

# A cave in Taiwan

## Comfort women's memories and the local identity

*Chou Ching-Yuan*

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In the early 1990s, the history of the Taiwan comfort women surfaced. With the help of women's rights activists and many civil society groups, their ordeals were publicised in Taiwan, the memory of each individual being documented by newspaper articles, books and documentary films. The comfort women's ordeals during the war became a part of the public memory of the Japanese colonial era in Taiwan. Innocent young women had been deceived and exploited, but their suffering continues into the present. Women's rights activists used the mass media to expose their ordeal and the Taipei Women's Rescue Foundation (TWRP) organised public testimony meetings at the campuses to introduce the stories of comfort women. It was estimated that the TWRP had held about 300 meetings at universities and high schools up to 2007. Many young students said that they felt the pain of the Taiwanese comfort women after hearing their public testimonies. However, their memories were not to go unchallenged in Taiwan. In 2001, a Japanese political cartoonist, Kobayashi Yoshinori, published *On Taiwan*, a series of manga texts in which he voiced the opinion that the Taiwanese comfort women were volunteers. Some 250,000 copies were sold in Japan and, when a Chinese translation was published in Taipei later in 2001, comfort women survivors and their sympathisers organised rallies to have the book banned in Taiwan.

In 2006, 17 women's cultural heritage sites were selected around Taiwan island (see National Cultural Association and Fembooks 2006).<sup>1</sup> Most of those sites emphasise women's attributes and successes in Taiwanese society, except the site at Shuiyuan Village, in the east coast Hualien County, which is about the suffering of aboriginal Taiwanese comfort women at the hands of an imperialist power. This chapter examines the Hualien women's cultural heritage site as a place of pain and shame by outlining the history of Taiwan's aboriginal tribes under Japanese rule and the movement demanding apologies and compensation from Japan for the comfort women in Taiwan. The chapter also considers how best to position and preserve the memories of young aboriginal women's pain in the collective memories of the Japanese colonial era both within and outside the Shuiyuan community.

## Taiwan under Japanese rule

After its defeat in the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, imperial China ceded control of Taiwan to Japan in the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895. At that time, about 45 per cent of Taiwan, mainly in the western and coastal regions, was under Han Chinese control while the regions of the interior and the east were under the control of various aboriginal tribes. The relationship between the two groups was good. From 1895 to 1945, the highest authority in colonial Taiwan was the Office of the Governor-General (OGG) in Taipei. The chief of Home Affairs was the primary executor of the OGG's policies. In Taiwan, Japan concentrated on economic exploitation and its territorial ambitions, with raw materials, rice and sugar being the main export products. The control of Taiwan was mainly through educating people thoroughly in the Japanese language. Throughout the colonial era, this policy never wavered.

The first twenty years of Japanese rule in Taiwan were marked by many acts of armed resistance from both Han Chinese and the aborigines. A quick contingent of military Governor-Generals was sent to Taiwan to suppress the uprisings. The Japanese set up the 'National Language Schools', public primary schools and instructional institutes, all with instruction in Japanese.

In 1919, a system of civil governorship was established and the attention of the colonial authority turned more fully to the economic and political exploitation of China and Southeast Asia. Several corporations were set up backed by the Japanese colonial government, such as the Taiwan Colonial Trade Development Corporation in 1936. To meet the needs of Japanese colonial development, Japan pursued an 'assimilation' policy between 1919 and 1937, under which the Taiwanese were taught to know their duties toward imperial Japan. In the process, many public schools and vocational schools were established.

From 1937 to 1945, the OGG sought to maximise productivity in agriculture, develop industries serving the military, and mobilise natural and human resources for the war effort. To this end, the colonial government sped up the process of Nipponisation (otherwise known as the Kominka Movement). During this period, the colonial authority promoted Shintoism, the 'National Language Family', adoption of Japanese names, and the Japanisation of customs and practices in Taiwan generally. Every child had to attend Japanese school and speak Japanese at home. After the outbreak of the Pacific War, the government encouraged Taiwanese to volunteer for the imperial army. In 1945, a full-scale draft was ordered and school children were also mobilised for the war effort.

The colonial policy was successful. Both Han Chinese and aborigines were securely under the control of the Japanese government. From 1937 to 1945, over 207,000 Taiwanese youths volunteered or were drafted into the Imperial Japanese Army or worked for the various corps in China and Southeast Asia (Qi 2007: 88). It was estimated that approximately 300,000 Taiwanese in total were conscripted while the total number of deaths among Taiwanese soldiers ran to over 30,000 by the end of the war (Pan 1998).

## The aborigines in Eastern Taiwan under Japanese rule

In the late nineteenth century, the plains aborigines, living on the west coast, were almost completely assimilated into Chinese society. The unassimilated aborigines lived mainly in the interior and eastern Taiwan. At the beginning of the Japanese colonial period, Japan adopted a segregation policy which isolated the aborigines in the mountain region, using outposts, modern weapons, a telegraph network and security cordon to confine them. This territory was called the 'Barbarian land'. The tribal people on the Barbarian land were not allowed to interact with Han Chinese.<sup>2</sup> Japan's eventual goal was to control the land and to ensure the labour force. Hence colonial authority's policy toward the tribal people was to assimilate them through suppression and re-education.

The largest aboriginal tribe in Taiwan, the Truka<sup>3</sup>, is located in eastern Taiwan, including Hualien County. It was still a hunter society in the late nineteenth century and it was the last to submit to Japanese rule. At that time most of the Truku lived in the lightly populated mountainous areas of central and eastern Taiwan. From 1896 to 1919, the Truku rebelled several times because of the aggressive Japanese appropriation of tribal land and enforcement of policies directed against tribal customs and practices.<sup>4</sup> In 1907, under the 'Barbarian Children Special Education Program', all tribal children had to learn Japanese in the so-called 'Barbarian Children Schools'. In 1909 a 'Five Year Policy for Managing the Barbarians' was drafted to suppress the aborigines further. Accordingly, police outposts were established in every village and Japanese policemen were put in charge of education, trading, migration and the judicature. Aboriginal children at schools were instructed by policemen to be loyal Japanese subjects. Under this policy, traditional practices were banned, such as headhunting, young women were no longer allowed to tattoo their faces, traditional festivals were shortened and only Shinto shrines were allowed to be erected in the tribal areas.

From 1910 onwards, many Japanese families migrated to Hualien County. The OGG committed huge funds to agricultural migration from Japan to Hualien. The vocational education for tribal youths was concentrated on developing expertise in modern agriculture, poultry and nursing, and helping to increase productivity and supply cheap labourers for Japanese corporations in the surrounding areas. In September 1914, 42 police stations were set up in the Truka tribal homeland. There were about 96 Truku *she*, the smallest tribal unit, living around the Taroko region in 1917 (Xia 2005: 106). The high mountain *she* were gradually forced to relocate closer to the plains. In 1918, many Truku *she* resettled in the area, later named Xiulin Town, located in the northern part of Hualien County.

The largest anti-Japanese uprising in the colonial era was led by the Truku chief, Mona Rudao, in October 1930. Over 300 tribal men assaulted a sports festival held by the Wushe (Musyaji) Elementary School. In the uprising, 134 Japanese nationals and two Taiwanese were killed, and 215 Japanese nationals were injured. Further raids were conducted on police outposts, post offices and Barbarian management offices. In response, the Japanese retaliated with its

modern arsenal. The crackdown on the uprising took about two months and the Truku were forced to resettle elsewhere.

After the Wushe Incident, the colonial government sped up its assimilation policy and lengthened primary education for the aborigines. In 1937, the Japanese colonial authority began a stronger social-political programme to enforce Japanese customs, rituals and identity on the aboriginal youth. Shortly after the outbreak of war in Asia, the Japanese military in Taiwan used the 'Act of Mobilisation for Japan' to mobilise the aboriginal males and females to work for the Japanese military in Taiwan. At the end of 1941, many aboriginal youths, with many drawn from the Truku, volunteered for the Japanese war efforts.<sup>5</sup> Takasago Volunteer Units were sent to China and Southeast Asia as labourers or guerrilla fighters (Qi 2007: 88).

### Japanese military in Hualian, 1937–1945

From 1895 to 1945, Japan had stationed a large number of troops at geographically important locations on a more or less permanent basis. After 1937 Taiwan became a transport station, sending Japanese troops, Taiwanese labourers and supplies to the south. Given Japan's needs for military resources, the colonial government devised a new development scheme for Hualian. In 1938, a new harbour was completed in Hualian by Taiwan Development Company, executing the OGG's economic policies. Hualian became the base for the wartime military industry.

Prior to August 1945, Japanese barracks and camps were concentrated in the areas surrounding Hualian Port. The number of Japanese soldiers around Hualian was approximately 11,000 (Liu 1997: 119–21). From 1938 to 1945, military supply factories were set up by the Japanese Imperial Army. In November 1943, the vocational institutes at Hualian Port were transformed into a weapons factory (Lo (ed.) 1983: 22, 24). In 1944, the Hualian harbour and surrounding areas were constantly raided by the Allied air force. The Japanese military had to send supplies and weapons further into the mountain region to be stored in caves. Therefore, some Japanese troops began to be stationed at several villages in Xiulin Town.

When the Allied forces took over the Japanese military bases at Xiulin Town in 1946, the names of four warehouses, which stored large amounts of food, medical, veterinary supplies and ammunition, were found in the military documents (Liu 1997: 246): Rongshu Warehouse, Banyan Warehouse (Mqmqi in Truku), Tongwenlian Warehouse (Tmuann in Truku) and Sabodang Warehouse (Saboda in Truku).

Using the 'Act of Mobilisation for Japan', local Japanese policemen stationed at these warehouses recruited many young aboriginal females to help with house-keeping around the camps. Japanese abused those young females at the same time. However, it was not until fifty years after the end of World War II that some of the abused women recognised publicly that they had been the victims of Japanese military sexual slavery.

## Asian comfort women activities

The first comfort stations were set up in Shanghai when Japan began its invasion of China following the Manchuria Incident in 1931. To summarise expert research on the subject (see Chu 2004; Su 1999; Yoshimi 1995), the Japanese military set up comfort stations for the following reasons: (1) to stabilise and calm the soldiers, thereby increasing their combat power; (2) to help in maintaining discipline and prevent rapes, hence avoiding international condemnation; (3) to prevent venereal disease; (4) to stop any leak of military secrets; (5) to allow anger to be vented against women from enemy countries; and (6) to relieve soldiers' fear of war and death. It was seen as a military necessity and the comfort women were regarded as strategic assets for the Japanese Army.

In 1937, after Japan had entered into fully fledged war against China, steadily expanding its occupied territories there, the army began to set up comfort stations in different parts of China. The women came from mainly China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. When Japanese troops advanced into Indochina in 1940 and expanded to other Southeast Asian countries, they also set up comfort stations as part of the military deployment. Comfort stations were set up in all the territories occupied by Japan, including Taiwan. The Japanese army kidnapped young females from home and transferred them to comfort stations abroad (never in their home countries). Several Korean women testified that they were transported from Korea to comfort stations at various locations, including Zhanghua (Chung-Hwa) and Xinzhu (Hsinchu) where Japanese troops were stationed (Howard 1995: 88, 95, 143).

In 1991, The Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan<sup>6</sup> received a telephone call via its hotline from Ms Kim Hak-soon, a former comfort woman in Korea. Subsequently, 214 Korean female victims have come forward. In December 1991, Ms Kim and three other Korean women went to Tokyo District Court to file a lawsuit against the Japanese government, demanding a formal apology and compensation. Soon after, in January 1992, Yoshimi Yoshiaki, a history professor who had done a vast amount of research since the late 1970s on Japan's role and responsibility for the Asia-Pacific War, discovered wartime documents in Japanese Self-Defence Agency archives, showing that the Japanese Imperial Army was directly involved in planning and running comfort stations. The findings were published in the *Asahi Shimbun* (Daily News) on 12 January 1992.

In February 1992, Ms Ito Hideko, a former member of Japan's House of Representatives, discovered three telegrams in the library of the Japanese Self-Defence Agency. One, dated 12 March 1942, required shipping permits from the Japanese Imperial Army to allow fifty 'comfort personnel' to transfer to Sarawak, Borneo. These fifty comfort personnel had been conscripted by the Japanese Military Commander in Taiwan at the request of the Southern Region Headquarters. Subsequently, the Southern Region Headquarters indicated that these fifty comfort personnel were overworked and requested an additional twenty personnel. The third telegram also sought travel permits and the request was again granted.

The three telegrams proved beyond doubt that during the war, Taiwanese women were sent to the frontline to serve as sexual slaves for the Japanese Imperial Army. This discovery triggered actions by the comfort women movement in Taiwan. On 20 February 1992, the Taipei Women's Rescue Foundation (TWRF, or Women's Rescue Foundation of Taipei) established a comfort women hotline. Several hundred calls were received and their claims of wartime experiences were investigated by the TWRF in cooperation with scholars, historians and government officials. Fifty-eight women have been conferred with the status of comfort women forcibly drafted by the Japanese military prior to 1945.

The Japanese government could no longer deny the involvement of its military in managing comfort stations. Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa issued an apology to Korean survivors during a trip to South Korea. In 1995 the Japanese government established a private foundation to compensate the victims of Japanese military sexual slavery.

Ms Wang Ching-feng, then director of the TWRF, campaigned with government agencies for an in-depth study of the Taiwan comfort women issue and for the founding of the 'Special Committee for Taiwanese survivors of Japanese sexual slavery'. As a result of the TWRF campaign, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of the Interior, Taipei and Gaoxiong city governments and Taiwanese provincial governments worked with the TWRF to set up a team to represent Japanese military sexual slavery survivors in Taiwan, assisting the victims in demanding an official apology and compensations from the Japanese government. At the same time, the team also raised funds successfully from the Taiwan government to enable the provision of financial and medical support. The media and TWRF kept the comfort women and their stories in the public arena. In addition, Taiwanese comfort women and activists cooperated with survivors and organisations from South Korea, the Philippines and the Netherlands to campaign on the human rights issue internationally.

Based on interviews with Taiwanese survivors, eyewitness reports, memories of Taiwanese soldiers and declassified documents, it was estimated that the number of Taiwanese comfort women is about 2,000 or more (TWRF 1999: 38). The number of Taiwanese comfort women drafted to work overseas peaked after the outbreak of the Asia-Pacific War. From the historical documents, Taiwanese scholars were able to establish that the deceptive ways of recruitment involved high-level Japanese military personnel and colonial officials as well as business figures in Taiwan.<sup>7</sup> Another way of recruiting women in Taiwan was through local brokers who would deceive young girls into believing they were simply going to do chores for restaurants or teahouses in South China or Southeast Asia. After arriving at the designated locations, the girls were forced to provide sexual services to the soldiers and others. From the backgrounds of the 58 known cases, it can be deduced that most of them were from impoverished families with little education or simply illiterate. They usually had to work for a living or had been supporting families from a young age. In wartime Taiwan, jobs were difficult to get. Therefore, the wages promised by the brokers were attractive to them.

The Taiwanese public knew that there had been three types of sexual violence committed by the Japanese army prior to 1945. The first type concerns the systematic establishment of comfort stations in urban areas. Yoshimi (1995) suggests that there were four kinds of comfort stations: military-controlled comfort stations; military-controlled comfort stations with a civilian front; civilian-run comfort stations providing services to the armed forces; and civilian brothels. Women from Korea, Taiwan, Japan and other countries were sent to these kinds of comfort stations.

The second type is mostly found in rural areas where strong anti-Japanese sentiment persisted. Japanese soldiers looted, kidnapped and raped local women by official sanction. The best study is done by the 'Association of Finding the Truth of the Sexual Violence committed by the Japanese Army' which spent many years researching and documenting the Japanese wartime atrocities at Yuxian, Shanxi Province (Institute of Taiwan Japan Studies 2007: 47–9, 122–6). The victims were usually local women.

The third type of sexual violence is a mixture of the two types mentioned above. Japanese soldiers committed mass rapes when on punitive operations, but also used comfort stations regularly in the urban areas.

In the first part of the 1990s, the images of those poor Taiwanese women abused by Japanese soldiers were brought to and stayed at the forefront of public consciousness. When the Taiwanese comfort women denounced the Asian Women's Fund in 1995, the public stood behind them. Novels and books about their sufferings were published and photographers took photos of them. But some wondered why there was not more material to reinforce the images and keep the public interest going. Would more victims come forward in Taiwan? These questions would be answered in 1996.

## **The aboriginal comfort women in Taiwan**

On 7 September 1996, a preliminary meeting for the 'Asia Pacific Post-war International Conference' was held in Hualien City for former Taiwanese soldiers, surviving descendants of the soldiers and nurses in the Hualien region.<sup>8</sup> Several aboriginal women from Shuiyuan Village attended the meeting as family members of the soldiers. Soon after, seven aboriginal women petitioned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government agencies to recognise their status as Taiwanese comfort women.

The investigations were conducted by scholars and the TWRF and their status as comfort women was confirmed in November 1996. The total number of the aboriginal petitioners was 16. Of these, 12 had been determined as genuine after interviews and investigations and 11 decided to seek compensation, the twelfth having denied being a comfort woman. Another petitioner could not be confirmed as a comfort woman; and two petitioners rejected the petition for family reasons (Wang and Chiang 1997).

The 16 petitioners came from the three major aboriginal tribes in Taiwan: one from the Bunun tribe, seven from the Atayal tribe and eight from the Truku tribe



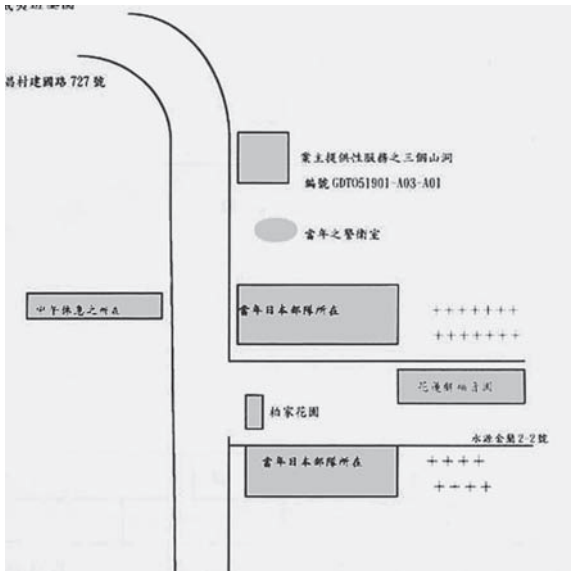


Figure 7.1 Map of Shuiyuan Village (Alang Sakura in Truku language) in 1945 drawn from the memories of the aboriginal comfort women. The grey shaded buildings are (from top): the Japanese military warehouse GDT051901-A03; the police station, the Japanese military camp, and the second military camp. (Source: Chou, TWRF)

(ibid.). The only aboriginal who had been a comfort woman abroad was Li Wen Hung-Shih who gave a public testimony in 1996. She was born in a Bunun *she* in Gaoxiong, South Taiwan. In 1941, she was approached by a Japanese policeman who promised to arrange for her to visit her husband in Hong Kong, where he had been conscripted to work as a guard at an ammunition warehouse. She was abducted while landing at Hong Kong harbour and taken to another barrack to cook and launder during the day and provide sexual services to Japanese soldiers at night. She felt that, 'as a married woman, it was filthy and shameful for her sexual organs to be touched by men other than her husband' (TWRF 2005: 156–7). Ms Li Wen finally told her husband about her past in Hong Kong on his deathbed in 1984.

Of the 12 aboriginal comfort women, only one was victimised outside Taiwan and the remaining petitioners were all victimised in their villages. During the schedule of interviews in various parts of Taiwan, the investigators found out that most of the places where the petitioners had been victimised were Japanese military camps, some of which had since been destroyed, while others were still occupied by the army. The Truku women's victimisation sites were located at three military warehouses at Xiulin Town, Hualien County, and one of the warehouses, a cave at Shuiyuan Village, was almost intact. Without going inside the





Figure 7.2 The cave at Shuiyuan Village, Xiulin Town, Hualian County in 2005. (Source: TWRF volunteer photographer Shen Chun-fan)

cave for nearly fifty years, several Truku petitioners could still tell the investigator the interiors and exact places where they were raped.

### The caves at Xiulin town

Xiulin Town (Alang Bsuring in Truku) is located in a mountain region in the northernmost part of Hualian County. It has abundant forest, water and mineral resources. After 1918, the Japanese colonial government forced most of the Truku tribes to relocate from the central mountain regions to this area. The Barbarian Management Bureaus, police stations and several Barbarian children's schools were set up at this region (Sun 2007: 341). Xiulin comes under the jurisdiction of Hualian County and is the County's largest town. In 2005, there were 4,299 families with total population of 15,099. Most of the local residents are Truku aborigines whose families had been resettled from the Central mountain region during the Japanese colonial period (Sun 2007: 323).

The cave is located at Saboda, the source of the Mei-Lun River and site of a water treatment plant, Shuiyuan Village (Paijiq in Truku), Xiulin Town, Hualian County. It was a warehouse used to store weapons and supplies for the Japanese Army and its military inventory number, GDT051901-A03, is still on the wall. The cave is the only known comfort station remaining in Taiwan. Here the young aboriginal women used to wash clothes for the Japanese soldiers at the brook during the day and were raped by the soldiers every night until the war's end. It was formerly owned by the Defence Department; today it is the property of the Council of Indigenous Peoples.

Table 7.1 Basic information on the eight Hualian aboriginal comfort women.

Name	Place of birth	Place of residence	Education	Status at the time	Age	Conscripted for	Place & time of victim	Family conscripted
Chun-fang	Banyan	Banyan	Elementary school	married/3 children	31	laundry, sewing	Banyan 1945-6	brother
Michiko	Banyan	Banyan	Elementary school	unmarried	17	laundry, sewing	Rongshu 1944-6	brothers
Mei-Yue	Xiulin			married/children	22	laundry, sewing	Rongshu over 1 year	husband
A-Hou	Xiulin			unmarried	19	washing, cleaning	Over 1 year	
Ab02	Mountain	Hong Ye		unmarried	19	washing, cleaning		
Xiu-Lan	Mountain	Hong Ye	Nursing training	married /1 daughter	21	odd jobs		husband
Hsiu-Feng	Taroko mountain	Hong Ye	5 years	unmarried		restaurant	Hong Ye 1944-5	brother
Fanf-mei	Mountain		Elementary school	engaged	13	floor sweeping	Shui Yuan 1945	fiancé

Sources: Data collected by TWRP, unpublished; Wang and Chiang 1997.

The Shuiyuan community was quite surprised by the news at the end of 1996 that the village housed victims of the Japanese sexual slavery during the wartime period. By the 1990s there were several comfort women in the village. The village had grown and residents lived along both sides of the Mei-Lun River. The majority of the comfort women found manual jobs in Hualian City or other urban areas. But there were several theme parks along the river and many families ran bed and breakfast establishments during the tourist season. There were restaurants and a grocery store. Several residents had greenhouse businesses. Catholic and Protestant churches shared the Christian believers in the village and across the river there was a Buddhist medical school. Walking along the village streets, one could hear Japanese, Truku, Fujian dialect and Mandarin Chinese spoken. The Truku comfort women at Shuiyuan spoke Japanese and Truku only.

Of the eight Truku comfort women who had been victimised at three different caves, several characteristics were shared among them. They all came from poor families, for instance, and had had no opportunities to leave their home villages. Some had had family members conscripted as soldiers, while others had been recruited by local Japanese policemen or were conscripted to work odd jobs around the military camps. They were brought to the caves to be abused after having worked at the camps for over three months. Afterwards, they were told to keep silent about what had happened at the caves.

Truku customs required young women to remain pure before their parents arranged suitable spouses. During the interviews or group therapy sessions, the women expressed shame and the feeling of being unclean or dirty; because of this, they were afraid of speaking in the village. Only one out of the eight Truku survivors lived outside the village after the war. They all kept quiet about their fate during the wartime and suffered alone or with their fellow victims. Their villages were isolated from the outside. For all these reasons, they came forward much later than did the Han Chinese comfort women survivors.

## Conclusion

On 17 August 1999, nine former comfort women from Taiwan, including one from Xiulin, filed a lawsuit at the Tokyo District Court, demanding an official apology and compensation from the Japanese government. The suit was turned down in October 2002, the Tokyo Supreme Court rejecting the lawsuit again on 25 February 2005. Since 2005, the TWRF has worked with the National Cultural Association in promoting the deserted cave at Shuiyuan as a historical site for women in Taiwan. The TWRF promoted the historical significance of the site to the public and mobilised college students to visit the site and talk with the remaining local survivors. In addition, the TWRF planned to erect a human rights monument in front the entrance and clear the interior and surrounding areas for future exhibitions. It was hoped that by creating a real historical space to memorialise the comfort women's story, the memories might live longer.



Figure 7.3 The cave in August 2006. (Source: Shen Chia-Ming, one of the university students who attended the comfort women public testimony)

Both organisations petitioned the owners of the cave and surrounding land, the Council of Indigenous Peoples, to have the site released. The TWRF invited aboriginal chiefs, officials, local historians and residents to participate in the project. They faced many difficulties from the community and the outside world. Some residents rejected the idea of the memorial site being in their backyard on the grounds that it would deter economic development. The local leaders and shop owners hoped to develop tourism to relieve unemployment and could not see the benefit of protecting such a difficult historical site. Money had been pouring into the theme parks and businesses. Therefore, when college students from Taipei visited there, they saw local homeless people defacing the exterior of the cave with paint. The space outside was occupied by homeless people and old furniture with graffiti in red Chinese characters: 'Welcome to the Bed and Breakfast'. There was more graffiti on the wall in Chinese characters.

In 2005, 1,147 out of the total 1,315 Shuiyuan residents were Truku (Sun 2007: 323). They had a strong sense of tribal identity and took pride in being the offspring of Mona Rudao, a heroic anti-Japanese fighter.<sup>9</sup> In recent years, Ms Chin May, a legislator of Truku identity, went to Yasukuni Shrine with the Takasago volunteers and descendants to bring the spirits of dead tribal comrades. Through her actions, the Takasago volunteers were painted as the victims of Japanese military might in the public mind (Simon 2006). This image is particularly popular within the local community.

Today, the TWRF is faced with at least three extremely sensitive and difficult questions. The first is how to merge the two different images of Taiwanese comfort women into one. As Jan Assmann (1992) suggests, collective memories persist through monuments, or words spoken in the community. Outside the Shuiyuan community, the difficulty is also how to merge the popular image of a young woman facing unspeakable violence against her in a foreign country and the image of the aboriginal comfort woman, and then bring them together to the site of a deserted cave. Secondly, how can the women's cultural heritage site and the commemoration of the hero, Mona Rudao, be brought together so that a stronger symbolic reminder of the comfort women's suffering is achieved. The TWRF's task is now to merge all the images and memories into one, so that the cave becomes the symbol of all the sufferings in Taiwan's colonial history. The third issue is how to promote the heritage site without the TWRF being seen as an external force manipulating or monopolising the public memories held by the tribal communities. Answers to all three questions will depend on encouraging those for whom the memories are personal to take the lead in determining what happens, when and how.

## Notes

- 1 Two out of the seventeen sites are located in eastern Taiwan, one being the cave at Shuiyuan Village, Huanlian; another is the Puyuma Women's festival (Pinyin: Beinan-zu) in south-eastern Taiwan. Only three sites out of 17, including the two above, are about the history of aborigines in Taiwan.
- 2 A Truku woman, at Xiulin Town, recalled that 'Japanese policemen called me loudly as Truku Barbarian at public ... Policemen prohibited Truku girls marrying Han Chinese' (see Sun 2007: 448).
- 3 The Truku tribe, often romanised as 'Taroko', is also sometimes referred to as Sediq, a subgroup of Atayal. It received recognition as the twelfth aboriginal tribe in Taiwan on 15 January 2004 (Sun 2007: 621).
- 4 For example, the Xincheng incident in 1896, the Weili incident in 1905 and in 1914 the Taroko Incident, where the Japanese colonial authority mobilised 20,000 polices and soldiers to suppress 3,000 Truku warriors. It is described in the *Xiulin Xianzhi* (Lo 2007) as the Taroko-Japan War.
- 5 They were told by the Japanese police that 'fighting for the Japanese Empire is a noble deed, and sacrificing in combat is the highest honour to the Volunteers' families' (Institute of Taiwan Japanese Studies 2007: 47).
- 6 The council was established in 1990 as an organisation for activists and researchers to fight for the rights of former comfort women in South Korea. With survivors and activists, it began the Wednesday Demonstration every week at noon in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul.
- 7 Some documentation proves that the recruitment of the women was partly carried out through a government-sponsored corporation, the 'Taiwan Colonial Trade Corporation'. A document shows that at least three merchants were entrusted with the work of accompanying the recruited females to Hainan Island in the late 1930s (see Chu 2001: 204-9).
- 8 The conference itself was held in Tokyo on 9-10 August 1996, with representatives from over ten countries from Asia and the USA. The Taiwan delegation consisted of soldiers, comfort women and their descendants, nurses and aborigines.
- 9 After two long days of conference in May 2007, Ms Chin May took a group of more than forty Japanese and Korean participants to a tour to visit the Mona Rudao Monument at Wushe and commemorated his struggle against Japanese aggression.



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