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Paul R. Katz/When Valleys Turned Blood Red

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Introduction

This book tells the story of Japan's colonial policies in Taiwan and the occasionally tragic impact they had on local society. Of the numerous acts of armed and unarmed resistance that occurred during Taiwan's colonial era, one uprising in particular dramatically underscores the successes and failures of Japan's rule: the Ta-pa-ni (pronounced Da-ba-nee) Incident of 1915.¹ In early July of that year, two discontented members of the elite, Yü Ch'ing-fang (1879–1915; a former police officer, clerk, and merchant) and Chiang Ting (1866–1916; a former district head [*kuchō*] who became an outlaw and local strongman after being implicated in a murder case), led an armed force of Han Chinese and Aborigine fighters that quickly overwhelmed numerous police stations in the mountains of today's Tainan and Kaohsiung Counties. The uprising lasted for over one month and was put down only after sustained counterattacks by Japanese military and police forces. The Ta-pa-ni Incident, which is named after the town where the fiercest fighting took place, was one of the largest acts of armed resistance to occur during the colonial era, with the number of villagers and Japanese killed during the fighting estimated to

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have exceeded one thousand.² These horrific events prompted the Taiwanese doctor and intellectual Lai Ho (1894–1943), who was twenty-one years old at the time of the uprising, to write a poem expressing his sorrow. This poem contains the line that is the basis for this book's title: "Corpses clog the streams, valleys turn blood red." A further 1,957 individuals were arrested in the months of the uprising and after it was suppressed; 1,482 of them were put on trial and 915 sentenced to death. A total of 135 people accused of being involved in the uprising were executed during 1915 and 1916, and hundreds more died during long years of imprisonment. Those who participated in the Ta-pa-ni Incident came from northern, central, and southern Taiwan, but the greatest number lived in the hills and mountains of southern Taiwan, where the fighting took place.

Because of its scale and impact on Japanese colonial rule, the Ta-pa-ni Incident has been amply documented in a wide range of sources, including *Taishō yonnen Taiwan nambu hito tōbatsu keisatsutai kinen* (Commemorative History of the Police Units Involved in the 1915 Suppression Campaign against Bandits in Southern Taiwan; 1916); *Taiwan hiran shōshi* (A Brief History of Taiwan's Bandit Insurrections; 1920); *Taiwan hishi* (Gazetteer about Taiwanese Bandits; 1923); and *Taiwan Sōtokufu keisatsu enkakushi* (A Treatise on the Historical Development of the Taiwan Governor-General's Police Force; 1938). Shortly after the end of the colonial era, in 1950, Taiwanese scholars published a detailed account of the Ta-pa-ni Incident as part of *Taiwan sheng tongzhi gao: Geming zhi, kangri pian* (Draft Edition of the Taiwan Provincial Gazetteer: Revolutionary Movements, Anti-Japanese Uprisings). More than two decades later, scholars employed by the Taiwan Provincial Documents Commission painstakingly translated much of the relevant archival data, which was published in 1974–1976 as an eight-volume work entitled *Yü Ch'ing-fang kangri geming an quandang* (Complete Archives of Yü Ch'ing-fang's Anti-Japanese Revolution; hereafter abbreviated *YCFQD*). The importance of this incident, as well as the ample data contained in the sources listed above, have attracted the attention of leading Taiwanese scholars, including Ch'eng Ta-hsüeh, Ch'en Chin-chung, Chou Tsung-hsien, Chou Wan-yao, Tai Pao-ts'un, Ts'ai Chin-t'ang, T'u Shun-

ts'ung, Wang Chien-ch'uan, and Weng Chia-yin.³ However, most of their research has focused on the participants' alleged "nationalist consciousness" (*minzu yishi*) or "anti-Japanese spirit" (*kangri jingshen*), the slaughter of Taiwanese villagers by the Japanese military, and the scriptures and morality books Yü Ch'ing-fang used in his recruitment efforts.⁴

Scholars attempting to explain why people rose in armed rebellion against the colonial authorities have generally adhered to one of two hermeneutical extremes. One interpretation, which was initially adopted by the colonial authorities and persists in some scholarship today, views armed resistance as a form of banditry led by disgruntled elements of the elite. The other, propagated under the Nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) government in China and later in Taiwan, depicts these uprisings as patriotic partisan warfare driven by nationalist sentiments. Such scholarship has tended to oversimplify the identities and motivations of those who participated in the Ta-pa-ni Incident or were simply caught up in its chaotic flow of events. This oversimplification can be seen in the earliest sources about the uprising, such as *Taiwan hiran shōshi* and the *Taiwan hishi*, which adopted the views of Taiwan's colonial rulers and labeled all participants "bandits" (*tufei*; *dohi* in Japanese).⁵ Not to be outdone, early Republican-era scholars like Huang Yuzhai (who used the penname Hanren, or "Han Chinese") did not hesitate to link the acts of Yü Ch'ing-fang and his followers to the 1911 Xinhai Revolution (Xinhai Geming) and instead labeled these men and women "martyrs" (*lieshi*) who were the victims of Japanese "brutality" (*baoxing*).⁶ These extremes may also reflect widespread controversies about the significance of the colonial era, as Japanese rule is often presented in a highly positive light in studies of education and economic development, yet very negatively in research on discrimination and law. Recent scholarship on colonial Taiwan now highlights elite resistance during the 1920s and 1930s, largely ignoring acts of armed resistance.⁷ Japanese officials and Chinese/Taiwanese scholars have been able to agree about one thing, however: the participants' beliefs and practices were little more than rank "superstition" (*mixin*).

Taken as a whole, the scholarship described above seems indicative of what Paul A. Cohen has described as the "process of

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mythologization,” whereby the past is manipulated to serve a particular reading of the present. As Cohen aptly points out, such a process achieves its goals not by falsifying the details about a particular event, but by distorting and even omitting the many factors that may have contributed to its occurrence (1997, xii–xiv, 213–214, 225–230).⁸ Perhaps the most striking example of how the Ta-pa-ni Incident has been mythologized in order to serve the political and ideological needs of current Taiwanese politics may be found in an article by an amateur historian named Ho Ts’ung-ming (2004) that compares this uprising to the February 28 Incident (Ereba Shijian) of 1947.⁹ While Ho’s essay portrays the KMT in an unflattering light compared to the Japanese, it also contains a number of factual errors and simplifications or distortions of the past.¹⁰ Its conclusion—a call for all Taiwanese to oversee the current political system or else suffer the fate of being governed by those whose hearts lie elsewhere (i.e., mainland China)—vividly reveals Ho’s true purpose in undertaking such a comparison.

Once we set aside the myths that have clouded past understandings of the Ta-pa-ni Incident, a number of striking facts quickly become apparent. While the leadership of the uprising clearly espoused nationalistic and anti-Japanese sentiments, the majority of rebels appear to have joined owing to a combination of socioeconomic and religious factors. Most of them were from areas that had suffered economic dislocation under the colonial regime. Although they were no match for the Japanese police and military, they were not a rabble but were organized into units possessing their own uniforms and commanders. Religion played a critical role in sparking the uprising, as many rebels were inspired by messianic beliefs and symbolism. Finally, the rebellion affected a large area and caused many casualties, far surpassing other acts of armed resistance during the colonial era, and the brutality on both sides appears to have reflected powerful underlying emotions. Judging from the smaller scale of later resistance, the policies put into effect following the suppression of the Ta-pa-ni uprising made a significant contribution to the strengthening of Japanese rule over Taiwan. Therefore, the historical significance of the incident requires us to reconsider the diverse factors that sparked this tragic turn of events. Simply labeling the individuals

who rose up against the Japanese as “bandits” or “martyrs” overlooks the basic problem of who these individuals were, what sort of society they belonged to, why they chose to take up arms against a clearly superior foe, how they attempted to mobilize for such an undertaking, and how they coped with the devastation following its collapse.

The primary goal of this book is to examine the Ta-pa-ni Incident’s significance by focusing on what Paul A. Cohen (1997) terms history’s “three keys”: event, experience, and myth. This study recounts the events surrounding this uprising and considers the ways in which it has been “mythologized” over time. However, my primary emphasis has been on providing a thorough description of the areas in southern Taiwan where the Ta-pa-ni Incident took place, as well as detailed accounts of the experiences of the men and women who became caught up in its flow. Both myth and experience are forms of discourse, and each is problematic in its own way. However, by choosing to focus on experience, I attempt to better understand the broad range of political, socio-economic, and cultural factors that helped spark this particularly dramatic act of armed resistance during Taiwan’s colonial era. In attempting to fathom the historical significance of the Ta-pa-ni Incident, I have focused on the following questions: Why did villagers in southern Taiwan launch a seemingly futile attack against a modern colonial state? Who were the elites that planned and organized the uprising, and what were their motives for doing so? How was the mobilization process undertaken? What were the immediate and long-term impacts of the Ta-pa-ni Incident on local society?

A case study of this type, which is based on a broad range of historical documents and data collected during field research, provides unique opportunities to understand the relationship between the colonial state and local society. A substantial body of research pertaining to armed resistance against colonial rule worldwide already exists but has rarely been based on the broad range of sources available for the study of the Ta-pa-ni Incident.¹¹ Research on millenarianism, including its links to colonial uprisings, has achieved equally impressive results, but in the case of the Ta-pa-ni Incident we are particularly fortunate in being able to

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use both scriptures and archives, which allow us to see not only what the uprising's leaders tried to transmit to their followers, but also what the men and women who joined the rebellion actually believed and practiced.¹² Accordingly, this book presents a detailed narrative account of the uprising and its aftermath along the lines of Susan Naquin's early work on millenarian rebellion in Qing China (1976, 1981). I also examine social structure and economic life in the areas of southern Taiwan where the Ta-pa-ni Incident took place, paying special attention to the following thirteen villages most directly involved in the uprising: Chu-wei, Mang-tzu-mang, and Sha-tzu-t'ien (located in today's Yü-ching Township in Tainan County); Kang-tzu-lin and Nei-chuang-tzu-chuang (Tso-chen Township, Tainan County); Ching-p'u-liao, Chu-t'ouch'i, Chung-k'eng, Nan-chuang, and Pei-liao (Nan-hua Township, Tainan County); A-li-kuan, Chia-tung-hu, and Ta-ch'iu-yuan (Chia-hsien Township, Kaohsiung County).¹³

The book's second goal is to explore how the Ta-pa-ni Incident reflects the successes and failures of Japan's early colonial enterprise and how its impact helped shape subsequent policies. The institutional apparatus of Japan's colonial rule in Taiwan is well understood, but the social history of colonialism has been largely overlooked. As Douglas Fix pointed out in his review of Western scholarship on Taiwan (1992, 1360, 1365, 1370), the vast majority of scholars researching the colonial era have devoted their efforts to the study of the state's policies while they have overlooked the ways in which such policies affected local society, particularly in the economic realm (see also Leo Ching 2001, 10). For example, armed uprisings like the Ta-pa-ni Incident were largely a result of land taxes, the sugar monopoly, and the confiscation of forestlands. A case study of rural areas of southern Taiwan can help social historians understand how local villagers tried to cope with dramatic changes resulting from their island's status as a colony of Japan. At the same time, the data on the Ta-pa-ni Incident shed light on how the colonial state adjusted its policies in the aftermath.¹⁴

A third and more ambitious goal is to help place the study of Taiwan's colonial past on the world academic stage. During the past two decades, the burgeoning body of research on colonialism

has largely focused on those parts of the world that were once part of the British and French empires and has had relatively little to say about Japan's former colonies, particularly Taiwan and Korea.¹⁵ This unfortunate situation is hardly due to a lack of data; in fact, as I will show in the pages below, the quantity and quality of information pertaining to Taiwan's colonial history has the potential to enable researchers to explore the social history of colonialism in unprecedented depth. In this book, I provide a detailed description of how a diverse group of local elites responded to Japanese colonial policies and how their actions ended up disrupting the lives of thousands of Taiwanese and Japanese men, women, and children. At the same time, I deal with issues of interest to the scholarly community both inside and outside Asian studies—particularly mobilization, resistance, and the millenarian beliefs that helped spark such actions.

Finally, I hope this book can play some role in overcoming the ongoing neglect of the Ta-pa-ni Incident in the historiography of colonial Taiwan. Compared to the Wu-she (Musha) Incident of 1930, about which an ever-growing body of books and articles has been published, almost no systematic research has been done on the Ta-pa-ni Incident since the 1970s, when the Nationalist government actively encouraged scholars to study this uprising as an example of "resistance against Japan" (*kangri*) in the context of the War of Resistance against Japan (*kangzhan*) in China (1937–1945).¹⁶ In today's Taiwan, research on violent outbreaks of resistance against Japan's colonial rule is often perceived as politically incorrect because mainstream scholarship largely emphasizes the positive aspects of Japanese rule, particularly in terms of the island's economic development, often as a means of contrasting the colonial era to the chaotic early years of Nationalist rule over Taiwan. As a result of the ebb and flow of political forces, as well as their impact on historical writing, the men and women who were caught up in the Ta-pa-ni Incident have ended up being the victims of two tragedies. The first is the horrific suffering they endured as a result of a whirlwind of events largely beyond their control. The second is the failure of scholars to understand their identities and the factors that motivated their actions. Like the Boxers, the men and women who took part in the Ta-pa-ni

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Incident have had their experiences reshaped in order to serve the political and ideological needs of people in the present (Cohen 1997, xii, 213). While this study has no intention of trying to rediscover the “reality” of an objective “past,” I hope that it can deepen our understanding of both the various factors that contributed to the outbreak of such a tragic episode and their implications for evaluating Taiwan’s colonial experience as a whole.

Theory and Method

While this book is primarily designed to provide a narrative account of the Ta-pa-ni Incident, as well as the colonial policies and socioeconomic structures that contributed to it, I also consider the hermeneutic issues that surround the historiography of Taiwan’s colonial experience. This is necessary because in postcolonial Taiwan the colonial past does not rest in peace. As Taiwan struggles to survive in the present and chart a stable course for the future, all attempts to impose interpretations on the past have become key components of its ongoing endeavor to construct a sense of identity. In particular, attempts to address events that took place when Taiwan was a colony of Japan and in the early years of the post-World War II era frequently spark controversies between scholars and politicians embracing vastly different ideologies and historical perspectives. One striking example can be found in the uproar that occurred in Taiwan during February and March 2001 following the publication of the Chinese translation of the popular Japanese comic book *On Taiwan (Taiwan ron)*, which was written by the controversial right-wing cartoonist Kobayashi Yoshinori and published by Avant Garde Publishing.¹⁷ Nongovernment organizations like the Taipei Women’s Rescue Foundation (Funu Jiuyuan Jijinhui), long dedicated to fact finding on Taiwanese “comfort women” (*weian fu*), lambasted Kobayashi’s “twisted” presentation of the issue. In *On Taiwan*, Kobayashi cited Shi Wen-lung, president of Chi Mei Electronics and until 2001 a senior adviser to Taiwan’s president, Chen Shui-bian, as saying that comfort women were volunteers who had not been forced into performing sexual services for the Japanese army during World War II. Taiwan

women's groups immediately launched a campaign against *On Taiwan*, calling on the public to boycott the book, which they claimed had rubbed salt into the wounds of Taiwan's former comfort women. Meanwhile, opposition legislators demanded that Shi apologize for his comments and also asked Chen to remove Shi from his position as adviser. People First Party lawmaker Lee Ching-hua went so far as to tear the book in half at a news conference, where he demanded that Chen dismiss Shi.

There was some truth to the vocal objections to Kobayashi's book. Chu Te-lan (2001), an associate research fellow at Academia Sinica, refuted Kobayashi's statements on the basis of her research on Taiwanese colonial history, stating that while those recruited as comfort women did indeed include a few public prostitutes, the majority were recruited against their will, by means of either coercion, force, or deception.¹⁸ Moreover, two former comfort women, eighty-year-old Liu-Huang A-tao and eighty-one-year-old Teng-Kao Pao-chu, joined opposition lawmakers to ask Shi to offer all comfort women an open explanation and apology for his remark. Shi Wen-lung quickly attempted to calm the ongoing debate by denying ever having said that comfort women had willingly accepted their work as sex slaves for the Japanese or used it as a way of raising their social status, and he subsequently issued a written apology.

Political considerations soon swamped any interest in confronting the complex experiences of actual historical actors, however. Premier Chang Chun-hsiung asked the Japanese government to offer an apology for the humiliation inflicted on Taiwanese comfort women during the war, and opposition lawmakers asked the Executive Yuan (the highest administrative organ of the Taiwan state) to list Kobayashi as a *persona non grata* and ban him from entering Taiwan. In addition, the strongest attacks against Kobayashi and Shi, while ostensibly in the name of comfort women, turned highly political. In one of the most extreme cases, New Party lawmaker Elmer Feng staged a book burning outside of one of the main branches of the Eslite chain of bookstores where *On Taiwan* was being sold. Academics also began to join the fray. For example, Joseph Wu, a professor of political science

at the National Chengchi University, claimed that subconscious nostalgia for Japanese colonial rule could have twisted the understanding of Taiwan's older generation about comfort women.

In early March 2001, the Taiwan government added further fuel to the controversy by announcing that it would ban Kobayashi from making a planned visit to Taiwan on March 8, claiming that he represented a threat to public safety. Critics immediately condemned the decision, saying that the contents of *On Taiwan* belonged in the realm of free speech and should not be cited as a reason for the government to ban Kobayashi's visit. Faced with strong opposition to its decision, the Executive Yuan promptly began to backtrack. Chang Chun-hsiung instructed the Ministry of the Interior to reevaluate the government's policies and regulations related to denying entry to blacklisted persons. A few days later, President Chen weighed in, saying that the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government should not follow the KMT's practice of blacklisting people or banning them from entering the country.¹⁹ The political firestorm even crossed the Pacific Ocean to the United States. At a seminar in New York City on March 17 (St. Patrick's Day), members of the Association for the Promotion of China's Peaceful Unification criticized *On Taiwan* while also taking aim at Shi Wen-lung and Alice King, another of President Chen's policy advisers and a vocal pro-independence advocate, for their remarks about Taiwan's history and Taiwanese identity. On March 23, the Ministry of the Interior lifted its ban on Kobayashi and two other foreigners. After conducting an overall review of the blacklist of 659 foreigners banned from entering the country, the ministry decided that if Kobayashi applied for a visa, he would be allowed to enter Taiwan.

In retrospect, the intense arguments that followed the publication of *On Taiwan* did little to resolve the issue of who the comfort women were and how they had been treated. Numerous politicians took full advantage of the free publicity generated by the debate, but perhaps the real winner was Kobayashi, whose comic book ended up selling two hundred and fifty thousand copies by the end of March. Nine months later, he attempted to profit further by releasing a new book, entitled *Follow-Up to On Taiwan*

(*Dai-niha Taiwan ron*), which detailed the firestorm ignited in Taiwan after the release of *On Taiwan*.²⁰

The controversy over *On Taiwan* represents part of ongoing postcolonial discourse in Taiwan, or what Leo Ching has aptly described as the “contradictory longing and loathing of the once-colonized subjects” (2001, 5). In addition to the comfort women described above, Mountain Aborigines from Taiwan who volunteered for service in the Japanese military and fought in the South Pacific during World War II (the Takasago Volunteers or Gaosha Yiyongdui) also struggle to balance a complex sense of historical identity. On the one hand, many feel a deep sense of pride about their *yamatodamashii* (literally “soul of the Yamato people”) and *Nippon seishin* (Japanese spirit). On the other hand, hundreds of survivors, as well as friends and relatives of Aborigine war dead, have fought for decades to have their remains removed from Japan’s Yasukuni shrine (which houses the spirits of Japanese soldiers killed during World War II) and returned to Taiwan (Leo Ching 2001, 1–4; Huang Chih-huei 2001).²¹ The struggle to formulate a postcolonial identity and the diverse feelings that accompany it also extend to numerous Taiwanese scholars who have devoted their lives to studying the island’s history. As Chang Lung-chih has shown (2004, 136–137), leading scholars like Tai Kuo-hui and Yang Pi-ch’uan have put forth very different evaluations not only of the colonial era, but also of leading historical figures like Governor-General Kodama Gentarō and his chief of civil administration, Gotō Shimpei (discussed in chapter 1 below).²² Leo Ching (2001, ch. 2) has shed further light on this problem by showing that Taiwanese intellectuals’ discourse about Japanese colonialism is often linked to tensions between those who favor reunification with China and those who support Taiwan independence, including well-known individuals like Wang Hsiao-p’o (who argues that any “Taiwanese consciousness” [*Taiwan yishi*] cannot be separated from Han Chinese consciousness); Shih Ming (a fervent supporter of Taiwan independence and author of perhaps the first comprehensive account of Taiwanese history, *Taiwan sibainian shi* [The Four Hundred Year History of Taiwan], originally published in Japanese in 1962); and Huang Chao-t’ang (Kō

Shō-dō in Japanese, Ng Chiautong in Southern Min, who claims that the Taiwanese people developed a clear sense of identity only during the colonial era) (Leo Ching 2001, 62–81). Today Japanese popular culture remains intensely popular among Taiwan's youth (the so-called Hari Zu), much to the dismay of many mainlanders and Taiwanese, who worry about the profound influence it is once again exerting in Taiwan.

Postcolonial debates about the significance of a nation's colonial experience are hardly unique to Taiwan. In the case of Taiwan's neighbor, the Philippines, E. Epifanio San Juan (2000, 373, 375–376) has focused on the ways in which local scholars analyzing colonialism choose to position their discourse in terms of power relations and political forces while also being influenced by or even participating in the fabrication of images for quotidian mass consumption that (like *On Taiwan*) involve the commodification of the past. Perhaps the most coherent body of research on this problem exists for modern India and can be found in the highly influential works of scholars like Dipesh Chakrabarty, Bernard S. Cohn, and Nicholas B. Dirks (see below). Their scholarship has convincingly demonstrated that any attempt to understand the colonial past involves grappling with issues of the postcolonial present.²³ Fernando Coronil's research on postcolonialism and the historical development of nations once subjected to colonial domination (2000, 200–202) further points to the inherent tension between their present sovereignty and former subjection, which often surfaces in debates that recreate or challenge the dependency relations of the past. Similarly, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (2000, 50, 53–54) have focused on the process by which postcolonial literatures are often initially produced by an elite that identifies with the colonizing power and only later by indigenous peoples who attempt to grapple with defining their identities and the problem of place and displacement (see also Chatterjee 1993; Said 2000).²⁴

What does all this tell us? I would argue that controversies and/or debates among intellectuals and politicians surrounding the nature of the colonial past constitute an integral and significant aspect of postcolonial discourse. At the same time, however, it is important to recognize that such discourse frequently ends up dis-

torting the past, with historical events and their impact on men and women being molded or manipulated to serve a wide range of agendas. The result is that we often fixate on interpreting events, institutions, or artifacts and overlook the experiences of individuals (like comfort women and Aborigine soldiers) whose voices rarely can compete with the hubbub raised by politicians and academics. In contrast, this book endeavors to give some voice to the men and women whose lives were affected by colonial policies or responses thereto while also considering the ways in which research on Taiwan's colonial experience can contribute to our knowledge of colonialism as a historical phenomenon. These two goals are interrelated, and achieving the first goal has the potential to help us rethink the second.²⁵

Any attempt to achieve these two goals would not be possible were it not for the efforts of previous scholars. Early research on colonialism has focused on how imperialist states relied on coercive methods to exploit the economic resources of colonized peoples. Thanks to the fruition of research on colonialism conducted during the past three decades, we are now able to fully appreciate that colonialism extended to the realms of scholarship, science, and even high culture. For example, Nicholas B. Dirks (2001) reveals that the concept of caste that we use to understand India was profoundly shaped not only by the interaction between British missionaries and administrators, but also by Indian scholars whose views had been shaped by Britain's colonial domination. Dipesh Chakrabarty (2002) has delved into problems surrounding modernity in India, especially pertaining to its cultural and institutional history. Bernard S. Cohn (1996), whose work helped set the agenda for today's generation of scholars, has convincingly demonstrated that the construction of colonial empires was a profoundly intellectual and cultural phenomenon. Thus, as Ania Loomba argues in a coherent and highly readable overview of colonialism and postcolonialism, "In any colonial context, economic plunder, the production of knowledge, and strategies of representation depended heavily on one another" (1998, 97).

Scholars researching colonialism in East Asia have also begun to explore its cultural history, as may be seen in the contributions to *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia* (Barlow 1997b). For

example, Alan S. Christy's essay about Japanese colonial rule in Okinawa describes colonial discourse about the island's inhabitants and discusses the colonial government's attempts to enact policies of assimilation, and Craig Clunas shows how colonialism has shaped Western understandings of East Asian art history. In addition, research by Komagome Takeshi (1991) and Chiang Jen-chieh (2000) reveals how Japanese educators and administrators attempted to transform the images of local heroes like Koxinga (Zheng Chenggong) and Wu Feng to dovetail with colonial policies, while Louis Young's research on Manchuria (1998) demonstrates that Japanese colonialism needs to be understood as an economic, political, and imaginative enterprise.²⁶ More recently, Paul David Barclay (1999, 2001, 2003a, 2003b) has explored how American and Japanese colonizers constructed images of the colonized people of the Philippines and Taiwan. Other scholars have begun the work of rigorously considering how scholars construct the colonial past in their research, as can be seen in Ramon Myers' (1984) study of post-World War II Japanese historiography about Japan's former colonial empire and Tani Barlow's (1997a) path-breaking essay about the impact of colonialism on postwar China studies. In Taiwan studies, Leo Ching (2001) has made a significant contribution to the field by combining the methodologies of historiography and literary studies to explore how people living in Taiwan both during and after the colonial era have attempted to formulate or reshape their cultural and political identities.

Progress is also being made in learning about the social and economic histories of Japan's former colonies. For example, Peter Duus' study of the early Japanese colonial experience in Korea contains thorough accounts of uprisings by local "righteous armies" and subsequent suppression campaigns, the growth of Korean trade with Japan, and land acquisition in Korea by the Japanese (1995, 220–234, 261–288).²⁷ Similarly, Allen Chun's research on colonial Hong Kong is based on the argument that "the future of method resides more in our effective understanding of the past than our theoretical imagination per se" (2000b, 383), and Chun (2000a, 438–443, 448) has shed new light on the importance of 1900–1903 land surveys in Hong Kong's social history. The social

and economic aspects of Taiwan's colonial experience have been studied by scholars like Lü Shao-li (1998a, 1998b) and E. Patricia Tsurumi (1977, 1980), not to mention the contributors to Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (1984). My research has been profoundly influenced by scholars like Ka Chih-ming (1995, 2001) and John Shepherd (1993, 1996, 2000, 2003), who have conducted detailed empirical studies of Taiwan's history while also being engaged with world history and relevant theoretical frameworks. In this book, I attempt to study colonialism from a social-historical perspective by exploring how villagers living in the hills and mountains of southern Taiwan rose in rebellion against the colonial authorities, as well as by considering the religious beliefs that helped spark their actions and the methods they used in organizing a campaign of armed resistance. Organized as a narrative account of the Ta-pa-ni Incident, the book also attempts to shed light on a number of theoretical issues, including the nature of Japanese colonialism, the colonial state and local society, patterns of armed resistance, and the mobilization process.

The nature of Japanese colonialism

Japan's rule over Taiwan differs from standard "Orientalist" pictures in that the Japanese and Han Chinese shared elements of a common cultural heritage. Many Japanese elites considered their nation to be the rightful ruler of modern Asia, but they also had considerable respect for traditional Chinese culture and had mixed feelings about the extent to which Japan could or should duplicate Western colonialism and imperialism (Barlow 1997a, 5, 8; Schmid 2000; Komagome 1996; Oguma 1998). Moreover, by the end of the nineteenth century Taiwan had begun to play an integral role in the world economic order and had experienced its own processes of socioeconomic development. Taiwan's society was highly commercialized yet also fraught with ethnic and subethnic strife, and it did not always willingly conform to the wishes of its new rulers.²⁸ The Japanese meticulously documented the ups and downs of their colonial rule over Taiwan, and the large body of evidence described above provides scholars with a unique opportunity to thoroughly reconstruct the ways in which colonial

policies were not only conceived and enacted, but also how they shaped the development of local society.

Colonial state and local society

One of the key problems to be explored in this book centers on the relationship between Japan's modern colonial apparatus and local communities in areas of southern Taiwan that had been largely untouched by the state's institutional authority prior to the modern era. A growing number of scholars are beginning to examine the impact of state expansion on local society. For example, R. Brian Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead focus on people who lived "at the intersections of global and local histories" (1992a, 4), as well as on warfare resulting from the impact of state expansion on indigenous peoples (18).²⁹ I consider these issues in part by using the concept of colonial governmentality—that is, the colonial state's surveillance and control over colonized societies. In Taiwan and other colonies, governmentality was achieved in part through the production of different forms of knowledge, including cartography, demography, and ethnography (among others). As a result, colonized societies often served as laboratories for modern "metropolitan" states to experiment with techniques of governance whose goal was to oblige the colonized to transform (improve) themselves by adopting new patterns of behavior, all as part of the quest to attain modernity (Dirks 2001, 6, 122–123, 313–315, 317; Scott 1998). Many scholars have researched how European states applied colonial governmentality in South Asia, specifically India and Sri Lanka (Chakrabarty 2002; Cohn 1996; Dirks 2001; Guha 1997), and an increasing number of scholars researching Taiwan's colonial history have now begun to pay attention to this topic (Chang Lung-chih 2004; Wakabayashi and Woo 2004; Yao 2001, 2002). For example, Yao Jen-to has noted the importance of colonial land surveys and population censuses, which he argues embody "the accuracy and all-embracing nature of the colonial (disciplinary) knowledge" (2001, 120).

My research also draws on the concept of "territorialization"—that is, the ongoing efforts by governments (including colonial states) to establish control over natural resources and the people

who use them. Such control is particularly notable because it includes people within boundaries defined by the state and embodied in maps, which, along with taxation and the use of force, serve the state as means of asserting its authority. Moreover, maps drawn by the state can be viewed as constituting a form of “abstract space,” which is often vastly different from the “experienced (or lived) space” of local communities. As a result, state attempts to achieve territorialization often (perhaps inevitably) spark acts of armed resistance.³⁰ Recent research by Peter Vandergeest and Nancy Lee Peluso (1995, 385–394) provides an important example of how the process of territorialization worked in nations that were endeavoring to adapt to conditions of the modern era. Their study of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Thailand shows how the Siamese state responded to the threat of British colonial expansion during the end of the nineteenth century by hiring foreign surveyors to scientifically survey and map out its territory. This was followed by the collection of poll taxes; restructuring of the subdistrict administration; establishment of a local police force; creation of a system of village heads elected by groups of ten households; implementation of a registration system for births, deaths, and marriages; and passage of a land code in 1901, followed by a series of cadastral surveys. In the course of these surveys, unpopulated lands were placed under control of the Royal Forestry Department, which often sparked conflicts between the state and local communities.³¹ As we will see in chapter 1, the Japanese colonial state made every effort to exert its authority over areas of Taiwan largely untouched by Qing rule, yet in doing so, it provoked repeated uprisings by Taiwanese peasants and local elites who resented the encroachment of any state (be it Chinese or Japanese) on their lived space.

Patterns of armed resistance in colonial Taiwan

Keeping in mind work by Ranajit Guha and Sherry Ortner, which reveals the tendency of studies of resistance movements to distort the realities of local society, I attempt to provide a vivid yet balanced account of the Ta-pa-ni Incident by paying close attention to the relatively untamed nature of Taiwan’s southern mountain

regions, the interaction between Han and Aborigine peoples, and the importance of socioreligious associations and their rituals.³² Accordingly I give full weight to messianic beliefs and vegetarian practices, which played an important role in the recruiting processes prior to the uprising.³³ A number of leading scholars, including Paul A. Cohen (1997), Joseph Esherick (1987), Philip Kuhn (1991), Susan Naquin (1976, 1981), and Jonathan Spence (2001), have used archival sources to examine the experiences of people involved in or accused of acts of resistance against the state. In the case of the Ta-pa-ni Incident, the quantity and quality of the archival data, combined with the potential to collect additional information via fieldwork, allows us to undertake a far more thorough investigation than has previously been done into both the identities of those who participated and the wide range of motives underlying their actions.

The mobilization process

As scholars like Michael Foley (1990) have pointed out, previous research has often centered on the motivations that prompted people to engage in acts of armed resistance, but it has overlooked the obstacles to mobilization and how peasants attempted to overcome them. As Roger V. Gould so aptly puts it, "The fact that considerable numbers of people have an interest in challenging authority does not guarantee that they will do so. . . . The puzzle is that resistance occurs . . . despite overwhelming odds and catastrophic costs" (1998, 37). While earlier work on protest and resistance focused on processes of resource mobilization and the ways in which social movements were constructed upon foundations of preexisting "catnets" (categories and networks) (Moore 1978; Tilly 1978), more recent scholarship has begun to emphasize the links between mobilization for collective action and identity formation (Hanagan et al. 1998a; Scott 1985; Weller 1994).³⁴ Of particular importance to our understanding of the recruitment patterns preceding the Ta-pa-ni Incident is Sidney Tarrow's (1994) idea of a "cycle of protest," which features the rapid diffusion of plans to undertake joint action among different social groups, ongoing (and not necessarily successful) efforts to establish collective identity, and

the formation and reformation of different coalitions. Scholars like David Arnold (2000, 35, 42) have demonstrated the importance of studying local elites, who often turn out not to be mere subalterns but men and women with considerable influence over an area's political, social, and economic life who could either support or challenge the state or both (see also Gould 1998; Schwartz 1998). Therefore, I consider the practical factors underlying the decision by southern Taiwanese elites to mobilize against the colonial state in 1915, and I also examine how they recruited new members via a combination of millenarian prophecies and rituals involving the making of an oath and worship of a banner.³⁵ In late imperial China, members of both the military and armed groups that opposed the state performed oaths and a variety of banner rites, and rebel groups in colonial Taiwan did so as well. However, the Ta-pa-ni Incident is particularly striking because banner worship was often accompanied by human sacrifice, including the execution of Japanese civilians or locals deemed traitors to the community. In chapter 3, I hypothesize that such rituals represented a means of legitimizing resistance while also dehumanizing the victims of communal justice.

Sources and Their Problems

My research on the Ta-pa-ni Incident, as noted above, is based on an interdisciplinary approach combining historical sources with information collected during fieldwork. I have utilized confessions, court records, and military and police reports (often accompanied by vivid photographs) about the uprising and suppression campaign; newspaper accounts of the fighting, its aftermath, and the trials of the accused; local gazetteers about Tainan and Kaohsiung Counties; statistical compilations about the local economy; demographic information in annual surveys and household registers; scriptures that belonged to the uprising's leaders; oral histories; and interviews my assistants and I conducted with survivors of the uprising and their relatives.

In order to better determine the identities of those who joined the rebellion, as well as the socioeconomic structure of the villages they inhabited, my research assistants and I compiled two

computer databases (using Microsoft Excel). The first contains data collected from the *YCFQD* on 1,584 individuals who were arrested during the course of the Ta-pa-ni Incident and its aftermath. It lists their names, addresses, ages, dates they joined Yü's planned uprising, identities of those who recruited them, and any rituals performed during the recruiting process (among other specifics). The second database comes from household registers from ten villages located in today's Tainan County and contains demographic information on a total of 11,828 villagers who resided there as of July 1, 1915, just prior to the outbreak of fighting.³⁶ My assistants and I have used these data, as well as information contained in colonial-era censuses and demographic reports, to analyze the social and demographic structures of these villages prior to the Ta-pa-ni Incident and to assess the incident's impact in terms of such factors as mortality rates, outward migration, and widow remarriage (see, for example, Chiu and Katz 2004 and chapters 5, 6, and 8 below).

This is not to deny that the above-mentioned sources can be highly problematic. It is a well-known fact that legal archives compiled by representatives of the state hardly constitute an ideal source for studying local society. As Ranajit Guha (1994) has pointed out, sources written by or on behalf of the state represent a form of official historiography that potentially distorts the nature of local society. The key problem for the social historian thus becomes how to "decode" elite or state documentation to find subaltern actions and beliefs (see also Parry 1993). In the case of the Ta-pa-ni Incident, any scholar who would attempt to interpret the data contained in the *YCFQD* must first confront the obvious problem that suspects who were interrogated spoke in Taiwanese or Aborigine languages but had their remarks recorded in Japanese, which was later translated into Chinese by members of the Taiwan Provincial Documents Commission. One must also be aware of the fact that many individuals confessed under duress, and the archives contain clear evidence of the use of intimidation and/or torture by Japanese interrogators, who used all means at their disposal to weaken suspects (see chapter 7). Moreover, the colonial authorities in southern Taiwan appear to have been overburdened with processing hundreds of suspects and used identi-

cal summaries of confessions for more than one individual in order to save time (*YCFQD*, 3:101, 103, 128, 274–278). Therefore, although the *YCFQD* names individuals accused of crimes like arson, murder, and rape, I have refrained from listing their names in this book. Finally, the archives give no indication of the ethnic or subethnic affiliation of each suspect, and for profession they usually list “peasant” (*nong*) without stating whether the person in question was a landowner, independent cultivator, or tenant farmer.³⁷ Nevertheless, while the data in the *YCFQD* should not be read too literally, they can give us a clear sense not only of what types of individuals joined (or were forced to join) the rebellion, but also the identities of those responsible for identifying and recruiting new members. This information, when combined with that from the household registers, can shed new light on the socioeconomic structure of the villages involved in the Ta-pa-ni Incident, as well as the factors that may have prompted some individuals to rise up in armed rebellion.

At first glance, annual censuses and household registers would appear to be less problematic, inasmuch as they provide basic data on the population structure of local communities. However, as Chakrabarty points out, “one symptom of [the state’s] modernity was that its techniques of government were very closely tied to techniques of measurement” (2002, 83). As a result, statistics produced by and for the state often place people in categories that the state has designed to measure them (84–87). While household registers of colonial Taiwan provide reasonably reliable data on an individual’s life and death, as well as key details pertaining to marriage and adoption, there are also instances of erroneous reporting, particularly regarding dates of birth and death deemed to be inauspicious. The registers also lack complete data on the occupations of household members, providing such information on a reasonably consistent basis only for household heads. Finally, although the registers list the date of an individual’s death, they provide no details as to cause.³⁸ This makes it difficult to determine whether an individual whose death occurred during the uprising died of natural causes, was killed in action, or was the victim of a massacre. At the same time, however, we can use the household registers to determine how many women and children

died on days when Japanese police and military forces were known to have passed through their villages, thus enabling us to better ascertain the extent to which alleged massacres actually took place. In addition, the registers provide important data on mortality patterns in the villages most affected by the Ta-pa-ni Incident.

In analyzing accounts of the fighting and its aftermath, I have attempted to judiciously combine data from historical sources with information gathered from interviews with survivors and their relatives. Such data provide vivid accounts of the past but can be extremely problematic when reports of atrocities are being considered. Both sides accused each other of indiscriminate butchery, rape, or even gang rape. Police reports and accounts in newspapers contain graphic accounts of rebels raping wives and daughters of policemen and informants, while oral histories compiled after the Ta-pa-ni Incident claim that Japanese military and police forces torched entire villages, slaughtered the inhabitants, and raped scores of Taiwanese women and girls. There seems to be little doubt that both sides were responsible for acts of inhumanity, but the extent of the violence remains difficult to determine. Written sources, which were compiled by the colonial authorities, may have exaggerated the crimes committed by rebel forces. Moreover, apart from brief mention of destroyed villages; corpses littering the battlefields; and communities composed mainly of widows, the elderly, and children, these texts have very little to say about the violence visited on local communities, not to mention those who were responsible for it. While we can endeavor to reconstruct mortality rates based on censuses and household registers, accusations of rape remain nearly impossible to verify. It is indeed likely that women on both sides were sexually assaulted, but because none of these accusations can be independently confirmed, I merely present them as accounts of the past without vouching for their veracity.

In attempting to assess the impact of the Ta-pa-ni Incident on local society, I have relied extensively on oral histories of survivors and their families compiled in the 1970s by Ch'en Ch'un-mu and Ch'eng Ta-hsüeh, as well as data collected in my own fieldwork in southern Taiwan during 1999–2002. Such accounts are no less

problematic than written sources. As scholars like Donald A. Ritchie have pointed out (1995, 11–17, 72–73, 92–101), people's memories are constantly changing, and as men and women approach the end of their lives, they often undertake a mental review that can both revive and omit painful details about the past. Moreover, survivors of natural disasters or acts of violence frequently form close-knit communities and often "rehearse" their experiences by recounting them to each other, with each retelling involving processes of exaggeration and omission (see also Thompson 2000). Oral histories need to be corroborated with additional evidence, which I have tried to supply by drawing on archival information, newspaper accounts, and demographic data. When combined selectively and used judiciously, these sources can provide a wealth of useful detail that allows us to both reconstruct events and begin to understand the individuals who participated in them.

Structure and Contents

The book's overall structure consists of four chapters providing background information on the Ta-pa-ni Incident, three chapters that narrate the course of the uprising, and a final chapter concerning the incident's impact on local society. Chapter 1 provides a brief summary of Taiwan's history during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially developments during the nineteenth century that enhanced the island's strategic and economic importance. I focus on early Japanese colonial policies that can be shown to have links to the Ta-pa-ni uprising, particularly those involving the police force and community policing, taxation, the sugar monopoly, and the exploitation of the island's mountain forests in the south. Chapter 2 presents biographical data on Yü Ch'ing-fang and other leaders who either planned the uprising and/or took part in the fighting. The bulk of this chapter describes the recruitment process and attempts to assess its links to extant networks of power in local society. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the various motives that prompted hundreds of men and women to join Yü's ranks. In Chapter 3, I describe the religious beliefs and practices related to the Ta-pa-ni Incident,

particularly messianic beliefs and initiation rituals. Considerable space is devoted to describing the temple that Yü Ch'ing-fang used as a base for his rebellion, the Xilai An (Abbey from the West) in Tainan City. Although the Japanese destroyed this temple after the Ta-pa-ni Incident, information on its history may be found in contemporary newspapers, as well as in a morality book (*shanshu*) printed by members of the temple committee (including Yü himself). Chapter 4 presents a detailed account of the mountainous areas of Tainan and Kaohsiung Counties where the fighting occurred. This chapter opens with a description of local geography but stresses the importance of local economic life and social structure, especially the area's complex mix of ethnic and subethnic groups, who lived in an uneasy state of coexistence.

The next three chapters present a narrative account of the Ta-pa-ni Incident. Chapter 5 contains a detailed description of how Yü Ch'ing-fang's plot was discovered by the colonial authorities and many of his key followers arrested. Yü then fled into the mountains of southern Taiwan, where he joined forces with Chiang Ting and other local strongmen to launch a series of bloody attacks on Japanese police stations, culminating in the pitched battle at Ta-pa-ni. A detailed account of all the action is provided. Chapter 6 draws on newspaper accounts and police reports to describe the lengthy and often fruitless Japanese effort to capture Yü Ch'ing-fang and his followers and wipe out remaining pockets of resistance. Many villagers appear to have sympathized with the rebels and either led the Japanese astray or actively attempted to obstruct them. Daily reports written by Japanese police officers reveal that the authorities often struggled to cope with local resistance and ended up resorting to a combination of threats and persuasion in order to round up the rebels who hid in the mountains. This chapter also treats the plight of local women and children, who had to deal with the Japanese forces while their men were on the run. Chapter 7 describes the interrogations and mass trials of Yü Ch'ing-fang and the other men and women who were caught in the dragnet following the Ta-pa-ni Incident. This chapter also describes prison conditions but focuses on the trials that concluded with hundreds of death sentences. Even though an amnesty by the Taishō emperor (1879–1926;

r. 1912–1926) resulted in the commutation of many sentences to life in prison, the entire judicial process aroused considerable outrage in Japan, and some officials came under fire in the Diet. The chapter concludes with graphic accounts of the executions of Yü and other rebel leaders.

The book's final chapter explores the ways in which the Ta-pa-ni Incident shaped the experiences of both colonizer and colonized on Taiwan. It opens with a discussion of the ways in which the colonial authorities modified their policies in order to prevent future outbreaks of armed resistance. Data are also supplied concerning the dramatic impact of the uprising on local society in the Ta-pa-ni area. Household registers indicate that the villages most directly involved suffered a nearly 40 percent population decline, and some newspaper articles give moving accounts of the desolation of "widow villages." Things did not begin to return to normal until the late 1920s, when the children who had survived grew up and started their own families and many of the men who had not been executed or died in prison were finally able to return home and attempt to rebuild their lives. During these troubled years, local women played a key role in holding the community together, and I have used interview data to shed further light on their efforts. The book concludes with an account of how the Ta-pa-ni Incident survives among villagers today with monuments and the performance of collective rites for the dead.