


# Memory, Partial Truth and Reconciliation without Justice: The White Terror Luku Incident in Taiwan

Fang-Long Shih

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## **Memory, Partial Truth and Reconciliation without Justice: The White Terror Luku Incident in Taiwan**

*Fang-Long Shih*  
*London School of Economics*

### **Abstract**

*During 1952-1953 the village of Luku in Taiwan became the focus of a military campaign to uncover and arrest alleged 'communists', with the result that nearly all the adult male population were either executed or given long prison sentences. This paper considers how this 'Luku Incident' has been remembered, using the theoretical perspective of social memory. The paper provides an overview to what happened, and then examines how the incident was forgotten during the martial law period, which lasted until 1987. It then elaborates how the remembering of Luku has been created since then, and how the incident has been remembered in certain ways for specific purposes by different social groups representing different political interests. It is shown that the way the incident has been remembered has been directed more by short-term political calculation than by a regard for truth, justice or reconciliation.*

### **Introduction**

Since September 2004 I have worked with Stephan Feuchtwang (2009a; 2009b) conducting interviews and research on the Luku Incident and the transmission of memories of the event. However, when we began, a number of political activists, documentary film-makers and historians were ahead of us. They had already interviewed the majority of the Luku survivors and there were films, articles, and books about the Luku Incident already in the public domain. I was questioned by one after another of the victims: 'We have been asked about this before, why do you come to ask us about it again?' Moreover, the victims' descendants were extremely reluctant to be interviewed, saying that at the time of the Luku Incident they were either too young to understand it, or had not been born; all they knew about it was what they had learned from their older family members. They suggested to me that if I wanted to know what had actually happened I should interview their seniors, because they were the ones who had experienced it.

The Headmaster of Yongding School (the primary and junior high school in the Luku area) told me that his school did not teach the Luku Incident to students. He explained the school's difficulty, saying that:

Except for a cleaner, who comes from Shiding township (to which Luku belongs), the rest of the staff are all from outside Shiding. We have asked older local people about the Luku Incident, but they were not willing to talk about it. Since our teachers do not know what actually happened at Luku, and given the complexity of the incident, about which there are a variety of different and even contradictory understandings, we decided not to mention it in the classroom.

As well as this, a young man in his late twenties, whose two uncles had been imprisoned respectively for eight and twelve years, said to me that 'maybe it is not necessary to remember the Luku Incident, to include it in textbooks, or for it to be taught in schools, because to recall it can bring conflict into society. The incident is past, and the grief suffered will be gone sooner or later.'

### **My Approach to the Luku Incident**

Stephan and I began our research on the Luku Incident at the end of a brief period during which the Incident had been recognized publicly. I asked myself how I could write something that would be different from the previous representations of the incident in secret files (now made public), government statements, documentary films, and in activist and scholarly articles and books. These sources claim either to disclose what really happened or to re-construct the historical 'facts' of the incident, but such documents can only be a representation. Representation resides in a relationship between something that stands for, or is associated with, something else. Particular representations of the Luku Incident may serve only as 'partial truth', but they contribute towards the construction of 'social memory', which is my particular concern in this essay. The ways in which the 'social memory' of Luku is fostered will affect how the incident is judged from the perspective of justice.

The notion of social memory entered anthropological discourse through Maurice Halbwachs' emphasis (1925 [1975]) on the social basis of memory and his idea of 'collective memory'. According to Halbwachs, as elaborated by Assmann (2006):

Memory is a social phenomenon. It grows into us from outside. Its neural foundation can be thought of as memory's 'hardware'...But, its contents and the use we make of it are determined by our intercourse with others, by language, action, communication, and by our emotional ties to the configurations of our social existence...In the act of remembering we do not just descend into the depths of our own most intimate inner life, but we introduce an order and a structure into that internal life that are socially conditioned and that link us to the social world. (Assmann 2006: 1-2)

As such, memory is both individual and collective. Halbwachs argues that collective memory is a common store of knowledge that is preserved by a social group, particularly groups bound by kinship, religious and class affiliations, from which individuals are able to acquire, to localize and to recall their memories. That is to say, what we recall or what is evoked in us exists in a relationship with the wider material life of the society to which we either belong or have belonged, and is expressed in connection to places, dates, persons, phrases, objects, images

and so on. For Halbwachs, it is not because thoughts are similar or contiguous in time that we can recollect them, but rather because recollection, either of the recent or the distant past,

forms part of a whole ensemble of thoughts common to a group, to the groups with which we are in a relationship at present or have been in some connection in the recent past...Groups provide individuals with frameworks within which their memories are localized and memories are localized by a kind of mapping. We situate what we recollect within the mental spaces provided by the group. (Halbwachs in Connerton 1989: 36-37)

Mental space, according to Halbwachs, is always with reference to specific physical spaces or localities that are occupied by particular social groups. Halbwachs also demonstrates how different social groups with different pasts have different memories attached to the different physical and mental spaces of that group.

However, Halbwachs does not explore the social practices through which collective memories might be manufactured and passed on within the same social group from one generation to the next. Paul Connerton addresses this by arguing that, 'images of the past and re-collected knowledge of the past are conveyed and sustained by (more or less ritual) performances' (Connerton 1989: 40), and in particular through commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices. Memory, then, is not merely a matter of individual recall but is social, conveyed by collective performances such as commemorative ceremonies, documentation, the building of memorials, and education.

Connerton tends to understand ceremonies 'as a species of performative' (Connerton 1989: 70), i.e., as rituals, noting that they are often held repetitively at special places at fixed times. He observes that ceremonies/rituals 'do not simply imply continuity with the past by virtue of their high degree of formality and fixity; rather, they have as one of their defining features the explicit claim to be commemorating such a continuity' (Connerton 1989: 48). Clearly, commemorative ceremonies play a significant role in the shaping of communal memory. But, what is being remembered in commemorative ceremonies? Connerton's answer is that 'a community is reminded of its identity as represented by and told in a master narrative... Its master narrative is more than a story told and reflected on; it is a cult enacted' (Connerton 1989: 70). In other words, 'If the ceremonies are to work for their participants, if they are to be persuasive to them, then those participants must be not simply cognitively competent to execute the performance; they must be habituated to those performances. This habituation is to be found...in the bodily substrate of the performance' (Connerton 1989: 71).

Remembering is indeed in order to belong. Jan Assmann argues that 'all culture is a struggle with oblivion' and culture is a 'constant process of making visible and articulating, of presentation and preservation' (Assmann 2006: 81). During this unceasing labour, memory plays a significant role in creating 'markers in the struggle against the furies of disappearance and forgetting, and builds stopping places in the river of change and disintegration' (Assmann 2006: 81). For Assmann, memory consists more of inventions than of innate human characteristics, and he argues that 'inventions could only be passed on to future

generations with the invention of inventions, namely, the invention of memory' (Assmann 2006: 81). By this, Assmann means 'writing, initially in the general sense of a system of notation of the contents of memory, and then in the special sense of the notation of language itself' (Assmann 2006: 81).

To summarize, then: firstly, following Halbwachs, memory is not merely personal or individual, it is social and attaches to specific socially constructed places; secondly, following Connerton, memory is not merely social but is performed and thereby embodied and, thirdly, following Assmann, it is social and materialized literally or fictionally, in language.

In what follows, I will firstly provide the background to what happened at Luku in 1952-1953, drawing on interviews and data from official reports that were formerly secret. I will then examine how the Luku Incident was forgotten during the martial law period in Taiwan, which lasted until 1987. I will finally elaborate how the remembering of Luku has been created since then, and how the incident has been remembered in certain ways for specific purposes by different social groups representing different political interests in the democratic period.

### **What Happened at Luku in 1952-1953?**

The Luku Incident is generally subsumed within the broad term 'the White Terror', but more people were either killed or jailed at Luku than in any other single incident during the White Terror as a whole. The term White Terror was borrowed from the Russian civil war of 1918 to 1921, when the so-called Whites led by former Tsarist officers fought the Bolshevik Red Army. The term has been adopted in Taiwan to describe the counter-revolutionary, or more precisely, anti-communist violence exerted by the right-wing KMT between the 1950s and the 1980s.

The KMT (Kuomintang, also known as the Chinese Nationalist Party) was defeated by the Chinese Communist Party after World War II and gradually retreated from Mainland China to Taiwan during the late 1940s (see Phillips 2007). Here, the KMT made efforts to eliminate communists and their bases from all over the island. Between 29 December 1952 and 3 March 1953, ten thousand KMT soldiers under the command of General Gu Zhengwen surrounded the village of Luku, located in the mountainous area of Shiding on the borders of another three towns/townships: Xizhe, Nangang, and Pingxi. According to the KMT Secret Service (the Bao Mi Ju, later renamed Qing Bao Ju, the Military Intelligence Bureau), there was a 'communist armed base' in Luku. They found a single pistol, 165 home-made bombs, 7 mines, five PRC flags, ten red army armbands, two banners of the Taiwan People's Militia, and 43 maps (Chang and Gao 1998: 19-39), and approximately 183 villagers were arrested. Three quarters of those detained were illiterate, poor, and were employed working long hours in the local coal mines. In total 36 villagers were executed. A further 97 villagers (including 19 teenagers) were sentenced and imprisoned for a total of 871 years.

### **Forgetting Luku**

For the rest of the 1950s, most of Luku's men were gone, either dead or in prison. The only people left were widows, grand-parents, and young children. Soon after, Luku village was renamed Guangming. The village had been given the name

'Luku' during the Qing Qianlong era (1736-1795), indicating three stone-caves there inhabited by wild deer (Shiding Xiang Gungso 2001: 88). However, in July 1953 in a joint village assembly of Shiding Township, the acting village head of Luku, Xie Mingzhao, claimed that 'Luku' was in fact a bad name: *ku* connotes a den of thieves or rebels, and so the name suggested criminality and sedition. He suggested changing it to Guangming (namely Bright Light), after the official name of Luku Caimiao. The majority of the villagers consented: through renaming the village as Guangming, perhaps the village's fortunes could be made brighter. The proposal to rename Luku was later approved by the Taiwan Provincial Government and enacted by the Shiding Township Government. Xie Mingzhao was later appointed as the representative of Shiding Township Assembly. After this, the name 'Luku' disappeared from road signs in the area, but also from government records. The change in name suited the then-ruling KMT government, which wished to eliminate the history of the White Terror from public memory. The KMT strategy disconnected people from their past and thus created a public amnesia in Taiwan in order to solidify its political power and interests and maintain its regime throughout the martial law period.

The Luku survivors were terrified at their connection with the incident. It became a taboo subject. Nobody dared to mention it in public. Trust among the villagers was broken, as they had been forced to implicate one another in their confessions. The Luku residents were already isolated from the outside world and now they were also alienated from each other. Moreover, from the mid-1960s, one after another, the local coal mines were closed down, and households were forced to move elsewhere in search of employment. The mountain paths were soon overgrown by weeds. One villager, Liao Fan-shu, told me that at that time, he had to cut back the weeds from the path to make his way from his home to the fields in order to plant sweet potatoes. It took too much of his energy and time. It was practically impossible for people to live in Luku when there were no decent jobs and no decent roads. Luku/Guangming village was eventually abandoned and gradually forgotten.

The terrifying trauma of the incident itself, the renaming of the village, the lack of jobs and the poor roads, coupled with the fact that at this time Taiwan was in the grip of a violently repressive, militarized state, meant that the Luku Incident was forgotten, in the sense that personal memories of the incident could not be voiced publicly. The records of it ever having happened were hidden in the Secret Service's files and in the private consciences of the victims and the perpetrators. A Luku villager, Li Wen-ming, told me that, 'since my childhood I had been occasionally overhearing my father and village seniors talking about the incident behind closed doors. But, if an outsider was present they would not say anything. There would be no way for them to answer questions asked by strangers about the incident.' The incident was repressed from public memory, but private grief remained unresolved: a widow, Liao Zhengxiu, whose husband had been executed during the Luku terror leaving her with his old mother and six young children, said to me that, 'not talking about the incident publicly does not stop me from remembering it. Every night in bed when it is quiet, I think of it and cry into my pillow.'

## Remembering Luku

Thirty-five years later, in 1987, martial law was lifted. The political transition to democracy followed soon after, and in 1991 official recognition was given to the victims of the 2-28 Incident, a massacre that had occurred in 1947 and which marked the beginning of martial law (see Edmondson 2002). In 2000 the KMT lost power to the main opposition party, the DPP (Democratic Progressive Party, also known as the Taiwanese Nationalist Party), and since then debates about Taiwanese identity have been contested all over Taiwan. Indeed, such debates have formed a critical feature of social and political life in Taiwan over the past decade. Taiwanese people have tried to remember their history in order to make that history their own and to give themselves a sense of historical agency.

From the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s, Pan Qi-hui, serving as the Head of Luku/Guangming village, has been assisting Taipei County government in building thirty to forty roads so that all the houses in Luku/Guangming are now once again accessible. He explained to me that

at the time of the Luku Incident, there were no roads in the village. It was a dead end. No wonder so many villagers did not understand the government and were cheated by outsiders. By building roads, I hope that future generations will have better access to the outside world, a fact that will prevent anything like the Luku terror from happening again.

In the last ten years, Luku people have returned to repair the houses they abandoned. In particular, the old people, including surviving victims, now spend their daytime in their houses in Luku, and take the bus home to Nangang or Xizhe before sunset. As such, the possibility for remembering Luku publicly has been created.

In the mid-1990s, a novelist named Lan Po-chou, who is leftist and pro-unification with China, went to Luku to trace Taiwanese communist footprints. Lan made two documentary films based on his research for a Taiwanese television station, entitled *The Red Base* (1997) and *The Last Battle* (1997), in an attempt to re-construct a communist past in Luku and by implication, in Taiwan as a whole. According to Lan, eight among the twelve adults who were either released without charge or found not guilty after being tried were 'real' communists. Only one was a Luku resident and the other seven were outsiders.

Apart from Liao Fanshu, who was an illiterate coal-miner, Lan only interviewed 'real' communist intellectuals and members of local elites who had escaped execution but had been placed under KMT surveillance for the rest of their lives. Lan focused on a real communist who was a Luku insider, Chen Chun-Ching. Through his interviews with Chen, Lan re-constructed a Luku communist past: sometime after 1947, one after another (in total about ten) communist intellectuals had been brought to Luku by Chen, who helped them to settle in. They intended to establish a base in Luku, and organized reading groups and youth groups. When they ran out money, they were regularly re-supplied from another communist base in southern Taiwan. They cut their own wood and cooked for themselves, while grain and clothing were brought for them from the low-lands.

Lan's documentaries were shot with him and his interviewees on location, conducting a conversation about the activities of Taiwanese communists. He explained that by taking his communist interviewees back to the original sites (such as where the reading groups had been held or where the PRC flags had been erected), he hoped to bring memories back to conscious recall. Also, by presenting his interviews in this way, he hoped to demonstrate that stories of Chinese communists in Taiwan had not been made up, but were based on factual information, real people and real sites. He believed this would counteract criticism from those who want Taiwan to be separate from China (primarily DPP supporters).

In contrast, the pro-DPP historian Chang Yen-hsien saw this as a distortion of the Luku Incident, and in 1997 he and his two research assistants, Gao Shu-yuan and Chen Feng-hua, began to search for those Luku people who were 'non-communists' and therefore 'innocent' of the KMT charges against them. They completed two volumes, entitled *Investigation and Research on the Luku Incident* in 1998 and *The Luku Incident: the Villagers' Frozen Tears* in 2000, which were funded and published by the Taipei County Government when Su Zhen-chang, a senior DDP member, was the County Head.

Chang's two volumes include interviews with seventy victims or their family members: except for Chen Xunyan, who was a communist, sixty-nine were innocent of the charges made against them by the KMT. Chang attempts to reconstruct the life histories of these victims with a focus around the difficult times of the Luku Incident. In the beginning of his post-script to the first volume, he writes that

Investigating the Luku Incident made me think of the poor peasants and miners who lived in cold villages: through blood relationships and traditional social networks they were caught in what was to them an unrecognisable and unpredictable political whirlpool. They had no way to understand the views of the leaders; they became sacrificial offerings. (Chang and Gao 1998: 318)

In his concluding remarks, Chang states that

the rulers arrested and tortured the innocent ruthlessly, interrogating them under duress, making false accusations, and sentencing them, neglecting their fundamental human rights. They were forced into silence for many years. (Chang and Gao 1998: 318-319)

One of many examples of this injustice is the case of a Luku miner, Liao Dejin. In an interview with Chang Yen-hsien in 1997, he testified:

At the time everyone in the village was struggling to eat three meals per day, just wanting to ensure their stomachs were not empty...Although we were in our early twenties, our understanding of the world was at the level of pre-school children because we had no contact with the world outside Luku. For example, in my case until this happened I had been in Taipei city once...They said we had participated in the Communist Party and worked for the Communist Party and intended to overthrow the government. But, was this possible with our low understanding?



What was the KMT? What was the Communist Party? What was the difference between these two parties? We didn't have a clue. Who was a Communist Party member? We could not tell. (Chang and Gao 1998: 90-91)

Liao Dejin described his detainment, interrogation and sentencing as follows:

Many of the villagers were detained, tortured, and interrogated in a small room in a local temple, known as Luku Caimiao. The room was around 5 or 6 square metres. But, there were about 100 men and women crammed into it. So, we each had to squat against the next person's legs... I was detained in this position for almost a month. I was taken for interrogation:

Q: Do you know Liao Musheng?

A: Of course I know him. Liao Musheng is my uncle. We live in the same house. I would be lying if I said I don't know him.

Q: Do you know Chen Qiwan and Chen Tianqi?

A: Of course I know both of them. Chen Qiwan is our village head and Chen Tianqi is his son. They are both headmen in the village. How could I not know them?

When the soldiers asked me these questions, I answered that I knew them and then I was beaten...

Finally, I was sent to the Military Court in Taipei. I was tried by a Judge.

Q: Have you seen any strangers in your village?

A: Yes. But, Judge, is it right that just because I have seen strangers in the village that is evidence of my guilt?... Judge, do you know everyone you meet on the street?

The Judge did not answer my questions but immediately announced that the trial was over. After the trial, I was beaten ruthlessly until I said I did know some of the strangers in my village. (see Chang and Gao 1998: 93-94)

As the result, Chen Qiwan, Chen Tianqi and Liao Musheng were all sentenced to death and Liao Dejin was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment. There are many more similar testimonies like Liao Dejin's in Chang's two books. It is interesting to note that Liao Dejin also provided more or less the same testimony, in interviews with me in 2004 and 2005.

One year after Chang's initial investigation, in December 1998, the Legislative Yuan passed the Regulations regarding Compensation for those wrongly sentenced (either to imprisonment or to death) during the martial law period either for sedition or as communist spies. This was soon followed by the establishment of the Compensation Fund Corporation, which is a statutory body under the administration of the Executive Yuan, although not a court, and which has dealt with applications for compensation since April 1999. The compensation amounts range from NT\$ 100,000 for one month's imprisonment, up to NT\$ 6,000,000 for execution. In the case of the Luku Incident, most of the victims were sentenced to eight, ten, or twelve years' imprisonment or to death, and typical compensation

payments were in the range of NT\$ 3,600,000, NT\$ 4,200,000, NT\$ 4,600,000, or NT\$ 6,000,000. Indeed, Chang's two volumes have served as kind of endorsement for those Luku people who were wrongly sentenced and thus are entitled to be granted compensation money.

On 29 December 2000, the 48th anniversary of the Luku Incident and soon after Chang's second volume was published, the Luku memorial (Fig. 1) was established and formally opened by the Taipei County Government under the DPP administration. The Luku memorial, located down a hill at the intersection of Xizhe, Shiding and Nangang, is a sharp but twisted blade made of shining stainless steel. It represents the public recall of the KMT military dictatorship and the torture and murder of civilians, but the simultaneous erosion of the Taiwanese communist past. In my interview with Li Wen-ming, who since childhood has been eavesdropping on adults talking about the Luku Incident behind closed doors, I asked him what he thought of the memorial. He said, 'I feel so glad at seeing it! The memorial is itself a licence, a licence which permits us to speak out loud about the Luku past that was held deep inside our minds for years.'



Fig. 1: The Luku Memorial (photograph © Fang-Long Shih)

As I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the local Yongding School did not teach students about the incident in the classroom. However, I was informed by the Headmaster, Guo Zhengxiong, that the school held a trip 'Walking toward the Future of Guangming' on 17 February 2004. All of the students visited the ruined building of what was once a branch of their school in Luku/Guangming as a way of understanding the history, and development of their school. On the way, they stopped at the Luku memorial, where the teachers used the text on the memorial to introduce the local Incident to students. This text contains only about 300 words, providing the date, the place, and the number of the innocent Luku civilians tortured and murdered by the KMT military dictatorship.

By the end of 2003, 7084 applications for compensation during the White Terror had been received by the Compensation Fund Corporation. Among them, 1052 were rejected as fraudulent and a further 57 were refused. If anyone making a claim is found to have actually been a communist, he/she is excluded from compensation. Indeed, even after the lifting of martial law, the fear of 'communists' is still vivid in Taiwan. In my interview with a Luku man Li Wen-ming in 2005, when he heard the word 'communist', goose bumps instantly appeared on his arms.

### **End of the Recognition of Luku**

The victims have got their compensation, the memorial has been erected, and the 300 word text now serves as a source for recalling the Luku Incident. However, the recognition of the Luku incident seems to be at an end, and sooner or later the remembering of Luku will be impossible. After the incident during the KMT regime, the original village name Luku was replaced with the name Guangming. Again, since the recognition of the incident during the DPP administration, the original road name Luku Road has now been renamed Xiding Road. Those who lived through the incident are old and will soon have passed away, and their second and third generations are generally unwilling to talk about what happened. Moreover, references to it in school books and Taiwanese history books and documentary films are few and far between. Apart from the stainless steel memorial and its text, any and all references to Luku are slowly but surely disappearing. This corresponds to the attitude of the newly elected KMT government: 'In order to create a harmonious society, we all should forget the sad past and look forward to a prosperous future!'

However, have the ways in which the 'social memory' of Luku was fostered during the period of public recognition affected the ways that the incident is judged from the perspective of justice? Almost every time after my interviews with the widow Liao Zhengxiu, who has received NT\$ 6,000,000 for the unjust execution of her husband, she asked me: who do I think should be responsible for her husband's death?

During my conversation with Chen Feng-hua, who worked with Chang Yen-hsien on the second volume, she said to me:

On reviewing the Luku Incident, the [DPP] government was only concerned with granting victims compensation money, but was unwilling to get those guilty sentenced. None of those responsible were arrested. This is like giving someone, who is going through a spell of bad luck, money. This sounds more like charity than compensation.

During my interview with Chen Jiu-xiong, who was one of the 19 teenagers wrongly held under house arrest for seven years without trial, he told me that he and the other 18 Luku boys and girls were arrested by General Gu Zhengwen and kept in his houses; the girls were used as his private house-keepers, cooking, doing laundry, feeding chickens and ducks etc. while the boys provided him with various forms of free labour, such as carrying, carpentry, driving, mastering dogs etc. Jiu-xiong indicates that in order to claim compensation money, they had to maintain a good relationship with General Gu, because they needed him to give

evidence of their service during their period of house arrest. He then emphasized that according to the Buddhist teaching of Karma (cause-effect), 'Good deed results in good karma and bad deed results in bad karma,' General Gu in his old age suffered loneliness and infirmity and nobody cared for him.

In my interview with Liao Fan-shu, who was illiterate and wrongly sentenced for eight years, he told me that he was set up by a Luku resident named Zhou Xi-yuan. A few days before the Luku Incident, Liao was resting at home as his leg had been injured during a coal mining accident. One night his neighbour Zhou Xi-yuan came to his house, saying that his uncle was looking for someone to cultivate his farm. Liao replied with his consent. The next day, Zhou brought a sheet of paper, asking him to sign it explaining that it was the contract. So, Liao did as Zhou requested. Liao went on to say that he was then arrested, taken to the Luku temple, and later sent to the military court for trial. Zhou Xi-yuan was called as a witness, and used the paper as evidence that Liao had agreed to join in the communist organization. Liao could not defend himself and was imprisoned for eight years. Liao told me that although Zhou Xi-yuan had a comfortable life as a KMT cadre he died suddenly in a car accident while still young. It was believed that Zhou Xi-yuan was haunted by ghosts seeking for revenge and justice.

### **Partial Truth and Reconciliation without Justice**

It has been difficult, if not impossible, to construct a shared or agreed memory about the Luku incident in Taiwan, divided as it is into blue and green camps. How might the remembering of the Luku Incident bring conflict to Taiwan? I suggest that it is not the remembering of the Luku Incident itself which may cause conflict in Taiwan but the ways in which the Luku Incident has been deliberately forgotten and then deliberately remembered in a certain way.

The memory of the Luku Incident has been sustained and transmitted during the DPP administration through social practices, such as documentation, writing, memorials, compensation, and such like, and highly charged and personal memories of violence and terror have been transformed into monuments and bureaucratic procedures, though those memories are periodically resurrected out of anonymity by DPP Taiwanese nationalists as examples of shared sufferings, shared fraternal ties and shared interests (see Whitehouse 2000: 21-23), indeed, as markers of community. If the DPP has given the victims of Luku recognition, it is recognition within limits: public monuments and money (so long as you were not a communist — in which case arbitrary arrest, detention, torture and death appears justified), but no apology from the KMT generals who ordered it, and no trials for those who manipulated the delicate Cold-War situation to torture and murder civilians in the name of anti-communism.

In Taiwan, truth, justice and reconciliation come second to short-term political calculation. I wonder if this is attributable to Confucian hierarchical values, namely, that the senior never to the junior. However, this does not mean the junior does not demand justice.

There is no single truth or a right way of memorializing the Luku Incident. Truth is multi-layered. However, Lan's and Chang's representations of the Luku Incident

can be understood only as 'partial truth', the most meaningful memory from their perspective. Social memory is a complex process that depends on stability and openness. Memories of the Luku Incident cannot avoid confusion, dis-continuity, and ambivalence. We should create possibilities for remembering the Luku Incident free from political distortion. Remembering the Luku Incident might be one way to guarantee peaceful co-existence for all the social groups with different political agendas in Taiwan. As a Taiwanese researcher but as a Luku outsider, I want to remember the Luku White Terror in order to foster a sense of belonging to Taiwan and to face a shared past of violence, terror and uncertainty. The transition to democracy in Taiwan has little meaning without the recognition of the place of horror we have come from.

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*Address for correspondence: Dr Fang-Long Shih, Taiwan Research Programme, Asia, Asia Research Centre, London School of Economics, Houghton Street London, WC2A 2AE, UK*