

Formosa, Japan's First Colony

Taiwan 1906, A Journey Around the Island



Réginald Kann



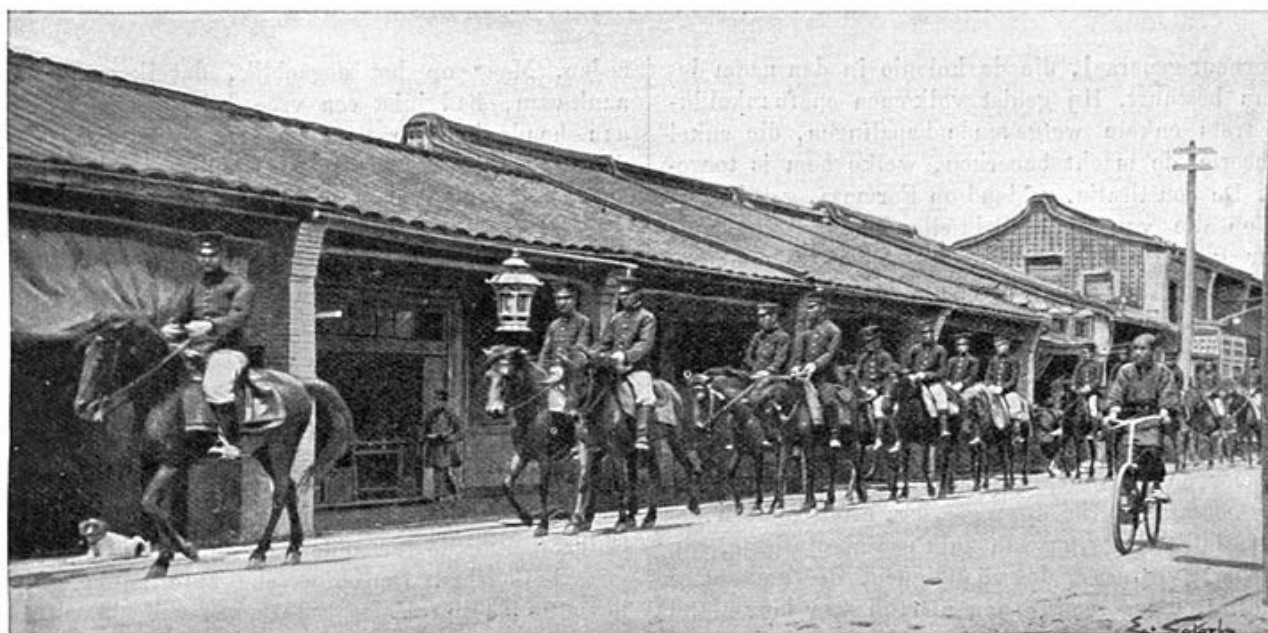
Le Tour du Monde.
a été fondé par Edouard Charton.
— en 1860 —

Réginald Kann (1876-1925), a French military officer and war correspondent, fought in the Boer War and as a journalist covered campaigns in Cuba, Morocco, Europe, the Far East and later, WWI. In between he wrote of his travels and in 1905 he reported from the Japan-Russian War: "Journal d'un correspondant de guerre en Extrême-Orient - Japon - Mandchourie - Corée".

The present travel report from Mr. Kann's tour to Taiwan in 1906 was first published as "Formose, Première Colonie Japonaise" in the magazine "LE TOUR DU MONDE" by Hachette, Paris 1907. Available at the Bibliothèque nationale de France: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k34448n/f604.item> , page 601 - 624.

Two years later 1909 the Dutch illustrated magazine "De Aarde en haar Volken" published "Formosa, de eerste kolonie van Japan". This Dutch translation had been digitized by the Project Gutenberg: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/25258/25258-h/25258-h.htm> .

Along his way he professionally collected details about the daily life and the administration. Although his sympathies and source of information are on the side of the colonial power, he kept a clear view for the supercilious attitude of its representatives and voiced distinctive criticism. This translation into English follows closely the Dutch text. Names of well known locations are kept in the Japanese Romaji transcriptions of the time. For smaller places the today's Pinyin romanization is used.



Japanese horsemen in the streets of the capital, Taihoku [Taipei]

I. Arrival on Formosa — Taihoku, the seat of government — Chinese and Japanese quarters — The two branches of the railway and the Decauville line — Consequences of the earthquake — The police officers and their administrative activities — Provisional hospitals — Excursion to Kagi — The former Samurai as police officers — Visit to the headhunters — Measures taken by the Japanese to combat old, barbaric customs — Relations between the Atayal and the Japanese — The tea — The war port of Keelung



Travelers going from Europe to Formosa leave in Hong Kong the great line of Yokohama, to embark on one of the small Nippon Steamers, who perceive the service of Tamsui 淡水. Before the conquest of the island by the Japanese in 1895, all trade was in the hands of English companies, but gradually, thanks to government subsidies¹, the British flag almost disappeared from the ports of Formosa. The Daijin Maru² for my passage is an excellent ship which is well built and very comfortably furnished. After we have followed the Chinese coast with a short delay in Swatow [Shantou 汕头, Guangdong] and Amoy [Xiamen 厦门, Fujian], we cross the strait with the always turbulent water and after three days of travel we are opposite the port Tamsui. Here we must anchor until the tide will allow us to cross a bank where at high tide there is only 13 feet of water.

After several hours of a nasty wait, during which time the monsoon sways us formidably, we are finally able to enter the river of Tamsui. The package boat moors at a wooden bridge built as a pier to the shore. From Tamsui to the islands capital, Taihoku, the ancient Taipei 台北 of the Chinese people, it is only a distance of twenty kilometers, which the railway train covers in just under an hour. Following the advice of a Japanese traveler, I decided to stop halfway at the Hokutō [Beitou 北投] station with its rich sulfur sources, where the government has build a military hospital and public baths, and where, I was assured, I would find the only European hotel on Formosa.

The so-called hotel turned out to be a single room, with a bed as the only furniture. The owner was a dirty and always drunk Chinese. I left that little appealing place the next day to find a less pretentious Japanese inn in Taihoku, which was very good and where I established my main residence during the two months I would spend on the island. The owner allowed me to place a chair and a table in my room, but on the condition that I wrapped their legs with thick cloth not to damage the tatami, the thick, woven mats, which cover the floors in all Japanese houses.

Taihoku is the seat of government where all branches of service are located. Also the governor-general, who governs the colony in the name of the emperor, resides there. He enjoys complete independence despite some legal provisions that only theoretically limit the powers granted to him. The constitution in force in Formosa is very similar to that of the Sunda Islands and was adopted without major changes. Its main features are the omnipotence of the governor, the strong centralization of the various administrative branches and the complete absence of all representation and share in government by the native people. The officials, even those of the municipalities, are nominated by the Japanese without exception.

The causes that have led the government to demonstrate such absolutism are twofold: first of all, the hostility of the Chinese population, who refused to recognize the cession of the island to Japan, the revolt against their new masters was only defeated in 1902 after seven years of struggle, and secondly, the strategic importance of Formosa, where Japan is primarily a military base, sees more than a field of exploitation or a settlement for its inhabitants as settlers. For the last reason, according to the constitution, the Governor-General can never be a civil servant but must be chosen from the officers of high rank in the armies by land or at sea.

What strikes the traveler immediately upon his arrival in Taihoku is the complete separation, which exists between the Chinese natives and the Japanese. The latter inhabit the middle of the city or the actual Taihoku, from which they have driven the inhabitants back to the vast suburbs of Bangka [Wanhua 萬華區] and Daitotei [DaDaoCheng 大稻埕]. No greater distinction is imaginable than between those quarters that are so close to each other. The part of city, where the Japanese live, is the accurate representation of a slice of Tokyo. Macadamised [compacted gravel], well-maintained streets are lined by telegraph poles and low wooden houses, covered with grey pans. When one passes through the old gate, which has now been restored with stones, one immediately finds oneself on Chinese territory, between narrow, dirty streets and a muddled, dirty and ragged crowd of people.

However, the result has not been achieved with the good of the people. In order to change Taihoku into a Japanese city, the authorities have had to resort to arbitrary measures by expropriating Chinese shops under the pretext of concern for hygiene, without granting them any compensation. This careless attitude towards the natives can be seen all over the island and in everything.

My first intention was to stay in Taihoku for a few days to study the political and administrative organisation of the colony, then to visit the most interesting provinces and particularly certain parts of the almost unexplored regions, inhabited only by indigenous ethnic Malays with absolutely savage customs. But at the time I arrived at Formosa a terrible earthquake, which had claimed the lives of hundreds of people, had just devastated the district of Kagi in the south of the island and I decided to go there without any hesitation [Meishan Earthquake 梅山地震, March 17. 1906].

Kagi [Chiayi City 嘉義] is serviced by the main railway line which traverses most of the Formosa island, running from Keelung in the far north to Takao [Kaohsiung 高雄], the island's southernmost port. The colony's network is further completed by the branch line from the capital to Tamsui. The construction of railways on Formosa dates back to before the Japanese occupation; it was first undertaken by the Chinese governor Liu Ming-Chuan [劉銘傳, 1836 - 1896], who led the Celestial troops at the time of Admiral Courbet's expedition. The Chinese authorities had completed the Keelung-Taihoku line in 1895 and even started to continue the line southwards; but the line was poorly planned and the work executed with the most negligence, so that when the Japanese took control of Formosa, they were forced to carry out an almost complete reconstruction.

To continue the work accomplished by its predecessors, the new government decided to develop the railways according to the same principles as applied in the construction of the lines in Japan, namely by entrusting their construction and operation to a private society. A company was established in Japan for this purpose; but the date of its formation coincided with the first Japanese attempt to immigrate into the new colony, which failed completely due to the unhealthy climate and the terrifying mortality rate among the new arrivals. At the time, the colony's future looked very precarious and the company was unable to raise the necessary capital.



Railway Station of Taihoku [Taipei]

Considering that the creation of a railway would be the most certain and fastest way of suppressing the rebellion and calming the population, and that exploitation would in future be a powerful leverage for the economic development of the region, the island government decided to bear the cost of the construction. It requested and obtained authorization to take out a loan of 30 million yen, that is about 37 million guilders, and rushed to implement the plan designed by chief engineer Hasegawa. Work began on the grand line at two points, North and South. Already in 1900 the line of Takao-Tainan could be opened in the South. The following year, the Tamsui-Taihoku branch was also opened for traffic. The work was continued without disturbance until 1904, when it had to be suspended because of the expenses needed by the war against Russia. The line was

completed, but in the middle a 40 kilometer stretch between the stations Sansa [三叉河驛 / Sanyi 三義] and Koroton [葫蘆潭驛 / Fengyuan 豐原] is now connected by a Decauville³ narrow gauge.

The railway on Formosa is similar to that in Japan, same track width, same locomotives, same wagons and also the same desperate slowdown. To cover the less than hundred kilometers separating Taihoku from Sansa, it took more than a day. I needed to spend the night in a bad inn in the town of Byōritsu [Miaoli 苗栗]. The next day our train arrived early at the station of the normal line, where the transfer at narrow-gauge immediately followed. Travelers and goods are placed on wheeled carriages, equipped with a primitive brake, and each pushed by two native coolies. These men trot behind the trolley, push a few meters and then jump onto the vehicle, where they remain until it stops automatically, after which they start the operation all over again.

Along the slopes, the trolley, as they call this small cart, runs by its own gravity, often with amazing speed, giving the travelers the same feeling as sitting in the Russian-Swings of our funfairs. It is a pleasant sensation despite the real danger to which one is exposed and which is also evident in numerous derailments, often accompanied by accidents involving broken limbs and even deaths. When ascending, on the other hand, the journey is difficult, especially as one has to get out repeatedly and climb the slope on foot. On the flat open carriages, travelers of the ordinary type are sitting two by two back to back on simple, upside-down wooden boxes. For travelers of a certain rank, trollies are designed with wicker armchairs, sheltered by a canopy from the sun. The coolies, who have to move these primitive and heavy vehicles, show extraordinary agility, especially when passing a wooden viaduct of several kilometers, which one encounters immediately at the start of the journey and which consists of crossbeams that are more than 50 centimeters apart from each other. A single mistake would throw the coolie into the river, yet he would not slow down his course at all. It is no rarity that young native girls slide the trollies with the same strength and agility as the men.⁴

After two hours of traveling by trolley at a speed not much slower to that of the train, we had to change to the railway again, which took us to Kagi the same day. As in all cities of Formosa, the Japanese live in a special quarter where you'll also find the hotel. I was fortunate enough to see Professor Takagi [高木友枝, 1858 – 1943]⁵ again, director of the colony's health service, whom I had met in Taihoku. This official, who had studied for a long time in Germany and married a European woman, had come to Kagi to see how the rescue work was going and how the local authorities had organized the makeshift hospitals for the victims of the earthquake. Professor Takagi made it possible for me to visit these facilities. As most of the government buildings had been destroyed or were in danger of collapse, the shelters had to be built from scratch. The military warehouses provided some large tents, but most infirmaries consisted of a shed with a bamboo framework covered with rice straw. They were exactly the same model of the field ambulances I had seen two years earlier in Manchuria in General Oku's army. [Oku Yasukata 奥保鞏, 1847 – 1930]



A sad young man from Kagi stands thoughtful in front of his home, devastated by the earthquake.

The practical organization of these hospitals and the way in which the patients were cared for seemed to me absolutely perfect. There was plenty of space and more than adequate ventilation. Care was provided by paramedics and Red Cross nurses, both Japanese and native. This

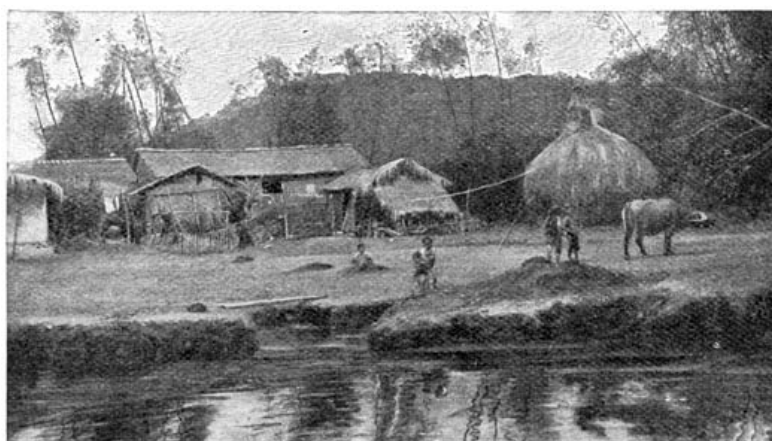
association, although only recently founded on Formosa, already has 23000 members who are as educated and as conscientious as their colleagues in metropolitan Europe.

Japanese surgeons have been sent to Kagi from all other provinces of the island. Also many students from the medical school for natives in Taihoku [臺灣總督府醫院], founded four years ago and managed by Professor Takagi, worked with them. He was very curious about how his students would pass this baptism of fire, and he was pleased to note that the youthful Chinese had successfully done many difficult operations even amputations.

The Japanese district, where the hospitals are located, suffered relatively little from the disaster. This is because the houses are all built of wood, while the tiled roofs are quite light and the entire building is constructed in such a way that it can withstand a fairly strong shaking around the central axis. I was able to see it for myself that day, when in the evening a violent aftershock was felt, which caused the guests of the hotel to flee into the garden, but caused no damage at all.

The Chinese city is no more than a lot of ruins; only very few houses have resisted, and their inhabitants have not had the courage to return. The entire population is sheltering in the open air or has sought shelter in hastily erected sheds that resemble the field hospitals. The natives, meanwhile, go about their business, and it is a strange spectacle to see all those shopkeepers displaying their wares in long rows in the middle of the street or on the land outside the city walls.

The total number of victims rises only in the Kagi district to more than 2000. As always in Chinese countries, the dead are mainly women; her poorly developed feet have prevented her from leaving the houses quickly enough. Although the town of Kagi itself has suffered a lot, the shocks there have been far less severe than in some of the surrounding villages, several of them being wiped away. Near a place, situated halfway between the city and the sea, most remarkable natural phenomena must have appeared, and I am advised to go there. For the next day the prefect has arranged a sedan chair with four porters for me, the only available means of transport and in fact, the most used on Formosa. Riding animals are scarce and chariots cannot be used most of the time because there are few roads. The inhabitants usually walk on the narrow dikes that enclose the rivers.



Farmhouses between bamboo hedges

My chair was waiting for me at the entrance of the city. It was a kind of square box, very low in floor, and in which men could neither sit nor lie; one had to accept a crouching position, somewhat resembling the Cardinal Jean de la Balue in his iron cage. As soon as the journey had begun, there was added the jerking movement which the coolies made as they walked, and thus the torture increased, which I could not endure for long. I soon decided to leave that uncomfortable vehicle and travel the 20 kilometres on foot. I was on this trip with a Japanese police officer. Our monotonous road continued through rice fields and sugarcane plantations, the two most important cultures in the south of Formosa. This part of the country, which is completely flat, is home to a dense population, and we went through many villages who had suffered more or less under the

earthquake. Close to most of these places, next to the native huts, a better built house rises in the middle of a small garden, which is enclosed with barbed wire on top of a high fence; a deep moat gives the house the appearance of a miniature fortress. These buildings serve as accommodation for police officers, spread in large numbers throughout this Chinese part of Formosa. These officials, together with the native deputies and the councils of notables, are the most important intermediaries between the government and the people. They enjoy many privileges and the most diverse work is assigned to them. They keep the civic registers, ensure order and security, help maintain community roads, call for human resources, arrange postal services and collect taxes. They have been assigned even more important things recently, by authorizing them to try all cases of police violations, for which fines are less than 30 yen. Such an agent also takes on the task of the tribunal in disputes between natives.

Thus, it is seen that the administrative regulations indeed give the police officers almost unlimited power over the residents in the places where they are stationed. During my stay in Formosa I have been able to observe that their authority is often exercised with the greatest arbitrariness and also with rough cruelty. The Japanese agents are almost all recruited from the class of the old military samurai, who even in Japan has always shown full contempt for the other classes, especially for the farmers. So no wonder they show even greater contempt for Chinese natives.

Moreover, in the long struggle against the bands of insurgents and robbers, which lasted until four years ago, the police were given the task of suppressing the uprising, and in the course of this struggle they adopted ruthless habits that continue to have an impact today. The only feeling that the population has for them is therefore fear without any sympathy. There have been laws of draconian severity against those who attacked the police, and they were forced to do so to ensure the safety in regions where agents were located in remote places. Whoever attacks a policeman is sentenced to death, and complicity is punished as severely as the crime.



Headhunters from the tribe of the Atayal

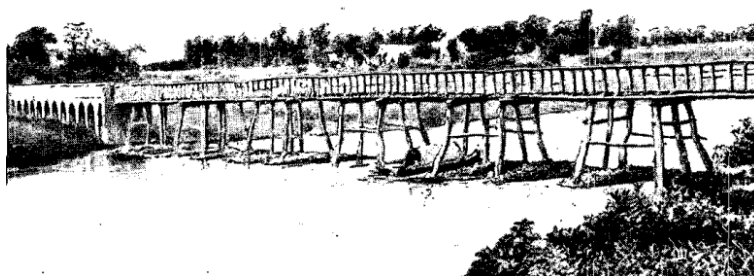
If the Formosa police officers are strict for the population, they are extremely hospitable to the strangers; I was unable to pass one of their posts without rest, smoke a cigarette and drink the traditional cup of green tea. This repeated halt slowed our journey considerably, and we only arrived at the village of our destination in the middle of the day. I saw that in this place the consequences of the disaster had been greatly exaggerated. The famous crack that must have arisen and which people had already told me about at Taihoku, turned out to be no more than a gully of a few centimeters depth, which I would not have noticed if they had not pushed aside the grass that grew on both sides and show it to me.

The springs and wells from before the shock had all dried up, and small geysers of boiling water had formed in other places; one of them had lifted the floor of beaten clay in a house and filled the space with sand and steam. A little further on I was shown trees whose trunks had been split in two and the two parts of which were now separated by a space of several centimeters.

We spent an hour walking around the village, and after a modest breakfast under the tent that had replaced the police post, we took the road to Kagi again. In one of the hamlets we went through, the population had gathered around some agents, who distributed what had been sent in aid after the subscription, which had been opened in Japan and on the island for the benefit of the needy, and which had raised a pretty sum. The donations came mainly from the natives. The agents took over the collection and carried out the work with little consideration, which I was assured was the usual way. In order to obtain registrations, they go around among their people and ask the richest of them for a certain sum, which they must deposit if they don't want to expose themselves to a multitude of annoying measures, that the omnipotence of the police can use against them. This is how so-called voluntary contributions are collected on Formosa.

After a last night in Kagi, which was repeatedly disturbed by alarm rumors of renewed eruptions, I returned straight to the capital, to prepare without delay for a journey to the country of the natives.

In the Middle Ages they were the only inhabitants of Formosa, and their tribes lived as far as the west coast. The Chinese migration, which according to Chinese historians began in the 15th century, first brought Chinese to the seaports opposite China and then



The Japanese have restored a large number of aqueducts built by the natives to irrigate the rice fields.

gradually gained ground inland. This influx, which was slowed down for a while by the establishment of Dutch and Spanish trading houses on Formosa, accelerated greatly when the island was annexed to the Celestial Empire at the end of the 17th century. The new arrivals gradually pushed the aboriginal population to the east, and by the time of the Japanese conquest, they had succeeded in completely driving them into the mountains that cover this part of the island.

All efforts to seize this difficult region had failed. The presence of the indigenous people is the more dangerous as the camphor forests, which supply Formosa's most profitable industry, are situated in their immediate vicinity.

The Chinese authorities, who levied a tax on the equipment used to manufacture camphor, had organised a guard to protect the workers, which was rather ineffective. When the Japanese arrived, they abolished this tax and at the same time the guard. However, a few years later, when the government of the colony held the monopoly on the camphor trade, it became concerned about the safety of the workers and took measures to protect them from incursions by aborigines.

During the first period, when all supervision was lifted, the Japanese attempted to reconcile themselves with the savages by studying their manners and customs and by providing for their needs. A policy, similar to that which the Americans follow towards the redskins of the Far West. The officials responsible for the mission estimate the number of original inhabitants at about one hundred thousand, divided among a large number of tribes. These tribes were grouped into seven groups according to their language and customs, namely the Paiwan 排灣族, the Puyuma 卑南族, the Amis 阿美族, the Tsou 鄒族, the Thao 邵族 (Tsalisen), the Bunun 布農族 (Vonum) and the Atayal 泰雅族. The first four are harmless. The Bunun and the Thao, although often fighting among themselves in the different tribes, never attack the yellow population.

The Atayal, on the other hand, who alone occupy half of the entire aboriginal country in the north, continue to make raids and attacks against the Chinese inhabitants. Their characteristic way of life is headhunting, which they engage in as actively as their fellow tribesmen from the Philippines and the Sunda Islands. As soon as an enemy has fallen in battle, he is beheaded; the skull is left to boil for a long time, to take away the fleshy parts, and then to make him bleach in the sun, he is placed on a hillside at the entrance of the village. The head of the tribe is chosen from the warriors who have contributed most to the enrichment of the macabre collection. No young man may hope to come to a marriage or get a seat in the council if not at least one of those trophies can be credited to his account. When two Atayals have a quarrel and fail to settle their dispute, they leave the village at the same time, and the first, who returns with a cut head, is proven right in the matter.



Stop on the Keelung line.

When the Japanese took possession of Formosa in 1895, as a result of the war between their country and China, they made commendable efforts to reconcile the natives and to persuade them to keep quiet in their mountains, without disturbing their Chinese neighbors. The southern groups have remained faithful to the agreements they made with the new rulers of the island; but the Atayal proved incapable of renouncing their barbarous customs. So the Japanese have taken on the task to subdue them.

They first sent out numerous military expeditions against them, which always failed. The savages offered little resistance at the beginning of the march and thus lured the soldiers deeper into the country, and then, when the enemy was on very difficult terrain, they entangled him into ambushes and decimated the troops. Very few Nippon soldiers were able to reach their starting point again, and after repeated attempts, sometimes with entire battalions falling to the last man, the Japanese decided to change tactics and adopt a defensive posture. For this purpose, they erected a cordon of strongholds around the land of the Atayal, defended by native police under Japanese officers and non-commissioned officers. These fortified houses, solidly built of stone, are situated at points that overlook the terrain at varying distances, but not exceeding one kilometer, so that in case of an attack they can assist each other. This cordon has been very effective in curbing Atayal incursions, and the number of murders committed by the savages decreases every year. In 1905 there were still 493.

The government plans to gradually shift the line of control towards the interior of the Atayal country, thus limiting the area they inhabit more and more each year, which one day will lead to their complete annihilation or a merger with the peaceful inhabitants. These operations required mobile corps in support of the permanent garrisons of the part of the cordon that was being pushed forward. On these occasions, the army provided the police with mountain cannons and machine guns.

I wanted to join the mobile corps, to accompany it in its activities for a while, or at least I wanted to visit some of the cordon posts and then the workshops where camphor is prepared and are close to the police posts. I met with a formal refusal from the government, and after numerous attempts I could only obtain permission to go under escort to one of the five trading posts located at different points of the border. There the Atayal come to sell the products of their land and buy gunpowder, knives and glass beads. I was told about the Kutsuseki market, only about twenty kilometers from the capital.

Early in the morning, I left with my guide in a Rickshaw [jap. Hand Power Vehicle] to the village of Shinten [Xindian 新店], which is halfway. There I was offered a sedan chair, for which I thanked kindly and we continued our way on foot. The country is very mountainous in this region and intersect by numerous rivers, which one has to cross by ferries or in simple boats. All hills are covered with tea plantations, because tea is grown extensively in the provinces of northern Formosa.

Kutsuseki [Quchi 屈尺] is a Chinese village with dirty and muddy streets, which we happily turned our backs on to continue down to the Tamsui river, which flows just outside the village. Upstream, on the banks of the river, is the electrical power-plant⁶ which provides light to Taihoku. It was also considered to increase the strength of the cordon with electricity. An iron wire, hidden in the bushes, runs in front of the blockhouse over a length of several kilometers. A high current is allowed to pass through it, so that every time a headhunter wants to cross the line, he met with that obstacle and gets a charge through his body, he stays where he is or at least gives up all wishes to to penetrate even further. Unfortunately, a number of Japanese or native police officers, who did not know the exact location of the wire, have themselves become victims of it, and there is already talk of the abolition of this dangerous means of defense.

At the power plant, we joined a dozen men from the border guard. Although they are part of a special corps, entirely separated from the police force on Chinese territory, they wear the same uniform as the regular police officers, but in addition to a sabre [sword], they are armed with a Murata rifle [Japanese military rifle]. As soon as we set out again, the escort adopted a completely unnecessary battle position; two men walked forward, while flankers walked through the bushes on either side of the road. We continued the path along the river for about a mile to a wooden bridge. On the opposite bank, in an open place, there was a small, mud hut, in front of which about twenty savages were seated, waiting for our arrival.

Like all inhabitants of the mountains, the Atayal are tall, sturdy and strong of constitution. The men pull out two front teeth in the upper jaw and wear three horizontal tattooed stripes on the forehead. The women add two more stripes, going from the ears to the corner of the mouth in a band about three centimeter wide, consisting of narrow lines that cross diagonally⁷. The costume of both sexes consists of a sleeveless garment made of animal skin or a fiber fabric, reaching to the knees;

The men also cover their heads with fur caps and hats of all shapes, braided from plant fibers. I offered a bottle of alcohol to the savages; it was rice brandy, which they love very much. They never drink alone; two of them stand next to each other and approach the same side of the dish or cup with their lips, after which they drink in that awkward position without spilling a drop. The Japanese interpreter, who was with me, had lived near the border for a long time and spoke the Atayal language very well; he told me some interesting things about their customs.

The Atayal live in bamboo huts with very low roofs, which rise only slightly above the ground and under which they excavate the ground to a depth of up to two meters. Food depots, on the other hand, are built on poles to preserve the crops from rats and other gnawing animals, which are common in the area. A special hut is always designated for the meetings of the tribe council. This is also where the warriors meet before they go out for hunting and war expeditions.

It is these ventures that define the work of the Atayal, who have very great contempt for labor and leave to the women the cultivation of the main foods barley and potatoes and also the ramie plant [苧麻, of the nettle family], the fiber from which the clothes are made. The religion of these peoples is actually nothing but a service of the ancestors, to whom sacrifices of cakes and honey are made at every full moon; all tribes have a witch-doctor who has to cure the sick and prevent the presence of evil spirits through prayers and magic.

While the Atayal inspired me with lively interest, I was also an object of curiosity to them. Never had they seen a white man; they asked the interpreter how far away is the country I came from, and they were told that they had to walk two years to get there. The headman turned to me and said, "You have given us gifts, we thank you for that, we will also keep the memory of you for two years."

Our way back led along a different route, always along hills planted with tea gardens. The trade in tea, which is now the island's most important exporting item, does not date back long and it was not until the middle of the last century that trade increased. It were foreign merchants who, struck by the good quality from some of the bushes acclimated by the Chinese on the island, advanced large sums of money to farmers from around Taihoku and committed to buy the entire harvest. The trials gave outstanding results from the very first years of production, and soon all natives in the region followed those who participated in the trials. Sales prices were so high, especially in the beginning, that farmers were seen sacrificing harvests of rice, sugar and indigo that were almost ripe, in order to plant the precious bushes without delay. With the rapid expansion of this culture, however, the quality deteriorated and significant amounts of tea did not find buyers. Then the new culture was dropped again with the same haste with which they had first overtaken it, and later resumed it for the second time. All these fluctuations naturally backfired on product sales and made it one of the most speculative trades, which, while it made many merchants rich, it led an even greater number to ruin.

Yet, exports of tea increased continuously until the moment of occupation by Japan. Then the produce became subject to a double taxation on manufacturing and exports, which put them in an unfavorable position against products from more favored foreign countries. Since then, trade has stagnated.

The tea produced on Formosa is of two kinds: Oolong [烏龍茶] or natural tea, which is exported to the United States and is currently the most expensive of all similar products worldwide, and the Pouchong tea⁸ perfumed with jasmine or gardenia flowers, used only by Chinese consumers.

I only stayed for a few days in the capital, which I soon left, to undertake a much bigger trip than the first one. I wanted to make a tour round whole island on one of the freight boats of the Osaka Shosen Kaisha shipping company, which is subsidized by the government.

The starting point for that service is Keelung, a port that had been occupied by our troops for many months⁹ and has now become the main military site on Formosa. All the surrounding mountains are full of canons and forts. Major works have been undertaken to change the Keelung Bay into a spacious harbour; but the largest part of the bay is very shallow, and so a considerable area had to be dredged. That part of the work cost no less than two million yen. Also quays have been constructed, which are served by a branch of the Taihoku railway.

However, the port of Keelung is still only inadequately protected from the almost continuous northerly winds in winter. To protect it, a gigantic breakwater will have to be built, almost completely closing off the entrance to the harbour, leaving only a 300-metre channel.



Formosan rice fields producing two harvests per year

II. Travel around the island — Unbearable distrust of my guides — The Kada Company — The Camphor Industry — The opium — Exploitation, trade and monopoly — The opium first banned then favoured — Native schools — The sugar — The last mooring on the Pescadores — The work of the Japanese on Formosa.

It took us a whole eight hours to cover the 25 miles between Keelung and Suao 蘇澳, our first stopover. Suao is with Keelung one of the two natural harbours the island possesses; it is wide, deep and fairly well sheltered except in a south-easterly direction. This point is the direct gateway to the province of Giran [Yilan 宜蘭] and the rich plain of Kapsulan [蛤仔蘭, Yilan Plain]. Although the region is most fertile, its trade is not sufficient to make up for the large expenses necessary for the development of a large port. At present, goods are loaded into boats. However, in order to transport goods and to supply the military posts, a narrow-gauge railway was built to link the port to the district capital, passing at the foot of the mountains still inhabited by the Atayal tribes.

I once again repeated my request to visit one of the blockhouses of the police cordon, but permission was not granted, first under the pretext of the short duration of my stopover, then because this excursion was represented to me as dangerous, as the headhunters made frequent incursions into this region. Nevertheless, I obtained permission to take the narrow-gauge to a point where one of the police posts could be seen a kilometer away.

Here again I was met with a refusal, when I wanted to go any further. It was clear that no danger could threaten us on the short stretch we had to cover from my observation point to the post. Peaceful farmers worked on their fields in the valley. In desperation, I suddenly made up my mind and started climbing the slope, ignoring the shouts and appeals of my guides. A minute later I went into the river with my clothes on, came out dripping and trotted to the police house. How great was my surprise when I met two women on the threshold, Japanese ladies, spouses of the sub-inspectors of the post, who had seen me coming and offered me tea to refresh myself after the cold bath I had just taken. They even refusing a former soldier, who had three war campaigns to his credit, access to a house where mousmés [young women] live in peace! This observation showed me once again to what extent all Japanese officials, whatever their rank, are suspicious of the most harmless foreigners and do their best to hide as much as they can from them.

However, the more I examined the blockhouse, the less I understood the reason for the mystery surrounding it. It was a simple, fairly long stone house with solid doors. The only precaution taken in its construction had been some small windows in the upper floor, which the defenders could use as peepholes and to shoot at the attackers. My visit was short and an hour later I was on board our liner Taito Maru 台東丸.



Surveillance blockhouse in the Giran area

The next morning the ship stopped in Karenkō [Hualien 花蓮], the second port of call. That point is located at the northern end of an elongated valley, separating a coastal mountain chain from Formosa's backbone, the mountain range that runs its full length.

The valley is formed by the course of two rivers, flowing in opposite directions and parallel to the sea. This land, though naturally fertile, is almost uninhabited. Its population consists of a few native tribes belonging to the Amis and a small core of settlers of Chinese origin, who came from the West of Formosa, shortly before the conquest by Japan.

As this region is completely isolated from the rest of the island, it forms a country of its own. The Japanese government had initially intended to develop it by having it run directly by its officials, but soon realized that this undertaking would require expenses far beyond the limits of its budget for the island. It was therefore decided to entrust the exploitation of the region's resources to a company, a chartered company, whose privilege is reminiscent of that of the English companies in Africa, especially that of Rhodesia. The corporate promoter and main shareholder of that society is a certain Kada, who had acquired a fortune both quickly and greatly by deliveries to the Japanese army during the Russian-Japanese war.

However, it seems that the company's financial condition is not too bright, as the initial costs of preparation and installation have already consumed most of the capital.

The biggest difficulties, which the Kada society will have to overcome, arise from the lack of connection to the interior and especially from the impossibility of getting a port there, where one can sail in and where one can embark the products without danger. Along the entire east coast, from Karenkō to Taitō [Taitung 台東], the outer points of the concession, a very dangerous sandbank is the greatest obstacle to the movement of goods, just as it is on the coast of Guinea. The Japanese can not build a harbour embankment like in Cotonou [Benin] or Grand Bassam [Ivory Coast], because the sea is too deep for that, even just a few meters from the beach. Also agriculture does not seem to be able to develop because it is always threatened with loss when embarking. Only the discovery of gold-bearing layers, as happened in the surroundings of Keelung, would be able to ensure the success of this venture.

Nevertheless, they have started doing something, namely exploiting the camphor trees in the immediate vicinity of Karenkō. These exist in pretty great abundance and have given Formosa the name camphor island.¹⁰

In Formosa's richest forests camphor trees are located far apart amid other wood species, sometimes at distances of 300 and 400 meters. This spatial distribution makes the workers' task very difficult and forces them to constantly move their tools from one point to another, as the area around the place where they have set up their fireplaces is soon exhausted. Two other objections contribute to the difficulty of production: the unhealthiness of the climate and, above all, the persistent danger posed by the proximity of the headhunters, who live not far from all the forests where camphor trees are still found today. Thousands of workers have been killed by the Atayal, and an American traveler has been able to say, without too much exaggeration, that camphor on Formosa can only be obtained against an equal weight of human blood.



Semi-wild population of Karenkō on the South Pacific beach.

The method for extracting the substance is the following, adopted both by the Japanese and the natives: The worker, equipped with a basket and an axe, cuts off twigs from the branch of an adult tree, which he transfers to the place where the heating stove is located. It consists of a stone fireplace, above which a metal bowl full of water is placed. A cone-shaped wooden box with a grid at the bottom is placed over this, intended to receive the twigs. A bamboo tube extends from the upper part of this box, which communicates with another wooden box, the cooler, which in turn communicates through another tube with another box, divided by partitions into several compartments. In this last one the crystallization takes place.

A well-maintained wood fire burns in the fireplace and keeps the constantly renewed water in the metal bowl boiling. The rising steam from the water passes through the grid and through the twigs, where it is saturated with camphor vapors. Then the steam passes through the cooling box and finally small camphor crystals condense on the walls of the crystallization box. These crystals are white and resemble salt. The amount of camphor thus obtained varies greatly depending on the quality of the wood and the skill of the worker in keeping his fire at the desired strength. On average, you should expect 4 to 5 kilos per day, equivalent to two or three percent crystals in relation to the weight of the twigs used.

Camphor has always been one of Formosa's most important exports, both when its production was free and under the state monopoly. Although camphor trees are found in several other countries of the Far East, only in Formosa and the southern islands of the Japanese archipelago are they found in sufficient numbers to make their exploitation profitable. By attaching this new colony to the Japanese Empire, the latter has, at least for the moment, placed camphor production beyond the reach of any foreign competition. A few years before the annexation, the stabilizing properties of camphor in relation to those substances based on explosive nitrocellulose were discovered in Europe. It is for this reason that it is used in the composition of celluloid, the use of which has spread so quickly and has significantly increased the value of camphor. These circumstances have led the Japanese government to re-establish the monopoly of camphor production regulated by law, the main provisions of which I would like to share with you here.

The government issues licenses to a certain number of manufacturers, Japanese nationals, allowing them to cut the trees and distill the camphor from them, but they are obliged to sell their entire proceeds to the agents of the monopoly at a fixed price, set in advance every year. The government also regulates the total amount of camphor that may be sold each year. The aim of this measure is to moderate production in order to maintain the very high prices currently paid by foreign refiners and also to protect the forests from being eradicated too quickly.

The steps from producing the camphor to exporting it from the island abroad are as follows: The manufacturers bring their products to one of the various agencies located in the forest region. An agent receives them there, weighs and classifies them according to their quality. He then issues a certificate to the producers, which accompanies the goods to the government warehouses in Taihoku, where the manufacturer receives a check from the Bank of Formosa in exchange for the certificate, allowing him to collect the amount without further formalities.

In the capital, the crystals are refined in a factory and then compressed into blocks of six kilograms using a hydraulic press. Only part of the camphor is treated in this way, the rest is packed in its raw state in hermetically sealed wooden boxes that bear the official stamp.

The government does not itself proceed with the sale of camphor, but entrusts it to a company, to which it has granted a concession. This undertakes to purchase a minimum of 30000 and a maximum quantity of 50000 pikols (one pikol is $62\frac{3}{4}$ kilograms) [traditional unit of mass in Southeast Asia with various conversions into kg] and to arrange transportation and sales in the main markets of Europe and America. The concessionaire is prohibited from altering the camphor in any way after it has been delivered to him or even opening the boxes. The government can confiscate part of the production for the needs of the Japanese Empire, but only if the company that received the concession has already received the agreed minimum. The concession is renewed every three years and is always awarded through a tender to the bidder who offers to sell the camphor at the lowest price. Until now it has always been awarded to the English house of Samuel Samuel & Co.

The camphor monopoly has given the government great satisfaction since the day it gained control not only of production in Formosa but also over that of Japan, thereby protecting it from any outside competition. The monopoly bureau, by keeping production within reasonable limits, has succeeded in gradually raising the price of camphor, which today yields from 96 to 200 yen per pikol. These figures, including the highest ever made, are in stark contrast to those of seven or eight piasters [currency of French Indochina], the price per pikol in 1875.

Since the establishment of the monopoly, annual production has not fallen far from the average figure of 38000 pikols. The consumers are, in order of importance, Germany, the United States, Great Britain, France, Japan and British India. In this latter country, camphor is used to make the incense that the natives use in their religious ceremonies.

The sale of camphor is now the main source of income for Formosa's budget, and the government is carefully guarding against any dangers that could threaten this industry. In the beginning, the idea was to replace the exhausted trees and to continue this every year, so that the monopoly office has planted several million young trees. However, as botanists estimate that it takes an average of twenty to thirty years for a camphor tree to reach a usable size, it will take many years before one can be sure of the yield from trees planted in this way. The botanists who carried out the work had to select the sites for planting rather randomly, because it has proved extremely difficult to identify the elements that are most favorable for the development of the trees. Under exactly the same soil and sunlight conditions, camphor trees sometimes produce very different yields.



Sturdily built boat to get over the sandbank

However, if circumstances make the task of Japanese planters difficult, they seem to favor Formosa to the extent of putting the island beyond the reach of foreign competition, because it is unlikely that the other countries, who have taken trials and felt the same uncertainty as Japan, will undertake significant plantings. Attempts have been made in Ceylon, in the Canary Islands, in Indo-China, in Texas, in Algiers and even in Italy and the South of France; everywhere the results have been discouraging.

A more immediate danger threatens the camphor industry, namely the discovery of substances that are obtained chemically and have the same properties as natural camphor. So far, they have only succeeded in obtaining crystals with a higher production price than natural camphor, but at one time or another this may change and camphor is increasingly threatened with a fate similar to that of indigo.

The government of Formosa has followed with the greatest attention and not without some fear the experiences of this kind, which have been obtained in most of the European countries, and especially in Germany, because without the high income, which it draws from camphor, it would be difficult to balance the budget.



House of Prince Kitashirakawa at Tainan

The camphor industry is subject to the supervision of the monopoly bureau, a special division of the administration, directly under the governor-general. This office has the task of supervising the exploitation of all state monopolies, so on camphor, opium and salt. Recently added were the sections Weights, Measures and Tobacco.

The opium monopoly provides less important income to the island's treasury than the camphor, but it is still important enough. One is familiar with the strict measures taken by the Japanese government against opium smokers in Japan, dating back to the time, now about 60 years ago, when the country was opened up to foreign trade. It was feared then, and rightly so, that the unhealthy paste was being brought into the country and that it would have an equally malevolent impact on the Nippon population as on that of China. The import, sale and use of opium were strictly forbidden, and very severe penalties were imposed on offenders. They went so far as to ban the import of pipes and lamps used by addicted opium smokers.

When the Japanese took control of Formosa, their first plan was to apply the same rules to their new colony. But the abolition of opium would be like a death sentence for habitual smokers, who, steeped in the poison, would only be able to slowly turn away from it. Furthermore, a formal ban would have alienated all natives who use the refined opium paste. Including also the highest levels of the local society and those with whom one would want to associate and retain on Formosa. The Japanese administrators lent a willing ear to these considerations and determined to monitor usage

and limit it as much as possible. They established a monopoly and were thus able to exercise supervision most effectively. The government was in charge of importing and retailing. Only a limited amount of opium was supplied to the same person and then only on presentation of a medical certificate that the buyer really needed the push.

Then a strange phenomenon occurred. The new monopoly soon brought the best financial results, just in a moment when the government was in no small financial difficulties. From then on, the officials' zeal for reducing the usage dropped as if by a stroke of magic. A blind eye was turned to the abuses. People stopped asking for the medical certificate, which was replaced by a simple statement from the buyer.

The number of permits increased rapidly and soon there was no question of eradicating the fatal habit. A factory was built at Taihoku for refining opium¹¹. Experiments were even carried out on the acclimatization and cultivation of the opium poppy in order to obtain the precious substance with less effort. The number of permits increases year by year, and the benefits gained by the monopoly agency grow at the same rate. However, it must be acknowledged that the prohibition with regard to the Japanese living in the colony remains as strict as in Japan itself, and offenders are immediately punished with banishment.

This digression distracted us a long way from Karenkō [Hualien], where the Taito Maru only stayed for a single afternoon.

Our next port of call was Pinan [Beinan 卑南鄉, Taitung County], the southern trading port of the valley, a concession of the Kada company and the capital of the largest but also the least populated district of Formosa. I was welcomed by the prefect, an old Samurai from the ancien régime, whose all too backward ideas had been banished to this lost corner as if to a place of punishment. He also showed an exaggerated concern for my safety and forbade me to make the excursion I had planned into the forests surrounding the small town.

In exchange, the prefect suggested that I visit one of the Japanese schools in the immediate vicinity, built for the benefit of the country's natives. These people belong to the Puyuma group¹² and are considered among the most civilized on the island.

They are of gentle morals; yet everyone I met in the countryside was armed to the teeth to defend themselves against the attacks of certain tribes living in the neighboring mountains, who sometimes engage in headhunting against the peaceful inhabitants of the plains. Even the schoolchildren, many of whom were under 10, came to school carrying their textbooks in one hand and a gigantic knife in the other.



Aboriginal students at the Taitō school

The Japanese teacher showed me around his institution which he ran with the help of several native instructors. Most of the children, who are very intelligent and lively, spoke fluent Japanese and some wrote already very well after three years of schooling. Remarkably, it is easier to get the children of genuine natives to attend school regularly than those of natives of Chinese descent. The teacher also hoped to soon be able to expand his program and in a short time bring his school up to the same standard as schools in Japan.

When I returned to the prefect's office, I found the head of the district in great distress; he advised me not to lose any time, but to return aboard immediately, for the sandbank, which we had passed without difficulty, was becoming more dangerous from minute to minute under the influence of a strong sea wind. The passage of this difficult obstacle takes place in large boats with high sides,

similar to the surfboats on the coast of Upper Guinea, but instead of being pushed by about twenty paddlers, here they have as their sole driving force only two Chinese rowers, whose efforts often remain fruitless.

Such was the case with us, when, with great effort, we had triumphed three consecutive rollers, our men could not withstand the force of the current, which drove us back to shore and threatened to throw us over the sandbank and leave us stranded. The vehemence of the waves did not lessen, and our sailors, weakened by opium, exerted themselves less and less. Fortunately, those who had stayed ashore became aware of our critical condition sent out a second boat to our assistance. Two rowers were placed in the boat with fresh strength, and thanks to this support we were able to reach the packet boat.

This moving embarkation made us appreciate all the more the calm waters, which we met the next day at Kwaliang [NanWan 南灣], where we arrived, after sailing around Cape Garanbi [Cape Eluanbi, 鵝鑾鼻], the southern tip of Formosa, where the Japanese erected a first class lighthouse. Landing here is done by bamboo rafts, which are so badly jointed that they are completely underwater. Passengers take their seats in a tub, which keeps them dry, but where it is very tight.

Kwaliang is the port of Kōshun town [Hengchun 恆春], the capital of the southern district, to which it is connected by a Decauville railway of the type commonly used on Formosa. I was received in Kōshun by the prefect, an official very different from that of the previous day and as modern as his colleague was conservative.

Yet here, instead of the so-called European and almost inedible breakfast that had been served to me at Taitō, I was served a tasty Japanese meal, including a dish that they called sashimi [沙西米, 刺身], consisting of raw fish, generously topped with a delicious sauce of lentils and ginger and other ingredients, tasted especially good.



One of the rafts on which passengers board large ships

The province of Kōshun, despite its name meaning "eternal spring", is the least fertile of Formosa; drought is frequent and rice brings only a single harvest a year. The prefect has tried to increase the welfare of the residents, in particular by supporting livestock farming. A model farm set up for this purpose has achieved promising results and the first sheep ever seen on the island were bred there.

After a most pleasant day spent in the prefect's garden surrounded by a splendour of orchids, we headed north again to anchor the next morning opposite Takao [Kaohsiung 高雄]. This port, if such a name can be given to a landing point devoid of any natural or artificial protection, is the main gateway to the southern region of Formosa, which exports almost exclusively sugar. In the vast plain that extends as far as Kagi [Chiayi 嘉義], the sugar cane is so dense that it forms an immense continuous field. On the slopes of the hills the farmers grow the rice needed to feed themselves in squares that are laid out like the steps of a staircase.

At Takao I left the Taito Maru for the moment to take the railway to Tainan 台南. I used my first day to visit Hōzan [Fongshan 鳳山], a small town surrounded by a Chinese wall, where I found Professor Takagi again. He had come to investigate a strange epidemic that had swept through the garrison, with all the characteristics of malarial fever and beri beri [Thiamine deficiency]. Until then, the disease had been confined to Hōzan. As it is almost always fatal, it had decimated a battalion of infantry. The professor seemed to attribute the illness to the abuse of pineapples, which are very beautiful and cheap and which the soldiers consume in large quantities.

Back in Takao the same day, I took the train there and stopped a few hours later at Kyōshitō station [Ciaotou 橋頭], about halfway to Tainan, to see the large sugar factory that a few years ago a company founded with the support of the government¹².

Of all agricultural products, sugar is the one that the government has encouraged the most, since Japan, which is a major consumer of this product, has been unable to produce it despite numerous attempts to acclimatize cane or sugar beet. Japan has been forced to look abroad for supplies, and now would like to obtain all the necessary raw materials from Formosa. The Government's efforts have focused on improving the cultivation and preparation processes, which still remain primitive and result in considerable wastage.

To this purpose, a special office was set up to draw up plans and take the most appropriate measures to improve the sugar industry. The best varieties of cane were introduced from the Hawaiian Islands, and metallic crushing machines were imported from Europe and America, far superior to the stone mills used by the natives. Incentives and advances are granted to growers who adopt the modern processes; finally, the construction of the Kyōshitō model factory is meant to be an example to growers and encourage them to set up similar factories with their own resources.

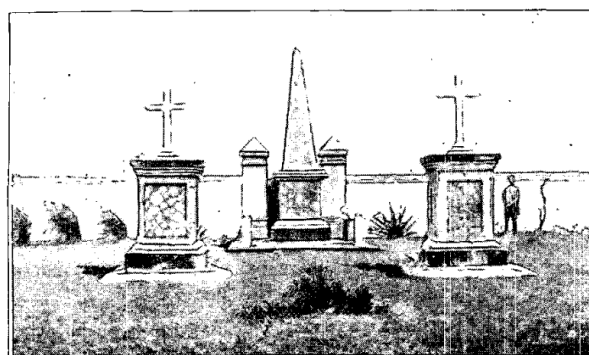
The company was presented in Japan more as a patriotic venture than a commercial one. The capital of one million yen was largely contributed by the imperial family and the leading representatives of the Japanese aristocracy. Despite a major subsidy from the island's treasury and preferential transport rates on the railway, the results to date have not lived up to expectations. The small indigenous manufacturers, seeing themselves threatened by this new competition, succeeded in dissuading the owners of the cane fields from bringing their harvests to the Kyoshito factory. And thus, due to a lack of raw materials, the factory's output has remained well below its manufacturing capacity.

At present, the police have been brought in to use their usual methods to break down the resistance of the farmers, which means that the company can look forward to prosperity in the near future. Yet there is no doubt that the Sugar Bureau has been too hasty in its reforms, because several factories, equipped with less modern equipment but with poorer capital than the Kyoshito company, had to cease their operations, which does not serve as good advertising for the new production methods that they are rightly trying to spread throughout the colony.

The same evening I arrived at Tainan. That city, which is the oldest and most populous in Formosa, has nothing remarkable. It has retained most of its Chinese character; one imagines being in one of the ports of Fujian or Guangdong.

I was shown the house where prince Kitashirakawa [1847 – 1895] died, the commander of the Japanese army corps that conquered the island, then the temple erected in honor of the Chinese pirate Koxinga [國姓爺, General of the Southern Ming, 1624 – 1662], who chased the Dutch from Formosa in the 17th century, and finally the old fort, which served as a residence for the Dutch governor and is currently used as a military hospital.

I found the Taito Maru again in Anping, a mooring one mile from the city, where ships have to anchor in the open sea like in Takao. The following day we anchored at the Makung pier [Makō, Magong 馬公] on the Pescadores archipelago. These islands have a strategic value of the first rank, as they lie in the way through the Strait and block the main route leading from the south to northern China and to Japan. On the other hand, they could serve as a focal point and base for a Japanese fleet wishing to make an offensive move to the South China Sea.



*In the French cemetery of the Pescadores:
Monument erected in memory of Admiral Courbet
and his comrades in arms.*

The archipelago of the Pescadores [Penghu 澎湖] was conquered and annexed by France in March 1885 under Admiral Amédée Courbet, who died there of cholera shortly before the islands were returned to the Celestial Empire [July 1885].

These ambiguous circumstances contributed to making my presence in Makung less desirable by the authorities. Instead of letting me go ashore accompanied by none other than my interpreter, as in all previous places where the boat moored, I was followed by several officers of the crew, who were joined, as soon as I set foot on land, by a certain number of officials and most members of the local police. That impressive procession grew larger with every step, the residents who were among the spectators had certainly never experienced such a great display of power to guard a single person. I had to take all sorts of steps to get permission to photograph the monument erected by our sailors in memory of the admiral and his comrades, who died there in large numbers. [about 1000 soldiers]

Although I had stayed ashore for less than an hour during our stay at Makung port, on my return to the capital I found an even cooler reception than before. They found excellent reasons to refuse me everything I asked for. I repeatedly appealed in vain to the promise made to me earlier by the authorities, that I might travel to the borders of the Atayal land and follow the operations of an important expedition sent against them in the South of the island. I went so far as to appeal to the governor himself and telegraphed to him in Tokyo, where he was just spending his annual leave, but all my efforts remained fruitless. Against such a systematically hostile attitude, I felt obliged to shorten my stay and bid Formosa farewell. The Japanese people are the most suspicious in the world.

Despite this dismissive attitude of the authorities, I was able to obtain valuable information about the work of the Japanese on Formosa and the current state of the colony during the two months I spent on the island, thanks to the excursions I made in different provinces, thanks also to the kindness of a few individuals and a small number of more tractable officials. Let me summarize some of this here.

What especially attracts attention is the politics followed towards the natives. It is known that the Japanese have presented themselves in recent years as the champions of justice in the Far East, the liberators of their Asian brothers and that they have created an anti-Western movement in several European colonies. It was therefore to be expected that they would set up a paternal government in a country inhabited by Chinese people and that they would conduct a very goodwill and gentle regime.



House of a Puyuma chief

However, this has not been the case at all, and one is amazed to see how arbitrarily the natives are treated by the police, whose authority is exercised without any control. It is also surprising that the population is deprived of any share in the management of public affairs.

These various causes of discontent, to which could be added many others, in particular the high rate of taxation, explain the aversion of the natives to their new masters and make them forget the very great benefits they have derived from the Japanese occupation. Thanks to well-understood sanitary measures, epidemics of all kinds have decreased in frequency and intensity. Finally, the country's present security contrasts sharply with the anarchy it has suffered throughout its history.

The complete pacification has given agricultural and commercial enterprises a stability hitherto unknown: the cultivated area has increased considerably, crops are cultivated with greater care and have been perfected by the introduction of better species and modern machinery. Famines, so frequent in the past, no longer exist today

Not only does Formosa no longer ask for additional rice from abroad to support its inhabitants, but it has also become an exporter of this commodity. The most valuable products, sugar, camphor and tea, yield higher profits than before, especially the last two. And finally the island's mineral riches - coal, gold, petroleum, sulfur - are all being exploited and are producing, or are expected to produce, satisfactory results.

The development of Formosa's resources primarily resulted in rapid growth in its trade. But there, as elsewhere, the attitude of the government gives rise to criticism, because when setting the rate of export duties, only the interests of Japan were taken into account, often to the disadvantage of the colony. The trade with the motherland, which was zero at the time of occupation, has gradually reached that of trade with foreign countries, and this trade, on the other hand, has remained unchanged.

Economic prosperity, which had grown steadily since the annexation, has come to a standstill in the last three years due to the costs of the recent war. Payment of the subsidy that the mainland was supposed to provide to the colony until 1910 was abruptly suspended last year. In all branches of government, one does not spend more than is absolutely necessary. Public works, even those concerning the defense of the island, have had to be temporarily abandoned. The same stagnation is felt everywhere, due to the shortage of money.

If one passes from the material questions to the moral ones, an even more selfish system of government is encountered. It has been seen that the natives enjoy no freedom at all. With regard to public education and the upbringing of the young generation of Chinese, the same methods reappear. Some basic skills are taught to the native children, enabling them to become good helpers and workers, but care is taken not to develop secondary or higher education, which could spark off ideas of emancipation or rebellion.

In short, the Japanese have created a very powerful military base in Formosa; they have founded a prosperous and inexpensive colony which constitutes an important commercial outlet for the mainland. But they continue to form a class of their own on the island, living there as if in a conquered country and jealously maintaining their subjects in a situation inferior to the natives of almost all the colonies in the Far East.¹⁴



Notes:

[1]

At that time the routes were operated by Mitsubishi Shokai, then N.Y.K. and O.S.K. The overly simplified view that western corporations fail because of Asian states subsidiaries is being challenged by Prof. Kōzō Yamamura 'The Founding of Mitsubishi: A Case Study in Japanese Business History'

<https://www.oakhouse.de/pic/Tosa/TheFoundingMitsubishi.pdf>

[2]

In the Hongkong Daily Press of January 25, 1906 the passage on the S.S. Daijin Maru to Tamsui was announced for the following Sunday.



Ten years later the Daijin Maru raised international attention when it sank in a collision accident with the loss of 160 people, only 21 saved.

OSAKA SHOSEN KAISHA.
REGULAR STEAMSHIP SERVICES BETWEEN
HONGKONG, SOUTH CHINA COAST PORTS
AND FORMOSA.
PROPOSED SAILINGS FROM HONGKONG—
SUBJECT TO ALTERATION.

FOR	THE CO.'S SS.	LEAVING
* TAMSUI VIA SWATOW AND AMOI	"DAIJIN MARU"	SUNDAY, 28th Jan., at 10 a.m.
SHANGHAI VIA SWATOW, AMOY AND FOOCHEW	"ANPING MARU"	THURSDAY, 25th Jan., at 10 a.m.
TAKAO VIA SWATOW, AMOY AND ANPING	"DECIMA"	SUNDAY, 28th Jan., at 8 a.m.
† SHANGHAI VIA SWATOW, AMOY AND FOOCHEW	"TRIUMPH"	THURSDAY, 1st Feb., at 10 a.m.

THE CHARTERED S.S. A. HANSEN
* These Steamers have superior accommodation for First-class Passengers, and are fitted throughout with electric light.
† Taking Cargo on through Bills of Lading to all Yangtze and Northern China Ports.
For Freight, Passage, and further information, apply at the Company's local Branch Office at No. 8, Des Voeux Road Central.
Hongkong, 18th January, 1906. T. ARIMA, Manager. [14]

**PENINSULAR & ORIENTAL
STEAM NAVIGATION CO.**
HOMEWARD PASSENGER SEASON, 1906.

[3]

The Decauville locomotive factory was a French pioneer in light railways. Its portable track system made it popular with industries and military around the world. In the text Decauville is synonymous for a narrow gauge railway.

[4]

Finished in 1906 a double-track light railway with hand-pushed trolleys made the connection between the temporary Bogongkeng Station 伯公坑火車站 on the north side of the DaAn river (beside the today's highway No1.) and the Fengyuan station. To climb the steep slope to the Houli plateau a spiral ramp was constructed. 1908, when the mountain line with its challenging bridges and tunnels was opened, this provisional track had been demolished.

<https://zh.wikipedia.org/zh-tw/大安溪鐵橋>

[https://memory.culture.tw/Home/Detail?](https://memory.culture.tw/Home/Detail?Id=236240&IndexCode=Culture_Event)

[Id=236240&IndexCode=Culture_Event](https://memory.culture.tw/Home/Detail?Id=236240&IndexCode=Culture_Event)

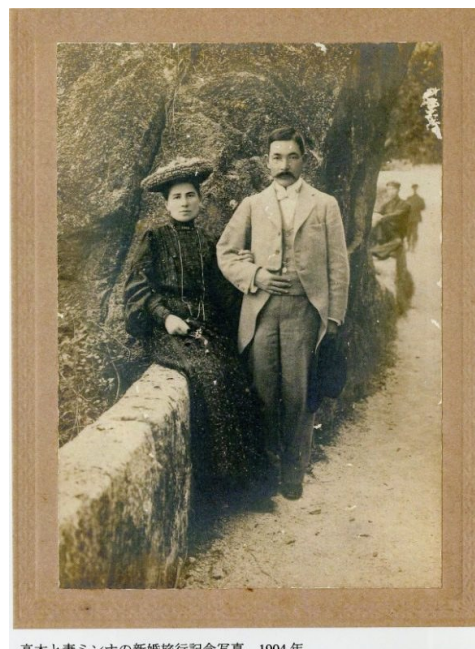


LIGHT HAND RAILWAY ACROSS THE TAIAH RIVER.

[5]

On honeymoon 1904, Professor Takagi Tomoe and German spouse Minna Ballerstedt. He laid the foundations for medical education and fought successfully against the plague. As "Father of Taiwanese Medicine and Hygiene" he is still highly respected in Taiwan today.

<https://pylin.kaishao.idv.tw/?p=7202>

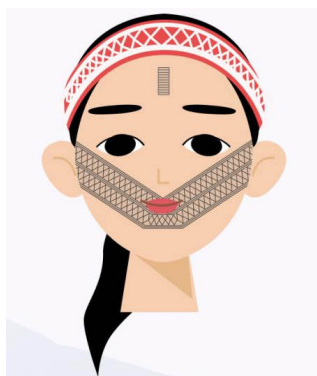


高木と妻ミンナの新婚旅行記念写真 1904年

[6]

The 'Guishan hydroelectric powerhouse' 龜山水力發電所 Taiwan's first hydroelectric power plant started operation in 1905.

<https://zh.wikipedia.org/zh-tw/龜山發電廠>



[7]

The last Atayal woman with this tattoo died 2019 at the age of 97. In a TV interview she still remembered the pain when she was stitched at the age of 8 years. It had been believed that without it you can not pass over the Rainbow Bridge into a new life.

[8]

The origin of the tea's name was followed by Jerome Besson. It seems Pouchong is a fuzzy transcription of the Wenshan Baozhong tea 文山包種茶 from the greater Taipei area. The pinyin romanisation: Wénshān bāo zhǒng chá, but in local Taiwanese / Holo it is pronounced Bûn-san pau-chióng tê.

From this pau-chióng (or bojong from Hakka) the French text made a Pouchong, leading to the surprising Dutch translation as Poesjong = Pussy-Boy.

[9]

Reference to the landing of a French expeditionary corps during the Sino-French war in 1884. The occupation of Keelung ended 8 months later with the French weakened by cholera, typhus fever and the enforced resistance by the Qing Dynasty under General Liu Ming-Chuan [劉銘傳 1836 - 1896], the later governor of the Taiwan Province.

[10]

Natural camphor is obtained by steam-distilling the wood of the camphor tree and was one of the most lucrative industries in Taiwan during the Japanese era. World usage of camphor in 1932: 80% celluloid and film, 10% medicine. Further usage religious incense, perfume, insect repellent and fireworks.



Camphor museum in DongShi 東勢
<https://www.camphor.tw/>



Camphor tree

[11]

The colonial authorities not only turned the opium problem into a profitable business, but also operated under the rhetoric of scientific modernization.

In 1930 Taiwan's Doctors Union and the original 'Taiwan people Party' send a protest note to Tokyo and to the League of Nations in Geneva against the overly easy issuing of licenses for purchasing and smoking of opium.

The factory buildings for refining camphor and opium near Taipei's Nanmen Gate are a museum now.



Licensed
Opium Shop



Laboratory of the Opium Production Office,
National Taiwan Library.

[12]

Famous daughter of the Puyuma, pop star A-Mei. "Sisters" her first international hit in 1996:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OO60xtWjLRw>

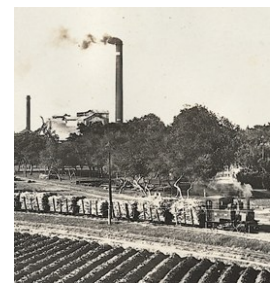


[13]

After being a strong base for anti-colonial armed resistance, Ciaotou was developed as Japan's first sugar plantation settlement in Taiwan. Industrialized production learned and adopted from the Hawaiian example. Governmental support by building the infrastructure and promoting a 'land reform' that gained the state-supported sugar companies access to a great expanse of land.

But with time the implementation of the sugar industry in Ciaotou brought about a profound change in local people's attitudes toward the colonizers.

2014 Japan's early colonization in Taiwan, Hui-Lin Lee, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa,



Kyoshito / Ciaotou 橋仔頭糖廠

[14]

To count Taiwan as the first colony is a rather western view. In 1869 Japan's colonization of Hokkaidō and its Ainu people was formalized and in 1879 the Okinawa Prefecture had been established replacing the autonomous Ryukyu Kingdom and its unique culture.

Text discovered and prepared by Michael Turton, <https://michaelturton.blogspot.com/>

Revised translation and notes by Martin Eickhoff, <https://www.oakhouse.de/>

ME, June 2024