Comparative study of Japanese colonialism in Taiwan and Hokkaido

The purpose of this comparative study is to reveal and emphasize the effects of the many different policies carried out by the Japanese in those two islands, which were the empire’s first attempts of colonialism during the Meiji era.

The starting point of these problematics is the evidence that Taiwan and Hokkaido share many historical parallels. For instance, their utilization as asylums by rebel lords or dynasties, as out-of-law lands by pirates and merchants. Also, Taiwan and Hokkaido both kept a long-lasting frontier between indigenous populations and mainland immigrants, and both were the targets of European countries wishing to use them as trading posts from where they could organize trade with China, Japan, or other Asian countries.

Consequently, this research focuses on how did the Japanese consider and manage those new territories, through policies and ways of developing and exploiting them, and with a remaining question, were these lands ever considered, inside or outside, to be part of Japan, and how did this affect the mentalities and self-consideration of Hokkaido’s inhabitants and the Taiwanese, from the late 19th century to these days?

Indeed, both islands were very early integrated as part of the Japanese territory, and being part of it, at least mentally, on a legitimate basis, since both were regarded as a logical extension of this very territory: as a continuation of the Ryukyu islands in the south, and as a both wild and barbaric land in the Northern side, but still part of the « Yukiguni » (雪国), a cognitive conception of all northernmost regions of Japan, of which the climate is damaging to the Japanese traditional lifestyle. The first phase of Japanese colonialism had a strong impact on both Taiwan and Hokkaido, before the ideology of pan-asianism had started to develop, before the second world war, and even before Japan actually entered an expansionist and martial logic.

Focusing mainly on the policies carried out by the Japanese administrators in both regions, concerning agricultural reforms, education, settling of Japanese citizens and integration of indigenous populations, and before the starting of the Japanese ideological wars
towards pan-asianism, this comparative study intends to enlighten the sociological, political, and identical determinants which prevailed then, in order to analyse their consequences on today’s populations and cultures in Taiwan and Hokkaido, laying the emphasize on their similarities.

As part of a wider research on Japanese colonialism in Hokkaido and its effects on the island’s political and cultural positions nowadays, which starts from the evidence that Japan must be regarded as a highly inward-looking society which, through those endeavors of expanding Japan’s territory, put an end to a long tradition of political and cultural confinement, and stood against the country’s character and will, a comparative study with Taiwan might help understanding what meant “being a Taiwanese” under the Japanese occupation, and how this sense of identity might still influence policies in Taiwan today.

In order to properly answer this question, it is important to use, as basic informations for this comparative study, few considerations related to Taiwan’s and Hokkaido’s territories and their populations. Indeed, as previously made explicit, many historical and sociological datas that appear to be shared by both territories matter a lot, not only in order to contemplate their depth but also their sociocultural scope until contemporary period.

Besides, in order to better consider the dimension of this identity paralellism between the two colonies, it is important that this comparative study shall be enlarged to those two state entities that Taiwan and Hokkaido are traditionally related to, China and Japan. To better understand the way that those nations currently regard and have been regarding those territories, and, through a game of cultural mirror, how the Taiwanese and Hokkaido’s inhabitants considered themselves, their territories, and what answers should be given to those questions : « What does it mean to be a Taiwanese ? », and « What does it mean to have been born in Hokkaido ? » ; from then on, a second question comes to us, to which we shall try to answer through the analysis of both those paralellisms : could a common historical determinism be considered, regarding the geographic situations of those islands ?

We shall begin with our comparative study of Taiwan and Hokkaido’s histories with Taiwan’s invasion by the Dutchs in the early seventeenth century, which stands for the opening of the Island to the outside world :
“Therefore, as early as the XVIIth Century, Taiwan opened itself to import-export trade, taking a direction that was basically different from that of the XVIIth Century continental China, which remained feudal and was striving to live in autarky.”

Here, the link with the Isle of Hokkaido is evident as far as both the dates and the facts are concerned:

« The great decision of the Tokugawa’s Shogunate remains the closing of all ports to foreigners, both merchants and missionaries, a closing that was gradual from 1616, but then became almost complete by 1639. It kept the archipelago dead to the rest of the world during more than two centuries. At first, the harbors of Hirado and Nagasaki remained opened. But soon enough, the Portuguese, the Spanish, and the British, who had been there since the early XVIIth century are asked to leave, only the Dutch can stay. »

But at the time, the fiefdom of Matsumae, a tiny enclave at the very south-east of Hokkaido, was home to a revival of the Japanese culture that had preceded the Shoguns’ Era, and managed to keep it alive until the Meiji restoration. It was the result of the rebellion and secession of a Daimyo, the Japanese equivalent to Russia’s Boyards before Ivan Vassilievitch’s reign, who had been the owner of one of the biggest fiefdoms in the North of Honshu, and had made the choice to remain faithful to the Emperor. Defeated when he chose to resist the Shogun’s army, he was exiled, along with his samurais, his peasants, and all his people to the Northern Island, then called Ezo, which is a synonym of “wild” and “unknown” in Japanese. Therefore, Matsumae was never to be obliged by the severe rules of the Shoguns, and always remained an open door to foreigners.

Besides, it allowed the cultures of Muromachi and Momoyama to stay alive, and was often used by the Shoguns themselves as a window through which the outside world could be observed. At the time, the only particularism which prevented Matsumae, and therefore Hokkaido, to become a privileged trade harbor and a target for Occidental nations was the well-known, and often exaggerated unkindness of its climate.

Therefore, Hokkaido’s territory remained, throughout the Matsumae’s Daimyos’ reign, mostly unknown and unexploited. The lands surrounding the harbor being enough fertile, and, most of all, the waters of the Matsumae’s strait being extremely abundant with fish and seaweeds, the inside populations, the Ainus, remained ignored and kept away from for a very long time, and Hokkaido was always to be regarded as a land of exile, as opposed to the Wagakuni, “Our Land”, meaning Japan.

As a matter of fact, all characteristics don’t match when comparing the histories of both Islands. Indeed, as far as Taiwan is concerned, even though the island was, to the Ming Dynasty and Zheng Cheng-gong, a land of asylum and became a rebel territory under the Qing dynasty, and therefore never really was regarded, by Koxinga and his descendants, as a territory where to settle down for a long period of time, still, they did attempt to benefit those lands as much as possible. As the Dutch were chased away, the rebel troops cleared the land and exploited it on a large scale, from Chiayi to Kaohsiung.

In 1663, Koxinga and his army had abandoned all positions in southern Fujian Province, and decidedly established what Zheng Jing called “a new state where Heaven and Earth were united”. This owed him to be called “King of Taiwan”.

From then on, both Taiwan and Hokkaido had become sovereign states, in which trade and exchanges with the outside weren’t handicapped by the Chinese Emperors or the Japanese Shoguns. So doing, the economic situations of both states grew particularly fast, until 1683 for Taiwan, and 1868 for Hokkaido.

From those periods of sovereignty, and though they differ in length, Hokkaido and Taiwan inherited a common past, but especially similar reputations and characteristics. Indeed, if Matsumae’s fiefdom was then described as a place of depravity, at least from the point of view of mainland’s Japanese, those particular behaviours, which piracy and banditry didn’t diminished, were also to be found in Taiwan and the Island’s reputation.

Yet another characteristic is to be found common in both territories, which concerns a mere sociological aspect rather than a historical one, is the way that immigration organized itself and took shape from mainlands’ regions to those new territories. This immigration was sparked off, depending on the cases, either by growing pauperization of provinces, as in the case of the Fujian, or by natural disasters which provoked entire communities to emigrate. In both cases, the settling in Taiwan and Hokkaido was a matter of groups, which divided themselves in small communities once arrived, and in both cases, this particular situation gave birth to many situations of rivalry, sometimes even fightings between communities, a
difficulty to establish a single culture that would have been particular to and representative of each territory, and, most of all, a difficulty to mentally settle down in those new regions without constantly contemplating a return to the mother land. Thus, a “Taiwanese identity” couldn’t emerge from this particular form of immigration, neither could it in Hokkaido.

Finally, another important sociologic parallel between the two islands is to be found in the way that indigenous populations were treated when they first came in contact with Chinese and Japanese settlers. An important fact is that in both cases, the immigrants chose to ignore the complexity of those populations’ cultures and made up extremely simplified classification system in order to refer to them. In the case of Hokkaido’s Ainus, no distinction was made between the numerous lifestyles, languages, or physical appearances that were observed. And in both cases, the populations were more likely to be driven away from the colonized lands rather than integrated or even tolerated as neighbours. In the case of Taiwan, although the “plain’s aborigines” were promptly forced to learn to communicate and relate to the colonizers, the “mountains’ aborigines” remained as unnoticed throughout the Chinese colonization, and until Taiwan became a Japanese territory. Therefore, in both cases, we are facing the contempt of one culture towards another one, a disdain which was backed, in the facts, by a severe segregation, and which we can only understand by looking closely at both the Chinese and Japanese mental determinants that were prevailing at the time.

We shall therefore try to draw a parallel between the psychological referents which characterize both the Chinese and the Japanese Empires when they look at those overseas territories. On one side there the Qing Empire, which ruled over Taiwan during two centuries, on the other side, the Shogun’s Japan, an archipelago of three main islands which long refused to consider Hokkaido as part of its territory. At first, a parallel can be drawned in the choices of terms and expressions that were chosen by the administrations and the populations to refer to Taiwan and Hokkaido.

On the Chinese side, Taiwan was this :

“Insignificant small piece of land. To acquire isn’t a benefit, to not acquire it isn’t an inconvenience.”

Therefore, the Chinese Empire can’t build its own image of Taiwan without being handicapped by its “Continental complex”:

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4 CORCUFF Stéphane, Cours sur l’Histoire ancienne de la Chine et de Taiwan, IEP de Lyon, 2007
“There are always some ambiguities in the way that China perceives Taiwan. Because Taiwan is an island, and China is a continent. This might sound like an evidence but it’s fundamental. This means that China can’t look at Taiwan but with a continental eye. [...] How to imagine that China could ever grant Taiwan with any value, other than those values which it can get from Taiwan, but never with an intrinsic value.”

This is at the origin of a conception, lingering throughout the Manchu Empire, of Taiwan as not being touched by the Chinese civilisation, and therefore not being part of China. This idea was to take shape in two manners: juridically, as Taiwan was long denied the status of a Chinese province, and the absence of assimilation’s policies in the Island, while they were being carried out in every other province by the Manchus.

As far as Japan and its vision of overseas territories are concerned, very precious informations are to be found in Augustin Berque’s book “The wild and the artificial”. Here the author is specifying a genre which is typically Japanese and which he calls “nippologies”, after the Japanese name “Nihonjinron”. The authors of those nippologies, among the most famous and appreciated in Japan, deny all possible comparison between Japanese culture, which is constantly, and in all aspects, glorified, and foreign cultures. For instance, the Japanese usually grant a specific type of natural environment, which is thought up as being their culture’s cradle, with an endless value. It is especially obvious that Japanese communities define themselves socially and culturally through the mastering and transforming of their environment. This is how Berque explains the disdain of Japanese populations towards foreign lands, and especially Ezo, the former Hokkaido, which wasn’t touched by Japanese civilisation and therefore couldn’t fit in those nippologies, couldn’t bare the comparing with Japanese culture and race, and therefore wasn’t considered of any divine origins, as opposed to the other three islands, and most of all, the land of Hokkaido remained, for the greatest part, unmastered, unchanged, virgin and wild. Civilisation wasn’t to be seen anywhere in those forests and mountains, which prevents, to a Japanese mind, the conceptualisation of this very space as a potential land of asylum.

5 CORCUFF Stéphane, Séminaire sur les politiques des identités à Taiwan, Institut d’Asie Orientale, Lyon, 11 Octobre 2007.
Here is a good example of the disdain of Chinese and Japanese authorities towards Taiwan and Hokkaido, as well as a proof of the lack of intrinsic value that both those regions were granted:

This is what Berque calls, in the case of Hokkaido, the “Occidental option” which was, for both territories, an important episode as to their economic, scientific, and cultural development on the international stage. In Taiwan, as early as 1860, the harbors were opened to foreign boats, from where a high proselytism will develop in the Island. With the Scottish presbyterian Church in the South, and the Canadian missionaries in the North, the cultural influence was to take roots in the Taiwanese society. Modern ideas and knowledge were spread, but moreover, the proselytism allowed the creation of numerous institutes of education, clinics, through which occidental physics were imported, an alphabetic transcription of the Taiwanese was invented, allowing the first Taiwanese newspaper to be published in 1885, ect. Through the creation of many schools, and even a college in 1882 in Tamsui, Taiwanese populations had an early access to modern sciences, such as astronomy, philosophy, physics, or biology, and Taiwan soon appeared to be more modern than continental China.

Now if this import of Occidental knowledge and technics was more relevant, in the Taiwanese case, of a disinterest of the Chinese authorities which, again, didn’t consider Taiwan to be valuable enough to be cared about; in the case of Hokkaido, on the contrary, it’s willingly that the Government of the Meiji Emperor decided to use the Northern Island as an immense laboratory from where to study, through the settling of Churches and missionaries, modern sciences and technics. The Imperial administration was satisfied at two levels by this situation: first, Hokkaido was used as a receptacle of all modern ideas that were potentially dangerous for the survival of the Empire, of its mythology, and of the boundless devotion of the population to their Emperor. Therefore, as soon as they arrived on the Japanese soil, all scientifics, researchers, and missionaries were systematically sent to Hakodate, which was the first city that the administration willingly opened to foreign boats in 1868. Moreover, the zeal with which those expatriates were trying to modernize and develop the island relieved the administration of a great burden, that of having to care the costly, and, according to them, useless duty to create in Hokkaido the necessary improvements that would allow the region to exist at a national level.

We can therefore realize the importance of an equally precocious occidentalism in Taiwan and Hokkaido, an importance which lays in the choices of both Chinese and Japanese
Imperial authorities, which still regarded those territories as wild, uncivilized, and therefore tractable and open to new ideas and concepts.

It is also possible to consider that the first settlers who actually granted Taiwan and Hokkaido with intrinsic values were neither Chinese nor Japanese, but Occidental missionaries who, in spite of their reprehensible proselytism, nevertheless were the firsts to bring along, for the sake of indigenous populations, the necessary schools and clinics.

I would now like to insist on the different stages of the Japanese colonization in Taiwan and Hokkaido, through the point of view of the ideological principles which guided its application, but also by analysing the policies of assimilation and “Japanization” that were put into practice during Hirohito’s reign, and the way they influenced the birth or the evolution of Taiwan’s and Hokkaido’s identities and self-perceptions.

The cultural operations, called “Bunka Sagyô”, that were led by the Japanese administration in Taiwan and Hokkaido, as well as in Korea and Okinawa, aimed at making those populations new subjects of the Emperor through the policies of the “Kominka”. The total submission which was targeted had to be reached through different identity policies, the main ones being:

- A movement in favor of a unique national language, called “Kokugo Undô”, which aimed, through incentive and repressive measures, at getting rid of Chinese, Korean, or other vernacular languages. At the same time, in the Japanese provinces that were geographically distant from the capital city, such as Shikoku or Kyushu, similar measures were taken in order to make the Japanese language standards uniform. This policy is often considered as the climax of the pan-asianist theory, as the Japanese scholar books were condemning, even in their own language, the use of Chinese characters, and encouraging the use of Japanese Kanas, which had long been despised by Japanese intellectuals. This is the symbol of the Japanese will to overcome an old complex and affirm its superiority over the other Asian countries.

- Along with this “Kokugo Undô” was the policy of family name changing, “Kaiseimei”, which was only regarded as a threat and an injury in Korea, where it meant the breaking with the Confucean traditions.
Finally came the “Voluntary participation systema”, “Shiganhei Seidô”, which meant, for colonized populations, a duty to pay a tax with their blood, justified by the term “Volunteer”, so to show one’s loyalty to the Emperor.

From a Japanese point of view, those policies were considered as a necessary intensification of the political and cultural assimilation in the process of preparing an impending war.

This is a quote from KOBAYASHI Seizô, the Governor General of Taiwan in 1937, talking about the policy of the Kominka:

“Since the beginning, in order to prove the meaning of our national politics, to eradicate the populations’ harshness, and to have them accepting the Emperor’s will of fairness under his reign, so as to realize the assimilation of the peoples, the goals of the Japanese policies in Taiwan have remained unchanged. Considering the mission of our Imperial Nation, Taiwan’s position, and the current situation in the rest of the world, our impending task is to bring together those five million subjects so that they can acquire, in all equality, the right to be called Japanese Citizens, and so doing, to have them reaffirming their common will of prosperity for the Nation. In that purpose, we must strive to reach to the extension of a unique and systematic Imperial Spirit, through the promotion of a consistent education, the rectification of appropriate language and customs, [...] that will make loyal subjects.”

But the facts are, that from the beginning of the Japanese colonization until the starting of the assimilation doctrines the Imperial Administration’s policies had been all but unchanged and stable. In fact, the first stage of colonization, as described in Chih-Ming KA’s “Japanese colonialism in Taiwan”, was merely a ferocious introduction of capitalism in the Island with no regards to the land owners, the populations’ well-being, or the leading of any particular cultural policy. In Taiwan, as well as in Hokkaido, this first stage of colonialism wasn’t at all characterized by the recognition of any society particularism. Socially speaking, the local traditional customs were tolerated, but on a political level, discrimination was the rule, if not in the laws, at least in the facts, and it never appeared to be an exception. At first, the keeping of public peace wasn’t considered as anything more than a way to allow

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capitalism to grow faster and to facilitate the import of Japanese capitals. The education of indigenous populations was, of course, not a priority in those times.

The Japanese settlers, who represented the huge majority of the population from a very early stage of the colonization, were, in the facts, not undergoing a treatment much smoother than that of the Ainus or, in Taiwan, of the Taiwanese. Most of them came from the poorest categories of the Japanese society, and the colonial administration proved an extreme neglect as to their education, their political representation, and the recognition of their social and political demands.

At first, Japan refused to see, either in Taiwan or in Hokkaido, legitimate or natural expansions of its territory. An example of this denial is the privilege that was systematically given, in those territories, to agricultural productions that were traditionally missing on the Japanese soil, sometimes even regardless of reasonable decisions. Therefore, the production of rice was scarcely supported financially, or even tolerated, in these islands. Instead, in Hokkaido, the productions of wheat, corn, barley, or mint were encouraged, and Taiwan was contemplated as a mass producer of sugar cane. Often, when Hokkaido farmers arrived from other Japanese regions, and managed to successfully adapt the Japanese techniques of rice production in those lands, this rice was systematically tagged as being of poor quality and unable to compete with the high quality standards of Japanese rice. Therefore, it remained, until recently, mostly meant for local consumption.

Pan-asianism hadn’t yet reached, at this stage, the level of theorization it had gained on the brink of the 1945’s defeat. We can easily realize that, at first, a mental rejection of those lands was recurrent, both from the Japanese population and the colonial administration. The beginnings of the Japanese colonization can be understood as a revenge against an invisible enemy, an anger to be satisfied by any possible means, may them be martial, political, or cognitive. But these methods were lacking a theory, a justification other than rapid enrichment.

This situation started to evolve in 1918, when the policies of “Dōka” were adopted by the Japanese administration. The fundamental difference brought upon by these policies was the acknowledgement, by the colonial government, of the singularity of each colonized people, towards a policy of assimilation which was to be applied to each territory and populations in different manners. The main purpose was the extension, to the colonies, of a Japanese social
and political system. Policies on education, racial harmony and peace, economy, and local development were modified or created.

But those evolutions don’t quite correspond a change in the colonial convictions or in the goals of the Imperial administration. Rather, they are a response to global evolutions in the recognition of human rights and critics of the colonial discourses, which became more important after the first world war and the Versailles Treaty. Therefore, this readjustment of the Japanese colonial policies was a mean to maintain its legitimacy in front of the rest of the world. However, the Japanese colonial administration embarked upon those new colonial ideologies differently from other European Nations. As the French and British colonial administrations were re-organizing their supremacy system around an ideological recognition of the cultural and civilisation differences that made the distinction between them and their colonies, the Japanese colonial administration insisted on what they called “a natural and homogenous extension of the National territory, with the Emperor in its center”.

However, in his book, “Becoming Japanese”, LEO T S Ching lays the emphasize on a contradiction which appears to be inherent in the Japanese doctrin of both the Dôka and the Kôminka : while the policies of the Kôminka were insisting on those specific practices and customs which would have helped colonized populations to “become Japanese”, the policies of the Dôka remained a vague and shapeless colonial project which, at the same time, aimed at maintaining a certain degree of legitimacy in the benefit of the Japanese authorities, while leaving room for the reorganizing of protest groups and discourse among colonized people. Therefore, as an ideology, the Dôka was used to fill in the gap which separated, on the one hand, the reality of the unequal distribution of properties and rights, and on the other hand, the need for a cultural assimilation inherent in the Japanese colonial practices in Taiwan and Hokkaido. Indeed, the Taiwanese were encouraged to “become Japanese” on the basis of an approximation, as they were encouraged to speak Japanese, to imitate the Japanese customs and lifestyle, to revere the Emperor, and so on... while being denied all political representation or power and all economic promotion.

On the contrary, the Kôminka stood for what could be called a “colonial objectivization”, a way to put the ideology of the Dôka into practice, putting the theory into practice. This did not only include the materialization of an ideology, but also on the physical destruction of ancestrals of temples and altars or Christian churches, the changing of Taiwanese, Chinese, or Ainu family names into Japanese ones. And, most of all, the
mobilization of thousands of men in the armed conflicts initiated by the Japanese Imperial authorities.

When it comes to comparing the policies of the Dôka and the Kôminka, it is important to always remember their theoretical interdependence, and their tactical differences. As soon as the beginning of the 1930’s, the Kôminka promoted the spiritual and cultural policies of social transformation, explaining how the colonized populations, including the uprooted Japanese settlers in Hokkaido, were meant to behave according to the Japanese standards.

In SHÛ Kin Ha’s “The Volunteer”, in which young Taiwanese talk about the way they feel regarding their belonging to the Japanese Empire and the way that they relate to the Japanese population and lifestyle, we realize that the Kominka’s argumentation constantly laid the emphasize on the lack of “deep emotion” that was supposed to be felt by colonized populations in front of the Emperor’s and the Imperial nation’s kindness. It’s only from this particular turning point in History that the struggle concerning a colonial identity appears to be the dominant discourse in colonial Taiwan and Hokkaido, when the feeling that “we can not allow ourselves not to be Japanese” is no longer only a political desire, but also becomes an existentialist fear. Therefore, the Kôminka is neither a logical extension nor a sudden intensification of the Dôka in Japanese colonialism’s general trend. It’s rather to be seen as a colonial ideology which, by reconciling and erasing the contradictory aspects of the Dôka’s policies, managed to radically transform the way that the colonial identity could be felt and represented, and left a deep impact, until post-colonial contemporary days, in both Taiwan and Hokkaido’s populations.

But here we must clearly distinguish two different identical process which were observed, one in Taiwan, the other in Hokkaido. While the Japanese occupation managed to encourage the rise of a new and singular identity through the promotion of a “Japanization” of the Taiwanese, in Hokkaido, those same practices, applied on Japanese emigrants who felt like they were being denied all citizenship, were the causes of separatist, rather than identical demands.

Liberalism and Marxism were the main ideologies that were used by both movements of protest in Taiwan and Hokkaido during this period. But the difference here is only ideological, concerning considerations such as “How should Taiwan’s autonomy be

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7 SHÛ Kin-Ha, The Volunteer, 1941, Quoted in LEO T. S. Ching, Ibid, P.89
recovered?”, or “What are the priorities for Hokkaido in the process of gaining more recognition from the part of the central administration?”.

But in Taiwan, both those ideologies ended up turning into handicaps for the struggle for independence. Indeed, the pro-Chinese movement, which was growing stronger in the Island at the time, among all parts of the population, tended to create a link between Taiwan’s liberalist movement and Sun Yat Sen’s party and opinions, while, later on, the Marxist trend was focusing more on its own relation to the Chinese communist party rather than on Taiwan’s march towards independence. Here is a main difference with the Island of Hokkaido. There, the uniformity of living conditions was such, among the population, as far as poverty and everyday life’s difficulties were concerned, that Hokkaido inevitably became the homeland to what was to become the Japanese communist party, with all the extremism and intolerance which can be related to it, and couldn’t relate to any other population in any other region or country, the Japanese nation being entirely regarded as an enemny to Hokkaido’s development and Marxist theories.

In Taiwan, according to those who were contemplating the possibility for an independence of a Taiwanese nation after the war, the possibility for a political autonomy could only be based on the assertion of the independence of a “Taiwanese people”. Their arguments were that Taiwan, precisely because of its colonial past, had reached a particular level of sociological and economical development which enabled it to build a unique Taiwanese consciousness which would be fundamentally different from that of continental China. SUNG Tse-Lai was the first one to bring up this idea that an ethnic or national consciousness is the product of a specific social community, and that its emergence can’t be separated from its economical condition. Therefore, the primary condition for the emergence of a nation is the unity of a single economic relation, to which come added a common psychology, a common language, and a common culture. From this point of view, the Taiwanese movement for independence would have reached its climaxe under the Japanese colonial era, as this period allowed the Island to benefit from a constant economic development on a capitalist model, from which a singular model of “Taiwanese capitalism” was enabled to emerge, along with modern nationalist thoughts. But also, while the colonial administration is making the most of the colony’s economic progress, the poorest levels of the population initiate their own nationalist protest movements towards independence.

Both these trends get together to produce a typical model of “third-world” way of thinking and relating to the outside world, which is against both imperialism and capitalism, but most of all, fundamentally related to nationalism.