

## **“Notoriety of the Forestry Bureau Blanketing the Island”: Forestry in Taiwan before and after February 28 Incident**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This essay focuses on forestry in early postwar Taiwan, examining how the February 28 Incident shaped and was shaped by the relationships between society, environment and the state, while unearthing the Incident’s implications in environmental history. In order to maintain a unified and totalized forestry regime favored by the forestry community in Europe and North America, the Forestry Bureau of the Chief Executive Office was inclined to ally with local forestry practitioners. Those who were excluded from this regime grew dissatisfied, and there were criticisms within the Chief Executive Office. The February 28 Incident opened the floodgate for the dissents. During the Incident, not only did “thugs” and “bandits” attack forest officials, “unruly people” also swarmed into national forests for illegal logging and cultivation. Meanwhile, in the Chief Executive Office, there emerged the argument that “the Forestry Bureau had become too large and inflexible, and should be broken down and restructured.” After the establishment of the Taiwan Provincial Government, Governor Dao-Ming Wei entrusted Zhenxu Tang (1911-2003), who received his PhD in Hydraulic Engineering and Transportation Engineering from the Cornell University, with the reconstruction of the forestry industry. Tang’s first step was to draw a clear line between his new forestry regime and the Forestry Bureau. Claiming that the Bureau had been “notorious” for its alliance with Taiwanese forestry practitioners, he thus declared war on them. Until 1960, Taiwan’s forestry was in a dark age characterized by high tension between the state and society, incessant changes in forestry authorities, as well as deforestation and illegal logging.

**Keywords:** Environmental History, February 28 Incident, Forestry, Forestry Bureau