

So for this reason,
installing colonial
administration did

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So what are the reasons for this predominantly positive portrayal of Japan in contemporary Taiwan? Does the favorable image of Japan correspond in any way with the historical facts? To some extent this is certainly the case; compared with other regions under the control of Japan in the first half of the 20th century, Taiwan was treated relatively well.

Undoubtedly, the intensity of coercive actions in Taiwan was clearly lower than in Korea or China. Why, then, did Taiwan enjoy such a privilege? One of the reasons may be the composition of the Japanese management staff in Taiwan. In 1945 27% of military personnel in Taiwan were owned by the imperial navy. In China and Korea this ratio added up to 6% and 10% respectively.

This might be crucial since the navy enjoyed the reputation of an institution of more liberal and open-minded people, compared to other branches of the Japanese Imperial Army¹. However, the impact of the military staff's open-mindedness is practically unmeasurable and as such it is pure speculation. In addition, unlike China and Korea, at the time of attempt to establish Japanese power in Taiwan, there was arguably no such thing as Taiwanese identity. For this reason, installing colonial administration did not encounter as much resistance as in Korea or China. The undeveloped national identity also resulted in less reluctance towards the aggressor. Japan intended to turn Taiwan into a "model colony"². It was supposed to help Japan to join the elite club of colonial powers.

Good treatment may also have its origins in the original purpose of the colony. In contrast to Korea, which was only supposed to provide a corridor to

Manchuria and deeper into China, Taiwan was planned to be the demonstration of Japan's potential, and also in a broader perspective/ later a bridgehead for the Japanese southbound expansion³. On the other hand, the Japanese administration often brutally (murders, tortures and imprisonments without convictions) used the apparatus of coercion to enforce power. There is a long list of malpractices, oppressive measures and pure discrimination against Taiwanese carried out by Japanese.

These actions distort the image of lenient and cooperative Japanese. In point of fact, even though considered to be relatively good, Japanese treatment of Taiwanese was by no means objectively good. 1 S. Denney, Taiwan's Collective Memory of Japan: Around the Horn, <http://www.shanghai1937.com/the-japanese-on-taiwan/> (retrieved 14. 1. 2018).

2 N. Heé, Taiwan under Japanese Rule. Showpiece of a Model Colony? Historiographical Tendencies in Narrating Colonialism, "History Compass", 8/2014. 3