

# Eating People and Selling Taiwan. W. Wykeham Myers, Indigenized Orientalism, and Culture Wars during the 1890s \*

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## Abstract

Centring upon an extensive Memorandum sent to the British government by a leading foreign resident of Taiwan (Dr W. Wykeham Myers), the paper examines the international and island contexts of developments in the months leading to and during the Japanese colonisation of Formosa. It suggests that an atmosphere of emergency and desperation gave rise to a chaos of possibilities in the minds and attitudes of Chinese authorities and residents, indigenous communities, and western expatriate residents who for a time hoped and planned for an alternative to Japanese colonisation. In the Anglophone perspective as exemplified by Myers there emerged the notion of a British intervention that might itself embrace at least a commercial colonialism, and in this regard arguments emerged that forged links between indigenous peoples, cannibalism, and a failure of Chinese authority and culture on its island frontier. This account emphasises the anglophone interventions because Britain<sup>1</sup> was far and away the most powerful commercial and naval power in the region and had forged a deepening commercial and diplomatic relationship with Japan since the 1850s. There was a strong assumption that Chinese authority limited British commercial interests, that Japanese control would at the very least maintain them, and that thus a second-best (but possibly optimum) outcome would be a controlled Japanese take-over. In also examining the international diplomacy and political economy involved in the entry of Japan, the paper develops an argument that bring together cultural economic and political forces into an historical conjuncture.

## Keywords

Cannibalism, colonialism, orientalism, China and Formosa/ Taiwan, othering, Japanese colonialism

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seiko), known in the west as Koxinga<sup>2</sup>. It is generally acknowledged that major features of the island's development can not be understood without giving admittance to some international context, that interventions from other nations occasionally sparked greater fear and therefore interest in the island by its official governors, in our period the Qing Chinese, who could at times be innovative and constructive, at least in intention (the best example of this being the governorship of Liu Ming-chuan during 1886-1891).

The present paper attempts to go further than this. What our exemplary case indicates is a much more profound type or style of intervention associated with the triumphal industrialism of Great Britain after the 1830s, the great commercial and colonial surge of the broadening array of industrialising nations from the 1870s, and the increased speed of communicative aggression secured by the Great Powers during the much faster technological changes of the Second Industrial Revolution<sup>3</sup>. This was a new world of callipers, cables, and gunboats. More particularly, the claims and assertions of Dr. W. Wykeham Myers as he addressed the world of British diplomacy in 1894, at a time of Japanese intervention in Taiwan and Great Power response, helps to expose a particular Anglophone intervention into Taiwan that ultimately served as both an extension of an ongoing attack on Imperial Chinese culture and policy as well as a strong defence of Japanese expansionism against China in particular. We will see that it was not for nothing that Wykeham Myers could be a spokesman for British interests into 1895, and an employee of Meiji Japan thereafter, whilst remaining happily resident in Taiwan! Furthermore, the character of Anglophone intervention in the 1890s in particular illustrated, disturbed, and coloured the relations between the Chinese majority of western Taiwan and the indigenous minority groups that inhabited the mountainous and forested eastern half of Taiwan. During 1894-1895 Anglophone claims concerning the indigenous peoples became central in the effort to forge a new global viewing of China and of Japan as well.

## **Wykeham Myers: Eating People and Selling an Island**

We enter the life of Wykeham Myers during the terrible famine that raged through northern China in the years 1877 and 1878<sup>4</sup>. Caused in most part by monsoons and possibly deforestation, famine conditions led quickly to the spread of dysentery, typhus, and "famine

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2 The Dutch had established a base on the Pescadores in 1622 in order to put pressure on China into opening up commercial relations and from which they could control trade between Macao and Japan and Amoy and Manila. A hostile relationship led to an agreement in April 1624 whereby the Dutch gave up the Pescadores, so much closer to the Chinese mainland, and retreated to the favoured option of Formosa. The first stronghold of Dutch colonial rule was Fort Zeelandia and nearby Fort Providentia on the southwest coast around what became Anping, and it is from this area of Taiwan that many stories of indigenous savagery fanned out over the subsequent years.

3 For treatments of such major contextual features, which act as a setting for the analyses of the present paper see Inkster (2009, 2002).

4 Myers had arrived in Northern China in 1869, practising at Pagoda Anchorage (Foochow) and was selected by Admiral Alfred Phillips Ryder (1820–1888), Commander-in-Chief of the China Station (established in 1865) in 1876 to take charge of the Naval Sick Quarters at Chefoo.

fever". In a tragedy that might have affected some 75 million Chinese, none were safe though many were silent, and hunger eventually hit all classes as "people starved to death with plenty of excellent furniture". Children were reportedly sold in the markets, girls for around 4/6d sterling<sup>5</sup>, and the physical weakness of the starving workers prevented effective sowing during 1878. Commentaries provided vivid pictures of wolves carrying away famished children. Well within the worst affected area, in Shantung province was the treaty port of Chefoo (Zhifu), opened in 1858 with customs offices established in 1863<sup>6</sup>. Wykeham Myers MB was the medical officer there for the Imperial Chinese Maritime Customs and in his report on the famine in the region emphasized its naturally healthy environs for Europeans, and how this had rapidly collapsed into destitution and cannibalism<sup>7</sup>.

What Myers witnessed in this crucial epicenter of the famine was a sequence towards horror. At first those strong enough gathered weeds, grass and herbage. They then descended to eating of soft clay-like slates, allaying the pangs of hunger. There followed in a downward spiral the sweepings of bean-cake, cotton seeds, grass seeds from the roadsides, bark and dried leaves; in Shanxi stone-cakes were even sold, made of the same stone as used for Western-style soft slate pencils, pounded and mixed with millet husks and baked. In other nearby regions the starving ate a white earth brought from the mountains, appearing like corn-flour and known as the mountain meal. Bark was then stripped from trees, powdered and eaten. In northern Shanxi the roots of rushes, plus seeds of the thorn bush and wild herbs were mixed with corn-flour or with the roots of the flag-rush, stems of wheat, millet, maize, or the leaves of willow or mulberry.

All such were attempted before resort was had to cannibalism. That too followed some sort of a sequence. Around Shanxi by March of 1878 people were reportedly moving from eating of corpses to the killing of their own living relatives, as "husbands eat their wives; parents eat their sons and daughters, and children eat their parents". Profiteers stole corpses from coffins, sold their clothes and ate their flesh, and ultimately human flesh was sold publicly. It was recorded of eleven villages that some two-fifths of the dead were eaten. Associated with the extremities of survival were the failures of all institutions of civility and governance, corrupt sales of offices and ranks (Gordon 1884, fn. 6, 384-391).

Whether Myers was profoundly shocked and disturbed or simply sent out of this posting

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5 This being just less than one-quarter of £1 at that time.

6 For the material used here see *China Inland Mission 1865-1951* (Microform), SOAS, Marlborough, Adam Matthew, 2006, from the James Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) archives at SOAS, held at BL, London, 102 reels Mic. A. 20093. pts. 1 and 2; see also (Gordon 1884; Committee of China Relief Fund 1878).

7 The IMCS acted really as an institutionalized outpost symptomatic of the loss of Chinese sovereignty to Britain after the Opium Wars. Replacing existing Chinese customs services during a period of massive trade disruptions, especially those associated with the Taiping Rebellion, it was formed from meetings of the foreign powers Great Britain, the United States, and the French in conference in Shanghai during June 1854. Through this a Western-style customs system was established for China in which consuls of real power controlled local treaty port activities alongside Taotai authorities with often a mere token role. The system spread to all treaty ports. By 1895 some 735 foreigners and 3471 Chinese were employed in the service (Brunero 2006).

is not clear, but during 1879 he established an experimental medical education scheme for Chinese in Tainan, on the mid-western coast of Taiwan<sup>8</sup>. By July 1888 three Chinese medical students had been sufficiently instructed there - with qualifications in medicine, surgery and obstetrics - as to be employed in Shanghai, and they became the core of a "medical cadet detachment" established by Myers in his work for the Manson Memorial Hospital (Myers 1889, 65). In this early period also Myers began his extensive observations and writing on the indigenous peoples of the regions in which he worked (Myers 1884, 39-46). By this time fluent in Chinese and Taiwanese, through the period he acted as an important observer of local events for the British consular service operating out of Tainan, and by his private medical practice clearly learnt a great deal concerning the local communities of Western Taiwan. From 1881 he reported to the consul - who reported on to Sir Thomas F. Wade, His Majesty's Minister at Peking - such matters as the activities of Chinese medical practitioners pretending to have knowledge of western techniques, and on those who were perambulating southern Taiwan vaccinating at a dollar per head. His reports seemingly led to proclamations from local magistrates and action by the resident Toatai (Phillips 1881). During the early 1880s Myers' clear support of the healthiness of Takao (modern Kaohsiung) and the south over the mission residencies in the north put him at loggerheads with powerful expatriates, but he was never daunted and seems to have maintained a working network for the whole of the Takao period from 1883 through the 1890s. With a small group of residents he appealed for British gunboat assistance at Takao during August 1884 when French hostilities were at a height<sup>10</sup>.

Into the 1890s Myers was beginning more general enquiries into the Taiwanese commercial sector (Myers 1891, Slough 407-421)<sup>11</sup>. By 1893 Myers could substitute for the recently arrived Consul R. W. Hurst in reporting the Tainan trade figures to the Earl of Kimberley (Hurst 1895, 613f)<sup>12</sup>. He was obviously energetic and resourceful. In October of 1892 he is reported as being amongst the small party that went out into a major typhoon storm to rescue the survivors of a Norwegian coal steamer. In 1894 he attended the several Chinese

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8 This was a base for his extensive medical research as in W.W. Myers (1881, 1880-1881, 1886); and Dr Stephen Mackenzie (1887, 548). See also Chu (2005, 221-230). From *Intelligence Reports Taiwan 1876-1895*, 1884, 43, *Taiwan Political and Economic Reports* (TPER), 1861-1960, edited by Robert L. Jarman, Archive Editions, Slough, 1997, vol. 3 1881-85, manuscript report of 1 September 1884, 291 and passim.

9 Consular Court 12 February 1883 "Plaintiff W. W. Myers MB ChM, Defendant to Petition is William Campbell, Missionary", in PCE series IV box 3, file 4; in W.W. Myers letters 1883-1898, based at Takao, *pca/fmc/6/02/049*, Chinese Maritime Customs, Archives, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Myers was heavily engaged in combatting opium smoking in southern Taiwan.

10 In August Myers was foremost amongst Britishers in the south signing a memo requesting that the gunship HMS Fly should stay in port as a result of "lurking dangers", Takao being especially under threat by brigands or bandits, if they raise "an anti-foreign or patriotic cry" there it could easily spread, the group being generally worried about "any possible attack by lawless soldiers or other evil-disposed Chinese".

11 Throughout the 1880s Myers remained in his medical practice in Takao despite the dangers of the Sino-French War of 1884-85. It should be noted that Taiwan was made a separate province in 1884 with the modernising Liu Ming-chuan being appointed as its governor, building railway, postal and defence systems. Liu also developed plans for the improvement of Takao Harbour, but once the French threat was removed Liu became a victim of vested interests both in Taiwan and in China.



were involved in teaching English to Japanese officials in Taiwan, putting on magic lantern shows for large groups of Japanese ladies as well as gentlemen, lecturing to select Japanese audiences and enjoying the sights and sounds of Japanese bands and firework displays (Mackay 2007, 1150-55)<sup>17</sup>. In 1898 Myers was frequently found in company with Japanese officials, by which time Mackay was negotiating with that same local Japanese officialdom on such matters as the arrest of Christian Chinese as rebels (Mackay 2007, 1160-62).

The purpose of such a thorough accounting of Myers' polyglot network activities is to show how it was that he was in the position by 1896 to be offered an appointment to a research post in the Japanese colonial government, enquiring into types of malaria, which by 1899 had broadened out into a position as a government advisor in Tokyo<sup>18</sup>. He was eased into this latter very important position by the Tainan Consul Joseph Henry Longford (1849-1925), who had only been in post since early 1896, but felt confident enough of Myer's ability to recommend in June of that year an intervention on his behalf by Sir Ernest Satow in Tokyo. The latter spoke directly to two of the most influential Japanese of the time, the Viscount Katsura Tarō (1847-1911) who was appointed Governor General of Taiwan in that year, and the Marquis Ito Hirobumi (1841-1909)<sup>19</sup>. From this meeting came an appointment in Japanese service on a 5-year contract at \$500 per month<sup>20</sup>. It is clear that around the time of his Memorandum Myers was gathering rapidly rising influence, prestige and income from his service to both the British and the Japanese authorities in Taiwan and Japan.

Others of the coterie were or soon became employed by the Japanese government, from attachments to the army in Taiwan and later Korea (Davidson), or to employment in major Taiwanese civil engineering projects (Burton)<sup>21</sup>. It is this gradual closer positioning of Myers which perhaps explains the character of his remarkable report to the British consulate and government of 27 December 1894 (Myers 1895, 120-127).

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17 Oxford College had been founded in January 1893 as a teaching branch of the northern Presbyterian mission in Taiwan.

18 *Japan Weekly Mail* (JWM), 13 October 1896, 378; 15 April 1899, 365.

19 "Correspondence of Sir Ernest Satow in Japan 1895-1900," PRO, 30/33, January-December 1896, in Correspondence and Papers (private) Japanese Consular Staff, Anping, Takao, Formosa: letters Longford to Satow 25 June; Myers to Longford 23 July; Longford-Satow 28 July, 28 September; E.Satow to Myers October 1896. As adviser direct to the Governor General of Formosa, Myers worked first for General Baron Nogi Kiten then for Katsura and thus became closely involved with Japanese imperial and military power at the highest level.

20 To this point Myers' best position had been his consular medical position at £100 per annum, a salary under threat from the removal of the Chinese Customs Service from Tainan. At the expiry of this contract, Myers in 1900 was appointed to the strength of General Alfred Gaselee's (1844-1918) force in North China for the relief of Peking and went through the entire campaign including actions at Pei-tsun and Yang-tsun, taking charge of wounded at the base hospital at Tientsin; Myer's honours included the Order of the Rising Sun and the medal and clasp for the relief of Peking. He retired to Pagoda Anchorage, near Foochow in China, where he had begun his China service in 1869.

21 *Japan Weekly Mail*, 19 December 1896, 703. Burton's work was very sensitive as he was put in charge of Japanese sanitary engineering installations in Taiwan, which were seen as addressing the filthy conditions associated with the plague outburst that had occurred in Taipei during 1896 and that equally felled both Japanese and Chinese. According to Burton following his inspections of Tamsui and Taipei, the deaths were primarily

## A Memorandum Regarding the Island of Formosa, 27 December 1894.

Addressed to Sir N. R. O'Connor in Peking, Myers construed a highly woven claim for British intervention in Taiwan in the face of an imminent Japanese war victory. He stressed at the outset how his fifteen years residence as well as the "full practice of my profession, bringing me in closest touch with the people all over South Formosa, has, perhaps, afforded me unusually good opportunities for obtaining information". An important element of this inside knowledge was to argue that the Taiwan "savages" of the east also wanted British intervention, for they hated Chinese and Japanese equally. Boasting a superiority in local knowledge, the memorandum charges all Chinese officials as corrupt, especially the former and reforming governor Liu Ming-chuan (1886-1891), all of whose improvements enriched himself and his followers; leading to much discontent at a popular level centred on corrupt applications of land tax, liken and other impositions, revolt by brigandage as the common condition of the island, and a common belief amongst the indigenous that a general uprising would be supported by the British. The argument unfolded elaborately.

Myers begins by praising the coal, petroleum and gold deposits, camphor, India-rubber, tobacco, river transport and other "intrinsic commercial resources of the island" and by damning the utter crudity and inefficiency of Chinese rule, "the principle of relying on extortion which permeates the whole island". In particular the potentially lucrative gold deposits "being entirely under the control of the aborigines, is closed to Chinese industry". Because of the pressures put on both Chinese and indigenous communities in the centre and east through the fiscal policies of the governor Liu, many inland products such as camphor and tobacco are presently of limited commercial value as "in many cases they have to be got through the aborigines".<sup>22</sup> Bad government over recent years had also led to bad feelings, riots and discontent amongst the Han Chinese population of Formosa, and the emergence of brigand bands and secret societies. Now, one inducement held out by the leaders of such popular dissent "was the assurance that, in the event of a general rising, the British would intervene and institute a regime similar to that existing in Hong Kong." This, claimed Myers, was now a general belief amongst the people. So it was "that the people – by which at present, is meant the Chinese settlers in Formosa – became, and have since remained, so highly predisposed towards the British and their method of ruling". Given that the war is soon to be lost and the cost will include the cession of Taiwan, but given also that the Formosan

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caused by bad hygiene, though local Chinese thought that the extensive earth-moving necessary for canal and railroad development was responsible. On practical matters Burton also worked with Myers when he was sanitary engineer to the Japanese Home Department (Burton 1898, 73-74). According to Davidson who wrote this report for the JWM, Chinese would not enter the Japanese hospitals in fear of atrocities, poisoning and tales of removal of their hearts, "fifty being required to give the strength essential for efficacy". This incidentally makes it clear that some versions of the cannibal stories that claimed Japanese cannibalism on Chinese were widely circulating by 1896 and once more associated with Anglophone intermediaries – see extensively below.

22 At the same time the consul for Tainan R.W. Hurst, was agreeing that the indigenous uprisings were detrimental to the camphor export trade in particular, as "outrages by savages have recently been reported in [camphor districts], the camphor stills have been destroyed, and operators murdered, and so far the savages have not been punished". (Hurst 1894-1899[1997], number 1555, 5).

Chinese regard Japan as efficient but "contemptibly beneath them", then so too has been "very acutely" renewed the Formosan "hope of British interference". Indeed, not just in the western ports, but deep into the centre of the island, those who otherwise "seem to know little or nothing about other places, or what goes on in them, appear to be well posted in the way British law is administered in Hong Kong, and groups of men may often be seen eagerly discussing amongst themselves the greatest advantages which would accrue to Formosa and its inhabitants if it were only in the same position as Hong Kong ... it may be safely inferred, therefore, that the popular votes of the so-called civilized settlers would be strongly in favour of British supremacy, even in preference to that of China". Perhaps more insightfully and prophetically, Myers concluded this theme by stating that "the Japanese, if they do come, will find themselves much more harassed by the guerrilla opposition that is being spontaneously organized among the people themselves than by that which the regular and imported soldiery are likely to present".

It was important to the overall Myers argument that emphasis should be put upon the ill-preparedness of Formosa to sustain any considerable external attack. Thus the army was undermanned, under-armed and deeply corrupt, with poorly paid troops "paid nominally 5 to 6 taels per mensem for each private" a large proportion of even this being extracted by officers.<sup>23</sup> Morale was low, many Chinese "braves" on the verge of mutiny, so that under the threat of Japan "the authorities, no doubt perceiving the impotency of their regular troops, have raised large levies amongst the people, and enlisted under promise of general amnesty many of the so-called brigands, who until lately have proved such effective opponents of the regulars... Liu has not been slow to recognize the superiority of the locally raised troops, especially those whose frontier life has made them somewhat expert bush-fighters".<sup>24</sup> However, the majority of Chinese commanders relied on city defence and more formal fighting, meaning for Myers that "to the initiated, landing and further satisfactory operation in Formosa could in all probability be effected with a minimum of risk and loss... Once taken, it needs scarcely be said that Formosa could be rendered almost impregnable."

Myers deepened his argument for British interference when he finally brought into the global balance the indigenous peoples of eastern Formosa.<sup>25</sup> He emphasised that any coming power would have to acknowledge the intransigence of the eastern half of Taiwan, where the "Chinese immigrants, and even some of the half-breed settlers, have as yet only been

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23 Per mensem being per month. Army authority held back payments through retention of up to 50% against desertion or theft, more being extracted in the dollar-tael exchange rates offered, and payment normally being made in arrears. There was a truck system, money going back to officers in exchange for rice and opium.

24 This is of course Liu Yung-fu, Leader of the "Black Flags" Brigade-General, Xan-Ao Division, who very much distinguished himself in fighting against the French at Foochow, and in Formosa against the Japanese. He was one of the most experienced and talented of fighting men on the island, and he adopted a guerrilla mode of warfare especially in the sugar-cane areas and the forests after the collapse of Taipei.

25 Unlike many of his compatriots Myers was happy to use terms such as aboriginal, savages, natives to describe indigenous peoples, and did not appear to choose his terms strictly according to any of the prevailing subjective distinctions between more "civilized", western and lowland indigenous groups (the Pepohoans) and the more independent indigenous easterners of the mountains and coasts.



In summary Myers enlisted the indigenous peoples on the grounds that their general discontent had been first hastened by Chinese governance under Liu<sup>29</sup>, was now rising again under threat of Japanese direct invasion<sup>30</sup>, but would be strongly reigned in by British rule. As a result British rule would be less costly and more commercially lucrative, although Japanese rule would be a proxy far superior to that of the Chinese for all the reasons given. Much depended on the attitudes of the eastern indigenous, who Myers rightfully asserted "have retaken a considerable amount of ground that had previously been yielded to Chinese aggression".<sup>31</sup> All "campaigns" against them announced so confidently by Chinese authorities "have been terminated by payment to the aborigines of a considerable sum of money down, and the promise of a yearly grant for the peace which, at various times, has been announced as Capitulation in the official Gazette".

### Political Economy and the Cultural Switch to Cannibalism

Here, in this one document to government of late 1894, we have the globe and its recent history in an ironic nutshell. Britain, the most thoroughly industrial of all powers, whose aggressions had done so much to bring the Chinese system to its military and commercial knees from the 1830s, now standing off from an eastern conflict, was according to the Myers claim being actively beckoned from both within Formosa and from the centre of China to come to the aid of the crumbling Empire.<sup>32</sup> The most powerful nation on earth, the Britain that sold advanced weaponry to all sides in most major conflicts, and that had threatened to extend its considerable aggression directly to Taiwan on more than one occasion, was now asked to save its erstwhile victim China from the doom of utter defeat on all fronts before a

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29 In his Memorandum, Myers reserved his biggest critique for the *likin* revised land tax, which engendered a "condition closely verging on general revolt" amongst both Chinese and indigenous, creating a foment as the "leaders of these gangs went about amongst the people exciting them to rebel against their Rulers".

30 Elsewhere I have argued that rising discontent amongst indigenous and Hakka people eastwards between 1891 and 1894 was also a reflection of attempts to accelerate the camphor industry, and thus owed much to Western commercial interests (Inkster 2018). The arrangements between Hakka and some of the indigenous groups could be very close, and there existed almost a *compradore* relationship between them. As consular officer L. C. Hopkins reported to Henry Parkes at Peking in October 1884, it is the Hakka "who carry on the barter trade with the savages, whom they supply with guns, powder and knives, mostly of their own manufacture, receiving in exchange skins, hardwood, camphor and the native cloth. They are the camphor manufacturers also, and have many thriving villages on these border marches, where they live independent of the Chinese administration" (Hopkins 1885, 2-3).

31 For excellent data and discussion on the character of indigenous resistance in these years see (Lin 2016).

32 It must be said that in the 1860s with the forced opening up of Chinese and Formosan ports and the establishment of a British consul, general opinion in Britain was that China should be induced by the great powers to properly secure or take-over "all the villages and bays on the east coast" of Formosa, *The Times* (London) 2 September 1867, a position stimulated by the Rover incident (above) where the problem was seen as the uncontrolled indigenous attacking Western shipping when blown by storm onto the island's dangerous eastern coast.

new enemy who could not yet be considered worthy.<sup>33</sup> With commercial interests in Taiwan far beyond those of any other western nation, turned to for advice on the war and its likely aftermaths by such other great contenders as the French and the Russians, the power of British brinkmanship was surely at its greatest around December 1894-February 1895.<sup>34</sup>

At such a point, then, it was surely a stroke of rhetorical genius for Myers to press a cultural switch concerning island cannibalism that was clearly designed to put a seal on the case for a very immediate British intervention. On this Myers might be left to speak for himself:

*It would take a Fenimore-Cooper's pen to describe the awful barbarities practised on the unfortunate prisoners before they are put to death; and astounding as it may seem, there can be no doubt that cannibalism is not only rampant among officers and men all along the frontier stations, but also that this fact is well known to the high Chinese officials.<sup>35</sup> The reason given, and apparently believed in, by the soldiers themselves for thus disposing of the bodies of their prisoners is that the courage, strength and endurance, which they freely ascribe to the aboriginal, will to some extent at least, be acquired by those who devour the bodies of the original possessors. All the organs and other parts of the body are dressed and cooked as would be those of one of the lower animals, and portions hung up to dry for future use may not infrequently be seen, even in the quarters of Commanding Officers. A catty of savage flesh has a high marketable value, which acts as further inducement to the scantily-paid, much "squeezed" opium-smoking brave for prosecuting his cowardly hunt.<sup>36</sup> It may be here mentioned that the "savage", beyond promptly decapitating his enemy, does not further mutilate the body, nor does he ever torture his prisoners. There is no doubt that cannibalism is entirely unknown amongst them, and they look on this propensity of the Chinese as being a perfect sign of racial depravity and degradation.*

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33 The most recent physical aggression had been during the so-called Camphor War of 1868 arising from the British aggressive response to the placing of camphor under government monopoly in 1867 and with all exports of the high-value product prohibited. For detailed background see (Yen 1965, 100-114); in brief see (Tsai 2009, 76-86). For a study linking camphor to both high-technology industrial advancement and indigenous Taiwanese resistance see (Inkster 2018).

34 A European perspective was consolidated in Leroy-Beaulieu (1900), who calculated that Britain had 60% of all foreign interest in China, about £42 million, yet was the only power not in official occupation of Chinese territory, contra the Triple Alliance of Russia, Germany and France. So Britain retained her commercial and diplomatic supremacy and was in the best position to continue a game of power balancing in the face of the speedy rise of Japanese military capabilities following the China war. Against France, Germany, Russia and the US, the combined naval power of Japan and Britain – measured in terms of ships, armament and steam power, or technical efficiency - was formidable. In 1898 *The Engineer* concluded from its detailed technical comparisons that "the naval forces of Japan and Great Britain are in a position to dictate any policy which may seem to be advisable, where the interests of our empire or those of the island empire of the east are affected." (11 March, 223-4)

35 The reference is to James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851), adventurer, traveller and author of highly dramatic sea novels and doubtful stories of American indigenous peoples, the most famous of the latter being *Last of the Mohicans*, 1827.

36 A catty was a basket weight of 1.3 lbs, 100 of which were equal to around 1 picul (133 lbs).

It was this extended savagery of the local Chinese that both caused the degradation of savage culture over time and measured the parallel degradation of Imperial Chinese civilization. The savage was made savage:

*The aboriginal is, or was, naturally inclined to be faithful to his engagements, and until repeated acts of treachery, followed by disaster, opened their eyes to the utter untrustworthiness of Chinese promises and protestations, many of these unfortunate people were persuaded to accept invitations to feasts, or, under the alleged protection of bogus "safe conducts", to venture within the lines. Here they were speedily seized and killed by a process of torture as terrible as it is lingering. Acts of this kind have now naturally rendered the savage distrustful and wary of his treacherous opponent, and although a state of reprisal is the normal between the parties, it is only when some outrage, involving more or less important personages, is committed, that adjoining tribes combine and declare general war, thus necessitating the dispatch of greater bodies of troops against them, these so-called campaigns being ended in the manner already described.*

In such a manner Myers closely linked aboriginal hostility and the degradation of the Taiwanese Chinese to a case for the commercial viability of Taiwan and the appropriateness of British intervention on the cusp of Japanese occupation. This case for a new site for the commercial colonialism of Great Britain was, thus, more nuanced than most, appealing at several levels to British interests, and subsuming the natural resource advantages of Taiwan in an argument centred on the failure of Imperial Chinese management and of local Chinese culture. In addition, for such historical and cultural reasons the strong support of indigenous people could be expected to be given to any British actions, this essential for the exploitation of the eastern side resources of "rhea-grass, camphor, India-rubber, tobacco, and most valuable timber", as well as coal, gold, silver, lead and petroleum.<sup>37</sup>

Myers scribed a master stroke when he illustrated to the British diplomats his own authority as a reporter of indigenous political culture by retailing how a chief of the southern tribes around Takao had selected himself and the Manson Hospital in the town as a safe sanctuary as early as 1883, during a period of especial Chinese-indigenous tension – but prior to the governorship of Liu.<sup>38</sup> At that time "bands of aborigines, including women, used to come from great distances, under special pass, for treatment at the David Manson Memorial Hospital, Takao". With the prohibitions instituted in that year followed by escalating tensions, the only way in which local Chinese authorities could encourage the "leading Chief" into Takao was to agree to his request for a "safe-conduct granted him to the Manson Hospital... in which place he was to reside as the guest of the surgeon [Myers himself], and where the

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37 More modest estimates of the natural resources of Taiwan were available in work by Davidson for one, who was a close friend and already publicizing similar ideas in Japan and Taiwan, see in particular his account (Japanese) in *Nichi Nichi Shimbun*, 17 July 1895, p. 3, and his "The Formosa Atrocities", *Japan Weekly Mail*, 13 August 1895, pp. 179-80.

38 A tension arising from renewed prohibitions on official passes that allowed indigenous groups to come down from the mountains temporarily.



being a post decorated with three skulls, generally those of a deer, pig, and bear, although the offerings deemed acceptable in their temples in many places are the heads or pig tails of the Chinese they have slain" (Mayers et al. 1867, 291-325, quote 314). One of the closest and informed of observer accounts was that of the Revd William Campbell in 1873, who in one of many inland trips describing mountain scenes of carnage and violence, interpreted what he saw as a result of a form of headhunting where the "Formosan tribes boil down every head brought in to a thick jelly, from which thin oblong cakes are made, for being nibbled to inspire fresh courage when another murderous attack is to be made upon the invaders of their country." (Campbell 1874, 410-412)<sup>42</sup> Here we have the voicing of an explicit connection between systematic pressure eastwards on the indigenous over time, their headhunting and their cannibalism against the Chinese settlers.<sup>43</sup> More important were his direct observations during that trip inland, where he came across indigenous children around Chiu-sia-Hun "in great glee, laughing, and shouting, and sky-larking about. The curious thing was that they were all furnished with handfuls of beef and meat-bones, which they were chewing with great apparent relish." In the hut nearby "a woman was busily engaged in extensive cooking operations. There was a big round pan filled up with soup and large joints, and two tables were covered with junkets of flesh and bones. Imagine my horror on finding that these were the remains of two human bodies which were rapidly being eaten up by the villagers." He expressed a western incredulity at which "she only smiled, but I insisted on showing my deep feeling of disgust; whereupon she lost her temper and angrily replied by saying, 'Why should we not eat them? They beheaded my husband, they beheaded my nephew, and it serves them very well to be treated in this way.'"

By the 1880s a basically Anglophone commentary had established a history of savage cannibalism on Chinese settlers stemming from what seemed to be a cultural backdrop of headhunting hastened into some form of cannibalism by frontier exigencies and passions.<sup>44</sup> In most cases the voice behind the story was more or less qualified and consistent in finding

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41 Chas Carroll, Acting Consul for Taiwan; 1 February 1867 TPER.

42 The observations here were drawn from an extended inland trip amongst Tsou or Bunan groups during April-May 1873.

43 One of the coterie surrounding Mackay and Myers by the 1880s, Campbell was a Glasgow-trained English Presbyterian missionary who had arrived in Taiwan in 1871, stationed at Taiwanfoo, leaving only in 1917. Long stationed in the south around Tainan, Campbell turning increasingly to conversions of the indigenous rather than the Han Chinese, supported the development of indigenous clergy, and became a very distinguished linguist and student of Formosan history and its indigenous people. Much of this is evidenced in his *Memorandum on Printing Missionary Books in the So-called South Formosa Dialect*, 1906; *Sketches from Formosa*, London: Marshall Brothers, 1913; *A Dictionary of the Amoy Vernacular*, Tainan: Taiwan Church Press, 1913. None of this suggests that Campbell at this stage was doing much other than reporting local stories and making direct observations himself.

44 It is worth noticing here that when other European observers do account savage cannibalism they almost always refer to an English-language source – thus Joest in 1882 depends on Pickering (Joest 1882, 53-76). Panchow in 1895 leans on Campbell (above), (Panchow 1895, 33-40; 65-76).

the links between headhunting and cannibalism and, thus, at least partially defining cannibalism in local cultural terms. So the English academic Sinologist Edward Harper Parker reported on the "curious superstition of the Formosa savages. They are in the habit of cutting off their enemies' heads, filling their mouths with wine, and drinking the wine mixed with the blood as it passes out through the reeking gullet, under the impression that the draught will secure their long life." (Parker 1888, 377)<sup>45</sup>

A further consideration of headhunting in the crisis decade of the 1890s can tell us more. The intrusion of the late Qing in an erstwhile attempt to pacify and quell the indigenous peoples engineered the indigenous culture in the name of social control over the island. This was astonishingly well published in the colonial culture of the Anglophone world. So the established and elitest *Pall Mall Gazette* of January 1890 publicised at length the Chinese governor's proclamation that there would be rewards to the Chinese settlers in Taiwan for the capture of "heads of rebels", embracing primarily the mountain indigenous in the camphor regions (Inkster 2018, 56-63). The rewards listed were £10 per head "for a savage captured in ordinary flight", £12 "for each taken by force of military colonists organized to repel a rebel raid", and £20 for each head taken by "the brave among the military colonists and the border people".<sup>46</sup> So here we have, just prior to the rapid cultural switch of 1895, a form of local governance that introduced an entirely artificial element into the Taiwanese history of head-hunting, one that presaged the cultural degradation of China in subsequent years.

We might now effectively position Myers and his *Memorandum* of 1894 as the first important and determined switch in this stream of reportage. By altering the common story radically, stating directly that the 1890s demonstrated the reverse cases of Chinese cannibalism against the indigenous of the mountains, a form of cannibalism that mixed elements of frontier exigency with cultural tendency and took the act of human flesh-eating well out of the mountains and into the western port towns of Taiwan and even to China itself, Myers publicized a story that had hitherto been mainly Anglophone but quiescent, and ushered in a group of post-1894 further voices and claims that represented a profound cultural switch pressed in favour of British commerce and the incoming Japanese colonialism. It was this cultural trope that made sense of Myers strong claim that the savage believes that "he and foreigners belong to the same family", trusting European missionaries or medical men far above any Chinese.<sup>47</sup>

The protection of British interests through the encouragement of a new cultural perspective on China, Japan and the indigenous, became a vital imperative that required speedy action once the violence of the republican resistance and the indigenous extension of

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45 At that time Parker was employed in HM consular services in both China and Taiwan, but was later appointed as Reader in Chinese at University College, Liverpool followed as Professor of Chinese at Owen's College, Manchester. This latter Chair has been established tentatively by the Lancashire County Council, by special grant and subscriptions.

46 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 January 1890 p.7743.

47 A full conceptual account of contested claims around Formosan cannibalism as part of a global characteristic in these years is in preparation for publication as Ian Inkster, "The Cultural Switch – A Cultural Anthropological Approach for Colonial History," (In Preparation)

48 *Japan Weekly Mail*, 20 July 1895 63-64; 10 August 1895 150.

that resistance became clear. The incoming Japanese may have considered that republican collapse was assured after five or six months of Japanese modern armed invasion from after 1894, but this was by no means the case. The resident foreigners emphasized the dangerous power of the republican Chinese, the indigenous and the Hakka *when they combined in force*.<sup>48</sup> An initial surge of some 14,000 Japanese troops in the north against a "wretched rabble called soldiers" was transformed when "fighting with the islanders proper, the Hakkas, and the tribesmen".<sup>49</sup> The British war correspondent of the *Nichi Nichi Shimbun* in Japan argued that now the Japanese would no longer be fighting raw Cantonese recruits but rather "the half-civilized tribes and the aborigines who are more turbulent and fiercer". It was increasingly imperative that cannibal tales should now embrace the degraded character of the Chinese, not just the older stories of indigenous cannibalism, for the Chinese emigrants living in the plains are scarcely less barbarous for they too are inhabiting the "hills to the east of Taipei and eat human flesh".<sup>50</sup>

Aiding the leadership of Myers came the writing of James W. Davidson. By the second week of January 1896 Davidson had transferred the switch into Tokyo through his columns and letters in the *Japan Weekly Mail* as well as his public lectures to the Asiatic Society of Japan, where he knowingly combined the Chinese cannibalism of violence against both Japanese and indigenous. In one case, a Chinese attack upon a Japanese garrison near Keelung on 32 December 1895 led to reported massacre, when:

Immediately upon entering the nearby village the [Japanese] troops were horrified at the ghastly spectacle of nineteen bodies of their countrymen beheaded and frightfully mutilated. They were the railway workers who had met their deaths at the hands of these fiends. Many of your readers may not be aware of the cannibalism that exists amongst the Taiwanese Chinese, although there is probably not a foreigner in Formosa but knows of the eating of portions of the bodies of the savages, or is unaware of the markets in Formosa settlements containing the human flesh of the savages for sale... The mutilated bodies of the Japanese were found, several of them disemboweled and the hearts cut out, also minus other parts of the body.<sup>51</sup>

And Davidson - as with Myers - is not slow in striking the contrast, the "Chinese take the savage's head to be displayed in the streets of the cities to be spat upon, jabbed with sticks, thus amusing the populace, and satisfying their thirst for atrocity. *And it is the Chinese rather than the savage who are the cannibals, their so-called civilization of thousands of years had not succeeded in doing away with this fearful custom.* After killing a savage on the island, the head is carried away for exhibition and the body is divided amongst the captors and eaten".<sup>52</sup> Thereby in one insecure and complex statement Davidson follows Myers into damning Chinese culture as not worthy of Empire, in stark contrast to the modernizing industrial civilization of Meiji Japan, increasingly their commercial ally. This task is accomplished quickly and in the

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49 *Nichi Nichi Shimbun*, 30 June 1895.

50 *Nichi Nichi Shimbun* 17 July 1895.

51 Davidson letter to *Japan Weekly Mail*, 12 January 88-89, 1 February 137-138, 1896.

52 Davidson, "Formosa and the Formosans", Asiatic Society of Japan, Tokyo 27 May 1896, *Japan Weekly Mail* 6 June 1896 640-641.

depths of the violent turmoil of an island undergoing foreign and civil war.

The scene was thus set for the later Japanese reconstruction of Taiwanese history as exemplary of both Chinese cultural failure and Japanese imperial vitality. For our purposes here, the finest brief example of this came from the pen of the highly influential Yosaburo Takekoshi (1865-1950), writing in Japanese from Okubo, Tokyo in 1905, translated into English and published by Longmans, London in 1907.<sup>53</sup> His account of Taiwan in the 1890s drew extensively from the writings and lectures of Anglophone residents of the island who were centred around Myers in that decade and who are mentioned already in our account, especially, J.W. Davidson, W. Pickering, and the Reverends William Campbell and G.L. Mackay. In addition, Takekoshi owed much of his knowledge to the work of C.W. Le Gendre between 1868 and 1891, and for early descriptions of both Chinese and indigenous savagery depended also on the fabulous constructions of Benyowsky's adventures of 1771, which had been recently re-published in London in 1893.<sup>54</sup> Takekoshi gave much credence to the extensive accounts of indigenous culture and resistance provided by Davidson throughout the 1890s in both Japan and Taiwan, summarized in his book of 1903, just in time for Takekoshi's own vivid accounting.<sup>55</sup> All of these were long-term residents, familiar with local languages, in cases veterans of extensive trips into the mountainous eastern part of the island and to Pephooan (or "civilized") villages, in instances educators of (or proselytizers to) both Chinese and indigenous communities, or married into local Chinese and even indigenous communities.

The colonial design of the Takekoshi text was to convincingly illustrate the ineffectiveness of mainland Chinese administration of the island historically, the periodic uprisings of indigenous tribes against resident Chinese settlers and authorities, and the continuous cruelty and encroachment of the Chinese on the indigenous communities of the centre and east. Thus, for years the island Chinese had visited "perfidy and slaughter" upon the mountain tribes, capturing the wives of indigenous men in return for land and camphor, swindling and violating all along the frontier of Qing authority. Not content with this, "some of these Chinese actually roast the flesh of their victims, make it into soup, or salt it down for future use; the liver, heart, kidneys and soles of the feet being regarded as especially dainty morsels and eagerly bought up by the rich Chinese mandarins and gentry, who esteem them precious medicines. Sometimes the flesh is exported to Amoy. When asked how it tastes, these cannibal Chinese say that it is ineffably delicious and beyond the power of human language to describe, and cannot even be imagined by those who have never had the joy of eating it.

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53 Historian and publicist, Yosaburo Takekoshi is now best known as the author of *Economic Aspects of the History of Japan*, at this time he was a confidant of Prince Kimmochi Saionji, appointed Parliamentary Undersecretary of the Department of Education of the Cabinet in 1898 and also Chief Historian of the Imperial House. He was a Member of the House of Representatives for 14 years, subsequently Member of the House of Peers.

54 Le Gendre had drawn uncritically from the early Benyowsky account of 1771. For an extensive critical account (Inkster 2010).

55 Takekoshi particularly noted Davidson as the correspondent for the New York Herald during the 1895 republican resistance, and also as the Consul at Antung (p. 87). It should be noted that Davidson's very important study of 1903 drew extensively upon Imbault-Huart (1893).

When told that to eat human flesh is very cruel and barbarous, they smile and say the savages are not men but a species of large monkey" (Takekoshi 1905, 228-229). So here is a much embellished story – where the locus of cannibalism passes from eastern frontier Formosa to elite Mandarin culture - a "cultural switch", from Myers through Davidson to Takekoshi that stood as a strong public truth claim posed in a language from 1894 to 1905 of all but identical syntax and vocabulary.

### **Selling Taiwan; The Indigenous and the Ultimate Intervention Plan.**

By the first months of 1895, just weeks after the Myers Memorandum had been lodged with the British authorities, Japan was throwing back Chinese forces on all fronts and introducing itself firmly as the new leader of East Asia. Russia was already conceding the cession of Formosa to Japan on the understanding that Port Arthur would not be occupied. Most of the powers now knew that Japan would be demanding the independence of Korea, a large war indemnity, and some considerable cession of Chinese territory. In Britain, the Earl of Kimberley, the new foreign secretary following Rosebery, saw the problem of Korea as longer term and involving Russia, and at this earlier stage possibly was more pro-China than pro-Japan, but generally the British acted as neutrals, considering that "Formosa would probably form a portion of the demands". When the French ambassador asked whether "we should object to the cession of Formosa to Japan", Kimberley replied on 22 February that "I thought that we should not find it necessary to object to the cession of Formosa". It was assumed that the French would be persuaded to the same view. Although Britain and France may have suspected something in the way of a secret agreement between Russia and Japan, the European great powers seemed happy enough with their newly-industrialised island of capitalism.<sup>56</sup>

Perhaps less well-known was the intended strategic deal on Formosa proposed by the Chinese government to the British on or around 13 March 1895, less than 3 months after the Memorandum by Myers that had pleaded for the acceptance of just such a deal and about the time of the latter's receipt by Kimberley on March 17.

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56 This and the following quotations and narrative is derived in the main from *Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print*, Part 1, Series E Asia 1860-1914, volume 5, especially pp. 80-417 (henceforth RPF0); Kimberley to Marquis of Dufferin 22 February 1895, p. 80. It should be emphasized that Kimberley for one always saw the question of Taiwan as a necessary Chinese sacrifice if the ruinous war against Japan was to be stopped short of Imperial disintegration; Britain would "not raise any objections if the Chinese Government found it desirable to cede the island to Japan in order to obtain peace, which in present circumstances, was such a necessity to them", Kimberley to O'Connor, Foreign Office 2 April 1895 RPF0 Doc 254, telegraphic.

57 The seeming utter lack of realism here in respect of Taiwan was, at that time, seen in the Anglophone world as a mere reflection of the naivety of all Chinese, from provincial governors and their local Taotai officials, to the literati, the merchants, the journalists, and the common people. J.W. Jamieson of the Shanghai consulate claimed that the Cantonese of the arsenals and other western sites of modernity would much rather be British than Japanese, thought that this might be feasible, and referred to the literati as those who "steeped in colossal ignorance, and saturated with prejudice, resent any attempt to afford them enlightenment as to the true state of affairs, and trying to convince them by reasonable arguments is a hopeless and thankless task." "Extract from the Intelligence Report of Mr Jamieson for the Quarter ended March 31 1895", RPF0, doc 581 in doc 580, to April 1895, pp. 328-9.

For the purpose of raising money, "a project was under the consideration of the Chinese Government for making over to a British Syndicate certain of the sovereign rights of China over Formosa".<sup>57</sup> This was really extraordinary for, as Kimberley understood it, the "rights to be ceded would include everything except the nominal suzerainty". The Emperor of China had accepted this proposal "in principle", but Kimberley responded that the British government "did not believe that, in present circumstances, it would be possible to carry it through, and the attempt would, in their opinion, only result in increased embarrassment for the Chinese Government". When the Chinese negotiator shifted slightly the ground by emphasising that the proposal was rather "for the hypothecation of the Island of Formosa for the purpose of raising money on loan", his British counterparts dismissed such "very vague notions" of how to raise emergency cash in London through advancements on the security of Formosa! It should be noted that the Chinese minister who attempted negotiation with Kimberley on these grounds on 1 April 1895 was under direct instruction from Viceroy Li Hung-chang, he whose talent and energy led to the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki on the 17th of April, just over two weeks later.<sup>58</sup>

Britain chose to do nothing. France might protest against the taking of Formosa, Russia and Germany could muster against Japan's occupation of territory on the Chinese mainland, but Britain basically sided with Japan's demands. Individual diplomats were sympathetic to China's fatal quandary, but could not let this interfere with their commercial and colonial logic. When the representative in London of Li, Kung Ta-jen had asked Kimberley, "Why should we not cede Formosa to you? We might then sleep soundly, which we never can do if the island is in the possession of the Japanese" he was told that the British were indeed sensible of the friendly intentions thus implied, but that, "apart from all other considerations" such a notion could not be entertained unless the British planned a direct interference in the war.<sup>59</sup>

And this they did not, certainly not on behalf of Taiwan. Most British authorities seemed to feel that cession would make little difference, or perhaps that the resulting Japanese efficiency might mean improved transport, harbours and policing that would in effect improve the position of the island's largest foreign trader. When the major commercial aspects of the Treaty of Shimonoseki became known during mid-April, the British seem to have welcomed the imminent "benefit of Japanese administration" and likely increased trade, the advantages of river and harbour improvements to be obtained under most-favoured-nation clauses. The only real problem British interests worried over concerned the possible

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58 PFO, Kimberley, Foreign Office London to O'Connor, Doc 253, number 50, 1 April 1895.

59 RPF0, Kimberley to N.R. O'Connor, 1 April 1895 doc 253, pp. 159-60. Kimberley wrote that the exact formulation then suggested by Li was "that Formosa might be hypothecated to a syndicate of English bankers as a security for a loan, or that it might be made over to a British company". For an amusing view of this period given by one of the coterie around Myers see Campbell (1915, 261-291).

60 Most-favoured-nation clauses were the method agreed on by the great powers to share the advantages of global aggression – any power gaining commercial and other advantage by treaty after war over a vanquished nation that was not a colony, shared the concession with the other powers. It was feared that China could face this indemnity only by borrowing at high interest; paying this off might require increasing revenue from customs duties "that will mean a new hindrance to trade" (Giffen 1895, 217).

impact on China as a viable commercial entity of the huge indemnity - £30 million – being demanded by the Japanese. The figure was nearly ten times that of China's annual customs revenue, about the only income still available to the imperial system.<sup>60</sup>

Nothing could shift the British, even when we move our account from London back to local initiative in Taiwan. When as part of an effort at resistance against the Japanese the Governor of Taiwan, Tang Jing-song visited the local British Consul, L. C. Hopkins in Tamsui on 20 April, he argued that he was now no longer in any position to protect foreign nationals on the island, and then ushered in a deputation of Taiwanese gentry figures "who prayed the island might be placed under British and German protection, proposing that these Powers should receive the duties from coal, camphor, tea, gold, and sulphur, while China would retain territory and administration, and continue to receive land-tax".<sup>61</sup> Seemingly the true provenance of this version of the original Myers proposal began with the Viceroy of Nanking. As Hopkins explained directly to Kimberley in a series of documents in late April, the go-between sent by the Nanking Governor to Hopkins was a Shanghai Chinese, Yao Wên-tung, of Taotai rank and a previous member of diplomatic missions to various European capitals. They met privately in Hopkins' own home, with the opening gambit from China that the "population was extremely averse to the cession", and that Japanese control of Taiwan would be adverse to British direct commercial interests and to Hong Kong, so Britain should step in even though peace had officially been restored by treaty.<sup>62</sup> Even this late in the day this was a serious excursion – Hopkins was of course astonished that such matters could be put at such a time, in such a peripheral place, and to such junior officials. The next day an "alliance" was proposed by Yao "the leading feature in their minds was to be the hiring of the British fleet to defend Formosa". When Hopkins pressed Yao to write down a more exact version of Chinese proposals in a short Memorandum, he did so leaving a copy with Hopkins that "pleaded for an alliance between China and Great Britain to resist Japan.. You are begged as a preliminary step, to ascertain from Her Majesty's Minister whether this is feasible or not. Should he say that it is, on our fully leaning his views, the throne can be memorialised as to the steps to be taken. If it is impracticable, then this secret idea can be treated as a private inquiry made

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61 N.R. O'Connor (Peking) to the Earl of Kimberley, 21 April 1895, RPFO, p. 222. The actual Memorandum of the Notables read in translation: "The population of the whole of Formosa are not willing to belong to Japan. They wish to request Great Britain to protect the territory and the inhabitants of Formosa. The duties derived from the products, namely, gold, coal sulphur, camphor, and tea, to be levied and received by your honourable country. As for the population, land tax, territory, and administration, these all to remain Chinese', *Memorandum drawn up by the Deputation of Notables at the Interview between Governor Tang and Acting Consul Hopkins in the Governor's Yamen, at Taipeh, April 20, 1895*, Doc. 636, enclosure in Doc. 633, Hopkins to O'Connor, 22 April 1895, RPFO p. 356. Around 20 people submitted the Formosan memorandum but some 200 crowded outside "for whom there was not room", including high scholars, headmen and tea-growing colonists and "various others from the south and other parts of the island", obviously including representatives of the marginal locations so emphasized in the original Myers memorandum of 27 December 1894. These were precisely the groups who were soon to support the fight against Japan and the attempt at a Republic over the following weeks despite the international treaty (Shimonoseki, 30 March 1895) that ceded the island to Japan.

62 RPFO, Inclosure Doc 633 Hopkins to O'Connor, Tamsui 20 April, 1895 (secret and Separate); O'Connor to Kimberley, doc 627 enclosed in doc 618 21 April 1895, p. 349.

of yourself as a friendly person, and as having a non-official character... Could not neutral Powers properly prevent Japan carrying out her aim of taking Formosa, and thus acquiring too preponderating an influence?"<sup>63</sup> Coming as it did from the island's governor, the British could argue that it would now "not be a friendly act to China, whose difficulties would be increased by it, and it would only serve to create complications for her and for Great Britain".<sup>64</sup>

When the Japanese then let Britain know "that a report has reached the Japanese Government to the effect that Great Britain intends to occupy Formosa", Kimberly replied adamantly on 9 May that Britain had "no such intention, but that, in consequence of the serious riots, which have broken out in that island, and which rendered such a course necessary", two British warships had landed sixty-six men "for the protection of foreigners in the island". Soon rumours were spreading both amongst the powers and within Formosa that the island was being "taken under protection" by each and every possible contender, from France and Spain to Germany and the US.<sup>65</sup> On 23 May a Declaration of Independence was made at Taipei. The British merely noted that the Republic was supported in China and that "10,000 men and 3 million cartridges have gone over", with Sir Nicholas O'Connor noting that he proposed "to warn the Yamen of the very grave results that may follow upon a breach of the conditions of the Treaty of Shimonoseki".<sup>66</sup> When news subsequently came of the further movements of mainland troops to Taiwan, Britain remained absolutely firm in adherence to the treaty. Chinese resistance would be merely humiliating.

### Conclusions: Political Economy, Orientalism and the Others' Others

However imaginative Myers was in some of his claims of December 1894, his Memorandum was part of a more broadly evolving cultural story voiced by Anglophone interests that appeared to be in support of the invasion of Taiwan in one way or another. As has been shown, British interests in Taiwan, exemplified by Myers, wished to see commercial arrangements calmed as soon as possible and in their own best interests.<sup>67</sup> The detailed experiences of Myers and others like him led them to advocate an intervention by Britain or an arrangement with Japan that would favour British interests but at the same time would adhere to their own experiential beliefs regarding the social, ethnic and cultural nature of the island's peoples. Myers in Taiwan in December 1894 was a few months ahead of the diplomatic games in Europe and the war in Asia, and possibly underestimated the diplomatic alliance being forged

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63 Hopkins to O'Connor, 20 April 1895, 354. RPFO.

64 Kimberley to O'Connor 29 April 1895, p. 261. RPFO.

65 The Tamsui consul reported a supposed planned French protectorate (doc 489 11 May), RPFO.

66 O'Connor to Kimberley 29 May, Peking, p. 313. RPFO doc 555.

67 In terms of British popular opinion (as against the calculations of diplomats) it is clear that British actions in 1894-95 were influenced strongly by the failure of authorities in Taiwan to generate a growing or efficient trade in camphor, sugar and tea after the French war in the 1880s; as examples see *The Times* 24 August 1887, 2 August 1889 p3, 7 Aug 1890 p11.

68 By late 1894 the changed status of Japan in British official thinking and commercial practice was becoming clear. British opinion in Japan itself especially emphasised what they chose to see as the Japanese defence of Korea against Chinese oppression, the Japanese being "considerate and honourable to the highest degree".

between Britain and Japan at a wider level.<sup>68</sup> It is noteworthy in this respect that in O'Connor's missive to the Earl of Kimberley of 17 March 1895 he suggests that Myer's Memorandum of 27 December 1894 "has probably some connection with the report lately current of the formation of a British syndicate for the purchase of the island" (Myers 1895). A conclusion might be that the Memorandum was important to getting a proposal off the ground in both Taiwan and in China and London, but not sufficient to affect the mind-set of a considered British diplomacy which was in the initial throes of a long-term alliance with industrialising Japan. And, of course, although Japan could be used as a threat – and future and racial turmoil within the island could be predicted if the Meiji authorities secured their colonial ambitions – Myers and the Anglophone interests in Taiwan were very quick to ally with the Japanese after Shimonoseki.<sup>69</sup>

We have suggested that the indigenous peoples of Taiwan were utilised in every effort to denigrate both the Chinese Empire and the resident Chinese within Taiwan.<sup>70</sup> Myers was doubly firm that the fallen civilisation of China was exemplified in the failure to control relations between indigenous and Chinese within the island – postulated at its exemplary extreme in cannibalism - and that this also meant that British intervention and even control over Taiwan would be welcomed by diverse interests. This was to be partially demonstrated by his own evidence and by the delegations in London and within Taiwan in the months subsequent to his *Memorandum*, who repeatedly chorused an emotional as well as a commercial appeal to Britain to square the circle of Taiwan's survival as an integral culture and economy.<sup>71</sup>

This paper has only been loosely concerned with the validity of contemporary truth claims concerning cannibalism, which require much more extended discussion.<sup>72</sup> It is entirely possible that the numerous western and Japanese accounts of Chinese cannibalism - with

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More generally, British commercial interests in the East defended industrial modernisation against what they branded as an "enemy that is the foe of progress and the embodiment of conservatism. What she seeks is in the interest of humanity and civilization." H. Loomis, "The Status of Japan among the Nations and her Position in Regard to Korea", *Japan Weekly Herald*, 27 October 1894.

69 The context of British support of Japanese control over Taiwan as this developed during 1895 is seen in "Pacification of Formosa" *Japan Weekly Mail*, 16 November 1895, 518-521.

70 As the Japan-British alliance formed up in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, images of the indigenous were still being constructed and reconstructed. A good example of this was the pavilions for the exhibition of "Arts, Products and Resources of the Allied Empires" at the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910 at White City, London. Afforded huge publicity in Britain and Japan, the Formosan Village was figured as "with its romantic population", the Aino [sic, meaning Ainu peoples of Hokkaido], Village as "with the primitive inhabitants of Japan", neatly compounding Japan's othering and control over the indigenous of its new Empire whilst establishing for all visitors the undoubted advance of industrial modernism in Japan itself: *The Times* (London), 12 July p6, 12 August p6, 9 October p8, 1909; 24 March p10, 28 March p8, 1910.

71 Myers' approach was continuously cited even after the violence and failures of early Japanese colonialism in Taiwan was known, see for instance W.N. Brewster, "Japan's Failure in Formosa", *Harper's Weekly*, 7 May, 1900, where Myers is quoted as an advisor to the Japanese.

72 As is suggested further below, this is not opting out of the issue, but simply a restatement of the intent of this analysis. Indeed, wider work does suggest that the post-modern cultural analyses are seriously flawed on both analytical and empirical grounds.



commercial and political aims, as in the case of British interests in Formosa on the cusp of Japanese colonisation.

Some observers such as Campbell and Mackay were both stalwart and clear in their first-hand accounts.<sup>73</sup> Others, such as Davidson or Myers himself, relied much on both innuendo and persuasion through the association of their cannibal claims with other features, such as the commercial potentials inherent in the coming of the Japanese. Indeed, so much could be made of this that cannibalism on the eastern frontier became a direct argument for British purchase of the entire island of Taiwan! Anglophone claims mixed broadly "cultural" and "warrior" aspects of cannibalism, both fore and aft of what we have labelled the cultural switch of 1895. At least for the indigenous, historical cannibalism was some outcome of culture and ceremony, as well as of exigency or circumstance. The basis was in a deep-rooted tradition of head-hunting, though – as we have seen - even this was in fact a complex relationship.<sup>74</sup>

So in the case of the indigenous Taiwanese, headhunting and cannibalism were historically associated both within their own tribal histories and through the actions of the Chinese state in Formosa during the 1890s, this providing something of a cultural trope for the savage.<sup>75</sup> But for the Chinese in Taiwan there was not - nor was there adduced - any special evidence of headhunting as a ceremonial group or tribal activity attached to mythical underpinnings. The Chinese - as with most historical cultures - had some history of periodic decapitation of enemies, and seemingly some stories of the strength to be had from enemies by both decapitating them and then eating them. But for Chinese cannibalism against indigenous peoples on the Taiwan frontier of empire, a strong exigency is all that could be argued even at best, this itself identified by observers such as Myers as a feature of Imperial Chinese cultural decline.

We would now suggest that what the Anglophone observers, reporters and commentators were doing in Taiwan after 1895 – following the concise lead offered by Myers - was to fairly rapidly create "another China" through a cultural switch around 1895, in which they focused almost exclusively on the Other's (Chinese) Other (indigenous Taiwanese) as now indigenous

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73 Mackay considered that the presence of westerners inhibited Chinese cannibalistic atrocity against the indigenous thus reducing sightings and reportage. In a diary entry for 27 September 1890 he gave account of the beheading of a savage in front of the Mandarin's Yamen at San-kiet village, involving 20 soldiers armed with Remington rifles. The head was both chopped and sawn off, and the military official in charge gave particular instructions "that the body must not be cut up and eaten", this instruction following the presence of Mackay: see *Mackay Diary*, 27 September 1890, 753-54.

74 For a very concise and intelligent slightly later Japanese anthropological account of this see (Ishii 1913, 77-92), and for the broader context of this see (Inkster 2011). We should note here that Ishii saw the indigenous Taiwanese of the high mountains as culturally viable and worthy of an ameliorative frontier policy.

75 Although very rare and not entirely at ease with other tales, there is a legend of the ancient Tayal which implies routine child eating amongst them, but it takes a form not so unlike several European legends; it was in many places and times culturally acceptable to "other" your ancestors as long as great time has lapsed, as in the 18th century Scottish belief that they had practiced cannibalism in ancient times and that the evidence of their obvious civilization and enlightenment in a world of Hume and Smith meant that even the most savage of societies could become civilized. In enlightenment Europe abandonment of an ancient cannibalism – the behaviour of the "others" of your own past – became some measure of your civil progress.

victims rather than degraded savages. What we might term "indigenized Orientalism" occurred when the Anglophone West pressed the cultural switch that transformed the Chinese into a degraded Other by identifying the indigenous victims of Chinese rule as culturally viable and of superior attainments and potential when compared to those of the Chinese themselves. This is surely a reasonable reading of Myer's Memorandum? This is a process never considered by exponents of Edward Said's vision of Orientalism as a western cultural process (Said 1978).

Our particular story offers several possible twists to previous generalization concerning western colonialism and its association with the cultural "othering" of conquered peoples. It is extremely notable that no commentaries on the incidents of Chinese consuming savages in Formosa argued that what they claimed to observe or to accurately report was either survival cannibalism (prohibited behavior occurring in extreme circumstances, as in the Chinese famine experienced by Myers in 1877-78) on one hand, or institutionalized, culturally sanctioned cannibalism on the other. Either of these arguments would have fitted quite comfortably into the presiding late-nineteenth century mentality of western travelers, agents and intellectuals, as well as those of the populists and new romantics of that time (Inkster, in preparation). Rather, the emphasis was on *utter distinctiveness of the local case as a direct reflection of the cultural and political decline into barbarity of Imperial China*.

Secondly, we focus here not on the colonial expansions of a western nation but on Japan, itself a very recent escapee of western dominance and industrialism. Here we have a case of the Orient itself, as represented by Japan, creating a very specific "Orientalism", in contradistinction to Edward Said's claims about the aping and adherence to Orientalism of segments of the modern Islamic orient (Said 1978, 323 forwards).

Thirdly, we have a very unusual - if not for this time unique - case of the civilized consuming the savage openly and even with testimony. And finally, we have a series of truth claims made by western observers on behalf of the Japanese colonial project, itself a proxy support of British commerce. We would hypothesize both from the material in this paper and by extension of its argument, that Japanese understandings of western colonialism were part and parcel of a cultural "othering" designed precisely to legitimize and power the early days of industrial Japan's expansionism, especially in the crucial years 1894-1906, between the two Japanese wars against the hitherto mighty empires of China and Russia. Claims concerning Chinese cannibalism in Formosa, as with those of Takekoshi, were not only one key to Japan's case for a civilizing mission in the east against any surviving claims of a multiply-defeated China, they also served to cement a Japan-western cultural alliance, for not only were westerners generally condemning cannibalism actively and purposively during the 1890s, they were at the heart of the original truth claims concerning Chinese cannibalism in Formosa.

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