

In a League of  
Their Own:  
Exploring  
Taiwan's Colonial  
Past through the  
Baseball Film,  
*Kano*



# Background of film

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- Based on true story
- KANO or Kagi Agricultural and Forestry School
- Hailed from present-day **Chiayi City**, Taiwan (called Kagi under Japanese colonial rule).
- KANO advanced to finals of the Japanese High School Baseball Championship at Koshien Stadium in Hyōgo Prefecture, Japan in 1931.



# Historical context

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Taiwan's Demographics

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Taiwan as a 17th c. Nexus for Trade

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Colonization of Taiwan

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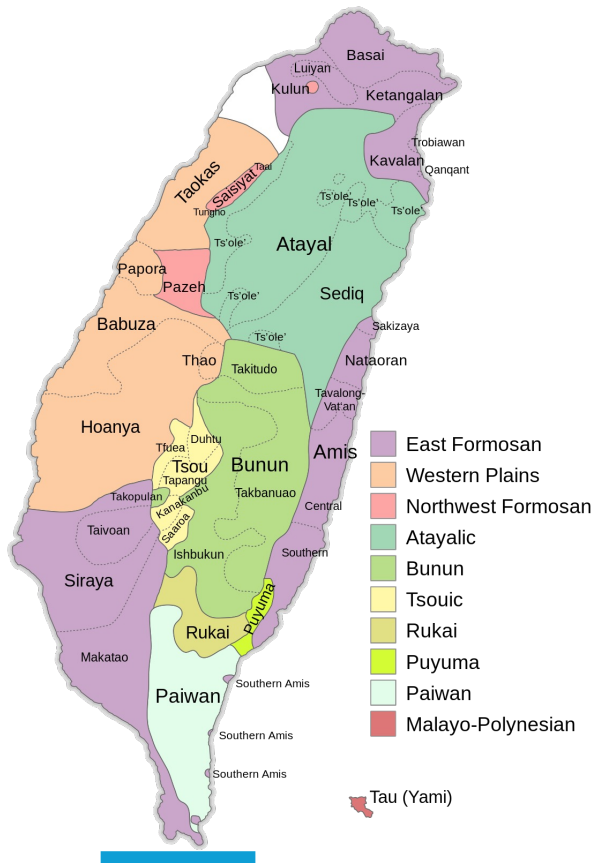
How Taiwan fared under Japanese Colonial Rule

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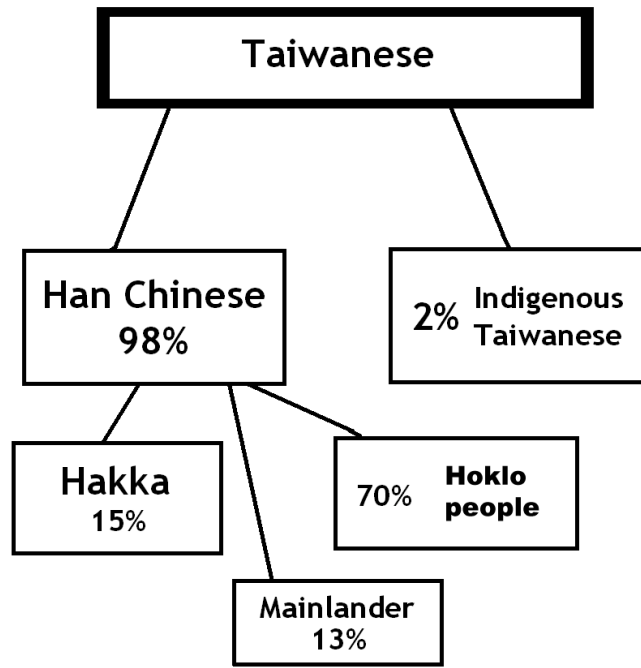
Taiwanese Views of Japan during WW II

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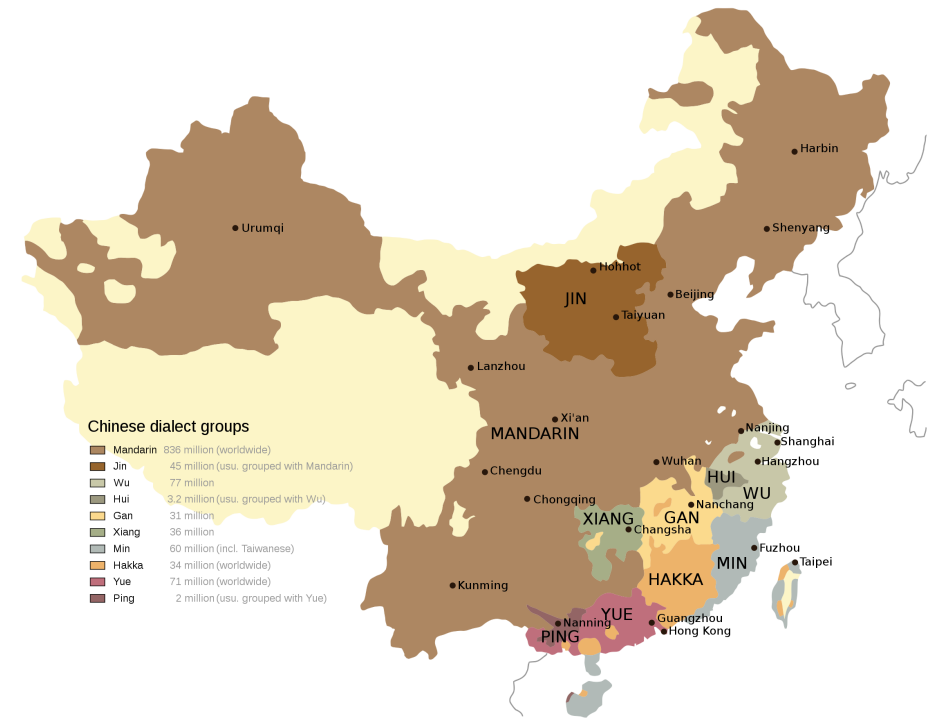
Legacy of Japanese Rule in Taiwan



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[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Republic\\_of\\_China\\_%28Taiwan%29\\_demographics.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Republic_of_China_%28Taiwan%29_demographics.png)



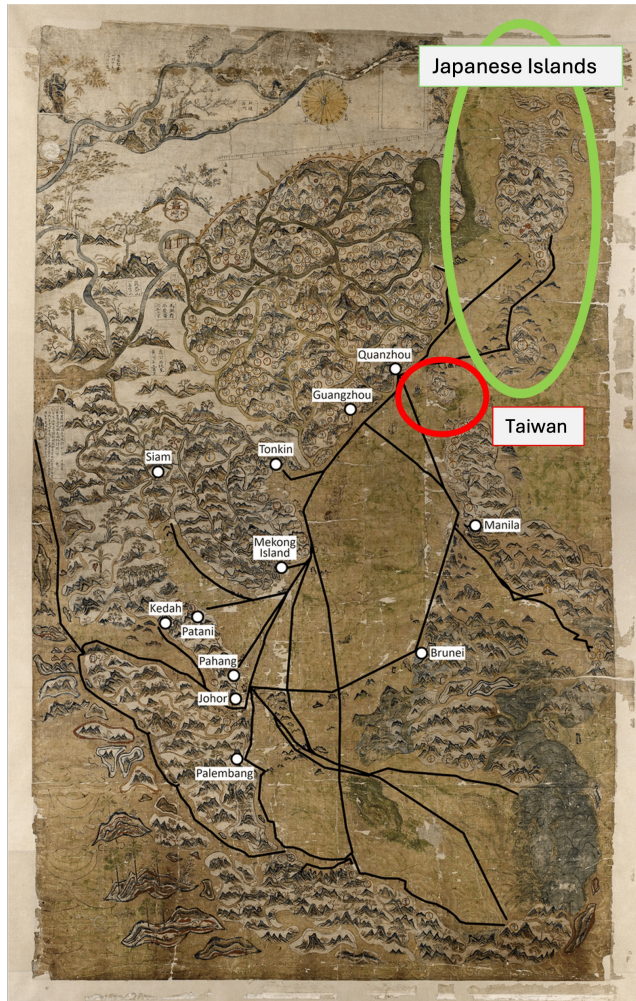
By Map\_of\_sinitic\_languages-en.svg: Wu Yue (original); Gohu1er (SVG) derivative work: Kanguole (talk) - Map\_of\_sinitic\_languages-en.svg, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=12775549>

# Taiwan's Demographics

# Taiwan as a 17<sup>th</sup> c. Nexus for Trade

## The Selden Map of China, early 17th c.

Source: [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-Selden-Map-of-China-The-routes-and-ports-used-in-modelling-are-emphasized-by-the\\_fig3\\_357129183](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-Selden-Map-of-China-The-routes-and-ports-used-in-modelling-are-emphasized-by-the_fig3_357129183)



## 17<sup>th</sup> century trade between Asia and Europe



Graphic organizer based on information from Tsai, Shih-shan Henry, *Maritime Taiwan: Historical Encounters with the East and the West*, p. 35-37.

# Colonization of Taiwan



## JAPANESE CONTROL OF TAIWAN



*Painting of Japanese entering the city of Taipei in 1895 after the Treaty of Shimonoseki*

Image credit

Japan's modernization, militarization, and industrialization with the Meiji Restoration of 1868 was soon followed by a military expedition to Taiwan in 1874, intended to exhibit Japan's strength and expansionist capabilities. In 1895, China, weakened and impoverished due to its losses to Great Britain in the Opium Wars and internal unrest, lost the Sino-Japanese war and ceded control of Taiwan to powerful, imperialist Japan with the Treaty of Shimonoseki.

Close Window



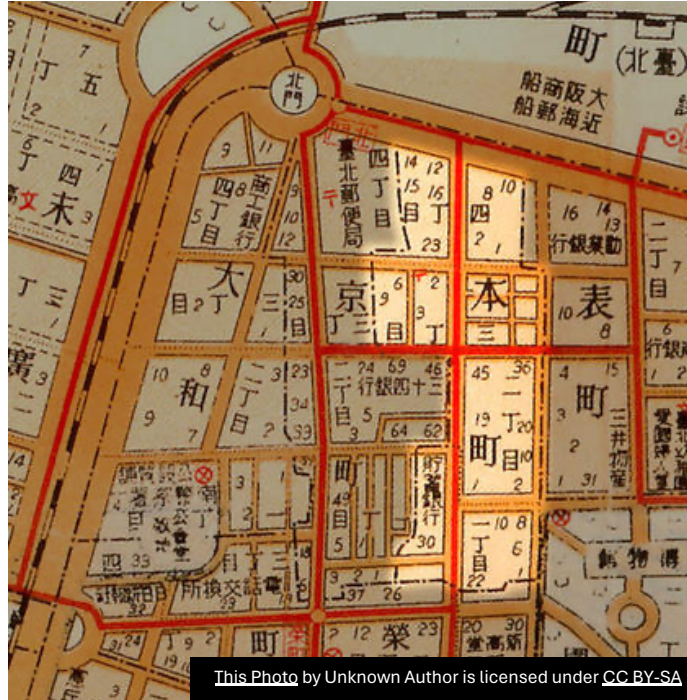
# Japanese Colonization of Taiwan

WHAT JAPAN EXPECTED	HOW JAPAN RULED
Acknowledgment from western nations of Japan's rightful place among imperialist world powers.	Controlled Taiwanese through military rule initially and then police force.
Agricultural output, natural and mineral resources of Taiwan's fertile soil.	Established <i>ho-ko</i> system: created a network of informants, collaborators, and manpower for communal tasks. Led by head of family or leader of a district, who dispensed laws and regulations in his area and reported lawbreakers to police.
Control of maritime traffic in the Yellow, East China, and South China Seas.	Created a Youth Corps, which indoctrinated young Taiwanese into Japanese nationalist and imperialist mindset and made them loyal subjects.



# How the Taiwanese fared under Japanese rule

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# Taiwanese view of Japan during World War II

Elderly Taiwanese, born in China and able to remember Qing rule in Taiwan (albeit inept and corrupt) and in their ancestral homeland of China, lamented the brutality and destruction in China during the Second Sino-Japanese War that would lead into WW II.

Middle-aged Taiwanese, born in Taiwan to *Benshengren* parents, sought to retain their identity and saw Japan's Asia aggression as imperialistic.

Young Taiwanese, fully indoctrinated by the Japanese education system, eagerly supported the war.

*Benshengren*

# The Japanese Legacy in Taiwan

Taiwanese benefitted from dramatic social and economic development, physical infrastructure development, improved public health, less government corruption.

During colonial rule, Taiwanese (aside from Japanese), were the most highly educated people in Asia.

Taiwanese developed a sense of their own identity and distinctness as a community, forming the basis for their sense of independence today from mainland China.

Subjugated to martial law, indoctrination, discrimination and treatment as inferior by Japanese during colonial rule.

Hakka and Indigenous communities were massacred by Japanese forces. (The military campaigns under Gōto and Samata, as well as the Wushe Rebellion of 1930, as examples).

# Using the film *Kano* in the K-12 Classroom

THEME	FILM SCENE	KEY TERMS	CONNECTION POINTS	SUBJECT & GRADE LEVEL
Identity, Multiculturalism	40:00 Undermining of team's diversity	Indigenous Peoples, Han Chinese, Japanese; "motley crew"	"Lost Names" in Korea under Japanese colonial rule; India under British colonial rule (the film <i>Lagaan</i> )	Social Studies, ELA—7-12 grades
Adversity	1:14 Papaya tree	Kagi Agricultural and Forestry School	Universal "underdog" narrative	Social Studies, ELA, STEM—7-12 grades
Colonization	1:32 Kano qualifies for Koshien; Kanan Canal's completion; steam locomotive	Meiji Restoration, Pan-Asianism, Infrastructure development, "progress"	Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, "White Man's Burden" in Africa	Social Studies, ELA, STEM—7-12 grades
Discrimination, Racism	1:50 Questions for team by journalist at Koshien	"Savages"	Korea, Africa, India under colonial rule	Social Studies, ELA—7-12 grades

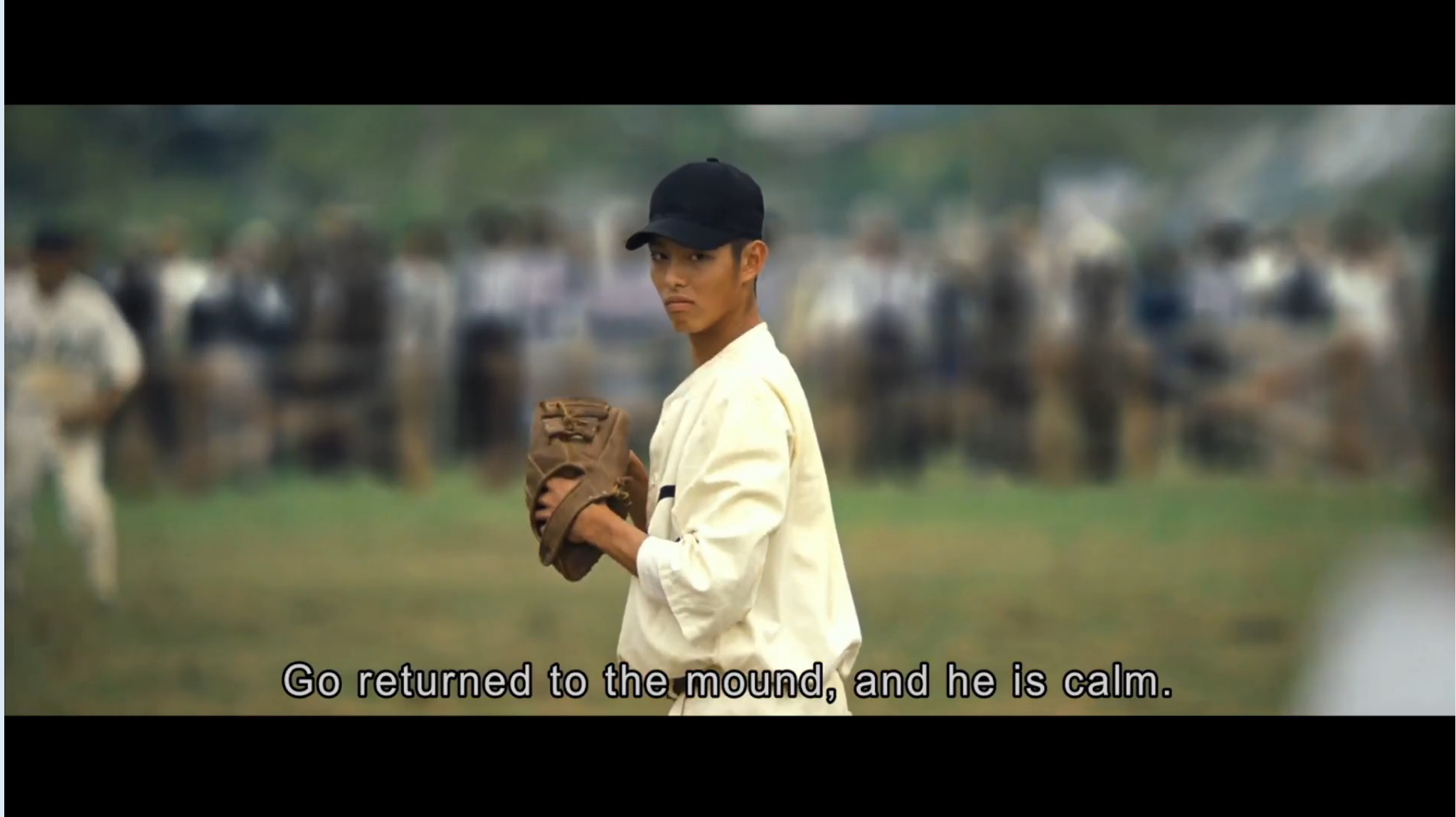
# Clip # 1: Identity & Multiculturalism



## Clip # 2: Adversity



# Clip # 3: Colonization



Go returned to the mound, and he is calm.

# Clip # 4: Discrimination, Racism





# Resources

- Centering Taiwan in Global Asia K-14 Curriculum Resource website. <https://centeringtaiwan.pitt.edu/>
- Manthorpe, Jonathan, *Forbidden Nation: A History of Taiwan*. St. Martin's Griffin. New York. 2008.
- Tsai, Shih-shan Henry, *Maritime Taiwan: Historical Encounters with the East and the West*. Routledge. 2009.