

A past to remember
and to reflect upon

Museum of the War of 1895

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The origination of the museum

A history of blood and tears

On August 1, 1894, a war broke out between China's Qing Dynasty and its neighbor, Japan because of their conflicts in Korea. In this war, the Qing Dynasty sent out an estimated 600,000 soldiers while Japan had roughly 240,000 soldiers. The nations began the war and it eventually included engagement on both land by the Yalu River, at the Yellow Sea in the full attention of the world.

The old and outdated armaments plus poorly-trained Qing Dynasty's soldiers, however, rendered its once renowned North Fleet and 35th battalion of the land force inferior to their counterparts.

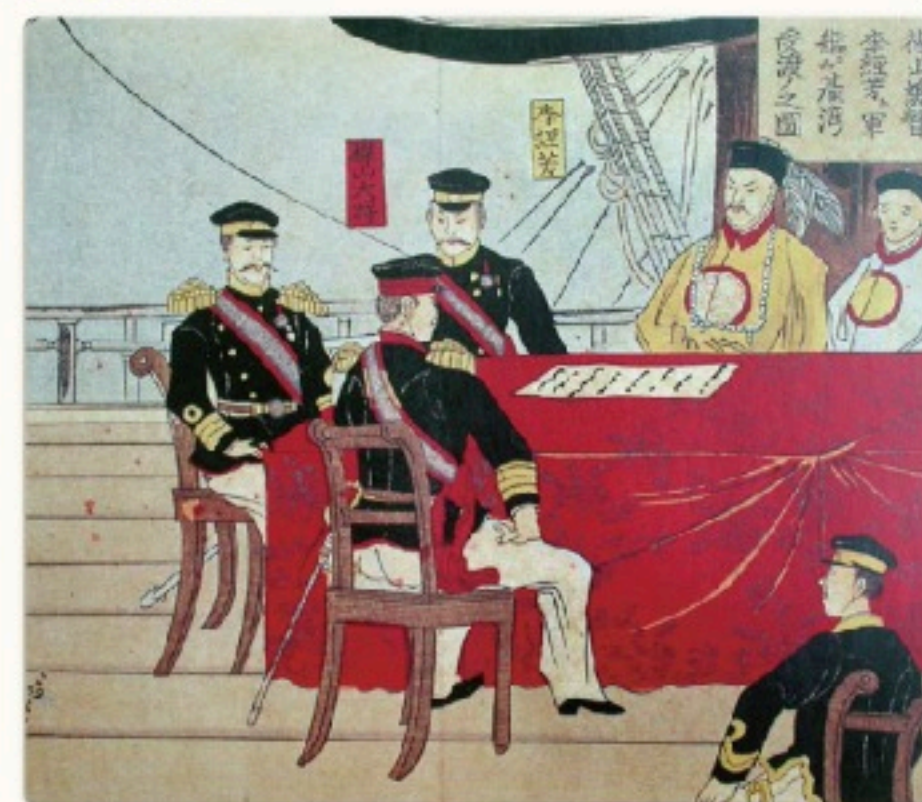


▲ Lee-Hong-Chang



▲ Ito-Hirobumi

Massive casualties were incurred from the beginning. The war is called "The Sino-Japanese War." In the wake of its victory, Japan brought up a treaty with all sorts of unreasonable demands on China. The list included China's reparation of 264,550,000 ounces of silver and an additional 39,682,500 ounces for the redemption of Shandong Peninsula, its opening-up of numerous harbors for trade, its complete withdrawal from the Korea peninsula and recognition of their independence, and its unconditional cession of Taiwan and Penghu. Reluctantly, China sent out Lee Hong-Chang to sign the treaty, "The Treaty of Shimonoseki", with Ito Hirobumi, the then prime minister of Japan. This treaty ascertained Japan's dominance in Asia while China gradually woke up from the deep grief. As for Taiwan, fifty years of colonial oppression and resistance had just begun.



▲ The signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki.

The transition of Taiwan from China to Japan, however, was not smooth. In Taiwan, 3000 kilometers away, Taiwanese were furious when they were informed of The Treaty of Shimonoseki, that China had decided to sacrifice them.

They could not accept the Qing government's reason to sacrifice them being "Taiwan is important, as important as it is, it cannot compare to Beijing, the Capital."

After endless protests and petitions, however, Taiwanese gradually came to terms with their reality and decided to fight for themselves. "Taiwan fundamentally required a unified effort to defend its land; Taiwanese would rather die on their feet than to just hand over Taiwan." From the 29th of May, 1895; determined not to be under colonial rule, Taiwanese, young and old alike, from North to South, gathered themselves to forge a path of resistance. The story has recently been adapted into a movie entitled "Blue Brave: The Legend of Formosa 1895," which received positive feedback.

A bomb shelter becomes a museum

Bagua Mountain played an important role in the history of Taiwan's resistance to Japanese colonial rule in 1895. To help citizens better understand and commemorate this remarkable part of the history, the Changhua County Government has directed the construction of the museum of The War of 1895. The museum occupies a refurbished part of the Bagua Mountain Bomb Shelter, it serves as an educational and sightseeing spot in Changhua County.

The bomb shelter was built after the Nationalist Government retreated to Taiwan to cope with the intense cross-strait relations between China and Taiwan. The construction began in 1951 and reached completion in 1979. During this period, the county had four successive administrations with each of them raising funds towards the construction project. The shelter was built in four phases and has a total capacity of six hundred people. It was used as a command center for civil defense against air raids.



▲ Fuel reserves stored at the air raid shelter.

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▲ The signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki