

Taiwan Literature and History

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In this issue we take as a theme literary works on historical subjects to reflect the correspondence and resonance between literature and history developed in Taiwan. Any creative work that refers to or reflects upon a great event that occurred in Taiwan and expresses the related thoughts or emotions, either as fiction or as a short essay, is considered a historical work in Taiwan literature. Although the relationship between literature and history is not as immediate a result as the shadow one instantly sees when erecting a pole or as closely associated as the shadow that follows the form, and the truth in a literary work is not necessarily the same as the historical fact, nevertheless through the literature that reflects history, we can see the direction of social changes of the time and the trend of the historical development of Taiwan literature.

According to the geologic record, Taiwan was connected to the continent during the glacial epoch of the Pleistocene, which ended 10,000 years ago, leaving traces of human activities during the Paleolithic Period of the mainland, and it was separated from the continent to become the island shape it is today about 10,000 years ago. Archaeologically, in the past 7,000 years, various Neolithic Age cultures with close relations to the New Stone Age cultures of the southeast coast of mainland China and Southeast Asia have been found scattered throughout Taiwan. These aborigines are of Austronesian (also known as Malayo-Polynesian) descent, and maintained a primitive society for 6,000 to 7,000 years until the seventeenth century, when foreign influences invaded Taiwan.

According to historical documents, Sun Quan (182–252) of the Three Kingdoms (220–265) sent troops overseas to conquer Yizhou and captured several thousands of aborigines, but whether Yizhou ("Barbarian Island" literally) was Liuqiu or Taiwan is an open question. During the fifteenth century Europe entered the age of exploration and foreign influences began to strive for domination on the sea for commercial profits. The Portuguese Fernao de Magalhaes (Ferdinand Magellan) completed the first navigation around the world in 1522, and in the mid-sixteenth century, the Portuguese started to use

Macao as a base for trading expeditions between India and Japan. In 1544, the first documentation of Taiwan appeared in world history records: When the first Portuguese ship passed by the island on the way to Japan (navigated by the Dutch Huygen van Linschoten), the sailors on board saw the green and luxuriant mountains and, amazed at their beauty, they exclaimed, "*Ilha Formosa*" (the Beautiful Island). In 1619, Spanish Dominican priests were driven to Taiwan by a typhoon en route to Fuzhou. In 1622, Dutch ships were stationed in the Penghus (Pescadores) and in 1624 moved to Anping (which at that time was a sandy shoal off the coast of Tainan, separated by the Taijiang Inland Sea). The Anping area was called "Tayouan" by the aboriginal Siraya Tribe, and called "Kunshen" (a gigantic legendary fish's body) by Taiwanese. In the historical records of the Ming Dynasty it was written as "Dayuan" (大員), "Taiyuan" (臺員), "Dayuan" (大圓), "Dawan" (大灣), or "Taiwan" (臺灣), based on the South Fujian vernacular, and gradually "Taiwan" became the name for the whole island. The accurate depiction of the island appeared for the first time in 1625 in a map published in the Netherlands; it was called "Pakan." After the Dutch occupied Anping, they began to build a fortress on the shoal as a colony trading post of the Dutch East India Company. The fort was named in 1627 "Zeelandia" after the Dutch province of Zeeland, and in 1652 they established the town Provintia across the port at a place called Saccam (today's Chikanlou). The Dutch started to colonize the southwestern part of Formosa, and to draw the primitive society of Taiwan into the world system. On the other hand, in 1626 the Spanish landed on Santiago in the northeast and entered Chilung as the strongpoint of trade in the Far East. In 1628 the Spanish entered Huwei (today's Tanshui) to build Fort Santo Domingo (Hongmao-cheng) and churches for missionary work. In 1642 the Dutch expelled all the Spanish influences in northern Taiwan, and the whole west coast came under Dutch control until 1662 when Zheng Chenggong expelled the Dutch. The Dutch rule in Taiwan (1624–1662) was, so to speak, the first regime established by a foreign power.

In 1644 when Manchu troops conquered China proper and China came under Manchu rule, Emperor Chongzhen of the Ming Dynasty committed suicide and the four Kings of Southern Ming were established in an attempt to resist the Manchu Qing

Dynasty and restore the Ming. In 1645 Zheng Chenggong, a Ming loyalist, was given the family name of Emperor Tang of Southern Ming, and thus was honored as Koxinga (Lord of the Imperial Surname) in the service of the Ming Emperor. Zheng Chenggong was born in Hirado, Hizen Province (today's Kyūshū) in Japan. His mother was from the Tagawa family. His father Zheng Zhilong, known by the nickname Iguan, which in Dutch documents was rendered Iquan or the Christian name Nicholas Iquan, was a tycoon controlling the trade of the East and South Asia Seas. Later on he was amnestied by the Ming court, appointed "Commander of Coast Defense," and was thus converted from a pirate to an imperial official assigned to wipe out other remaining pirates. In 1661, the fifteenth year of Yongli, the reign title of King Gui of the Southern Ming, Zheng Chenggong expelled the Dutch and made Taiwan the base for "Fighting against Qing to restore Ming," establishing Dongdu (today's Tainan) as the East Capital of Ming, and consolidating local administrative structures. In 1662, Zheng Chenggong died and was succeeded by his son Zheng Jing, who renamed Dongdu "Dongning" and declared himself "King of Dongning," which was, so to speak, the first and the only dynasty established by a Chinese in Taiwan. The Zheng Dynasty in Taiwan lasted for three generations, twenty-three years all together. In 1683, the twenty-second year of Kangxi, Shi Lang's troops attacked Penghus, and Taiwan was in imminent danger; the third generation Zheng Keshuang surrendered without resistance and Taiwan became part of Qing's territory included in Fujian Province. However, incidents against the Qing government often happened, and Taiwan was described as a place with "an uprising every three years and a rebellion every five years." In 1885, Taiwan was administratively separated from Fujian and officially became a province.

In 1895 the Qing Dynasty was defeated in the first Sino-Japanese War and, according to the resulting Shimonoseki Treaty, Taiwan and the Penghus were ceded to Japan as a colony. Upon this news, the wrathful and indignant Taiwanese people, one after another, organized militias to protect their own homes against the Japanese. A Qing official in Taiwan, Qiu Fengjia (1864–1912) advocated independence. He appealed to the local gentry and officially declared the establishment of a "Democratic Republic of Taiwan." As soon as the Japanese troops invaded the island on a large scale, President Tang Jingsong (1841–1903) absconded to Xiamen, and Qiu Fengjia, Vice President and

concurrently Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Volunteers, escaped to Guangdong. The volunteers, who had no will to fight, retreated in defeat again and again, and all the officials of the Republic fled to mainland China one after another. Therefore the Republic of Taiwan collapsed in less than two weeks after its declaration. Within five months from the landing of Japanese troops at Aodi (in the northeast) to the capture of Tainan, the “subjugation of the whole island” was announced, and the Japanese completed their occupation of Taiwan.

Under Japanese occupation, the Taiwanese people continued their resistance at the expense of many lives for seven years, and the Japanese Government-General was unable to announce the “Recovery of Public Peace and Order” until May, 1902. In the following fourteen years, armed uprisings in dissatisfaction from the Japanese imperial rule occurred more than ten times, until 1915, when the Xilaitan Incident, with serious loss of life, occurred. The Taiwanese people turned to parliamentary movements and cultural resistance to avoid further bloodshed. In 1937 the Lugouqiao (Marco Polo Bridge) Incident happened; Japanese imperialists in Taiwan promoted the Kōmin (Imperial Subjects) Movement to accelerate the establishment of the state system for war. In 1941 the Imperial Subjects Public Service Society was established, encouraging Taiwanese to adopt Japanese names, as “Japanization” of Taiwanese was intensified. In December, the Pacific War broke out. In 1942, when the volunteer system was put into practice, Taiwanese were drafted to fight in Southeast Asia as Japanese troops. On August 15, 1945, Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration with unconditional surrender, and China took over Taiwan. In October 1945, the Seventeenth Army arrived in Taiwan from the mainland, but the discipline, appearance, and bearing of the soldiers were unexpectedly disappointing to the frustrated Taiwanese people. In addition, corruption of the government and politics became a remote cause undermining the conflict between Taiwanese and mainlanders later on. On February 27, 1947, because of an incident in which agents of the government monopoly bureau beat up an illegal tobacco vendor, a riot ensued the next day and, spreading to the whole island, became known as the February 28 Incident. This provoked the high-handed policy of the “White Terror,” a

reaction in which countless innocent intellectuals and cultural figures were arrested and killed. The disaster left a profound and lasting impact on Taiwan's history.

When the civil war in China ended in 1949, the Communists defeated the Nationalists and established the People's Republic of China on October 1. The government of the Republic of China moved to Taiwan on December 7 of the same year, but martial law was issued by the Taiwan Garrison Command as early as May 20. Under martial law, the government implemented "clearing out the Communists" and "eliminating Communist followers." It tightly controlled ideology and speech, including the police, military and education systems, and the media for almost forty years, until martial law was lifted on July 15, 1987. Since then, bans on new newspapers and political parties have been removed, and Taiwan has become a democratic society with freedom of speech and diversity of opinions. As seen from this synopsis, modern history has spanned about 400 years, beginning in the sixteenth century, with the end of the Ming and beginning of the Qing Dynasties, through various eras—from the occupation periods of Spanish and Dutch, the Zheng Dynasty, Qing rule, Japanese Colony, postwar, martial law, to the democratic society of today.