenous political leaders emphasized that they were best able to manage the internal affairs of the island—they should have a greater role—and that their economic development and education levels warranted such measures—they could take on this responsibility.

In 1935, based primarily upon confidence in their tight control over the island, the Japanese reformed the assemblies to permit Taiwanese and Japanese residents of the island to elect half the members (assuming that the governor-general allowed them to be candidates). The powers of these bodies, however, remained limited to interpellation of colonial officials, and they could be dissolved at any time by the governor-general. Under an increasingly oppressive atmosphere as Japan marched toward war with China and then the Western powers, the Taiwanese had fewer opportunities to press their demands. By the time full-scale war broke out on the mainland in August 1937, even the most moderate political organizations were banned. The drive for greater self-government would resurface in political discourse after 1945.

To mobilize the Taiwanese for their war effort, the Japanese relied upon effective police repression of dissent, an education system designed to promote loyalty, and a record of providing limited material progress and relative stability. Based upon a compliant local population and Taiwan’s location, the island became a key staging and supply area for military operations in southern China and Southeast Asia. The colonial government’s propaganda sought Taiwanese support on two levels. Among the bulk of the population—farmers and laborers—the Japanese emphasized loyalty to the emperor, pan-Asianism, and the benefits of the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere. After the Diet passed the National General Mobilization Law in 1938, many Taiwanese were drafted to work in military-related industries, often in Japan. More than 200,000 young draftees
served in the Imperial Army or Navy during the war, mainly in Southeast Asia. More than thirty thousand Taiwanese died; the balance returned safely to the island in 1946, swelling the ranks of unemployed. At the elite level, the governor-general focused his attention on the interests of individual local leaders by providing status, such as political posts, and the promise of greater equality with Japanese residents and officials on the island. Most Taiwanese supported the war effort as loyal, albeit second-class, members of the empire. Others retreated from political activity. A few openly opposed their colonial masters or felt the pull of Chinese ancestry and fled to areas of the mainland not occupied by the Japanese. No significant armed resistance movement or sabotage of the war effort occurred on the island itself.

Across the Taiwan strait, the expansion of the Sino-Japanese conflict into a broader war including the Western powers raised Chinese hopes of recovering Taiwan. At the Cairo Conference of November 1943, U.S. president Franklin Roosevelt, Generalissimo Chiang, and British prime minister Winston Churchill stated their intention of returning Taiwan to China after the war. Simultaneously, the Nationalist government stepped up its efforts to prepare for the restoration of Chinese sovereignty over the island. In April 1944, Chiang established the Taiwan Investigation Committee within the Central Statistical Bureau. Chiang named Ch'en Yi, former chairman of Fukien province (directly across the Taiwan straits from the island), to head the committee. Cooperation with Taiwanese who had moved to the mainland became an important facet of postwar planning as about a thousand islanders joined Nationalist government or party organizations, many in the wartime capital of Chungking. These Taiwanese became known as “half-mountain people” (pan-shan-jen). They served as an important link between the island and the central government when they returned to Taiwan after the retrocession. Many of them, however, were torn between loyalty to their native place and to the Nationalist state, which had provided them with status and careers.

On August 15, 1945, the Taiwanese dutifully turned on their radios—they had been told by Japanese officials to expect an important announcement. They strained to hear the Showa emperor announce that the time had come to “endure the unendurable.” After fifty years, the empire had collapsed; the Taiwanese were no longer second-class citizens of Japan—but would they be first-class citizens of China? The colonial era left the Taiwanese with a dual legacy. As the Taiwanese would emphasize after the retrocession, their standard of living, level of education, and sanitary conditions all exceeded those of the mainland, even Manchuria (part of China under Japanese control since 1931). Due to a well-enforced system of compulsory education, there were few under age forty who could not read Japanese. The island was more advanced economically and industrially and had avoided the chaos of warlords, civil war, and invasion that had plagued the mainland during the previous decades. In this context, most Taiwanese became loyal subjects of the empire and eager participants in modernization.
They also took advantage of the opportunity for limited political activity in local assemblies. Another aspect of the legacy, however, was a negative one. The Taiwanese endured second-class citizenship, systematic discrimination, frustrated political aims, an economic order developed solely for Japan’s benefit, and wartime deprivation. They had struggled to reform Japanese rule, symbolized by the governor-general system, through a variety of political movements designed to expand self-government. The contradictions of the colonial experience set the stage for the difficult processes of decolonization and reintegration.

**Nationalist Rule Established**

Upon hearing of Japan’s surrender, the Taiwanese reacted initially with elation, for it marked the end of U.S. bombing and the return of sons serving in the military. This joy, however, was tempered by uncertainty. The island was ripe with rumors of Nationalist intentions, Taiwanese cliques, and foreign plots. For example, the diaries of colonial-era doctor and political activist Wu Hsin-jung referred repeatedly to the feelings of unease (pu an) in himself and his compatriots. The “problem” of the colonial legacy became apparent even before the arrival of the new government. The son of a traditional Chinese scholar who became a doctor and advocate of self-government under Japanese rule, Han Shih-ch’uan reported on the events in T’ai-an, an important city on the southwest coast of the island. He divided his fellow citizens into four groups. First, some people who had helped the Japanese rule (wei hu tuo ch’ang)—“aid to an evildoer”—suddenly became ardent Chinese patriots. Second, others with a conscience stayed indoors because they were ashamed of their past collaboration with the Japanese. Third were those loyal to China who had opposed Japan. They eagerly sought to use the opportunity to grasp political power. Last were the masses who went wild with joy and released fifty years of accumulated hatred toward the Japanese.

As the initial shock and confusion of Japan’s defeat wore off, some Taiwanese took the initiative in decolonization and reintegration. These men had become leaders to the people of the island based upon their economic power, positions in prominent families, and roles in political movements during the Japanese era. They would be the ones who attempted to shape the relationship between state and society after the retrocession. The Taiwanese organized themselves to preserve public order, taking this task over from the Japanese, and to prepare for the arrival of the Nationalist government. Political leader, landlord, and businessman Lin Hsien-t’ang and other well-known figures in central Taiwan offered to cooperate with the Japanese to maintain stability during this time of uncertainty. This exemplified the collaborative relationship between wealthy Taiwanese and their colonizers, an issue that would become extremely sensitive in the years to come. These men worked closely with local youth, many with Japanese military training, to keep order as the colonial police had little enthusi-
asm for the endeavor. This cooperation also highlighted a gap between the elite and their fellow islanders. While many poor Taiwanese might have benefited from the breakdown of law and order, the elite had property, businesses, and social status to protect—chaos was not in their class interests.

The Taiwanese realized that their collaboration with the Japanese colonial empire would be an extraordinarily sensitive issue in their relationship with the mainlander-dominated Nationalist state. As they turned their attention to building ties with the new regime, the Taiwanese almost uniformly offered public professions of loyalty to the ideal of a reuniting with China under Chiang Kai-shek's regime. To take the initiative on reintegration, prominent Taiwanese formed the Preparatory Committee to Welcome the National Government. Participants included Lin, Yeh Jung-chung, and others who were simultaneously cooperating with the Japanese to maintain order. They organized activities to show their support for new government (such as distributing Nationalist flags and banners), met newly arrived mainland officials, and traveled to Nanking to meet with leaders in the central government. Smaller versions of this committee were established in communities throughout the island.

The Nationalists established their administration in this atmosphere of Taiwanese public support and private reservations. Chiang Kai-shek's government sought tight control of Taiwan to promote decolonization and advance reintegration by erasing Japanese influence and bringing the island under the economic, political, and cultural sway of China. While the Nationalists were suspicious of the Taiwanese because of their long collaboration with the Japanese, they hoped to exploit the island's wealth and industrial base for the mainland's postwar reconstruction and struggle against the Communists. Toward this end, in August 1945 the Nationalists established an administrative system unlike that of any other province in China—the Taiwan Provincial Administrative Executive Office (T'ai-wan-sheng hsing-cheng chang-kuan kung-shu). Ch'en Yi became administrator (hsing-cheng chang-kuan) and commander of the Taiwan Garrison. Ch'en, working through the Executive Office, had direct control over the administrative, military, judicial, and regulatory organs on the island. Although not intentionally modeled after Law 63, this system's similarities to the colonial regime laid the base for conflict with the Taiwanese after the retrocession.

Nationalist rule of Taiwan during the latter half of the 1940s was a failure. State policies involving important issues such as the disposition of Japanese assets and economic reconstruction, cultural reintegration and language, and participation in political activity all led to disputes with the island's people. Because the Taiwanese came to see few major differences between Japanese and mainland Chinese economic and political systems and goals, they transferred their ambiguity toward the colonial experience to their relationship with the Nationalist government. Although both regimes were seen as exploitative, the new government was deemed particularly deficient in important areas such as honesty, competence, predictability, and efficiency.
After Ch'en Yi formally took power as administrator on October 25, the Nationalists began to wrestle with the problems of postwar Taiwan. In the economic sphere, the island faced two difficult transitions: from the Japanese to the Chinese orbit, and from wartime mobilization to peacetime reconstruction. The Nationalists inherited an industrial infrastructure worn down from the demands of Japan's war effort and American bombing. The most devastated areas included harbors, housing in coastal cities, sugar refineries, and communication or transportation facilities. Work on repairs ceased in August 1945 as Japanese technical experts and managers began to return home and spare parts for equipment became difficult to obtain. Agricultural production declined because of the lack of labor and fertilizer. In this context, any government would have had a difficult time managing the island's economy. The state magnified these problems by attempting to link Taiwan to the mainland even as the latter struggled, then failed, to recover from the war. The Nationalists placed colonial-era enterprises and monopolies under state control, confiscated Japanese private property, and established trade bureaus to manage commerce between the island and the mainland or the outside world.

Ch'en Yi molded the general strategies set in Chungking to fit his own ideas on the need for government domination of Taiwan's economy. He emphasized Sun Yat-sen's ideas of placing national capital over private investment. Since the nation and government belonged to the people, he reasoned, state enterprises were inherently good. Administrator Ch'en tied support of his policies to patriotism, leaving the Taiwanese little room for dissent. He attacked those who opposed his economic measures, stressing that such critics held the "traditional ideology of the gentry." He asked, "The government should not make money, but merchants should? How can you say this? The money the government earns is for the benefit of the people, but the money earned by merchants goes into private pockets." This uncompromising attitude laid the base for conflict with Taiwanese businessmen.

The new regime's efforts to increase its control over all facets of the economy collided with the drive by wealthy Taiwanese to expand their enterprises into areas formerly controlled by Japanese firms or the colonial government. Businessmen large and small could neither compete with state firms nor trade freely with either old markets (Japan and its former colonies) or new (the mainland). In August 1946, U.S. officials reported that "economic paralysis has set in, attributed primarily to the policy of creating semi-official companies against which private enterprise cannot successfully compete." Extortion by undisciplined soldiers and officials from the mainland, bad management, and corruption magnified problems stemming from government policies. Taiwanese saw corruption as particularly troublesome, as they came to recall fondly that they had learned the importance of the rule of law under the strict—yet predictable—police state run by the Japanese.

In the competition between Taiwanese and mainlanders to control colonial-era assets, the disposition of Japanese private property, especially homes, be-
came a contentious issue. Ownership was often unclear because many Japanese had sold their homes at bargain prices at the end of the war; Taiwanese simply occupied other dwellings. In the eyes of most islanders, much of this property had been confiscated by the colonial government or sold to Japanese enterprises at unfair prices over the previous fifty years and was thus rightfully theirs. According to Nationalist law, however, all Japanese property now belonged to the government. Corruption complicated this issue as some mainlanders took advantage of their power and positions to take property that may have belonged to Taiwanese. The colonial legacy became part of this conflict. One Taiwanese observed later, “When a Chinese with some influence wanted a particular property, he had only to accuse a Formosan of being a collaborationist during the past fifty years of Japanese sovereignty.” For the next few years, islanders attempted to obtain property that they believed was their own through largely unsuccessful lawsuits and petitions.

For most Taiwanese, living conditions worsened after the retrocession. In the central part of the island, people talked of “three hopes.” First there existed hope (hsii-wang) from the time of Japan’s surrender through the arrival of the Nationalist administration two months later. Next was lost hope (shih-wang) that resulted from the performance of the new government. Finally came chueh-wang (hopelessness) as the people felt that “the future was black.” The most serious problems were inflation and unemployment. Although the island had its own currency, as had been the case during the colonial era, it was tied to a government that did not and could not make Taiwan’s welfare a high priority. Ch’en Yi’s attempt to insulate Taiwan from the ravages of inflation on the mainland failed and prices rose according to the changing value of the central government’s currency (fa-pi) and perceptions of Nationalist China’s stability. Unemployment resulted from the lack of industrial recovery, magnified by the demobilization of many youth who had served as laborers or soldiers for the Japanese. State monopolies on goods such as tobacco, alcohol, salt, and matches proved unable to meet the needs of consumers. Grain and housing shortages also harmed most Taiwanese. Government attempts to control grain prices and sales proved ineffective. Hoarding and profiteering by businessmen and officials—both Taiwanese and mainlanders—magnified these difficulties. Finally, public health and sanitation declined. For example, a cholera epidemic hit southern Taiwan during the summer of 1946, the incidence of malaria and leprosy increased, and bubonic plague reappeared for the first time since 1919.

Policies concerning culture and language formed another problematic aspect of decolonization and reintegration. The government sought to eradicate Japanese influence and sinicize the Taiwanese through a process of cultural reconstruction (wen-hua ch’ung-chien). Toward this end, Administrator Ch’en used organizations like the Three Principles of the People Youth Corps and the Taiwan Office of Translation and Compilation. The latter was headed by an associate of Ch’en named Hsu Shou-t’ang who thought that Taiwan needed its own
May Fourth movement to sweep away the influence of Japanese colonialism and feudal thinking. Hsu promoted the writings of Lu Hsun, an icon of China’s youth and one of the leading authors of the mainland’s New Culture movement. This program presents an excellent case study of Nationalist efforts at decolonization and reintegration in the cultural sphere. First, the program failed because of limited interest in Lu Hsun. Many Taiwanese gave cultural change a much lower priority than economic recovery. Second, some who read Lu Hsun’s work interpreted it as a critique of the mainland and its culture. Thus it served as much to turn Taiwanese intellectuals against China and its representatives, the Nationalist government, as it did to build ties. Finally, the Taiwanese received mixed messages from the state. Hsu’s work to spread the thought of Lu Hsun conflicted with much of the Nationalist Party’s (Kuomintang) official ideology, which emphasized Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People, and attacked Lu as a Communist sympathizer.

Linguistic differences resulting from colonial rule became a point of conflict between the Taiwanese and the new administration. Over fifty years spoken Japanese had come to replace the common Chinese dialects (Taiwanese, or T’ai-yu, and Hakka, or K’echia hua) among the better educated. In response, the Nationalists struggled to spread the use of Mandarin Chinese (kuo-yu), literally “national language”), the officially sanctioned dialect of the mainland government. In April 1946, the government established a committee for the promotion of kuo-yu. While most Taiwanese enthusiastically studied their new language—whether out of patriotism, drive for profit in the China market, release of curiosity stifled by the Japanese, or simple self-interest is difficult to say—there were several problems with the government’s approach. The state vastly overestimated the speed at which Taiwanese could learn kuo-yu well enough to discuss political issues (the fastest process) and read or write official materials (the slowest). This proved especially troublesome for those seeking positions in the provincial administration. Even in the Provincial Consultative Assembly (T’ai-wan-sheng ts’an-i-hui) meetings of 1946, translation was required as so few representatives could speak “standard Mandarin” (piao-chun kuo-yu). Also, many newly arrived mainlanders could not speak understandable kuo-yu—They brought with them the plethora of dialects that existed in China. Finally, language competence became a symbol of one’s “Chinese-ness” and the use of Japanese turned into a “political problem.” The inability to speak, read, and write the official language suggested a lack of patriotism and backwardness to mainland Chinese. Taiwanese became especially upset when the ability to communicate in Mandarin became a symbol of political and educational development required for the implementation of self-government. Nevertheless, the government moved ahead with its attempts to restrict the use of Japanese. On the first anniversary of the retrocession, periodicals using the colonial language were banned.

Conflicts over policies concerning economic reconstruction and cultural reintegration created the context for Taiwanese political activity. The retrocession
appeared to present an unprecedented opportunity for participation in public life, which had been severely restricted by the Japanese. Through factions, the media, appointed posts, and elected assemblies, the Taiwanese endeavored to increase their role in governing the island. Factions were a way of distributing political power and controlling resources through personal relationships. These relationships had grown out of shared experiences (such as education or military service), place of birth, ideology, or a combination of the three. At the national level, Chiang Kai-shek deliberately promoted factions to protect his own power by keeping potential rivals divided and off-balance. For example, Ch’en Yi, part of the Political Science Clique, was in constant conflict with the C-C Clique while in Fukien and Taiwan.71 Administrator Ch’en had his own underlings who, in turn, formed factions.72

Politically active Taiwanese divided themselves into three groups: half-mountain (pan-shan), Taichung, and Ah Hai.73 Each had its own subfactions. The relationships and rivalries between cliques were extraordinarily complex. During the early 1940s the Nationalists had begun working with some Taiwanese, the “half-mountain people (pan-shan-jen),” in preparation for the retrocession. This uneasy alliance continued after the war. These men often joined mainland factions and had their own rivalries as well. After the retrocession, half-mountain clique members brought other Taiwanese into their circle. In the eyes of many Taiwanese who never ventured off the island, however, the strength of pan-shan-jen ties to the Nationalist government reduced their legitimacy as representatives of the island’s interests. The Taichung clique consisted of men such as Lin Hsien-t’ang, Yang Chao-chia, Yeh Jung-chung, and others with relatively high social standing in Japanese-era Taiwan.74 Many had been involved in social and political activity during the colonial period such as the movements to abolish Law 63 and to establish an islandwide assembly. After the retrocession, they sought to take what they believed to be their rightful place as political leaders of the island. Administrator Ch’en opposed this faction because it contained many merchants or landlords who fought his economic policies. The Ah Hai clique tended to represent the youthful elite of Taiwan. Some had been strident anti-Japanese activists who spent time in jail while others had actively collaborated with their colonizers. They shared a strong antipathy toward the half-mountain clique and antagonized Ch’en with their harsh criticism of his rule. Mainlanders disdained some of those in the Ah Hai clique for their past subservience to the Japanese.

The media became the most visible avenue for the Taiwanese to attempt to influence the state. For two reasons, immediately after the retrocession the press enjoyed greater freedom than at any time before the lifting of martial law in 1987. First, the Nationalists had difficulty manipulating the media any more effectively than they controlled prices, promoted the use of Mandarin Chinese, or implemented any other policy. Second, the depth of Taiwanese discontent did not become clear until well into 1946. Nationalist officials did not immediately seek to control all print media—they seemed genuinely surprised at the criticism.
they received.75 By mid-1946, however, the limits of Ch'en Yi's tolerance became increasingly clear, as reporters and editors were harassed, sued, or arrested.76 For example, Wang T'ien-teng, newspaper publisher, member of the Provincial Consultative Assembly, and part of the Ah Hai clique, was arrested for "undermining public confidence in authority."77 Wang's difficulties were part of an attack on Jen-min tao-pao, one of the newspapers most openly critical of the provincial government.78 Shortly after the paper had ceased publishing, the highest court on Taiwan announced that the case against him was being dropped for lack of evidence.79

Official posts represented another part of political activity. The mainlanders' near-monopoly over important positions in the provincial administration, including state enterprises and monopoly bureaus, antagonized the Taiwanese. Here, too, the colonial legacy played an important role. To many Nationalists, islanders lacked the qualifications for holding these posts because of their lack of Chinese-language ability and administrative experience, as well as their previous collaboration with the Japanese.80 Only three of the first twenty-three county magistrates posts or mayorships, and one of the twenty-one highest posts in the provincial government, were delegated to Taiwanese.81 Islanders made up only a small portion of midlevel officials in the various departments. Opportunities for employment (and influence) at all levels declined after the war as the bureaucracy shrank from 85,000 persons (including Japanese and Taiwanese) in 1944 to 44,000 in 1946. The Nationalists sent about 28,000 officials to the island. In the end, about 36,000 Taiwanese lost their jobs in the change of administrations.82 Not only the quantity but also the quality of mainland officials became a contentious issue. Incompetence, corruption, and nepotism were rampant. Another problem was that, as had been the case during the colonial era, a salary differential existed between the Taiwanese and officials sent by the central government.83

Representative assemblies became a key aspect of political life. The Taiwanese were eager to participate in governing the island, as they had been during the colonial era, and the Nationalists' willingness to create assemblies held great promise. The first registration of candidates occurred in February 1946. At the lowest level, 36,966 candidates vied for 7,771 posts on village and town councils. They, in turn, elected 523 district or city representatives in March and April. These representatives then elected thirty provincial assemblymen. Reflecting the continuity of personnel between the Japanese and Nationalist eras, of 1,180 candidates for the Provincial Consultative Assembly in 1946, 400 had been involved in assemblies at various levels during the Japanese era, which had fewer positions.84 The limited powers of the local and provincial bodies, however, left the Taiwanese dissatisfied. Assemblies at all levels were little more than advisory and consultation (tzu-hsun) organs. At the same time, these bodies provided a forum for the political elite to express their increasingly critical views of the government.85
The Colonial Legacy and Self-Government

In debates carried out through factions, the press, and representative assemblies, the Taiwanese linked the colonial legacy with their immediate concerns over Nationalist misrule. Perceptions of the provincial administration's corruption and ineptitude, defined by standards derived from the experience of Japanese rule, motivated a drive for reform. The goal of that reform—greater self-government—represented a return to a political movement from the pre-retrocession era. Colonial rule, however, was also a historical burden. Only by showing that they had not been "tainted" by Japanese influence could the Taiwanese justify their participation in political activity or criticism of the government. Since the Treaty of Shimonoseki had been signed in 1895, many Taiwanese faced the dilemma of reconciling pride in their Chinese cultural background with the reality of Japanese military power, institutional efficiency, and economic modernization. After 1945 the conflict between admiration of Japanese material progress and Chinese ancestry became a major point of contention between the Nationalist state, which presented itself as synonymous with China, and the Taiwanese. Even some mainlanders became aware of this problem. For example, Chekiang-born Chou Hsiwen outlined the problem of the colonial legacy in an essay examining the island's history. According to Chou, some observers claimed that Taiwan was more advanced than the mainland because of developments between 1895 and 1945. Others responded that the colonial legacy required complete reform of the island. He concluded that Taiwan's special characteristics, based on its fifty-year experience under foreign control, were not the sole cause of its problems—the island must unite with the mainland while avoiding its defects. Chou did not provide specifics on how to resolve the contradiction of uniting and avoiding defects, which goes to the heart of the Taiwanese conflict with the mainland-based Nationalist government.

The colonial legacy proved inescapable for those discussing the island's place in the Nationalist China. For example, editorials in a newspaper run by the provincial government, T'ai-wan hsien-sheng-pao, credited the Japanese with raising education levels and promoting economic development on the island. At the same time, it stressed that the culture of Taiwan, while not low by world standards, did not equal the motherland's (pu-ju tsu-kuo). Increased contact with the mainland was advocated as a solution. Another editorial stressed Taiwan's advances in education, industry, agriculture, and transportation under the Japanese. The island was compared to the Szechwan province of old, a land of plenty (t'ien-fu). The editorial concluded, however, that Taiwan was now in good hands under Administrator Ch'en Yi's able leadership. In this context, the Taiwanese were to continue to follow, not lead, in the island's development. For the most part, though, the government did not discuss Japanese influence as much as wield it as a political weapon. In light of Nationalist control of Taiwan, the term "Chinese" often meant little more than acceptance of Chiang Kai-shek's rule.
Many mainlanders portrayed the Taiwanese as disloyal to China because of their Japanization (*Jih-pen-hua*), often put in terms of "slavization" (*nu-hua*) at the hands of their colonial masters. They complained that Taiwanese knew little of the mainland or its culture, or worse, disdained China. Islanders were also viewed as exclusionary of mainlanders.\(^90\)

The Taiwanese vigorously rejected the charge that they had been incurably infected by Japanese education or culture because this would delegitimize their participation in politics. Emphasizing Taiwanese resistance to colonial rule formed a key part of this effort. At the end of the war, Li Wan-chu, who worked with the Nationalist government on the mainland in activities opposing the Japanese, emphasized that the Taiwanese had not been Japanized by their colonial experience. He complained that mainlanders did not understand that the Taiwanese had preserved the Chinese race's superior tradition and withstood attempts at assimilation by the Japanese.\(^91\) An editorial in the newspaper *Min-pao* claimed that the mainlanders' frequent use of the terms "slavization" or "slaves" when discussing the Taiwanese represented the sort of insult that caused the island's people to turn against outsiders. Mainlanders did not realize that the Taiwanese had attempted to resist colonial rule as much as possible, particularly by opposing the governor-general system.\(^92\)

Sung Fei-ju serves as an interesting case study in changing Taiwanese attitudes toward the colonial legacy. Sung fled to the mainland during Japanese rule and returned in 1946 as vice-chief of the Education Office in the provincial government, a post he held despite his leftist views. He wrote occasionally for *Jen-min too-pao*, a newspaper frequently critical of both the provincial administration and the central government. In early 1946, he claimed that Taiwan had missed fifty years of global progress as well as specific advances on the mainland such as the May Fourth movement. Sung described the culture of the island as a complicated mixture of Japanese slave education and the precolonial Han orthodoxy.\(^93\) The Taiwanese, because of Japanese rule, lacked the notion of ruling themselves and required a lengthy education. Sung urged Taiwanese to cultivate themselves to be worldly and think about more than their families' or the island's affairs.\(^94\) Based on his increasing disaffection with the provincial administration, by mid-1946 Sung's position shifted as he emphasized Taiwanese resistance to colonial rule. He wrote that the results of Japan's *kōninka* program had already been completely overturned.\(^95\) Sung explained that the Japanese attempt to educate the Taiwanese had only awakened resistance and that this led to more than twenty years (1920s to 1945) of opposing "slavization" through activities such as the movement to obtain an islandwide assembly.\(^96\) By showing a history of resistance to Japanese rule, Sung was attempting to legitimize a larger Taiwanese role in governing the island.

The Taiwanese used a variety of rhetorical tactics to explain their vital role in forging the island's future. For example, essayists often used the image of a family to describe China. An editorial in *Hsin T'ai-wan*, a magazine published
by Taiwanese in North China after Japan’s surrender, portrayed islanders as a younger brother separated from his loved ones for fifty years. His experience of slavery made him love the family even more than his parents did. Since the parents have sent an older brother to rule, however, some conflict is inevitable. Peace and renewal required that the family sometimes listen to the younger brother. Other materials were more blunt. An anonymous article in Hsin T'ai-"wan stated that the Japanese knew the value of the island as a "treasure house." It also warned that although the Taiwanese were not seeking independence from the mainland, the island could become an entirely self-sufficient nation. This represented a challenge to the Nationalists to manage Taiwan’s resources as efficiently as the Japanese had done.

Other Taiwanese appropriated the theme of colonialism to promote their political agendas vis-à-vis the Nationalist government. Some people even reached back to Ch‘ing rule of China—another instance of imperialism—and compared it to Japan’s domination of the island. Poet and democracy activist Wang Pai-yuan’s essay in Cheng-ching-pao stressed that the Taiwanese did not absorb Japanese thinking any more than Ch‘ing rule poisoned the minds of mainland Chinese. Taiwan was very orderly, he claimed, and should be easier to rule than other recovered areas. Thus, the island possessed optimal conditions for modern democratic development. Wang decried that some mainlanders treated Taiwan as a colony. The theme of Taiwan as a Chinese colony became a common one in 1946. For example, an editorial in Jen-min tao-pao frankly stated that prejudices between Taiwanese and mainlanders prevented their mutual progress. Although they were all Chinese ("sons of the Yellow Emperor"), many of those from outside the province felt superior and looked upon Taiwan in the same manner as the British treated India.

To many Taiwanese, the new regime compared unfavorably to the old. Disatisfaction became especially clear in the realms of preserving public order and preventing corruption, areas of particular importance to the island’s elite, who had substantial assets to protect and who dealt frequently with government officials. Taiwanese joked about “Passing the Five Tzu Imperial Exam” (wu tu teng-k‘e). This indicated the five things newly arrived mainland officials craved: gold, automobiles, rank, homes, and women. Wang T‘ien-teng wrote, “The good people of Taiwan still do not dare hope for real governance under the Three Principles of the People, they only hope for a little rule of law. . . . [They also] hope that the system of not daring to disrespect the rule of law [that existed] under Japanese imperialism can continue.” Ch‘en Feng-yuan, successful businessman under both Japanese and Nationalist rule, said that the term denoting the mainland’s takeover (chieh-shou) was replaced by a homonym meaning to plunder. He complained that corrupt officials monopolized Japanese assets and that public security had declined.

The Nationalists’ initial concerns over hostile Taiwanese attitudes were realized. Islanders-connected the failures of the state, as represented by the provin-
cial government, to a broader critique of the nation of China. Some members of
the elite saw the mainland as feudal, even as the island had advanced to the
industrial age during Japanese rule. Specifically, nepotism, which was rampant
in the provincial administration, was portrayed as a remnant from a stage of
development through which the island had passed. Taiwanese depicted corrup-
tion as part of the mainland’s defective political culture.\textsuperscript{105} To others, the National-
ist ideology, San Min Chu-I (Three Principles of the People), had become
\textit{ts'an-min chü-i} (Cruel person-ism).\textsuperscript{106} The views of average Taiwanese were
even more blunt. Some said that the dogs (the Japanese) had left, but the pigs
(mainland Chinese) had come. Pigs in this case emphasized the greedy and
uncultured nature that many Taiwanese saw in mainlanders.\textsuperscript{107} By mid-1946,
newspapers reported brawls between mainlanders and Taiwanese as living condi-
tions worsened and tensions rose.\textsuperscript{108}

Among the elite, concerns over Nationalist misrule drove calls for change. The
Japanese legacy not only determined the type of reform sought—greater auton-
omy from the central government—but also served to justify it. Hsieh Nan-kuang,
a leftist who had worked with the Nationalists on the mainland, attempted to
synthesize Nationalist political ideology and Taiwan’s colonial experience. He
used one aspect of Sun Yat-sen’s Three Principles of the People, democracy, as a
foil to present his case. The Taiwanese, he wrote, were prepared for a high level
of self-government and democracy because of their high education levels and
experience with political organizing during the Japanese era. Hsieh added a plea
for mainlanders to understand Taiwanese political aspirations, which had been
frustrated under colonial rule. The Nationalists were urged to show that they were
different from the Japanese.\textsuperscript{109} Others shared Hsieh’s focus on the colonial legacy
as a key factor in post-retrocession politics. One of the most prominent Taiwanese
of the immediate postwar era was Nationalist official Ch’iu Nien-t’ai.\textsuperscript{110} Based on
Ch’iu’s analysis, Taiwan was suitable for a high level of self-government and
could become a model province for two reasons: political legitimacy based upon
resistance to colonial rule, and material progress that stemmed from Japanese
investment. First, the Taiwanese could not be considered disloyal to China since
the Middle Kingdom had cast them out in the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Further,
during the Japanese era, the Taiwanese formed many organizations for expressing
the popular will and resisting their colonizers. Second, colonial rule had some
positive results. The island’s well-developed industry, agriculture, and transporta-
tion deserved special protection by the government.\textsuperscript{111}

Despite a wide range of emphases, the ambiguity of the retrocession disappeared in 1946 as Taiwanese sought to reconcile their vision of the island’s
future with the reality of reintegration into a chaotic China. For example, Li Ch’un-\textsuperscript{cheng}, a frequent contributor to \textit{T’ai-wan p’ing-lun}, wrote an essay on
Chinese rule of Taiwan.\textsuperscript{112} While clearly rejecting independence, he urged islanders to avoid the whirlpool of party struggles on the mainland and called for
Taiwan to become a model province of local self-government.\textsuperscript{113} Some politi-
cally active islanders moved toward advocating looser ties with the increasingly chaotic mainland. Lin Hsien-t'ang stressed that Taiwanese could do nothing to affect the growing conflict between the Nationalists and Communists. He suggested that self-government through a confederation of provinces (lien-sheng tsu-chih) would be the most effective system to govern China. This had the advantage of letting people select and be ruled by their own provincial representatives. He and others took pains to stress that they did not seek to exclude those from outside the province. Like many others grappling with this problem, however, Lin was unclear on how to resolve this apparent contradiction.

The limited powers of the representative assemblies did not meet Taiwanese expectations of self-government. The first and second sessions of the Provincial Consultative Assembly did, however, become a forum where the Taiwanese called for greater influence over the island's administration. Assembly members requested elections for mayors and district heads (appointed posts at that time) as well as expanded powers for assemblies at all levels—town, district, city, and provincial. One representative raised the issue of Taiwan's material progress during the colonial era, asking the head of the Civil Administration Department, “According to Sun Yat-sen's teachings, the order of each province's implementation of local self-government depends upon the conditions in each location. This province is more advanced than others, so why cannot Taiwan carry it out first?” Kao-Hsiung's Kuo Kuo-chi, whose anti-Japanese activities and arrest during the 1930s first brought him into the public eye, stressed the middle ground of self-government that many of his peers were seeking. He charted a course between independence and complete assimilation by attempting to illustrate how self-government was part of building a better China: “The Taiwanese advocate ruling themselves. Because Taiwan is part of the territory of China, and the Taiwanese love their nation and their native place, self-government and self-strengthening are natural requests and logical hopes.” Like many other politically active Taiwanese, however, Kuo had to confront the negative aspects of the Japanese legacy. Even as he advocated self-government, he was careful to invoke the memory of Taiwanese resistance against colonial rule, stressing that they had not been turned into slaves of the Japanese.

By the end of 1946, the Taiwanese knew what they wanted and why. Nationalist misrule provided the Taiwanese with a motive to request reform. The Japanese-era experiences of economic development and political activism became justifications for change through expanded self-government. The problem lay in opportunity—how to increase autonomy at the provincial and local levels.

The February 28 Incident: Failed Reintegration

The February 28 incident epitomized the collision between decolonization and reintegration. The drive for self-government linked these two complicated processes. Taiwanese concerns, amorphous at the time of the retrocession, then
increasingly specific and linked to criticism of Nationalist policies in 1946, finally exploded in concrete antistate action in early 1947. Islanders briefly overthrew the provincial administration and attempted to change their relationship with the central government. The incident represented the high point of Taiwanese demands for self-government. The Nationalists reacted brutally, crushing the island’s elite as a political force capable of operating outside the mainland-dominated state or the Kuomintang.

A series of crises on the mainland and on Taiwan formed the context for the incident. On January 6, U.S. General George Marshall abandoned his mediation efforts between the Nationalists and the Communists and returned to Washington. The mainland was soon embroiled in full-scale civil war. Student unrest throughout early 1947 presented another pressing problem for the Nanking government. Political instability spurred inflation. These problems diverted the central government’s attention from increasing tensions on the island. Taiwan’s currency, which was tied to the mainland’s finances, depreciated rapidly. The government lost control of the economy—when it was willing and able to enforce price controls on commodities such as rice, shortages resulted. When it did not control prices, inflation soared. On February 14, Taipei’s rice market closed briefly because of a riot as citizens struggled to buy ever-smaller amounts of rice at increasing prices. The problems of reintegration— inflation, grain shortages, corruption, lack of military discipline, unemployment, industrial collapse, and cultural conflict—led to simmering discontent in the towns and cities of Taiwan.

On the evening of February 27, six officers from the Monopoly Bureau attempted to arrest a woman selling cigarettes illegally in Taipei. A policeman struck the woman, an angry crowd gathered, and violence broke out after an officer fired into the crowd, killing a bystander. The uprising soon spread to many of the island’s urban centers as Taiwanese and government forces battled for control of public infrastructure such as buildings, railroad stations, and police stations. Some Taiwanese brutally attacked any mainlanders that they could find. In many cities, officials and police sought safety together in local military outposts. Youth who had received Japanese military training re-formed their old units when taking power in many of the island’s cities—singing wartime songs, wearing their uniforms, and sporting swords. This served to justify the suspicions of mainlanders that the Taiwanese had been “Japanized” by their colonial experience.

Although few of the elite participated in the initial uprising or anticipated that the Nationalists would so quickly lose control, they suddenly found themselves negotiating between the state and Taiwanese society. The Taipei City Council hurriedly organized a committee to bring calm to the city and seek punishment of the policemen responsible for the conflict. At this time, these representatives limited themselves to discussing problems stemming directly from the incident itself. The committee members wanted policemen and soldiers to return to their barracks, an end to indiscriminate shooting on the streets, the release of those arrested, compensation for damage or injury, and the restoration of communica-
tions. Administrator Ch'en Yi appeared to respond positively and promised to punish anyone in the police force guilty of crimes. The organization in Taipei was duplicated throughout the large towns and cities of the island. These groups often cooperated with local youth in order to maintain public order, much as the elite had done immediately following the Japanese surrender. In addition to taking over the functions of the police force, the network of committees attempted to restore communication and transportation—in many ways replacing the government.

During the first days of March, the immediate opportunity presented by the incident and long-term trends of advocating self-government merged, as the Taipei committee expanded both in membership and goals. It grew into an organization made up of prominent Taiwanese from all levels of assemblies on the island—district, city, and provincial—as well as representatives elected to the National Assembly. What became known as the February 28 Incident Settlement committee also included prominent Taiwanese from other walks of life. Officials from the provincial government participated in the first few meetings. The committee became the focal point for negotiations with the state. Its representatives met with Ch'en during the first days of March, each time moving further toward urging fundamental political reforms under the rubric of self-government. Many of their demands were similar to those articulated during the Japanese-era or in the post-retrocession press and Provincial Consultative Assembly. Although some political leaders, particularly pan-shan-jen, attempted to moderate Taiwanese demands, passions ran high. By March 4, government officials participating in the Settlement committee were no longer welcome.

During the first week of March, events spun out of control. After a disorderly public meeting, on March 6 the Settlement committee drafted a set of requests known as the Thirty-two Demands. The committee members called for reforms including the election of mayors and district magistrates, greater Taiwanese representation in the provincial administration (including government bureaus, courts, and police), abolition of the trade and monopoly bureaus, and that Taiwanese not be drafted to fight in the mainland's civil war. In a chaotic meeting the next day, ten additional far-reaching demands were added, such as the abolition of the Administrator's Office and Garrison Command and greater Taiwanese control over the military forces on the island. When provincial assemblyman and head of propaganda for the Settlement committee Wang T'ien-teng, chairman of the Provincial Consultative Assembly Huang Ch'ao-ch'in, and other prominent Taiwanese presented the demands to Ch'en Yi on February 7, the administrator became visibly angry. Many members of the committee realized that they had overstepped themselves and feared that military reinforcements were en route from the mainland. The next day they repudiated much of the previous day's statement, especially the sections that called for Taiwanese control over the police or military. They also admitted that the demands had not been discussed thoroughly and that the government had met their initial requests
for police restraint. The Taiwanese themselves were divided on what course of action to follow. Although most of the committee emphasized that order had been restored and that they did not wish to expand the incident, a few prominent groups called for armed struggle against the Nationalists. The state answered the challenge presented by the Taiwanese takeover and political demands with force. On March 8, Taiwanese leaders from the southern port of Kaohsiung were arrested and a unified command. Furthermore, most Taiwanese never sought a peaceful solution with mainland forces because their goals were essentially reformist, not revolutionary. Nevertheless, the state's targeted campaign of intimidation, harassment, and imprisonment of leaders and activists continued.

**Estimates of the number killed range from slightly over 1,000 to high (100,000). Those who have closer ties to the Nationalist government provide lower figures for the dead and injured, while supporters of Taiwan independence provide higher figures.**

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insist on higher numbers. One common estimate is 10,000 killed and 30,000 wounded. The most detailed English-language account of the incident provides a figure of 8,000 dead. Although knowing whether 5,000, 10,000, or more died is important for understanding the scope of this massacre, it is also worth asking who was killed and what impact this had upon later political activity. Many of those who criticized the state and promoted self-government after the retrocession died, fled, or were frightened into silence. For example, Wang T'ien-teng, a vocal critic of the provincial administration and advocate of greater autonomy, was taken away by police, doused with gasoline, and burned to death. Those arrested included Kuo Kuo-chi, a provincial assemblyman who strongly advocated expanded self-government. All together, two members (of thirty) of the Provincial Consultative Assembly were killed and five others arrested, while four members of the Taipei City Council died and seven were jailed.

Now, the state alone defined the Japanese legacy, which it placed at the core of evaluations of the February 28 incident. Yang Liang-kung, head of the Supervisory Yuan for Fukien and Taiwan, reported on the incident for the central government. According to him, two important causes of this uprising were Taiwanese misunderstanding of the motherland (China) and the poisonous Japanese legacy. Yang focused blame on criminals, youth with Japanese military training, students, Japanese who remained on the island, and Communists. He also pointed to "evil politicians" and former members of Japan's Imperial Loyalty groups—a clear reference to many members of the Taiwanese political elite. Yang's interpretation represented an extension of the perceptions many mainlanders had of Taiwanese before the incident. Editorials stated that those who had called for more democracy in early March 1947 were despicable traitors acting purely in their own interests. They also warned that some evil conspirators remained hidden. This interpretation of the February 28 incident reminded the Taiwanese that their Japanese-era experience represented a liability and that their political standing and personal safety were tenuous.

The February 28 incident was a watershed in the island's modern political history. It marked the defeat of the Taiwanese attempt to implement concrete policies—under the broad heading of self-government—that reflected their ambiguity toward mainland China and its representative, the Nationalist government. The process of decolonization essentially came to a close in early March 1947 as many of the Taiwanese most likely to use the Japanese era as a basis for evaluating the Nationalists or promoting self-government were killed or cowed into silence. Now, the state dominated debate over the colonial legacy and thus prevented its application as a justification for political reform.

Post-February 28: Reform, Repression, and Retreat

Self-government as the Taiwanese had envisioned it was dead. The Nationalist state now managed political debate and change from the top down, with little
concern for the requests of the Taiwanese. Government policies became relatively easy to implement since few people dared voice open opposition. Criticism of the state in the press became muted, as outspoken Taiwanese had disappeared and the most independent publications were banned or forced out of business. Emphasizing a pattern that would define the relationship between the government and the Taiwanese until the 1980s, the islanders' political aspirations were largely ignored or suppressed while economic development received a great deal of attention.

The state did carry out several minor reforms in response to the incident and resulting U.S. unease over Nationalist misrule. On April 22, 1947, the Nanking government announced that Taiwan would have a regular provincial government under Governor Wei Tao-ming. Ch'en Yi was recalled to the mainland to take a post in Chekiang. Upon his arrival in May, Wei announced four policies: (1) to lift martial law, (2) to conclude the "clearing villages" campaign, (3) to remove controls over communications, and (4) to implement currency reform to limit inflation. The Taiwanese, minus the most vocal advocates of self-government, held slightly more posts in the provincial government and state-controlled enterprises. Also, a Provincial committee was created to provide advice on the administration of the island. Seven of fifteen committee members were Taiwanese. This body, however, had little formal power or informal influence over the state. The Nationalists acted to gain support in two other areas. The Taiwanese enjoyed better health care through the Taiwan Provincial Health Department. No cases of plague or cholera were reported after 1948 because of compulsory vaccinations, effective quarantines, and improved sanitation. Wei also relaxed slightly the written policy on speaking or publishing in Japanese. The colonial language, however, remained closely tied to political issues.

The state focused on economic development even as it quashed Taiwanese political aspirations. Wei stated that one principle of his administration would be to move Taiwan "from stability to prosperity." In mid-1948, a Kung-lun-pao editorial said that, especially when compared to the situation on the mainland, Taiwan enjoyed stability (an-ting). Concerning prosperity (fan-jung), however, there had been only slight progress over the previous year. Although most of the problems that led to the February 28 incident awaited resolution, Taiwanese criticism was muted and requests for change were made with much less force than before. For example, the Taiwanese remained concerned over the role of mainlanders and the government in the island's economy. They complained that, through various "mysterious reasons" (mo nüng ch'i miao), the government sold the island's products at low prices to mainland buyers. They also urged that, other than mining companies with direct military importance, public enterprises be privatized. Some progress was noted in increasing Taiwanese investment in the match and chemical industries, but printing enterprises had been sold to mainlanders. On the other hand, the vice-chair of the Provincial Consultative Assembly, Li Wan-chu, one of the most prominent non-Kuomintang political
figures, pointed out that the Taiwanese lacked the capital to purchase these state enterprises. Thus, selling major companies like the Taiwan Sugar Corporation could only increase the economic influence of outsiders.  

One newspaper editorial hinted at the new political environment after the February 28 incident, writing that the dispute over the disposition of Japanese property had changed from a hot war (jeh chan) to a cold war (leng chan). Although less was said in public, people still submitted requests for assistance in recovering property to the city and provincial assemblies, while a special committee established to sort out these claims made little progress.  

The issue came to closure, though not in the way Taiwanese would have wished. In early December 1948, the Taiwan High Court upheld an earlier ruling by a Tainan court invalidating all transfers of Japanese property made after August 15, 1945. This meant that much of the property sold by the Japanese to Taiwanese at the end of the war belonged to the state.

The government carried out a variety of measures to consolidate its control and make clear the limits of acceptable political discourse. These policies included nationwide acts like the declaration of Temporary Provisions for Mobilization for the Period of Suppressing Rebellion, as well as tighter controls over movement to and from Taiwan, and the implementation of household registration and identification cards. Police carried out arrests in February 1948 to prevent protests marking the February 28 incident. To keep students under control, the government placed mainland Chinese in leadership positions at Taiwan’s universities. Reflecting the pressures of all-out civil war on the mainland, communism joined Japanization as the primary enemies of the state. For example, in December Governor Wei announced that criticism of the Nationalists was prompted by the Communists and Taiwan independence activists, most of whom had fled to Japan. An editorial entitled “Opposing the Government and Commenting on Politics” defined the scope of tolerable debate. “Opposing” threatened the existence of the nation’s people (as defined by the government) and was equated with support for the Communists or that which benefited them. “Commenting” pointed out errors of the government and was done in the interest of the people. The police and military determined the difference between commenting and opposing.

The bloody aftermath of the February 28 incident made clear the penalties for running afoul of the Nationalists—the Taiwanese were now much more cautious in their political activity. Although occasional violence between mainlanders and islanders occurred, organized resistance or revolts approaching the scale of early 1947 did not recur. In the Provincial Consultative Assembly, the political elite avoided issues that could antagonize the state. In July 1948, an editorial stated euphemistically that, in order to be taken seriously, members had to avoid empty talk and raising issues that were impossible to resolve. Now, the Taiwanese focused on individual officials and their actions, not the administrative structure or self-government. For example, members of the Provincial Consultative As-
sembly attacked the head of the Transportation Bureau, Ch’en Ch’ing-wen, and his subordinates in the Railroad Bureau, saying he fostered an atmosphere of corruption and exclusion of Taiwanese “one hundred times worse than the plague.” The solution offered, however, was the removal of a few officials, not systematic change.

In the clearest sign of state confidence in its control—reflecting the decline of Japanese influence and success at government-controlled reintegration—the provincial government began to move forward with its own program for local self-government in 1948. The state set the agenda and limits on these discussions by rejecting provincial self-government (changing the relationship between Taiwan and the central government) while promoting its version of local self-government at the city, town, or district level. The state made clear that self-government outside its own program was synonymous with seeking independence from China. The press, now more tightly controlled by the authorities, emphasized that the statesponsored self-government in no way sought to weaken the island’s links to the mainland government—completely the opposite of the vision held by Taiwanese. The process started with meetings sponsored by the Civil Administration Office to train cadres in the Nationalist program of local self-government. In early July 1948, the Taiwan Provincial Local Self-Government Association was created under government auspices. Chaired by the head of the Civil Administration Office, it included leading members of the Kuomintang and government officials, as well as the commander of the Taiwan Garrison. The state placed this activity in the context of a broader program of “citizenship training” for the Taiwanese and the newly promulgated constitution for the Republic of China. The Japanese legacy was no longer a justification for self-government. Now the Taiwanese would have to earn the state’s version of local self-government by assimilating into the Nationalist Chinese political order.

Even as the government consolidated its domination over political reform and debate, conditions on Taiwan worsened because of the Nationalists’ military, administrative, and financial collapse on the mainland. More than thirty-one thousand refugees per week fled to Taiwan during November 1948. This increased to approximately five thousand people, mostly troops and officials, arriving each day by New Year’s Day 1949. The evacuation continued through 1950. As the Nationalists began to flee the mainland, Taiwanese complained that “Taiwan was number three” (T’ai-wan ti san)—the island became the third most desirable destination for mainlanders: They claimed that the wealthiest and most influential refugees moved to the United States, and others with money went to Hong Kong. Refugees from the mainland exacerbated crime, unemployment, and food and housing shortages. Rampant inflation, sparked by the mainland’s civil war, devastated Taiwan. It was an atmosphere of “spending money as soon as one possesses it” (yu ch’ien ch’u ch’ien) as mainlanders flooded the island with increasingly useless currency. As early as July, Nationalist authorities had strengthened regulations against hoarding grain.
the Nationalist press had to admit that chaos on the mainland led to “panic purchases” of food in the early fall of 1948.\textsuperscript{169}

Increasingly, the Republic of China and Taiwan province overlapped. By late 1948, it was becoming clear that the island would be one of the last redoubts of the Nationalists. As a result, fewer Taiwanese resources were sacrificed for the mainland struggle. The government stopped exporting food and other commodities from the island on October 27, thus easing shortages and relieving inflation. Also, the ridiculously low prices mandated by the central government were widely ignored, thus giving merchants an incentive to sell goods.\textsuperscript{170} Chiang, planning his retreat and ever mindful of potential rivals, moved to strengthen his hold over Taiwan by replacing Wei with a long-time ally.\textsuperscript{171} The central government announced the appointment of Ch’en Ch’eng as governor on December 30, 1948.\textsuperscript{172} Based on Ch’en’s slogan of “the people are on top, the people’s livelihood comes first” (jen-min chih shang, min-sheng ti yi), local self-government and economic reconstruction were to be top priorities.\textsuperscript{173} In reality, local self-government was a sham. The system finally implemented in 1950 and 1951 mandated new assemblies at the provincial level and below. These bodies had little power and lacked control over government administration or budgets.

Conclusion

After the retrocession, the Taiwanese had hoped that local self-government—a position between formal independence and complete assimilation—would enable them to move successfully through the processes of decolonization and reintegration. Growing dissatisfaction with Nationalist rule strengthened the Taiwanese people’s emphasis upon maximizing their autonomy within a larger political entity, reinvigorating the most important political movement of the colonial era. When urbanites briefly wrested control of Taiwan from the provincial administration in early 1947, the elite used the opportunity to pursue its long-term political agenda. This attempt to reconcile the Japanese legacy of seeking self-government with the reality of Nationalist rule failed disastrously. After the February 28 incident, the state controlled not only the pace and scope of reforms to the island’s administration, it even dominated how those changes were discussed. By 1948, the Nationalists had redefined local self-government in their own interests. The eventual implementation of limited reform in the early 1950s reflected the Nationalists’ confidence in their ability to prevent dissent and engage in state building from the top down.

The 1945–48 period taught a harsh lesson to the Taiwanese elite. They learned to focus on local issues, not national-level policies or systematic change to the provincial administration. In particular, after the February 28 incident discussion of topics such as weakening Taiwan’s ties to the central government or the positive aspects of Japanese colonial rule (a justification for demanding reform) became dangerous. For example, the fate of Wang T’ien-teng served as a
warning to the elite. Through the press and Provincial Consultative Assembly, he strongly criticized the state and advocated expanded self-government, often comparing aspects of the new regime unfavorably with the old. Wang became too visible a challenge because of his role in the February 28 Incident Settlement committee and was killed in early March 1947.

Taiwanese power vis-à-vis the mainlander-dominated government was weakened not only by oppression but also by divisions among the island's elite. Some Taiwanese, particularly the half-mountain people, generally avoided the topic of the Japanese legacy and did not strongly advocate expanded local self-government. These men often built upon their pre-1945 relationship with the Nationalists. For example, Huang Ch'ao-ch'in was a success in the Nationalist state, party, and economy. He served as chairman of the Provincial Consultative Assembly for more than twenty years and steadily moved up the Nationalist Party hierarchy. Huang also held important posts in several banks and state enterprises. His success can be attributed in part to the fact that he clearly placed national (or Nationalist) prerogatives ahead of provincial ones. His views of Taiwan's relationship with the mainland and local self-government closely matched the state's. During his long tenure in the provincial-level body, he did little to expand the powers of that body vis-à-vis the central government. This is not to suggest that a relatively powerful figure such as Huang lacked any constituency or legitimacy among the Taiwanese. However, he focused on the distribution of benefits from the state, not on issues involving systematic change such as self-government.

A few islanders, such as Li Wan-chu and Kuo Kuo-chi, managed to remain active in politics outside the Nationalist party and state structures. Although Li held the posts of vice-chair of the Provincial Consultative Assembly, then representative to the National Assembly, his actual influence over concrete policies was limited. His main venues for advocating change were the small (and powerless) China Youth Party and newspapers such as Kung-lun-pao. During his tenure at this newspaper he generally placed his criticism of the Nationalist government and calls for reform in the context of anticommunism and the future of China. Li's political activity became as much part of a broader movement led by prodemocracy liberals from mainland as it was specifically Taiwanese. Kuo Kuo-chi relied upon his immense popularity in Kao-hsiung, a major city in southern Taiwan, for his political influence. He spent his career in the Provincial Consultative Assembly, carefully attempting to represent what he believed were the Taiwanese people's interests, without incurring the wrath of the government. His arrest and harassment at the hands of the Japanese served to "protect" Kuo after the retrocession—whatever his political positions, mainlanders could not accuse him of collaboration, much less "Japanization."

Japan became home for a community of Taiwanese who found that they could not live under Chiang's government. To these people, the burdens of reconciling Taiwan's colonial experience with the immediate problems of Nationalist rule made remaining on the island untenable. Some agitated for the island's perma-
viability independence from China and the overthrow of the Nationalist regime. For example, immediately after the retrocession, Liao Wen-yi (Thomas Liao) did not call for independence, but he did stress the need for Taiwan to remain insulated from the chaos of the mainland’s civil war. Nationalist misrule and personal setbacks, however, pushed him toward a more radical position.174 After moving to Tokyo, Liao became among the most visible leaders of the independence movement.

Some moderate Taiwanese who had advocated self-government, such as Lin Hsien-t’ang, dropped out of politics. During the Japanese era, he embodied the ambivalent relationship between the Taiwanese and their colonizers. Although reconciled to living under colonial rule, Lin did not attempt to assimilate culturally into the empire—he did not learn Japanese, as many of the elite had. He was a leader in political movements designed to increase the Taiwanese voice in governing the island. At the same time, Lin participated in the self-government institutions created by the governor-general and was even named to the Japanese House of Peers. After Japan’s surrender, Lin led activities welcoming the new government and was soon elected to the provincial and national assemblies. He had been eager to work with the Nationalist government, but soon became discouraged and retreated from public life. Lin’s economic success and relatively cooperative relationship with the Japanese raised mainlanders’ suspicions. In 1946 Lin was briefly listed as a traitor by the Nationalist government. Further, the elected assemblies in which he participated proved to have little influence over the government. By the late 1940s his image became that of an elder statesman—generally venerated but powerless when compared to half-mountain Taiwanese or mainlanders. Finally, the promise of rent reduction and land reform threatened his economic well-being. In 1949 Lin emigrated to Japan, ostensibly for medical treatment, and died there in 1955.175

The state had cleared a path for innovative policies to promote development that is today characterized as an “economic miracle.” Few prominent Taiwanese would dare oppose measures such as rent reduction and land reform, even if they did not think that it was in their best economic interests.176 In the political realm the Nationalists blocked any change in the relationship between the state and Taiwanese society. Restrictions on civil society grew in scope and severity as Chiang Kai-shek and the remnants of his defeated army retreated to the island, beginning a “White Terror” in 1949.177 Thousands of Taiwanese and recently arrived mainlanders were killed, arrested, or intimidated for their alleged ties to the Communists. The Korean War and resulting U.S. support for Chiang’s regime was the final step in solidifying the relationship between the Taiwanese and the Nationalist Chinese government, creating a pattern that would exist largely unchanged for almost forty years. Although mainlanders represented a minority on the island, the Nationalist government had no fear of overthrow by the Taiwanese. It was not until the 1980s that the Taiwanese could safely advocate a political agenda of their own. Economic development and resulting social
change enlarged a middle class that increasingly pressured the state for democratic reform. Also, Taiwanese gradually came to dominate the Nationalist Party and government from the inside—thus making both institutions more amenable to the interests of the island’s people.

Notes

1. The Nationalist government (Kuo-min cheng-fu) established the Republic of China (Chung-hua min-kuo). Almost all important figures in the government were members of the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang).

2. The recent work done by scholars on Taiwan is invaluable, and this chapter reflects their contributions. Because of the sensitivity of this era, historians on Taiwan published little about the immediate postwar period until political reform began in the late 1980s. After the Nationalist government lifted martial law in 1987, wide-ranging reforms included the relaxation of controls over the press, speech, assembly, and political opposition. A subsequent series of elections led to the replacement of legislators and National Assembly members (most of whom had been elected on the mainland in the late 1940s). In late 1994, elections were to elect the provincial governor and mayors of the two largest cities (Taipei and Kao-hsiung) and, in March 1996, the president. The most visible manifestation of the new political and academic environments was the creation of the Institute of Taiwan History within the Academia Sinica, the premier research institution in the Republic of China. Other new organizations devoted to researching the island’s history include the Taiwan Materials Center at the Taiwan Provincial Branch of the National Central Library and the Wu San-lun Foundation’s Taiwan Historical Materials Center. The research commission created under the auspices of the central government to study the February 28 incident also serves as an example of a more open attitude by the government. Several interesting overviews of recent trends in the historiography of Taiwan are in the Free China Review, 42, no. 3 (March 1992) and 44, no. 2 (February 1994). For an excellent Chinese-language discussion of the changing nature of Taiwan historiography and its connection to the political environment, see Chang Yen-hsiien, “Tai-wan-shih yen-chiu te hsii ching-shen” [The new spirit of Taiwanese historical research], Tai-wan shih-liao yen-chiu, 1 (February 1993): 76–86.

3. Although their experiences in the Japanese empire varied widely, the people of Taiwan, Korea, the Philippines, Vietnam, Burma, British Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, and large parts of mainland China all faced difficult transitions after World War II. In the case of Taiwan, the length of Japan’s rule (a half-century) made its process of decolonization far more problematic. In much of East and Southeast Asia, the collapse of the Japanese empire marked the beginning of a new (and successful) stage of long-running struggles against Western imperialism. In other cases, civil war or agrarian revolutionary movements ensued. For brief overviews of Japanese colonialism and its aftermath in Asia, see Franz Ansprenger, The Dissolution of the Colonial Empires (New York: Routledge, 1989); Raymond F. Betts, Uncertain Dimensions: Western Overseas Empires in the Twentieth Century (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985); and David Joel Steinberg, ed., In Search of Southeast Asia, rev. ed. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987).

4. In many ways, the history of the Taiwanese relationship with the state during the immediate postwar period represents an examination of collective memory and how it shaped—both consciously and unconsciously—political activity. This chapter focuses on the collective memory formed by the Taiwanese political elite. As Patrick Hutton wrote, “Collective memory is an elaborate network of social mores, values, and ideals that marks
out the dimensions of our imaginations according to the attitudes of the social groups to which we relate. It is through the interconnections among these shared images that the social frameworks (cadres sociaux) of our collective memory are formed, and it is within such settings that individual memories must be situated if they are to survive" (History as an Art of Memory [Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993], 78). One of the premier historians of memory, Maurice Halbwachs, wrote that "collective frameworks are...precisely the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is an accord, with the predominant thoughts of the society" (On Collective Memory, trans. and ed. Lewis A. Coser [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992], 40).

5. "Taiwanese" are Han Chinese who had emigrated to Taiwan before 1945. Most had come from provinces along the southeastern coast of the mainland during the Ch'ing dynasty (1644–1911) but before the Japanese occupation in 1895. Taiwan is sometimes called Formosa, which is Portuguese for "beautiful." Although this term has become less popular in recent years, the Taiwanese are also known as Formosans. Traditionally, the Taiwanese have been divided into two main groups, Hokkien and Hakka. The southern Min people from Fukien are often called Hokkien or Fu-lao (Old Fukenese). They constitute about 85 percent of the Taiwanese population. They can be subdivided into two groups named for the areas of Fukien from which many immigrated to Taiwan: Chang-chou and Ch'uan-chou. The coastal cities of Hsia-men (Amoy) and Foochow were also important sources of migrants to Taiwan. The smaller group is the Hakka, also called K'e-chia-jen or Yueh-min (Yueh is a traditional term for Kuangtung). These people came from the highlands of Kuangtung (often Ch'ao-chou prefecture). "Mainlanders" are Chinese who came to the island after 1945, the majority arriving between late 1948 and mid-1950 as the Nationalist government faced defeat at the hands of the Chinese Communists. The other two groups are the aborigines (yuan-chu-min), who comprise about 2 percent of the population. They are not Han Chinese, but are closely related to the island peoples of Southeast Asia.

6. As one of the last parts of China settled and brought into the Middle Kingdom, the island was more weakly tied to the central government and dominant Confucian culture than other areas populated by Han peoples. Taiwan's historical ties to the mainland are a source of great academic debate on Taiwan today.

7. October 25, Retrocession Day, is an official holiday on Taiwan. The term retrocession (kuang-fu) has strong political implications. It stresses the restoration of Chinese sovereignty over lands temporarily taken away by foreigners. Thus, kuang-fu presupposes the legitimacy of the Nationalist government's rule over Taiwan. Others use the term chieh-shou, which means "to receive" or "to take over" and lacks the emphasis on political legitimacy. This paper uses retrocession because it is still the most commonly understood term.

8. In particular, two scholars on Taiwan have explored the continuity of political aspirations before and after 1945. Cheng Mu-hsin (Cheng Tzu), T'ai-wan i-hui cheng-chih ssu-shih-nien [Forty years of Taiwan assembly politics] (Taipei: Tzu-li wan-pao wen-hua ch'u-pan-she, 1987); and Li Hsiao-feng, T'ai-wan chan-hou ch'u-ch'i te min-tai-piao [Representatives of the popular will in immediate postwar Taiwan] (Taipei: Tzu-li wan-pao ch'u-pan-she, 1993).

9. Some supporters of Taiwanese independence (T'ai-tu) go to great lengths to show a long-term drive for permanent and formal separation from the mainland. Although a few Taiwanese did seek independence immediately after the war, their influence was more limited than these authors claim. Examples of this approach include Peng Ming-min, A Taste of Freedom: Memoirs of a Formosan Independence Leader (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972); and Shih Ming, T'ai-wan-jen ssu-pai-nien shih [A Four-hundred-year history of the Taiwanese] (Taipei: n.p.). Shih Ming's massive history of
Taiwan emphasizes that the Nationalists were imperialists no different from the Dutch, the Manchus of the Ch'ing era, or the Japanese. Li Hsiao-feng, however, has researched the life histories of ten independence activists and makes a convincing case that this movement really began in the late 1940s. Although their understanding of the island's long-term history was important, he emphasized that leaders of the movement were motivated by specific grievances against the Nationalist government that arose after the retrocession. Li Hsiao-feng, "Kuo-chia jen-t'ung te chuan-hsiang: i chan-hou T'ai-wan fan-tui jen-shih te shih ke ke-an wei li" [The shift of national identity: Ten postwar Taiwanese as case studies], in Jen-t'ung yu kuo-chia: Chin-tai Chung-Hsi lin-shih te pi-chiao (Nan-kang: Chung-yan yen-chiu-yuan chin-tai-shih-suo, 1994), 323–362.

10. One failed alternative to the reformist program of self-government was radical social and political revolution led by a communist party. The Chinese Communist Party has claimed that it played an active role in leading a revolutionary struggle on Taiwan immediately after the retrocession. In reality, while some leftists or supporters of communism were present at that time, they did not have a major influence. Communism never took root because of Japan's effective repression coupled with its ability to provide the colony some measure of material progress and stability, thus limiting support for radical change. However, a small communist movement did exist on the island. The radicalization of some Taiwanese students in Japan or the mainland during the 1920s was key to the creation of the Taiwanese Communist Party (TCP). The TCP, organized in Shanghai in 1928, was to be a branch of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) but "seek guidance from the CCP (Chinese Communist Party)." The Taiwanese party was constantly torn between the CCP, the JCP, and Taiwanese nationalist factions. In 1930, the TCP was put under the control of the CCP because of the JCP's weakness. The Japanese proved very effective in arresting TCP members on the island, and the party almost completely disappeared after 1937. After World War II Communists on Taiwan remained weak and factionalized. The most detailed English-language articles on the TCP are Frank Hsiao, "A Political History of the Taiwanese Communist Party, 1928–1931," Journal of Asian Studies, 42, no. 2 (March 1983): 269–289; and Lawrence Sullivan, "The Chinese Communist Party and the Status of Taiwan, 1928–1943," Pacific Affairs, 52, no. 3 (1979): 446–467. The most detailed Chinese-language account is Lu Hsui-yi, Ji-hua shih-tai T'ai-wan kung-ch' an-tang shih, 1928–1932 [A history of the Taiwan Communist Party during the Japanese era, 1928–1932] (Taipei: Ch'ien-wei ch'u-pan she, 1989). Many mainland books attempt to put the Communist Party in the center of conflict between the Taiwanese and Nationalist China. For example, see Wu Yuan, ed., Taiwan de guoqu he xianzai [Taiwan's past and present] (Beijing: Tongyu duwu chubanshe, 1954); Li Zhifu, Taiwan renmin gengzip douzheng jianshi [A brief history of the Taiwanese people's revolutionary struggle] (Guangzhou: Huanan renmin chubanshe, 1953); and Su Hsin, Wei-kui te T'ai-kung tou-hun: Su Hsin zu-chuan yu wen-chi [The Taiwanese Communist spirit who will not return: The autobiography and writings of Su Hsin] (Taipei: Shih-pao wen-hua ch'u-pan ch'i-yeh yu-hsien kung-ssu, 1993).

11. Another sensitive issue is how to refer to the events of early 1947—incident? popular uprising? rebellion? massacre? Each term implies a political agenda. For the purposes of this chapter, "incident," a relatively neutral term, is used. For more information on this topic, see the translator's introduction in Yang I-chou, 2–28 min-pien: T'ai-wan yu Chiang Chieh-shih [The February 28 popular uprising: Taiwan and Chiang Kai-shek], trans. from the Japanese by Chang Liang-te (Taipei: Ch'ien-wei ch'u-pan she, 1991), 13–16.

12. Under the Ch'ing dynasty (1644–1911), China was ruled by a minority people who originally came from an area today called Manchuria or Northeast China (Dongbei).

13. For an overview of Taiwan's development, see Samuel P. H. Ho, Economic Devel-
opment of Taiwan, 1860–1970 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978). The same author places the island’s experience in a comparative perspective in “Colonialism and Development: Korea, Taiwan, and Kwantung,” in The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945, ed. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). Trends of economic growth and development were not entirely absent during the late Ch’ing period. As is the case with studies of the mainland, a lively academic debate exists over the genesis of modernization on the island. A comprehensive overview of Taiwan’s economic and political development during the late Ch’ing is in Li Kuo-ch’i, Chung-kuo hsien-tai-hua te ch’u-yu yen-chiu: Min-Ch’o-T’ai ti-ch’u, 1860–1916 [Modernization in China: A regional study of the Fukien, Chekiang, and Taiwan region, 1860–1916] (Nan-kang: Chung-yang yen-chiu-yuan chin-tai-shih yen-chiu-suo, 1982). For the best review of theories explaining Taiwan’s economic development, see Sung Kuang-yu, “Li-shih wen-hua lun te t’i-ch’u” [Presenting theories of history and culture], in T’ai-wan ch’ing-yen: Li-shih ching-chi p’ien, ed. Sung Kuang-yu (Taipei: Tung-hai ta-hsueh, 1993), 1–65. The author posits that the commercial culture and trade networks that existed on Taiwan since large-scale migration to the island in the 1600s were the keys to the island’s economic development.

14. The stories and reminiscences of Wu Cho-liu are important source material for understanding Taiwan’s experience of oppression, material progress, and an bigotry under both Japanese and Nationalist rule. See Wu Ch’o-liu, Ya-hsi-yu te ku-erh [Asia’s orphan] (Taipei: Ts’ao-ken ch’u-pan shih-yeh yu-hsien kung-szu, 1995); Wu-hua-kuo: T’ai-wan ch’i-shih-nien te hui-hsiang [The fig: Looking back at Taiwan over seventy years] (Taipei: Ch’ien-feng ch’u-pan-she, 1993); and T’ai-wan lien-ch’iao: T’ai-wan te li-shih chien-cheng [Taiwan Forsythia: Witness to Taiwan’s history] (Taipei: Ch’ien-feng ch’u-pan-she, 1988).

15. The original law was replaced by Law 31 in 1907. In 1921, this became Order No. 3. The powers of the governor-general changed relatively little over forty years and “Law 63” became the term used most frequently for this system. For an overview of Japanese colonial policies, see Huang Chao-t’ang, T’ai-wan tsung-tu-fu, trans. from the Japanese by Huang Ying-chen. (Taipei: The Taiwan governor-general’s office) (Taipei: Ch’ien-wei ch’u-pan-she, 1994).

16. The focus for much of this chapter is the Taiwan provincial elite. This group could also be called a “subelite” as they held a position below the national elite under both Japanese and Nationalist rule. They represent a political elite, but not necessarily a governing or positional elite. In other words, although they were involved in political activity and attempted to play a role in shaping government policies, they did not necessarily hold formal elected or appointed posts. Their role as middlemen between Taiwanese society and a central government was based upon their leading positions in social networks on the island—thus displaying the characteristics of a functional elite. They typically worked as doctors, reporters, teachers, managers in trade or light industry, or landlords. Most had education above the high school level. Their political activity focused on issues at an islandwide level, not that of a single city or district. Some Taiwanese did travel to the mainland and made their careers with the Nationalist government. Upon their return to the island in 1945, they too became part of the political elite. Unlike other Taiwanese, however, their influence depended less upon their role in society (a functional elite) than upon formal state posts (a positional elite). Ch’ien Ming-t’ung, in his examination of provincial assembly candidates, explains that the elite’s influence stemmed from its power to control the distribution of resources. Resources include the personal (political power, social authority, and personal resources) and the nonpersonal (natural resources, capital, and financial resources). Ch’ien Ming-t’ung, “Wei-ch’uan cheng-t’i hsia T’ai-wan ti-fang cheng-chih ching-ying te liu-tung (1945–1986): Sheng-ts’an-i-hui-yuan chi sheng-i-hui-


22. The majority of the students, however, were the children of Japanese residents of the island. Today, this institution is National Taiwan University.


24. Taishō democracy refers to the period after the accession of the Taishō emperor in 1912, when political parties and the Diet (National Assembly) were relatively powerful in comparison to the military, the Privy Council, and the genrō (elder statesmen from the Meiji era). This period was marked by greater demands for public participation in politics.

25. An earlier islandwide group had been made up solely of Japanese officials. It was somewhat analogous to a cabinet.

26. Primary source material on the drive for self-government includes Yang Chao-chu, "Tai-wan ti-fang tzu-chih chih-tu" [Taiwan’s system of local self-government], in Tai-wan ti-fang tzu-chih wen-i [Problems in Taiwan’s local self-government] (Tokyo: Shuminsha, 1928); and numerous articles and editorials in magazines and newspapers published by the Taiwanese including Taiwan, Taiwan minpō, and Taiwan shinninpō (Tai-wan min-pao and Tai-wan hsin-min-pao in Chinese).

27. As would be the case after 1945, the Taiwanese often used the adjective “local” (Chinese: ti-fang; Japanese: chihō) to describe the type of self-government they sought. To islanders, “local” included greater autonomy at the islandwide level and below.


30. When the Japanese faced defeat at the hands of the Allies, they held out the promise of increased local autonomy in order to buttress Taiwanese support. In 1945, the Japanese announced plans for equal salaries and treatment for Taiwanese and Japanese officials on the island. The government in Tokyo also selected three Taiwanese for membership in the House of Peers and announced plans for Taiwanese representation in the Diet. The same defeat on the battlefield that spurred these measures however, prevented their implementation.

31. For the most detailed account of the planning and implementation of Nationalist policies regarding the takeover of Taiwan, see Cheng Tzu, Chan-hou T’ai-wan te chieh-shou yu ch’ung-chien: T’ai-wan hsien-tai-shih yen-chiu lun-chi [The takeover and reconstruction of postwar Taiwan: A collection of essays on modern Taiwanese history] (Taipei: Hsin-hua T’u-shu, 1994).

32. J. Bruce Jacobs estimates that during the early 1940s one hundred thousand Taiwanese lived in China. Most lived in Japanese-occupied areas as merchants, soldiers, students, and low-level officials in the occupying administration. These Taiwanese appeared to have few emotional or political ties to China. J. Bruce Jacobs, “Taiwanese and the Chinese Nationalists, 1937–1945: The Origins of Taiwan’s ‘Half-Mountain People,’ ” Modern China, 16, no. 1 (January 1990): 89–118. Between 1940 and 1942, six groups of Taiwanese on the mainland allied to form the Taiwanese Revolutionist League, a loose coalition under Kuomintang auspices. Presaging future conflicts between the Taiwanese and the Nationalist government, the league was held together by anti-Japanese sentiment, not a single plan for postwar Taiwan. “Taiwanese Revolutionary Movements,” “Taiwanese Independence Movements, 1683–1956,” National Archives, Department of State Records, RG 59, Office of Intelligence Research, August 8, 1956, IR 7203, 6.

33. Many of these men fled because of conflicts with the Japanese. The term half-mountain people (pan-shan-jen) comes from the fact that Taiwanese referred to the mainland as the “Tang mountains” (T’ang shan). Mainlanders were often called “Ah shan.” (“Ah” is a prefix to a term of address.) The term pan-shan-jen was not merely descriptive; it was often a normative judgment of the suspect loyalties of Taiwanese with close ties to the Nationalists.

34. In order to emphasize the ties between their government and the Taiwanese, the Nationalists have stressed that many Taiwanese fled to the mainland and actively worked with the Chungking government. For example, see Chang Jui-ch’eng, ed., T’ai-chi chih-shih tsai tzu-kao te fu-T’ai nu-li [Taiwanese fighters’ endeavor on the motherland to recover Taiwan] (Taipei: Kuomintang tang-shih-hui ch’u-pan-shu, 1990); and Chang Jui-ch’eng, ed., K’un-chuan shih-ch’i show-fu T’ai-wan chih chung-yao yen-lun [Selected important documents on recovering Taiwan] (Taipei: Kuomintang tang-shih-hui ch’u-pan-shu, 1990).

35. Some scholars suggest that Taiwan underwent its own Meiji Restoration under Japanese rule. Following the overthrow of the Tokugawa bakufu’s court nobles and samurai, administration of Japan was returned to the emperor, who adopted the reign name of Meiji (Enlightened Rule) in 1869. The Restoration marked the beginning of a wide-ranging program of modernization led by the central government. Li Hsiao-feng,


39. See Yeh Jung-chung, “T’ai-wan kuang-fu ch’en-hou te hui-i” [Memories of Taiwan’s retrocession], in T’ai-wan jen-wu ch’un-hsiang [A portrait of Taiwanese], ed. Li Nan-heng and Yeh Yun-yun (Taipei: Shih-pao wen-hua ch'u-pan ch'i-ye shih-yu-hsien kung-sau, 1995), 400–435. Yeh was an assistant and confidant to Lin Hsien-t’ang, and later became important in political and cultural circles in his own right after the retrocession.

40. Taiwanese had many reasons for disliking the police, both Japanese and Taiwanese, at the end of the war. In addition to enforcing criminal codes, police managed household registration, price controls, and sanitation regulations. They also monitored Taiwanese political activity—harassing and arresting those seen as a threat to the colonial administration.

41. Some seemed to accept wholeheartedly Taiwan’s assimilation into Nationalist China. For example, Huang Ch’ao-ch’iu, a Japanese- and American-educated half-mountain person who became mayor of Taipei, then chairman of the Provincial Assembly in 1946, clearly subordinated the island and its experience to the mainland. In his writings, he focused on his Chinese identity and accurately pointed out that the mainland had suffered the hardships of war far more than had Taiwan. In general, Taiwanese with looser ties to the mainland echoed allegiance to the ultimate goal of mainland rule, but did not stress the inequality of suffering. Huang Ch’ao-ch’iu, “Ts’ai chien-kuo yun-tung, chung T’ai-peh shih-min tu-yu tsu-yu chi shou-fu ying-ya chih jen-shih” [What Taipei citizens should know about freedom and respect for the law in the movement for national reconstruction], T’ai-wan hsien-sheng-pao, November 28, 1945, 1. On the other hand, there is ample evidence that Taiwanese sought the island’s independence immediately after World War II. Most accounts focus on the activities of Ku Chen-fu. He and a few others with close ties to the Japanese attempted to cooperate with Japanese military officers to work for independence. Little came of their efforts, as the governor-general opposed this endeavor. Ku and others were arrested after the war. For a generally sympathetic account of Ku Chen-fu and his father, see Shen Tz’u-chia and Chang Chu-hung, Ku Chen-fu ch’uan [Biography of Ku Chen-fu] (Taipei hsien: Shu-hua ch'u-pan shih-yeh yu-hsien kung-sau, 1993).

42. “Chang-kuan,” translated here as administrator, is sometimes rendered “governor-general” (Chinese: tzung-tu; Japanese: sōtoku), the same term used for the top official on the island during the colonial era. Ch’ien Yi’s full title was T’ai-wan-sheng hsing-cheng chang-kuan (Taiwan province administrative executive).

43. Nationalist misrule was by no means confined to Taiwan. For an overview of the Nanking government’s failure to obtain or hold support on the mainland after World War II, see Suzanne Pepper, Civil War in China: The Political Struggle, 1945–1949 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

45. By 1945, the U.S. Navy and Army Air Corps were regularly bombing the island. The aerial assault focused primarily upon Taiwan’s harbors, which contained ships and supplies vital for the Japanese war effort in Southeast Asia and China, but also targeted industrial targets such as sugar refineries and transportation links including railway stations and airfields.

46. At the end of the war, about 488,000 Japanese remained on the island: 322,000 civilians and 166,000 soldiers and sailors. Huang estimates that as many as 200,000 planned to stay on Taiwan for an indefinite period because of rice shortages and uncertainty about their future in Japan. By early 1946, however, they began to return home because of declining public order and orders from Governor-General Ch’en Yi. It was only in mid-1947 that the last Japanese technical experts returned to Japan. Huang, *Taiwan tsung-tu-fu*, 254–257.

47. In 1946 poor weather was also a factor, as a major typhoon hit the island in September, reducing agricultural production and damaging industrial facilities.

48. Ch’en Yi and the Nanking government were in frequent conflict over the management of Taiwan and its resources. It is difficult to determine whether Ch’en’s desire to limit the central government’s influence was based upon his concern for the welfare of the Taiwanese or upon factional rivalries among top Nationalist leaders. For background on Ch’en’s views of economic development, see Chang Fu-mei, “Ch’en Yi yu Fu-chien sheng-cheng (1934–1941)” [Ch’en Yi and the provincial government of Fukien (1934–1941)], in 2–28 Erh-erh-pa hsueh-shu yen-t’ao-hui lun-wen-chi (Taipei: 2–28 Erh-erh-pa min-chien yen-chiu hsiao-syu, 1991), 9–26.

49. Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925) was revered by the Chinese Nationalists and Communists alike. His political ideology, known as the Three Principles of the People (San-min chu-i) stressed nationalism, democracy, and people’s livelihood (a program based primarily upon land reform and a large state role in the economy).

50. Ting Wen-chih, “Ch’en chang-kuan lun ‘guan-liao tsu-pen’” [Administrator Ch’en discusses ‘bureaucratic capital’], *Ho-p’ing jih-pao*, August 1, 1946, 2; and August 2, 1946, 3.

51. One American report stated: “Now that the Japanese are to be eliminated, the Formosans anticipate an opportunity to return to full control and ownership of their private businesses.” “Conditions in Formosa,” State Department Report, March 15, 1946, National Archives, State Department Records, Record Group 59, RG 59, 894A.00/3–1546 (hereafter, cited as RG 59). See also “Report on Current Public Opinion in Formosa, November 23, 1945,” RG 59, 894A.00/1–2846. William Kirby has examined Taiwan’s retrocession from the perspective of the central government and the provincial economy. He writes: “Policies were pursued from a national agenda that was not one of ‘plunder’ but of planned nationalization and economic ‘synchronization.’ The policies may have been ill-conceived and the state industries ill-managed; and certainly from that perspective, ‘nationalization’ seemed much more like ‘expropriation.’ Given Taiwan’s initial place in national economic planning, which was one of relatively low priority, it is likely that the Nationalist policies would result in a lowering of Taiwan’s standard of living” (“Planning Postwar Taiwan: Industrial Policy and the Nationalist Takeover, 1943–1947,” Harvard Studies on Taiwan, Papers of the Taiwan Studies Workshop, Volume I [1995], 297).

52. “Memorandum from Ralph Blake, U.S. Consul in Taipei, to J.L. Stuart, Ambassador to China,” RG 59, 894A.00/8–1246. Possibly as an attempt by merchants to avoid Nationalist monopolies, export controls, and taxes, smuggling occurred among Taiwan, Japan, Okinawa, and the Philippines. This in fact represented a continuation of trade patterns from the Japanese era. Review of press reports in State Department files, RG 59, 894A.00/5–2146. See also “Ralph Blake, American Consul in Taipei, to the Ambassador to China, J.L. Stuart, October 31, 1946,” RG 59, 894A.00/10–3146.
53. Li, Tao-yu hsfn t’ai-chi, 48.
54. Ibid., 32–33.
57. “Hsiao kan k’un” [Little Heaven and Earth], Min-pao, February 20, 1946, 2.
59. For example, by early 1947, a desperate Kaohsiung city government was blaming profiteers (chien shang) for hoarding grain. It also urged that the provincial government act quickly to distribute rice. “Yen-chung ch’u-t’an chi chien shang” [Severely punish hoarding profiteers], Kuo-sheng-pao, January 31, 1947, 4.
62. The May Fourth movement began when the warlord government that controlled Peking accepted the humiliating Twenty-one Demands from the Japanese in 1919. Intellectuals, students, and others took to the streets to protest imperialism and warlord rule. Although quickly crushed by China’s militarists, the movement was a key step in radicalizing youthful, increasing resistance to imperialism, sparking a broad social and cultural critique of traditional China, and spreading the spread of politically motivated colloquial literature (New Culture movement).
63. During the 1920s some young Taiwanese became familiar with the authors of the May Fourth era, including Lu Hsun. Understanding and readership of Lu Hsun was limited on Taiwan, however, and Chinese publications were forbidden by the Japanese after 1937.
65. Hsu himself was criticized by other Kaomintang members who tied him to Lu Hsun’s leftist ideology. After the February 28 incident, there was little discussion, much less state promotion, of Lu Hsun. His works were forbidden after 1950. Hsi himself was relieved of his post after Ch’en Yi left Taiwan in 1947. Huang, “Lu Hsun shu-hsiang,” 317–318.
66. For a comprehensive overview of the language policies of the Nationalist government on Taiwan during this period, see Hsu Hsueh-chi, “Taiwan kuang-fu ch’u-ch’i te yu-wen wen-i’” [The language problem in immediate post-retrocession Taiwan], Shu shu yen, 29, no. 4 (December 1991): 155–184.
67. This body had powers to advise and consult (the Nationalists often used the words
interpellate—tzu-hsun), but not legislate. The is’an-i-hui should not be confused with a ts’an-i-yuan, a national-level legislative body usually translated as “senate.”


69. Ibid., 173. For example, editorials in pro-Nationalist newspapers claimed that certain “beautiful young gentlemen” who persisted in using Japanese had a problem with their mentality (hsin li)—namely, that Japanese education had reduced their nationalist spirit. This was deemed a great disgrace to the Taiwanese. “Ta-chia tou chiang kuo-yu” [Everyone speak Chinese], Chung-hua jih-pao, October 2, 1946, 1.

70. Hsu “Yu-wen wen-’i,” 184.

71. Ch’en Ming-t’ung, “P’ai-hsi cheng-chih yu Ch’en Yi chih T’ai-lun” [A discussion of political factions and Ch’en Yi’s rule of Taiwan], in Taiwan kuang-fu chu’-ch’i li-chih, ed. Lai Tse-han (Nan-kang: Chung-yang yen-chiu-yuan Chung Shan jen-wen she-hui k’o-hsueh yen-chiu-so, 1993), 353–355. See also Ch’en Ts’ui-lien, P’ai-hsi tou-cheng yu ch’uan-mou cheng-chih: 2–38 pei-chu te ling-i miien-hsiang [Factional struggles and power politics: The other face of the February 28 tragedy] (Taipei: Shih-pao wen-hua ch’u-pan-she, 1995). The Political Science Clique (also called the Political Study Clique) included many administrative or technical experts who had been educated in Japan or the United States. They gave less importance to anticommunist ideology and one-party rule than did the C-C Clique. The C-C Clique was named for its two most powerful members, brothers Ch’en Li-fu and Ch’en Kuo-fu. This clique represented a combination of Leninist organization, support from Chinese secret societies, violent anticommunism, and strong nationalism. Americans described (perhaps mistakenly) the Political Science Clique as “progressive” and “oriented toward Western democracies.” This was true when Political Scientists were compared to other groups, such as the C-C Clique. Chiang Kai-shek was dependent upon the C-C Clique for control of the Nationalist Party.

72. Most of Ch’en’s subordinates formed ties with him during his study in Japan or Germany, or during his tenure as chairman in Fukien province from 1934 to 1941.

73. Ah hai, meaning “one of the sea,” contrasts with mainlanders—ah shan (mountain). See note 33 for a short explanation of pan-shan-ren and ah shan.

74. Taichung is a large city in central Taiwan.

75. Historian Lin Heng-tao states in his oral history: “Upon his arrival on Taiwan, Ch’ en Yi supported a certain level of freedom of expression and permitted newspapers to reflect some practical questions.” (Ch’en San-ching and Hsu Hsueh-chi, Lin Heng-tao hsien-sheng fang-wen chi-lu [A record of a visit with Mr. Lin Heng-tao] [Nan-kang: Chung-yang yen-chiu-yuan chin-shih yen-chiu-so, 1992], 75).

76. For example, a reporter for the Ho-p’ing jih-pao was arrested in late 1946, prompting some Taiwanese to demand guarantees for freedom of the press. Ch’en Yi responded that this freedom should be protected in accordance with law, but that he hoped that reporters would cooperate with provincial administration, spread government decrees, and build a new Taiwan. “Cheng-fu tsu-yu ho-fa pao-chang” [Government to guarantee accordance with the law], Ho-p’ing jih-pao, November 23, 1946, 3.

77. “Memorandum from Ralph Blake, U.S. consul in Taipei, to J.L. Stuart, ambassador to China,” RG 59, 894A.00/1–3147.

78. This newspaper was one of the most important voices for Taiwanese outside the Nationalist ranks. It was published until government pressure and financial problems forced it to close in mid-1946.

Chamber of Commerce with ties to the C-C Clique, was sued for libel by the provincial government under Ch'en Yi. Chiang's ties to the mainland-based faction may also have been a factor in his being named as a conspirator in the wake of the February 28 incident. Ch'en, "Pi'ai-shih cheng-chih," in Lai, ed., Taiwan kuang-fu ch' u-ch'i, 355–356.


81. They were Taipei mayor Yu Mi-chien, Hsin-chu magistrate Liu Chi-kuang, and Kao-hsiung mayor Hsieh Tung-min. Sung Fei-ju, a half-mountain person who disappeared during the February 28 incident, held the second most important post in the provincial government's Education Office.

82. Lai et al., A Tragic Beginning, 65.


85. For more information on the workings and powers of the Provincial Assembly, see Li Hsiao-feng, T'ai-wan chan-hou ch'u-ch' i te min-i tai-piao [Representatives of the popular will in immediate postwar Taiwan] (Taipei: Tzu-li wu-pao ch'u-pan-she, 1993); and Cheng Tzu, Chan-hou T'ai-wan i-hui yun-tung-shih chih yen-chiu: pen-t'u ching-yung yu i-hui cheng-chih (1946–1951) [Research into the history of the postwar Taiwan Assembly movement: Native elites and representative politics (1946–1951)] (Taichung: Cheng Tzu, 1993).

86. "Since the late nineteenth century, many Chinese both hated Western imperialism and admired many Western ways. Similarly, a number of Taiwanese resented their status as colonial subjects while simultaneously appreciating many Japanese ways, liking many Japanese individuals, taking for granted the validity of many Japanese values and perspectives, and feeling superior to Chinese without these values" (Lai et al., A Tragic Beginning, 47).

87. Chou Hsien-wen, "Ju-ho k'an T'ai-wan?" [How should Taiwan be seen?], T'ai-wan hsin-sheng-pao, June 9, 1946, 1.

88. "Chien-shie T'ai-wan hsin wen-hua" [Establishing Taiwan's new culture], T'ai-wan hsin-sheng-pao, November 6, 1945, 2. This publication was managed by Lee Wenchau, a Tainan native who studied in France and Shanghai before moving to the mainland to work with the Nationalists. He was forced out of his post in 1947. He then began to publish Kung-lun-pao, one of the few newspapers on the island that took a relatively independent stance toward the government. Lee also served as an elected official and leader of the China Youth Party. Because he was not a member of the Kuomintang, his influence on policy was minimal.

89. "T'ai-wan te t'e-tien" [The particularities of Taiwan], T'ai-wan hsin-sheng-pao, July 5, 1946, 1.

90. Li, Tiao-yu hsin t'ai-chi, 94–105. In particular, the Taiwanese interest in the activities of the Provincial Assembly and the strong views of some members were portrayed as extremist and exclusionary of those from outside the province. "Sheng ts'an-i-hui pi-mu" [Closing of the Taiwan Provincial Assembly], Min-pao, May 16, 1946, 1.

91. Lee Wan-chu, "T'ai-wan min-chung ping-mei yu Jih-pen-hua" [The Taiwanese masses certainly have not been Japanized], Cheng-ching-pao, 2, no. 3 (February 10, 1946): 4. This magazine was established in October 1945 under chief editor Su Hsin, an anti-Japanese activist and leftist labor organizer who had been jailed by the Japanese in
the 1930s. He eventually fled the Nationalist police for the mainland in the late 1940s. He also edited Jên-min tao-pao and other short-lived publications after the retrocession.

92. "T'ai-wan wei ch'ang 'nu-hua' " [Taiwan has not been enslaved], Min-pao, April 7, 1946, 1.

93. Sung Fei-ju, "Ju-ho kai-chin T'ai-wan wen-hua chiao-yu (shang)" [How to improve Taiwan's cultural education (part I)], Jên-min tao-pao, January 11, 1946, 1.

94. Sung Fei-ju, "Ju-ho kai-chin T'ai-wan wen-hua chiao-yu (hsiü)" [How to improve Taiwan's cultural education (part II)], Jên-min tao-pao, January 12, 1946, 1.

95. Kâminkâ (Chinese: huang min hua) literally means "becoming a person of the emperor." It was a long-term colonial program to turn the Taiwanese into full citizens of Japan. On Taiwan, the program focused on the promotion of Japanese language and culture, as well as loyalty to the emperor.

96. Ting Wen-chih, "Fang Sung Fei-ju fu-ch'u-chang" [A visit with Vice Chief Sung Fei-ju], Ho-p'ing jih-pao, July 4, 1946, 2. Sung was executed in the wake of the February 28 incident.

97. Taiwanese who had lived in Japanese-occupied areas of the mainland had first-hand knowledge of the Nationalists' defects and greater affinity for the colonial administration. As a result, their criticism of the state's efforts at reintegration came earlier and was stated more forcefully than that of other Taiwanese. Hsin T'ai-wan (New Taiwan), a magazine published in early 1946 by Taiwanese stranded in North China, contained information about views of the mainland, Taiwan, and their relationship. Some of the more than 3,000 Taiwanese in North China at the end of World War II organized and wrote this journal. In addition to students, teachers, and businessmen, this figure included bureaucrats of the shattered Japanese colonial empire. Fang Hao, "Hung Yen-ch'iu hsien-sheng fang-wen-chi" [A record of an interview with Ml. Yen-ch'iu Hung], in Chìn-hsien-tai T'ai-wan k'ou-shu li-shih [Modern Taiwan oral history] (Taipei: Lin Pen-yuan Chung-hua wen-hua chiao-yu chi-chin-hui, 1991), 8.


101. "Wai-sheng-jen wen-t'ü" [Problems with those from outside the province], Jên-min tao-pao, May 9, 1946, 1.


105. Li, T'ao-yu hsin t'ai-chi, 30–35.


108. "Su-ch'ing tou-ou chih feng" [Exterminate the trend of brawling], Chung-hua jih-pao, June 25, 1946, 1.


110. He left the island with his family shortly after the Japanese occupation in
1895. Ch'iu built his political career in Kwangtung province, on the southeast coast of China. Ch'iu became a member of the Nationalist government's Control Yuan Committee and the Kuomintang Provincial Party Committee.

111. Ch'u Nien-t'ai, "Jen-shih T'ai-wan fa-yang T'ai-wan" [Understanding and enhancing Taiwan], T'ai-wan hsin-sheng-pao, March 6, 1946, 2. Ch'iu reiterated these points in many of his interviews and writings. "Ch'an-ming T'ai-jen wu Han-chien" [Clarifying that Taiwanese are not traitors], Jen-min tao-pao, March 9, 1946, 2.

112. Li was a Taipei-born leftist who wrote for various newspapers in Shanghai. He returned to Taiwan at least once after the retrocession.

113. Li Ch'un-ch'ing, "Chung-kuo cheng-chih yu T'ai-wan" [Chinese politics and Taiwan], T'ai-wan p'ing-lun, 1, no. 1 (July 1, 1946): 4–5.

114. "Tui shih-chu fa-piao cheng-chien" [Expressing political views on the current situation], T'ai-wan p'ing-lun, 1, no. 3 (September 1, 1946): 6–9.

115. T'ai-wan-sheng ts'an-i-hui ti-i-chiieh ti-i-ts'u ta-hui t'e-chi [Special record of the first session of the first Taiwan Provincial Assembly] (Taipei: T'ai-wan-sheng ts'an-i-hui mi-shu-ch'u, 1946); and T'ai-wan-sheng ts'an-i-hui ti-i-chiieh ti-i-chiieh ti-i-chiieh ti-i-ts'u ta-hui t'e-chi [Special record of the second session of the first Taiwan Provincial Assembly] (Taipei: T'ai-wan-sheng ts'an-i-hui mi-shu-ch'u, 1946).


117. Student protests around the New Year, 1947, in Peking, Shanghai, and Nanking were sparked by the alleged rape of a Peking University student by two U.S. Marines. Youth broadened their activity to include criticism of the Nationalist government, which was closely tied to the Americas. Handbook, 1930, 122.

118. A crowd of four thousand marched to the nearby city government offices, holding banners saying: "Request the government restrain rice prices. " "Mi-shang pi-men hang-shih wen-luan" [Rice market closes, market in disorder], Ho-p'ing jih-pao, February 14, 1947, 3.

119. Most of the activity connected to the February 28 incident was limited to the towns and cities of Taiwan. In the countryside, which had a smaller government presence, tensions were lower until Taiwanese scattered in the face of Nationalist reinforcements in early and mid-March 1947. Taiwanese scholar Li Hsiang-feng points out that in 1946 there were several small incidents similar to that which sparked the February 28 incident. These conflicts, however, occurred in rural areas and did not expand. Li, Tao-yu hsien t'ai-chi, 69–73.

120. Tobacco was one of the products taxed and controlled by a state monopoly.

121. Li, Tao-yu hsien t'ai-chi, 113–120, has a short description of the incident and its aftermath in various towns and cities on the island. See also Lai et al., A Tragic Beginning, 99–139.


123. Li, Tao-yu hsien t'ai-chi, 123.

124. For a more detailed account of self-government and the February 28 incident, see Teng K'ung-chiao, "Ts'ung 2–28 shih-chien k'an min-chu yu ti-fang tsu-chih te yao-ch'i" [Looking at demands for local self-government and democracy from the February 28 incident], Tong-tai 34 (February 1, 1989): 66–79; and Ch'en Fang-min, "Chan-hou..."


126. Li, Tao-yu hsin t’ai-chi, 150–151.
127. Ibid., 180–185.
128. For an overview of the attempt to promote Mandarin Chinese in the wake of the incident, see Hsu, “Yu-wen wen-t’i,” 176–182.
130. For a brief review of Ch’en Yi’s meetings with various Taiwanese and his possible role in the massacre of early March 1947, see Li, Tao-yu hsin t’ai-chi, 129–137. Lai et al. posit that Chiang Kai-shek had decided to dispatch troops to the island on March 5. Lai et al., A Tragic Beginning, 142–151.
131. Li, Tao-yu hsin t’ai-chi, 153.
133. Historian Li Hsiao-feng’s estimate does not include those caught up in the “clearing villages” campaign, which lasted well after the incident and initial Nationalist crackdown. Li, Tao-yu hsin t’ai-chi, 189.
134. For a discussion of the various estimates of dead, wounded, and arrested, see Lai et al., A Tragic Beginning, 155–164. In May 1947, the Taiwan Garrison Command attempted to minimize the number of casualties, reporting as follows: military officers: 16 dead, 135 wounded, 3 missing; soldiers: 74 dead, 262 wounded, 37 missing; public employees: 64 dead, 1,351 wounded, 8 missing; citizens: 244 dead, 383 wounded, 24 missing. Most of the public employees harmed were Taiwanese. Thirty people were held as the most important criminals from the incident, including Provincial Assemblyman Kuo Kuo-chi. About 500 were arrested and charged with some sort of crime in connection with the incident. “2–28 shih-pien” [The February 28 incident], Kuo-sheng-pao, May 28, 1947, 3.
135. Lai, Myers, and Wu estimate that 4,000 of those killed were part of the elite. They define 5 percent of the island’s population of 6.5 million as the elite. (A Tragic Beginning).
136. For a brief list and analysis of prominent islanders killed in the wake of the incident, see Li Hsiao-feng, T’ai-wan chan-hou ch’u-ch’i, 216–224.
137. According to Yang Liang-kung, other contributing factors included inflation and unemployment, improper government policies, some corrupt or incompetent officials, public opinion out of control because of new freedom of the press after fifty years of Japanese control, calls of evil politicians, communists who wanted to use the uprising for their own agenda, weakness of local military, and letting rebels gain control of radio station. Chiang Yung-ching, bi Yun-han, and Hsu Shih-shen, Yang Liang-kung hsien-sheng nien-pu [The chronological bibliography of Yang Liang-kung] (Taipei: Lian-ching ch’u-pan shih-yeh kung-ssu, 1988), 393–399. Lai, Myers, and Wu, A Tragic Beginning,
stress that the shortage of Nationalist troops on the island was key to the spread of violence. They state that the provincial government could only call upon five thousand soldiers and eight thousand police to restore control (Lai et al., A Tragic Beginning, 65). There is little evidence to back up the Nationalist charge of Communist involvement in the uprising of February and March. Certainly, the Communists welcomed the uprising as it diverted Nationalist resources and provided a propaganda coup. In a few areas, though, the Communists did play an important role in rallying resistance to the Nationalists. Hsueh Hsueh-hung, a Communist, led armed resistance to the Nationalists in central Taiwan.

U.S. State Department official George Kerr received a letter from an informant in Taichung mentioning the presence of Hsueh and her attempt to incite violence. The Communists claimed later that a people's government was created in Taichung on March 2, 1947, and that it organized a military force to fight Nationalists. Other alleged representatives of "Taiwan compatriots who participated in the February 28 Uprising" claimed that the Communists supplied support and instruction by radio. In March, Hsueh escaped to Hong Kong and formed the Taiwan Democratic Self-Government League. She later went to the People's Republic of China to lead the China Youth League and participate in the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. On Communist involvement in the February 28 incident, see "Ralph Black, American Consul in Taipei, to J.L. Stuart, Ambassador in China, February 14, 1947," RG 59, 894A.003-1447; Peng, Memoirs, 67; Kerr, Formosa Betrayed, 278; Twenty-Sixth Anniversary, 4, 22; Fred W. Riggs, Formosa Under Chinese Nationalist Rule (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 55.

138. Chiang Yung-ching et al., Yang Liang-kung, 400-402. Yang's analysis was in fact more moderate than that offered publicly by the Nationalists. For example, Nationalist publications combined the ideas of a poisonous Japanese legacy and a Communist menace, stating: "The recent riots in Taiwan were instigated by Taiwanese Communist members who had during the war been drafted by the Japanese to fight in the South Seas." General Pai Chung-hsi, minister of national defense, blamed the Communists as well as Japanese education, which "gave Taiwan Chinese the wrong idea about their own motherland, the government, the people, and the national army." See An Infamous Riot: Story of Recent Mob Violence in Taiwan (Taipei: Taiwan News Service, 1947), 13 and 27.

139. "Tai-wan min-chu-hua te ch'en-t'u" [The future of Taiwan's democratization], Kuo-sheng-pao, May 2, 1947, 1. Indictments of prominent Taiwanese for their involvement in the February 28 incident continued through the summer of 1947. "Kao-chien-ch' u t'i-ji' kung-su" [Prosecutor's office submits indictments], Ch'uan-min jih-pao, September 15, 1947, 3.

140. In 1949 Ch'en was accused of conspiring with the Communists. He was arrested, brought to Taiwan, and executed in June 1950, much to the delight of many Taiwanese.

141. "Wei chu-hsi hsu-han pu ssu-hsiang chueh-ting" [Chairman Wei announces four decisions], Chung-hua jih-pao, May 17, 1947, 1.

142. For example, the chairman of the Provincial Assembly, Huang Ch'ao-ch'in, also became chairman of the First Commercial Bank in 1947.

143. For details on the makeup of the committee, see "Kenneth Krench, American Consul in Taipei, to the Secretary of State, January 2, 1949," RG 59, 894A.001-2349.


145. "Pao-chih hui-fu jih-wen-pan wen-t'i" [Problems of restoring the use of Japanese in newspapers], Kuo-sheng-pao, May 21, 1947, 1. Local officials often went beyond the provincial level regulations. For example, the schools in Ping-tung county in southern Taiwan mandated a variety of increasing penalties for employees who used Japanese. Tests of ability to speak Mandarin Chinese were given to staff. "Tu-ching kuo-yu,

146. "Tai-cheng i-nien chien-tao" [A review of Taiwan's administration over the past year], Kung-lun-pao, May 16, 1948, 2. See also "Wei Tao-ming t'an shih-cheng fang-chou" [Wei Tao-ming discusses present policies], Chung-hua jih-pao, May 13, 1947, 1.

147. "Taiwan ching-chi te chi-chen wen-t'ie" [The basic problems of Taiwan's economy], Kung-lun-pao, May 8, 1948, 2.


149. "Hsien kei sheng ts'an-i-hui su-tz'u ta-hui," [For the fourth session of the Taiwan Provincial Assembly], Kung-lun-pao, December 1, 1947, 2.


151. "T'ing-chih shu-yan-ch'i k'aihsien pien-keng" [The time period for ending transfers is changed], Kung-lun-pao, December 14, 1948, 3.

152. Lin Te-jung, "Kuo-fu ch'i-san-T'ai ch'en-hou she-hui k'ung-chih chih li-ch'eng" [The process of social control before and after the retreat of the national government to Taiwan], T'ai-wan shih-liao yen-chiu, 3 (February 1994): 114–119.


Kerr, Formosa Betrayed, 349.

156. "Fan-hui chung-fu' yu 'pi-p'ing cheng-chih" [Opposing the government and commenting on politics], Ch'ien-mu jih-pao, August 5, 1948, 4.

157. "Sheng ts'an-i-hui ti-wu tz'u ta-hui te shih-ming" [The mission of the fifth session of the Provincial Assembly], Kung-lun-pao, July 1, 1948, 2.

158. "Ti-pa tz'u hui k'ung-ch'i ch'en-chang" [Atmosphere of eighth meeting tense], Kung-lun-pao, July 9, 1948, 4.

159. "Shih ti-fang tsu-chih ch'en-ti" [Explaining the real meaning of local self-government], Ho-p'ing jih-pao, April 25, 1948, 3.

160. The state made clear the connection between provincial self-government and independence. For example, in June 1947, the indictment of five Taiwanese charged with war crimes and promotion of the island's independence used the terms independence (tzu-chih) and self-government (tzu-chih) interchangeably to describe their activities. The five were Hsu Ping, Chien Lang-shan (both of whom had been named to the Japanese House of Peers for their loyalty), Ku Chen-fu, Lin Hsiung-hsiang (named to the governor-general's Consultative Assembly), and Hsu K'un-ch'uan (special agent for the Japanese). They were indicted for "war crimes"—conspiring to make Taiwan independent in concert with Japanese military officers immediately after the surrender. "Yen-ch'ang kung-shan" [Extension granted in public trial], Kuo-sheng-pao, June 27, 1947, 3; and "T'ai-chi chuan-sei chi'su shu ch'un-wen" [Taiwan war criminals: Complete text of the indictment], Kuo-sheng-pao, June 29, 1947, 3.

161. "Tzu-chih chueh fel t'o-i" [Self-government is absolutely not severing], Ch'uan-min jih-pao, April 25, 1948, 3.

162. For example, see "P'e-i-chih ti-fang tz'u-chih kan-pu" [Cultivate local self-government cadres], Kung-lun-pao, July 28, 1948, 3.

163. "T'ing-fang tsu-chih hsieh-hui ch'eng-i" [Association for local self-government established], Kung-lun-pao, July 9, 1948, 3. "Sheng ti-fang tz'u-chih hsieh-hui" [The


166. In reality, many of the refugees in Hong Kong were poor. The Taiwanese view, however, was based upon the perception of the relative wealth of migrants to each destination.


169. "Pen-shih fa-sheng mi-liang k'ung-huang" [Rice shortage occurs in city], \textit{Kung-lun-pao}, October 6, 1948, 3.

170. "Memorandum from American Consul Kenneth Krentz to the Secretary of State, October 29, 1948," RG 59, 894A.00/10-2948.

171. In late November Wei, bitter over his conflicts with the crumbling central government, discussed with U.S. officials the possibility of breaking completely from the mainland. "The Consul General at Taipei (Krentz) to the Secretary of State, November 23, 1948," in FRUS, 1948, vol. 7, 601. One option in early December 1948 was that Wei and the U.S.-educated General Sun Li-jen would break free of the Nationalists and form an independent Taiwan. The State Department ordered officials in Taipei not to discuss this possibility with Wei. "Memorandum of Conversation with General Douglas MacArthur at Tokyo, December 7, 1948," RG 59, 894A.00/12-748; and "L.F. Craig, Taiwan Regional Office, Economic Cooperation Administration, to Chief of Mission, January 13, 1949," RG 59, 894A.00/1-1349.

172. Ch'en's experience was almost exclusively in the military sphere. He served as commander-in-chief of Chinese forces in Burma (1943–44), minister of war (1944–46), and chief of staff (1946–48) (\textit{Handbook}, 1950, 735). His personal ties to Chiang K'ai-shek and Chiang Ching-kuo were much closer than were Wei's. On the same day as Ch'en's appointment, U.S. officials in Nanking reported that Chiang K'ai-shek's personal files were being secretly moved to Taiwan, indicating the generalissimo's eventual plans. "Memorandum from Ambassador Stuart to the Secretary of State, December 30, 1948," RG 59, 894A.00/12-3048.

173. "Kai-shan min-sheng shih shou-yao cheng-wu" [Improving the people's livelihood is the first task of the administration], \textit{Kung-lun-pao}, December 31, 1948, 3.


175. For a brief overview of Lin's postrecession activities, see Chou, \textit{Jih-chu shih-tai te T'ai-wan yi-hui}, 248–262.
