

Imperial Gateway: Colonial Taiwan and Japan's Expansion in South China and Southeast Asia, 1895-1945

Seiji Shirane

Abstract: *Seiji Shirane's Imperial Gateway: Colonial Taiwan and Japan's Expansion in South China and Southeast Asia, 1895-1945 (forthcoming with Cornell University Press in December 2022) explores the political, social, and economic significance of colonial Taiwan in the southern expansion of Japan's empire from 1895 to the end of World War II. Here's the unabridged introduction to the volume.*

Keywords: *Japan, Taiwan, South China, Southeast Asia, Imperialism, Colonialism, World War II*

Seiji Shirane's Imperial Gateway: Colonial Taiwan and Japan's Expansion in South China and Southeast Asia, 1895-1945 (forthcoming on 15 December 2022 with Cornell University Press) explores the political, social, and economic significance of colonial Taiwan in the southern expansion of Japan's empire from 1895 to the end of World War II. Challenging understandings of empire that focus on bilateral relations between metropole and colonial periphery, the author uncovers a half century of dynamic relations between Japan, Taiwan, China, and Western regional powers.

Japanese officials in Taiwan did not simply take orders from Tokyo; rather, they often pursued their own expansionist ambitions in South China and Southeast Asia. When outright conquest was not possible, they promoted alternative strategies, including naturalizing resident Chinese as overseas Taiwanese subjects, extending colonial police networks, and deploying tens of thousands of Taiwanese to war. The Taiwanese—merchants, gangsters, policemen, interpreters, nurses, and soldiers—seized new opportunities for socioeconomic advancement that did not always align with Japan's imperial interests. Drawing on multilingual archives in six countries, Imperial Gateway shows how Japanese officials and Taiwanese subjects transformed Taiwan into a regional gateway for expansion in an ever-shifting international order. Here's the unabridged introduction to the volume, which is available with a 40% discount and free shipping at [this link](#) with the code 09EXP40.

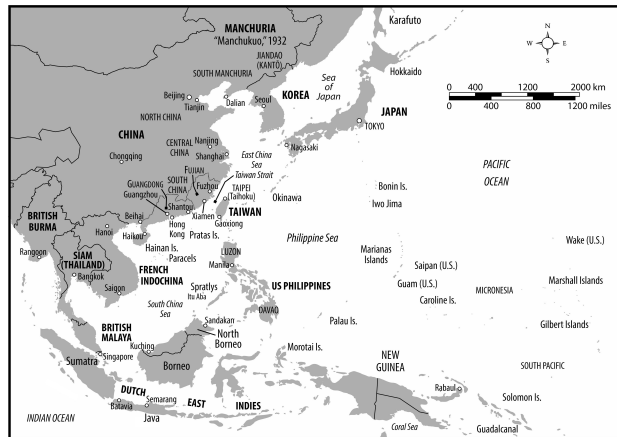


Figure 1: East and Southeast Asia. Map by Mike Bechthold.

One year after Japan annexed the subtropical island of Taiwan in 1895 as its first overseas colony, Taiwan governor-general Katsura Tarō (1848–1913) wrote that “Colonial rule in Taiwan cannot be restricted to the island’s borders: it must also involve overseas expansion.” Katsura’s June 1896 report, which he sent to the Tokyo central government, was titled *Principles of Taiwan Rule* and described his recent month-long observation tour of both the island and, across the Taiwan Strait, South China. He outlined Taiwan’s strategic importance to Japan’s southern imperial interests: “On the opposite side of Taiwan and the Pescadores is the South China coast connected to the key port of Xiamen; to the south of Taiwan are the islands of the South Seas [Nanyō Shotō, present-day maritime Southeast Asia]. Taiwan is thus the perfect site from which to gain control of the South China Sea.”¹ Katsura’s report was the first of many such arguments that framed Taiwan’s importance in terms of continued imperial expansion.

Taiwan’s modest landmass—13,000 square miles, or less than one-tenth the size of Japan’s archipelago—was located at the maritime crossroads of East and Southeast Asia: 100

miles from southwest Japan’s Okinawan islands, 100 miles off the coast of South China, and between Japan and the Philippines. Since the seventeenth century, Taiwan had served as a commercial hub for Chinese, Japanese, Dutch, Spanish, British, American, and Southeast Asian traders. It also had been the target of imperial ambitions due to its strategic position and natural resources. Parts of the island had been governed by the Dutch (1624–62), the Spanish (1626–42), the Sino-Japanese “pirate” Koxinga (C. Zheng Chenggong) and his family (1662–83), and the Manchu Qing dynasty (1683–1895).² After the opening of Qing Taiwan’s treaty ports to foreign trade in 1860, the island became a site of commercial and geostrategic competition among Britain, France, the United States, and Japan.³

Japan’s victory in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) led it to annex Taiwan from Qing China (1644–1911), thereby joining the ranks of the Western imperial powers in Asia. The Japanese Meiji government (1868–1912) faced opposition from the local population, which included roughly 2.8 million ethnic Han Chinese and 100,000 indigenous peoples.⁴ To quell anti-Japanese resistance, “civilize” the island’s residents, and develop the island’s economy, the Tokyo central government established the Taiwan Government-General (Taiwan Sōtokufu, 1895–1945) in the colonial capital of Taipei (J. Taihoku). Headed by Japanese military leaders selected from among high-ranking officers in the Imperial Army and Navy, the Government-General was granted complete military and civil jurisdiction over the island.⁵

As hinted by Katsura Tarō’s 1896 report, Japanese colonial leaders focused, right from the start, on promoting Taiwan as Japan’s “southern gateway” (*nanmon*) through which the nascent Japanese empire could continue to advance. Under Qing rule, Taiwan had been a political and economic appendage of Fujian

province. Under Japanese rule, the fourth governor-general Kodama Gentarō (1852–1906, served 1898–1906) wished to reverse the cross-strait relationship to make Fujian into Taiwan’s imperial frontier on mainland China.⁶ Yet a central paradox of early Japanese colonialism was that Government-General leaders advocated for overseas expansion at a time when they could hardly afford the finances or personnel to undertake it. For the first decade, they were plagued by incessant anti-Japanese uprisings and fiscal insolvency. In 1898, for example, subsidies for Taiwan had so drained Tokyo’s finances that some Japanese officials in the central government suggested selling off the island to a Western power.⁷

Over time, however, the Taiwan Government-General did extend its imperial interests across the East and South China Seas. To explain this process, I adopt the concept of the “imperial gateway.” From 1895 to 1945, Japanese colonial leaders envisioned the island as an open-ended channel through which they could continually expand Japan’s southern frontiers, with colonial Taiwan—both its Japanese colonialists and Taiwanese subjects—mediating Japan’s strategic, economic, and military expansion in South China and Southeast Asia.⁸ The skills and experiences of Taiwan’s institutions and personnel critically shaped Japan’s informal empire in prewar South China and military occupation of the “Southern Regions” (Nanpō, the Japanese term that collectively referred to South China, Southeast Asia, and the South Pacific). This book illustrates how Japanese imperial strategies and practices were not merely dictated by the Tokyo central government. Japanese colonial leaders in Taiwan innovated new imperial strategies to compete with Chinese and Western powers for regional hegemony.

The trajectories of the Japanese empire were also shaped by intra-imperial rivalries. Although the Taiwan Government-General sought to expand Japan’s imperial power

overseas, its objectives were not always aligned with those in the Tokyo central government. The Japanese metropole’s imperial aspirations, especially as advanced by the Foreign Ministry and Imperial Army, initially prioritized northern continental advance through Korea and Manchuria over the southern expansion promoted by colonial leaders in Taiwan. Technically, the jurisdiction of the Government-General was circumscribed to the island and remained legally subordinate to Tokyo until 1945. Nevertheless, the Government-General took advantage of Taiwan’s geographical proximity to and cultural affinities with South China and Southeast Asia—especially their shared ethnic Han Chinese populations—to elevate its strategic importance in Japan’s empire.⁹ This book analyzes both the synergies and tensions between the expansionist ambitions of the Government-General and the imperial priorities of Tokyo, including those advanced by the Foreign Ministry, army, and navy.¹⁰

Even when lacking the support of the Tokyo government, the Taiwan Government-General enacted new imperial strategies centered on mobilizing its overseas Taiwanese subjects. The Japanese legal category of “overseas Taiwanese” (J. Taiwan sekimin, C. Taiwan jimin) included both Taiwanese subjects who had migrated abroad as well as resident ethnic Chinese in South China or Southeast Asia whom the Japanese had naturalized as Taiwanese subjects. In North and Central China, there were significant numbers of Japanese migrant settlers. In South China, by contrast, Japan’s economic and demographic representation was weak. In response, the Government-General welcomed thousands of resident Chinese who eagerly sought out Taiwanese subjecthood because it granted them the extraterritorial rights—such as exemption from Chinese taxes and laws and Japanese consular protection—that Japan had obtained after 1895.¹¹ Such practices, which I call “proxy colonialism,” were in sharp contrast

to those of rival Western powers in China's treaty ports that increasingly used racialized nationality policies to restrict Chinese naturalization.¹²

Japanese colonial leaders viewed overseas Taiwanese as ideal Sino-Japanese intermediaries. South China's Fujianese dialect, Hokkien (C. Minnanhua), was similar to the Taiwanese dialect (C. Taiwanhua) and spoken by sizable overseas Chinese populations throughout Southeast Asia. Japanese officials relied on wealthy, well-connected, and even armed overseas Taiwanese as gateway subjects to help mediate Taiwan's economic, geopolitical, and cultural interests across the East and South China Seas. There were limits, however, to how much Japanese authorities could monitor the growing overseas Taiwanese population. Chinese and Taiwanese alike learned to exploit loopholes in nationality laws to pursue individual interests irrespective of national loyalties. Japanese policies toward the overseas Taiwanese were thus as much about reacting to the unpredictable behavior of Taiwanese subjects in South China as they were about directing such behavior.

In Japan's quest for geopolitical and economic supremacy in Asia, neither the processes of colonialism and imperialism nor the boundaries between formal empire (overseas colonies) and informal empire ("semi-colonial" Chinese treaty ports) were neatly divided.¹³ Such boundaries fluctuated due to geopolitical contingencies and unforeseen activities by a range of actors who passed through the Taiwan gateway at the crossroads of multiple empires. The agency and flexibility displayed by overseas Taiwanese during the prewar and wartime periods challenge prevailing assumptions that the "colonizers" and the "colonized" occupied clear places within imperial hierarchies: outside Taiwan's territorial borders, gradations of power and categories of identity could be quite fluid. In turn, the geographic orientations and strategic aims of Japanese expansion from

Taiwan were ever-shifting and adaptable to the changing international order.

Japan's Annexation of Taiwan

Japan's overseas empire emerged within the context of accelerated Western expansion in Asia. Western empires included both bounded territories under colonial rule and modes of imperial commerce and politics that reshaped life in coastal treaty ports. By the 1850s under the threat of steamships and cannons, Tokugawa Japan (1603–1868), along with China and Siam, was subjected to Western informal empire. The signing of unequal treaties compromised Japan's sovereignty: in coastal treaty ports, Westerners enjoyed tariff immunity and extraterritorial rights exempting them from Japanese laws. After rival samurai from southwest Japan toppled the Tokugawa regime in 1868, the new Meiji government embarked on Western-inspired modernization and military reforms to resist further encroachment and restore complete sovereignty.

At the same time that Meiji leaders strengthened Japan's industrial economy and military, they actively sought opportunities for territorial expansion. Between 1869 and 1879, they extended Japan's national borders through the forceful incorporation of Ezo (Hokkaido), the Kuril Islands (Chishima), the Bonin Islands (Ogasawara), and the Ryūkyū Islands (Okinawa) as part of Japan proper.¹⁴ They also planned to invade Korea in 1873, though those plans were aborted. A military expedition the following year sent 3,600 troops to Taiwan under the staged pretext to avenge the murder of fifty-four shipwrecked Ryūkyūan subjects at the hands of Taiwan's indigenous peoples in 1871. Enlisting Western legal advisors' support, the Japanese contended that under international law, the "uncivilized" indigenous lands in southeastern Taiwan remained outside Qing jurisdiction and thereby open lands

available for annexation. During the expedition, one of the officers, Admiral Kabayama Sukenori—who later became navy minister (served 1890–92) and the first Taiwan governor-general (served 1895–96)—highlighted Taiwan’s potential as a naval base. General Tani Kanjō went so far as to advance grandiose visions of invading mainland China from Taiwan.¹⁵

Nothing came of such fantasies, for while the 1874 Taiwan Expedition subjugated the island’s southeast indigenous peoples, Meiji leaders were unprepared to go to war with the Qing. Moreover, Britain and the United States were strongly opposed to Japan’s incursion: trade in Taiwan’s camphor, tea, and sugar had flourished since the opening of the island’s treaty ports after the Second Opium War (1856–60). These Western powers did not want to give up their profits, and the Japanese government did not want to antagonize them. In the end, Japan withdrew its forces, and the Qing paid a small indemnity that effectively acknowledged the Ryūkyūs as part of Japan but required no territorial concessions. Over the next few decades, Japanese leaders turned their focus northward to rivalries with the Qing and Russia over the Korean peninsula.

Japan’s imperial ambitions toward neighboring regions in Asia were driven as much by preemptive defensiveness as by the pursuit of power and prestige. By the end of the nineteenth century, the kingdoms of Southeast Asia were to be divided into the Western colonies of British Malaya and Burma, French Indochina, the Dutch East Indies, and the US Philippines.¹⁶ Japanese leaders worried that a potential foreign occupation of Korea would make Japan, whose “western gate” (*seimon*) of Tsushima was just thirty miles away, a vulnerable target. Likewise, a Western annexation of Taiwan would similarly leave the “southern gate” (*nanmon*) of their Okinawan islands, one hundred miles away, susceptible to invasion.¹⁷ These fears were warranted. As

early as the 1850s, American officials in East Asia, including Commodore Matthew Perry, advocated annexing Taiwan for its commercial value. They did not receive the backing of the US government, but that did not mean Taiwan was safe from invasion. Over the coming decades, as the French extended their colonial possessions in Indochina northward up to Southwest China’s border, they attempted to incorporate Taiwan as well, occupying its northern ports during the Sino-French War (1884–85) to win concessions. The Qing staved off a French takeover only by mounting a successful defense of the rest of Taiwan.¹⁸ For the Japanese navy, the Sino-French War confirmed the strategic importance of Taiwan as a maritime base.¹⁹ A decade later, at the end of the First Sino-Japanese War, Japan secured the island for itself.

Since 1885, Japan and the Qing had agreed not to station their respective military forces in the Korean peninsula. When the Qing sent troops to support the Korean court against a peasant rebellion in spring 1894, Japan declared war against the Qing ostensibly “to protect Korea’s independence.” Over the coming months, Japan’s military defeated Qing forces in a series of battles in Korea, Manchuria, and the Yellow Sea. In peace negotiations with the Qing, Japan’s Imperial Army lobbied for the Qing to cede South Manchuria as a northern buffer against Russia. Japan’s Imperial Navy, meanwhile, pushed for Taiwan as a southern foothold in the East and South China Seas. The April 1895 Treaty of Shimonoseki ended the war and ceded both regions to Japan. A week later, however, Russia, France, and Germany mounted what came to be known as the Triple Intervention, pressuring Japan to return South Manchuria to the Qing. Japan was allowed to retain Taiwan by assuring the Western powers commercial access to the island and freedom of shipping in the Taiwan Strait.²⁰

Japan’s acquisition of Taiwan in 1895 marked the formal start of its overseas empire. In

contrast to Hokkaido and Okinawa, for example, which the Meiji government legally incorporated as part of Japan's metropole (*naichi*), Taiwan was governed as a colony (*gaichi*). Some historians have argued that Hokkaido and Okinawa should be viewed as Japan's first colonies. However, while residents of these territories initially faced legal and ethnic discrimination, they were gradually incorporated as citizens of Japan's metropole with civic rights unavailable in colonies like Taiwan.²¹ Though Han Taiwanese subjects became Japanese nationals, they did not receive access to primary education, social welfare, and conscription duties equal to those of Japanese citizens in the metropole.²² Scholars have termed the second-class status of colonial subjecthood, which later applied to Koreans and other colonized Asians, as Japanese "regional citizenship" or "sub-nationality."²³ Still, the Japanese gave the Han Taiwanese more social privileges and opportunities than the upland indigenous Taiwanese (called *banjin* or "savages" by the authorities), who were governed separately in a specially administered indigenous territorial zone in eastern Taiwan.²⁴

A decade after acquiring Taiwan, Japan won the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5) and turned its focus northward. The Japanese occupied Korea, the Kwantung Leasehold in South Manchuria, Karafuto (Sakhalin), and the rest of Manchuria in 1931 before taking over strategic regions in North, Central, and South China during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–45). Previous narratives of Japan's empire have largely focused on these northern advances into continental East Asia.²⁵ The story of Japan's southern advance is generally told in small bursts, when historians discuss Japanese expansionist fantasies of the South Pacific in the 1870s–80s and the acquisition of Micronesia from Germany during World War I (1914–18).²⁶ Southern expansion only takes center stage with the Imperial Army and Navy's 1936 unified policy of simultaneous northern

and southern advance, which culminated in the Asia-Pacific War (1941–45). Studies of wartime Japanese Pan-Asianist rhetoric and state-building have highlighted the puppet-state of Manchukuo (1932–45), Chinese collaborationist regimes (1937–45), and occupied Southeast Asia (1942–45).²⁷ Despite the intense scholarly interest in Japan's northern advance, recapturing the importance of southern expansion—especially radiating out from Taiwan—is essential for understanding the broader history of the Japanese empire.

Japan's Southern Advance

Orienting the geographic focus to the understudied southern half of Japan's empire centered on Taiwan, *Imperial Gateway* contends that, even as Japan's Imperial Army and Foreign Ministry prioritized northern advance in Korea and Manchuria from the 1900s up to the 1930s, Taiwan served as a pivotal gateway for Japan's contested southward advance through the Asia-Pacific War. In spite of the multi-vectored nature of Japanese empire-building, the strategic significance of Taiwan has been largely overlooked in the English-language historiography. Present-day accounts of Taiwan have remained surprisingly consistent with Mark Peattie's 1984 observation that Taiwan was peripheral to Japan's long-term foreign policies: "Taiwan was an imperial accessory, a laboratory where the 'new boy' among the colonial powers could show off his modernizing skills, not the heart of Japan's strategic concerns."²⁸ Historians have shown in various ways how Taiwan did indeed serve as a colonial "laboratory," but it was much more than a site for experiments.

To be sure, after the end of martial law in Taiwan in 1987 and ensuing political and academic liberalization, historical studies of the island have undergone a radical

transformation.²⁹ Since the 1990s, scholars have begun to rewrite the history of colonial Taiwan not as a local case study in Chinese anti-Japanese resistance undertaken by China, the narrative previously promoted by the Republic of China government, but from the perspectives of Taiwanese subjectivity and agency. Cultural and literary studies have illustrated the multifaceted nature of Japanese colonial rule and its mutual impact on Japanese and Taiwanese identity formation.³⁰ Sayaka Chatani, Evan Dawley, Paul Barclay, and Kirsten Ziomek, among others, have furthered our understanding of the limits of Japanese state power vis-à-vis colonial subjects.³¹ By highlighting the agency and various intermediary roles of the Han and indigenous Taiwanese, such works have revealed the fluidity of Japan's imperial hierarchies and categories. Hiroko Matsuda, David Ambaras, and Eiichiro Azuma have likewise traced the liminal mobilities of border-crossers to and from Taiwan—whether it be Taiwanese in Okinawa, Japanese adventurers from Taiwan to South China, or Japanese settlers from Hawai'i to Taiwan.³² Such works have pushed the spatial and analytic boundaries of Japan's empire beyond its formal territorial limits.

Building on such studies that challenge the standard geographies of Japan's empire, *Imperial Gateway* examines the intricate ties between Japanese colonial governance in Taiwan and a broader web of international relations. The conventional focus on bilateral ties between the metropole and its colonies simply cannot account for Japanese rule in Taiwan, which was shaped as much by developments in neighboring South China and Southeast Asia as by the will of leaders in Tokyo. In turn, Taiwan served as a conduit for Sino-Japanese relations and Japanese engagement with Southeast Asia. Approaching colonial Taiwan as an imperial gateway allows us to uncover regional networks and conflicts often neglected due to divisions in the academic subfields of Sino-Japanese, Sino-

Taiwanese, Japanese-Taiwanese, and Japanese-Southeast Asian relations.³³ Imperial expansion was a contested process among state agencies and mobile colonial subjects whose interests did not easily map onto national, local, or ethnoracial categories.

Conceptualizing Taiwan as an imperial gateway also expands our understanding of the regional dynamics of Japan's territorial peripheries. No other Japanese colony played a more critical role in informal and formal southern expansion during the first half of the twentieth century. Before annexing Taiwan in 1895, Japanese leaders first viewed Okinawa (formerly known as the Ryūkyūs) as their nation's "southern gateway." Since the sixteenth century, the Ryūkyū Kingdom had served as a critical intermediary for maritime trade between China, Japan, and Southeast Asia.³⁴ In the 1870s, Japan occupied the Ryūkyūs and incorporated them as Okinawa Prefecture, highlighting their potential for military defense and forward deployment. Yet after 1895, Taiwan replaced Okinawa as Japan's southern imperial gateway. Not only was Taiwan located closer to South China and Southeast Asia and further from Japan's archipelago, but it also had fifteen times the landmass and population.³⁵ Unlike in Taiwan and Korea, the Japanese government did not invest significant resources to develop Okinawa's infrastructure and industries. Hundreds of thousands of Okinawans went on to migrate to other parts of the Japanese metropole, Taiwan, Micronesia, the Philippines, Hawai'i, and Latin America for better socioeconomic opportunities but rarely as imperialists like the overseas Taiwanese.³⁶ As for Japan's northern territories, Hokkaido (formerly Ezo) served as a migratory entryway into colonial Karafuto (Sakhalin). Karafuto, on the other hand, never developed into an imperial gateway into northern Eurasia.³⁷

Micronesia, which the Japanese navy took over from Germany in the South Pacific during

World War I, served as the empire's secondary southern gateway through the Asia-Pacific War. Yet until the 1930s, several factors prevented Micronesia from becoming as important an imperial gateway as Taiwan until the 1930s. The islands were dispersed—stretching from the Marianas to the Carolines and Marshalls, and totaled only 860 square miles, one-fifteenth the size of Taiwan. Although Micronesia became a center for sugar production—with a sugar industry modelled on that of Taiwan—the islands remained too geographically distant to play a strategic or economic role in prewar East and Southeast Asia.³⁸ In Japan's hierarchy of colonial administrations, Micronesia, as a League of Nations mandate, ranked below Taiwan and Korea, on par with Karafuto and the Kwangtung Leasehold Territory.³⁹ The Taiwan Government-General even sought to incorporate Micronesia under its jurisdiction as part of an extended "Southern Regions Bloc" (Nanpō-ken) in the late-1930s (see chapter 6). In addition, Micronesia's mandate status and naval limitations treaties with the Anglo-American powers prevented Japan from fortifying the islands as military bases in the 1920s. Only after the collapse of the arms limitation agreements in the mid-1930s did the Imperial Navy use Micronesia to control strategic shipping lanes between Hawai'i and the Philippines; it also began to covertly construct air, sea, and land facilities in Micronesia that were critical to Japanese attacks against US Pacific territories in 1941.⁴⁰

The closest parallel to Taiwan as Japan's imperial schema was colonial Korea (1910–45), the empire's "northern gateway" to Manchuria in Northeast China.⁴¹ Both the Taiwan and Korean colonial governments sought to extend their spheres of power in order to defend their colonial borders against attacks by anti-Japanese insurgents, to advance cross-border economic and cultural interests, and to elevate their colonies' prestige and strategic relevance within Japan's empire. Since the mid-nineteenth century, the Korean-Manchurian

borderlands had been a contested site of inter-imperial mobility and sovereignty. Hundreds of thousands of Korean peasants crossed the Sino-Korean border at the Tumen River to settle farmlands in Manchuria. Some Koreans naturalized as Qing or Russian subjects for legal and economic protections, resulting in disputes over their jurisdiction among China, Korea, and Russia.⁴² Japan's occupation of Korea and the Kwantung Leasehold in 1905 did not stop Korean migration into Northeast China. Instead, Japanese officials in the Foreign Ministry, army, and colonial governments used their jurisdiction over transborder Korean subjects to advance economic and strategic interests in the rest of Manchuria.⁴³ Such imperial practices resembled those by the Taiwan Government-General and Foreign Ministry in South China, where Japanese authorities legitimated police and military intervention using the pretext of "protecting overseas Taiwanese from Chinese violence," as epitomized by the 1900 Xiamen Incident (chapter 1).

To be sure, the Korean Government-General enjoyed higher status and greater resources than its Taiwan counterpart. Korea, after all, had three times the landmass and four times the population.⁴⁴ Japan's army stationed many more garrisons in Korea and South Manchuria, which served as defensive buffers against Russia in the north and as military entryways into Northeast China, than it did in Taiwan. Ironically, however, the Foreign Ministry and army's greater attention to the Manchuria-Korean borderlands gave the Taiwan Government-General more leeway to expand its influence in South China. In Manchuria, Foreign Ministry officials competed for jurisdiction over Korean subjects with the Korea Government-General, Kwantung Government-General, South Manchurian Railway Company, and Kwantung Army.⁴⁵ By contrast, the Foreign Ministry devoted few resources to South China and largely delegated police and judicial responsibilities to the

Taiwan Government-General, which established a foothold in South China with more independence up until the Second Sino-Japanese War. Despite having fewer resources, the Taiwan Government-General had a freer hand and less competition in South China than the Korean Government-General in Northeast China.

Other colonies among the Western empires served as imperial gateways too, and their histories can help throw Taiwan's into further relief. For example, India, which served as Britain's entry point for the Middle East and Indian Ocean regions, possessed more institutional autonomy and greater economic and military power than Taiwan. The Indian Government-General presided over the Indian Army, the British empire's largest force, consisting of majority Indian soldiers and financed by colonial revenues. The Indian Army led incursions in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, and the resulting acquisitions—the Straits Settlements, Aden, and Burma, among others—were placed under India's jurisdiction for several decades, until they became separate colonies supervised by the Colonial Office in London.⁴⁶ Taiwan, by contrast, never possessed its own independent army or foreign office and remained subordinate to directives issued by Tokyo's Imperial Army and Foreign Ministry in its international relations. Yet even with far less manpower and resources than both Korea and India, the Taiwan Government-General helped shape the trajectory of Japan's southern expansion through its use of overseas Taiwanese as gateway subjects.



Figure 2: The Taiwan Government-General headquarters in the colonial capital of Taipei, 1919. The European Baroque-style building was over 400 feet wide with an imposing eleven-story tower in the center 200 feet long, symbolic of the Government-General's power. Courtesy of the National Taiwan Library.

Gateway Actors

Some historians have contended that Japan's empire differed from its Western counterparts in that the Japanese shared racial and cultural affinities with their colonial subjects in East Asia. Certainly, Japan's early territorial acquisitions in Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria were geographically closer to the metropole than the Western powers' far-flung colonies in the Americas, Africa, and Asia.⁴⁷ Moreover, when the moral legitimacy of empires came under attack, the Japanese attempted to justify colonial rule through Pan-Asianist rhetoric and assimilation policies predicated on shared heritages, typified by the motto of "same culture, same race" (J. *dōbun dōshu*, C. *tongwen tongzhong*). In practice, however, Japanese assimilationist rule was rife with contradictions, and just as hierarchical and discriminatory as the colonial governance of

the Western imperial powers.⁴⁸

Japan governed based on what Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper have called the politics of difference, striving to maintain imperial hierarchies through differentiated ethnic policies.⁴⁹ Ethnic Japanese were first-class subjects with civic and social rights, while Taiwanese and Koreans were relegated to second-class status, without equal access to education, welfare, or conscription duties. Still, in official and popular Japanese discourse, the Taiwanese and Koreans were “fellow compatriots” (*dōhō*), and on account of their colonial subjecthood, they ranked above the Chinese in legal and civilizational status.

Most Western imperial powers enlisted colonial subjects as armed soldiers during World War I, but Japan did not.⁵⁰ Despite promoting Pan-Asianist rhetoric of a shared ethnocultural heritage among its colonies, the Japanese empire did not trust its colonial subjects to bear arms until the late 1930s, when the outbreak of total war in China demanded a considerable increase in military manpower.⁵¹ Japanese authorities had long trumpeted the common ancestral ties of Koreans and Japanese, and began enlisting Korean subjects first, in 1938. But they saw the Han Taiwanese as more ethnically distinct, sharing heritage with the Han Chinese across the strait in South China, which made the Japanese anxious about Taiwanese loyalty and hesitant to arm them until 1942, several years into the fighting.

Despite fears of pro-Chinese sentiment among Taiwanese subjects, the Japanese also valued that Chinese heritage, which they leveraged to extend Japan’s spheres of influence across the East and South China Seas. To compensate for the lack of Japanese settlers and resources in South China, the Taiwan Government-General actively naturalized tens of thousands of resident Chinese as overseas Taiwanese subjects. At the time, the Anglo-American imperial powers were increasingly stringent

about extending extraterritorial protection to their ethnic Chinese subjects (from colonial Hong Kong, Malaya, and the Philippines) in China’s treaty ports. In contrast, Japanese colonial authorities embraced the growing number of Chinese who wished to benefit from the extraterritorial privileges accorded to Taiwanese subjects. By the turn of the twentieth century, the Taiwanese population in Fujian outnumbered Western settlers, which helped the Japanese claim imperial hegemony in the province. The Taiwan Government-General then sought to take advantage of linguistic and kinship ties that overseas Taiwanese shared with local Chinese to mediate Sino-Japanese partnerships in business, politics, and culture.

But the overseas Taiwanese were not mere pawns of Japan’s empire. They often leveraged their liminal status between multiple nationalities and jurisdictions to pursue illicit enterprises or anti-imperial activities irrespective of state interests. Taiwanese exercised considerable agency by taking advantage of their local Chinese ties and Japanese extraterritorial status. For example, members of prominent Taiwanese families (the Lins of Banqiao and the Lins of Wufeng, no relation) who resided in Xiamen maintained dual Sino-Japanese nationality. Some worked for Taiwan-based companies while concurrently serving as local Chinese officials, taking advantage of economic and political ties with Japanese and Chinese authorities as they saw fit. Thus, South China was a source of both opportunity and anxiety for the Japanese, who could not always control the activities and loyalties of the overseas Taiwanese.

The phenomenon of colonial subjects exerting agency overseas was certainly not limited to Taiwan. The manipulation of nationality and extraterritoriality and the transgression of territorial and social boundaries have been central to the colonial experience at the edges of empires.⁵² Yet few other empires had the

same ethnocultural advantage that the Han Taiwanese, as ethnic Chinese, provided Japan. In most other cases, empires benefitted not from local naturalization, but from physical migration by colonial subjects. Millions of Indians as British subjects, for instance, traversed the Indian Ocean into Africa and Asia as laborers, merchants, policemen, and soldiers. In China's treaty ports, a sizeable population of Indian and Middle Eastern subjects served as imperial go-betweens.⁵³ Indian Sikhs made up most British police forces in colonial Hong Kong and concessions in Shanghai and other treaty ports because of their ostensible military background and reputation for loyalty.⁵⁴ As for commercial activities in China's treaty ports, Indian and Middle Eastern subjects leveraged extraterritorial rights to manage Britain's opium trade between India and China.⁵⁵ What distinguished overseas Taiwanese from their British colonial counterparts was their shared ethnic and linguistic ties to the local Chinese population.

Hundreds of thousands of Koreans settled in Manchuria before Japan took it over from China in 1931. Yet, they too were migrants rather than naturalized Chinese subjects. Korean settlers were largely impoverished farmers who had left Korea in search of greater opportunities in wet rice agriculture. Other Koreans migrated to Manchurian cities as merchants and smugglers, many of whom took advantage of Japanese extraterritorial protection to participate in the illicit opium trade—as did their Taiwanese counterparts in South China. Opium revenues amassed by Koreans were part of Japan's largest narcotics economy, a system controlled by the Kwantung Army in Manchuria.⁵⁶ By contrast, Taiwanese opium dealers in coastal South China shared their profits with local Chinese authorities, whether it was warlords or the Chinese Nationalist Party, but not with Japanese officials until the occupation of the region in 1938. Some Koreans also migrated to

Manchuria for political rather than economic reasons. Like the Taiwanese who moved to South and Central China to participate in anti-Japanese movements (see chapter 2), Korean activists sought refuge in Manchuria to avoid police persecution and form anti-Japanese resistance groups.⁵⁷

It was only after the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese and Asia-Pacific wars that Japanese authorities began to dispatch tens of thousands of Taiwanese overseas to participate in military occupation (in contrast to the prewar strategy of naturalizing South Chinese residents). The Taiwan Government-General lobbied to expand its administrative powers beyond Taiwan as head of a "Southern Regions Colony" that included the South China coast, South China Sea islands, and Micronesia. Supported by Japan's navy, which captured the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea from French Indochina in 1939, the islands were brought under Taiwan's jurisdiction. Ultimately, however, the Government-General was limited to a cooperative, rather than a leading role in Japan's occupation of South China, which remained under the administration of the army and navy. Still, the Japanese military relied on Taiwan's institutions and personnel for regional expertise to administer coastal South China. Especially in wartime Xiamen and Hainan, the navy turned to tens of thousands of Taiwanese—including residents from the prewar period—with bilingual skills to help restore public order and manage businesses and industries.

In wartime South China and Southeast Asia, within the imperial hierarchy, Taiwanese remained relegated to a second-class status below that of the Japanese but in supervisory positions above that of local civilians and Allied POWs. Like their Korean counterparts, Han and indigenous Taiwanese experienced Japanese coercion and social pressure to serve in the military. Many Taiwanese, however, also

willingly volunteered out of patriotism and belief in Japan's war mission. From military assistants to nurses, self-professed patriotic Taiwanese fought against the Chinese and Western Allies to prove that they were just as capable and loyal as the Japanese. Even Taiwanese with conflicted feelings toward the Japanese were drawn to wartime opportunities overseas with higher pay and prestige than those in Taiwan. Examining Taiwanese roles in the Asia-Pacific wars allows us to better understand the historical context of war memories, identities, and nationalisms that resulted from Japan's southern advance.

Sources and Chapter Overview

Imperial Gateway draws on source materials in six countries and three languages. In addition to Tokyo-based ministry archives, I make use of Taiwan Government-General archives in Taipei that were made public in the 1990s after the end of martial law in Taiwan. Only by studying these materials alongside Chinese, British, and American sources can we better understand how the Government-General cooperated with and contested the Foreign Ministry, army, and navy regarding imperial relations in South China and Southeast Asia. Some Taiwanese subjects—most of them educated elites—wrote in Japanese and Chinese about their activities and views regarding Japan's southern expansion, and their archives have been important sources. But most of the Taiwanese individuals I describe—especially the overseas Taiwanese in South China and Southeast Asia—left few records of their own. To understand their experiences, I rely on reports from Japanese, Chinese, and Anglo-American officials in East and Southeast Asia, as well as newspaper coverage on the overseas Taiwanese. For the 1930s and 1940s, I supplement these sources with oral histories by Taiwanese military personnel transcribed since the 1990s. There are certainly methodological

challenges in using what Ann Heylen has described as Taiwanese “ego-documents,” which retrospectively historicize wartime experiences through selective memory and contemporary views toward the Chinese Nationalist Party, Japan, and mainland China.⁵⁸ Still, even if filtered through hindsight, such sources allow us to hear about firsthand experiences of wartime subjects, helping to fill in the gaps that remain in official archives.

This book consists of six body chapters divided into two parts that weave together macro and micro perspectives. Rather than privileging a top-down narrative of state governance or a bottom-up story centered on colonial subjects, each chapter illustrates how Japan's empire-building and on-the-ground activities by local actors were mutually constitutive processes. Part 1, “Overseas Subjects as Gateway Actors,” examines how the Taiwan Government-General sought to mobilize Taiwanese overseas to extend Japan's informal empire in prewar East and Southeast Asia. Chapter 1, “Opening a Gateway into China,” analyzes how Japan's acquisition of Taiwan initiated new vectors for expansion across the strait in South China. Chapter 2, “Taiwanese in South China's Borders Zones,” explores how, even without the Tokyo central government's full support, the Taiwan Government-General mobilized the overseas Taiwanese as imperial intermediaries with ethnolinguistic ties to the local population in South China. At the same time, overseas Taiwanese often took advantage of their dual Sino-Japanese status to pursue individual interests beyond the limits of state control. Chapter 3, “Taiwanese in Southeast Asia,” examines how the Government-General promoted Taiwan as integral to Japan's economic advance in Southeast Asia. It was less successful in mobilizing Taiwanese in the Western colonies of Southeast Asia, though, than it had been in China: in these other colonies, the Taiwanese lacked the legal advantages and sufficient numbers to challenge the dominance of well-established overseas

Chinese networks.

Part 2, “The Wartime Gateway,” shifts the focus to the Asia-Pacific wars and Taiwan’s integral role in Japan’s military occupation of South China and Southeast Asia. The Government-General initially sought to extend its administrative powers beyond Taiwan as head of a “Southern Regions Colony” that ranged from South China to Micronesia. While the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea were incorporated as part of Taiwan, intra-imperial rivalries among the army, navy, and Colonial Ministry ultimately curbed the Government-General’s aspirations to further expand its jurisdiction. Nevertheless, Japan’s military services relied on Taiwan for southern regional expertise and personnel unavailable in the home islands.

Chapter 4, “Mobilizing for War,” introduces the dilemmas faced by Japanese authorities in sending Taiwanese to the China war front. Even as wartime *kōminka* (“imperial subjectification”) policies sought to replace Taiwan’s culture with radical Japanization, the Japanese recruited Taiwanese as military

interpreters, laborers, and medical personnel precisely because of their Chinese linguistic skills. The Imperial Navy and Army also enlisted Taiwan’s personnel to help administer the region—the focus of chapter 5, “Colonial Liaisons in Occupied South China.” Tens of thousands of Taiwanese took advantage of wartime opportunities for socioeconomic advancement to work in Japanese-led occupation governments. Chapter 6, “Advancing into the Southern Regions,” analyzes how the Japanese deployed Han Taiwanese to mediate between military authorities and the overseas Chinese in occupied Southeast Asia. Indigenous Taiwanese were also enlisted as military assistants for their jungle warfare expertise in the Philippines and the East Indies. All three wartime chapters juxtapose Japanese sources that celebrated the Taiwanese as “model Japanese subjects” with firsthand experiences recounted by Taiwanese in oral testimonies. Lastly, the epilogue explores the postwar aftermath and legacies resulting from the collapse of Japan’s empire and the retrocession of Taiwan to the Republic of China.

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Notes

¹ Tsurumi Yūsuke, *Taiwan jidai, 1898–1906*, vol. 3 of *Seiden Gotō Shinpei: ketteiban*, rev. and annot. (Ikkai Tomoyoshi Fujiwara Shoten, 2005), 567. On the Japanese geographic term Nan’yō, see “Note to the Reader” in the Front Matter.

² Tonio Andrade, *How Taiwan Became Chinese: Dutch, Spanish, and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Xing Hang, *Conflict and Commerce in Maritime East Asia: The Zheng Family and the Shaping of the Modern World, c. 1620–1720* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016); John R. Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600–1800* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University

Press, 1993); Emma J. Teng, *Taiwan's Imagined Geography: Chinese Colonial Travel Writing and Pictures, 1683–1895* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004).

³ Leonard H. D. Gordon, *Confrontation over Taiwan: Nineteenth-Century China and the Powers* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), chaps. 2–3.

⁴ Japanese officials called Han Taiwanese subjects who lived in Taiwan “islanders” (J. *hontōjin*, C. *bendaoren*) or “Taiwanese” (J. *Taiwanjin*, C. *Taiwanren*). The English convention for Taiwan’s indigenous peoples since the 1990s has been “Indigeneous Taiwanese” (J. *genjūmin*, C. *yuanzhumin*). Paul D. Barclay, *Outcasts of Empire: Japan's Rule on Taiwan's "Savage Border," 1874–1945* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017). On Austronesians as the island’s first inhabitants and their common ancestry with indigenous peoples across Southeast Asia and the Pacific, see Peter Bellwood, “Formosan Prehistory and Austronesian Dispersal,” in *Austronesian Taiwan: Linguistics, History, Ethnology, and Prehistory*, ed. David Blundell (Taipei: SMC Publishing, 2001), 337–65.

⁵ Tay-sheng Wang, *Legal Reform in Taiwan under Japanese Colonial Rule, 1895–1945: The Reception of Western Law* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000).

⁶ Kodama Gentarō, “Taiwan tōchi no kiō oyobi shōrai ni kansuru kakusho” (June 1899), reprinted in Tsurumi, *Taiwan jidai*, 493–506.

⁷ On the socioeconomic challenges that the Government-General faced during its first few years, see Reo Matsuzaki, *Statebuilding by Imposition: Resistance and Control in Colonial Taiwan and the Philippines* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019), chap. 3.

⁸ On the conceptualization of gates as thresholds and liminal spaces that navigate power, see Daniel Jütte, *The Strait Gate: Thresholds and Power in Western History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015).

⁹ On migratory ties between South China and Southeast Asia, see Huei-Ying Kuo, *Networks beyond Empires: Chinese Business and Nationalism in the Hong Kong-Singapore Corridor, 1914–1941* (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Shelly Chan, *Diaspora's Homeland: Modern China in the Age of Global Migration* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018); Soon Keong Ong, *Coming Home to a Foreign Country: Xiamen and Returned Overseas Chinese, 1843–1938* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021); Melissa Macauley, *Distant Shores: Colonial Encounters in China's Maritime Frontier* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021).

¹⁰ Recent studies on intra-imperial competition among Japanese officials in Korea, Manchuria, and Japan include Jun Uchida, *Brokers of Empire: Japanese Settler Colonialism in Korea, 1876–1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), 272–302; Erik Esselstrom, *Crossing Empire's Edge: Foreign Ministry Police and Japanese Expansionism in Northeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), chaps. 2–3; Emer O'Dwyer, *Significant Soil: Settler Colonialism and Japan's Urban Empire in Manchuria* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), chaps. 2–3, 8; Joseph A. Seeley, “Liquid Geography: The Yalu River and the Boundaries of Empire in East Asia, 1894–1945” (PhD diss., Stanford University, 2019), chaps. 3–5; David Fedman, *Seeds of Control: Japan's Empire of Forestry in Colonial Korea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020), chap. 5.

¹¹ Western powers obtained extraterritoriality in China with the unequal treaties in 1842. Pär Cassel, *Grounds of Judgment: Extraterritoriality and Imperial Power in Nineteenth-Century China and Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹² Eileen P. Scully, *Bargaining with the State from Afar: American Citizenship in Treaty Port*

China, 1844–1942 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); Robert A. Bickers, “Legal Fiction: Extraterritoriality as an Instrument of British Power in China in the ‘Long Nineteenth Century,’” in *The Long Nineteenth Century*, vol. 2 of *Empire in Asia: A New Global History*, ed. Brian P. Farrell and Donna Brunero (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 53–80.

¹³ By “semi-colonial” China, I adopt Shu-mei Shih’s definition of treaty port zones where foreign nationals enjoyed concessions and extraterritoriality. Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917–1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 30–32; Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Bryna Goodman and David S. G. Goodman, *Twentieth-Century Colonialism and China: Localities, the Everyday and the World* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).

¹⁴ Takahiro Yamamoto, “Balance of Favour: The Emergence of Territorial Boundaries Around Japan, 1861–1875” (PhD. diss., London School of Economics, 2015), chaps. 3–6; Wendy Matsumura, *The Limits of Okinawa: Japanese Capitalism, Living Labor, and Theorizations of Community* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015); David Chapman, “History and the Bonin (Ogasawara) Islands: Connecting Japan and the Pacific,” in *Routledge Handbook of Race and Ethnicity in Asia*, ed. Michael Weiner (London: Routledge, 2021), 381–92.

¹⁵ Robert Eskildsen, *Transforming Empire in Japan and East Asia: The Taiwan Expedition and the Birth of Japanese Imperialism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), chaps. 3–6; Danny Orbach, *Curse on This Country: The Rebellious Army of Imperial Japan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017), 38–53.

¹⁶ Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895–1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 13–24.

¹⁷ Gotō Ken’ichi, *Kindai Nihon no ‘Nanshin’ to Okinawa* (Iwanami Shoten, 2015), 13–22.

¹⁸ Gordon, *Confrontation Over Taiwan*, 24–37, 55–66.

¹⁹ Liang Hua-huang [Liang Huahuang], *Taiwan zongdufu de “duian” zhengce yanjiu: Riju shidai TaiMin guanxi shi* (Daoxiang, 2001), 29.

²⁰ Gordon, *Confrontation Over Taiwan*, 184–86.

²¹ Oguma Eiji, *Nihonjin no kyōkai: Okinawa, Ainu, Taiwan, Chōsen, shokuminchi shihai kara fukki undō made* (Shin’yōsha, 1998), chaps. 1–4; cf. Alan S. Christy, “The Making of Imperial Subjects in Okinawa,” in *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia*, ed. Tani Barlow (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 141–70.

²² Han Taiwanese were legally distinguished from the Japanese by separate regional family registration systems. Haruka Nomura, “Making the Japanese Empire: Nationality and Family Register in Taiwan, 1871–1899,” *Japanese Studies* 30, no. 1 (April 2010): 69–71.

²³ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “Migrants, Subjects, Citizens: Comparative Perspectives on Nationality in the Prewar Japanese Empire,” *Japan Focus* 6, no. 8 (August 2008): 6; Michael Kim, “‘Sub-Nationality’ in the Japanese Empire: A Social History of the *Koseki* in Colonial Korea, 1910–45,” in *Japan’s Household Registration System and Citizenship: Koseki, Identification and Documentation*, ed. David Chapman and Karl Jakob Krogness (New York: Routledge, 2014), 112.

²⁴ The Japanese placed upland indigenous Taiwanese in separate “Savage District Registers” (*bansha daichō*). Masataka Endō, *State Construction of ‘Japaneseness’: The Household Registration System in Japan*, trans. Barbara Hartley and ed. Miriam Riley (Melbourne: Trans

Pacific Press, 2019), 142–43, 168; Barclay, *Outcasts of Empire*.

²⁵ Louise Young, *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Yoshihisa Tak Matsusaka, *The Making of Japanese Manchuria, 1904–1932* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2001); O'Dwyer, *Significant Soil*; Uchida, *Brokers of Empire*.

²⁶ Jun Uchida, "Island Nation to Oceanic Empire: A Vision of Japanese Expansion From the Periphery," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 42, no. 1 (Winter 2016): 57–68, 81–89; J. Charles Schencking, "The Imperial Japanese Navy and the Constructed Consciousness of a South Seas Destiny, 1872–1921," *Modern Asian Studies* 33, no. 4 (October 1999): 771–78; Mark R. Peattie, *Nan'yō: The Rise and Fall of the Japanese in Micronesia, 1885–1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1988); Paul Kreitman, *Japan's Ocean Borderlands: Nature and Sovereignty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

²⁷ On Pan-Asianism and Manchukuo, see Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); Eri Hotta, *Pan-Asianism and Japan's War 1931–1945* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). On occupied North and Central China, see Kelly A. Hammond, *China's Muslims and Japan's Empire: Centering Islam in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020); Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Christian Henriot and Wen-Hsin Yeh, ed., *In the Shadow of the Rising Sun: Shanghai Under Japanese Occupation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). On Japan's occupation of Southeast Asia, see Jeremy A. Yellen, *The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere: When Total Empire Met Total War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019); Ethan Mark, *Japan's Occupation of Java in the Second World War: A Transnational History* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

²⁸ Mark Peattie, introduction to *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945*, ed. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 16.

²⁹ In Taiwan under martial law (1947–87), the study of colonial Taiwan other than as a local Chinese case of "anti-Japanese resistance" was politically taboo. Asano Toyomi, "Historical Perceptions of Taiwan's Japan Era," in *Toward a History beyond Borders: Contentious Issues in Sino-Japanese Relations*, ed. Daqing Yang, Jie Liu, Hiroshi Mitani, and Andrew Gordon (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012), 299–339; Wen-Hsin Yeh, "A Quiet Revolution: Oppositional Politics and the Writing of Taiwanese History," in *Mobile Horizons: Dynamics across the Taiwan Strait*, ed. Wen-Hsin Yeh (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 2013), 259–86.

³⁰ Leo T. S. Ching, *Becoming "Japanese": Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Faye Yuan Kleeman, *Under an Imperial Sun: Japanese Colonial Literature of Taiwan and the South* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003); Robert T. Tierney, *Tropics of Savagery the Culture of Japanese Empire in Comparative Frame* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Kate McDonald, *Placing Empire: Travel and the Social Imagination in Imperial Japan* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017). On Taiwanese identity, see Ming-cheng M. Lo, *Doctors within Borders: Profession, Ethnicity, and Modernity in Colonial Taiwan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Shih-jung Tzeng, *From Hōnto Jin to Bensheng Ren: The Origin and Development of Taiwanese National Consciousness* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2009).

³¹ Sayaka Chatani, *Nation-Empire: Ideology and Rural Youth Mobilization in Japan and Its Colonies* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018); Evan N. Dawley, *Becoming Taiwanese: Ethnogenesis in a Colonial City, 1880s–1950s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2019); Kirsten L. Ziomek, *Lost Histories: Recovering the Lives of Japan's Colonial Peoples* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2019); Barclay, *Outcasts of Empire*.

³² Hiroko Matsuda, *Liminality of the Japanese Empire: Border Crossings From Okinawa to Colonial Taiwan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018); David R. Ambaras, *Japan's Imperial Underworlds: Intimate Encounters at the Borders of Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Eiichiro Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier: Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan's Borderless Empire* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), chap. 6; Mariko Iijima, "Sugar Islands in the Pacific in the Early Twentieth Century: Taiwan as a Protégé of Hawai'i," *Historische Anthropologie* 27, no. 3 (December 2019): 361–81.

³³ My work is indebted to pioneering scholarship by Nakamura Takashi, Liang Hua-huang, Kondō Masami, Chung Shu-ming, Adam Schneider, Lin Man-houng, and Gotō Ken'ichi, who were among the first to trace Japanese and Taiwanese networks between Taiwan, China, and Southeast Asia. See notes and bibliography for their references.

³⁴ Man-houng Lin, "The Ryukyus and Taiwan in the East Asian Seas: A Longue Duree Perspective," *Asia-Pacific Journal* 4, no. 10 (October 2006): 2–3.

³⁵ Gotō, *Kindai Nihon no 'Nanshin' to Okinawa*, 21, 76.

³⁶ Hundreds of thousands of Okinawans migrated to other parts of the Japanese metropole, Taiwan, Micronesia, the Philippines, Hawai'i, and Latin America for better socioeconomic opportunities. Those in Taiwan even enjoyed legal status as Japanese colonialists. Matsuda, *Liminality of the Japanese Empire*; Ronald Y. Nakasone, ed. *Okinawan Diaspora* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002).

³⁷ Sidney Xu Lu, *The Making of Japanese Settler Colonialism: Malthusianism and Trans-Pacific Migration, 1868–1961* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), chap. 1; Ziomek, *Lost Histories*, chaps. 1–2, 4, 7; Steven Ivings, "Colonial Settlement and Migratory Labour in Karafuto 1905–1941" (PhD diss., London School of Economics, 2014).

³⁸ On intra-colonial relations between Taiwan and Micronesia, see Yamada Atsushi, "Shokuminchi Taiwan kara i'nin tōchi Nan'yō Guntō e: nanshin kōzō no kyojitsu," in *Nan'yō Guntō to teikoku, kokusai chitsujo*, ed. Asano Toyomi (Jigakusha Shuppan, 2007), 143–63.

³⁹ Edward I-te Chen, "The Attempt to Integrate the Empire: Legal Perspectives," in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945*, ed. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 242–46, 262–66.

⁴⁰ Peattie, *Nan'yō*, chap. 8. Because Micronesia was not a formal colony, Micronesian residents never obtained Japanese nationality. Thus unlike the Han Taiwanese, they did not experience overseas mobility or second-class imperialist status until the Asia-Pacific War, when thousands were enlisted as military assistants in Pacific islands taken from the United States. The wartime overseas deployment of Micronesians was more analogous to that of the indigenous Taiwanese. Keith Camacho, *Cultures of Commemoration: The Politics of War, Memory, and History in the Mariana Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011); Lin Poyer, Suzanne Falgout, and Laurence Marshall Carucci, *The Typhoon of War*:

Micronesian Experiences of the Pacific War (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001).

⁴¹ Scholars like Jun Uchida have called colonial Korea a Japanese “gateway” to the Chinese continent. Uchida, *Brokers of Empire*, chap. 7.

⁴² Alyssa M. Park, *Sovereignty Experiments: Korean Migrants and the Building of Borders in Northeast Asia, 1860–1945* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019), chaps. 1–3; Nianshen Song, *Making Borders in Modern East Asia: The Tumen River Demarcation, 1881–1919* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), chaps. 1–4.

⁴³ Esselstrom, *Crossing Empire's Edge*, chaps. 2–4; Hyun Ok Park, *Two Dreams in One Bed: Empire, Social Life, and the Origins of the North Korean Revolution in Manchuria* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), chaps. 1–3; Song, *Making Borders*, chaps. 4–6.

⁴⁴ The Taiwan Government-General was monitored by the Home Ministry but the Korea Government-General was only supervised by the Emperor. While the Korean governor-general required the rank of general or admiral, his counterpart in Taiwan could be a lieutenant general or vice-admiral. Korea also had over twice the number of officials as Taiwan (in 1926, for example, there were 28,657 officials in Korea compared to 11,873 in Taiwan, 3,537 in South Manchuria, 969 in Karafuto, and 288 in Micronesia). Chen, “Attempt to Integrate the Empire,” 262–66; Okamoto Makiko, *Shokuminchi kanryō no seijishi: Chōsen, Taiwan sōtokufu to Teikoku Nihon* (Sangensha, 2008), 43, 88–96.

⁴⁵ O'Dwyer, *Significant Soil*; Esselstrom, *Crossing Empire's Edge*.

⁴⁶ Thomas R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Sugata A. Bose, *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

⁴⁷ Mark R. Peattie, “Japanese Attitudes Toward Colonialism, 1895–1945,” in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895–1945*, ed. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 96–104.

⁴⁸ Komagome Takeshi, *Shokuminchi Teikoku Nihon no bunka tōgō* (Iwanami Shoten, 1996); Ching, *Becoming “Japanese.”*

⁴⁹ Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 11–12.

⁵⁰ Robert Gerwarth and Erez Manela, ed., *Empires At War: 1911–1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); David Killingray and David Omissi, ed., *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers c. 1700–1964* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

⁵¹ Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Brandon Palmer, *Fighting for the Enemy: Koreans in Japan's War, 1937–1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013).

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⁵³ Claude Markovits, “Indian Communities in China, c. 1842–1949,” in *New Frontiers: Imperialism's New Communities in East Asia, 1842–1953*, ed. Robert A. Bickers and Christian

Henriot (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 55–74.

⁵⁴ Yin Cao, *From Policemen to Revolutionaries: A Sikh Diaspora in Global Shanghai, 1885–1945* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

⁵⁵ Sarah A. Stein, “Protected Persons? The Baghdadi Jewish Diaspora, the British State, and the Persistence of Empire,” *American Historical Review* 116, no. 1 (February 2011): 80–108.

⁵⁶ Miriam Kingsberg, “Status and Smoke: Koreans in Japan’s Opium Empire,” in *Mobile Subjects: Boundaries and Identities in the Modern Korean Diaspora*, ed. Wen-Hsin Yeh (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies, 2013), 53.

⁵⁷ Esselstrom, *Crossing Empire’s Edge*, chaps. 3–4; Seeley, “Liquid Geography,” chap. 3.

⁵⁸ Ann Heylen, “Diaries and Oral Histories as Ego-Documents in the Representations of the Taiwanese Nation,” *European Journal of East Asian Studies* 19, no. 1 (2020): 48–73.