

## The Taiwan Republic:

### First-Ever Taiwan Independence Movement?

### 史上最初的台灣獨立運動？-----台灣民主國

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台灣民主國國璽

Republic of Taiwan state seal.

1895 年，大清國與日本之間爲了爭奪朝鮮半島的經濟勢力爆發了甲午戰爭（或稱日清戰爭），清國大敗，而以馬關條約議和，清國同意將台灣、澎湖及遼東半島等地割讓給日本。

The 1894-95 Sino-Japanese War was fought between the Qing Empire and Japan to settle their contest for economic dominance on the Korean Peninsula. The Qing was soundly beaten and forced to sign the Treaty of Shimonoseki, in which it agreed to cede Taiwan, the Pescadores, and the Liaodong Peninsula to Japan.

#### 割讓前夕人心惶惶

割讓台灣的消息透過洋行、外國商人的口耳相傳，台灣的住民皆感到震驚譁然。令他們百思不得其解的是，整個戰役的場景發生在中國的北方，但爲何卻要割讓南方的領土。由於清國官方並沒有將割讓的消息正式告知台灣民眾，因此地方上

#### Pervasive Panic Prior to the Cession

As word-of-mouth news of the island's cession spread among the foreign firms and merchants, Taiwan residents were overtaken by surprise and panicked. They were dumbfounded by the seeming absurdity that, while all the battles had been engaged in the north of China, the aftermath was regardless the cession of a southern territory. Since the impending

的仕紳便推派代表向當時的台灣巡撫唐景崧求證，並表達誓死與日本對抗的決心。

唐景崧原本私下準備潛行回大陸，但面對地方仕紳的「劫留」，頓時感到騎虎難下，乃將此地的情勢電告清廷，謀求對策。當時的南洋大臣張之洞便以幾個原則提示唐景崧，強調台灣的反抗無論是自立救助、或是結以外援，都必須在與清國無關的前提下，以台灣「自保」的名義、或民眾「意願、從違」的形式，從事抗爭活動。

relinquishment was not formally made public to the residents of Taiwan, representatives of the local gentry had to seek for its confirmation from Tang Jingsong, then the governor-general of Taiwan. At the same time, they expressed their resolution to fight against Japan to the bitter end.

Tang had planned to sneak back to the mainland on the sly, but pretty soon he found himself in a tight spot as he was “abducted and detained” by the gentry. In the event, he telegraphed to the Qing court a report on local conditions and a request for advice on a proper response. Zhang Chidong, the governor-general at Nanking, replied and ordered Tang to follow several general guidelines. The resistance should be conducted, it was emphasized, without implicating the Qing government. Whether the movement was for self-reliant deliverance or was to solicit outside assistance, it should be attempted only in the name of Taiwan’s “self-protection,” or pursuant to the public’s “willingness to follow or the lack thereof.”

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## 台灣巡撫電告清廷將獨立建國

在與地方仕紳商議之後，唐景崧便電告清廷，報備此處將以「獨立建國」的名義謀求自立。並於該年 5 月 23 日發表「台灣民主國自主宣言」，這個號稱是「東亞第一個民主共和國」的「台灣民主國」就這樣產生。以唐景崧為總統、丘逢甲為副總統兼民兵司令官、俞明震任內務部長、李秉瑞任國防部長、劉永福任南部守備大將、國會議長則推林維源擔任（不過他沒有就任便潛行回大陸去了）。

## Intention for Independence Declared by the Governor-General

After consultation with the local gentry, Tang sent a telegraph to the Qing court, proposing that the territory should try for self-reliance in the manner of an “independent nation.” On May 23, 1895, the “Declaration of the Taiwan Republic Autonomy” was announced, and thus was brought into existence the “Taiwan Republic” -- heralded as the first democratic republic of East Asia. Tang himself assumed the office of its president, with Chiu Fengjia as vice-president and militia commander; Yu Mingzhen as interior minister; Lee Bingrui as defense minister, Liu Yungfu as brigade-general of the south, and Lin Weiyuan as chairman of the parliament (although he slipped back to the mainland before taking the office).

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## 有獨立建國之名，卻無獨立建國之實

從許多的蛛絲馬跡中可以明顯看出，「台灣民主國」基本上雖有獨立建國之名，卻無獨立建國之實。例如民主國的年號被定為「永清」，表示雖然是獨立建國，但仍將「永遠服膺於大清國之下」；又設計「藍地黃虎」旗作為民主國的旗幟，是因為清國使用的是「龍旗」，一則表示不敢冒犯龍威、二則強調民主國與清國之間「龍兄虎弟」的特殊情誼；唐景崧在民主國的總統就職典禮上，讓紳民對他行以「兩跪六叩」的封建朝儀，以有別於對清國皇帝的「三跪九叩」禮。這一切在在顯示出，一群毫無民主概念的人，試圖以「民主獨立建國」的名義，作為阻止日本接收、統治此地的手段。不過即使如此，站在清廷立場上，基於各種理由，對於台灣的「獨立建國」卻不能釋懷，而其中最重要的因素則是深恐台灣的抗拒會因而得罪日本，導致中日之間再度開戰，屆時可能會得不償失。

## An Independence Nation in Name Only

It was evident from so many straws in the wind that the Taiwan Republic was nothing but a figment of the imagination, however self-styled as an independent nation. The reign title “Yungqing” ( “Forever Qing” ) was used to indicate that, even though an independent nation was declared, it would “forever be a vassal of the Great Qing Empire.” The national flag depicted an amber tiger on blue ground. Use of the dragon flag as the Qing’ s imperial ensign was intended as symbolic tribute to the dragon’ s mightiness. This served to underscore the point that the two nations had a singular amity as “between the senior dragon and the junior tiger.” At his presidential inauguration, Tang made the republic’ s subjects go through the feudalistic court etiquette of “twice kneeling and six times bowing,” as a scaled-down version of the “thrice kneeling and nine times bowing” due to the Qing Emperor. What all this means is that a coterie of people utterly ignorant of democracy were using “democratic independence” as a pretext to thwart Japan’ s annexation and governing of the territory. Be that as it may, the Qing court, looking at the matter from its standpoint, was not unconcerned about the “national independence” of Taiwan, the uppermost reason being the fear of a disgruntled Japan in the event of Taiwan resistance -- especially when this could lead to another Sino-Japanese war in which the Qing was likely to lose even more dearly.

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