Remembrance as Resistance: 
Social Memory and Social Movement on Indigenous Formosa

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ABSTRACT:

Sixty years after the conclusion of World War II, memories of the Japanese occupation of Taiwan remain a part of social and political life in the country. In the weeks leading up to the 2005 county and township elections, for example, the KMT headquarters in Taipei were adorned with an enormous image of Mona Ludaw, the aboriginal hero who had led a rebellion against the Japanese in 1930. The use of this particular image has historical precedents in KMT historical narrative of that rebellion illustrating resistance against Taiwan’s colonial overlords on behalf of the Republic of China. The electoral image, meant to appeal to the party’s hard-core Mainlander supporters, uses social memory of anti-Japanese rebellion to reinforce its image as the carrier of Chinese nationalism. In this discourse, the DPP and its supporters end up looking sympathetic to Japan and nostalgic for colonial rule.

But what of the memories of Taiwan’s aboriginal people, the families and communities of Mona Ludaw? How are images and perspectives of the Japanese period evoked in personal and social memories in their communities? This paper, based on anthropological field research and interviews with villagers of the Truku people (Mona Ludaw’s tribe), shows how aboriginal memories of the period both differ from and articulate with the social memories of Mainlanders and Native Taiwanese. Although the Truku remain close to Mainlanders and tend to support the KMT, they have very distinctive ways of understanding the former Japanese presence in their lives and the violent struggles they once engaged in against that regime. The enactment of those memories, moreover, may contribute to social movements that transcend blue and green political divisions.
Sixty years after the conclusion of World War II, memories of the Japanese occupation of Taiwan remain a part of social and political life in the country. In the weeks leading up to the 2005 county and township elections, for example, the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) headquarters in Taipei were adorned with an enormous image of Mona Ludaw, the aboriginal hero who had led a rebellion against the Japanese in 1930. The use of this particular image has historical precedents in KMT historical narrative of that rebellion illustrating resistance against Taiwan’s colonial overlords on behalf of the Republic of China. The electoral image, meant to appeal to the party’s hard-core Mainlander supporters, uses social memory of anti-Japanese rebellion to reinforce its image as the carrier of Chinese nationalism. In this discourse, Mona Ludaw becomes a symbol of the Republic of China, ironically in spite of the fact that he was never a citizen of that country. The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), other pan-green parties and their supporters end up looking sympathetic to Japan and nostalgic for colonial rule, especially since their largely Native Taiwanese supporters are perceived as having collaborated with Japan.  

In recent years, competing political forces in Taiwan have incorporated the relationship between Taiwan’s indigenous peoples and colonial Japan into their historical and political discourse. In April 2005, for example, Taiwan Solidarity Union Chairman Shu Chin-chiang paid a visit to the Yasukuni Shrine in Japan, where some 28,000 Taiwanese, including approximately 10,000 aboriginal men, are commemorated for their service to the Japanese Imperial Army during the Pacific War. Shu was greeted upon his return to Taipei by pan-blue independent legislator May Chin and a group of protesters who pelted him with eggs at the airport.

Two days later, a coalition of veterans who had served in the Japanese military protested outside of Taiwan's legislature in favor of Shu's visit to the Shrine and against

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1 Throughout this paper, the word “aboriginal” refers to individuals, whereas the term “indigenous” refers to collectivities of the earliest inhabitants of Taiwan. This follows the legal distinction between aboriginal (yuanzhumin, 原住民) and indigenous (yuanzhu minzu, 原住民族) in international legal discourse.

2 The pan-blue parties are the Chinese Nationalist Party, the Peoples First Party and the Chinese New Party. They support the eventual reunification of Taiwan with China, albeit under the conditions that China first democratizes. The pan-green parties are the Democratic Progressive Party and the Taiwan Solidarity Union. They support some kind of independence from China and emphasize local identity.
May Chin's actions. Chen Chun-chin, president of the Association for the Bereaved of Taiwanese Serving as Japanese Soldiers, defended Shu and others of his generation who regularly visit the Yasukuni Shrine to pay respect to their former colleagues and relatives. He said that the KMT has consistently neglected former Japanese soldiers, as they failed to bring many survivors back from Japan after the war and subsequently failed to seek compensation from Japan on their behalf. The TSU thus promised to seek compensation for the veterans and build a Shinto Shrine in Taiwan for the memory of those who died in the war. Only two months later, May Chin led a protest of approximately 50 aboriginal people to protest at the Yasukuni Shrine and demand that the aboriginal memorials be "returned" to Taiwan (Simon 2006a).³

But what of the memories of Taiwan’s aboriginal people, the families and communities of Mona Ludaw? How are images and perspectives of the Japanese period evoked in personal and social memories in their communities? To what political purpose are those memories evoked in their communities? This paper, based on anthropological field research and interviews with villagers of the Truku people (Mona Ludaw’s tribe), shows how aboriginal memories of the period both differ from and articulate with the social memories of Mainlanders and Native Taiwanese. Different families within the same village also have different experiences and memories of the Japanese period. Although the Truku remain close to Mainlanders and tend to support the KMT, they have very distinctive ways of understanding the former Japanese presence in their lives and the violent struggles they once engaged in against that regime. The memories of that period still shape their lives, their political actions, and the possibilities of resistance.⁴

Anthropologists and scholars in related disciplines have long explored the imagined dimensions of national communities (e.g. Anderson 1991), as well as the relationships between memory, power and place (e.g. Feld and Basso 1996, Gupta and Ferguson 1997, Lefebvre 1991 [1974], Pred 1990). Halbwachs (1980 [1950]), Lefebvre (1991 [1974]) and those who follow in a similar analytical framework show how

³ Contrary to what many people in Taiwan have come to believe, there are neither bodily remains nor spirit tablets at the Yasukuni Shrine. There is merely a list of the war dead. In other sections of the shrine, there are also memorials for others who died during the war, including members of the enemy Allied forces.

⁴ A note of caution is warranted here. This is not historical research, but rather anthropological research on memory. Memory is selective, faulty and often historically incorrect. This paper is less interested in historical detail and accuracy than in how memories and stories of the past are used by individuals and mobilized in collective political discourse.
collective social memory is a claim to space. The study of social memory is thus a way of understanding political struggles over space. This is especially important in the study of Taiwan, where Austronesian tribes have appropriated a discourse of indigenism (Niezen 2003), and where indigeneity is a contested symbol in larger debates about the future of Taiwan. For all indigenous peoples, the state is a foreign intrusion (Bodley 1999, Maybury-Lewis 2002). Since Japan was the first state to extend its reach into Truku territory, those memories are especially potent and reveal much about different visions for a future relationship with subsequent states.

**The Field Site**

This paper is based on research with the Taroko tribe. The Taroko tribe, with a population of approximately 26,000 people in three Hualien townships and Ren’ai Township of Nantou, is Taiwan’s newest tribe. It was recognized as a tribe only in January 2005, when the three subgroups of Truku, Tkedaya and Teuda became independent from the Atayal tribe. Even the name of the tribe, however, is not uncontested. Some members of the tribe argue that for historical reasons it would be more appropriate to use the name Sediq. This paper uses the ethnonym Taroko to indicate the tribal name that has been legally recognized by the Executive Yuan Indigenous Peoples Council; yet adds the word Sediq because the term is contested. It also refers primarily to the “Truku people” (rather than tribe) because these are the people with whom the research was conducted. This paper thus reflects the current political situation in Taiwan. The latter term of Truku people is also closer to the way in which they describe themselves in local language, as *sediq truku*, as opposed to *sediq dewan, sediq Nippon*, etc. As will be shown below, however, the struggle over naming is not yet over and there might be an officially recognized Sediq tribe in the future. This conflict is a political struggle just like that between May Chin and the pan-green parties. This struggle also has its roots in the Japanese period and the way in which those memories are translated into social memory.

The first stage of this research, a three-village project, is currently being conducted in the village of Bsngan, where the Truku are in the absolute majority. As the native place name for the village comes from an old Truku place name for the area. The

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5 In the next two years, further research will be conducted in two other communities.
linguistic root of the name is bais, which means “a couple or pair.” As one man told me, “This was the place where we had to come down from the mountains in pairs, because we might encounter flatlanders.” This village of approximately 2224 people is important to contemporary land struggles because of its location pinched in between the Asia Cement mining area and the Taroko National Park. The main residential area located at the mouth of the Taroko gorge, moreover, was also important as the site of violent resistance against the Japanese. After the tribe was subdued, Bsngan was also a trading post where aborigines could sell hides to Japanese and Han in exchange for such items as alcohol, matches, and salt. Like most communities in Taiwan, the village is dotted with Japanese-era construction. In Bsngan, those architectural reminders include a Japanese-era power plant, a campus of abandoned workers’ dormitories, a few homes, and the former nursing station.

The degree to which the Truku accepted Japanese lifeways is astonishing. Japanese language can still be heard everyday in Bsngan, not just in the conversations of the elderly, but also in songs crooned in road-side karaoke stalls and in everyday conversation. Even young people use “arigatoo” to say thank you, some shopkeepers are in the habit of calculating money in Japanese, and the local language is interspersed with Japanese words. Church sermons, for example, are delivered in Truku peppered with Japanese words in both the Presbyterian and True Jesus churches. These are not just foreign church-related terms like kyokai (church), and kamisama (gods), but also such words as jikan (time), ishoo ni (together), and tokubetsu (especially). The use of Japanese time measurements, including the days of the week and even usages such as nansai da to ask a person’s age or nanji da to inquire about the time, all reveal how modern usages of time were introduced by the Japanese. The young as well as the old incorporate Japanese into daily conversation.

A Love and Hate Relationship

Like the Native Taiwanese, the Truku have what can be described as a love and hate relationship with the Japanese. There are, however, important differences. At

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6 Flatlanders, or pingdiren (平地人), is the Mandarin term used to refer to the Native Taiwanese, or Hoklo people of Taiwan. They are called sediq dewan in the Truku language.

7 For an historian’s perspective on these interactions, see Barclay 2003.

8 The village has one Catholic church, one True Jesus church, and three Presbyterian churches. I attended services in the True Jesus Church and two of the three Presbyterian churches.

9 See Huang 2004 about the introduction of Japanese time concepts into the Amis tribe of Taiwan.
the end of the 19th century, when Japan took over Taiwan, the Han populations of Western Taiwan were already living in an agricultural society and were well acquainted with commerce. Taiwan became a province of China in 1884, with Liu Ming-chuan as its first governor. He began the process of modernization that came to fruition under Japanese administration. For them, the Japanese represented a foreign occupying force, but at least the Han Taiwanese had in common with the new occupiers a familiarity with such institutions as settled agriculture, a written language, and a monetary economy. Those who prospered under Japanese rule would eventually remember the Japanese as the carriers of modernity. Many still remember the Japanese occupation nostalgically, especially compared to the relative disempowerment they encountered with the arrival of the Republic of China after 1945 (Simon 2003).

The hunter-gatherer tribes of eastern Taiwan, however, had a very different relationship with the Japanese. Before the Japanese arrived, the Qing Dynasty had merely labeled the Truku and other unassimilated peoples as “raw barbarians” (shengfan, 生蕃) and had not attempted to administer their territories. It was the Japanese who subdued the indigenous communities, although at great expense. According to John Bodley, 4,341 Japanese and Han Chinese settlers died at the hands of indigenous Formosans between 1896 and 1909 (Bodley 1999: 56). The Japanese brought with them all of the institutions of modernity including the military, police forces, schools, land censuses, extractive industries, and anthropology. In Taroko/Sediq tribal areas, there were three main violent incidents between the Taroko/Sediq and the Japanese: the Hsincheng, Taroko and Wushe Incidents. Once the Taroko/Sediq were subdued, the Japanese moved many of their communities to the plains, forced them to take up settled agriculture, and began incorporating them into the periphery of the capitalist world system (Yan and Yang 2004). Like indigenous peoples everywhere, these changes came as a great shock. It can indeed be said of all aboriginal individuals, and not just soldiers, that “these are conscripts of civilization, not volunteers” (Diamond 1960: vi, cited in Bodley 1999: 23).

Individuals have very different impressions of the Japanese occupation. When asked about his impressions, one day worker whom I shall call Yuji described the Japanese as cruel and violent overlords. He said he has seen photos of them bayoneting...
babies and displaying severed heads on the tips of their bayonets. He said that they made the aborigines into their slaves, forcing them to carry goods and even people up and down the mountains. The only reason they came, he said was to exploit the island’s natural resources, such as the hinoki tree that was used to build many Shinto shrines. If the aboriginal slaves didn’t obey, he claimed, the Japanese overlords would push them off the side of the mountain to their death and their relatives could do nothing but continue to work.

At the same time, however, he said that the Japanese brought “civilization” (wenming) to the Taroko/Sediq, by providing them with education, health and material benefits. Overall, however, the result was negative, because it took the Taroko/Sediq out of the mountains. It is from that moment, he said, that the Taroko/Sediq started to lose their ability to hunt. “We are people of the mountains,” he said, “but if we leave the mountains we lose hunting. If we lose hunting, we will lose the mountains, since they will dig them up (reference to mining), and we will lose the animals, too.”

If he is to thank the Japanese for anything, he said, it would be education. “Mona Ludaw was not stupid,” he said. “He received a Japanese education and they even took him to Japan to study.” In Japan, he discovered that his people had been made into slaves, which is why he came back and led his people in a rebellion. The Japanese used aboriginal people to subdue other aboriginal people, creating divisions within the tribes. “There are four words to describe how we feel about the Japanese,” he said, “We love and hate.”

This story, coming from a non-elite member of the community, is quite revealing. To a certain extent, it reveals the success of the KMT educational system in creating an anti-Japanese rhetoric believed by many people. At the same time, however, Yuji uses this story to criticize the contemporary situation of his tribe. Since the two most contested political issues in his community are mining and prohibitions against hunting in the Taroko National Park, he astutely brings the two issues together and argues that only the maintenance of hunting can protect the mountains from overexploitation. He claims to be talking about the past but, having eaten mountain meat together on several occasions, both of us know that we are talking about the present. By continuing to hunt and defending hunting customs, he and his family

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members are engaged in resistance against the Park and its strict enforcement of the law. These assertions about the importance of hunting to nature are among the “hidden transcripts” of the weak (Scott 1990). As we will see below, however, Yuji is criticizing here more than the National Park.

Elite Memories of the Japanese Occupation

Members of the village elite have different perspectives on the Japanese and tend to cast the colonial period in a more positive light. One man, for example, tells the story of his father. His father was 70 years old when World War II broke out. In spite of his advanced age, he volunteered to join the Japanese Imperial Army and was refused. He petitioned to higher authorities, insisting that he be permitted to fight in the war. Finally, his petition was accepted. He was sent to the South Pacific front and died in battle. His family benefited materially from close cooperation with the Japanese. Having been informed before the others that the Japanese were planning on relocating his village to the plains, they moved to the planned location and cleared land for cultivation. As a result, the family became wealthier than others. One member of the family was later elected as a member of the Taiwan provincial assembly. Another made a career as a township-level elected official, a position that permitted his family to become even wealthier as he facilitated the purchase of land in the community by mining companies.

Another elite family with complex ties to Japan is that of Ukan Mawna, one of the wealthiest men in the village. His home, decorated with photos from the Japanese era, is often the site of dinners and conversation over tea between leading members of the community. Along with the courtyard and exhibition hall of his brother, who has done research on the tribe’s custom of facial tattooing, this is also one of the first places that a visitor to the village will see. Like the entire Taroko/Sediq tribe, the family of Ukan Mawna has had a close relationship with Japan. Their mother, whose biological mother (of the Teuda people) had traveled around the island to make facial tattoos for members of the Atayal tribe, spent most of her childhood in the home of a Japanese policeman. After the Japanese sent her to nursing school, she worked in the clinic in the village. Her children boast that she vaccinated the entire village.\footnote{With her medical training, in fact, she was one of the main agents of Japanese modernity and a key part of the process of displacing traditional Taroko/Sediq healers from their position in society. In the past, each village had healers, who could contact the spirit world and prescribe cures for medical and other...}
Ukan's father had a much more conflictual relationship with the Japanese, especially with the police. One of the earliest aboriginal converts to the True Jesus Church, which was illegal under Japanese occupation, he established the congregation in Bsnan. In the many social gatherings at his home, Ukan Mawna delights in telling the miraculous story of his father. At one point, the Japanese sent a member of the tribe to arrest him, put him on trial, and planned to execute him for his illegal missionary activities. They imprisoned him in a bamboo hut to await execution. On the night before his execution, however, a typhoon struck the island and destroyed his bamboo prison. He managed to escape through the forest and his sentence was later commuted. Ukan concludes his story by saying that his father subsequently received a Japanese education and learned to love the Japanese in the village. “My father never let anyone say a bad word about the Japanese,” he says with every re-telling of the story.

Ukan, a retired policeman, participates regularly in meetings to discuss development plans in the village; and also runs a development NGO that often organizes craft education for unemployed aboriginal women. He is an outspoken proponent of restoring Japanese-era buildings as tourist sites, and has even suggested rebuilding the Shinto Shrine as a tourist site and historical museum. On one of many drives through the countryside in which he pointed out Japanese-built irrigation systems, water towers, power plants and an alcohol distillery, he summed up his perception of Japan’s legacy in the village:

There are no Truku who hate the Japanese. Quite the contrary. They love the Japanese. Why do they love the Japanese? Because of the charity of the Japanese. The Japanese took them from the worst kind of feudalism and brought them civilization. It was the Japanese who brought them roads and electrical power plants.

Ukan speaks Japanese; has traveled to Japan to visit his village’s former teachers, and enjoys spending time with Japanese scholars studying his tribe. Like his father, he has little patience for negative readings of the Japanese period. When I asked him if the Japanese had pushed Taroko/Sediq workers off cliffs, for example, he immediately exclaimed, “Impossible!” He said that the Japanese were always fair to the aboriginal people and in general treated them well. Although they were strict, they...
would mete out punishment only to those who truly deserved it. Disobedient workers would be beaten, he said, but they would never be killed. At this point, I have no way of verifying the historical accuracy of either claim. What is important, however, is that different members of the community have different interpretations of the colonial period their families experienced.

Ukan’s nostalgic memories of the Japanese occupation bear a superficial resemblance to those of the Native Taiwanese elites, who praise the Japanese as a critique of the subsequent regime and sometimes end their stories with the phrase “the dogs left and the pigs came.” Ukan, however, does not criticize the KMT. To the contrary, both Ukan and his wife are staunch supporters of the KMT. As a retired policeman and a retired school teacher, both of them are strongly identified by other community members with strict KMT rule under martial law. Ukan boasts of his close connections with pan-blue politicians such as May Chin and Kong Wen-ji (another pan-blue aboriginal legislator). He even contributes directly to pan-blue discourse on the Japanese period, having made a TV series on the 1930 Wushe Incident from that perspective. In that series, he portrayed the Japanese as cruel overlords who manipulated differences between the Truku, Tkedaya and Teuda to gain control of their territory, even using some groups in military attacks against the others. Ukan, as we shall see below, is skilled at translating his personal memories into social memory. He, however, represents only one competing discourse in the community. There are other approaches.

Social Memory of the Taroko Incident

In the summer of 2005, the Taroko tribe -- under that name -- became the subject of a special exhibit in the basement of the Taroko National Park Visitors Centre. This exhibit, designed by temporary curator Chin Shang-teh (a Han from Tainan and a graduate student at National Donghwa University in Hualien), illustrated the history of the Taroko Incident with photos and artifacts he had collected in Japan. The exhibit showed how the Japanese slowly encircled indigenous villages, even constructing electric fences to restrict their movement, in order to get them to surrender to Japanese forces. In 1910, the Japanese Governor-General Sakuma Samata launched the “Five Year Plan to Subdue the Barbarians.” In May 1914, Japanese troops attacked the people of the Taroko Gorge by coming in simultaneously from Hualien City in the South and Wushe through mountain passes from the West. The Taroko resisted fiercely for 74 days, but were ultimately forced to surrender control of their lands to the Japanese.
The exhibit contained graphic photos of the military expeditions, including the electric fences, Japanese artillery, and Taroko people resisting with simple hunting guns. Many of the photos were taken from memorabilia albums sold in Japan at the time to celebrate the victory. The final panel of the exhibit, a drawing of the sun setting over the mountains, brought the issue of resistance to contemporary Taiwan. The text said that the Taroko came down from the mountains, saw their land occupied by outsiders, and “have not yet been able to return to their ancestral lands.” Putting it into context, museum visitors could recognize that the arrival of the Republic of China and later the establishment of the Taroko National Park were precisely extensions of imperial conquest, the replacement of one colonial overlord with another. This written discourse repeated Taroko nationalist Tera Yudaw’s contention that the Taroko National Park is a form of “environmental colonialism” (Tera 2003: 169).

According to the curator, the exhibit almost never saw the light of day. When the Han park superintendent viewed the exhibit the day before the opening ceremony, she asked the curator to remove the final panel with its oblique reference to the National Park as another colonial power. She said that it risked inciting “ethnic conflict.” The use of this term already reveals her political positioning, as it comes directly from pan-blue discourse. The pan-blue discourse emphasizes "ethnic harmony" and portrays the pan-greens as stirring up ethnic division (especially between Mainlanders and Native Taiwanese) for political gain. The curator, however, refused to comply and threatened to remove the entire exhibit if she removed the plaque without his permission. The superintendent backed down and allowed the exhibit to open with the final panel in place.

In the subsequent months, however, the National Park refrained from advertising the exhibit to the surrounding communities. Instead, the Presbyterian Church, which has close links to both the indigenous social movements (Stainton 1995) and the pan-green parties (Rubinstein 2001), took the lead in inviting their members to visit the exhibit. This move was consistent with other church actions in promoting Taroko identity. The Presbyterian Church, in fact, has become the main institution behind the recognition of the Taroko tribe as distinct from the Atayal, and now the most important lobbyist for the establishment of autonomous indigenous regions in Taiwan. These activities, protests by their opponents, and the ways in which both groups mobilize social memory, reveal the political fault lines within the community. The different memories mobilized by these different actors are local manifestations of pan-blue and pan-green conflicts.
Contesting Taroko

At the end of February 2006, Ukan suddenly telephoned me and asked me to come immediately to his home. A television crew was there making a programme about the debates about the tribal name. Ukan, his younger brother, two school principles, and retired Pastor Watan, one of the oldest pastors in the region, were seated around the table. Although I did not speak, the physical presence of a foreign anthropologist – identified as such in the programme – surely gave them additional credibility in the eyes of many viewers.

They made the argument that the name change from Atayal to Taroko was forced upon them by a small minority faction in the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan and the Executive Yuan Indigenous Peoples Council; and was finally forced upon them by You Hsi-kun, chair of the Executive Yuan. He had done so for political reasons, they argued, saying that he hoped to gain DPP voters in both the legislative and county elections. Although they acknowledged that the Taroko/Sediq are culturally and linguistically different from the Atayal, they said that the correct name should be Sediq, since that is the word for “people” in their language. They said that the name change was made too quickly, without appropriate consultation with the members of the tribe.

They argued that the name Taroko creates ethnic conflict. Using a linguistic variant of the word “Truku” is unfair to the Tkedaya and Teuda people, they claimed, since it elevates the name of one of the groups to the name of all of them – and it is the group that the Japanese had used to oppress the Tkedaya after the Wushe Incident. The name change is thus the equivalent of the troublesome brother suddenly claiming to be the father, an act which is disrespectful of the ancestors. They said that “Truku” is just a place name, meaning “steps” or “platforms” in the mountains and is thus not appropriate as the name of a tribe. One of the school principles said that he refuses to change his legal status, that he will use Atayal until they can have an independent Sediq tribe. Overall, they made it appear as if the proponents of the Taroko tribe were being used by the DPP, had made the change for political reasons, and had done so without paying appropriate attention to historical and ethnographic accuracy. They presented themselves as being the voice of reason and their opponents as instigators of ethnic conflict.

As the programme was being filmed, I reflected upon the political factions within the community. I knew that Tera Yudaw and the Presbyterian Church supported
the Taroko name rectification movement and hoped that the momentum created by that social movement would allow them to make the Taroko into Taiwan’s first autonomous indigenous tribe. I also knew that these individuals were sympathetic to the DPP, which has the stated goal of establishing indigenous autonomy as part of its strategy of distancing Taiwan from China (Simon 2006b). I also knew that Ukan is an active member of the KMT; and critical of the DPP supporters in his community.

At the conclusion of the programme, one of the school principles asked my opinion on the tribal name. I asked if those who oppose the name Taroko also oppose the plans to establish Taroko autonomy. He reacted strongly, saying that indigenous autonomy is impossible in Taiwan. He said that Taiwan is different from Canada. In Canada, he said, the different ethnic groups live in different areas so it is possible to have autonomous regions. He said that Taiwan is different than Canada because people of different ethnic groups live together and seek harmony rather than separation. He thus placed himself into a larger discourse in which the pan-blue parties stress ethnic harmony and economic development; whereas the pan-green parties emphasize indigenous rights and autonomy (Simon 2004). Whether they intend to do so or not, if they split up the community into supporters of Taroko and Sediq, the tribe will lose the unity needed to make the politically difficult claim for tribal autonomy. Large numbers of Sediq people, in addition to the minority of Han, Bunun, Amis and others who already live in the territory that would be a Taroko Autonomous Region, would make Taroko autonomy even more difficult to reach than it is under current conditions.

When I talked to Tera Yudaw and other Taroko supporters later, they dismissed the claims of Ukan, Pastor Watan and the others, saying that they are the former beneficiaries of the old regime and angry about the fact that political change in Taiwan has left them behind. They had a particular disdain for Pastor Watan. During the Japanese occupation, the Japanese distrusted Christians as potential American spies and thus oppressed their congregations. At the time, they said, Watan worked for the Japanese and oppressed the churches. In fact, I had already known this for a long time. The first time that I visited him in his home, Ukan explained that to me that he was the policeman who had arrested Ukan’s father in preparation for execution. After the Japanese left, he converted to Christianity and became a pastor. The “tensions of empire” (Cooper and Stoler 1989), however, eventually made them allies. Ukan’s father and later Ukan himself allied themselves with the same Japanese state forces that Watan
had earlier accepted. Their pattern of collaboration with an external regime continued with the arrival of the Republic of China in their community.

Concluding Observations

Although it is still early to make final conclusions based on this research, a number of important observations can be made about the Japanese period and how memories of that time are mobilized in the Taroko/Sediq tribe. These observations are probably true of other villages and tribes in Taiwan, and at any rate can contribute to a better understanding of the anthropology of social memory.

First of all, the Japanese occupation changed Taroko/Sediq life forever. It created new material conditions in which the Taroko/Sediq no longer subsisted on hunting and swidden agriculture. The Japanese forced them into a new lifestyle of settled agriculture, wage labour and commerce. At the same time, the Japanese created a new group of elites who collaborated with the colonial forces. Some took advantage of their close relations with the Japanese to enrich themselves and their families. The most obvious example is the family of the elderly soldier who ended up with good land and wealth that allowed them to maintain political power even after the Japanese left. Those with good positions in the Japanese era could also get the prized positions as police officers and pastors after the Japanese left. The local elite in the Japanese period remained the local elite with the arrival of the Republic of China.

This is the most obvious difference between indigenous and Native Taiwanese communities. Whereas Native Taiwanese experienced the arrival of the ROC as a relative loss of power, there was more continuity in indigenous communities. Although there was some resistance, even at the time of the 2:28 Massacre, the general tendency was for the same aboriginal families to continue to cooperate with new colonial overlords. This continuity was probably easier for both aborigines and the new Mainlander rulers. Unlike the Native Taiwanese, who initially perceived the arrival of the Chinese as liberation by fellow ethnics and were later disappointed, the indigenous peoples saw both Japan and the ROC as outside forces. They were thus psychologically in a better position to accept ROC rule and learn how to deal with the new rulers. For them, the transition was not a failed liberation, but merely a change of one outside force for another. The Mainlanders

12 A similar study in a rural Native Taiwanese community might show that some families continued to collaborate with the new colonial rulers; whereas other who lost benefits gained under the Japanese became part of the resistance.
who took control after 1945 were also less likely to perceive aboriginal local collaboration with the Japanese as a betrayal against their own people. Indirect rule continued as in the past; and the educated indigenous elite was even able to influence the ROC policy in ways beneficial to themselves, including the definition and implementation of laws regarding indigenous reserve lands (Yan and Yang 2004).

With the democratization of Taiwan, there are now two competing discourses for power in all communities. In indigenous communities as well as in the rest of Taiwan, these discourses can be labeled as pan-green and pan-blue. Both of these discourses evoke memories of the Japanese period to mobilize supporters in political struggles of the present. The pan-green forces emphasize Taroko resistance against Japan, a common resistance that formed a Taroko tribal identity and offers hope for eventual autonomy. It overlooks, however, the differences within the Taroko tribe. The pan-blue discourse recalls those differences. Some of its supporters offer Sediq identity as a way of overcoming ethnic discord. This strategy, however, could divide up communities into distinct groups supporting one tribal label over another. Even within the same family, brothers and sisters could end up as members of different tribes. Ukan, for example, has refused to register as Taroko and insists that he is Sediq; his sister identifies as Taroko. This factionalism weakens the possibility that the Taroko/Sediq will become Taiwan’s first autonomous tribe. Unity and discord both have roots in the Japanese period; and can be evoked through social memory to aid the struggles of the present. At the beginning of this paper, I cited the day worker Yuji who said that the Japanese had created divisions within the community. The Republic of China has done the same thing, cultivating indigenous elites and exacerbating factions within the villages.

Considering the way in which state power has extended into indigenous communities for over a century, it is difficult to be optimistic about the possibility of autonomous social movement and real indigenous autonomy in the near future. As Gramsci pointed out, however, hegemony is never total; it is always a process through which different actors strive for primacy in espousing their different conceptions of the world (Crehan 2002: 146). With the lifting of martial law and democratization, actors with views different from the state are no longer violently suppressed. With increased internationalization, moreover, Taiwan’s indigenous peoples now participate in the global indigenous movement in such forums as the UN International Working Group on
Indigenous Peoples. State hegemony over indigenous territory is still strong, but is no longer under the exclusive control of one party.

After only a decade of indigenous activism, some activists are becoming increasing adept at using international discourse on human rights to pressure the ROC state for change. Some young indigenous scholars are even talking about lessons to be learned from other struggles such as Chiapas. The Taroko people may not be the first tribe in Taiwan to establish an autonomous district; and even if they do, the state will surely continue to create divisions among them. Nonetheless, they have learned new strategies of resistance and gained new space in which they can be employed. Even without the emergence of autonomous social movements, there still remains the possibility of new political and social movement.

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