Siraya Activism: Siraya’s Political Movement

Presenter: UMA TALAVAN, former Chair of Tainan Pepo Siraya Culture Association
Main motivation: Identity Reclamation

- The Siraya people have not been acknowledged as an official indigenous people in her homeland, Taiwan.
Government’s Logic:

No language = No culture = No identity = No people

(“The Siraya people have all disappeared;” “The Siraya people have all been Han/Chinese-ized”)
Due to the fact that native Siraya lived in the plains of Taiwan,
She is the first one to encounter outsiders and the first one to be colonized.
Consequently her language is silenced, Hculture stepped on and her identity concealed. She’s the longest and deepest to have been victimized.
Siraya Revitalization Movement

- Claiming indigenous identity official recognition
- Rewrite own history
- Cultural restoration
- Language revitalization
- Rebuilding community
Political Involvement

- Street demonstration
- Political lobbying
- Legal lawsuit

1993-2005-2009-2013
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<th>(1) Street demonstration</th>
<th>(1) Political lobbying</th>
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<td><strong>(a) Large-scale street protests:</strong></td>
<td>(2005) The regional Tainan Government officially recognized Siraya as the region’s local indigenous people.</td>
<td>(2009) Siraya sued CIP on the ground that its denial of Siraya’s indigenous status is unconstitutional.</td>
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<td>(May 2, 2009) The Siraya, joined by other unrecognized indigenous groups of Taiwan, hosted a street protest in front of the Presidential House in Taipei. More than 5,000 people participated.</td>
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<td><strong>(b) Sit-in demonstrations:</strong></td>
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<td>(2012) After 4 years and several court hearings, Taiwan Highest Court rejected Siraya’s lawsuit. Siraya remained unrecognized.</td>
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<td>(2013) Siraya now applies directly to CIP for indigenous registration.</td>
<td>(2013) Siraya anticipates/prepares for a new lawsuit against CIP.</td>
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<td><strong>(c) Campaign vehicle:</strong></td>
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<td>(2012 – present) Chien-hiong Ban has been</td>
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- Land Rights
- Educational Rights
- Cultural Rights
- Rights to Political Participation
- Others example: individual rights
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<th>Rights to Political Participation</th>
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<td><strong>The Kauchania Land Case: (2011-2012)</strong> In June, 2011, National Chung Hsing University sued several Siraya households for illegally occupying its educational forest, which is traditional Siraya land robbed from the natives by the ROC government in 1949. After several court appearances and through political lobbying, Siraya finally made the university drop the lawsuit in May, 2012.</td>
<td>(a) <strong>Affirmative Action:</strong> If Siraya was officially recognized as an official language &amp; people, the underprivileged Siraya children could receive extra points in College Entrance Exam if they acquired a Native-language Certificate. (b) <strong>Public education:</strong> The officially recognized indigenous languages are taught in Taiwan’s public schools, under the Mother Tongue Curriculum.</td>
<td>Officially recognized peoples receive (financial and other kinds of) support from central as well as regional governments regularly. Siraya does not.</td>
<td>Indigenous individuals with official status can run for public positions in the indigenous sector. Siraya individuals cannot.</td>
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Again, Siraya is denied of all these rights and/or privileges because the government (and some academics, including linguists) has DECIDEd that the Siraya language is extinct/dead.
Language restoration
From Zero

Group research team and associate with academia
Write & publish
Onini & Siraya Song

Cultural & creative industry
Proclaim & state
Teching Musuhapa

Tribe → International
Siraya University

The Siraya language demonstration family and Language Village

The Siraya Language Center
Siraya’s work

GOV policy

Break the mainstream, across mainstream
Silence, more than a century of long silences...

then she wakes and rises up to find her name and identity.

She’s looking for her mother ancestor’s language.

While adult and children join hands together, they begin to sing Siraya song, speak Siraya words like infants.

They start to have new breath and new story.

The story that starts with the question,

“who am I?”