Japan’s First War Reporter: Kishida Ginkō and the Taiwan Expedition

MATTHEW FRALEIGH, Brandeis University, USA

The 1874 Taiwan Expedition was a watershed event for early Meiji journalism, for it was during this conflict that Kishida Ginkō (1833–1905) became Japan’s first war reporter. At a time when newspapers had only started to become a feature of daily life in Japan, Ginkō’s pioneering coverage of the Taiwan campaign was an important demonstration of the newspaper’s potential to the Meiji authorities, and his coverage likewise gave many readers their first concrete understandings of the reporter at work. This paper examines Ginkō’s extensive writings on Taiwan with the goal of illuminating how the campaign, its setting, and the Taiwanese aborigines were understood by and represented to the Meiji reading public. It shows that more than simply conveying information about the Expedition to the reading public, Ginkō’s reportage strove to situate the project as part of a broader colonial agenda that would impart ‘civilization’ to the indigenous population. In columns that stressed Japan’s long-term strategic interests in the area, Ginkō called upon his readers to imagine themselves as part of the enterprise.

In the first overseas military campaign it had launched in over two centuries, Japan sent some 3,000 troops to southern Taiwan in 1874 to seek redress for what it saw as the murders of its subjects. After a few brief battles that took place over three weeks, the Japanese soldiers emerged victorious and many returned home, though a large force remained behind in Taiwan for several months while a settlement was negotiated. Some scholars have seen in this episode early manifestations of Japanese aggression toward its neighbors and the first signs of the expansionist agenda that led it to colonize Taiwan 20 years later. Others have instead highlighted domestic factors in discussing the event, arguing that factional intrigues within the centers of the Meiji government were more important than any inchoate imperialist program. Yet the Taiwan expedition is also important for what it can tell us about early Meiji journalism, for it was during this conflict that Kishida Ginkō (1833–1905) became Japan’s first war reporter. Just four days after Commander Saigō Tsugumichi departed Tokyo for the front, the first installment of Ginkō’s ‘News From Taiwan’ (Taiwan shinpō) appeared in the Tōkyō nichichi shinbun newspaper. The series ran throughout the Taiwan conflict, providing prompt and regular updates on troop deployments and battlefield conditions.1 Founded just two years earlier, Ginkō’s newspaper was Tokyo’s first daily, and his pioneering coverage of the Taiwan campaign gave readers their first

1In all, the series included 28 numbered installments, though a half dozen or so unnumbered installments of News From Taiwan appeared toward the end of the series. The average interval between successive installments was a few days, but postal delays and variations in the frequency of ship traffic meant that this gap might range from a single day to two weeks.

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memorably concrete images of the intrepid investigative reporter. While Ginkō’s dispatches helped both the government and the reading public to understand the newspaper’s function and potential, they also contributed to instilling new ideas about the responsibility of the government to operate more transparently.

Moreover, beyond simply conveying basic factual information about how the Taiwan Expedition was faring, Ginkō focused a great deal of his attention on its larger significance, placing the campaign in a broader context and imagining Japan’s future role in the region. Even after the fighting had essentially ended and Ginkō had returned to Japan, the installments of ‘News From Taiwan’ continued, and Ginkō went on to launch a new series of columns called ‘Taiwan Manuscript’ (Taiwan shukō) focused mainly on describing the island’s natural features and the indigenous people’s customs. His writings are thus also an invaluable source for illuminating how the campaign, its setting, and its principal targets, the Taiwanese aborigines, were understood by and represented to the Meiji reading public. They unmistakably frame the expedition as an attempt to bring ‘civilization’ to the indigenous population, articulate Japan’s long-term strategic interests in establishing a colony in Taiwan, and enthusiastically involve readers in the enterprise, inducing them to imagine how they too might contribute to it.

The Taiwan Expedition

The principal stated purpose of the Taiwan campaign was to demand redress for the murders of Japanese seafarers who had been shipwrecked in recent years on Taiwan.\(^2\) Japan’s claim to be seeking justice for the wrongful death of its subjects was complicated, however, by the fact that the victims were mainly from the Ryukyus, which were at this time ‘dually affiliated’ with both the fledgling Meiji state and the Qing dynasty. Qing officials could thus reasonably counter that the Ryukyus had in fact long been a tributary of the Qing (and of the Ming before that) and thus Japan had no grounds to pursue claims on behalf of Ryukyuan victims. To add a further wrinkle, the indigenous people of Taiwan who were responsible for the deaths of the shipwrecked Ryukyuans were in an equally ambiguous position vis-à-vis the Qing, for the areas of southern and eastern Taiwan where they lived were regarded by the Qing as ‘beyond the pale’ (Ch. huawai), that is, outside their sphere of suasive acculturation. While the Qing might cite the peripherality of the Taiwanese indigenous areas as a means of recusing themselves of responsibility for the indigenous actions, such an argument also left them vulnerable to a new threat. Japanese officials conversant with Western principles of international law and national territorial integrity could make the provocative assertion that if indeed the Qing had no sovereignty over the aboriginal regions of Taiwan then these regions were free for annexation by any power that would mount a mission civilisatrice.

\(^2\) In the winter of 1871, a group of Ryukyuan sailors departed from Naha and encountered severely stormy seas. After drifting for several weeks, they landed on the coast of Taiwan. Of the 66 passengers who made it ashore, 54 were murdered by the indigenous inhabitants of the island. The remaining 12 survivors were taken into custody by Qing officials and eventually allowed to return home. A second incident took place in 1873, when four sailors from Oda (later part of Okayama) were stranded on Taiwan and also attacked by aborigines. As part of his argument that the negotiated terms of the settlement of the Taiwan Expedition in 1874 did not imply Chinese relinquishment of sovereignty over the Ryukyus, Edwin Pak-Wah Leung advances the alternative interpretation that ‘the immediate factor leading to the Japanese Formosan expedition was not the Ryukyu shipwreck incident of 1871, but the Oda incident of 1873’: Leung, ‘The Quasi-War’, 277–278.
The Taiwan Expedition and the events leading up to it thus mark a watershed in the histories of both China and Japan, for these developments of the early 1870s were the occasion for thoroughgoing redefinitions of self on both sides, as well as a major recalibration of the assumptions underlying the two states’ relations with each other and the world at large. At the time, both China and Japan were in transition from traditional worldviews to new models of modern nationhood.  

In 1873, for example, Japan’s Foreign Minister Soejima Taneomi had been dispatched to China ostensibly to ratify the Sino-Japanese Treaty of Amity. One of the more important symbolic results of his mission was to transform the protocol governing foreign diplomats’ audiences with the Qing Emperor, replacing a Sinocentric model with one based upon Western norms, in which individual nation states related to each other as equals.  

A second, unofficial goal of Soejima’s mission was to clarify the new Meiji state’s national boundaries by resolving the ambiguous status of the Ryukyus. Soejima had previously taken active steps to bring these islands under Japan’s control, and his intent to focus on this front is clearly evident in the Chinese quatrain he wrote shortly after he departed Japan on March 17 (Figure 1):

Wind whips the waves, the force of the waves surges; Steam engines speed our progress, the ship’s flags flutter. Sacred words, earnest and prudent, linger in my ears:
‘Protect the newly established domain in the southern seas.’

It is customary to assume that Japan alone marshaled Western concepts of international law while China remained tied to traditional notions of its own supremacy. As Motegi Toshio has shown in his discussion of negotiations between the two nations in the 1870s and 1880s, however, both Japan and China selectively and strategically practiced ‘code-switching’ as suited their purposes: see Motegi, ‘Nitchū kankeishi no katarikata’.

See Wayne McWilliams, ‘East Meets East’, for a vivid account of the mission. It is also important to note that Soejima cherished no naïve notions of Western impartiality; he was well aware of the gap between the norms of parity Western nations employed in their relations with one another and the assumptions of superiority that informed their stances toward Asian and African nations.

Soejima Taneomi, Sōkai zenshū, Vol. 1, 1a.
The phrase about ‘sacred words’ in the third line presumably refers to the Meiji Emperor’s brief edict, dated 9 March, charging Soejima with the responsibility to seek redress on behalf of the murdered Ryukyuan castaways.\(^6\)

With its indirect invocation of the castaways’ deaths on Taiwan, Soejima’s poem shows how the goal of clarifying Japanese national borders by asserting exclusive sovereignty over the Ryukyus was closely linked to the punitive expedition against the Taiwanese aborigines that would be launched the following year. Though Soejima himself never formally broached the issue, his assistant prepared the essential legal groundwork for the Taiwan Expedition in a meeting with Qing officials.\(^7\) In light of the subsequent emergence of Japan as an imperialist power in East Asia, there has long been a debate over whether the 1874 Taiwan Expedition should be seen as the first stirrings of Japanese colonialism. It is clearly documented, for example, that Soejima’s principal advisor on Taiwan, the former American consular official Charles LeGendre, enthusiastically fomented Japanese expansionism.\(^8\) In his capacity as a consultant to the Japanese Foreign Ministry, he submitted detailed memoranda with plans of attack and legal justifications for annexation from the winter of 1872 through the months leading up to his departure with the Soejima mission to China. Given that blueprints for the Japanese annexation of eastern Taiwan were being drawn up in 1872, and that (at least in the Japanese view) Soejima’s 1873 mission secured the requisite legitimization for launching a punitive action against Taiwan, some have been tempted to ponder another, more expansive, interpretation of the last line in Soejima’s poem – for these characters could just as plausibly mean, ‘To protect the southern seas, establish a new domain’. Such a reading would reflect the argument being promoted by LeGendre and others at the time that Taiwan’s ambiguous status put it at imminent risk of being seized by one of the Western powers.\(^9\) Annexation of Taiwan was thus held to be the only way to insure Japanese coastal security.\(^10\)

Just as Soejima’s poem permits multiple interpretive possibilities, the historical record of Sino-Japanese relations in the early 1870s has been read in various ways. Scholars looking at the same evidence have reached remarkably different conclusions. Leonard Gordon, for one, has argued that Japan became ‘a contender’ for Taiwan at this time, and concludes that the expedition was a serious colonization effort.\(^11\) Yet Marlene

\(^6\)The original manuscript edict is reproduced in McWilliams, ‘East Meets East’, 241. For an English translation, see Mizuno, ‘Early Meiji Policies’, 710.\(^7\)According to the Japanese interpretation of the brief interchange that took place, the Qing admitted that they lacked authority over aboriginal Taiwan; they did not specifically reject Japanese claims to the Ryukyus; and they were also informed that Japan intended to send a punitive mission to Taiwan to confront the aboriginals about the murders of Japanese subjects. The lack of documentation on the Chinese side concerning this important exchange has only exacerbated the problem of determining what transpired; see McWilliams, ‘East Meets East’, esp. 263–266; and Leung, ‘The Quasi-War’, esp. 269–271.\(^8\)The similarity between LeGendre’s proposals and the course of action that was adopted has been discussed in Leonard Gordon’s ‘Japan’s Abortive Colonial Venture in Taiwan’, as well as in Mōri, Taiwan shuppei, esp. 33–46 and 121–133.\(^9\)Leonard Gordon’s recent monograph, Confrontation Over Taiwan, examines British, American, French, Japanese, and Chinese interest in the island, which he describes as an ‘international prize’ in the nineteenth century; see esp. xx.\(^10\)Mōri Toshihiko provides a slightly variant version of this poem and argues that the final line should be read as referring to the defense of the new Ryukyu domain; Mōri, Taiwan shuppei, 50. The poem is featured prominently on the first page of Soejima’s collected works, where it appears with a headnote that supports Mōri’s reading: ‘In the southern seas, I gaze at the Ryukyu archipelago.’\(^11\)Gordon, ‘Japan’s Abortive Colonial Venture in Taiwan’, 185.
Mayo has rejected this analysis, calling attention instead to domestic factors, for which the expedition was intended to act as 'a safety valve' that would divert 'shizoku rancor'. More recently, Robert Eskildsen has interpreted the Taiwan Expedition as part of a 'mimetic' process by which Japan imported and reproduced aspects of Western civilization and imperialism simultaneously. Still, the debate continues; in a 2009 article, Norihito Mizuno argued that whatever expansionist dimensions there might have been to the Taiwan Expedition, they were subordinate to concerns about domestic tranquility, national security, and achieving prestige in the international arena.

An analysis of Kishida Ginkō's coverage of the Taiwan Expedition cannot provide a definitive answer to the question of the extent to which the Meiji government's strategy during the campaign should be seen in terms of expansion. It can, however, shed a great deal of light on how the campaign was understood popularly, for Ginkō's reporting, and the ways in which he contextualized the campaign, were the principal sources of information for many back home. He became so closely identified with the Taiwan Expedition that his iconic figure appeared as the centerpiece of a colorful newspaper broadsheet (*shinbun nishikie*), a new genre of woodblock print that had just begun to circulate widely. Knowledge of Chinese characters was not necessary to read the text of these newspaper broadsheets, which were written in an accessible style that could easily be understood by listeners when read aloud. In this way, the newspaper became accessible to an audience that could not read it directly. Moreover, Tsuchiya Reiko observes that one important function of this new visual medium was to disseminate understanding of what a newspaper was at a time when this was still an unfamiliar concept to those outside the intellectual elite. The well-known broadsheet showing Kishida Ginkō in the midst of reporting from the Taiwan conflict (Figure 2) played a similar role in conveying to this audience a concrete understanding of the newspaper correspondent at work in the field. Likewise, when a Taiwan Expedition Panorama opened in Asakusa in 1876 featuring a large-scale representation of the conflict, Ginkō's figure stood out prominently in a battlefield tableau, clearly distinguished from the soldiers that surrounded him by his civilian dress (Figure 3). Ginkō was thus one of...
Figure 2. Tōkyō nichichi shinbun 736 gō (Rikken Collection, courtesy of Chiba City Museum of Art). The text reads, ‘Kishida Ginkō followed the army and stayed in Taiwan for over two months as a reporter for the newspaper. After the various savages surrendered, he strolled through the lands of the Mudan raw savages. On his way back, he prepared to cross a stream at Shimen, and just as he was about to remove his shoes, a native approached and said “I’ll carry you across on my back”. Ginkō declined, but the native would hear nothing of it, and so Ginkō climbed atop his back. But the native’s strength was insufficient and he was unable to stand up. In the end they laughed and had to stop. But come to think of it, Ginkō has a portly frame and weighs over 23 kan [about 86kg]. Old Ginkō is a literary confere of our company.’

Cartouches identify the figures, from right to left, as: ‘A raw savage woman’, ‘Kishida Ginkō’, and ‘A Taiwanese native’. The print was made in September 1874 and is based on an article from the 6 July 1874 newspaper. It is signed by the artist Ikkeisai Yoshiiku (Ochiai Yoshiiku, 1833–1904) and the carver of the wood block is Watanabe Chōei, otherwise known as Watanabe Eizō (1833–1901). The author of the inscription is identified as Tentendō Ransen, otherwise known as Tentendō Dondon (1838–1885). The publisher of the print is Gusokuya.18

the few identifiable Japanese individuals to appear in such visual representations of the Taiwan Expedition. As his mediating presence in these popular images attests, it was through Ginkō’s eyes that many readers experienced modern Japan’s first overseas military action.

18See Chiba-shi Bijutsukan, Bunmei kaika no nishikie shinbun, 19.
Kishida Ginkō, Reporter

A pioneer in fields ranging from pharmaceuticals to philanthropy, from ice manufacture to oil extraction, from lexicography to transportation, Kishida Ginkō is surely one of the most colorful characters of nineteenth-century Japan. Born the eldest son of a moderately affluent Okayama farming family in 1833, he excelled in traditional Chinese learning. While pursuing these studies in various Edo and Osaka academies in the mid-1850s, Ginkō became associated with a well-educated group of shishi, or ‘men of high purpose’, fiery critics of shogunal policy in the face of foreign threats. Much remains unclear about the precise nature of Ginkō’s activism, but it was significant enough to drive him into hiding in the wake of an 1858 crackdown by the shogunate. Like many shishi, however, Ginkō was undergoing a metamorphosis at this time from a more xenophobic brand of activism to one that saw the opening of the country and the adoption of Western technology to be the best route toward ensuring national strength. While hiding out in Edo (where he worked as a brothel attendant, among other menial positions), he made the acquaintance of Mitsukuri Shūhei and other scholars of Western learning. Stricken with an eye ailment in 1863, Ginkō was introduced by them to James Curtis Hepburn, the American physician and Christian missionary who had opened a clinic in Yokohama several years earlier. After Hepburn’s ministrations led him to a speedy recovery, Ginkō went on to assist Hepburn in the compilation of his monumental Japanese-English dictionary, eventually moving in to Hepburn’s home in 1865, and accompanying him to Shanghai in 1866 to oversee its printing. In preparing the dictionary, Hepburn benefitted tremendously from Ginkō’s knowledge, particularly his familiarity with forms of Japanese spoken by people from all levels of society. For Ginkō as well, the encounter with Hepburn was clearly transformative. It was presumably Hepburn’s

19Sugiyama Sakae and Sugiura Tadashi are the authors of the two standard biographical works on Kishida Ginkō. In English, Douglas Reynolds has written a useful overview of Kishida Ginkō’s activities; see Reynolds, ‘Before Imperialism’. Most recently, Joshua Fogel has devoted significant attention to discussing Ginkō’s ventures in China in his Articulating the Sinosphere, 92–95.
influence that instilled in Ginkō an interest in Christianity, from Hepburn that he learned how to make the medicinal eye-drops that he quickly began to market in Japan and China (and which would fund much of his future charitable work), and through Hepburn that he was introduced to Hamada Hikozō and the world of newspapers.

In 1865, Ginkō teamed up with returned Japanese castaway Hamada Hikozō and one other man to found the first privately published Japanese newspaper, Kaigai shinbun [News from Abroad], which ran for one year.20 Hamada used the English fluency he had acquired while living in the United States to explain the content of English newspaper articles to Ginkō, who then transformed this information into publishable prose. While Ginkō possessed formidable knowledge of classical Chinese, he endeavored to write in a style that was more broadly accessible; even in his own diary, he experimented with writing in the colloquial rather than in Chinese or Sino-Japanese.21 In 1868, Ginkō founded another newspaper in Yokohama, Moshiogusa, and in its first issue he declared that just as newspapers were indispensable for the nation, clarity and intelligibility were essential in newspaper writing. Moshiogusa enjoyed a successful run during these tumultuous years, lasting through 1870. A few years later, Ginkō’s assumption of the role of Japan’s first war correspondent in the Taiwan Expedition brought him widespread fame and cemented his reputation as a journalist, but in Moshiogusa we see a domestic precursor as it published articles in its inaugural year reporting on battles between Tokugawa and imperial forces.

By the standards of early Meiji Japan’s fledgling newspaper industry, Ginkō was thus already an old hand when he joined the Tōkyō nichichi shinbun as its ‘principal writer’ in 1873. Many of the first newspaper writers in Japan had honed their writing skills as producers of lighter fare, including gesaku or ‘frivolous compositions’, which aimed to amuse. The novelty of modern journalistic categories meant that Ginkō’s proposal to send a correspondent to accompany the Taiwan expedition was initially met with incredulity. As he later reminisced, his suggestion elicited a resounding lack of enthusiasm on the part of his coworkers at the Tōkyō nichichi shinbun, who believed wordsmiths had no place on battlefields:

I tried to convince my colleagues at the newspaper that we should send a reporter to accompany the army to the front. But it seemed that all of them feared the risks involved, saying, ‘What sense can there be in having a man who makes his living with a brush go off to a battlefront overseas?’ Most of the men on staff regarded the newspaper as a mere source of diverting entertainment, and appeared to attach little seriousness to it. I declared, ‘The newspaper is the

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20 There were earlier newspapers founded in Japan, such as The Nagasaki Shipping List and Advertiser (1861), published in English, and the Batajiwa shinbun (1862), which was produced by the Tokugawa shogunate, but Kaigai shinbun was the first private Japanese language newspaper, founded by Ginkō, Horita Senzō, and Hamada Hikozō in 1865 (see Sugiyama, Kishida Ginkō, 214–215). Hamada, also known as Joseph Heco, was a young sailor who in 1850 was blown off course in a storm and drifted with his fellow sailors for several weeks before being rescued by an American ship. He lived in the United States for several years, and became a citizen, but eventually returned to Japan to work as a translator. The most comprehensive treatment of the early Meiji press is Huffman’s Creating a Public; his Politics of the Meiji Press is another good source that devotes particular attention to the Tōkyō nichichi shinbun.

21 See Yamaguchi Yutaka’s discussion, in ‘Ūsun nikki ni mirareru’, of Ginkō’s ‘Wusong Diary’, written during his time with Hepburn in Shanghai, as a forerunner of genbun itchi (unification of spoken and written language) discourse.
eyes and ears of the nation! Whether the matter be trifling or grave, if something has been seen or heard, it is the newspaper’s responsibility to record that information and speedily disseminate it to compatriots throughout the realm. At this moment we are confronted with the expedition against Taiwan: a matter of the greatest importance and one about which citizens high and low alike share a profound concern. Surely all of our countrymen are especially eager to learn the circumstances of battle as soon as possible. This is why the newspapers published in the various Western nations invariably dispatch newspaper reporters abroad to follow the armies whenever a war breaks out. Such is the standard practice. I request that you select a bold man with literary skills and promptly send him along on this campaign’. All of those listening shuffled the responsibility off onto someone else and not a single person volunteered to follow the army.22

If his colleagues showed little understanding or zeal for Ginkō’s plans, the Meiji authorities were initially even less encouraging. When he approached Commander Saigō Tsugumichi with a proposal to accompany the campaign, he was promptly turned down on the grounds that warfare demanded secrecy and thus ‘allowing a newspaper reporter to accompany the army was out of the question’.23 Ginkō was not so easily dissuaded, however, and eventually hit upon a strategy for circumventing the official prohibition. He managed to have himself designated a ‘clerk’ assisting Ōkura Kihachirō, a major industrialist who was overseeing the provision of supplies to the mission. Ginkō did not reveal this innovative arrangement in the ‘News From Taiwan’ series, but the ruse was apparently so thorough that he was even officially placed on Ōkura’s payroll with a 25- yen monthly salary.24 Though initially resistant to allowing Ginkō to accompany the expedition, Saigō Tsugumichi soon reconsidered and tacitly accepted this compromise, eventually coming to recognize that having a reporter on hand would benefit the military by furnishing a mode of communication with the reading public back home.25

The inaugural installment of ‘News from Taiwan’ appeared on 13 April, shortly after the Bureau for Savage Affairs, which oversaw the Taiwan Expedition, had been established in Nagasaki on 4 April.26 Most of Ginkō’s readers would be unfamiliar with the very notion of a war correspondent, and this first piece served as both explanation and advertisement. It promised readers that the series would provide them with ‘unusual tales and curious affairs’, and emphasized that Ginkō’s departure for Taiwan was a ‘feat’ that had been realized through the newspaper’s extraordinary efforts to petition the government on their behalf. In terms that resonate with Ginkō’s description of the newspaper as the nation’s ‘eyes and ears’, readers were told that Ginkō’s reportage from the front would make them ‘feel as though they are traveling through the island even as

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22Tokyō nichichi shinbun (hereafter, TNNS), 15 June 1898. Quoted in Sugiura, Kishida Ginkō, 201.
24Whatever services Ginkō rendered as Ōkura’s ‘clerk’ are unclear, but Ōkura presumably benefitted from the laudatory comments about him that Ginkō periodically included in his reports; see, for example, TNNS, 13 May 1874, and 6 August 1874.
25Ochiai reports that Kishidawas even awarded a regular commission as a translator; see Ochiai, ‘Ochiai gun’ikan no kaisōdan’, also Sugiura, Kishida Ginkō, 203. In his diary, Taiwan Expedition photographer Matsuzaki Shinji identified Ginkō as ‘official secretary of the Army’, with a monthly salary of 50 yen; Morita, Nakahashi Izumichō Matsuzaki Shinji shashinjō, 16.
26The Banchi Jimukyoku was known as the ‘Colonization Office’ in official English translations; see Eskildsen, ‘Of Civilization and Savages’, 397.
they sit and read'. News From Taiwan' above all strove to help the newspaper's readers at home in the metropole identify with the mission's efforts abroad.

Setting the Stage in Nagasaki

In spite of the auspicious departure from Tokyo, a combination of factors intervened to delay the expedition, leaving Ginkō, the bulk of the campaign soldiers, and a large support staff biding their time in Nagasaki for over three weeks. During this time, Ginkō maintained his readers' interest by filing columns in which he offered the latest developments on suspenseful situations, composed gripping narratives, and attempted to place the mission in a larger strategic context. Nearly half of the 28 numbered installments of 'News from Taiwan' were written before Ginkō even left Japan, and these constituted an essential framework for readers' understanding of the campaign.

In his second and third reports from Nagasaki, Ginkō eagerly repeated that he would be boarding the Hokkai-maru and heading to Taiwan just as soon as this ship arrived from Tokyo. Yet when the Hokkai-maru did finally dock at Nagasaki, it turned out to have been so badly damaged by storms en route that it would be unable to convey troops to Taiwan:

On the 22nd [of April], with the winds growing ever fiercer and the waves becoming taller, the ship was tossed about like grain in a winnow. Turbulent waves surged across the deck with such force that the mast almost broke. The men on board... all sat within their cabins, but every time the ship bucked, their bodies were sent reeling. And then, the most tragic thing happened. Among the sailors who had been newly enlisted for the expedition was a man in the prime of his life named Mosuke from Suzaki in Shinagawa. He was working at the time while seated on a barrel of water beneath the mast. With the onslaught of a giant wave, the ship suddenly tilted upwards, the water barrel toppled over, and the momentum sent Mosuke hurtling into the sea. Those who were above deck at the time immediately threw in an empty barrel after him, but by then he was already four or five ken [about eight metres] away and was apparently unable to grab a hold of it. He is said to have raised his hand up three times from amid the heaving waves. 'Quick! Stop the ship! Cut the engines!' came the shouts from on deck, but the ship was at the mercy of the waves. So loud was the din that the men's cries must not have reached the machinist's ears, for the ship was not immediately brought to a halt. And since the sail was raised, it was only after the ship had already come to a place quite distant that it was turned and brought back around to where Mosuke had fallen in. Although they searched the area again, by then there was no sign left of him. When I heard that this man had a wife and children, I was seized with feelings of sympathy as I thought how great their grief must be. What a pity!

Unlike most of the reports that Ginkō filed in 'News From Taiwan', this was one he had not personally witnessed. While he was usually careful to clearly identify his sources of information in reporting, distinguishing things he had seen from merely heard, the

27 TNNS, 13 April 1874.
28 TNNS, 10 May 1874.
suspension of such frames in this narrative made the events all the more immediate. Vivid accounts such as this quickly earned Ginkō a devoted following. One measure of his success is that other Japanese papers soon sought to reprint his ‘News From Taiwan’. Circulation of Tōkyō nichi nichii shinbun, already very high by contemporary standards, increased 50% during this serialization.

The Taiwan Expedition was at this stage also foundering on the shoals of international power politics. A schism between Meiji statesmen over the wisdom of the mission left its fate ambiguous, and in late April, the captains of the British and American ships that the Japanese government had hired to transport soldiers and supplies to Taiwan were unexpectedly ordered by their respective consular authorities to immediately terminate their services to Japan in order to avoid antagonizing the Qing. This peremptory intervention necessitated a hasty search by the Japanese for new modes of transport, but the delay also introduced new sources of conflict and suspense to Ginkō’s narrative. Even before they learned the specifics of the Western powers’ intervention, readers of the newspaper would have been well aware of Western opposition to the Taiwan expedition. One regular feature of the newspaper was the ‘News from Abroad’ (Kaigai shinbun) section, which typically provided translated news items culled from Western newspapers. During the Taiwan crisis, this column occasionally offered glimpses of commentary on the campaign drawn from the local Western language press, more often than not printing pieces that in some way buttressed Japanese claims. Occasionally, however, the newspaper chose Western editorials that were sharply critical of the expedition. Just days before the first installment of ‘News From Taiwan’ appeared, for example, the paper printed a translation from the Japan Gazette that called the expedition ‘madness’. A week later, they printed another Western dismissal of the expedition as recklessly ill-conceived and of little possible benefit to Japan. Following the translation, the editors appended an impassioned riposte that asserted the southward campaign was inevitable, yet also observed that Western objections might be worth consideration:

When it comes to their denunciations of specific courses of action and implementation, there are many things that are worth examining. We are, after all, mere students, and our theories are no match for the methods of the practiced Westerners. The reason that we have translated a piece of this sort is of course not because we subscribe to it, but simply because we wish to inform our readers that there are such points of view and to urge their due consideration. Our proud regiments and stately armies are now headed toward that lone island. In a matter of ten days, the Rising Sun flag shall shine its light in the four directions, and with that, the righteousness of our nation shall be known to all. Surely this cannot fail to be a moment when our hearts as humble subjects will dance with emotion! And at that time, we shall succeed in shaming the Westerners.

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29 The 14 June 1874 TNNS informs its readers (for the second time) that J.R. Black, the Scottish publisher of the Nishin shinjishi, asked permission to reprint Ginkō’s reports; see Sugiura, Kishida Ginkō, 205.
31 Olav i Fält’s detailed survey of Japan-based English-language media reporting on the Taiwan Expedition, ‘Western Views of the Japanese Expedition to Formosa in 1874’, shows that they espoused a wide range of positions.
32 TNNS, 9 April 1874.
33 TNNS, 16 April 1874.
This editorial response’s explicit portrayal of Japanese policymakers as ‘students’ who could learn from the methods of the ‘practiced Westerners’ reflects how Western examples of territorial administration and overseas expansion were specifically invoked as models for Japan’s Taiwan Expedition in the mainstream media. Amid the editorial’s defiant tone, the student metaphor may seem almost facetious, but the incongruity reveals a genuine tension between Japan’s drive to be recognized by the Western powers on equal terms, which required the adoption of Western models, and its concurrent drive to assert its autonomy. Just as the editorial called attention to the Taiwan Expedition’s promise for enhancing Japan’s prestige among the Western powers, so too did Ginkō emphasize the importance of how the effort was perceived both at home and abroad. Moreover, Ginkō’s reports frequently situated the expedition in a broader context, elaborating expansive visions for Japanese activity in East Asia of which this was only the first step.

The first clear articulation of this regional agenda came in Ginkō’s reporting of a banquet held by his nominal employer, the ‘official provisions master’ Ōkura Kihachirō. On 28 April, Ōkura summoned to a Nagasaki restaurant more than 50 of the men whom he had hired to provide labor and supplies to the Taiwan campaign. In his remarks, this private businessman sought to impress upon the assembled men the significance of the military mission and the service they could offer as civilians to the nation:

Our advance into Taiwan is the first since Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s attack on Korea and all of us who are accompanying the expedition must bear this fact in mind. Above all, we must be scrupulously careful not to do anything that might lead to the humiliation of our Great Japan. The beginnings of prosperity for our nation lie in this endeavor we are undertaking at present. We must ensure that affairs turn out well; then, the territory of the Japanese nation will be increasingly enlarged, frontiers opened, and trade enriched such that the honor of our imperial nation will shine to the whole world. Will this not be truly the most joyous thing? Let us together then combine our energies, make our hearts one, and do our utmost for the benefit of the imperial court.

Ōkura went on to urge the men to ‘all take pains to observe the purport of their military orders and not violate the law’. As Ginkō’s account of the drowned sailor Mosuke suggests, the heroism of the soldiers serving on the expedition was a frequent focus of his narrative attention. In his lengthy reporting of Ōkura’s speech, we see Ginkō enlarge the circle of mission participants to embrace civilians too.

Two days later, Ginkō filed a report that echoed the expansionist rhetoric and also provided readers with a newly concrete understanding of the Taiwan Expedition. In a highly unusual departure from the newspaper’s typical layout, Ginkō’s installment for this day took up two-thirds of the front page, most of which was dominated by a detailed map of Taiwan (Figure 4). Ginkō was guarded about the provenance of the map,

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34TNNS, 13 May 1874.
35In the 16 May installment of ‘News From Taiwan’, Ginkō commended the soldiers, ‘many of whom have only recently experienced battle in Saga Prefecture’, for the ‘fine martial spirit’ and ‘proper discipline’ they had shown during their unplanned stay in Nagasaki.
beginning his column with the simple statement, ‘Recently I have obtained a map of Taiwan from a certain person’. On the basis of striking similarities between this map and those contained in reports and policy statements produced for the Japanese Foreign Ministry by Charles LeGendre, Matsunaga Masayoshi has persuasively argued that Ginkō’s source was none other than LeGendre. In this way, Ginkō’s ‘News From Taiwan’ served as one of the major vehicles through which the expansionist proposals of LeGendre, and the imperialistic discourse upon which they were based, found their way into the public sphere.

The remainder of Ginkō’s accompanying text essentially serves as a guided tour of the map, connecting Taiwan’s major topographical features to its ethnic profile. This and the map’s annotations both explain that the dotted line running parallel along the western side of the Central Mountain Range identifies the limits of Chinese territory. As Emma Teng has discussed in her study of representations of Taiwan in Chinese cartographic and ethnographic texts, Qing maps often reflected a similar divide, with the eastern half of Taiwan being omitted, drawn as blank space, or identified as wilderness. That Chinese jurisdiction did not extend throughout the entire territory of Taiwan was also the linchpin of the arguments LeGendre had used in his memoranda to the Japanese Foreign Ministry, and Ginkō’s representation here thus partakes of both

![Map from Tōkyō nichi nichi shinbun, 15 May 1874 (English annotations added).](image)

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36 Matsunaga, ‘Taiwan Ryōyūron no keifu’, 12.
37 Teng, Taiwan’s Imagined Geography, esp. 34–59.
discourses. Similarly, in the explanatory text, we can see how Ginkō began to more actively distinguish between various subgroups of Taiwan’s indigenous peoples, following longstanding Chinese practice in referring to the indigenes in terms of their propinquity to Chineseness. The ‘cooked savages’ (Ch. shufan; J. jukuban) were those who intermingled and intermarried with the Chinese while the ‘raw savages’ (Ch. shengfan; J. seiban) were those who maintained physical and cultural distance from the Chinese. Among those indigenes on the extremes, he singled out the Mudan (Botan) group of the southeast as being ‘evil in temperament, and unlike human beings. They are fond of fighting, butchering and eating the flesh of those whom they defeat’. Robert Eskildsen has argued that one of the innovations of Japan’s mimetic imperialism was its exaggeration of the putative savagery of Taiwan’s indigenes. By accentuating the savagery of others, he argues, Japan could eliminate the potential middle ground into which it might fall, thereby shoring up its own claims to being ‘civilized’. While such emphasis on cannibalism does appear in other forms of contemporary Japanese popular media, this is actually one of the very few references to it in Ginkō’s ‘News From Taiwan’ series. Almost immediately after his arrival in Taiwan, Ginkō began to portray the majority of the indigenous population as docile, reserving images of savage brutality almost exclusively for the Mudan. Even then, he did not traffic in lurid rumors of cannibalism. Moreover, once the Mudan had surrendered, his assertions of their savagery abruptly ceased. It was attesting to the feasibility of a civilizing project in Taiwan, and outlining the instrumental role Japan would play, that animated Ginkō’s reportage.

Ginkō’s map provided many of the paper’s readers with the most detailed visual understanding of recent events and present conditions in Taiwan that they had ever seen. Yet it also guided them in imagining the future stages through which the Taiwan Expedition would proceed, a project Ginkō specifically explained in terms of colonization:

Our government is now deploying troops and its intent is surely the following. The soldiers will first commence their operations in the land that lies to the south of the border with Chinese territory. Once they capture this land, they will make it a colony and thence proceed to station troops throughout the land lying south of the Chinese border, gradually developing it. They will fell trees and burn brush, teaching and leading the native savages and thereby expanding the territory of our imperial state.

The phrase translated ‘expanding the territory of our imperial state’ is  

The term hanto is the Japanese equivalent of bantu; for a discussion of ru bantu, or ‘entering the map’, see Teng, Taiwan’s Imagined Geography, 44. A virtually identical phrase occurs in Ginkō’s report of Ōkura’s speech.

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38 For a discussion of LeGendre’s appropriation of the Qing boundary to assert the absence of Qing sovereignty, see Eskildsen’s ‘Foreign Views,’ esp. 257–263.
39 See Teng, Taiwan’s Imagined Geography, Chapter 5, for a discussion of these terms.
41 Okabe Michio observes that in as much as Ginkō wrote this passage before he had actually left Nagasaki, it is perhaps best not seen as a revelation of his own impressions so much as a reflection of perceptions of Taiwan then prevalent in Japan; see Okabe, ‘Kishida Ginkō to Taiwan’.
42 TNNS, 15 May 1874.
43 The term hanto is the Japanese equivalent of bantu; for a discussion of ru bantu, or ‘entering the map’, see Teng, Taiwan’s Imagined Geography, 44. A virtually identical phrase occurs in Ginkō’s report of Ōkura’s speech.
indigenous peoples who dwelt in these regions of Taiwan that would soon 'enter the map' of imperial Japan and indigenes closer to home, the 'Emishi' or Ainu of northern Honshu and Hokkaido. In eastern Taiwan, he wrote:

There are no roads to allow passage. Along the way are the cave and field dwellings of the raw savages. There has never been anyone since antiquity who has ventured there, and so the ethnic groups and local products of this region are unknown. Nevertheless, I imagine they are the same as the Emishi.

The analogy Ginkō proposed between the indigenous peoples of the Japanese archipelago and those of eastern Taiwan effectively domesticated them, linking them with state-building underway closer to home. The Meiji government was then in the process of developing Hokkaido and areas of northern Honshu that had traditionally been home to the Ainu, and Ginkō's comparison allowed readers to readily imagine the development and settling of Taiwan in similar terms.

In Ginkō's accounts, the Taiwan Expedition thus had important resonances with territorial consolidation, development, cultural homogenization, and other domestic policies. During the several weeks he was delayed in Nagasaki, Ginkō took stock of local issues that at first seem completely unrelated, only to incorporate them into his grand regional vision. In the ninth installment of 'News From Taiwan', for example, he prescribed a remedy for Nagasaki's present economic slump. Rather than stubbornly clinging to old methods, he argued, Nagasaki should invest in the modern transportation, shipping, and manufacturing infrastructure that would enable it to capitalize on its coal resources to power factories and produce goods for domestic trade and international export. It was in this future role as a revitalized international port of trade that Nagasaki became relevant in Ginkō's vision to the matter of the Taiwan Expedition:

At present, the Imperial Court is about to pacify Taiwan. If its land enters our maps, then Nagasaki will become the very throat of our realm's territory. And what is more, in recent years, our countrymen have been vying to open businesses in the various ports of China. They will certainly be compelled to route their traffic through Nagasaki for the sake of convenience . . . With these various auspicious signs, how can we not endeavor to try our hardest for the sake of our country? If there are men of keen eye in the world, they will take advantage of the present slump to buy up the important regions as an investment for the future. They might well be able to amass the wealth of Tao Zhu or Yi Dun.  

The discussion of Japanese who were 'vying to open businesses' in China had especial relevance to Ginkō, for he had already expanded his own entrepreneurial operations to the continent, founding a distribution network there for Seikisui, his popular brand of medicinal eye-drops. With reports such as this one, Ginkō not only placed the Taiwan Expedition in a larger context, linking it to both concrete domestic concerns and a broad regional vision, but also called upon readers to imagine the ways in which they too might take part.

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44TNNS, 17 May 1874. Tao Zhu and Yi Dun were famously rich men of Chinese antiquity.
Reporting From Taiwan

Ginkō finally left Nagasaki for Taiwan on 17 May, traveling aboard the same ship as Commander Saigō Tsugumichi. Ginkō’s first dispatch from Taiwan was accompanied by an annotated sketch of the Langqiao port in the southwest of the island (Figure 5), identifying the encampment of the Japanese forces, and clearly demarcating the groups of indigenes who would figure as its enemies and allies: the Mudan to the north and the powerful chieftain Tok-e-Tok’s sphere of influence to the south. As the flotilla of ships flying Japanese flags in the center of the harbor made clear, Japan had already established a significant stronghold. The brief period of actual conflict that unfolded over the next few weeks would focus almost entirely on Japan’s efforts to force the Mudan to surrender. Just a few days later, readers would learn that Commander Saigō had enlisted several other chieftains for this campaign:

He summoned the seven chieftains and admonished them, appealing to military might and also to trust. They were moved to tears and submitted to his words, requesting to become the vanguard of the attack against the Mudan. With this, they were given our national flags, as well as swords and blankets. They were then treated to a banquet with beer and champagne.\(^{45}\)

Beer and champagne were relatively new beverages in early Meiji Japan, and would have struck contemporary readers as modish tokens of the ‘civilization and enlightenment’

\[\text{Figure 5. Illustration from Tōkyō nichi nichi shinbun, 10 June 1874.} \]

The rightmost inscription reads, ‘The race in the area of Sheliao, Langqiao and Checheng is a mixture of Malay and Chinese.’ The inscriptions across the mountain range read, from top right to the left: ‘From this point south, under Tok-e-Tok’s control; ’Sheliao village; ’The Commander’s Station; ’Main camp tents; ’Langqiao; ’A River; ’Checheng village; ’From this point, the Mudan race’. The four cardinal directions are also indicated, with the finger pointing towards Xiamen near the character identifying ‘West’.

\(^{45}\)TNNS, 15 June 1874.
era. The awarding of these novel items alongside emerging national icons like Japanese flags and swords highlights the hybridity of the civilizing mission. The indigenes submitted to a distinctly and identifiable Japanese authority, but one that was also held to embody and impart modern ‘civilization’.

As it turned out, the first of the two major engagements of the Taiwan conflict took place on the day Ginkō arrived, in an area of steep terrain known as Shimen. This conflict provided Ginkō with the opportunity for his first extended account of the Japanese troops’ engagement with the Mudan. The report included a tale of intrigue focused on a peddler who had been seen loitering around the Japanese camp but who was later revealed to be a Mudan spy. Beyond its contents, however, it would have impressed readers back in Japan for another reason. Though it took over two weeks for Ginkō’s account to reach Tokyo and be printed in his newspaper, this speed was still considerably faster than the release of news from the Japanese government. Three days after Ginkō’s narrative appeared, his newspaper published an official communication from Commander Saigō in its ‘Log of the Bureau of Savage Affairs’ section. To readers of ‘News From Taiwan’, much in Saigō’s letter would have been old news, since it too made reference to spies, gave a brief account of the preliminary skirmishes, and focused its attention on the Shimen conflict, just as Ginkō’s report had. The official dispatch would thus have confirmed for the paper’s readers both the timeliness and accuracy of the ‘News From Taiwan’ series.

The decisive battle came in early June, just 10 days after Ginkō had arrived, and was also fought at Shimen. In this second engagement at the site, Japanese forces overwhelmed the Mudan with a three-pronged attack. While the Mudan’s surrender would not come for another month, the battle had fatally weakened them and prompted more indigenous groups to declare their allegiance to Japan. The steady reports of successive indigenous chieftains’ surrender made the Mudan seem all the more savage and egregious for their intransigent resistance, while at the same time portending the inevitable day when they too would be brought to submission.

Ginkō had written extensively about the aims and significance of the Taiwan Expedition as well as Japan’s role in the region in the installments of ‘News From Taiwan’ that he filed before reaching its shores. These were topics he continued to ponder while in Taiwan, and his proposals took on an extra layer of concreteness borne of his newfound first-hand knowledge of the island. With the diminution of actual fighting, Ginkō no doubt had more time to consider such matters, but the fact that the mission had nearly attained its stated goal of chastising the aborigines presumably directed his attention to what would happen once that task was complete. In one of the most striking passages in ‘News From Taiwan’, Ginkō contrasts the development and ‘enlightenment’ (kaika) that he imagines Japan can impart to Taiwan with the more traditional forms of acculturation possible under Qing tutelage:

Mere pacification of the natives is not likely to bring about their enlightenment any time soon. Because they have so-called ‘Confucian’ airs, they will forever remain barbarians. When it comes to the urgent business of developing this land, there is no better course of action than for Japan to colonize it. Those individuals who have never seen the conditions on this island have

\[46\text{TNNS, 10 June 1874. See the discussion in Szostak, ‘Ukiyo-e Tabloids’, 61–62.}
\[47\text{TNNS, 13 June 1874.} \]
various theories about it, but having come [here] and seen it, for me it has nothing to do with a desire to amass a larger territory or a desire to amass a larger population or some such thing. I simply want to see this island opened up. That is the position that I hold. If we look at the condition of the country now, it is not the case that it is difficult to invigorate it and make it thrive. Rather, the fact of the matter is that it has been abandoned and left to languish. But there's no use now in blaming the Chinese for their lazy negligence.  

Ginkō’s descriptions of Taiwan’s topography frequently emphasized the untapped potential he saw for the land’s development. In this passage, his emphasis on his own visual encounter with the land recalls the gaze of the ‘seeing man’ that Mary Pratt has described in European colonial encounters: ‘he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess’. Ginkō went on to address the willing individuals among his readers who might share his vision and take up his challenge:  

If there are men of similar ambition in Japan, then make yourselves heard! In the coastal areas from Fenggang to southern Baoli, the villages of Checheng, Langqiao, and Sheliao have excellent soil. If one plentifully planted tobacco, one would certainly make huge profits. Though the land at the foot of the mountains to the east is hot, there is a ceaseless cool breeze that is pleasant on one’s skin. If houses were constructed there, they would be good for dwelling. If the government provided sufficient assistance, then this could become a truly good land. The locals are fond of raising livestock and they let their water buffalo roam atop the mountains and by the water. The five grains can all be grown well. I did not come here as part of the military, and yet when I hear gunfire, I feel myself growing young again.  

The gunfire-inspired frisson at the end notwithstanding, this installment in ‘News From Taiwan’ indicated a shift in Ginkō’s attention away from the immediate conflict and toward the future. In his remaining days on Taiwan, Ginkō made further explorations of the island, gathering information about its topography and local products and learning more about the cultures of its native inhabitants.

**Keeping Taiwan in the Public Eye**

Ginkō’s tour of Taiwan’s interior did not last long, however, for he became ill in mid-June and was advised by a military physician to return home. By the time he arrived back in Tokyo, reports had come from Ginkō’s sources announcing the surrender of the Mudan and the ‘complete pacification’ of Taiwan on 1 July. Yet even after his return, Ginkō continued to publish installments of ‘News From Taiwan’, relying on reports he received from those who remained behind with the Japanese troops. Hostilities had ceased, but a number of questions remained unanswered, and negotiations between

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48 Ibid.  
50 *TNNS*, 28 June 1874.
Japan and China would drag on for several more months before a settlement was finally reached.\textsuperscript{51}

Perhaps more significant than reporting news about the status of negotiations, however, was Ginkō’s effort to keep Taiwan in the public eye. In the months after his return, Ginkō published a range of new materials about Taiwan and continued to ponder the question of Japan’s future role there. His position had softened considerably and he now refrained from presenting arguments for any particular resolution to the stalled negotiations with China. Similarly, he no longer made the kind of overt statements advocating colonization or annexation of Taiwan that had marked his earlier reporting. Nevertheless, Japan’s colonial possession of eastern Taiwan had certainly not disappeared from the spectrum of possibility that Ginkō presented.

More than anything, Ginkō attempted to convince his readers that a proper understanding of Taiwan was essential for them and for Japan’s future especially now that the ‘savage’ tribes had been pacified. Immediately after his return to Tokyo, Ginkō reported being shocked by both the lack of enthusiasm his acquaintances had shown for the Taiwan Expedition and the prevalence of misinformed or unfavorable attitudes toward Taiwan. Among the host of false rumors that Ginkō’s friends regaled him with were reports of Mudan cannibalism. It is significant that Ginkō now rebuked in no uncertain terms the ‘fools who would concoct such wicked words to mislead the people’.\textsuperscript{52} Though he did not mention the fact that his own series had itself contained one isolated assertion of Mudan cannibalism, Ginkō’s continued publication of material on Taiwan marked his attempt to correct these widespread misunderstandings and to present Taiwan, and its indigenous population, more favorably.

Just as Ginkō was bringing the ‘News from Taiwan’ series to an end, he began a new sequence entitled ‘Taiwan Manuscript’. As he explained in the first installment of what became a nine-part series, this section of the newspaper would focus entirely on a description of the topography and the customs of its indigenes. Whereas his reports from Taiwan had emphasized its oppressive heat and its harsh and unforgiving terrain, in this series Ginkō presented the island as a welcoming and altogether agreeable place. Poring over the several volumes of notes he had kept during his travels in Taiwan, Ginkō noted that he felt as though he was ‘back among the areca palms, eating bananas and pineapples, and chatting with the savage women and island folk’. In his geographic overview of the island, the cloud-capped mountain peaks of Taiwan now ‘looked like Mt Fuji’.\textsuperscript{53} The transformation in the imagery was striking, and as Ginkō noted in the installment of ‘News From Taiwan’ that appeared the day after he launched ‘Taiwan Manuscript’, it was entirely attributable to the success of Japan’s expedition: ‘I think our campaign against the barbarians was the first step in this island’s progress toward civilization’.\textsuperscript{54}

In describing the customs and material culture of the indigenous people in ‘Taiwan Manuscript’, Ginkō’s tone was on the whole objective and even-handed. The series was illustrated, and the newspaper reproduced many of the sketches Ginkō had made in his

\textsuperscript{51} In their analysis of Ginkō’s reportage on Taiwan, Kusano and Yamaguchi argue for a shift in his coverage from September to October that reflected a growing concern about the potential for war between China and Japan; see Kusano and Yamaguchi, ‘Meiji shoki ni okeru’, 22.
\textsuperscript{52} TNNS, 25 July 1874.
\textsuperscript{53} TNNS, 5 August 1874.
\textsuperscript{54} TNNS, 6 August 1874.
notebooks, which featured the indigenes’ characteristic dress, hairstyles, and other forms of adornment. While such depictions can often tend toward exoticism, Ginkō instead frequently identified similarities between Taiwan and Japan, noting that the same sorts of agricultural implements or modes of transport were used in both places, or that life among the raw savages in a place like Baoli was not so different from life in the mountains of Japan. Like the domestic hinterlands, Taiwan became configured as a part of the Japanese periphery, and one that held the prospect of developing in such a way as to be particularly beneficial to the metropole:

Though this area is wild and savage, it has many worthwhile features. In Japan as well, there are many remote regions in places like Chikuma, Nagano, Okitama, or Iwate where there are numerous individuals who are more unenlightened and foolish than those here. We should not necessarily regard Taiwan alone as a barbarian region. Taiwan’s neighbor to the south is an island nation called Luzon. It is the northernmost of the South Sea Islands. Its customs were once barbaric, but ever since it became the territory of Spain, its people became civilized to a great extent. It steadily grew more productive, becoming at the time a veritable goldmine for the home country’s government. And who is to say? Perhaps the savage lands of Taiwan might one day become our goldmine.55

The rhetoric is noticeably more tentative than some of the dispatches Ginkō wrote at the Taiwan Expedition’s inception, but as the striking analogy to the case of the Philippines shows, clearly colonial possession of eastern Taiwan still lingered in his writing as a possibility even over one month after his return.

Aftermath of the Taiwan Expedition

The final chapter of the Taiwan Expedition began when Ōkubo Toshimichi traveled to Beijing in September to begin working out a settlement with Qing officials. Not surprisingly, an agreement was not immediately forthcoming, and the negotiations continued over six weeks. While discussions dragged on in Beijing, the final dispatch in Ginkō’s ‘News From Taiwan’ appeared, offering a mixed verdict on the Taiwan Expedition. Ginkō began by praising what he thought the campaign had achieved on Taiwan: ‘more and more,’ he wrote, ‘it seems that they are progressing along the path of enlightenment’.56 Yet he went on to report a much bleaker situation facing the Japanese troops, over half of whom had succumbed to the heat and tropical illnesses:

Out of a total staff of 2350 men, from officials and soldiers down to various workmen, there are roughly 1500 or 1600 who have become sick. It truly makes one feel dispirited. It is reported that among the soldiers who were sent back to Nagasaki aboard the Takasago-maru there were many who died. In the course of the attack on the savage lands, rather than soldiers losing their lives amid the slings and arrows of combat, their corpses exposed on the battlefield, and their names shining for posterity, we can say that these soldiers have lost

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55 TNNS, 14 August 1874.
56 TNNS, 7 October 1874.
their lives beneath grass-roofed shacks, their corpses buried in the sands, and their names left to disappear into the barbarian wilderness. It is truly an incomparably lamentable situation.\footnote{Ibid.}

A few weeks after Ginkō wrote this last column in ‘News From Taiwan’, a settlement was reached in Beijing. China recognized that the Japanese campaign had been a justifiable action undertaken for the protection of its subjects and it agreed to compensate the families of the castaways who were murdered by the aboriginals. Additionally, China agreed to pay reparations to Japan and to compensate it for the expenses associated with road building and other works in Taiwan.\footnote{For a discussion of the negotiation process and the settlement, see Gordon, Confrontation Over Taiwan, 117–131.}

With the Beijing settlement, the Taiwan Expedition was brought to a close and the possibility of a Japanese colonial interest in Taiwan was, at least for the time being, discarded. Kishida Ginkō continued to write for the トキョーにちにちしんぶん in the years following the Taiwan Expedition, but increasingly devoted a larger share of his attention to entrepreneurial activity, mainly the marketing of eye-drops and other pharmaceuticals. This work took him to China multiple times, where he developed an extensive business network, cultivated connections with Chinese intellectuals and cultural figures, and also engaged in philanthropic activity such as founding a school for the blind. A few years after the Taiwan Expedition, Ginkō went on to start compiling Shinkoku chishi, a multi-volume gazetteer of China. He also continued his work as an overseas correspondent, publishing essays based on his travels in China in several Tokyo newspapers. His tireless efforts toward Sino-Japanese understanding and regional cooperation are evident in the bookstores, publishing concerns, and poetry societies he founded in Shanghai.

These future developments might at first seem difficult to reconcile with the colonial designs that characterized the early installments of ‘News From Taiwan’. Yet as Ginkō stated most explicitly in his later reports, the colonial project was not for him a simple matter of territorial acquisition but rather part of a larger East Asian regional vision. In an era when many Meiji thinkers were speaking of importing ‘civilization and enlightenment’ through the adoption of Western technologies, institutions, and cultural practices, Ginkō was an early exponent of the idea that Japan ought to be in the export business. While the vision of ‘civilization’ that he imagined transplanting to Taiwan bore the stamp of Western notions of ‘progress’, his interest in Taiwan and the East Asian area as a whole likely had earlier, domestic roots.\footnote{Matsunaga Masayoshi argues that early Meiji statesmen were amenable to proposals by LeGendre and other Westerners that Japan annex Taiwan because such ideas resonated with both popular representations of Taiwan in the Edo period and with the writings of some Edo intellectuals; see Matsunaga, ‘Taiwan Ryōyūron no keifu’, 15–25.}

Even while he was serializing ‘News From Taiwan’, Ginkō’s conviction that it was imperative for Japan to understand its neighbors was evident. His documentation of Taiwanese aboriginal customs in ‘Taiwan Manuscript’ was part of this concern, and while he was publishing that series, his newspaper also printed a multi-part sequence entitled ‘Shina zusetsu’ [An Illustrated Treatise on China] that provided its readers with a basic understanding of China’s geography.\footnote{TNNS, 25 August to 4 September 1874.}
Though the Taiwan Expedition did not end as Kishida Ginkō initially imagined it might, his 'News From Taiwan' had established his fame and had made a lasting impact on Japanese journalism. Shortly before the series was launched, the Tōkyō nichi nichi shinbun had printed a spirited letter from a reader who wrote with exasperation that rumors about the imminent dispatch of troops to Taiwan proliferated on the streets of Tokyo and yet no information on this pressing topic appeared in the newspaper: "You are the leader of the Tokyo newspapers; this is why everyone looks to you with confidence . . . To dispatch troops to seek redress for a crime is a great matter for the nation. Though I am but a common citizen, I want to know about it." When Ginkō's 'News From Taiwan' began to appear one week later, it was in many ways an early affirmation of the Meiji public's right to know. At the same time, Ginkō's coverage of the Taiwan Expedition gave the Meiji authorities a new understanding of the newspaper's utility in shaping public opinion.

In a whimsical poem written to welcome Ginkō back to Tokyo, Ishii Nankyō (1831–1887) took stock of Ginkō's reports from Taiwan, celebrating both the series and its author:

載筆慨然從討蠻  
異聞博物入刊刪
十旬新報江湖上  
一代壯遊旅諮間
非是文章出銀座  
爭教兒女識臺灣
記中數語今猶悸  
背後醉獠弓滿彎

Ishii's poem testifies to how Ginkō had come to occupy a singular role in informing the Japanese reading public not only about the course of the military campaign but about Taiwan itself. It notes the uniqueness of the endeavor and draws our attention to the occasional overlap between Ginkō and the mission itself: a feature that reflects the earliest years of Japanese journalism, before an adversarial distance developed between newspapers and the Meiji state in the wake of the draconian press laws adopted in 1875. The final couplet points to the suspenseful qualities of Ginkō's reporting that earned him a devoted readership and the newspaper an expanded circulation. That Ginkō’s reporting from Taiwan itself became the subject of media representations running the gamut from an elite form such as this Chinese poem to colorful newspaper broadsheets aimed principally at the uneducated shows just how thoroughgoing his impact was. In his coverage of the Taiwan Expedition, Ginkō had succeeded in becoming the 'eyes and ears of the nation'.

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61 TNNNS, 6 April 1874.
62 By year's end, Ginkō's newspaper would be designated a goyō shinbun or 'official newspaper', one that enjoyed government patronage and was authorised to publish official notices. Tsuchiya Reiko in 'Meiji shichinen' links this development to the paper's Taiwan Expedition reportage, arguing that the latter had awakened the Meiji government to the medium's potential.
63 TNNNS, 24 July 1874. During Ginkō's sojourn in Taiwan, his newspaper had relocated its offices from Asakusa to Ginza. See Sugiyama, Kishida Ginkō, 352.
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