

THE EPIC LIFE OF TAIWANESE-JAPANESE SOLDIER KAN SHIGEMATSU (1925-2000)

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By

Han-Ling Wu

Thesis Committee:

Shan J. Brown, Chairperson

C. Harrison Kim

Yuma Totani

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all the honorable Taiwanese men and women, who faithfully and dutifully devoted themselves to the project of empire, as soldiers, as gunzoku (military personnel), and as nursing assistants. They believed their sacrifices would be duly rewarded and recognized. To their shock and disbelief, the empire abandoned them at their hour of need. They were left to their own devices after surrender, to the violent redrawing of borders and reassignment of nationalities.

That abandonment left lifelong scars and detrimental impacts in their well-being and pursuit of happiness. Some were forced against their will to become comfort women. Some died during the war. Some, despite having survived the battlefield, died in the immediate postwar period, under cruel and unforgiving circumstances, with their remains buried in distant lands across Asia and the Pacific, far from their homeland. Uninterred in family plots, without proper burials, there was no way for their families to pacify their spirits, to make offerings on their death day, or during the ghost month, or clean their graves during the Qingming Festival.

Then there were those who luckily were able to return safely home immediately after the war, but became embroiled in the 228 Incident of 1947, and were shot to death by Nationalist soldiers. Be it those who died in the immediate postwar period, or those who led impoverished postwar lives, or families of the bereaved, the empire failed them at an institutional scale. They were used effectively like oil and rubber, raw materials to be consumed. The empire had broken its promises to treat them as citizens, and instead made apparent the hollowness and emptiness of the imperial project, which its colonial subjects had believed in good faith.

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This MA thesis and my pursuit of the History MA program at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa would not have been possible had I not first undergone a profound journey of mental health.

I would like to thank my parents, my brother, my friends, my psychiatrist, and my psychotherapist. I would not be alive, had it not been my mental health professionals, friends, and family that helped me move out of a deep fog of despair and self-loathing.

I first experienced mental health issues when I was an undergraduate, studying in Washington D.C., 12,639 kilometers from my home in Taipei. It took me nine years to complete my Bachelor of Arts in Asian Studies from start to finish. Having grown up with no exposure to the concept of mental health, it was an abstraction to me without meaning, an intangible concept.

I attempted to navigate and benefit from the mental health care I needed while simultaneously maintaining my F-1 student visa status as a full-time international student. I ultimately failed. I became another college dropout. From the summer of 2015 to that of 2019, I was a social recluse.

Depression and anxiety had taken hostage of me. I could only exist by withdrawing into my own inner world. I felt like a failure.

Had it not been the enduring patience of my family and friends, combined with weekly psycho-therapy sessions and psychiatric care, along with the time and space to fully process my own inner world, I would not have risen from my nadir.

As I gradually recovered, I applied for re-admission to my undergraduate program. I also applied for graduate school. I returned to complete the one semester of coursework left required for the undergraduate program in January 2020. I started the MA program in August 2020.

The COVID-19 global pandemic brought forth other kinds of challenges. I spent the first three semesters of my MA program taking courses online, from Taipei, 18 time zones away from Honolulu. I finally made it to Hawai'i in January of 2022, and stayed for 6 months. It was the most splendid six months of my program, for I finally saw and met my classmates and committee members in person.

I thank the friends who accompanied me through the deepest valleys of my despair: Kimiko, Anna Cai, Rory Hytrek, and Greg Wagner. It is only because of your friendship that I am able to stand tall and walk with confidence in this world. I treasure your friendship to the end of time.

I am thankful for having taken *History of Taiwan* as an undergraduate student at The George Washington University with Evan Dawley. The course opened my eyes to a historical vista I had

not seen before. Evan has been a source of aid in my continued pursuit of studying Taiwanese history.

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I write extensively about my mental health journey here in my foreword because I want to leave it on record that having mental health issues is not a shame, a stigma, or a personal failure.

Experiencing mental health issues is neither a reflection, nor a measurement of your worth or potential as a human being—a falsehood and a stigma I internalized for the longest time. Mental health issues are one of the thousands of phenomena that constitute the human experience. It is neither an outlier nor a rare phenomena, but one that any one of us, at any point in our life could experience due to circumstances beyond our control.

It is not impossible for a person to overcome mental health problems. However, no one overcomes them without support. No man is an island. None of us succeed alone. My success is the direct result of all the people in my life who have sustained and nurtured me. It is to them that I raise a glass, and thank them for their kindness and warmth, and for accepting me as I am.

I have nothing to be ashamed of. Of who I am, or the journey I had to take in order to arrive at this moment, at the completion of my Master's thesis in History. I share and rejoice at this accomplishment with all those who aided me along the way.

ABSTRACT

In the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War, and the subsequent Asia-Pacific War, the Japanese Empire came to increasingly rely upon its colonial subjects in its war efforts. Based on the biography of Kan Shigematsu (1925-2000), a Taiwanese-Japanese POW guard and soldier, this thesis uses a single case study to illustrate how colonial subjects experienced the war. Examining how race, labor and empire are intertwined, this is a work of both microhistory and transnational history. The thesis argues that Taiwanese in their deployment were both victims of Japanese militarism and victimizers of POWs and local populations.

The thesis focuses on both the wartime and postwar experience. Arguing that the revocation of both Japanese nationality and owed compensations to colonial veterans was an act of breaking an imperial social contract signed between the empire and its colonial subjects. The termination of such a contract indicates that colonial subjects were subjected to a second-class citizenship, or even non-citizenship.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| DEDICATION..... | i |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | ii |
| ABSTRACT..... | iv |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS..... | v |
| PREFACE..... | x |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| Research Questions..... | 1 |
| Methodology..... | 3 |
| Historiography..... | 8 |
| Chinese Language Historiography..... | 8 |
| Japanese Language Historiography..... | 9 |
| English Language Historiography..... | 10 |
| Literature Review of Key Texts..... | 11 |
| Sayaka Chatani: Targeting Rural Middle Class Youths for Military Mobilization..... | 11 |
| Takashi Fujitani: Moving From “Vulgar Racism” Towards “Polite Racism”..... | 15 |
| Seiji Shirane: Taiwanese as “Empowering and Vulnerable” Intermediaries..... | 18 |
| The Mobilization of the Taiwanese in WWII by Japan..... | 20 |
| About Kan’s Biography..... | 26 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Reception of Kan’s Book..... | 34 |
| Abandonment of Colonial/Minority Citizens: A Universal Phenomenon..... | 38 |
| PART I SERVING THE EMPIRE..... | 41 |
| CHAPTER ONE: DEPLOYMENT TO BRITISH NORTH BORNEO (BNB) AND BRUNEI...42 | |
| Overview..... | 42 |
| Childhood..... | 43 |
| Deployment..... | 44 |
| Supervising POW Labor..... | 50 |
| Mandatory Violence Against POWs..... | 52 |
| Food & Leisure..... | 54 |
| Counterinsurgency Fighting..... | 56 |
| POW Deaths..... | 58 |
| Becoming a Soldier..... | 61 |
| Resource Competition & The Indigenous Population..... | 63 |
| Unmaterialized Promotion..... | 65 |
| Surrender..... | 67 |
| Summary..... | 69 |
| CHAPTER TWO: SERVING AS WAR CRIMINAL—AN ARCHIPELAGO OF IMPRISONMENT..... | 74 |
| Overview..... | 74 |
| Labuan..... | 75 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| An Introduction to the War Crime Trials..... | 79 |
| An Introduction to Taiwanese War Criminals (TWC)..... | 83 |
| The Trial..... | 86 |
| Kan’s Recollection..... | 86 |
| The Trial Records..... | 89 |
| Morotai Island..... | 97 |
| Rabaul Island..... | 100 |
| The Politics of War Crime Trials..... | 105 |
| Manus Island..... | 107 |
| The Politics of Repatriation..... | 113 |
| Summary..... | 115 |
| PART II LIFE AFTER EMPIRE..... | 118 |
| CHAPTER THREE: EXILE IN POSTWAR JAPAN..... | 119 |
| Overview..... | 119 |
| Betrayal by Empire..... | 120 |
| Living in the Shadows..... | 125 |
| To Live..... | 126 |
| Gender, Race & Empire..... | 128 |
| Imperial Social Contract Voided: Wages, Military Postal Deposits, Pensions, Disability and Death Compensations Gone..... | 133 |
| Betrayal by Empire on the “Home Front”..... | 141 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Becoming a Taxi Driver..... | 145 |
| Racism At School..... | 146 |
| Three Decades as a Taxi Driver..... | 149 |
| Summary..... | 151 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: VISITS TO MARTIAL LAW TAIWAN..... | 154 |
| Overview..... | 154 |
| Postwar Taiwan: Re-Colonization, Sinicization, and Totalitarianism..... | 155 |
| Seen as Suspicious: Former War Criminals Living in Martial Law Taiwan..... | 164 |
| The Taiwanese Diaspora: Transnational Political Activism..... | 165 |
| First Visit in 20 Years..... | 168 |
| Pleading With Chiang Kai-Shek..... | 171 |
| Summary..... | 177 |
| CONCLUSION..... | 180 |
| The General’s Letter Declassified..... | 180 |
| The Melting of Misunderstanding..... | 182 |
| The End of the Biography..... | 185 |
| Race: Becoming, Unbecoming, and Interpellation..... | 187 |
| Nation-State, Citizenship, and Labor..... | 189 |
| Narratives of Victimhood and Decolonization..... | 192 |
| Who Does the Nation Choose to Remember?..... | 193 |
| APPENDICES..... | 196 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| APPENDIX A: FIGURE..... | 196 |
| APPENDIX B: MAPS..... | 197 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 200 |
| PRIMARY SOURCES..... | 200 |
| National Archives of Australia..... | 200 |
| Biography..... | 200 |
| Oral History Volumes..... | 200 |
| Newspaper Articles..... | 200 |
| SECONDARY SOURCES..... | 201 |
| Books..... | 201 |
| Book Chapter..... | 202 |
| Journal Article..... | 203 |
| Thesis & Dissertations..... | 204 |

PREFACE

I did not set out to focus on the experiences of Taiwanese soldiers and gunzoku (military personnel), who fought on behalf of the Imperial Japanese Military during WWII. I was determined to focus on the Japanese colonial era of Taiwan from the outset. Due to my upbringing across a number of overseas locales, I became a diasporic Taiwanese, and thus possessed an incomplete knowledge of Taiwan. Though Taiwan is the only land where I hold citizenship, I was alienated from it as a child. I was umbilically connected to it through a fast-food diet of cultural production: variety shows and idol dramas, which reinforced a neoliberal present Taiwan, devoid of any references to the *real* history and politics of the land.¹

Imagine growing up as an American abroad, and the only media you have access to American history were sitcoms such as *Friends*, and reality television such as *The Bachelor*. That was more or less my experience. There were very intermittent and vague references to the Taiwanese past in these fast-food media, such as when a guest on a variety show is only fluent in Taiwanese Hokkien and another guest on the show has to translate for them. Or the Indigenous entertainer whose background is either erased, ignored, or casually addressed.² Raised in

¹ Variety shows (Chinese [c]: zongyi jiemu), are usually talk shows with appearances by primarily entertainers, that discuss various topics designed to entertain television audiences, with occasional singing or dancing performances mixed in. Idol shows (C: ouxiangju) emerged around the early 2000's; they were considered a major departure from the more soap opera-like television drama such as the 8PM shows (C: badiandang). Idol dramas focused on casting young singers or actors in plots about young romantic love.

² The Indigenous peoples of Taiwan are part of the Austronesian group—which migrated across the Asia-Pacific region, to be found from Madagascar, to maritime Southeast Asia, to Polynesia. After the first waves of Han settler colonialism began under Dutch rule in the 1600s, indigenous people became arbitrarily divided into the categories of plains versus highland indigenous. These were categories that have no internal significance amongst the indigenous. Due to contact with the waves of Han settlers encroaching on their territories, many of the plain indigenous became assimilated, and thus were not considered indigenous in official census. While due to natural barriers, highland indigenous were mostly unassimilated (that was, until the Governor General of Taiwan made it a priority to seize total control of the highlands for resource extraction) and were

different countries, enrolled in American international schools, taught in an American style curriculum, by White American teachers, I did not and could not register the significance of these slippages. I was placed on a trajectory of becoming Americanized, at the expense of retaining my Taiwanese heritage.

By the time I started college in America, I had an existential crisis about who I was and where I came from. If you do not know where you come from, then you come from nowhere, you belong to nowhere. You cannot form real, meaningful connections to a land if you do not know its past. If you do not know your history, you are not a stakeholder, you are just a passerby, a tourist who takes photos of sites and landmarks unaware of their symbolism, eating food without realizing their significance, and befriending people without knowing what their families and communities had endured. You are simply then a person who only holds a superficial and casual interest in this land, not seeking to become someone who inherits its full past, all its good and all its bad, someone who is fully invested in this land. To inherit all of the past, is to become a stakeholder, to become responsible for all the deeds and sins committed by all those who came before you on this land. Writing this thesis has been an act of therapy. Finally owning and facing the history that I have long been severed and disconnected from. Finally having this opportunity to read books after books, articles after articles on Taiwanese History is something I desperately wanted for the longest time. Ever since that moment I became conscious of this disconnection, I have been actively seeking to repair those ties that were severed in my childhood.

Luckily, during my sophomore year of college, a history of Taiwan course was offered.

That course opened my eyes to a new vista of Taiwanese history. The most shocking thing to

able to retain their own culture and language practices. As such, they were called *Takasago-zoku* (highland people) by the Japanese. The Japanese assimilation of Indigenous Taiwanese was more intensive and harsh when compared to Han Taiwanese. Han Taiwanese were already capitalists, and thus easily co-opted. Whereas in the highlands, Indigenous Taiwanese were obstacles to the raw materials desired.

learn was the half a century of Japanese rule in Taiwan. Before then, my vague understanding was that the Japanese were briefly present in Taiwan, then left, and then came the Nationalist government. I did not, however, realize the Japanese had exercised a modern colonial enterprise, akin and on par with that of British India, or French Indochina—colonies whose histories I was well versed in. Learning this fact was a shock to my system, because that fact alone was incredible, and it was even more incredible that I did not know this fact. I knew virtually nothing about the Japanese colonial era. It was entirely foreign to me. The foreignness and alienness of it all gravitated me towards it. Like peeling an onion for the first time, I realized that beyond the surface, there were many unseen layers. It was also equally shocking to learn that the Nationalist government was not the benevolent anti-Communist force that I was taught of in my three years of elementary schooling in Taiwan. I knew not of the horrors and the violence brought by the 228 incident, or the White Terror (C: baise kongbu) that followed during the four decades of Martial Law (C: jieyan) rule.

As a diasporic Taiwanese, I wrote this thesis as a personal effort to reconnect with a place I have been alienated from. It is part of my quest to know all that I was not taught. I want to know it all: the good, the bad, the ugly, the beauty, and the inconvenient. I want to see all the diversity of experiences that have taken place on this land, in all its colors and shades. I want to help restore and retell all the stories and experiences that have long been silenced and erased.

When I started looking for a specific research topic on the Japanese colonial era, I encountered a major challenge: I only have an elementary proficiency in Japanese. English language sources I could readily locate were mostly written by American and European travelers and missionaries, whose perspectives do not interest me. Primary sources on the era that I could locate, the only ones that were written in Mandarin focused on the subject of Taiwanese soldiers

and gunzoku mobilized by Japan in WWII. Due to the heavy censorship of the Martial Law period (1949-1987), it was virtually impossible for Taiwanese-Japanese veterans to discuss their experiences openly.

Martial Law finally ended due to the pro-democracy movement. As a seismic shift occurred in the political realm, a parallel shift occurred in the field of knowledge production, known as the *bentuha* (localization) movement. Among other changes, historians begin to deviate from China-centrism and focus on the Taiwanese perspective. In the late 1990s Taiwanese historians were able to conduct interviews and rescue oral histories of WWII veterans. By the late 1990s, the bulk of these men and women were already in their 70s, and sometimes when historians wanted to conduct a follow up interview, they would be notified that the interviewee had deceased. The interviewees spoke in languages of their convenience (Taiwanese Hokkien, Hakka, or Japanese), and historians transcribed and translated them into Mandarin. In addition, autobiographies and historical fiction were being published as well. Some were first published in Japanese, then subsequently translated into Mandarin. The wave of publications of oral history, autobiographies, and historical fiction re-wrote Taiwanese-Japanese veterans back into history, and back into the public consciousness.³

I will freely admit that if it were not for my linguistic limitations, the Second World War, or any war in general would not have been my first choice as a research topic. I would have otherwise preferred a topic on social, cultural, or gender history instead. I knew nothing about the experience of these Taiwanese-Japanese soldiers and gunzoku before I began this research.⁴

³ Lan, Shi-chi Mike. "(Re-)Writing History of the Second World War: Forgetting and Remembering the Taiwanese-Native Japanese Soldiers in Postwar Taiwan." *positions: east asia cultures critique* 21, no. 4 (2013): 801–851. 814

⁴ In Japanese scholarship, they are referred to as 台湾人元日本兵 (former Taiwanese Japanese soldiers). In Mandarin scholarship, they are referred to as 台籍日本兵 (Taiwanese-born Japanese

Growing up abroad, in the house, the few books that did pertain to “the war” were predominantly those of the mainland Chinese experience. These were books written by the *waishengren*, meaning those who came to Taiwan from China post-1945. They included books such as *Big River*, *Big Sea Untold Stories of 1949*, and *The River of Big Torrents*.⁵ However, there were no books written on the Taiwanese experience of the war to be found on my family’s bookshelves.

When I started reading the literature, I found myself discarding my prior notion of war as simply immoral, and thus unworthy of my attention. Wars may be regrettable, but not all individuals who become involved in a war, be they soldiers or civilians, did so voluntarily. These individuals are worthy of attention, because they were placed in impossible scenarios where there were very few options for them to exercise, and even fewer good options. It is not that I condone any actions one undertakes in a war. However, we must situate the individual in context. We must first see the contexts in which individuals become entangled in wars, in order to understand the rationales and motivations for their actions that they did. To simply judge a person for an action they undertook, without fully understanding the circumstances in which that action was undertaken, is to perform a reductive historical reading. To strip out the moods and conditions of the past, and to read it from a subjective historical present, is not only a misreading, but also an unjust act. It is easy to condemn people for actions that they undertook in the past. It is hard to actually look at, contextualize, and situate the conditions that drove them to such actions.

soldiers). In English scholarship they are referred to as Taiwanese native Japanese soldiers. In this thesis, I simply refer to them as Taiwanese-Japanese soldiers.

⁵Lung Yingtai, *Da jiang da hai 1949 (Big River, Big Sea Untold Stories of 1949)*. Taipei City: Tianxia Zazhi, 2009; Chi Pang yuan, *Ju liu he (The River of Big Torrents)*. Taipei City: Tianxia Yuanjian, 2014.

INTRODUCTION

Research Questions

To the Nationalist government that arrived and recolonized Taiwan after 1945, the Taiwanese were already suspicious, for they had been under Japanese rule, and were seen as poisoned in the mind. This made Taiwanese-Japanese soldiers and gunzoku of even greater suspicion, for they had gone as far as to fight for the enemy. Some of them were perceived as threatening, and faced forms of state retaliation ranging from the blacklist, to imprisonment, or even execution.⁶ Yet, they were recruited by Japan right out of middle school, in their early teens, to serve the colonial masters in far and distant lands. To judge them as collaborators or traitors was to deny the legitimate circumstances—from social engineering, seeking honor, higher wages, to outright coercion—that drove them to fight for the Japanese Emperor.

The contention of this thesis is that Taiwanese veterans of the war were both victims and victimizers of the war. Their participation was inextricably tied to their position as colonized subjects. This status does not mean that they had zero say or autonomy in their actions. However, their colonial status must be part of the equation and consideration when evaluating their experiences. They were neither automatons carrying out tasks as preprogrammed, nor were they free agents able to do whatever they wished to. They were caught somewhere in between. The research questions this thesis engages in include: How did positionality as colonial subjects impact the experience as soldiers and gunzoku in the Imperial Japanese Military, during and after the war? How were race, racial hierarchies, and racial inequalities reinforced, and operated by

⁶ Those on the blacklist were barred from certain privileges such as leaving or re-entering the country, being hired in government or major private institutions.

the state, and various individual actors? Was it a solely utilitarian drive? In the deployment, and de-mobilization of Taiwanese soldiers and gunzoku, what was the relationship between utilitarianism and racism? How are we to assess Japan's radically different treatment toward Taiwanese soldiers, between the wartime and the postwar periods? What is the larger historical relevance of the experience of Taiwanese-Japanese veterans? How does it speak to other instances of imperial mobilization of colonial subjects for the war effort?

In the process of training and mobilization by Imperial Japan, some Taiwanese soldiers and gunzoku undeniably felt themselves to have become Japanese. Cruelly, in the aftermath of the war, they along with all other colonial subjects were stripped of their Japanese nationality. They were not even given the choice to retain their Japanese nationality. But then is that the end of the story? In this case, Japanese-ness or becoming Japanese was not merely about paperwork. After all, during the colonial period, Korean and Taiwanese subjects alike were able to freely move to the metropole and reside there. They were, in a sense, Japanese. Yet, both *kōminka* (becoming an imperial subject—a political movement to rapidly assimilate colonial subjects as Japanese), and military mobilization, where certain qualities of Japaneseness were imbued upon the colonial subjects. Mobilization encouraged a transformative identification of the colonial subject with the metropole. For how else are we to understand the very deep psychic wound caused by the revocation of Kan Shigematsu's Japanese nationality (the case study of this thesis)? Of course, one might contend that assimilation or becoming, was never possible, and colonial subjects were never intended to actually become Japanese, or British, or French. Assimilation was dangled in front of colonial subjects as a decoy, a pacifier, a distraction. Assimilation itself was a lie. A key research question then becomes this: Was there any sincerity, in the mobilization of the colonial subjects, to the claim that they were to be treated as Japanese,

in recognition of the enormous sacrifice that was being asked of them? Or should we take a brutally realist stance and assume that there was never any sincerity, that assimilation was never possible, and that assimilation was a cynical carrot not meant for the colonial subject to ever obtain?

Methodology

I initially set out to read as many oral history volumes as possible, in order to have a mix of different case studies to compare—looking for a mixture of the type of military corps or roles, and geographic frontlines of deployment. I eventually decided to abandon this macro, social history approach, in favor of an intimate microhistoric, single case approach, which allowed me to more richly examine the impacts of the war on an individual level across time and space.

This thesis is a work of transnational history and microhistory, using the life story of one person, Kan Shigematsu, to illustrate the larger category of Taiwanese-Japanese soldiers and *gunzoku*. Although my approach is largely microhistorical, my analysis relies on a broad framework of historical contexts, both in terms of temporality and physical location. Each chapter covers a different time and geographic space(s). I have provided contextualization for each chapter. Part I focuses on wartime British North Borneo and Brunei (Chapter 1), Class BC war crime trials and incarceration across Southeast Asia (Chapter 2). Part II deals with the long-term ramifications of the war, both on an individual level for Kan, but as well as for Taiwanese-Japanese veterans and Taiwanese in general, including in Postwar Japan (Chapter 3), and Martial Law Taiwan (Chapter 4).

Chapter 1 deals with the deployment of Kan to Borneo as a POW guard, as well as his subsequent on-site conscription as a construction soldier in Brunei. This chapter details the

various minutiae that came with being below Japanese soldiers, but above Allied POWs in the ethnic hierarchy of the concentration camps., and examines how the high death rates of POWs was a result of both chronic supply shortage and harsh physical punishment practiced upon POWs, a policy indoctrinated on to them by their Japanese superiors. As well as his subsequent on site conscription as a construction soldier in Brunei. Chapter 2 addresses the Australian war crime trials of Taiwanese military personnel, and their subsequent incarceration in places like Australia's Manus Island prison. At times they were subject to perform carceral and necropolitical labor, as suffered from physical abuse by Australian guards. Though the war crime trials were claimed to be an impartial delivery of justice, they were heavily influenced by the shifting domestic and international politics of the immediate postwar and the onset of the Cold War.⁷

Chapter 3 addresses Kan's exile in Japan after completing his sentence in Manus. His time in Japan was mired in difficulties resulting from the revocation of Japanese nationality to all colonial subjects in the aftermath of the war. Due to his lack of Japanese nationality, he faced a myriad of impediments in accessing social benefits, and most critically his wartime wages, deposits in the military postal savings, pensions, and veteran benefits. Racism haunted his domestic life, including with his wife and his children. Chapter 4 describes his visit to Taiwan, where he has to navigate the new colonial regime of the Nationalists. Chapter 4 also covers the series of events that occurred from the immediate handing of Taiwan over to the Nationalists to the four decades of Martial Law rule—its implications for Taiwanese, both domestic and the

⁷ *Australia's War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, a volume of work utilizing 300 Australian war crime trials, is used substantially in Part I. The volume provides critical analysis and contextualization in regards to the experience of Allied POWs detained by the Japanese military, as well as the process and aftermath of the war crime trials.

diaspora, and their abilities to access rights and privileges that were denied to those whom the state found suspect, via the blacklist system.

The primary text used in this thesis is the biography of Kan Shigematsu. I have not taken the narrative put forth by Kan (and his biographer Hamazaki Kōichi) at face value. Rather, I have corroborated, analyzed, and contextualized the narrative with primary sources and secondary literature. Other primary sources have been utilized to cross reference and triangulate the events described in the biography. In particular I utilized two oral history volumes which exclusively covered Taiwanese POW guards stationed in Borneo, both written by the journalist Li Zhan-ping (李展平), and published by Taiwan Historica—a history archive based in Nantou, Taiwan. The experiences of other POW guards—especially in instances where their paths diverged from Kan, were helpful in more fully fleshing out the overall experience of Taiwanese POW guards. Another primary source utilized are trial documents from the National Archives of Australia, which has fully digitized and uploaded all of its class BC war crime trial documents onto its website. (Australia is the only country of the Allied countries to have done so.) The particular mass trial that included Kan was useful in revealing the mindset of the Australians, as one of the victorious Allied countries, and how they perceived and determined the guilt and innocence of those who sat at the very bottom of the Japanese military hierarchy.

In no way does the biography of Kan Shigematsu capture every facet of Taiwanese-Japanese soldiers and gunzoku. There were so many variations and iterations of deployment and frontline locations, and each deployment presented unique differences. Taiwanese military personnel were sent to grow food in Central China, to Xiamen as policemen, to Hainan as civil administrators, to Singapore as interpreters, and across the Asia-Pacific as soldiers and comfort women. Some were repatriated to Taiwan immediately after the war. Some

were stranded for a year or two. Some were convicted as war criminals. Some were killed in 228. Some lived in a foreign land for the remainder of their lives. Although there is no single typical experience, Kan's biography nonetheless serves to illustrate two universal aspects of the experiences endured by Taiwanese soldiers and gunzoku: 1) the unforgiving nature of colonialism toward colonial subjects in the wartime and postwar contexts, and 2) the historical trajectory of Taiwan being subjected to different and succeeding waves of colonialisms and imperialisms, causing the peoples of Taiwan to be caught in between, and interpellated into reductive and false binary of collaborators versus resistors.

The unforgiving nature of colonialism toward colonial subjects is demonstrated by Japan's use of its colonial subjects in the war and denial of responsibility afterwards. Postwar Japan did not live up to promises made to its colonial peoples when it recruited them for war mobilization. Unlike WWI, WWII was a total war, one in which all human resources, even "abjected populations" such as colonial peoples or ethnic minorities, must be utilized. Japan made a formal denunciation of racism, in order to elicit "active cooperation from those populations rather than using them only as slave labor."⁸ This "ideology of equality and fraternity under assimilation (Japanese [j]:dōka) and imperialization (j:kōminka) only serves to conceal the hypocrisy that, in the words of Ozaki Hotsuki, allowed the colonized 'not to live as Japanese, but to die as Japanese.'⁹ With its surrender came the end of Japanese overseas colonies, as well as revocation of the compensations and benefits it had promised in the social contract it signed with its colonial peoples. Thousands of Korean and Taiwanese soldiers and personnel were denied pensions and other compensations they were promised. Meanwhile, their Japanese counterparts

⁸ Fujitani, Takashi. *Race for Empire Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011. 9

⁹ Ching, Leo T. S. *Becoming "Japanese": Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. 4. (Note: Ozaki Hotsuki (1928-1999) was a Japanese literary critic.)

accessed these benefits with ease. The only reason why they were denied was racism. It was not as though postwar Japan, especially after the outbreak of the Korean War, did not revive its economy, and could not afford to provide the compensations owed to its colonial veterans. It was a racist, systemic, and institutional decision by the Japanese state to deny Korean and Taiwanese veterans their promised compensations. It was neither a mistake nor an accident.

The historical trajectory of Taiwan being subjected to different and succeeding waves of colonialisms and imperialisms meant that those who were “guilty” of having been loyal to the prior colonial regime were actively erased and denied rights and privileges by the subsequent Nationalist colonial regime.¹⁰ The Nationalist government actively suppressed the era of Japanese rule from the public memory, and also blacklisted and refused to help Taiwanese soldiers lobby the Japanese government for their pensions and other promised compensations.

The Cold War itself must be considered as a form of imperialism and colonialism. The significance of the role of the United States in this context, as one of the two bipolar powers in the aftermath of the war, must not be downplayed. American ships brought the Nationalist government staff and soldiers across the Taiwan Strait, for the Nationalists had no ships or naval capabilities. American financial, material, and political aid helped consolidate Nationalist rule over Taiwan during the Cold War. The Americans, in the form of General Douglas MacArthur, oversaw the Allied occupation of Japan, and had an active hand in determining the restructuring of Japanese society and government. MacArthur also had a direct hand in impacting the process and outcome of the Australian war crime trials, and helped develop the policy regarding the status of Koreans and Taiwanese residing in postwar Japan.

¹⁰ The arrival of the Nationalist government has been agreed among scholars as a re-colonizing regime. Subjecting a new colonialism atop of the prior one by the Japanese. Chen Tsui-lian [Chen Cuilian], *Taiwanren de dikang yu rentong, 1920– 1950* (Yuanliu chuban gongsi, 2008), 382; Dawley, Evan N. *Becoming Taiwanese : Ethnogenesis in a Colonial City, 1880s-1950s*. Boston: Harvard University Asia Center, 2019, 249.

Historiography

Chinese Language Historiography

As discussed in the Preface, the production in Taiwan of history writing on the subject of the wartime experience of colonial Taiwanese did not begin until the late 1990s, with the publication of a number of oral history volumes produced by Taiwanese historians. Some of the most prominent ones were produced by the Institute of Taiwan History (ITH) at Academia Sinica—a renowned government funded research institution—including by Wan-yao Chou, and Hui-Yu Caroline Ts'ai.¹¹ Oral history volumes were also commissioned and produced by various local and city governments.¹² A number of biographies and autobiographies were also privately published by veterans or their surviving families.¹³ In regards to the plight of Taiwanese war criminals, historians such as Shu-min Zhong and Mike Lan-Shi Chi have also produced works on the issue.¹⁴ Works that focus on other sub-topics include the experience of women who served as

¹¹ Chou Wan-yao, ed., *Taiji Ribenbing zuotanhui jilu bing xiangguan ziliao (Record from the Roundtable Discussion by Taiwanese-Native Japanese Soldiers and Related Materials)* (Taipei: Institute of Taiwan History Preparatory Office, Academia Sinica, 1997). Hui-yu Caroline Ts'ai, ed., *Zouguo liangge shidai de ren: Taiji Riben bing (The Lives and Times of Taiwanese Veterans)* (Taipei: Institute of Taiwan History, Academia Sinica, 1997)

¹² An example of local government commissions: Tang Xiyong and Chen Yiru, eds., *Taibeishi Taiji Ribenbing chafang zhuanji (Special Investigative Report on Taiwanese-Native Japanese Soldiers in Taipei City)* (Taipei: Taibeishi wen-xian weiyuanhui [Taipei Municipal Government], 2001)

¹³ Lin Suide, *Wode kang Ri tianming (My Destiny of Resisting the Japanese)* (Taipei: Qianwei, 1996); Wu Shuzhen and Wu Shumin, *Tuonan shaonian shi (History of the Tuonan Youth)* (Taipei County: Xiangrikui wenhua, 2004).

¹⁴ Zhong Shu-min has written extensively regarding the experiences of Taiwanese serving Japan across various locales across Asia before and during WWII. Examples include: Zhong Shu-min, “Fulu shourongsuo: Jindai taiwanshi de yiduan beige” (“Prisoners of War Internment Camps: A Sad Story in Modern Taiwan History”), in Cao Yonghe Xiansheng Bashi Shouqing Lunwenji Bianji Weiyuanhui (Editorial Committee of Proceedings in Honor of the

nursing assistants in frontline hospitals.¹⁵ Lastly, it must be mentioned that in the recent years, there have been more works published explicitly on the overseas experience of Taiwanese during Japanese rule, including Manchuria by Xue-ji Xu and Southeast Asia by Shu-min Zhong.¹⁶

Japanese Language Historiography

Relevant Japanese works on the subject are to be found starting around the 1980s. Although immediate postwar Japan did not have a censorship regime as stringent as that of Martial Law Taiwan, the political climate still led to a lack of focus on study of its colonial past and wartime ambitions. A number of biographies by Taiwanese-Japanese veterans were published in Japanese (given that Japanese was their primary language, and they may not have ever acquired fluency in Mandarin in their lifetime.)¹⁷ Kondō Masami has written on the processes of mobilization of Taiwan as a colony.¹⁸ Hayashi Eidai has produced a book on the

Eightieth Birthday of Mr. Cao Yonghe), ed., *Cao Yonghe xiansheng bashi shouqing lunwenji (Proceedings in Honor of the Eightieth Birthday of Mr. Cao Yonghe)* (Taipei: Lexue shuju, 2001) _____, 2004, “Colonization and Re-colonization : Japanese Colonial Experience on Taiwan and the Occupational Administration on Hainan during the WW II”, paper presented at 北美洲台灣研究學會年會, Hawaii University: North American Taiwan Studies Association, 2004-6-17 ~ 2004-6-20. For works by Shi- chi Lan, “ ‘Crime’ of Interpreting: Taiwanese Interpreters as War Criminals of World War II,” in *New Insights in the History of Interpreting*, ed. Kayoko Takeda and Jesús Baigorri- Jalón (Philadelphia: John Ben- jamins Publishing Co., 2016), 198.

¹⁵ You Jian-ming, “Di wu zhang jianren qiangong de kanhu fu” (Chapter 5 The Persevering and Humble Nursing Assistants), *Riben zhimin xia de tamen: Zhanxian nengli, yinling taiwan nuxing jiuye de zhichang nu xianfeng (Women Under Japanese Colonization: Pioneers in the Workplace Who Showed Their Abilities and Lead the Employment of Taiwanese Women)*. Xin beishi. Taiwan shangwu yin shuguan gufen youxian gongsi, 2022.

¹⁶ Xu Xue-ji, *Lisan yu huigui: Zai manzhou guo de taiwan ren (1905-1948) (Dispersion and Return: Taiwanese in Manchukuo 1905-1948)*. Xin beishi. Zuoan wenhua di er bianji bu. 2022. Chung Shu-ming [Zhong Shumin], *Rizhi shiqi zai Nanyang de Taiwanren (Taiwanese in Nanyo during the Japanese Colonial Period)* (Zhong- yang yanjiuyuan Taiwanshi yanjiusuo, 2020)

¹⁷ Wu Pingcheng, *Kaigun gun 'i nikki* (Mondai to Kenkyū, 1996); Chen Huimei, *Taiwanjin jūgun kangofu tsuisōki: sumire no hana ga saita koro: Nittai gassaku* (Tendensha, 2001)

¹⁸ Kondō Masami, *Sōryokusen to Taiwan: Nihon shokuminchi hōkai no kenkyū* (Tōsui Shobō, 1996)

overall experience of Taiwanese soldiers and gunzoku.¹⁹ A number of works have been produced on the experience of Indigenous Taiwanese volunteers, as well as that of Han Taiwanese women deployed as nursing assistants during the war.²⁰ Utsumi Aiko has written on the experience of Korean Class BC war criminals and attempts of Korean veterans to seek compensation from the Japanese government.²¹ Kato Kunihiko has written on the attempts of Taiwanese veterans seeking compensation from the Japanese government.²² The topic of Taiwanese comfort women have also received a lot of attention.²³

English Language Historiography

Similarly, in the field of Japan Studies within North America, a rigorous study of Imperial Japan did not occur until after the Cold War, in part due to the political climate of the era. The many contradictions of *kōminka* have been widely written about.²⁴ Lo Ming-Cheng has

¹⁹ Hayashi Eidai, *Taiwan no Yamato damashi* (Osaka: Tōhō Shuppan, 2000)

²⁰ Hayashi Eidai, *Shōgen Taiwan Takasago Giytai (Testimony: Takasago Volunteers)* (Tokyo: Sōfūkan, 1998); Nakajima Mitsunori, *Kanga sorei: Taiwan genjū minzoku to yasukuni jinja (Returning Our Ancestors' Spirit: Taiwanese Aborigines and Yasukuni Shrine)* (Tokyo: Hakutakusha, 2006); Kikuchi Kazutaka, *Nihongun gerira, Taiwan Takasago Giyūtai: Taiwan genjūmin no Taiheiyō Sensō* (Heibonsha, 2018). Ōya Wataru, *Kangofutachi no Nanpō sensen: teikoku no rakujitsu o seotte* (Osaka: Tōhō Shuppan, 2011)

²¹ Utsumi Aiko, *Chosenjin bishikyu senpan no kiroku (Record of Class B/C Korean War Criminals)* (Tokyo: Keisoshobo, 1982); *Sengo hoshō kara kangaeru nihon to ajia (Examining Postwar Compensation in Japan and Asia)* (2002; repr. Tokyo: Yamakawa, 2007)

²² Kato Kunihiko, *Isshidōjin no hate: Taiwanjin moto gunzoku no kōyū (Consequences of Assimilation: The Situation of Former Taiwanese Auxiliary Military Personnel)* (Tokyo: Keisshob, 1979)

²³ Chu Te- lan [Zhu Delan], *Taiwan Sōtokufu to ianfu* (Akashi Shoten, 2005)

²⁴ Wan-yao Chou, “The *kōminka* Movement in Taiwan and Korea: Comparisons and Interpretations,” in *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945*, ed. Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Ching, Leo T. S. *Becoming “Japanese”: Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation*. Berkeley:

examined the experience of Taiwanese doctors mobilized for the war, in particular to China, to both treat patients to gain local support and conduct medical experimentation to advance the war effort.²⁵ Takashi Fujitani and Brandon Palmer have examined the plight of Koreans who fought on behalf of Japan in WWII.²⁶ Sayaka Chatani has produced a monograph which examined how colonial authorities mobilized rural middle class youths by tapping into what Chatani termed as the social mobility complex.²⁷ Seiji Shirane has written explicitly on the instrumentality of Taiwanese as intermediaries for the empire in both the pre-war and war period. Lastly, in recent years, many historians have reconstructed both intra and inter imperial mobilities of various individuals and social groups from the Japanese Empire.²⁸

Literature Review of Key Texts

Sayaka Chatani: Targeting Rural Middle Class Youths for Military Mobilization

Based on oral interviews and local archives, Sayaka Chatani's *Nation-Empire: Ideology and Rural Youth Mobilization in Japan and its Colonies* investigated the deployment of state-

University of California Press, 2001; Yingzhen, Chen. "Imperial Army Betrayed." In *Perilous Memories: the Asia-Pacific War(s)*, 181–198. New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2020.

²⁵ Lo, Ming-cheng Miriam. Ch.7 "Doctors' In-between Position—Medical Modernists (1937-1945)" *Doctors Within Borders Profession, Ethnicity, and Modernity in Colonial Taiwan*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

²⁶ Takashi Fujitani, *Race for Empire: Koreans as Japanese and Japanese as Americans during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011); Brandon Palmer, *Fighting for the Enemy: Koreans in Japan's War, 1937–1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013).

²⁷ Chatani, Sayaka. *Nation-Empire: Ideology and Rural Youth Mobilization in Japan and Its Colonies*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018.

²⁸ Hiroko Matsuda, *Liminality of the Japanese Empire: Border Crossings From Okinawa to Colonial Taiwan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018); David R. Ambaras, *Japan's Imperial Underworlds: Intimate Encounters at the Borders of Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Eiichiro Azuma, *In Search of Our Frontier: Japanese America and Settler Colonialism in the Construction of Japan's Borderless Empire* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019); Mariko Iijima, "Sugar Islands in the Pacific in the Early Twentieth Century: Taiwan as a Protégé of Hawai'i," *Historische Anthropologie* 27, no. 3 (December 2019): 361–81.

sponsored youth training programs such as the *seinendan* (village youth associations) and *shūrenjō* (youth training institute); one had to first perform well in the former in order to be eligible to enter the latter. In this work, Chatani performed a cross-examination between select village locales in the Japanese empire—including the metropole, Korea, and Taiwan—and how they became a pipeline for military mobilization.

Chatani's book explicitly avoided a focus on urban intellectual elite youths, whose upper-class backgrounds enabled their pursuit of higher education in Tokyo and other locales. Instead, Chatani examined how rural middle-class youths were mobilized by the imperial state. Elite youths were unlikely participants of such programs given that they were more predisposed to participate in anticolonial movements. In fact, an ideological chasm existed between intellectual and rural youths, as for the latter group, "more than the crackdown by colonial police, the widening gap between students and farmers constituted a major obstacle."²⁹

In the contexts of totalitarian and fascist regimes, Chatani's analysis gives primacy to the specific local social dynamics when state ideologies are being deployed. Chatani pays close attention to local contexts, and how they play a determinant role in the ways in which individuals perceive, interact and absorb state ideologies. Chatani refers to this process whereby individuals "actively shaped the ideology by appropriating the ideas to their personal and social contexts" as "internalization of a state ideology".³⁰ A central argument of the book is that ideological dissemination itself was insufficient for mobilization. The other half of the formula for mobilization was the necessary local conditions that came into synchronization, including the desire for upward mobility.

²⁹ Chatani 108

³⁰ Ibid 10

One example of the exploitation of the desire for social mobility were state-sponsored youth training programs, which largely targeted the ambitious middle class. Elite or intellectual youths did not need such opportunities. Meanwhile those from the lower class could not afford to send away their youths for some months—a key condition to attend these state-sponsored programs—as their labor was needed at home for farming. Thus, state sponsored youth training programs tapped into what Chatani terms as the social mobility complex.³¹ These programs provided pathways to social mobility that participants would not have otherwise been able to access. Given that secondary schooling was unaffordable while “...four months of intense training away from home—one month at the training center and three months at the Labor Corps—offered a golden opportunity to broaden one’s horizon.”³² Graduates of such programs could be employed as school teachers without having attended middle school.

Importantly, in the process of undergoing these state sponsored training programs such as the *seinendan* and the *shūrenjo*, a hyper-intensive and affective bonding between Japanese teachers and Taiwanese students occurred.³³ Chatani radically asserts that neither ideology nor material benefits played a critical role in the binding of these youths to the state, but rather an emotional factor.

³¹ Ibid 15

³² Ibid 167

³³ Ibid 158. “Discipline was promoted not only through the strict regimen, but also through deep affective bonding. For the first time in their lives, young people received intense attention from Japanese instructors. The training site had three full-time Japanese teachers and one or two Taiwanese assistants. The teachers lived in the same building, ate the same amount of the same food, and adhered to the same schedule as the trainees. As expressed in their personal letters, published essays, and roundtable interviews in *Dōkō*, the graduates appear to have developed intimate friendships with the instructors. Some described the teachers’ devotion as equivalent to parental love: ‘The teachers even taught us how to scoop rice and hold chopsticks. Their kindness surpassed that of our parents.’”

The role of the intermediary is also crucial. The teachers who were appointed to training programs served as intermediaries of the state. Someone had to distill the ideas of privileging youth—which incidentally also subverted traditional local hierarchies—and the role they are destined to play. The highly regimented daily schedules of such programs came to realize this purpose. The daily schedule included waking up at 6 am to do “*misogi*, a Shinto-style morning prayer in the ocean, wearing only a *fundoshi* (loincloth),” followed by lectures on Japanese imperial history, martial art practices, construction at a shrine, and plowing land, followed by “*seiza*, a proper sitting position that entails kneeling on the floor with the buttocks resting on the heels and the ankles stretched so that the tops of the feet are pressed flat,” followed by an evening lecture, and then sleep at 930pm.³⁴ These activities were intended to promote a feeling of becoming culturally Japanese, in order to cultivate them as agents of the empire. As the empire became increasingly totalitarian, the boundary between public and private became eliminated. Thus, graduates of the *seinendan* and *shūrenjō* most often applied to become volunteer soldiers as they could not separate their personal desires from enormous social pressure. Schoolteachers wielded tremendous influence, to the extent that they were thought of as gods.

In addition, high symbolic and social value was imbued in the volunteer soldier; “Volunteer soldiers were celebrated as ‘like heroes of the village’ and received special treatment from the village office and the police. Children often dreamed of becoming one someday when they saw volunteer soldiers playing a trumpet at the top of a hill.”³⁵ The personal was public and the public was personal. The public and the private spheres were indistinguishable, inseparable, and indivisible from one another. They were one and the same. The volunteer soldier program

³⁴ Ibid 155

³⁵ Ibid 242

was seen “as the new top rung on the ladder of youth training programs.”³⁶ The volunteer soldier itself was an exalted status. Thus, a core motivation to signing up as a volunteer soldier was not blind loyalty nor material benefits, but rather the social significance embedded within.

Takashi Fujitani: Moving From “Vulgar Racism” Towards “Polite Racism”

In his work, Takashi Fujitani makes the argument that during WWII, both the United States and Imperial Japan mobilized their previously despised ethnic or colonial subjects, respectively Japanese Americans and Korean Japanese. Such an unprecedented move was necessitated by the totalitarian nature of this war, where every human and material resource must be managed and maximized. Fujitani characterized this move as moving away from “vulgar racism” towards “polite racism”³⁷, whereby racism was at the very least publicly disavowed. A formal disavowal of racism was a precondition to gaining “some degree of active cooperation from those populations rather than using them only as slave labor.”³⁸ Vulgar racism operated on the logic of exclusion, that is exclusion from society; where the “sovereign exercised his power through the right to kill—or, put the other way, by allowing subjects to live.” Whereas polite

³⁶ Ibid 173

³⁷Fujitani 26. “Under vulgar racism they were not objects of a political rationality that worked through the logic of making people live so that they might be utilized by the state. Instead, power operated on them primarily through the negative logic of repression, exclusions, and the right to exterminate those considered dangerous to society.” Ibid 26. “Under the polite racism of the total war regimes, however, these individuals and subpopulations came to be targeted as worthy of life, education, health, and even to some degree happiness, precisely because these systems came to regard the health and development of even abjected populations as useful for the regime’s survival, prosperity, and victory in war...Of course, since this apparently kind, nurturing, and even pro-natalist treatment of these populations emerged out of an understanding of their utility, when necessary their lives could easily be sacrificed, particularly as soldiers, coerced laborers, and sexual slaves.”

³⁸ Ibid 9

racism was more inclusionary and operated through what “Foucault called ‘bio-power, is exercised by making others live—by a productive or positive logic.’”³⁹

While most literature on both Japanese and American wartime propaganda disavowing racism have dismissed it as insincere, Fujitani makes the intervention that regardless of the intentions of the state, acting as if it did not practice racism produced very real positive effects. Fujitani does not dispute the utilitarian motivations of mobilizing ethnic and colonial subjects. Rather, Fujitani argues that by denouncing racism, the Japanese state had no choice but to enact actual policy changes regarding Koreans empire-wide, not exclusive to the confines of the military itself. Furthermore, as Korean people were increasingly depended upon militarily, it became more difficult to exclude them from the nation.

The military was one of the key factions of the state that advocated for greater equality in the treatment of Koreans. In part this was because they were interested in interethnic harmony within the troops. In part it was because of incidents such as the 1936 revolt against the Manchurian Army’s discriminatory treatment of Koreans. As such, when General Koiso Kuniaki replaced Tojo Hideki in 1944 as the prime minister of Japan, he initiated specific measures to enhance the policy of “Betterment of the treatment of Korean and Taiwanese compatriots” (*Chōsen oyobi Taiwan dōhō ni taisuru shogū kaizen*). He did so by enhancing 1) the political treatment (*seiji shogū*) of Koreans and Taiwanese to send representatives to the national Diet, and 2) the general treatment (*ippan shogū*) of Koreans and Taiwanese in the Foucauldian sense of governmentality and bio-power.

In regards to political treatment, laws were passed in April 1945 allowing Koreans and Taiwanese to vote and send representatives to the Diet. Law No.34 stipulated that male subjects living in Korea and Taiwan, 25 years old or older, having paid at least 15 yen in national taxes,

³⁹ Ibid 36

were eligible to vote for representatives for the lower house of the Diet. The war ended before these laws went into effect, and thus colonial subjects never had the opportunity to exercise these newly given electoral rights. Fujitani noted that colonial officials testified that enhancement of political rights and better treatment were necessary for the military mobilization of colonial subjects, and “not because they assumed that they were about to lose the war and that their promises would become meaningless.”⁴⁰ The second being Imperial Ordinance No. 193, which allowed an additional path for Koreans and Taiwanese to enter the House of Peers—which previously only three Koreans and one Taiwanese were given lifetime appointments. Due to this law, an additional seven Koreans and three Taiwanese joined the House of Peers, on top of one still surviving Korean appointee.

In regards to general treatment, the state emphasized bio-power, or improving the people’s livelihood. Japan’s Military Assistance Law (*Gunji fujohō*, 1937) allowed Korean *gunzoku* and their families to be recipients of aid. The number of eligible recipients drastically increased after 1944, when conscription of Koreans began. Especially so as “the majority of conscripts came from poor farming households.”⁴¹ Aid ranged from livelihood aid (*seikatsu fujo*) to assistance for medical care, childbirth, burials, and occupational training. The state also created specific institutions for the care of veterans and survivors: sanitarium for veterans with tuberculosis or pleurisy, assisting veterans to find employment, and assisting widows and survivors in job training. Furthermore, the state also targeted the general Korean population, offering services for disaster relief, social, labor, sanitation, and health issues. Some scholars have argued that these services provided in Korea were merely performative, especially when compared to more robust programs in the metropole. Fujitani however insists that all social

⁴⁰ Ibid 67

⁴¹ Ibid 70

services and social welfare programs operate in tangent to power, and thus all social services are equally in service to one ulterior motive or another, regardless of scale.⁴²

Finally, Fujitani addressed the key paradoxical question of “if there was indeed a shift from ‘vulgar’ to ‘polite’ racism, and from the ‘right to kill’ to the ‘right to make live,’ why then did the Korean people experience so much death and brutality?”⁴³ Fujitani argued that Korean-Japanese and Japanese-Americans alike, were “both nurtured and put up for slaughter in the interests of preserving the core population.” In other words, as colonial and ethnic populations, their well-being were better tended to by the state, only in so far as to be able to maximize them to fight and die on behalf of defending the lives of metropolitan Japanese and White Americans.

Seiji Shirane: Taiwanese as “Empowering and Vulnerable” Intermediaries

The recent monograph produced by Seiji Shirane entitled *Imperial Gateway: Colonial Taiwan and Japan’s Expansion in South China and Southeast Asia, 1895-1945*, is referenced extensively in this thesis for contextualization and analysis.⁴⁴ This monograph is of considerable importance as it deals specifically with the mobilization of Taiwanese subjects in the Japanese imperial expansion across the regions of Southern China and Southeast Asia; drawing from archives in three languages, from six countries. The work is split into two parts, the first dealing with the pre-war era, and the second dealing with the wartime. This thesis primarily draws from the second part. Shirane’s work is set apart from prior English language historiography, which

⁴² Ibid 73

⁴³ Ibid 76

⁴⁴ Shirane, Seiji. *Imperial Gateway : Colonial Taiwan and Japan’s Expansion in South China and Southeast Asia, 1895–1945* /. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2022.

have primarily focused on Japan's northern expansion into East Asia. Shirane not only deliberately chose to place emphasis upon the southern expansion, but also placed Taiwan as the central actor in this expansion, as a *gateway*. Shirane's work is part of a recent decade wave of English language historiography examining Japan's colonial rule in Taiwan.⁴⁵ Shirane argued that parallel to the role which Korea played as a northern gateway to Japanese expansion to North China, Taiwan played the same role as a southern gateway to South China and Southeast Asia.

Shirane's central argument in regard to the role played by the Taiwanese in imperial Japan's Southern Expansion is this: "In wartime South China and Southeast Asia, within the imperial hierarchy, Taiwanese remained relegated to a second-class status below that of the Japanese but in supervisory positions above that of local civilians and Allied POWs."⁴⁶ A kind of social engineering was thus utilized. This ethnic hierarchy—with racism at its core, as any ethnic hierarchy entails—could be evidenced by the differentiated pay scale employed in Hainan, where Taiwanese were paid more than the local Hainan people.⁴⁷

In part due to the abilities of Han Taiwanese to speak and acquire proficiency in Sinophone languages (facilitating communication in South China, and with overseas Chinese residing in Southeast Asia), and Indigenous Taiwanese to speak and acquire Austronesian languages (facilitating communication with Austronesian peoples in Southeast Asia, such as in the Philippines and New Guinea), Taiwanese served as intermediaries for the Japanese empire to extend its reach into these new locales.⁴⁸ Shirane argued that of those deployed overseas, a

⁴⁵ Ibid 7

⁴⁶ Ibid 14

⁴⁷ Ibid 124

⁴⁸ I deliberately use the phrase Sinophone languages, rather than Chinese languages or Chinese dialects, as these terms imply the multitude of languages spoken across China as simply sub-variations of Mandarin, and are mutually intelligible, which they are not.

number of them moved up in the imperial hierarchy, precisely because they were at a third locale—that is neither the colony nor the metropole, but a new frontier—thereby becoming “second-class imperialists”. In other words, although Taiwanese subjects did not become equals to the Japanese, they were also no longer at the bottom of the imperial hierarchy, as now that space was occupied by the peoples of newly acquired territories (local populations, and Allied POWs). Deployed Taiwanese were thus able to exercise power over a group of people even more marginalized and disempowered than themselves. Being placed in the middle, as intermediaries, resulted in Taiwanese occupying a positionality that was simultaneously “empowering and vulnerable.”⁴⁹ Taiwanese were both victims and victimizers in the war.⁵⁰

The Mobilization of the Taiwanese in WWII by Japan

Who becomes enshrined and revered in the halls of national memory? Do all soldiers who have fought on behalf of the nation become honored sons? The answer is no, not everyone. The nation is selective and intentional in choosing which stories to amplify and which to silence. This was most certainly true of Taiwanese who were deployed by the Japanese Empire to fight and die on behalf of the Japanese Emperor across Asia during the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War. In the immediate decades following the end of the war, the memory of these colonial soldiers was erased from both the metropole and the homeland. The truth that Japan had mobilized its colonies was inconvenient to the narrative of the Japanese people as victims. The

⁴⁹ Ibid 132. “Taiwanese personnel dispatched overseas earned relatively high wages and were celebrated as patriotic heroes in the Japanese media. Still, they remained at the mercy of their Japanese superiors, who commanded them to abuse and execute Allied POWs or sacrifice their lives in battle. Those who survived the Asia-Pacific War became among the first targets of retribution because many interacted directly with the Allied and Asian populations.”

⁵⁰ Ibid 156. “Taiwanese nurses in the Philippines also witnessed a Taiwanese couple in their fifties who served as comfort station operators in charge of Taiwanese women.”

historical truth that the Taiwanese had fought on behalf of the enemy during the war was inconvenient to the new colonizers, the Nationalists. Their very existence served as a reminder of a prior colonial enterprise in Taiwan, especially a Japanese one—the very enemy against which the Nationalist had fought for eight years in the “War of Resistance Against Japan.”⁵¹ Though Taiwanese-Japanese veterans lived and existed in both postwar Taiwan and Japan, their visibility in public memory and discourse was largely erased and forgotten. In Japan, the history of Taiwanese-Japanese soldiers was temporarily forced into the public limelight due to the shocking discovery of the indigenous Amis soldier Nakamura Teruo living in the jungles of Morotai Island, Indonesia, decades after the end of the war. In Taiwan, Nakamura’s sudden reappearance and occasional developments of Taiwanese-Japanese veterans suing the Japan government for denied pensions, make ephemeral news items. Their true re-emergence into public memory only occurred with the end of Martial Law in the late 1990s.

The period of 1937-1945 was the final phase of Japanese colonialism, when the Governor-General of Taiwan, Kobayashi Seizō (1936-1940), implemented the three core strategies of *kōminka*, industrialization, and southern advance. Southern advance and industrialization were mutually intertwined policies. Given the expansion of the war into Southeast Asia and the Pacific, Taiwan became the geographically closest territory within the Japanese Empire to these new fronts—as shipping personnel and goods from Japan was too costly. The industrialization of military related fields, such as chemicals, in Taiwan was catalyzed by this development.⁵²

⁵¹ The Nationalists referred to the Second Sino-Japanese War as the War of Resistance Against Japan (*kangri zhanzheng*).

⁵² Ts’ ai, Hui-yu Caroline (2016). Chapter 6 Total War, Labor Drafts, and Colonial Administration Wartime Mobilization in Taiwan, 1936–45. Paul H. Kratoska (Ed.), *Asian Labor in the Wartime Japanese Empire: Unknown Histories* (pp. 99-126). Oxfordshire, England: Routledge. 123-124

In total, “more than 80,000 Taiwanese were recruited or mobilized by the Japanese colonial and military authorities to serve as soldiers, and more than 126,000 Taiwanese served as ‘military servants’ and ‘civilian military personnel.’ Among them, there were more than 30,000 casualties.” A total of 200,000 Taiwanese were deployed across the Asia-Pacific for the war.⁵³ At the time, Taiwan had about a total population of 6.5 million people, of which the male population between 17 and 30 years old was approximately 630,000 in 1940.⁵⁴

The Second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937. The processes of deployment revealed contradictory impulses and mindsets of the colonial masters. There was initial hesitation to arm Han Taiwanese to fight in mainland China, out of concerns of ethnic loyalty, despite Taiwan having been governed separately for over at least four decades. Thus, Taiwanese were initially recruited as civilian military personnel (Chinese [C]: junshu, Japanese [J]: gunzoku) and military laborer (C: junfu, J: gunpu). These were not combat positions. Gunzoku had specialized roles such as “administrative work (paper work, accounting and such), communication, interpretation, translation, and medical care”.⁵⁵ Military laborers were “primarily in charge of transportation of heavy equipment, such as weaponry, construction of ditches, construction of camp, transportation and preparation of food, bridge and road construction, and other laborious

⁵³ Lan, Shi-Chi Mike. “‘Crime’ of Interpreting: Taiwanese Interpreters as War Criminals of World War II.” In *New Insights in the History of Interpreting*. Vol. 122. The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2016. 194

⁵⁴ Louzon, Victor. “From Japanese Soldiers to Chinese Rebels: Colonial Hegemony, War Experience, and Spontaneous Remobilization During the 1947 Taiwanese Rebellion.” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 77, no. 1 (2018): 161–179. 164

⁵⁵ Li Guo-Shen. “War and Taiwanese People: The Military Personnel Mobilization of Taiwan by the Colonial Government (1937-1945)”. Master’s Thesis—National Taiwan University History Graduate Institute, 1997. 67. Note: This MA was published in Mandarin, the English translation is my own.

work.”⁵⁶ Numerous corps of gunzoku⁵⁷ were recruited and deployed, each for specific purposes, such as to farm in various fronts or to work in labor-depleted factories in Japan.⁵⁸

Concerns of ethnic loyalty were abandoned only after much time, as Han Taiwanese were shown to be reliable in the position of gunzoku, and the war was extended to Southeast Asia and the Pacific due to the outbreak of the Asia-Pacific War in 1941. At that point, facing a massive geographical expansion of the warzone, the Taiwan Government General began to initiate the volunteer soldier program, which required additional personnel to be sent to the frontline. The colonies of Korea and Taiwan could not be left underutilized. However, it must be noted that the volunteer soldier program was first implemented in Korea in 1938, and then in Taiwan in 1942.⁵⁹ This is notable because Korea was acquired as a colony in 1910, fifteen years after Taiwan was acquired in 1895.

Although Indigenous Taiwanese did not share ethnicity with continental populations, they were only permitted to enlist as gunzoku four years after Han Taiwanese. This was because “Japanese officials viewed Indigenous Taiwanese as less acculturated—even primitive or

⁵⁶ Ibid 66

⁵⁷ I will be using the term gunzoku to collectively refer to both gunzoku and gunpu henceforth. Across the English literature, these terms have no universally agreed upon translations. Gunzoku is sometimes translated as civilian military personnel. Gunpu is sometimes translated as military servants. However, these translations are inadequate, as the roles assigned to these personnel were not always fixed, at times armed due to lack of soldiers, and ad-hoc reassigned to new roles as needed. They could be translated as “civilian military personnel”, however they were subject to the internal rules and regulations of the Japanese imperial military. They were not like modern contract workers or mercenaries, who though may have been hired to work for the military, are not subject to the internal rules and regulations that soldiers or military officers must adhere to.

⁵⁸ Ts’ai, Hui-yu Caroline (2016). Chapter 6 Total War, Labor Drafts, and Colonial Administration Wartime Mobilization in Taiwan, 1936–45. Paul H. Kratoska (Ed.), *Asian Labor in the Wartime Japanese Empire: Unknown Histories* (pp. 99-126). Oxfordshire, England: Routledge.

⁵⁹ Chou, Wan-yao. Chapter 2 The Kōminka Movement in Taiwan and Korea: Comparisons and Interpretations. *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931-1945* / Edited by Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie; Contributors Wan-Yao Chou [and Others]”. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1996. 52

uncivilized—with poor Japanese and without Chinese skills that would translate in wartime China.” Indigenous Taiwanese were only mobilized as gunzoku, and then subsequently as soldiers, after military expansion into Southeast Asia in 1941.⁶⁰ Whilst Han Taiwanese were placed in the status of a second-class imperialists in the wartime deployment, “Indigenous servicemen largely remained third-class subjects under the Japanese and Han Taiwanese.” The deployment of Indigenous Taiwanese was further tragic as the majority died in the war, and never returned home.⁶¹

As we have seen, there was not a singular homogenous and monolithic mobilization experience. Some people participated voluntarily, whereas others were subject to deceit and coercion as in the case of comfort women. Some were forced to “volunteer” by the Japanese police.⁶² Some were motivated by ideals of serving the empire and the social prestige garnered from the status of volunteer soldiers—a prestige socially engineered by the colonial government.⁶³ Some were motivated by higher salaries when compared to existing jobs in the colony.⁶⁴ Indigenous Taiwanese were motivated by both prestige and the high salary that motivated them. This was due to the third-class status they were long subjected to by Japanese

⁶⁰ Shirane 97

⁶¹ Ibid 175

⁶² Shirane 98

⁶³ Chatani 242

⁶⁴ Li Guo-Shen. 73. “Though some of the military laborers were forcibly recruited, there were also those who volunteered. Given that the term of deployment was short, and the relatively high salary of 60 yen a month, compared to that of 35 yen a month for public servants, and 45 yen a month for teachers. As the primary role of porters was labor and not combat, many Taiwanese were motivated by the economic benefits and volunteered.”

colonial rule; one class below the Han Taiwanese, who were second class, with the Japanese as first class.

There was also neither uniformity nor universality in regards to the extent to which peoples of the Japanese colonies identified with the empire, let alone identified *as* Japanese. Across both Korea and Taiwan, there was a constellation of projects designed with the intention to rapidly assimilate the colonies under the broad slogan of *kōminka* (imperial subjectification).⁶⁵ Putting aside the degree of success in assimilating the colonies, *kōminka* itself demonstrated an anxiety in the metropole regarding the loyalty of colonial subjects, and by extension the Japanese-ness of the colonies. Shirane further complicated *kōminka*, by pointing out that though one of its agendas of *kōminka* was the elimination of Sinophone language usage,; this agenda was counterproductive as the Japanese government was intent on using Han Taiwanese for their linguistic abilities on the China front. Herein lies the central paradox to the Japanese mobilization of Taiwanese: the ethnicity and linguistic abilities of Han Taiwanese made their loyalty suspect in a war against China, yet the linguistic abilities they possessed due to their ethnic heritage also made them unique assets in the very same war. This paradox can be observed in the numerous contradictions of the policies by the Japanese military as well as the Government General of Taiwan.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Ching 92. “This was a cultural political campaign that aimed to transform its colonized people into imperial subjects through the ‘national language movement’ (*kokugoundo*), the ‘name-changing program’ (*kaiseimei*) and the ‘volunteers system’ (*shiganhei seido*).”

⁶⁶ Shirane 101. “On the one hand, the Government-General promoted *kōminka* policies that sought to convert the mother tongue of Taiwanese subjects to Japanese, increase patriotic loyalty, and eliminate pro-Chinese sentiment. Along with active Japanese- language outreach efforts, colonial officials banned Chinese-language education and publications. At the same time, the Japanese encouraged the use of spoken Chinese for pragmatic war aims. The Government-General inaugurated Chinese-language radio broadcasts to promote war propaganda and pro-Japanese nationalism among the Han Taiwanese population (the majority did not yet understand Japanese in 1937). Moreover, the Japanese military dispatched Han Taiwanese as

This paradox persisted even after the end of the war. Taiwanese and Koreans alike were never given equality to their counterparts in the Japanese metropole. The Taiwanese were wanted for their manpower and linguistic skill sets. The Taiwanese were however, not wanted as actual full citizens, not granted with all the duties and privileges that come with being a full citizen. The Japanese government was more than happy to compel military service from its colonial subjects by providing incentives (e.g. higher salaries than the jobs available to them in the colony, coercion via Japanese police). The postwar Japanese government however, refused to recognize their military service, by actively denying Taiwanese and Korean veterans their wages and pensions, withholding their military postal saving deposits, and canceling their disability and bereavement compensations. Colonial soldiers were treated as disposable. Harvested for the labor and skill sets they possessed, and left injured, stranded, and disabled to their own devices in the postwar.

About Kan's Biography

Using the biography of Kan Shigematsu 簡茂松 as the central text of this study has required some authorial decisions, starting with his name. I am deliberate in not referring to him by the Mandarin pronunciation of the subject of his name (Jian Mao-song), because he stated in his biography that he did not know Mandarin and could not communicate in it. His two languages of proficiency were Taiwanese Hokkien and Japanese. His family in Taiwan only referred to him by his Taiwanese Hokkien nickname of A-tsuí 阿水. It is likely that for most of his life, in most circumstances, he was referred to as Kan Shigematsu. Particularly so as he made an intentional and conscious decision to stop using the Japanese surname of Takenaga—a

military assistants to China's war front precisely because of their Sino-Japanese bilingual abilities.”

surname which his family adopted during the kōminka movement—after he found out that his Japanese nationality had been rescinded, and also that he was not entitled to the benefits and rights that Japanese veterans enjoyed. I wish to honor his decision to revert back to his family name Kan—as the character is pronounced in Taiwanese Hokkien. It also happens to be the onyomi (Japanese pronunciation derived from Chinese) pronunciation of the character 簡.⁶⁷ As he never gained Mandarin proficiency in his life, it is unlikely that he referred to himself using the Mandarin reading of his name.

His life was the focus of a 2000 biography *I! The life of Kan Shigematsu, A Taiwanese-Japanese Soldier*. The book details his experience of deployment to Borneo as a POW guard, his service as a soldier in Brunei, his sentencing and serving as a Class BC War Criminal across Southeast Asia, his “repatriation” to Japan, and his subsequent life in Tokyo. The life of Kan Shigematsu was one of transnational movement and displacement, influenced by the shifting geopolitics of the Asia Pacific War and the subsequent Cold War. The original text was published in Japanese in 2000 in Japan, with the aid of Hamazaki Koichi, a Japanese journalist.⁶⁸ A year later, the Mandarin version was published in Taiwan.⁶⁹ The translated passages in this thesis originate in the Mandarin version.

The introduction of the biography starts with a scene of direct confrontation that occurred in their first encounter between Kan and Hamazaki as strangers. In the summer of 1997, Kan was

⁶⁷ In the kanji (Chinese characters adopted into use in the Japanese language), their pronunciations can be categorized into onyomi and kunyomi pronunciations. The onyomi being the Chinese pronunciation of the kanji, the kunyomi being the Japanese pronunciation.

⁶⁸Hamazaki Koichi. *Ore wa nihonhei: Taiwanjin kan shigematsu no sokoku* (Tokyo: Shinchosha, 2000)

⁶⁹ Hamazaki Koichi (Binqi Xuanyi), *Wo A!: Yige Taiwan ren Riben bing Jian Maosong de rensheng (I! The life of Kan Shigematsu, A Taiwanese-Japanese Soldier)*, trans. Qiu Zhenrui (Taipei: Yuanshen, 2001)

driving his taxi in the Ikebukuro District of Tokyo, and picked up Hamazaki as a customer. Kan was then 71 years old. The confrontation arose as Hamazaki noticed the driver's license photo plastered on the back of the front seat, and asked, "Your surname is Kan? Where are you from?" A question on national origin is intended to differentiate and draw a hierarchical relationship between the questioner and the questioned.⁷⁰ To which, Kan replied Taiwan. The confrontation escalated as Hamazaki questioned why a Taiwanese was driving a taxicab in Tokyo, rather than in Taiwan. Kan devolved into an angry monologue: "Yes, I am Taiwanese, and actually I was a former Japanese Imperial Army First Class Soldier, a Class BC War Criminal. If you are indeed right wing as you said, my ancestral country is Japan. For the ancestral country, for the Emperor we fought with our lives, yet we became war criminals. To this day, your country's government refuses to make any payments, I will wait until the grave. I will not die until I have received my proper reparations. I am not exaggerating!"

Kan is not a Japanese surname. To explain why a conversation about nationality between a Taiwanese taxi driver and his Japanese customer could engender a hostile confrontation, requires some context on the ideology and mythology of Japan as racially homogenous. This ideology emerged in the specific context of postwar Japan.⁷¹ It is not a neutral or harmless ideology, for it helped facilitate the erasure of the multiethnic imperial past of Japan. It must be noted that this was a significant shift from wartime Japan. Due to its need to cater to a multiethnic nation-state, wartime Japan actively emphasized "shared racial lineages with others,

⁷⁰Tai, Eiko. "Taiwanese in Japan: A Legacy of Japanese Rule in Taiwan". ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1993. 70. "The act of asking these questions has an effect of drawing a line between the two people involved and putting them in a hierarchical order. Such an action is the exercise of power (Foucault 1982) to the degree that it coerces the person who is asked to admit that he or she is not a member of mainstream Japanese society, and is lower in status than Japanese people."

⁷¹Ching 33-34

especially with Koreans, or even rejected explicit racial thinking and the symbolism of blood altogether.”⁷² In postwar Japan, the ideology of racial homogeneity was of such potency, that it served as “a basis of oppression and discrimination against the Ainu, the Okinawans, the Koreans, Taiwanese, and other minorities in modern Japan. They have been pressured to be assimilated to become ‘like Japanese’ while at the same time they have been treated as outsiders of the society.”⁷³ Thus, someone such as Kan who explicitly refuses to assimilate, by refusing to adopt a Japanese surname, disrupts this fiction of homogeneity, and draws the attention of those who are ethnically Japanese.

Upon learning of his driver’s shocking background, Hamazaki quickly apologized. And as he exited the cab at his destination, he promised that he would help Kan tell his story to the world. The biography was the fulfillment of that promise. Between meeting Kan, and the publication of the biography, three and a half years elapsed. Hamazaki was one of the few Japanese individuals in Kan’s biography who was willing and able to recognize the tremendous debts owed to and harms done to him—a former colonial subject—by Japan. Many of his encounters with Japanese nationals were often racist, dismissive, ignorant, and/or unsympathetic to his plight. He was often asked why he did not simply return to Taiwan, as Hamazaki did in their initial encounter.

The very conceptualization of returning to Taiwan as an equally viable alternative to staying in Japan—as though one was making the choice between oranges and apples, steak or fish, was in and of itself a display of ignorance. Taiwan was under Martial Law for 38 years, from 20 May 1949 to 14 July 1987. Martial Law Taiwan was an authoritarian state, where the Nationalist regime enacted re-colonization, Sinicization, and totalitarianism. The official

⁷² Fujitani 12

⁷³ Tai 68

language was changed from Japanese to Mandarin, a language that most of the benshengren neither knew nor spoke.⁷⁴ Government and other prominent jobs were prioritized towards waishengren. The Martial Law period is also commonly referred to as the period of White Terror, whereby the state systematically surveilled, policed, punished, and executed individuals who challenged or were perceived to be challenging the legitimacy of the state. Returning to live in Taiwan during this period was not an equally viable alternative to living in postwar Japan, which allowed the rise of civil society, and adhered to the rule of law.

In the biography, Hamazaki noted certain barriers and challenges that occurred during his interviews with Kan, the subsequent transcription, and the editorial process. As Kan only orally narrated, with Hamazaki transcribing, and editing, one must remember that this is not a work of autobiography. The protagonist is actively narrated through a third party. Hamzaki noted that, “In order to clarify the sequence of events, at first I asked Mr. Kan to write it down. However, his level of Japanese language composition writing training ended when he left for Taiwan at the age of 17. Thus this attempt was abandoned.” As such, Kan’s Japanese ability alone could not have produced this text, not without the aid of a native speaker. In addition, Hamazaki observed certain gaps in Kan’s narrative; as Kan was at the bottom of the military hierarchy, he lacked knowledge in certain overall and macro developments in the Asia-Pacific War. The intended audience of this biography was the Japanese general public, so it became necessary for Hamazaki to cover those gaps by doing some research to provide some macro historical contexts. While this was a nice and arguably important work that Hamazaki had provided, it is not evident in the biography as to where Hamazaki made these interventions.

⁷⁴ Benshengren (those of the province) is a terminology that comes to refer to Han people who first settled in Taiwan pre-1945. Mostly migrated from coastal provinces of Fujian and Guangdong. This term came into currency after KMT rule, to distinguish the bengshengren from those who came over after 1945, after Taiwan was retrocessed to Nationalist China. Those who came after 1945 came to be referred to as waishengren (those from outside the province).

The narrative of the biography is written in a roughly chronological order, with some exceptions. The introduction chapter starts with the initial encounter between Hamazaki and Kan. Chapter One does not start from Kan's childhood in Taiwan, but rather from the moment when he arrived in Japan for the first time, at a harbor near Hiroshima, after just having completed a five year sentence as a Class BC war criminal at Manus Island under the custody of the Australian military. The narrative choice of starting at this particular scene functions as a way to shock and introduce the readers to the vicissitudes and forces that affected Taiwanese-Japanese veterans. For the purposes of efficiency, I analyze the events of the biography as they occurred chronologically. Though there are many moments of shock and despair in Kan's life story, this particular moment was intentionally chosen as the starting point of the biography. The purpose was not exclusively to shock the reader, but to introduce the reader to Kan Shigematsu's primary drive: the righteous anger and indignation at being abandoned and disavowed by the country to whom he sacrificed his youth. He had in the Japanese military for three years, followed by five years serving as a Class BC War Criminal, totaling up to eight years of sacrifice for the Japanese Empire.

If the primary purpose of the biography is to tell the fate of Taiwanese who had served for Japan during the war, a secondary and intertwined purpose is to elicit public sympathy. Public sympathy could only be ensured by casting the Taiwanese personnel as victims. There are moments in this biography, such as when Kan served as POW guard in Borneo, that one could sense a conscious intent to reinforce this secondary purpose. Victims, such as those when questioned by the police, the court of the legal system, or that of the public perception, are at times compelled by certain preconceived notions and perceptions of how victims should present themselves and their narratives. If any part of their presentation or narration could even conflict

or contradict that perception of what a victim is or should be, they may lose their victimhood. Victims may be compelled to conform with such preconceived notions. In that process of their presentation, they may leave out details and components of their experiences. This kind of self-censorship has also occurred in this biography. It is necessary to point out, as I do in Part I, that in his narrative, Kan refused to be explicit about the systemic physical abuses of Allied POWs, abuse which Taiwanese gunzoku most certainly took part in. This is a difficult subject for Kan, perhaps because he feared that uncensored commentary on this subject could negate the victimhood of Taiwanese-Japanese veterans. However, from the perspective of my project, these two identities are not mutually exclusive: being a victim does not mean one cannot simultaneously also be a victimizer, and being a victimizer does not mean one cannot also be a victim.

Here it is perhaps necessary to draw parallels between the flood of oral history and memoirs of Taiwanese-Japanese veterans to those of waishengren, which also emerged in the 1990's and 2000's. In his monograph *The Great Exodus*, Dominic Yang argues that the common understanding of waishengren as an exclusively homogeneous group of supporters and beneficiaries of the ROC regime was a misperception.⁷⁵ Yang explicitly argued that memory cannot be treated as history, that it must be subject to scrutiny with rigorous archival and other documentary research. Yang demonstrates that the memory boom—referring to the copious amount of memoirs and other cultural productions in regard to the great exodus from mainland China to Taiwan after the KMT lost the Chinese Civil War—occurred only in the last three decades due to specific socio-political shifts in Taiwan. The end of Martial Law rule not only allowed Taiwanese-Japanese veterans to openly speak of their experiences, it also opened the

⁷⁵ Yang, Dominic Meng-Hsuan. *The Great Exodus from China : Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Modern Taiwan*. Cambridge, United Kingdom ; Cambridge University Press, 2021.

door for other social groups who were silenced. This included the great exodus, because the story of defeat was heavily censored by the Nationalist government, as it did not shine a positive light. According to Yang, the heartrending stories of escape and refugees that the waishengren began to tell openly was a way “to mitigate this social trauma and deflect blanket stigmatization.”⁷⁶ This mitigation was in response to the emergence of a benshengren discourse, speaking of the horrors and violence they endured at the hands of the Nationalist government under 228 and the White Terror. This wave of discourse also attacked waishengren as a group who had actively assisted and consolidated the four decades of totalitarian rule.

Yang further complicates this story by arguing that based on available statistical data, waishengren made up a majority of the victims of White Terror.⁷⁷ This heavily contradicts the perception of waishengren as beneficiaries of the Nationalist government. Yang argues that after the collapse of the Nationalist government on mainland China in 1949, the massive waves of military personnel and civilian refugees that came to Taiwan were heavily unregulated. This unchecked mass migration combined with a very real fear of infiltration of Communist agents, was a pretext for the government to crack down on any and all suspicious persons. In addition, many waishengren had severe problems in adjusting. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, mainlander crime rates were double the overall crime rates in Taiwan. In the early 1950s, in Taipei the waishengren suicide rate was significantly higher than that of benshengren.⁷⁸ They were what Yang termed as “socially atomized people”, people who have been displaced and forcibly removed from a web of social and cultural ties. Yang’s work provides us with a complex picture: the waishengren were on the one hand displaced refugees who suffered persecution,

⁷⁶ Ibid 217

⁷⁷ Ibid 111

⁷⁸ Ibid 69-70

corruption and neglect from the Nationalist government, but simultaneously were also members of a small group of colonizers who came to exert cultural, political, social and economic dominance over the benshengren for over four decades. Both victims and victimizers: one does not negate the other.

Reception of Kan's Book

In light of its emotional claims, the publication of Kan's book was met with significant interest. Kan held a press conference in Taipei for the publication of the Mandarin version of his biography on April 25, 2001.⁷⁹ A number of people attended, including other Taiwanese-Japanese veterans who did not know Kan personally, a number of academics, and a politician—Legislative Yuan representative Lin Zhuo-Shui (林濁水), of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), a Taiwanese nationalist party. Kan expressed his lament at the continued failure of the Japanese government to apologize and provide due compensation to veterans. He went so far as to say that even if he dies, he will not cross the Naihe Bridge to the afterlife until the Japanese government has made adequate reparations; in other words, he would rather remain a ghost and haunt wrongdoers.⁸⁰ Kan also said that he was very pleased that this book was published, so that today's generation may learn about this period of history.

⁷⁹ This section uses exclusively newspaper articles that reported on the news conferences held by Kan and Hamazaki. Citations can be found in the bibliography chapter, under primary sources.

⁸⁰ Naihe Bridge in Chinese folklore is a bridge that one must cross upon entering the underworld after having deceased. Only after having crossed the bridge and drunk the Meng Po Soup—which will render one to lose all memories of their life, can one then be re-born to the next life. In other words, Kan is saying that he is willing to stay in limbo in the underworld, and delay his reincarnation to the next life, until such time as the Japanese government has apologized and paid their due compensation.

In attendance at the press conference were researchers of the Institute of Taiwanese History (ITH) at Academia Sinica, Cao Yong-He (曹永和) and Zhong Shu-min (鍾淑敏). Cao studied History at the Taihoku Imperial University under Kuwata Rokurō—a specialist in East Asian history.⁸¹ Cao specialized in research on Dutch rule of Taiwan in the 17th Century. Starting from 1984, Cao taught courses in *History of Taiwan*, and *Guided Reading of Key Texts in Japanese History*.⁸² Zhong as of September 2023, was appointed as the new head of the Taiwan History Institute at Academia Sinica.⁸³ Zhong specializes in research on the Government General of Taiwan archives, as well as on Japanese rule in Taiwan—specifically in regards to the experience of Taiwanese who resided in the Nanyang region, both before and during the war.⁸⁴

Cao and Zhong had overseen a research project on the POW Camps set up by the Japanese military across Taiwan and Southeast Asia during WWII. At the time, this was the newest topic to be researched on the topic of the experience of the Taiwanese people in WWII; the other topics already researched on included: soldiers, comfort women, and the takasago-giyutai (the Indigenous corps). While conducting research in Japan, Cao and Zhong came across Kan. Cao subsequently recommended Kan’s biography to be published at Yuanshen Publishing.

⁸¹ 臺北帝國大學史學科的研究 . Department of History NTU , 2009. Accessed Nov. 10, 2023. https://homepage.ntu.edu.tw/~history/public_html/tsao/tsao_paper.html.

⁸² “與曹老師一起唸日文的日子。” Department of History NTU , October 2015. Accessed Nov. 10, 2023. https://homepage.ntu.edu.tw/~history/public_html/09newsletter/19/19-04.html.

⁸³ “本院台灣史研究所所長由研究員鍾淑敏博士接任，廖院長主持交接典禮。” Academia Sinica, Aug. 29, 2023. Accessed Nov. 10, 2023 https://www.sinica.edu.tw/News_Content/56/1820.

⁸⁴Nanyang refers to Southeast Asia and Pacific. It is a geographical terminology that originated from Japan. “Chung, Shu-Ming .” Scholars Hub of the Academia Sinica . Accessed 2023. <https://ir.sinica.edu.tw/cris/rp/rp00285/otherinfo.html>.

Scholars in attendance at the press conference, including Cao and Zhong, were interviewed by reporters and asked for their views on Kan's book. Cao expressed that this book is part of a wider set of historical materials that should be used in the construction of a history of Taiwan, built on the conceptual framework of the island of Taiwan, based on the factors of spatial, temporal, and human factors, one that is beyond the frameworks of mainland Chinese history and the cross-straits, a history based on Taiwan's own subjectivity. Cao also expressed that in regards to WWII, the Taiwanese had a completely different experience than that of China. While mainland Chinese were oppressed by the Japanese, the Taiwanese were not only oppressed by the Japanese, but also forced to oppress other people.

Another scholar in attendance was Huang Zhi-Hui (黃智慧), an anthropologist at the Institute of Ethnology at Academia Sinica. Huang's research focus is on Okinawa, the effects of Japanese rule on ethnic relations in Taiwan, and NGO activism in regards to seeking state compensations for indigenous communities affected by the 2009 Morakot typhoon.⁸⁵ She noted that although there were a total of 207,000 Taiwanese-Japanese soldiers, the biography of Kan is one of the few books that re-constructed an entire life story, and covered a larger period of the time. Huang also felt that Kan's critiques of Japan could perhaps counteract pro-Japanese sentiment adopted by certain communities.

There was also a subsequent and separate conference held by Hamazaki Koichi and Kan, who also traveled to Taipei, a week later. Hamazaki stated that the general attitude of the Japanese people toward the issue of unequal treatment of colonial veterans is one of hoping it would gradually fade into memory. As such, even though the Japanese version of the book was published by the well-known publisher *Shinchosha*, the sale numbers were less than expected.

⁸⁵ "Huang, Chih Hue." Institute of Ethnology Academia Sinica . Accessed November 10, 2023. <https://www.ioe.sinica.edu.tw/Content/Researcher/content.aspx?&SiteID=530167135246736660&MenuID=530167136406372131&Fid=0&MSID=530210513413756373>.

As of that press conference, only 4,500 copies of the Japanese version had been sold. Hamazaki added that the coverage of the issue in Japanese media is limited, and thus the majority of the Japanese population assume that the issue of compensation for colonial veterans has already been resolved. Hamazaki noted that he deliberately used a more conversational approach when he wrote the biography, in the hopes of letting more Japanese people learn this history. At this press conference, Kan also noted that from his many experiences of dealing with Japanese officials, it is his opinion that the plan of the Japanese government is as follows: as these veterans will all die out, and the power to write History will still rest in the hands of the Japanese, the officials thus always adopt a patronizing attitude when dealing with Taiwanese-Japanese veterans.

Most authors do not hold press conferences. At Kan's press conference, there were four different newspapers present, along with prominent members of the historical community, who consented to be interviewed about his book. They lent their academic credentials in part to help magnify and boost the reception of this book. It should also be noted that Institutes and Departments of Taiwanese History were not created in Taiwan until the 1990s. Such institutes and departments only came into existence due to the democratization of Taiwan. History textbooks and general history education under Martial Law had predominantly been concerned with Chinese history—this was part of the concerted effort to Sinicize Taiwan and the Taiwanese people. To actively and explicitly research, produce, and teach Taiwanese History was not possible during the Martial Law era.

Abandonment of Colonial/Minority Citizens: A Universal Phenomenon

The abandonment and erasure of Taiwanese-Japanese gunzoku and soldiers by Japan is not unique. That is to say, empires disposing of its ethnic and colonial subjects who have made tremendous sacrifices at its behest under the auspices as “imperial subjects,” is a universal phenomenon. Similar parallels are to be found in the post-WWII United States, such as Black and Indigenous Americans.

Minority soldiers of the United States who had served in WWII, though they served their country as valiantly as their White counterparts, were denied equal benefits. A key legislative bill that helped significantly increase the American Middle Class in the 20th Century was the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944—commonly known as the “GI Bill,” in which veterans were “entitled to, among other things, a business or mortgage loan to be guaranteed by the Veterans Administration (VA).”⁸⁶ 1.1 million Black Americans served in WWII, 1 in 13 soldiers was Black or 7.69 percent. Yet, Black Americans only received 0.7% of VA guaranteed mortgage loans. White veterans faced no impediments in securing such loans. This unequal and racist treatment had long term consequences: “Between 1940 and 2009, white homeownership rates increased from 42 to 74 percent. During this same period African American homeownership rates increased from 23 to 46 percent.”⁸⁷ According to Historian Kathleen Frydell, beneficiaries of the GI Bill mortgage guarantee “secured significant forms of generational wealth, assets that could be inherited or leveraged to create wealth for descendants.”⁸⁸ Black American veterans

⁸⁶ Woods, Louis Lee. “ALMOST ‘NO NEGRO VETERAN ... COULD GET A LOAN’: AFRICAN AMERICANS, THE GI BILL, AND THE NAACP CAMPAIGN AGAINST RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION, 1917–1960.” *The Journal of African American history* 98, no. 3 (2013): 392–417. 395

⁸⁷ Ibid 410

⁸⁸ Frydell, Kathleen. *The GI Bill*. Cambridge ; Cambridge University Press, 2009. 24

were desired by their nation for their raw manpower—or else they would not have been allowed to enlist. However, they were not seen as full citizens, and thus denied benefits that were given to their White counterparts.

Another group forgotten by the nation were the Navajo (Diné) code talkers.⁸⁹ A total of 400 Navajo code talkers were recruited in WWII. The deployment of Indigenous Americans to the war was full of contradictions and ironies. Their native tongue, which had been under decades of “systematic attempts of extermination and which they were forbidden to use, was now turning into a crucial device to win the war.”⁹⁰ The Diné endured the war against the Navajo launched against them by Kit Carson—an infamous American frontiersman, they were forced to endure the Navajo Long Walk—relocating from their homelands to Fort Summer in New Mexico in 1864, the Livestock Massacre of the 1930s when employees of the Bureau of Indian Affairs burned thousands of sheep and goats alive thereby depriving Diné of their livelihoods, and the forced removal of children to boarding schools. The very people whom the American government committed genocide against turned out to be crucial human resources in WWII. The American military was in need of a code that cannot be broken by the enemy. The Navajo language as of the 1940s had no written form, and was considered one of the most difficult of all American Indian languages to learn, making it “an ideal basis for the development of a military code.” The reasons why so many were willing to enlist—that is, in addition to patriotism—was perhaps most ironic of all: “the incentive of escaping from conditions of poverty, of cultural

⁸⁹ Navajo is the term Spanish missionaries used to refer to them. They refer to themselves as Diné, meaning the people.

⁹⁰ Dāwes, Birgit. “Transnational Debts: The Cultural Memory of Navajo Code Talkers in World War II.” *American studies journal* 59, no. 59 (2015).

<http://www.asjournal.org/59-2015/cultural-memory-of-navajo-code-talkers-in-world-war-ii/>

alienation (mostly inflicted through compulsory attendance of boarding schools), and of reservation life.”⁹¹ Precisely because they have been so severely displaced, dispossessed, and alienated from their own lands, the opportunity to join the military was in some sense an improvement from their then current conditions. Yet, as the project itself was classified, upon return, they were not allowed to publicly discuss their work. Their project was only declassified after 1968, and only then did their contributions were slowly publicly recognized by the federal government. Furthermore, they too were denied access to the benefits of the GI Bill.

In sum, the nation-state was more than happy to utilize and direct colonial and minority citizens for their raw manual power, as well as the unique linguistic assets they provide, towards the war efforts. However, citizenship is not solely about the duties and responsibilities one must uphold to the nation. Conversely, citizenship is also about what the nation provides, be it rights, privileges, or benefits. When functioning in its ideal form, citizenship is a two-way street relationship in which both parties—the individual citizen and the nation-state—mutually benefit. Yet, when it comes to colonial or ethnic citizens, the nation-state is reluctant to deal out the full benefits of citizenship. Perhaps because the nation-state does not perceive colonial citizens as full citizens to begin with.

⁹¹ Däwes

PART I SERVING THE EMPIRE

CHAPTER ONE: DEPLOYMENT TO BRITISH NORTH BORNEO (BNB) AND BRUNEI

Overview

This chapter deals with the events from Kan's enlistment as a gunzoku, specifically as a POW guard, to the end of the war, when the Japanese military in Borneo surrendered to the Australian military. This chapter deals with the morally and ethically contentious position of the POW guard—who wielded life and death powers over the Allied POWs they oversaw on a daily basis. Yet, though the POW guards wielded power, they also sat at the very bottom of the Japanese military hierarchy, as they were gunzoku, and thus ranked lower than soldiers. The first topic of this chapter is the treatment of POWs, as it became a major category of cases tried in the Class BC War Crimes. This chapter actively speaks on the issue of the mistreatment of POWs, as Kan was subsequently tried and convicted as a Class BC War Criminal by the Australian military—as will be detailed in Chapter Two. Due to the high rate of death of Allied POWs, the Allied countries were most determined in seeking justice in the immediate aftermath of the war. The second topic is the re-production and maintenance of ethnic based colonial hierarchy. Despite being sent to the frontlines, ethnic hierarchies were just as rigidly adhered to as within the colony. Any semblance of equality or egalitarianism across ethnic lines were only temporary facades. The third topic is the draconian lengths to which loyalty is indoctrinated upon soldiers and gunzoku—via physical discipline and group punishment. Very little autonomy or individuality is retained after entering the Japanese Imperial Military.

Childhood

Born in 1925, Kan grew up in Tucheng, a farm village close to Taipei.⁹² He was the third eldest out of seven children. His family was not wealthy. The family adopted the surname of Takenaga during the *kōminka* movement. It was given by a Japanese staff member at the village office. His Japanese style name of Shigematsu was given to him at birth, by the staff at the village office. At home he was referred to as 阿水 A-tsuí, a Taiwanese Hokkien nickname.

Kan attended six years of mandatory *kōgakkō* or primary school. Japanese colonial Taiwan had a three-tier system of education based on ethnicity: Japanese, Han Taiwanese, and Indigenous Taiwanese received different forms of schooling and of descending quality. Japanese attended the *shōgakkō* or elementary schools. Han Taiwanese attended *kōgakkō*. For the highland Indigenous there were *bandō kyōikusho* or educational centers, taught by Japanese policemen. There were also middle and high schools, and universities which most Taiwanese could not afford to attend. Japanese was the only language permitted at school, and Taiwanese Hokkien was spoken at Kan's home. After primary school he started taking the bus to Taipei to attend Kensei Seinen Gakkou (Kensei Youth School). The Youth School was only one year long. Its purpose was military training (e.g. how to use bayonets) and indoctrination.

Kan, like many of his friends, idealized the prospect of becoming a Japanese soldier. The status of the soldier was exalted.⁹³ Kan's friends often said, "Once I graduate, I too am going to become a *gunzoku* on the frontlines." The officers at school often reiterated that the Japanese

⁹² Tucheng is presently a district within New Taipei City, a separate entity from Taipei City.

⁹³ Louzon 165. "The word *youxiu* 優秀 (good, excellent) was commonly used in ulterior oral testimonies to describe the qualities, both moral and physical, of those who became soldiers (Chou 1997, 114 [1995]; Ts'ai 2008, 34 [1995], 73 [1995]). There was an 'objective' dimension to this assessment, since volunteers had to take written, oral, and physical examinations to be accepted."

military will win every fight in China and Asia. Kan and his peers had no negative emotions about the war. None of them doubted an inevitable Japanese victory. As graduation neared, the school arranged for students to volunteer as gunzoku. Many accepted this without question. As Kan graduated from the Youth School in March 1942, he along with his friends were accepted as gunzoku of the Japanese military Taiwan Command. After enlistment was formalized, the police no longer treated him with disrespect. This was noteworthy as the police wielded tremendous power in colonial Taiwan, and were disliked by most civilians. Kan also noted that since Japan became embroiled with the United States, there were only ever reports of victories. They truly believed that Japan was winning. In reality, in June of that year in the island chain battles, significant losses had occurred, namely Japan's defeat in the Battle of Midway. However they knew nothing of this crisis. The internal propaganda was consistent, and kept colonial subjects oblivious of the actual progress of the war.

Deployment

In November of 1942, Kan was notified by mail to report to the Kaohsiung port—located in Southern Taiwan. Kan and his fellow gunzoku wore school uniforms and military hats they purchased at a grocery store, and departed for Kaohsiung. Kan described their arrival at Kaohsiung as filled with glee and excitement, an atmosphere akin to that of a graduation trip. Neither he nor his family felt any sadness about his departure for war. He attributed this to the success of the Japanese government in engineering and naturalizing such an atmosphere. They boarded a ship already full of thousands of newly recruited Japanese soldiers. The ship headed for Japan-occupied Saigon—present day Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. During their week there, Kan was surprised to learn that the residents of the local Chinatown spoke Hokkien as well, and

even played the same games. They then boarded a ship departing for Singapore, where they spent another month waiting for deployment.

According to Kan, at the time he was carrying 1,500 Yen on him. This sum was raised by his brothers and relatives. 1,500 Yen at the time could buy two houses in Taiwan. Kan kept this sum on him at all times. By June 1945, he became a soldier to be deployed to Brunei. After being advised by others, he finally deposited in a military postal savings account. However, the military postal savings system became one of the many collapsed systems by the end of the war, and his money became unretrievable. Regarding this issue, there was still no word from the Japanese government, at the time when the biography was published in 2000.

After their month-long wait in Singapore, Kan and his fellow gunzoku were deployed to British North Borneo (BNB)—part of present day Malaysia—to the Borneo POW Concentration Camp, assigned as POW guards. There were concentration camps in Sandakan and Rabaul, and other locations, in total eleven sites. Kan was headed to the main site of Kuching, which also served as the POW camp headquarters. Their ship was escorted by two cargo ships converted to be outfitted with cannons and machine guns. There were no proper military ships to escort them. On the second night of the voyage, one of the ships was attacked by a torpedo from an enemy submarine, and sank within seconds. The ship Kan boarded was not attacked. Rescue operations began under the dark of the night. The sunken ship had carried 500-600 soldiers, two thirds of whom died. Next morning, Kan awoke to a ship surrounded by floating corpses. This was his first time witnessing the cruelty of war. The jubilant atmosphere of a graduation trip evaporated. This was Kan's baptism to the violence of war.

A week later, they arrived at Kuching. The Kuching POW concentration camp was situated close to the port, and was enclosed with barbed wires in its outer perimeter. Borneo

POW Concentration Camp Main Branch was also the headquarters. At the time BNB was under the jurisdiction of the Japanese army. South Borneo—present day Indonesia—was under the jurisdiction of the Japanese navy.

POWs held in Kuching were captured across various theaters of war in Southeast Asia: British, Australian, American, and Dutch soldiers and military officers, British India, Dutch Indonesia civilians, as well as diplomats, government staff, corporate employees and their families, totaling at five thousand people. Some were subsequently moved to other sites. The total detainee population was later reduced to three thousand. Japan had unexpectedly acquired far more Allied POWs than expected, and thus had to rely on its colonies to staff the personnel to guard them.⁹⁴ POW camps were established across Southeast Asia, as well as Taiwan. The Taiwanese served as the POW guards in BNB. After the arrival of Kan's party, there were a total of 200 POW guards. The POWs were utilized for their labor, as the Japanese military initiated massive infrastructural projects for the war effort.⁹⁵ Japanese occupation across Southeast Asia resulted from urgent demand for key resources. After its expansion into mainland China and

⁹⁴ Shirane 150. "By May 1942, the Japanese military was in charge of an estimated 270,000 Allied POWs (140,000 servicemen and 130,000 civilians)— far more than initially anticipated. The Japanese lack of manpower, logistical planning, and interest in prioritizing POW care resulted in high casualty rates: over one-quarter of Allied POWs died by the end of the war." Ibid 151 "In May 1942, the Japanese military began recruiting Taiwanese (mostly Han but also indigenous peoples) and Koreans as POW prison guards to free Japanese soldiers for frontline duties. New volunteers underwent two months of training in their respective colonies before deployment to overseas POW camps. An estimated 1,500 Taiwanese and 3,000 Korean prison guards served in Southeast Asia. The majority of Taiwanese were dispatched to POW camps in Hong Kong, Borneo and the Philippines, while Koreans were sent to Singapore, Siam, and the East Indies."

⁹⁵ Fitzpatrick, Georgina. "The Trials on Labuan." In *Australia's War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:429–470, 2016. 430 "Sandakan, in particular was of vital strategic importance for the Japanese as it linked the oil fields of Borneo's east coast to the Philippines and other areas in the region that were occupied by Japan. To build an airstrip at Sandakan to serve as a refueling stop between the Philippines, Singapore, Java, Celebes and Timor, the Japanese required a large labour force."

Indochina by July 1941, Japan was retaliated with trade embargoes from the United States, the British Commonwealth, and the Netherland East Indies (NEI). This catalyzed Japanese expansion into Southeast Asia, in search for rubber plantations and oil fields.⁹⁶

Under the direct supervision of ten Japanese soldiers, Kan and other POW guards were responsible for the surveillance of detainees and oversight of the POW labor performance. In the institutional hierarchy, a Japanese soldier served as the captain of every unit, each unit composed of forty guards. Most of those who served as captain had formerly served as police in Taiwan. Among the Japanese who ruled Taiwan, the police were some of the most hated amongst the Taiwanese public, for the enormous amount of power they wielded in a quotidian manner. Thus these former Taiwan-based Japanese policemen helped reinforce the colonial hierarchy.

Upon arrival, gunzoku were immediately integrated into the camp hierarchy, and were ordered to “follow all directions from officers and higher ups.” They also received the following supplies: British-made rifles, fifty bullets, a bayonet, army uniform, military hat, belt, leg wrappings, high top leather shoes, gas mask, backpack, food container, water bottle, rain cloths, triangle scarf, and bandages. The rifles were war spoils. They were much heavier and powerful than the standard Japanese military issued Type 38 Rifle. The rifles came with rusts. If they were caught with their rifles with noticeable rusts they were reprimanded by their captain, “Attention! What did you do? How could you let rifles that the emperor gifted you with get rust? Bring out your soul as an imperial army soldier and clean it well!” They would all then be slapped. But the captain himself could not slap all forty of them all at once. They would be ordered to stand in two lines, and slap the person in front of them. It is not a miscellaneous detail nor a happenstance

⁹⁶Fitzpatrick, Georgina. “The Trials on Morotai.” In *Australia’s War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:371–407, 2016. 373

that the captain emphasized that these spoils of war were gifts from the emperor. This was a method to re-emphasize the institutional hierarchy they were now incorporated under.⁹⁷

These supplies issued indicated that they were not really just “gunzoku”. They even wore clothing akin to Japanese military uniforms. Though they were forbidden from carrying guns, they wore uniforms and carried knives. They received a monthly salary of 30 Yen, divided between gunpyo (military script, a form of cash), military postal savings, and money wired back home to Taiwan, in three equal parts. Kan noted that gunzoku actually received a higher salary compared to newly conscripted Japanese soldiers—who were issued akagami or conscription papers—whose monthly salary was just 18 Yen.⁹⁸

Kan and other Taiwanese POW guards performed guard duties—including guarding the front gates and supervision of POW performing labor. They also had to undergo intensive military training, with three to four emergency drills per month. Such intensive training suggested that the army already had intentions of utilizing them beyond non-combatant roles. These unannounced drills often occurred in the late night or early morning. The training included shooting, field combat, and other practices which left Kan was exhausted. If any of his movements were hesitant or slow, he would immediately be reprimanded with face slaps or closed-fist punches by the captain or other soldiers. He had never been subjected to such beatings before. It was an intense shock. Kan referred to this as “slap culture,” whereby the tiniest

⁹⁷ Bullard, Steven. “The Emperor’s Army: Military Operations and Ideology in the War Against Australia.” In *Australia’s War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:27–57, 2016. 56 “Japanese soldiers and sailors were conditioned and indoctrinated within a particular military ideology that emphasised the group over the individual to an extraordinary degree. Duty and loyalty were directed toward superiors within a strict hierarchy that ultimately traced upward to the emperor. Any order from a superior was therefore imbued with the authority of the emperor, and the culture of shame reinforced by violence gave little opportunity for Japanese soldiers to not obey an order from a superior.”

⁹⁸ Red paper. Japanese conscription notices were delivered using red paper.

perceived mistakes could be reprimanded with physical punishment.⁹⁹ A justifiable rationale was not needed. Superiors could simply claim that you lacked discipline, or your shoes were not well tied.

In addition to punishing infractions, officers also reproduced and maintained ethnic hierarchies. According to fellow POW guard, Cai Xin-zong (蔡新宗), not only did superior officers slap them, but also curse at them as “Qing slaves,” alluding to the historical fact that prior to Japanese colonization, coastal parts of Taiwan were under the jurisdiction of Qing China.¹⁰⁰ Hu Xian-de (胡先德), an interpreter deployed to Hianan, described that although they received the same housing and food as the Japanese, they were given uniforms in a different color and of poorer quality. Their higher pay provoked resentment from lower rank Japanese soldiers, and they were often referred to as Chankoro (Chinaman).¹⁰¹ Likewise, Indigenous Taiwanese were often called by Japanese officers as banjin (savages).¹⁰² Despite the many official state claims and propaganda of equality of the inner and exterior territories, there was

⁹⁹ Bullard, Steven. “The Emperor’s Army: Military Operations and Ideology in the War Against Australia.” In *Australia’s War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:27–57, 2016. 46. “Soldiers were subjected to a series of measures and controls designed to remove from a recruit any sense of individuality or critical thought. A regime of arbitrary violence from superiors ingrained a deep sense of duty, loyalty to the group and unquestioning obedience. The smallest perceived misdemeanor would serve as a pretense for beatings, privations or punishments, often for entire squads of men in order to reinforce a sense of collective responsibility. Many of the accused in the Australian war crimes trials recounted the ‘customary’ practice of biota, or face slapping, within the Japanese army as a defense for hitting prisoners of war. Any army requires a degree of self-less obedience in its soldiers, but the methods of the Imperial Japanese Army was extreme.”

¹⁰⁰ Li Zhanping (2007). 36

¹⁰¹ Zhou Wan-yao. *Tai ji riben bing zuotan hui jilu bing xiangguan ziliao. Zhou Wanyao zhubian.* Chuban. Taibei Shi. Zhongyang yan jiu yuan taiwan shi yan jiu suo choubi chu. 1997. 26, 175–80, 236.

¹⁰² Shirane 149

still significant resistance against embracing and executing such a policy within the state and the military at an individual level.¹⁰³

Precautions were also taken to ensure a sense of separation was maintained from the local Chinese population. According to fellow POW guard Ke Jing-Xing (柯景星), upon arrival everyone received a booklet of Malay words, with annotations regarding pronunciation, and learning them was mandatory. There was a significant Chinese population in North Borneo, and the Japanese military feared the potential of ethnic based sympathies. They thus ordered all Taiwan POW guards to adopt Japanese names. The intent was to prevent local Chinese from recognizing them as Taiwanese, and to prevent leaks of military intel. As POW guards, their name plates included the katakana syllable of フ (J: fu). As the local Chinese did not recognize this Japanese syllable, they simply referred to the POW guards as “Unit NO.7.”¹⁰⁴

Supervising POW Labor

In the camp system, POWs were taken to various work assignments daily: expansion of the Kuching airport, road maintenance, digging ditches on roadsides, weeding, or chopping wood. The military handed out the tasks of the day, the concentration camp assigned POWs to work details, armed guards took 40-50 POWs to board a work truck, and oversaw their tasks.¹⁰⁵ The higher ups in the military occasionally conducted site visits. At 11:30AM, a truck would bring lunch to the work site. The POW lunch was prepared by a POW kitchen cook, carried in

¹⁰³ Fujitani 49

¹⁰⁴ Li Zhanping 2005. 31

¹⁰⁵ Fitzpatrick, Georgina. “The Trials on Labuan.” In *Australia’s War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:429–470, 2016. 431. “Prisoners from Kuching were put to work unloading supplies at the Kuching docks, constructing ship-building yards and an airfield and performing other labour of benefit to the Japanese military machines.”

water buckets. The meal was the same every day: deep fried rice balls and spinach soup boiled until it black. The Japanese higher ups would often warn the POW guards, “Do not let those POWs underestimate you! They are a bunch of lazy people. Beat those who refuse to follow orders as much as you can.”¹⁰⁶

Japanese soldiers often said to gunzoku, “let me instill in you the spirit of the soldier,” or “let me tell you about the Yamatodamashii (Japanese Spirit),” and then slap them. Although Kan became accustomed to this kind of punishment, the sensation of humiliation was always far worse than the physical pain. The system depended on use of physical violence for its effectiveness. Using 200 people to oversee 3000 POWs and detainees was not an easy matter. A ratio of 15 POWs and detainees for every POW guard. The POWs were highly regarded soldiers, many of whom were resistant to their detention. Kan’s interpretation was that some Taiwanese, either because they were following instructions given by Japanese higher ups or that they followed their own personal subjectivity, beat these POWs. Kan noted that compared to the White officers, they had much smaller bodies and were much younger, they were almost like children in comparison. That in the eyes of the White POWs, it must have been a great humiliation to be beaten by these barely adults of the “Yellow race.”

¹⁰⁶ Bullard, Steven. “The Emperor’s Army: Military Operations and Ideology in the War Against Australia.” In *Australia’s War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:27–57, 2016. 55 “Treatment of Allied prisoners by their Japanese captors conformed in many respects to standards imposed on the latter by the dominant military ideology. This system reinforced and legitimized a strict hierarchy that maintained order and discipline through violence and repression, and demanded frugality and personal sacrifice from its own soldiers. It is difficult to imagine how soldiers indoctrinated within this system could allow captives under their command to have better rations, living conditions, or softer punishment for indiscretions than what they would have received themselves as Japanese soldiers... There were, of course, instances of humane treatment toward prisoners and internees by individual Japanese guards that confound such generalisations, but they were exceptions, and had little impact on the overall survival rate for Australian prisoners of the Japanese.”

Although they lived and worked in the POW concentration camps, they never heard higher ups mention anything about international law. Kan concluded that, “Clearly, from the start Japan decided to take a position of ignoring international law when it came to the treatment of POWs. The problem was, those who were sent to war criminal trials were not the Japanese who gave the orders, but rather the gunzoku, us Taiwanese and Koreans who were carrying out the orders.”

The relationship between POW guards and POWs was both a hierarchical and an interrelated one. As much as the POWs were disciplined and overseen by the POW guards on a daily basis, POW guards were also held accountable for the actions of the POWs they oversaw. This can be illustrated by an incident experienced by Ke Jing-Xing. A disciplinary violation had occurred when Ke was overseeing road construction by POWs. Some of the POWs under his watch stole pineapples grown by a local farmer. The farmer insisted that her pineapples were stolen by POWs, as locals used knives to chop off pineapples from their shrubs, whereas these pineapples were removed by hand. Ke confirmed this allegation when he investigated the matter. Ke appeased the angry farmer by offering six packs of cigarettes and some cash. Ke did so because had the farmer chosen to report this incident to his higher ups, not only would the POWs in question be severely punished, so would he, the POW guard in charge.¹⁰⁷

Mandatory Violence Against POWs

Kan never admitted to using violence against POWs. He claimed to detest violence. However, he did slap a POW once. On that occasion, he was on guard duty at the front gate. A British officer walked past him without saluting. That British officer was tall and had a large body frame, kept a mustache, and often kept a baton under his armpit. He walked breezily past

¹⁰⁷ Li Zhanping 2005. 35

Kan, without saluting. Kan decided to let it go. In his opinion, it was a good thing to let the POWs retain some sense of dignity. However, a Japanese army lieutenant happened to be riding his bicycle pass by, witnessed this interaction, and questioned Kan. The army lieutenant chased after that British officer, physically dragged him in front of Kan, and exclaimed, “Do you not have eyes?! Walking over so breezily, not saluting! Such disregard for the Japanese military! Slap him!” Kan did not want to slap the British officer, and hesitated. The angry lieutenant yelled, “Why aren’t you hitting? This is an order!” Out of choices, Kan gently pressed against that large framed British officer, and gently slapped against his left cheek. “What are you doing! Hit him again, viciously!” the lieutenant yelled. This time Kan hit with all his might.

This was the only time Kan stated he ever used violence against POWs. Kan still remembered the eyes full of anger and humiliation of that British soldier. According to Kan, this incident was later used to try him as a Class BC War Criminal. Though there are discrepancies between this incident and the specific case tried against him, it is apparent from his narrative that he did not wish to inflict violence against the POWs. However, when it came to the issue of disciplining POWs, even if the POW guard himself wished not to partake, he ultimately had no bodily autonomy. Refusal to carry out superior orders regarding POWs was not a choice. At least not a viable choice, given such a refusal could incur severe punishment.

The POW guard’s body became an instrument and tool of his Japanese superior officers. This loss of bodily autonomy became highly apparent in the case of Ke Jing-Xing. By March 1945, when the Allied troops were soon to land, the Japanese military in Labuan began to retreat. Ke along with ten other guards and 46 POWs relocated to Brunei. By June the Allied troops had landed in BNB. POW Camp Commander Sugita Tsurukuma (杉田 鶴熊) concluded that the situation was dangerous as they had limited food and medical supplies. Sugita gathered all the

guards and ordered them to kill all the POWs. Faced with the POWs begging for their lives in English, and praying to Jesus for protection, the guards were hesitant. Until Sugita commanded, “If you do not open fire, I will kill you as well.” Ke closed his eyes and fired two shots, hoping he missed. The POWs all died. Ke described that he was friends with some of those who were killed. Ke described himself as having committed a grave sin. Ke was sentenced to a ten year sentence for his involvement in the killing of POWs.¹⁰⁸

Food & Leisure

Taiwanese POW guards were subjected to different regulations than the Japanese officers. They were forbidden to be outside of camp at nighttime. The only place they could acquire leisure was outside of camp, and the only kind of leisure they could enjoy was a good meal. Kan and his colleagues would travel by bus to Kuching and find a Chinese restaurant to have a good meal. This was the only leisure and respite they could have.

Sexual relationships were reserved for women outside the camp. Kan mentioned that he visited the Kuching Comfort Station. He and other POW guards flirted with young Japanese women, who awaited dates with officers under a large rubber tree outside the front gate guard post. They were members of the Women’s Volunteer Corps (Jōshi Teishin-tai). They served as typists, clerks, or nurses at the Kuching military command. On their days off, these members traveled, had meals, and conversed with the POW guards. Kan and his colleagues enjoyed going into town with them to converse to share a meal. However, Kan and his colleagues never approached them physically. It was said that at night, these members served as hostesses at the Military Officer Club, and many were also “companions” of the officers.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid 38-39

Though eating was the primary source of leisure for POW guards, the same cannot be said about POWs and detainees. Occasionally the guards might have some beef or pork to give to them. POWs could only rely upon what they have in their possession. POWs had no poultry, no eggs, and rarely had vegetables. As a result, POWs often suffered from malnutrition. POW lunch meals were soup-soaked rice, made into rice balls, and deep fried. For dinner they usually ate tomatoes, carrots, potatoes and such vegetables stewed to the point beyond recognition, and oats. The oil used to deep fry the rice balls was of very poor quality, and the cans used to stew the vegetables were already burnt pitch black. It was visually unappetizing. The kitchen usually provided tea at 10:00AM and again at 3:00PM. As the general health of the POWs and detainees were poor due to the poor quality of food, once one of them contracted dengue fever, death was inevitable. Every day there were POWs and detainees dying, to be buried in the back mountain. Kan often heard his colleagues complaining that, “We just dug holes to bury ten people!”

Many of the White POWs harvested snails commonly found in the wet forests, to retain protein intake. Underneath the shaded leaves found in the back mountain, one is guaranteed to find snails. In the morning, if they knew Kan was on duty as that day’s supervisor, they would be so happy as to blow whistles. If it was a big haul, they could return with a bag full of snails that required two people to carry. At the time the guards were not used to eating snails, however as conditions worsened, guards often ate snails after the surrender. Kan noted that after you boil the snail, wash it with salt water, and stir fry it, it could be quite delicious.

Among the POWs who were sent to forced labor, there were often those who were incapacitated due to malnutrition or disease, and on the brink of collapsing. When this occurred, Kan would convince his colleagues to not force them to work, and to simply have them act like they were working when officers conducted site visits. Sometimes the local indigenous Kanaka

people would come over during lunch breaks to sell fruit. Kan would purchase bananas for the POWs, or some papayas for the sick to take back. As a result, some of the POWs did not hold a grudge against him, and when seeing Kan standing guard, would raise their hands to say hello upon passing by. In addition, when performing labor supervision duties, the head of the POW section proactively sought him for consultation. In Kan's opinion, the Japanese military's violent and high-pressure attitude only provoked resistance, and did not enhance work efficiency, but only the reverse. Kan would also sometimes buy candy and eggs for the detainees. One time, an Australian woman pleaded with him, "If this goes on as such, this child will die." He bought her ten eggs immediately. She thanked him with tears flowing. He tells us that, "I did these things, not so I could buy their hearts or to cozy up to people. This might sound self-promoting, but I am a kind-hearted person."

Due to chronic food shortages, by the time Kan was in charge of the kitchen, how to source food became his daily headache. He often went to swamps to bomb fish. He would remove the gunpowder from some bullets, to be filled into hollowed bamboo, then attached with a fuse, light it, throw it into the water and wait for the fish to float to the top.

Counterinsurgency Fighting

POW guards were also forced to participate in anti-guerilla military activities. This further blurred their supposed non-combatant role. They were equipped with the same equipment as soldiers received. They have already received training in shooting and using bayonets. The Sandakan concentration camp often faced attacks from the local indigenous guerilla fighters. In Kuching, though they also faced guerilla fighters, the scale of the conflict was not as large. The Allied forces re-supplied weapons and food to the guerilla fighters. Every day, a unit of eight

were to be deployed to conduct reconnaissance. They shared a tacit understanding: they all knew that two mountains away was where the guerilla fighters were operating, and they would never cross that natural border under normal circumstances. There was a huge tree among the mountains that demarcated this border. They usually would have their meals under this tree, assess the situation as nothing irregular and retreat.

Yet when a newly-promoted officer was rotated to be their captain, this arrangement was no longer honored. The newly minted officer heroically insisted that they must go over the mountains to conduct reconnaissance on the enemy. No matter how much they pleaded with him that such a journey would be dangerous, he insisted that the Indigenous people would run away at the sight of Japanese swords. He gallantly took out his military sword, commanded everyone to march forward, and walked right in front of them. They could only begrudgingly follow behind him, holding their guns. In this hierarchical structure, even if they were assigned an incompetent superior, they as subordinates had to follow orders. This instance perfectly encapsulated this norm. Suddenly, there was a huge noise. First they saw their new captain falling onto the ground, followed by painful howls. His leg was hit directly by bullets. It took all their might to carry him back across two entire mountains. Fortunately, his wounds were not too severe, and he was repatriated to Japan. This officer was overcome by his colonial arrogance and orientalist essentialism. He was so consumed by his own sense of Japanese imperial superiority, that he assumed the indigenous people would be easily frightened at the mere sight of “Japanese swords.”

POW Deaths

The question of POW treatment and cause of death was an important issue in Kan's biography. During the war, out of some 1400 British and Australian POWs, about 529 British and Australians died.¹⁰⁹ Kan took pains to assert that the most typical cause of death was poor food quality, malnutrition, poor hygiene, malaria and dengue fever—not torture. There is some corroborating evidence for this claim. Japanese forces, including POW camps in Southeast Asia, were drastically low on supplies after naval routes were interrupted by major Pacific defeats in 1942 (Battle of the Coral Sea) and 1943 (Battle of Guadalcanal).¹¹⁰

I would like to pause, to note that there is some reason to doubt Kan's account, when it comes to POW torture. In his biography, he never mentions ever witnessing or even hearing of the well-documented acts of physical torture that POW guards inflicted upon POWs. He admits to only one act of violence, namely slapping a British officer after being ordered to do so by a superior. Either he truly did not witness or hear of any torture, or he deliberately left out the details from this biography. The latter is the more plausible explanation. Even supposing that Kan truly was one of the POW guards who did not enact physical torture, it is highly unlikely that he did not witness or hear of the torture that other guards inflicted.

Similarly, we can also critically examine Kan's claim that physical torture was not a primary cause of mass POW deaths, but rather malnutrition, malaria, dengue fever, and poor food quality. One must then ask, were the conditions they were kept in, not a form of torture? That is, had the Japanese military not decided to detain all these people in Borneo, they would

¹⁰⁹ Fitzpatrick, Georgina. "The Trials on Labuan." In *Australia's War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:429–470, 2016. 429

¹¹⁰ Shirane 153

not have been living in these horrid conditions in the first place? Is someone being beaten, the only form of responsibility for their death?

To place Kan's biography in context, it was written in the late 1990s, long after all the war crime trials, held in the late 1940s. Kan does not deny that acts of torture were committed. Nor should we characterize him as committing some kind of whitewashing or denial of torture of POWs held by Japan in the Asia-Pacific War. He was however, unwilling to share much, if any, of the details of the torture that POWs were subjected to. Rather he attempts to retain some sense of his own humanity in his narrative of his time as a POW guard, a position where one was forced to perform many inhumane acts, willingly or otherwise. This reluctance to admit guilt is typical of oral history accounts by POW guards.¹¹¹ Shirane argued that it is necessary to include the experiences of civilians and others whom the Taiwanese soldiers and gunzoku harmed, because the exclusion of this narrative not only distorts the historical truth, but more importantly reinforces a common historical narrative of Taiwanese as solely victims of colonization and rarely, if ever, as agents of colonization.¹¹²

Kan admits that some of the guards dutifully complied with their Japanese superiors and were as harsh as possible in their treatment of POWs. In contrast, Kan was more merciful: exempted those physically incapacitated from physical labor, and bought eggs for the mother of an infant. He does not tell us of these acts of kindness he performed in order to negate or

¹¹¹ Ibid 168. "Though British, Australian, and Dutch military trials all sentenced Taiwanese for war crimes against Indian and Chinese (ROC) POWs and local Chinese civilians, postwar oral histories by former Taiwanese prison guards and interpreters rarely discussed coming into contact with Asian POWs and civilians. Taiwanese instead focused on their relations with Japanese superiors, their treatment of Western POWs, and the subsequent retribution by the Western Allies. Perhaps this is because Taiwanese convicted as war criminals felt that they were unduly punished for actions seemingly beyond their control as colonial subjects. By portraying themselves as dual victims of Japanese coercion and Western 'victors' justice,' the Taiwanese have elided stories of their complicity as fellow imperialists in the Asia-Pacific war fronts."

¹¹² Ibid 169

disassociate himself of the inhumanities that occurred in the POW camps. Rather, he tells us of his small acts of kindness as a way to tell us how he maintained his humanity in the face of his deployment as a POW guard.

Perhaps this was a scenario where only gradations of gray exist, and absolute morals and ethics of black and white, right and wrong are difficult to ascertain and delineate. Even if we take Kan at his word, that he rarely used any kind of physical violence against POWs, he was still a part of the system. A system that was deliberate and intent on enacting physical torture upon, and extracting labor from POWs. By existing in that system, even though he occupied the very bottom of its institutional hierarchy, he was a part of the system. He contributed to the function and maintenance of the system. Even if he morally objected to how it was run, his contribution rendered him complicit. He could only claim to be free of guilt by association, had he either physically fled from the camp, or outright resisted his superiors regarding the inhumane treatments of the camp.¹¹³ As he exercised neither of these extreme options, he remained a part of the system. He helped facilitate that system, whose primary objective was the detention and extraction of maximum labor of POWs. Perhaps he did not personally torture any POWs, but that did not make him a neutral third party either.

Kan contracted both malaria and dengue fever while stationed in BNB. Once the illness struck, he could only sleep by himself in isolation. It was a very helpless state. Unless one was near the brink of death, military doctors were un-attentive to most patients. In their view, the

¹¹³ Ibid 157. “However, not all were willing to fight to the death on the southern war front. Like their Han counterparts, several indigenous Taiwanese fled their units and hid in jungles or surrendered to Allied forces.” Ibid 154. “According to historian Yuki Tanaka, one Taiwanese guard in Borneo with the Japanese surname of Nakamura warned an Australian POW, Keith Botterill, that his Japanese superior was planning on executing the remaining Allied POWs and that they should escape. Botterill successfully fled, and a few days later, on July 4, 1945, Nakamura attacked four Japanese officers, killing one and wounding two before committing suicide.”

patient will “naturally recover.” If one had tooth decay and sought the army doctor, the doctor would say, “Anesthetics would be a waste to use on someone who will die tomorrow. Hey, find me five men to hold him down!” The teeth would be pulled without any anesthetics. Here, Kan stated that: “In their mentality, both soldiers and gunzoku were consumables, to them there was no difference between being sick today or dying on the battlefield tomorrow. Because the basic ideology of the Japanese military is of such violence and disregard for human life, of course they had no intention to treat POWs and detainees with any kind of care.” If the Japanese military was already so cavalier about the welfare of their own people, it was unlikely to treat POWs any better.¹¹⁴ Kan then proceeded to state, “It is my strong belief, that the Japanese military should have at the very start informed POW guards, and their failure to explain the clauses regarding the treatment of POWs in international law was not a temporary oversight, but a planned directive.”

Becoming a Soldier

Around June 1945, Japan began to start recruiting combat soldiers in Taiwan. The targets of conscription were twenty-year old men. Within the jurisdiction of the Kuching POW camp, six gunzoku satisfied these parameters. They were conscripted on site, and Kan became a second-class army soldier. At this point, Japan was on the brink of surrender. Military personnel were still not told of the actual conditions of the war. Though Kuching was faced with Allied

¹¹⁴ Bullard, Steven. “The Emperor’s Army: Military Operations and Ideology in the War Against Australia.” In *Australia’s War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:27–57, 2016. 56 “The overall mistreatment and neglect of Allied prisoners of war was as much a reflection of the Japanese military’s disregard for the individual Japanese soldier as it was any specific contempt for the enemy. After the war, former Prime Minister Tojo Hideki remarked that: ‘It was unfortunate that standards which a Japanese soldier would not find unbearable had apparently proved to be inadequate for western prisoners’. Such ‘standards’ included the virtual abandonment of hundreds of thousands of Japanese troops in New Guinea outside the ‘vital line of national defence instituted in September 1943. This sacrifice was symbolic of an ideology that was prepared to accept what the West would consider unacceptable high individual losses in battle.’”

aerial attacks, they still believed that Japan won all the battles it had fought. And yet, there was also a visible decrease in the amount of food they were supplied with. Two months later, Japan surrendered.

After formally becoming a soldier, Kan was deployed to the jungles of Southern Brunei, incorporated into a group just arrived from Manchuria, to counter local guerilla fighters, as part of the Kwantung 538th Independent Infantry East Battalion 關東兵團獨立步兵第五三八東大隊隊長. He and other Taiwanese-Japanese soldiers were placed alongside Japanese soldiers, and received no difference in their missions or treatment. They were absolutely seen as Japanese soldiers, and as such he was touched, for he finally felt like he was a real Japanese. It was as though, in my own analysis, the wooden puppet of Pinocchio had finally become a real boy, the real thing in which his entire being was made in reference to. Imitation had turned into becoming. Yet, also like Pinnochico, becoming the real thing was not an unconditional transformation. The transformation was contingent upon specific factors. Becoming was not a gift, but a lease. He only became Japanese because the war had already exhausted the number of able-bodied men that the empire could mobilize from the naichi (inner territories), and the empire had to tap into its colonial subjects from the gaichi (outer territories).

Kan became a construction soldier (J: kohei). He was issued 20 kilograms more equipment than infantry soldiers. Standard issue equipment included: one round spade, one pickaxe, one Type 38 Rifle, 100 bullets (twice the amount than what was issued to infantry soldiers), three hand grenades, two packs of dry food, and some rock salt. And if they were in an emergent situation, they must also prepare for a depth charge to be used against tanks.¹¹⁵ As construction soldiers, their missions mainly involved construction for frontline and encampment

¹¹⁵ A depth charge is an anti-submarine warfare (ASW) weapon. It is usually used by dropping into the surrounding water of a submarine and detonated, creating a powerful hydraulic shock.

sites. They needed to locate sites that were easy to protect, difficult to attack, and with access to fresh water. They dug trenches, set up fences, constructed towers for surveillance, and established watch posts that had a clear field of vision. They felled trees to serve as tent poles. They also established routes and underground passages for retreat in case of enemy attack. Once construction of the campsite was complete, they had to then start drawing maps of the nearby area. In teams of two or three, each team was sent to different parts of the surrounding area to spot trees or rocks that could serve as reference points, and to document the topography to their best ability.

Overall, their primary goal was not necessarily to lay siege upon the Indigenous guerilla fighters. Most of their activities were regular small surveillance patrols, in order to restrict the movement of the guerilla fighters. Australian seaplanes flew from the lakes situated at the border area between Brunei and the Sarawak province of Borneo, to re-supply guerilla fighters with weapons and food supplies, as well as to provide combat training. The guerilla fighters did not attack during the day, but rather on nights with dim moonlight, with a couple of fighters to shoot and immediately retreat.

Resource Competition & The Indigenous Population

Kan became responsible for running the kitchen. All supply shipments had stopped. Ensuring a stable food supply became his most critical daily task. In the morning, a group of three soldiers head out to scavenge for vegetables and fruits, such as bananas, coconuts, breadfruit trees, and cassava. One day, in the middle of the jungle, they excitedly spotted a garden of pumpkins, edible greens, and eggplants. It was a vegetable garden cultivated by the local Indigenous people. Kan knew that stealing from the vegetable garden was dangerous, but

he had to do it. The Indigenous people were not the Malay and Bruneian people who constituted the guerilla forces. Kan called them “Mountain Atayal,” however their accurate name was one of the indigenous peoples of Sarawak—the Land Dayak, now referred to as the Bidayuh people.¹¹⁶

On another day, they were going about as usual, stealing from the vegetable garden. This time they were caught in the act by the Bidayuh people, who pointed guns at Kan and the Japanese soldier who was accompanying him. They had no choice but to surrender. The Bidayuh people were enraged. The atmosphere was tense. Kan and the Japanese soldier’s hands were restrained. They were taken to a village not far from the vegetable garden. Kan described the village as some ten straw hut dwellings, with the gates to the village topped with human skeletons. He interpreted this to mean his captors were headhunters, who displayed the remains of their enemies as trophies. They were taken to a gathering of six village heads and the village chief. From their tones and severe stares, Kan assumed they were making life or death decisions. Kan grew cold at the thought of decapitation. Suddenly, the daughter of the village chief came over to talk to Kan. Then, they were released. The gun-holding warriors of the village not only escorted them back to their encampment, but even gifted them some vegetables as well.

This was due to the intervention of the daughter of the village chief. The twelve year old teenage girl had come to peek at them out of curiosity. Kan was able to communicate with her in Hokkien. Her mother had contracted an illness after giving birth to her, and the girl was raised by a Chinese wetnurse for some years. The Bidayuh people also had trading relations with Chinese merchants. As her and her father experienced sincerity and kindness in their interactions with the Chinese, they had also perceived Kan as Chinese. She had pleaded with her father that they were not Japanese, but Chinese, and to spare them. One must then also ask that had it not been Kan and one Japanese who was caught, but rather simply two Japanese without any Hokkien

¹¹⁶ Atayal is one of the Indigenous peoples of Taiwan.

proficiency, would they have also had the luck to be perceived as “Chinese”? At this instance, Kan’s proximity to Chinese-ness—or rather, his fluency in Hokkien—saved him and the Japanese soldier who accompanied him.

Prior to his capture, Kan had recently contracted malaria. His condition had grown increasingly worse, and he had been shaking non-stop since the night before his capture. As locals, the Bidayuh people recognized the cause of his shaking. The village chief boiled some herbs, and handed the tea to Kan to drink. He also gave Kan many of the precious herbs. The herbs worked, and his illness finally stabilized. From then on, whenever malaria recurred, these herbs served as great treatments. He also shared them with his comrades, for which they were very grateful.

In regards to the kindness of the Indigenous people, their tolerance for a vegetable thief such as himself, their gifting of malaria-treating herbs, greatly moved Kan. At the time, it was unimaginable for him that the very people that the Japanese saw as “natives” could be so kind.¹¹⁷ Decades after that day, Kan could still picture the daughter of the village chief standing under the poles with skeletons, waving goodbye. Shirane has noted that Han Taiwanese deployed often internalized “Japanese Orientalist views of superiority over the Southeast Asian ‘natives’ as supposedly at the bottom of the civilizational hierarchy.”¹¹⁸ As such, Kan’s initial surprise at the warmth of the Bidayuh people is understandable.

Unmaterialized Promotion

Even when camping deep in the mountains, promotion exams were still held. In the first round of testing, Kan scored second place. First place went to a soldier from Okinawa. The

¹¹⁷ In the biography, the word used was 土人 (C: turen. J: dojin).

¹¹⁸ Shirane 159

exams tested shooting, bayonet use, military tactics, and a paper test. This unit of Japanese soldiers mostly came from Fukushima and Nagano Prefecture, 30-something-year-old reservists. In comparison to Kan, a twenty-something who received military-like training for three years, these soldiers had much more seniority. After the exam, an officer informed Kan, “Takenaga, you tested first place originally, but according to the rules Taiwanese people cannot receive first place. However, you will be promoted to corporal, go to school to start learning English!”¹¹⁹ And so, Kan started learning English. Ethnic discrimination permeated and persisted, even when one was taking an exam deep in the mountains on a frontline in the middle of a war. A colonial subject must forever be ranked second, even if he actually tested first. The empire was not a meritocracy, but a hierarchy, based on perceived proximities to Japanese-ness. The Okinawa-born soldier was more tolerable as an official first place holder than Kan, a Taiwan-born soldier. Although Okinawa along with Hokkaido, were Japan’s first colonies, they were both integrated into the legal category of *naichi* (inner territories). Territories such as Taiwan and Korea were placed under the legal category of *gaichi* (exterior territories).¹²⁰ Colonial hierarchies were maintained and reproduced.

According to his superiors, Kan was slated to start studying at the officer academy in Singapore. And, if he successfully graduated, he would have been promoted to captain, and be the captain of the Taiwanese unit when Australia becomes occupied. This “promotion” was a

¹¹⁹ Takenaga was Kan’s Japanese surname. Kan stopped using the surname only after his arrival in Japan, due to a deep sense of betrayal at the hands of the Japanese government.

¹²⁰ Shirane 6. “In contrast to Hokkaido and Okinawa, for example, which the Meiji government legally incorporated as part of Japan’s metropole (*naichi*), Taiwan was governed as a colony (*gaichi*). Some historians have argued that Hokkaido and Okinawa should be viewed as Japan’s first colonies. However, while residents of these territories initially faced legal and ethnic discrimination, they were gradually incorporated as citizens of Japan’s metropole with civic rights unavailable in colonies like Taiwan.”

happy occasion. The exam results had shown that he tested first place, which made him particularly satisfied. Less than a month later, Japan surrendered. The news of his promotion leaked, and Kan started to be beaten by those aforementioned Japanese soldiers in their 30s from Fukushima and Nagano. A number of first class soldiers, upon seeing him, would say, “In a year, your rank will be higher than us, we’ll take the time now to train you into an exemplary corporal.” And they used any excuse to beat him senseless. Not just slapping him in the face, or hitting him with fists, but also kicking him in military issued boots, or whipping him with belts. Of course, he never became a unit captain. Japan surrendered, and his two months of army life ended.

Surrender

After surrender, on October 5th, a small unit of the Australian military arrived to disarm them. However, the six Taiwanese—Kan included—were forcibly taken away. They were only allowed to take some toiletries and items of clothing. Kan did not understand why they were arrested, and Japanese soldiers were not. They were put into Jeeps, and taken to the very same Kuching POW Concentration Camp where they served as guards. The 2000 POWs and detainees were no longer present. In a reversal of circumstances, the people being detained here were the two hundred Taiwanese POW guards who served across British North Borneo. In Kuching, they were imprisoned in the same jail cells that formerly housed POWs. They were assigned the tasks of cleaning, de-construction of various camp buildings, and weeding.

Kan asserted that had the Japanese who remained in Kuching reported to the Australian military that the POW guards had all already returned to Taiwan or were incommunicado, there

was a chance they might not have become war criminals. The Japanese had reported them to the Australian military, and handed over all of their records as well. The officer in charge at Brunei had even received notice for their imminent arrest, but said not even a word to them regarding the matter. When Kan was serving as a soldier in Brunei, he did not feel any sense of discriminatory attitude by the Japanese toward the Taiwanese. But circumstances took a drastic turn after surrender. This discriminatory attitude was in full view when the war crime trials were held in Rabaul. The Japanese officers not only refused to defend the Taiwanese POW guards, some even shamelessly stated, "I do not recall giving any orders to torture the POWs, it occurred because Taiwanese are cruel and savage in their nature!" By displacing and deflecting responsibility onto their Taiwanese subordinates, these particular Japanese superiors revealed the limits of colonizer-colonized allegiance. It is a one-way street. The colonizer is always looking out for his own interests first, and only maintains the facade of some kind of solidarity when the interests of the colonized align with his own interests.

One day they were ordered to stand in line. In front of them were a group of British and Australian officers who were formerly detained as POWs in Kuching. The British officer whom Kan slapped was also amongst them. The officers had a booklet of names, the former POW guards were called out by their names, confirmed by facial features, and then divided them into two groups. When it was Kan's turn, that same British officer who refused to salute, was still carrying a baton under his armpits, and directed Kan to his assigned group. This turned out to be a selection process, to differentiate between those who might be qualified as war criminals or not. At the time it did not occur to him that he would be charged as a war criminal. Kan did not know what a war criminal was. After they were divided into two groups, the group with more people started to disappear without explanation. Kan and others who remained behind thought

they might have been killed. The larger group of people was actually released without any charges. Most of them returned to Taiwan. About a hundred of them remained, and twenty were identified by black ribbons. Those with black ribbons suffered much harsher labor than those who were not marked, and were often kicked and beaten by Australian soldiers. These less fortunate ones were almost all squad leaders, but the exact reason as to why they were targeted was unknown.

Summary

The deployment of Koreans and Taiwanese in the role of POW guards was a logistical necessity, to relieve Japanese from the role and be deployed into combat positions. As POW guards were part of the larger category of gunzoku, they sat at the very bottom of the institutional hierarchy of the Imperial Japanese Army. They were subjected to intense indoctrination, designed to instill absolute loyalty, via physical discipline and collective punishment. It was no coincidence that the draconian treatment the military inflicted upon POW guards was the same treatment subjected onto the POWs. Even if there were instances of human kindness, or friendship between POW guards and POWs, the intransigent positionalities they each occupied made their dynamic fundamentally antagonistic. One could have developed friendships with the POWs, but yet when forcefully commanded by a Japanese superior to kill them—or else be killed by the superior, as in the case of Ke Jing-Xing—the POW guard himself had no autonomy, because he is an instrument, a tool of the military. The only way to break free of such a positionality for the POW guard was to either flee from the camp, or to resist his Japanese superior. The POW guard was ultimately a tool, for if he were a person, the military would surely have bothered to inform POW guards that Japan though did not ratify, was a signatory to the

Geneva Convention, which explicitly stated a minimum standard in the treatment of POWs—a key tenant of which was the prohibition of the use of physical punishment. Violations of the standards outlined in the convention could warrant one to be tried and convicted as a war criminal. Either the Japanese military was so confident that it could not possibly lose the war and thus the issue was moot, or it disregarded the possibility that the POW guards might be convicted of crimes they did not even know were crimes to begin with.

Yet, despite all of this, POW guards did possess one form of autonomy: the ability to physically flee. So then we must ask: why did they not all flee in mass, given that they were participating in what was inhumane treatment that led to a high loss of life? This is a question to which I do not have the exact answers. Perhaps we can apply the lessons learned from the Stanford Prison Experiment conducted by the psychologist Philip Zimbardo. An experiment that was designed to last two weeks, but had to be halted six days in, because the roles played by the students had taken such a drastic turn that the prisoners became distressed, and the guards had turned sadistic. The lesson being that ordinary people, when placed in very highly charged scenarios such as guards at a prison, can take on sadistic behavior due to the conditions of the environment they are placed in.¹²¹

Allied POWs were also treated by the Japanese military as raw manual labor, to be used, extracted without any regard or care for their welfare or their lives. Any concern the system held for POWs was their physical ability to help boost the war effort, via the construction and maintenance of key installations and infrastructural projects across Japanese Occupied Southeast Asia. Though a key factor in the massive loss of life among Allied POWs captured by Japan was

¹²¹ Zimbardo, Philip G. *The Lucifer Effect : Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*. Random House trade pbk ed. New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2008.

due to food and supply shortages, the inherent disregard for their welfare was most certainly a contributory factor.

Lastly, on the issue of ethnicity, Taiwanese were required to all adopt Japanese names, as fears of them being recognized as ethnically Han may foster any unwanted ties with the local Chinese populations. Although there was a constant emphasis on becoming instilled with Japanese-ness, be it the yamatodamshii (Japanese spirit), or the war spoils of British rifles reified as gifts from the Emperor himself, there was also a constant emphasis on their foreignness, inferiority, and lack of Japanese-ness. Be it the deliberate placement of Taiwan based Japanese policemen as the captains of the POW guards, the use of racist slurs when disciplining, or not allowing Kan to place first place on the promotion exams despite him having scored the best. Japanese-ness was the goal, and the ideal. However, at every opportunity, their foreign-ness is emphasized. They were simultaneously encouraged to become more Japanese, and yet also reinforced as the Other; a contradiction, a paradox. Transformation into Japanese was never the real goal, at least from the colonizer's perspective. The possibility or the idealization of transformation was simply a method to justify differential treatment, to say you are not given the same treatment because you are still inferior. Transformation into Japanese is akin to the proverbial carrot tied to a donkey; the donkey motivated by the carrot keeps walking forward in anticipation of receiving the reward, the carrot, yet it will never receive it, for it was meant as not a real reward, but an incentive to extract raw manual power from the donkey. Similarly, transformation to Japanese was never the real goal, it was merely the incentive to keep them motivated, that in service of the Emperor, in carrying out duties in the name of the empire, they were somehow gaining upward mobility in the imperial ethnic hierarchy. As Seiji Shirane puts it, they became second-class imperialists, who due to the demands of war, gained temporary

upward mobility, as there was now a new class of people to take their position in the bottom of the hierarchy—the local populations and Allied POWs of the frontlines they were deployed to.

As Takashi Fujitani puts it, precisely as “the more the Japanese empire came to depend on the Korean population for soldiers and sailors, the more difficult it became to exclude them from the nation—in both the conventional meaning of a political community and in Foucault’s bio-political sense of a population.”¹²² Because what is being asked of the colonial subjects has been significantly raised (“demand for death”), thus the privileges and rights granted to them must be raised equally. As WWII was a total war in which all human resources of the nation must be utilized, Japan could not un-utilize or under-utilize its colonial populations. Thus, wartime Japan granted Koreans and Taiwanese “the rights to vote and send representatives to the national diet through two laws promulgated on 1 April 1945,” and the “1945 Imperial Ordinance No.193 [which] opened up a more substantial avenue for selections of Koreans and Taiwanese to the House of Peers”.¹²³ These were political demands that Japan outright refused to meet prior to the war. Thus, the granting of these rights and privileges must be considered as historically contingent, one that only occurred because of the demands of colonial populations. Because demands on colonial populations increased significantly, rights and privileges were also raised.

Given the background of wartime necessity, it is not a surprise that many of these rights and privileges were rescinded wholesale in the aftermath of Japan’s surrender. Following defeat, former colonial subjects were not only no longer Japanese citizens, but those who had served in the Japanese military were denied wages, pensions, and other benefits on the basis that they were no longer Japanese. As colonial veterans no longer are needed as human resources, the

¹²² Fujitani 40

¹²³ Ibid 66-68

empire—or the former empire—considers itself not obligated in any way to provide the compensations they had promised. The details of this revocation of rights and privileges, and their detrimental impacts on Taiwanese veterans can be found in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER TWO: SERVING AS WAR CRIMINAL—AN ARCHIPELAGO OF IMPRISONMENT

Overview

This chapter revolves around three key aspects. One is the interpellation of Kan by the Australian military as a war criminal—a process he found to be bewildering, and incomprehensible. He had never heard of the term war criminal, let alone understood what it meant to be charged and convicted as one. It was an entirely alien process to him. The many inequities within the trial—whether they were intentional or oversights—made the process and outcome unjust. Some historians have even argued that the war crime trials held by the Allied Powers were unjust and characterized them as “Victor’s Justice.”

Second is the harsh conditions of Kan’s incarceration, where war crime suspects and convicts were subject to harsh labor at every opportunity as both punishment and to the benefit of the Australian military. Some convicts were forced to perform necropolitical labor; labor which rendered them severely injured or dead in the process. Such labor was further worsened by instances of physical torture at the hands of Australian soldiers overseeing their imprisonment. These instances of physical torture have been well documented and corroborated. Having experienced battle against the Japanese, and witnessed the horrid states of their countrymen detained at the hands of the Japanese military, many Australian soldiers guarding war crime suspects and convicts expressed profound rage.

Third, is the political and the Realpolitik mechanisms and actors that influenced the outcomes of these trials and incarcerations. The class BC war crime trials occurred not only for

the reason of justice, but also as an act of political theater. The victims of Japanese Occupation were not only Allied soldiers and officers, but also included a significant number of local colonial subjects. The Japanese Occupation disrupted the domination held by the pre-war European colonial powers. Holding war crime trials was not only an exercise in justice, but also an exercise in legitimacy. War crime trials were not just to exact justice on behalf of victims, but to also appease domestic political sentiments. The rise of the Cold War made stopping the spread of communism across Asia a far more urgent priority than exacting justice upon Japan. Furthermore, pulling Japan into the American side of the Cold War, made further war crime trials a disincentive. Thus, as much as war crime trials were purportedly about justice, it was also about the domestic and diplomatic political benefits and costs of performing them.

Labuan

After spending 20 days at Kuching, around late October of 1945, Kan and other Taiwanese-Japanese personnel received the order to be moved to Labuan Island. Labuan Island is near the coast of BNB. Sixteen war crime trials were held here between December 1945 and January 1946. The Japanese military Borneo POW camp had a site there. All the Taiwanese and a few Japanese higher ups, totaling 108 people, were transported by bus to the Kuching port. A ship was awaiting them. Those whose names were called boarded the ship. Australian soldiers were waiting to come up to them, competing to steal their watches, wallets and other personal valuables.

The second they boarded, Kan states that the cabin door was closed, and all the lights were extinguished, except for one dimly lit lightbulb. Australian soldiers started yelling loudly, running toward them and beating them. Australian soldiers held in their hands hoses, ropes,

sticks, and belts. There were about twenty of them. The cabin was filled with shouts of anger and cries of sadness. The floor turned into a sea of red. Excluding the Japanese officers, all Japanese soldiers below the rank of corporal suffered the same fate. Everyone lay on the floor either crying out in pain, or passed out. Kan was kicked severely. Acts of violence by Australian soldiers against war crime suspects have been corroborated.¹²⁴ Kan told us that, “it was on this day that he truly understood just how much the Australian soldiers hated the Taiwanese POW guards.”

The journey to Labuan took several days, and the physical abuse did not stop. The cruelest example was that of two Taiwanese who were doing laundry on the deck: one had their head stuffed in a can filled with seawater, and the other was tied naked by ropes hanging atop the ocean surface. Kan tells us that, “Their revenge, was far more cruel than the ‘torture of POWs’ we did as suspected war criminals.” Here, I am going to make some of my own speculations. In his narrative of his time as a POW guard, he does not provide even the slightest graphic description of the well documented violence that POWs faced in WWII Japanese POW Concentration Camps. And yet, regarding his time under the custody of the Australian military, Kan was more than willing to supply graphic minutiae of the violence that he was subjected to and witnessed. Even if Kan himself did not personally perform any acts of physical violence against POWs other than the one slap he was ordered to perform, he must have at the very least heard of or witnessed such acts performed by other POW guards. And so, what to make of this dearth of details? This disparity. This gap. This discrepancy.

¹²⁴ Fitzpatrick, Georgina. “The Trials on Labuan.” In *Australia’s War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:429–470, 2016. 438

The main victim that Kan sought to center in his biography is that of the Taiwanese Class BC War Criminals, as well as the more general category of Taiwanese soldiers and gunzoku deployed by the Japanese military. He does not go so far as to altogether erase the very real and well documented violence inflicted upon POWs detained by the Japanese military. The use of violence and torture were recorded in the war crime trial documents. But Kan is reluctant to provide the entire picture of that violence. I speculate that he avoided providing a fully fleshed-out graphic picture of violence in part because doing so may decenter the victim that this biography is foregrounding—that of the Taiwanese-Japanese personnel. The truth was that Taiwanese-Japanese soldiers and gunzoku were both victims and victimizers. They cannot be reduced to a binary of either victim or victimizer.

On November 1st, 1945 at midnight, the ship arrived at Labuan Island. They were whipped ashore, with scars across their bodies, as they helped one another land ashore. Due to the violence that occurred aboard the ship, upon arrival one person died. Upon landing, some fifty people received medical care and were injected with tranquilizers, some became permanently disabled. The Australian soldiers had already decided who they were going to most severely beat. Those tied with black ribbons before boarding the ship received most of the torture. Upon arrival at Labuan, about forty people were required to wear an arm wrist band with a red letter X. They were forced to perform meaningless labor at Labuan: carrying wood from one place to another, then from that place to another, with whips and beatings awaiting them afterwards. To Kan, the Taiwanese were tortured for revenge. During wartime, many loyally obeyed the orders of the Japanese. They dutifully followed the orders from the Japanese, and hit and slapped POWs who were disobedient, and as such incurred even greater hatred than the very

Japanese who gave the orders. Ironically, those who were most earnest and diligent in carrying out the orders received even greater vengeance.

What Kan despised the most, was that Camp Commandant Lieutenant Colonel Suga Tatsuji and Camp Commander of the Indian Special Labor Unit Concentration Camp Lieutenant Colonel Nakao, among other Japanese higherups, committed suicide one after another. They used the logic of never-live-to-suffer-the-humiliation-of-a-captive (J:ikite ryoshūnohazukashime o ukezu) from *Instructions for the Battlefield* (J:senjinkun) to justify suicide.¹²⁵ To bear the responsibility of acting-like-a-Japanese-soldier (J:nihon gunjinrashiku). To Kan, they committed suicide selfishly and irresponsibly, as only they had the ability to testify that the Taiwanese were in a position where they were forced to obey orders, throwing away the chance to testify that the Taiwanese were forced to obey orders. They were the most important witnesses for the defense. Committing suicide not only freed them of the humiliation of being tried in a court by the victorious Allied Powers, but also allowed them to abandon their duty as superior officers toward their subordinates. The Japanese officers who were subordinates to these deceased superior officers then exploited this opportunity and claimed ignorance in order to avoid any responsibility. Furthermore, they attributed the abuse of POWs to “the savage nature of the Taiwanese,” and scapegoated all the responsibility for the torture of POWs onto the Taiwanese. To Kan, this was the real face of “the spirit of the Japanese soldier of the country of the Gods (J:kamikuni)”! There was no real sincere camaraderie in the country of the Gods (J:kamikuni), but rather a bold-faced lie, full of hypocrisy.

¹²⁵ *Instructions for the Battlefield* was a small pocket size book on the military code, issued to soldiers, starting from 1941.

The food at Labuan was very poor. Every meal was rice and canned beef, with barely any vegetables in the soup. They soon became malnourished. Their bellies became bloated. They were now experiencing the very same marginal and malnourished existence that the Allied POWs had lived through. Many were sent to perform harsh physical labor. Kan was fortunate that he was sent to perform janitorial and other lighter tasks. Kan was the sole person sent to help in the officer cafeteria, perhaps it was because they knew he used to work at the kitchen in Brunei. His skills in food preparation and sewing become critical in easing his five years of incarceration. Because of them, he was appointed to duties that were less harsh, compared to hard physical labor. At first, he mostly cleaned the floor, and washed the dishes. Eventually he was able to learn how to grill steaks and make sandwiches. He later became the chef's assistant. The biggest benefit of the job was that he could take the leftovers. Every night, he would take leftovers back to the six other men with whom he shared the same tent by the seaside. As such, they were able to acquire the necessary nutrition for sustenance. Unlike the violent Australian soldiers, the chefs were more compassionate and easy going.

An Introduction to the War Crime Trials

In the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, in which Class A suspected war criminals were tried, in a similar fashion to the Nuremberg Trial held in Germany, for crimes against peace. A total of 28 Japanese were initially tried as Class A war criminals, of which 25 received sentences (two died before sentencing, and one defendant was ruled unfit to be tried). The suspects were predominantly powerful government and military officials—those responsible for the war at the highest levels. Judges from each of the Allied countries were appointed.

Unlike the Tokyo War Crime Trial, Class BC War Criminal Trials were held across the Asia Pacific, by individual Allied countries. Approximately 4000 people received sentences as Class BC war criminals. Class BC war criminals were charged for war crimes, and crimes against humanity. The Allied Nations were intent on pursuing Japan due to the fact that Japan did not sign the Geneva Convention, though it did not ratify.¹²⁶ During the war, Allied countries had lodged at least “eighty-three such statements of protest and inquiries” to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, via neutral countries, in regard to the treatment of Allied POWs. In fact, “in February 1942 the Japanese military had promised the Allied countries that it would treat POWs according to the guidelines established in the Geneva Conventions.” 27 percent of Allied POWs died under Japanese custody.¹²⁷

The massive casualties of Australian POWs held by Japan was astronomically higher when compared to those held by Germany and Italy.¹²⁸ Australian prisoners were held in camps across Ambon, Borneo, Burma, Taiwan, Hainan, Indo-China, Japan, Java, Korea, Malaya, New Britain, Singapore, Sumatra and Thailand. POWs were exploited for their labor, not just in

¹²⁶ Bullard, Steven. “The Emperor’s Army: Military Operations and Ideology in the War Against Australia.” In *Australia’s War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:27–57, 2016. 52 “Japan did not ratify the 1929 Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, but gave assurances on the outbreak of war in the Pacific that it would apply it to prisoners of war from Western nations. The main reasons for not adopting the convention concerned the fact that it would impose an unequal burden on Japan, as there was no expectation of any Japanese becoming prisoners, and that the provisions for food and accommodation in the convention were more generous than the Japanese military provided for its own troops.”

¹²⁷ Utsumi Aiko. “Korean ‘Imperial Soldiers’: Remembering Colonialism and Crimes Against Allied POWs.” In *Perilous Memories in the Asia Pacific War(s)*. Duke University Press, 2001. 210

¹²⁸ Bullard, Steven 53. “Around 36 percent of Australians captured by the Japanese—8,031 out of a total of 22,376—did not survive the war. By way of contrast, only 2 percent of the 8,119 Australian prisoners of Germany and Italy in Europe did not return to Australia alive.”

Borneo. Three-fourths of the suspects tried in Australian war crime trials were charged for mistreatment of prisoners of war. A third of the Australian POW deaths were due to the construction of the Burma-Thailand Railway (1942-43).¹²⁹ Korean POW guards were stationed to oversee the construction of the railway. Many of them were also tried for war crimes as a result of the massive loss of life. Another infamous instance of massive loss of life was the Sandakan Death March (1944), during which over 2,500 Australian and British POWs died.¹³⁰ The trials held at Labuan dealt with cases of POW mistreatment in Kuching, and the Sandakan Death March.

Trial locations were chosen due to a constellation of factors. Ideally, trials were held near where suspects were captured, or near the site of where the crimes occurred. However, war crime trials required a massive machinery: a sizable number of military officers to serve as the Court members, legal professionals to serve as judge advocates, proficient translators and interpreters, cooks, court stenographers, and personnel to oversee the compounds detaining war crime suspects and convicted war criminals. That is on top of finding a suitable location that has sufficient and functional infrastructure to house suspects, court officials, and other necessary facilities. Oftentimes, trials had to cease—even though there were still cases to be tried—because the trial facility had to be returned to civilian rule or to the pre-war European colonial power that claimed the territory. Some war crime suspects were detained for years until trial, due to lack of adequate space for tribunal personnel. Furthermore, other Allied nations were simultaneously holding their own war crime trials across Asia and the Pacific.

¹²⁹ Ibid 52

¹³⁰ Ibid 55. “The camp at Sandakan on the north-east coast had been established in July 1942, but Japanese authorities, perhaps fearing invasion of the coastal area, began to move all prisoners by foot in early 1945 to Rabaul, some 260 kilometers inland to the west... The only survivors from Sandakan were six Australians who managed to escape during the overland trek.”

Intriguingly, the Australians had not initially intended to hold trials at Labuan. BNB was British colonial territory, and many of the Allied POWs detained there were British. Due to circumstances, the 9th Australian Division was the first to arrive at Labuan. The Australians were given the responsibility of overseeing the Japanese surrender. This was so, as the British were “fully stretched re-establishing control in Singapore and Malaya as well as in the troubled Dutch possession of Java, the Australians took over the temporary administration of BNB.”¹³¹ Australia had expected to turn over BNB to the British by October of 1945. Yet temporary administration was extended to include overseeing the war crime trials. The British military was preoccupied with instances of unrest, “particularly in Java, where Indonesian nationalists were rebelling against the return of Dutch colonial control.”¹³² The Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies had disrupted its pre-war power dynamics.¹³³ I would like to pause for a moment, to let that fact sink in. The Australian military held war crime trials regarding crimes against victims who were predominantly British soldiers that took place in a British colonial territory, because the British were preoccupied with assisting the Dutch retake its colony. Allied powers—most of whom were also colonial powers—were actively assisting one another to reinforce their respective pre-war territorial holdings across Southeast Asia.

¹³¹ Fitzpatrick, Georgina. “The Trials on Labuan.” In *Australia’s War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:429–470, 2016. 433

¹³² Ibid 436

¹³³ Fitzpatrick, Georgina. “The Trials on Morotai.” In *Australia’s War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:371–407, 2016. 378

An Introduction to Taiwanese War Criminals (TWC)

Not only were there Japanese Class BC War criminals, but Taiwanese and Koreans—former colonial subjects of the Japanese Empire—were tried as war criminals as well: “According to existing documents, 173 Taiwanese were convicted in war crime trials after the war. Among these Taiwanese war criminals (TWCs), 26 were sentenced to death and 21 were consequently executed.” In regards to Korean war criminals, 148 were convicted, of which 23 were given the death sentence.¹³⁴

The five Allied countries which prosecuted Taiwanese as war criminals were Australia, the Republic of China (ROC), the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Of which “Australia convicted the largest number of Taiwanese war criminals (95), followed by the ROC (41), the United Kingdom (26), the Netherlands (7), and the US/the Philippines (4)”. In addition, “most of the TWCs had worked as camp guards of the Allied prisoners of war (POWs) in Southeast Asia during the wartime. And it has been further pointed out that eight of these Taiwanese camp guards who were tried as war criminals were sentenced to death. The MHW Name list also confirms that the majority of Taiwanese (and Korean) war criminals had served as POW camp guards (*Kōsei-shō hikiage engo-kyoku* 1955: 2), followed by ‘interpreters’ working for the *Kempeitai* (Japanese military police), and then ‘civilians.’”¹³⁵

Most Taiwanese POW guards were charged with mistreatment of POWs. Taiwanese interpreters meanwhile were charged for ill-treatment and killing local civilians. Historian Lan

¹³⁴ Lan, Shi-Chi Mike. “‘Crime’ of Interpreting: Taiwanese Interpreters as War Criminals of World War II.” In *New Insights in the History of Interpreting*. Vol. 122. The Netherlands: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2016. 194

¹³⁵ Ibid 195-196

Shi-Chi Mike argued that there were formal and informal interpreters, the former being those who had formal training and were deployed as interpreters. The latter were those initially assigned to other roles, but ad hoc reassigned as interpreters due to the need of Sinophone personnel who could communicate with the Chinese residing across Southeast Asia, or Chinese soldiers captured in China and transported to POW camps in Southeast Asia. Interpreters were needed whenever communication between Japanese superiors and Chinese civilians or POWs occurred, from mundane everyday tasks, interrogation, torture, to executions. Interpreters had no control over the scenarios in which they participated.¹³⁶ Lan argued that the positionality of the interpreters—especially those who doubled as POW guards for the sake of efficiency—was a highly precarious one. They were highly visible to the POWs, as they carried out all the orders from the Japanese superiors—who became “invisible” as POWs rarely saw or interacted with them. This had tremendous significance when the identification and investigation of potential war criminals began in the immediate postwar period.¹³⁷

Lan further noted that European colonial powers returning to Southeast Asia had one essential priority: to reassert the domination over their colonies and colonial subjects which was shattered by Japanese occupation. War crime trials were a tool which European colonial powers utilized as part of that reassertion. Especially so, as a significant number of the victims of Japanese occupation were colonial subjects; to carry out justice on their behalf was an act of asserting legitimacy. This is further compounded by the fact that the Taiwanese were also of high visibility to diasporic Chinese residing in Southeast Asia. As the Chinese in Southeast Asia

¹³⁶ Ibid 199-201

¹³⁷ Lan Shi-Chi. “Zhanfan de shenpan” (Trials of War Criminals), Lu Fang-Shang zhubian, *Zhongguo kangri zhanzheng shi xinbian: Zhan hou zhongguo* (New Edition of Chinese War of Resistance Against Japan: Postwar China), ye 210-247. Taipei shi: Guoshi guan, 2015. 238-239

migrated from Southeastern China—as did most Han Taiwanese who migrated to Taiwan pre-1945—their shared linguistic and cultural ties were exploited by the Japanese to rule over the Chinese population in Southeast Asia. This not only made Taiwanese highly visible to the local Chinese populations, but also caused the Taiwanese to be perceived as “traitors,” as having betrayed those with whom they shared a linguistic and cultural affinity, making the Taiwanese even more of a target.¹³⁸

The issue of nationality becomes even further complicated as the Nationalist government explicitly communicated “to British, Australian, and Dutch authorities to treat Taiwanese in Southeast Asia as ‘ordinary overseas Chinese’ (C:yiban huaqiao) with ROC nationality to expedite repatriation to Taiwan. The GMD contended that Taiwanese colonial subjects had been victims of Japanese imperialism and should not be indicted for war crimes as Japanese nationals (much like what the South Korean government argued on behalf of Korean War criminals). However, the Allied powers rejected such appeals and maintained jurisdiction over Taiwanese war criminals as ‘enemy Japanese nationals’ until the signing of the Sino-Japanese Peace Treaty in 1952.”¹³⁹

One of the Allied nations, the Soviet Union, did not hold war crime trials, but it did detain a significant number of people from the war, and imprisoned them across Siberia to perform forced labor. After the Soviet Union temporarily took over Northeast China—Manchuria—at the end of the war, its State Defense Committee decided as part of its reconstruction effort to select 500,000 people out of the Japanese military to work in Siberia. The

¹³⁸ Lan 2016. 202-203

¹³⁹ Shirane 167. (Note: At the time of the immediate postwar, the Nationalist government (the Republic of China, ROC) was still the power controlling most of mainland China. The end of the Second Sino-Japanese War was soon followed by the outbreak of the Chinese Civil War, at the end of which in 1949 the Nationalists had lost to the Communists, and subsequently fled to Taiwan.)

total number of Japanese sent to the Soviet Union were 700,000 people (from Manchuria, and other Soviet occupied locations), of which 472,942 returned to Japan. Taiwanese people were among those sent to Siberia.¹⁴⁰ The repatriation of all the people detained by the Soviet Union was only completed upon the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Soviet Union in 1956. Due to extreme cold, forced labor, and lack of adequate supplies, 58,000 deaths occurred.¹⁴¹ The Soviet Union not only appropriated factory equipment, flour, and other material sources from Northeast China, it was also desirous of labor. Labor was desperately needed. In the wake of WWII, the Soviet Union lost 25 million soldiers. Soviet industrial sites were also severely damaged by the German Military.¹⁴² The political need to appropriate leftover human resources from the war was high and universal.

The Trial

This section utilizes the trial documents of the mass trial in which Kan Shigematsu was tried. Following Kan's perspective as written in the biography, the focus will shift to the trial documents themselves.

Kan's Recollection

Neither the Japanese nor the Australians ever explained to the Taiwanese detainees the definitions and the legal implications of "war criminal," and thus Kan had no understanding of

¹⁴⁰ Xu Xue-Ji. (2016 nian wu yue) "Taiwan ren zai manzhou de zhanzheng jingyan". (*The Wartime Experience of the Taiwanese in Manchukuo*) *Lishi taiwan*, di 11 qi, 75-132 ye.

¹⁴¹ Chen Li-hang. *Lingxia liushiba du: Erzhan hou taiwan ren de xiboliya zhanfu jingyan. (Minus 68 Degrees: Experience of Post-WWII Taiwanese as POWs in Siberia)*. Taibei shi. Qianwei chuban she. 2021. 8

¹⁴² Ibid 60

the severity of the charge he was about to be tried for. In the discussions Kan had with other Taiwanese, the word “war criminal” never entered their vocabulary. By early December, the Australian military started its military court trials in Labuan. Prior to the trial, they were one by one called upon for interrogation. The language fluency of the second generation Japanese-American translator was too poor, leaving Kan unable to comprehend the details. Here it is necessary to note that the level of linguistic proficiency was low not only among the translators, but also among the Taiwanese war criminal suspects as well.¹⁴³ A primary school education in Japanese was insufficient to navigate a military court trial held in English, especially when relying upon a translator of questionable ability. What speaks volumes about the inequities of these legal proceedings was that some of the Japanese officers possessed English proficiency, sufficient enough to interrupt when he found an interpreter to be unsatisfactory.¹⁴⁴ One’s proficiency in Japanese and English determined how much access one had to these legal proceedings.

The one statement Kan remembered most clearly during his interrogation was, “You are Taiwanese, yet you actively became a Japanese soldier to kill us.” Kan replied, “As Taiwan started sending out conscription orders, I was conscripted on site, I did not do so voluntarily.” Yet, Kan did not know whether the translator did not understand the meaning of “conscript order” or “conscription on site,” or pretended not to understand. In his memory, the translator did

¹⁴³ Fitzpatrick, Georgina. “The Trials on Labuan.” In *Australia’s War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:429–470, 2016. 455

¹⁴⁴ Ibid 456. “Captain Hoshijima (Labuan ML28), whom Mofitt dubbed the Pacific War’s ‘beast of Belesen’ was one example. Hoshijima objected to the translation of his interrogation by Captain Bereton and criticized the interpreter.”

not translate accurately. The translator even said to Kan, “You used violence toward Officer _____, this is clearly an example of torture of POWs!”¹⁴⁵

In their time as POW guards, the Taiwanese never heard from the Japanese military that within international law there was a clause regarding the treatment of POWs. When they were asked about violating “the rules and customs of war,” Kan was confused. Furthermore, no one told them when Japan surrendered, it had accepted the Potsdam Declaration, which emphasized serious investigation of the crimes of torture of POWs performed by the Japanese military. Thus, given the questionable linguistic abilities of the translator and Kan’s lack of any basic knowledge of war crime trials, even though some explanations were made to him, he could not follow the legal proceedings as they occurred. Later, Kan lamented how younger Japanese had at least some knowledge of the Class A War Criminals sentenced in the Tokyo Trial, but very few know about Class BC War Criminals.

In Kan’s memory, he appeared twice before the court. The first time was when the charges were brought forth, the second time was to receive the judgment. Akin to the prior interrogation, the court kept insisting that he had tortured a British officer. The Japanese lawyer from start to end had never once defended him, and he could never forget this. Kan heard that for the Japanese who faced possible death sentences, this lawyer always did what he could to request the court to commute to life imprisonment. Yet the lawyer showed no sympathy for Kan, and did little for Kan’s defense. Kan was sentenced to five years of imprisonment. The judgments came one after another, about five minutes per person, and sent out of the tent once finished. Thus, they became Class BC War Criminals.

¹⁴⁵ Kan cannot recall the name of the large figured British officer who refused to salute.

The Trial Records

According to the records available digitally via the Australian National Archive, Kan was tried in a mass trial along with 44 other individuals. In the Australian War Crime Trials, similar to other Anglo-American Allied countries, there were four legal entities: 1) the judge advocate general (JAG), an individual who is experienced in military court trial procedures, and offers his professional legal explanation on the rules, procedures, and opinion on the trial, but he can only offer his professional opinion, 2) the court, composed of a group of military officers, who did not necessarily have experience or training in military law, but who ultimately make the decision in regards to whether the defendant is guilty or not, 3) the defense, the lawyer(s) who represent the defendant(s), and 4) the prosecution, the lawyer(s) suing on behalf of the victims. The trial documents contained the opinion and summary provided by JAG, the opening and closing statements of the prosecution and defense, questioning of witnesses, and the petition of the defendants. No Australian trial documents contain the deliberation process of the court, and as such, we are not privy to how or why the court arrived at its decision. We may only speculate.

This trial occurred because the POW camp had been the site of a huge loss of life, from 1200-1300 British detained at the camp at the start, to only approximately 750 still alive by the end of the war. At the end of the trial the 45 people tried were found guilty of “frequently assault and cruelly beat certain of the said prisoners in violation of the Laws and usages of War and sentenced to terms of imprisonment varying from life to one year and 3 were acquitted.”¹⁴⁶

In the opening statement to the court, the prosecution argued that the high death rate at the camp was “a result of lack of proper food and medical attention and overwork, coupled with

¹⁴⁶ NAA: A471, 80754 PART 1. 5-6

brutal treatment received at the hands of the guards.”¹⁴⁷ The prosecution asserted that even though there was a lack of available food and medical supply due to circumstantial reasons, it was this lack of supply combined with overwork and beatings that resulted in the high loss of life. In other words, the prosecution argued that although overwork and beatings alone may not have caused high death rates, they most certainly were contributing factors. The prosecution then described the poor quality of supplies issued to the POWs.¹⁴⁸ They then pointed out that even when POWs became ill and needed medical care, they would be given half rations. This effectively forced the sick to work, so that they could receive a full ration. Thus there was not just a lack of food, but also a willful withholding of food in order to compel the sick to work. The prosecution then argued that guards beat POWs even when they were not ordered to do so, and that collective punishment would be issued even when one person alone committed a minor offense.

As a witness for the defense, Kan made the following statement:

TWENTY SIXTH witness for the DEFENCE.

TAKENAGA Shigematsu

having made a solemn declaration through the sworn interpreter is examined by the defending officer.

I would like to make a correction to my statement taken by Lt. SUNDERLAND. I did not beat any INDONESIAN. I scolded them only once. I was not given orders to beat P.W.s at the place of beating. I was a cook. But now and then I did guard duties. The ship yards were so big that we could not guard all of it carefully. For that reason when we took the P.W.s to the ship yards to

¹⁴⁷ PART 1. 93

¹⁴⁸Part 1. 94. “Most of the food given as protein issue was rotten and unfit for human consumption, and the prisoners were forced to exist on the rice ration and what little vegetables they were able to grow in their meager gardens. Many prisoners were suffering from scabies and tropical ulcers. They were unable to obtain bandages and covered their sores with filthy scraps of rags, leaves, etc.”

work we left it to the Japanese of the ship yards and we would guard them from up a hill. In 1945 an employee of the ship yard beat up a P.W.. The P.W. reported it to me. I sought out the employee. I was told, "I am doing the beating it had nothing to do with you". I told the P.W. to report it to the commandant and also told him to report it to my superiors. Lt. SUNDERLAND told me that I was responsible for my friends beating P.W.s as well. I regretted it because I did not do the beating. I also regretted that I could not stop the beating. My friends said that we did not have the authority to stop the beating of P.W.s. I can swear that I did not treat P.W.s and internees badly. As my comrades have already said we permitted the P.W.s to buy things many times. I would also like to add that I bought eggs for women and children of NO. 5 camp.¹⁴⁹

Here, Kan asserted that he did not directly oversee the POWs at this particular instance in the shipyards, which appears to be the main focus for his case. As he was guarding from the outer perimeter, from a hill, he could not have been beating POWs working at the shipyard, and it was the shipyard employees who had beaten the POWs. He also mentioned that he bought eggs for women and children, something he also stated in his biography.

During the mass trial, two people testified against Kan. A Lieutenant Sunderland testified that Kan had beaten POWs at the Songhai Priok Ship Building Yards in 1943. He alleged that Kan had "carried out many severe beatings using pieces of wood and his fists." The other officer, a Major MacArthur, testified that Kan had beaten POWs on several occasions. Then Kan stated that he had never hit POWs. And then the ends. Kan's portion of the trial was no more than half of a page of a typewritten document.¹⁵⁰ It may be possible that either of the witnesses were the British officer with the baton whom he was ordered to slap, as described in the biography.

In his opening statement to the court, the lawyer for the defense insisted that while it was unquestionable that some of the defendants beat POWs, it remained a question as to "whether these beatings constitute a question or not, and to what degree the accused should be

¹⁴⁹ Part 2. 23

¹⁵⁰ Part 3. 165

punished.”¹⁵¹ The defense stated that for minor offenses, the informal punishment of a face slap is much preferable to the official one of confinement at the guard house, where they received no bedding, and less food.¹⁵² This kind of corporal punishment was also practiced by the Japanese military against its own people for minor offenses. The prosecution proceeded to argue that due to their young age, their limited education, their status as Taiwanese, and their discipline by the Japanese military, they had no idea that the corporal punishment they carried out against the POWs were illegal.¹⁵³ In addition, there were instances of human kindness where the guards “gave foodstuffs to the prisoners, bought some food for them and gave [it to] them surreptitiously.”¹⁵⁴

In his closing arguments, the lawyer for the prosecution argued that in “Article 4 of the Annex to The Hague Convention (MML page 328) states—‘Prisoners of War are in the power of the hostile government but not of the individuals or corps who capture them. They must be humanely treated...’” The prosecution then proceeded to state that according to “Article 46 of the Prisoner of War Convention (MML page 372) ‘All forms of corporal punishment, confinement in premises not lighted by daylight, and in general all forms of cruelty whatsoever are prohibited.’” The prosecution argued that it does not matter that POWs received the same as did the Japanese officers and soldiers. That it was not an excuse if the Japanese military also

¹⁵¹ Part 2. 47

¹⁵² Such as leaving the compound without permission, not saluting, and smoking outside the designated smoking time.

¹⁵³ Part 2. 47. “In this case especially, almost all of the accused are Formosans who came to BORNEO in their teens having hardly finished their Elementary School. They gave beatings on several occasions in these three years believing they were authorized to do so according to their superior’s order or instruction, without being aware of its illegality. Therefore I believe the necessary punishment against the accused must be such a light one as to gain its purpose of penalty by warning them for their future.”

¹⁵⁴ Part 2. 47

mistreated their own people in the same manner. Given that corporal punishment is forbidden, and the humane treatment of POWs is fundamental in the Hague and the Geneva Conventions, just because the Japanese beat their own people, did not give them a reasonable justification to also beat POWs.

In his argument in favor of mitigation of the sentence, the defense argued that slapping has a different cultural meaning in the Japanese context than it does in the Western context. That the guards all arrived at Borneo no older than 16 or 17. That “Formosans are going to be released from Japanese rule as a result of international surrender. I presume they will become the servants of China or another state after leaving Japan, which means they will become members of a state which is a member of the 5 big powers after this war.”¹⁵⁵

In his opinion, the judge advocate general (JAG) found several flaws in how the trial was conducted. The JAG found the high number of defendants tried together made it “extremely difficult to follow and allocate the evidence to the individual.” In addition, because most of the witness testimony consisted of written documents, this made the trial inadequate, even when “taking into account the relaxed laws of evidence by the Crimes Act.” By heavily relying upon written documents, the “accused persons were denied the opportunity of cross examining and testing the written evidence tendered by the prosecution.”¹⁵⁶ The defendants were denied their right to cross examination. JAG offered his observation that while the prosecution argued that the high death rate was due to the physical beatings the guards dealt to the POWs, he considered the death rate to be “due chiefly to the shortage of food and medical supplies.” JAG also found that

¹⁵⁵ Part 3. 62

¹⁵⁶ NAA: A471, 80754 PART 1. 6

the variation of sentences to be too extreme, and that the sentences should have been no more than 3 years. And most importantly, “If this had been a court-martial and governed by the laws applying to courts-martial, I would have recommended that none of the sentences be confirmed, but as previously stated, the laws of evidence for war crimes courts have been greatly relaxed.”¹⁵⁷

In the petition, the defendants reiterated the argument that in accordance with the Geneva Convention, when an officer becomes a POW, they are subject to the standard punishment practiced by the hostile country that detained the POW. That is to say, Allied POWs captured by Japan, under the terms of the Geneva Convention, are subject to the same standard of punishment that Japanese officers are subject to. In addition, within Japanese military practices, for minor offenses, it is preferable to hand out the informal punishment of a slap rather than the formal punishment of confinement. Confinement is not only more painful “mentally but physically, having insufficient rations, nearly no blankets, and being confined in a small place.” A beating or a slap is preferable as it is less painful, it does not require a formal trial, is a more efficient allocation of resources, and more economical for punishing minor offenses. The petition then goes on to point out that due to differences in cultural contexts, Westerners may consider such slaps a greater insult and punishment than confinement. The petition continued to emphasize that as Taiwanese, they were taught to believe that such physical punishments were legal.¹⁵⁸ Arguing that they as Taiwanese, as colonial subjects, were very young, arrived at Borneo no older than 20, and combined with their lack of knowledge of international laws regarding the proper treatment of POWs, they were naive and simply did as they were told, and so “behaved

¹⁵⁷ NAA: A471, 80754 PART 1. 7

¹⁵⁸ NAA: A471, 80754 PART 1. 63. “The beatings administered by the accused to the PWs and internees were recognised as it was mentioned, as a simple and informal punishment, as admitted, or tacitly admitted custom among the Japanese Army. Especially so far as the Formosan guards are concerned, they had been educated and disciplined to that effect. They had had no recognition of illegality of their act...”

like Robots.”¹⁵⁹ They argued that they possessed no agency, no autonomy, and thus could not be held responsible for their actions, as they were merely tools to be used at will by their Japanese superiors. Like robots, they carried out tasks they were pre-programmed to perform. The petition proceeded to argue that beatings are categorically different from injury or manslaughter. And that even if such beatings are to be considered illegal, the sentencing handed out in this mass trial has been disproportionate to the crime. The penalty for murder was imprisonment for 5 to 7 years, whereas for the crime of beatings, some defendants in this trial had been given sentences ranging from 15 to 20 years, and even life imprisonment. The petition also argued that over the course of years of interaction between the POWs and the guards, some development of human affection had occurred, and that such friendships meant that some of the guards could not have treated the POWs “inhumanely.” Lastly, perhaps one of the most intriguing arguments put forth by the petition, was that as Taiwanese will no longer be Japanese, and will become ROC nationals, they should be treated accordingly.¹⁶⁰ Again asserting the notion that as Taiwanese, they were not in the position of determining the policies over the treatment of POWs, they were merely pawns and tools of Japan to carry out the will of those who wield them, and should not be penalized.

In regards to the joint petition of the defendants, JAG had recommended: “Confirm finding and mitigate all sentences of those accused sentenced to over 3 years imprisonment to terms of imprisonment or imprisonment for 3 yrs.”¹⁶¹ The petition was dismissed. None of the sentences was mitigated.

¹⁵⁹ NAA: A471, 80754 PART 1. 66

¹⁶⁰ NAA: A471, 80754 PART 1. 66. “Now Formosans are going to cease Japanese nationality and revive as members of the Allies. If these accused had not committed the acts in question they would turn over a new leaf in life in the hopeful future as soon as the war ended, but as they happened to be the guards in a prisoners’ camp, unfortunately, they are going to sacrifice their lives of a glorious future.”

¹⁶¹ Part 1. 3

Mass trials prioritize efficiency over more lengthy individual prosecution and defense. In addition there was an issue of disparity in sentencing. This was not just a feature within Kan's trial, but an overall feature of the Australia trials. As the trials occurred over the span of six years, across eight locations, there was a lack of uniformity across sentencing standards, and there was no communication between the different courts to arrive at a standard.¹⁶² There was effectively no uniformity in sentencing. Specifically in Labuan, "the convicted in the Labuan ML37 trial complained in their petition that their sentences of between 15 and 20 years or life imprisonment for 'trifling offences' of beating, albeit multiple times, were disproportionate to sentences for more serious crimes, such as murder, for which the sentence was sometimes 5-7 years imprisonment. The Judge-Advocate General appeared to agree that there had been some injustice in this trial, as he commented that it was 'difficult to appreciate' upon what factors the Court had based its variations in sentencing."¹⁶³

Throughout the trial, Kan always considered himself to be innocent, compared to the Japanese superiors who always beat the POWs, the two slaps he gave came at the price of five years of imprisonment. The sentence was unfathomable. At the time, a rumor circulating amongst them that "a face slap cost five years, a fistful of punches cost ten years" had been realized. In the Labuan trials, there were a total of 146 people charged, about 102 of whom were Taiwanese. Seven were given life sentences, and 84 were sentenced to life imprisonment. Conversely, fellow POW guard Lian A-Mu (連阿木), before he was transported to Singapore for war crime trials, he had the fortune of having received letters of gratitude from a number of

¹⁶² Morotai, Wewak, Labuan, Darwin, Rabaul, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Manus.

¹⁶³ Morris, Narrelle, and Tim McCormack. "Were the Australian Trials Fair?" In *Australia's War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:781-809, 2016. 802

Dutch, British and Indian POWs. Letters he received because of his kind treatment toward them. These letters were of use to his trial appeals, and he credited them as the reason why he was able to avoid any jail time.¹⁶⁴ It is important to note how different Lian's trajectory diverged from that of Kan. As these trials ultimately came down to what testimonies one can leverage in favor of their behalf, be it words of praise or condemnation from Allied POWs could have major life or death implications for the POW guards on war crime trials

Morotai Island

In late February 1946 the war crime convicts were taken away from Labuan by ship. By early March they arrived at Morotai, an island close to New Guinea Island. It is one of the Moluccan islands, North of Halmahera. Twenty-five war crime trials by Australia were held here, from 29 November 1945 to 28 February 1946. The Australian trials in Morotai ceased as many of the officers and soldiers were due for demobilization, and were unwilling to prolong their stay. There was also pressure from the Dutch for returning Morotai to their jurisdiction. A small island with a local population of 2000-3000 people, Morotai was surrounded by coral reefs, and covered in mostly tropical jungles.

Extrajudicial punishments continued unabated. New kinds of torture awaited them in Morotai. From morning till night, war crime convicts were forced to lumber wood, weed fields, and perform other physical labor. Those who wore the red X armband suffered particular bullying: when performing physical labor, they often got beaten or hit with rubber hoses, ropes and other objects by the supervising Australian soldiers and the Indigenous guards. At dawn,

¹⁶⁴ Li Zhanping (2005). 107

when they returned to camp after a day's work, worse conditions awaited them. Australian soldiers would stand by the two sides right outside the entrance, holding whips made out of ropes tied to the tips of belts and bats. As the war criminal prisoners entered in a two-line formation, Australian soldiers would whip them with all their might. The prisoners would attempt to start running at the entrance, so as to run past the Australians as fast as they could. However, the day-long labor rendered them exhausted, and some would stumble and fall over. Those who fell got stepped over by everyone else. The ones who fell often had to be sent to the medical office.

According to Kan, these particular Australian soldiers just a few months ago were on the battlefield fighting the Japanese military to the death. It was a well experienced unit, and they used war criminals as outlets for their built-up animosity and hatred. Before this unit returned to Australia, their anger was released upon the war criminals for up to a week or so. Physical abuse of war crime suspects in Morotai have also been corroborated.¹⁶⁵ Georgina Fitzpatrick noted that no action or investigation were initiated regarding the Australian guards at Morotai, and that “the practice on Morotai differed from those governing the Rabaul and Manus compounds, where complaints were more likely to be followed up. The different attitude on Morotai may be ascribed to the presence of recovering prisoners of war whose visible signs of wartime suffering shocked the Australian troops assigned to guard duties.”¹⁶⁶ However, one also must note that the overall picture was heterogeneous. That is to say, there were also instances of compassionate treatment toward war crime suspects.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Fitzpatrick, Georgina. “The Trials on Morotai.” In *Australia's War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:371–407, 2016. 400

¹⁶⁶ Ibid 401

¹⁶⁷ Ibid 399. “Despite the difficult and cramped conditions, many Japanese showed a surprising gratitude to their Australian captors for being treated humanely. For example, when Sergeant John Landon left for Australia, several of those whom he guarded in No 1 Compound presented

Yet, the most shocking of all after their arrival at Morotai was the presence of 200 Japanese POWs. They surrendered during the war and became POWs. They wore clean and neat Australian military uniforms. According to international law, military officers cannot be subjected to compulsory labor. They were even given the same food, cigarettes and alcohol that the Australian military received. The favorable treatment these Japanese officer POWs received in comparison to the daily physical abuse received by convicted Class BC War Criminals was staggering. In Kuching, Kan was instilled with the ideology of *Instructions for the Battlefield* (J:senjinkun). He firmly believed that Japanese soldiers do not ever allow themselves to suffer the humiliation of becoming a POW. At that moment, the presence of so many Japanese military officers who willingly surrendered to become POWs was incomprehensible to him. This was another instance of the stark difference between reality and the ideals indoctrinated to Kan by the Japanese military.

Daily chores included cleaning out the toilets of Japanese officer POW living quarters. Some of them resented still having to serve as subordinates to the Japanese, even after being convicted as war criminals. But they had no choice. The Japanese officers seemed to have been forbidden from talking to them. If they tried to start a conversation with the officers, the officers would not respond, and this made them dislike these officers even more. They would secretly complain, “They refused to gyokusai (honorable death, death without surrender), they willingly became POWs, how disgraceful! And spending their days here leisurely, utterly unforgivable!” When it was Kan’s rotation to perform custodial work at the living quarters of these officers, his perception altered. Upon seeing Taiwanese personnel, Japanese officers would light a cigarette, then immediately put it out, and throw it onto the floor, so as to allow them to acquire barely

him with an autographed Japanese flag. The signatories thanked him for his great kindness and wished him happiness and health.”

used cigarettes. As it was forbidden for the officers to give them cigarettes and other items openly, they had to pretend to be discarding things away. The Japanese officers had better food than they did. The leftovers of the Japanese officers became the best parts of their meals. The person whose turn it was to be head of the kitchen had to bring metal cans to acquire the leftovers. Sometimes Japanese officers would hide rationed canned foods and such items under the leftovers for them to take. They later learned that these officers were survivors of the Morotai defense unit. It was only after intense fighting against the Allied Forces, and the loss of half their unit, did these officers finally surrender.

Rabaul Island

In May of 1946 they were transported to Rabaul. The Australian military held 188 war crime trials at Rabaul from December 1945 to August 1947. Rabaul was also the headquarters of the Eighth Army Area, led by General Imamura Hitoshi. Prior to the Japanese occupation, “Rabaul had been the administrative center of Australia’s mandated territories; territories which had been colonies of Imperial Germany before the First World War.”¹⁶⁸ Rabaul had all the necessary factors for a suitable trial location. It was an Australian territory, unlike other locations which imminently reverted back to a European colonial power. This, combined with the fact that there was the military base of HQ 8MD to provide ample personnel, two thirds of the war crime trials held by Australia occurred at Rabaul.

The concentration camp was located on a mountain, from which one could see Rabaul Bay. The view was beautiful. The buildings, surrounding roads, fields, and gardens were all built

¹⁶⁸ Fitzpatrick, Georgina. “The Trials in Rabaul.” In *Australia’s War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:507–567, 2016. 508.

by the compulsory labor of the war criminals. The entire jail cell was built from wood lumbered from the mountains. Kan was assigned to work in the material construction unit. Going up the mountain to log wood was not only dangerous but also physically intense labor. Even amidst the pouring rain, the work continued without interruption. Some fell because they were whipped upon their backs and were crushed to death beneath the lumber. They engaged in necropolitical labor. The very labor being performed was almost consuming the laborer himself in the process. The death or intense physical draining of the laborer renders the labor necropolitical. This is most certainly evident in the case of fellow POW guard and war crime convict Xu Qing-Quan (許清泉). Xu was sentenced to ten years. When he was imprisoned at Kuching, some of the Taiwanese were ordered to handle bomb disposal. Xu was among those chosen to handle the task. They carried over 250 kilograms of missile materials to a site, to be detonated one at a time. However an accident occurred. Everyone else in the work party died immediately, except Xu, who had severe burnings all over his body. He had to be transported by plane to the Rabaul Military Hospital, where he received over three months of intensive treatment.¹⁶⁹ Work-related deaths due to the dangerous nature of the compulsory labor was of such frequency that it led “war criminals to petition, unsuccessfully, for the ‘abolition of the dangerous works’, for ‘relief’ to be given to the families of those killed, and for those war criminals injured during the ‘forced labour’ to be released on parole.”¹⁷⁰

General Imamura was not only undefeated across the battlefields of South China, Java, and Rabaul, but more importantly, he also “shielded and took a firm stand for his former

¹⁶⁹ Li Zhanping (2005). 54

¹⁷⁰ Morris, Narrelle. “The Australian War Criminals Compounds at Rabaul and on Manus Island, 1945-53”. Brill Nijhoff, 2016. 725

subordinates as a defendant in war crime trials conducted by the Australian and Dutch armies after the war”.¹⁷¹ As almost all of his subordinates began to be jailed as suspected war criminals at Rabaul, General Imamura had insisted to Major General Kenneth Eather—commanding officer of the Australian occupying forces— that “if you are still going to try them as war criminals, you ought to bring charges only against the commander-in-chief, who holds the position of leadership, rather than trying the officers and men individually. Accordingly, I would like you to put me on trial and release the others immediately (434-435).”¹⁷² The military tribunals subsequently granted his request to be put on trial as the commander-in-chief. He was sentenced to ten years of imprisonment. To Kan, in terms of integrity, General Imamura was entirely different from his superiors in Kuching Concentration Camp who scapegoated their responsibility onto their subordinates.

General Imamura repeatedly demonstrated that he truly cared about the wellbeing of his men.¹⁷³ General Imamura had attempted multiple times to communicate with the camp commander, to try to get him to put a stop to these acts of torture. In the initial period it was

¹⁷¹ Ushimura, Kei, and Steven J. Ericson. “‘A Gentleman Delights in Three Things’: The Memoirs of General Imamura Hitoshi .” In *Beyond the “Judgment of Civilization”: The Intellectual Legacy of the Japanese War Crimes Trials, 1946-1949*, 1st ed., 278–319. English . Tokyo : International House of Japan, 2003. 279

¹⁷² Ibid 306

¹⁷³ Ibid 307-308. “Imamura and more than thirty other generals and admirals were housed in a place called ‘Generals’ Village.’ Twice he received letters signed jointly by the commanding officers who had been under his direct command. Having already been placed in an internment camp as suspected war criminals, they complained about their innermost feelings of unease. Imamura made up his mind: Reading the anguish not only of the letter writers but also of much younger officers and men, he asked to be interned with the accused war criminals so that he could be close to them and offer help, even though he himself had not been charged with any crimes. Familiar with the Bible, Imamura wrote of his feelings at the time: ‘Even if it means leaving the ninety-nine sheep, one must not forsake the one that is lonely and in distress’ (435-436).”

impossible to dissipate the hatred and desires of vengeance amongst the Australian soldiers. The war criminals became objects and targets for retribution and vengeance. They were consumed by these soldiers. Like the instances of abuse that occurred in other locations, the instances of abuse at Rabaul were also substantiated by others.¹⁷⁴

In addition, there were institutional failures and oversights, “the war criminals compounds operated between late 1945 and early 1951 without the benefit of formal regulations.”¹⁷⁵ The camp commandant of the Rabaul war criminals compound—Major Upson—had even asked for formal regulations in regards to the operations of the compounds, to no avail. In fact, “war criminals in Rabaul, too, petitioned for the public announcement’ of the compound regulations, noting that they were ‘always puzzled by the different sometimes reverse instructions issued at random’ by compound staff or by the ‘frequent alterations of the way of arrangements’ caused by staff changes.”¹⁷⁶ If prisoners cannot have a reasonable expectation of what rules they must abide by, then a failure of justice has occurred, through this massive delay to provide formal regulations. The War Crimes (Imprisonment) Regulations were only issued in February 1951.

Soon, a variety of workshops sprung up across camp. This was in part an act of utilitarianism by the Australians, to utilize the specific skill sets the war criminal convicts

¹⁷⁴ Morris, Narrelle. “The Australian War Criminals Compounds at Rabaul and on Manus Island, 1945–53.” In *Australia’s War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:687–731, 2016. 720

¹⁷⁵ Ibid 691

¹⁷⁶ Ibid 715

already possessed to help reduce the costs of maintenance of the camp.¹⁷⁷ As Kan had tailoring skills, he along with a Japanese war criminal named Sato were responsible for the sewing shop. Their duties were mostly repairing military and prisoner uniforms. Sato was a well trained suit tailor. In addition, there was lumber, metal processing, shoe repairing and all kinds of shops, including a hair salon. They repaired prisoner uniforms every day. Compared to the general labor that was rather harsh, being able to utilize his own skill sets made it all easier. Having a set of specialized skills exempted him from the much more physically demanding general labor. In the beginning, they mostly repaired and ironed the uniforms of the Australian soldiers. They would also sometimes sew the clothing and shirts of the camp commander and officers. As a result of being assigned to tailoring, the two years and seven months spent in Rabaul was easy for Kan.

General Imamura was resolute in protesting against the acts of torture inflicted by the Australian soldiers. As the war criminals could no longer tolerate the endless acts of violence, it was decided they were to carry out a riot even at the risk of their own lives. Upon learning of this, General Imamura attempted to console and sympathize with them. He also used a forceful negotiation tactic to strongly demand the camp commandant to improve the situation. He warned that, “If the abuse continues as such, there will be riots!” The Australian military only held high regard for General Imamura. They heeded his words, and improvements in the overall management of the camp were made.

The Rabaul trials came to a close by 1947—despite cases still awaiting trial—due to the demobilization of Australian soldiers stationed on site. Demobilization is essentially the opposite to mobilization; when soldiers are to end their active service and to return to their civilian lives.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid 723. “Often, the work of the war criminals amounted to utilizing their skills and experience...including the farmers, blacksmiths, electricians, carpenters, mechanics, doctors, and pharmacists; the fountain pen dealer perhaps less...”

Combined with an “acute scarcity of investigating and legal officers still remaining in the military forces” and the court in Hong Kong coming to a close, there were no more available trial locations.¹⁷⁸ The Australian war crime trials thus stalled until 1950, when trials resumed on Manus Island. Twenty-six trials were held on Manus from June 1950 to April 1951.

The Politics of War Crime Trials

The three year-long pause was due to a combination of inertia from the Australian government and geopolitical shifts. The British government was no longer willing to host an Australian military court in Hong Kong. The Australian government was reluctant to hold trials within Australia, and sought out Japan as a location. In particular, many suspects were already being held at Sugamo Prison, Tokyo. General Douglas MacArthur, who served as Supreme Commander Allied Powers (SCAP), denied this request as conducting further war crime trials within Japan was in direct conflict with his policy interests in regards to the Cold War.¹⁷⁹ There were internal disagreements within the Australian government over how to proceed. Prime Minister Ben Chifley, and the Department of External Affairs preferred an end to the trials rather than continuing them in Australia. Whereas the Department of the Army was eager to continue

¹⁷⁸ Fitzpatrick, Georgina. “The Trials in Rabaul.” In *Australia’s War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:507–567, 2016. 567

¹⁷⁹ Fitzpatrick, Georgina. “Last Trials: Manus Island.” In *Australia’s War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:646–686, 2016. 648. “However, MacArthur refused to host an Australian court. As early as 14 August 1948, he argued that such a court would have ‘no direct connection with the occupation of Japan’ and therefore could not ‘appropriately function therein’. MacArthur, who had fought hard to keep the Japanese Emperor from being prosecuted as a war criminal at the International Military Tribunal of the Far East (IMTFE) that was then underway in Tokyo, was by 1948 pursuing a policy of accommodation with Japan. He needed Emperor Hirohito *in situ* to control the Japanese population during the post-war period of occupation and Japan as a bulwark against the rising threat of communism in the region. Setting up further war crimes trials in Japan would sound a jarring note.”

the trials, and did not accept SCAP's refusal. As it became clear Japan was not an option, the Department of the Army came to side with an end to the trials. Manus was not considered as an ideal trial venue at this time.¹⁸⁰ Australia as a venue was also rejected, in part because of transportation difficulties and the "likelihood of trials on the Australian mainland leading to 'undesirable publicity.'"¹⁸¹ Indecision over whether to proceed or halt the trials had irritated MacArthur as such that in September 1949 he communicated to the Australian government that he will "release the suspects he held for the Australians within 45 days since there had been 'no indication that the Australian authorities are presently prepared to accept delivery of these suspects for transfer to Sydney.'"¹⁸² After some negotiations, MacArthur agreed to extend the deadline to after the end of the year, when the upcoming Australian election will have ended.

Simultaneously, domestic pressure on the trials surged. In September 1949, the halting of progress on the war crime trials was leaked to *The Melbourne Age*. Discontent erupted from "the Returned Services League (RSL) and former prisoners of war when rumours surfaced of the projected releases of suspects from Sugamo."¹⁸³ The domestic pressure finally pushed the Chiefly administration to investigate Manus as a possible site. However, this was all too late, and Robert Menzies was elected as Prime Minister. The investigative team reported sufficient infrastructure, and the Menzies administration determined that Manus was a suitable site. The fact that public sentiment regarding war crime suspects and government inaction on trials shifted

¹⁸⁰ Manus Island was at the time under Australian jurisdiction. It is presently part of Papua New Guinea. It is also an offshore island used by the Australian government to indefinitely detain asylum and refugees seeking to arrive at Australia via boats since 2000; the detention center is infamous for its inhumane treatment.

¹⁸¹ Ibid 651

¹⁸² Ibid 653

¹⁸³ Ibid 656

an election, is telling of the level of significance that these trials meant to the Australian public. What was also equally revealing was the extent of General MacArthur's reach. The Australian government had determined there were 42 cases concerning 177 suspects ready for trial, but after discussions with MacArthur, it was determined only 9 cases concerning 51 suspects will be tried.¹⁸⁴ MacArthur was able to intervene in the Australian war crime trials because it was him who "had set up the machinery for the arrest of any war criminal suspect still at large."¹⁸⁵ It is necessary to point out these realities of both domestic and international politics in order to illustrate the fact that war crime trials were not purely about the pursuit of justice. War crime trials were as much influenced by politics, as it was influenced by the pursuit of justice. Australia was the "last of the Western allies to complete its programme of trials, in 1951."¹⁸⁶

Manus Island

Manus Island is the main island of the Admiralty Islands, surrounded by coral reefs on all sides, a distance of 500 kilometers Northwest of Rabaul. Even before Manus was determined as a site for trials, "296 Japanese serving sentences for war crimes had moved from Rabaul to Manus with a contingent of Australian personnel in 1949."¹⁸⁷ Kan was incorporated into an eighty person advance unit, sent one month ahead of others to Manus, for the goal of setting up the necessary infrastructure. The American military came to occupy the island during the war

¹⁸⁴ Ibid 659

¹⁸⁵ Ibid 660

¹⁸⁶ Aszkielowicz, Dean. "Changing Direction: Repatriation of Japanese War Criminals in Australian Custody." In *Australia's War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:732–754, 2016. 733.

¹⁸⁷ Fitzpatrick, Georgina. "Last Trials: Manus Island." In *Australia's War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:646–686, 2016. 648. 657.

and subsequently constructed a large-scale base. After the war, the facilities were handed over to the Australian military. The Australian military's plan was to assign war criminals the task of dismantling the facilities so the materials could be transported back to Australia. And to utilize whatever materials leftover for the purpose of construction of compounds for convicted war criminals. It was only after the advance team had completed cleaning operations of the site, that the rest of the war criminals relocated from Rabaul, and then helped to build the very camp they were to be imprisoned in. By the time when the San Francisco Peace Treaty was signed in 1951, all Allied nations had repatriated their respective sentence serving war criminals to Japan, except Australia.

Manus was a remote and undeveloped island. The climate was very hot and humid. It was grueling to perform hard labor under the blazing sun. Once the construction of the camp was finished, the dismantling of the military base began. Although they were dismantling airplane hangars, warehouses, and living quarters, they were not destroying them. For the purpose of re-utilizing the rebars, the metal sheets and other materials for future projects, they had to carefully remove every nail and screw one by one. When working on the rooftop, it was easy to slip if one wore shoes, so they often worked barefoot. Kan described it as akin to putting your feet on a hot pan. It was so hot that their feet and legs grew blisters. It was painful when the blisters burst and turned purulent. When they had to dismantle a forty-meter tall, ten-meter wide gigantic oil tank, their entire bodies were dipped in oil stains. Dismantling the military base took two years. Just when this work ended, the work of road repairing and cleaning awaited them. The labor the war criminals performed in Manus were of significant benefit to the Australian Navy.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁸ Aszkielowicz, Dean. "Changing Direction: Repatriation of Japanese War Criminals in Australian Custody." In *Australia's War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:732–754, 2016. 747. "Manus Island was run by the Australian Navy, and there were plans to make it a significant base for use by Australian units for the future defence of the Pacific. Japanese prisoners provided a cheap

A good Taiwanese friend of Kan committed suicide. His friend was sentenced to twenty years. Starting from the time in Rabaul, his friend often said, “Rather than to befallen to such a fate, death would be better.” Kan tried to cheer him up by saying, “We will be able to return home, you must endure!” Unfortunately, Manus was a prison island isolated from the rest of the world. For someone like Kan who was sentenced to five years—at this point he had two years left—it was possible to endure. However, for his friend, who still had 17 years of jail time left, it must have felt hopeless. Yet, had his friend lasted a bit longer, by 1953 all prisoners were repatriated back to Sugamo Prison in Japan. All prisoners were subsequently released within the following four years regardless of their sentences, due to policy changes. Of course, his friend did not know such a change was to come, and succumbed to despair and hopelessness at the prospect of rotting away for a decade on an isolated and remote island carrying out hard labor.

In Manus, Taiwanese POW guards and Japanese officers were held in the same camp. The atmosphere was entirely different from the time when General Imamura led the camp in Rabaul. The officers were cold in their attitude, and never conversed with them. A sense of solidarity was not to be found. It was only until March 1950, when General Imamura arrived, did the atmosphere change. After he was sentenced to 10 years at the Australian war crimes trials held at Rabaul, he was later extradited at the request of the Dutch, to be tried for his time as the commander-in-chief of the occupation army on Java. He was found innocent. He was then transported to Sugamo Prison. When he learned of the cruel conditions on Manus, he insisted on serving out the remainder of his sentence along with his former subordinates. He even brought a variety of vegetable seeds to Manus Island to be planted. Precisely because General Imamura

source of labour as part of various Navy working parties on the island. In April 1952, the Minister for Navy was William McMahan and his position on the issue was that the prisoners were carrying out valuable work.”

held such determination, the attitude of the camp commandant altered. The presence of a well-respected leader like General Imamura made a tremendous positive improvement to the daily conditions of the camp.¹⁸⁹

General Imamura was not discriminatory. He came into contact with the Taiwanese. He said to them, “You carry upon your shoulders the future of Japan, you must make contributions to the revival of Japan. As such, from now on you must study well.” They were to spend two hours every night studying. Every Thursday, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM, General Imamura would lecture on political science and social studies. Other officers each taught a different subject. Subjects included *The Art of War*, Mencius, arithmetic, physics, and English. According to Cai Xin-zong, one of the subjects taught was Mandarin. One of the Japanese officers imprisoned with them was a Lieutenant Sakata Saburo. Lieutenant Sakata graduated from the Shanghai Toa Dobunshoin Academy, famous for producing Chinese language specialists and interpreters. General Imamura proposed the idea of having Lieutenant Sakata teach Mandarin, so that when they return to the Chiang Kai-Shek ruled Taiwan, they will be able to communicate in the new official language. They learned Mandarin from the beginning, like children. Some 50 or so Taiwanese participated in this class. Saburo taught Mandarin for seven years. As there were no classrooms in the camp, they stood beside the barbed wire fences at night, and looked at the words on the pages through the lights projected from the camp perimeter.¹⁹⁰

Kan was selected as head of the kitchen. About once every six months, each dormitory building will put forward a new head of the cooking section. When it was his building’s turn, as he had prior experience as head of kitchen during the war, he was selected. Including some

¹⁸⁹ Ushimura 314-317

¹⁹⁰ Li Zhanping (2007). 36-37

Japanese, a total of ten people were responsible for preparing the breakfast, lunch, and dinner for three hundred people every day. As the head of the kitchen, his job was to design the menu and to source the ingredients. The food situation in Manus was very poor, the ingredients they had were rice with husks still on, canned salted beef, and canned vegetables. They could not make anything that could be considered as proper culinary. Each day Kan took a cart to the warehouse to retrieve foodstuffs. Luckily the man in charge of overseeing the food warehouse was a Taiwanese whom he was good friends with. Thus he was able to procure food items reserved for the Australian soldiers such as canned fruit, these were things that the previous head of cooking were unable to procure. Kan was uncertain of what some of the items were. He took some of them and piled them onto the cart. The Australian soldier serving as the guard of the warehouse knew he was Taiwanese, and had sympathized with Kan. When Kan pointed at the canned goods and asked, “Ok? Ok?” the guard pretended not to have seen nor heard anything. Kan was able to take these canned goods back to the kitchen.

They kept demanding the camp commander to let them fish in the sea. After becoming head of the kitchen, Kan’s need for fish became even stronger. Only with fish could they make a proper meal. Most importantly, this will cheer everyone up. One day, the camp commander finally gave permission. That Sunday, a truck was allocated to them. Kan was responsible for oversight, and along with ten fellow Taiwanese they excitedly headed for the river mouth where lots of fish swam. They had sewed together the mosquito nets that the American military left behind and created a fishing net. They were able to capture a truck load worth of horse mackerel. That night for dinner, everyone received one piece of fried fish. This was the happiest occasion in a while, and roaring cheers could be heard across the dining hall. Kan was very pleased with himself. For General Imamura and other officers, they each received two pieces of fried fish. As

the officers under the supervision of General Imamura had been diligently growing vegetables, this was Kan's way of demonstrating his appreciation. His gesture was scolded by General Imamura, "Just give us the same as the soldiers. If you have extra left, give them to the patients!" Kan needed not be told of this, of course the patients were the first to receive the fried fish. He spent a whole night frying all the horse mackerel. As there was a large American made refrigerator available, they were able to have fish for dinner every night that week. After further negotiations with the camp commander, he agreed to allow them to go fishing once a week. It then became much easier for him to design the menu. This also enabled him to create special means for patients. Perhaps it was because this development received some good reception, Kan was once again selected as head of the kitchen. Even some of the Australian guards found fishing on Sunday to be fun, and joined them as well. At this point, they became used to the life of convicted war criminals, it felt like every day they were still living the military life. Then the day of repatriation finally came. On March 21st of 1951, he and T—who also served a five-year sentence—boarded the Australian transport ship leaving Manus.

Days before departure, the camp commandant called for T and him. The camp commandant said, "It has been difficult, and you persisted to this day. Your sentencing has been served, and you will be repatriated to Japan." At the time, Kan requested to be sent to Taiwan, he was concerned for his family as he had received news that his father died at the end of the war. The reasoning for rejecting his request was that "You served as Japanese soldiers, in sum, if you do not return to Japan, it will be very problematic for us in our paperwork."

The Politics of Repatriation

The signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in September 1951 marked the end of Allied occupation, and Japan regained its sovereignty. Article 11 of the San Francisco Treaty had “specifically referred to war criminals, and in effect created a loose framework for their return to Japanese custody by stipulating that decisions on the fate of convicted criminals remained the prerogative of Allied governments that had prosecuted them, even after full sovereignty returned to Japan.”¹⁹¹ In other words, it “did not legally compel the convicting nations to repatriate war criminals and in fact did not mention repatriation, but made it more palatable, because it preserved the right of the prosecuting countries to control variations to the original sentences, even of criminals who had left their jurisdiction.”¹⁹²

While there was no legal obligation for the Allied countries to repatriate war criminals still serving sentences back to Japan, it was commonly practiced. Australia was the sole exception, as it did not feel leniency for Japan should be made due to the rise of Communism in Asia. The Australian government also “believed that, until the late 1950s, a large section of the Australian public favoured resolute treatment of Japan.”¹⁹³ Eventually Australia perceived self-interests for the repatriation of the war criminals outweighed the benefits of holding on to them, as: 1) since the Peace Treaty, there was a resumption of Japan-Australia trade, but the full benefits of such trade could only be realized if Australia conceded on Japanese demands of

¹⁹¹ Aszkielowicz, Dean. “Changing Direction: Repatriation of Japanese War Criminals in Australian Custody.” In *Australia’s War Crimes Trials 1945-51*, 48:732–754, 2016. 737

¹⁹² Ibid 738

¹⁹³ Ibid 734

repatriation of the war criminals, and 2) “there would be new costs in not matching the United States policy of treating Japan as an important ally in the Cold War.”¹⁹⁴ The Japanese government was motivated to bring up the issue of the war criminals in its diplomatic negotiations by domestic pressure. By the early 1950s a nationwide petition emerged, which “demanded that the Japanese government make representations to foreign governments for the repatriation of prisoners.”¹⁹⁵ By “late 1952, roughly 180 war criminals were still held on Manus Island.”¹⁹⁶

Differences in the conditions of imprisonment between Manus and Sugamo Prison emerged. As devised by SCAP, war criminals held at Sugamo were eligible for parole, a policy that the Australians did not practice. There was a possibility for earlier release if the war criminals were repatriated to Japan.¹⁹⁷ The icing on top of it all, was the question of the nationality of war criminals from former colonies of Japan, and whether Japan could incarcerate them.¹⁹⁸ The legality of Japan holding non-Japanese prisoners was tested when “a case was brought before the Japanese courts in July 1952 on behalf of 30 prisoners of Korean and Formosan origin”. In the end the government lawyers “contended that the prisoners should be treated as Japanese nationals for the duration of their sentence, and the court ultimately

¹⁹⁴ Ibid 748, Ibid 735

¹⁹⁵ Ibid 739

¹⁹⁶ Ibid 741

¹⁹⁷ Ibid 742

¹⁹⁸ Ibid 743 “War criminals of Korean or Formosan origin convicted in the Class B and C trials were considered to be Japanese nationals during the proceedings because they had been colonial subjects of the Japanese during the war, even though Japan lost its colonies immediately after surrender. The Australian Government maintained that they should be treated as such for the duration of their sentences, but there was a view in Japan that they were no longer Japanese citizens and therefore some Japanese officials were uncertain where Japanese law permitted the government to manage their sentences as foreign nationals.”

agreed.”¹⁹⁹ Ultimately, “in July 1953, the Manus Island compound was closed and all remaining war criminals were repatriated to Japan, where they were held in Sugamo Prison in Tokyo and gradually released over the next four years.”²⁰⁰

Summary

What is justice? When is justice the same as revenge? What is the intended effect of the carriage of justice? Is the fulfillment of justice simply the most severe possible punishment for those convicted of the crime? I ask these questions not to make a rhetorical point, but to engender contemplations. These questions are intended for us to consider, to frame the experience of Kan Shigematsu from his arrest, trial, and incarceration as a war crime suspect and convict. Some of the other war crime convicts either died while carrying out dangerous work as part of the compulsory labor, and some committed suicide out of the sheer misery of the conditions of imprisonment. The mass trial itself was riddled with various inequities: an inadequate interpreter, the disproportion between the nature of the crimes charged and the length of sentences given (being given much longer sentences for slapping a prisoner than the standard sentence given for murder), the lack of uniformity in sentencing (some receiving much longer sentences than others for the charge of the same crime), the partiality to written testimonies over in-person cross examinations (denying defendants the opportunity and right to cross-examine witness testimonies), and the inherent nature of mass trials (which prioritized speed and efficiency over due process). Setting aside whether these inequities were intended (implying

¹⁹⁹ Ibid 744

²⁰⁰ Ibid 730

there laid a malicious intent) or unintended (due to circumstances of limited resources and time), their very existence made the process unjust.

Yet reflexively, if we were soldiers of the Australian military at the end of the war in 1945, and having witnessed our fellow countrymen dying in mass numbers, and grown emaciated due to lack of food and intense compulsory labor while under detention by the Japanese military, how would we have reacted and treated the Japanese soldiers who have now surrendered to us? Would we all have the composure and self-discipline to restrain ourselves? I am not here to condone or rationalize extrajudicial violence and punishment, but to rather pose the question: what would be your response? I do not intend to exercise moral relativism here. I intend to frame this as extreme situations, beyond the norms of what you and I would encounter in our everyday lives living in peace times, free of war.

The war crime trials were as much about politics as they were about justice. It was about the politics of re-asserting the pre-war colonial domination asserted by European powers that was disrupted by Japanese Occupations. It was about exercising justice as a method of re-asserting domination and legitimacy in the eyes of the colonial subjects. It was about the need to act on behalf of the victims—alive and dead, to satisfy domestic constituents. This was clearly evidenced when news of supposed halt of Australian war crime trials created such a vociferous domestic backlash. To the extent that it altered the outcome of an election for prime minister. It was about the public projections and implications of what such trials intend to convey. As did when General MacArthur outright refused Japan as a venue for further Australian war crime trials, for it would have been contradictory to his policy of promoting Japan as an ally of the US in the rising Cold War context. War crime trials were just as much about justice as about what was politically expedient both for domestic and foreign politics.

In regard to the narrative that Kan had intended to frame himself—and the category of Taiwanese-Japanese soldiers and gunzoku—as victims in their experience of the war and its immediate aftermath. Whilst it is understandable, that this was his one sole biography, and his main grievances are against Japan, and his main concern are the many injustices that have befallen him as a direct result of having served and sacrificed for Japan. From not being told that not only is physical abuse of POWs prohibited by international law, but that such a violation could result in him becoming convicted as a war criminal, to the Japanese higher ups who committed suicides and voided their responsibility to explain that the Taiwanese POW guards did not decide to mistreat the Allied POWs out of their own volition but were rather following such a policy directive from their Japanese higher ups. Reflexively, we must also examine why it is that in his narrative he was silent on the various forms of physical abuse that POW guards have subjected upon Allied POWs, and yet willing and able to provide such extensive and graphic details on the abuse that Australian soldiers have subjected upon war crime suspects and convicts. While he does not go so far as to whitewash or deny abuse performed by POW guards, he is unwilling to provide details of such abuse—either because he felt it might cast him in a bad light, or that he wished to center himself and the larger category of Taiwanese-Japanese soldiers and gunzoku as the primary victims in his narrative. The historical truth is that Taiwanese-Japanese soldiers and gunzoku were both victims and victimizers, and that is an uncomfortable and inconvenient one. Being a victim however, does not negate the misdeeds of being a victimizer, and vice versa. One does not cancel out the other.

PART II LIFE AFTER EMPIRE

CHAPTER THREE: EXILE IN POSTWAR JAPAN

Overview

This chapter chronicles Kan's journey into the metropole, where he was not met with warm welcome or embraced as a fellow Japanese. He found himself stripped of his Japanese nationality, as well as the compensations that he was entitled to for his military service. This double betrayal was a profound experience. One in which made him resolute in two decisions he has never walked back from: 1) reverting his surname from Takenaga back to Kan, and 2) refusing to ever naturalize as Japanese. The social significance of these decisions are detailed in the chapter. In Japan he was forced to live in a marginal existence—often relying on the kindness of strangers as well as the Taiwanese community, in order to make a living to sustain himself. Though he was able to subsequently find love, a woman to marry and start a family with, the relationship was that of star-crossed lovers. Her family, with the exception of her father, was racist and found the marriage to be inappropriate, as he was in their eyes “Chinese.” The fact that he was Han Taiwanese, and had served in the Japanese military, did not make him any more palatable to her family. The marriage ultimately ended in divorce due to the vociferous and sustained campaign of her family to separate them. Racism rears its ugly head in a different form in his domestic life.

Kan's ability to provide for his family was limited. Despite his success at opening his own tailor shop, the dawn of the mass production of clothing obliterated the entire industry for tailors. At one point he worked so hard that he contracted duodenal ulcer, which forced him to rest, and saw no income for three months. His wife's contraction of hepatitis and peritonitis after

giving birth to their first son also set him back financially. Overall, his financial circumstances—besides the dawn of mass production in the clothing industry—were severely impacted by his lack of an advanced degree, him being Taiwanese, and denial of rightful compensations that were given to his Japanese counterparts with ease by the state. Postwar Japanese society was in general hostile towards ethnically non-Japanese people, despite the fact that many of them were former colonial subjects. Postwar Japan actively sought to cast out the memory of its former life as a multiethnic empire, and to forget the existence of its former colonial subjects. However, forgetting is not erasing, for they still exist, but only in the margins and the shadows of society. Denied equal rights and privileges, they were cast out into a de facto second class citizenship.

Betrayal by Empire

After having completed his five-year sentence as a Class BC War Criminal in Manus, Kan along with a fellow Taiwanese War Criminal of the pseudonym T, boarded a ship headed for Japan. They arrived on March 29th of 1951, near the waters of Kureshi, Hiroshima Prefecture. This was his first time in his life seeing Japan with his own eyes. He was in a state of euphoria. He described his landing as: “Oh, this was my first time stepping foot on the soil of my ancestral country! This had been a dream come true, a place without barbed wires surrounding me, a land of freedom! Tears flowed down my face as I took each step.”

This euphoric state was rudely awoken from as he and T were informed by a customs official that they were no longer Japanese, and were handed foreign resident documents. Kan was thrown into bewilderment by this proclamation that they were now foreigners, and no longer Japanese. This nonchalant, bureaucratic, cold and unfeeling procedural interpellation by

government workers was alienating to his core. This was a period of time whereby the Taiwanese were effectively caught in a state of jurisdictional limbo. They were categorized by the Allied Occupation regime, the General Headquarter (GHQ), as people of a “third nation.”²⁰¹ After the surrender, there were 200,000 Ryukyans, 50,000 Chinese, 35,000 Taiwanese, and two million Koreans in Japan.²⁰²

This alienation from his ancestral country was further exacerbated by the fact that he and T were immediately sent to a prison island located at Seto Naikai (Seto Inland Sea). This sea is located in between three of the four main islands of Japan: Honshū, Shikoku, and Kyūshū. They were taken to a former concentration camp that housed Allied POWs during the war. Its outer perimeter was covered with barbed wires. The local authorities had treated them with outright hostility. Even though they had already completed their sentencing in Manus, and were no longer war criminals. The local authorities had even made public announcements to local residents regarding the presence of the two Taiwanese War Criminals. To the point of warning residents against making communications or providing food to them. They were treated by the state not with warm embraces as fellow countrymen returning home after having made patriotic sacrifices, but with hostility as suspicious foreign individuals. In his own words, Kan referred to this day of

²⁰¹ Tai 47-48. “In the aftermath of the war, the Taiwanese in Japan encountered ambiguity over their sense of belonging legally and ethnically. Their legal status was not clarified until the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the Japan-China Treaty were concluded in 1952. During the years between 1945 and 1952, the Taiwanese could not be categorized either as Chinese or as Japanese. According to an order issued by the American GHQ in November 1945, the Taiwanese were regarded as ‘not Japanese’ but were considered to be still ‘Japanese citizens.’ There was a legal distinction between the Chinese and the Taiwanese. The former were citizens of the Republic of China, a country on the winning side of the war. On the other hand, the latter who still had Japanese citizenship were categorized as the people of ‘the third nation,’ a nation which was neither a winner nor a loser of the war. Many Japanese people had a fear of the people of the third nation because of the ambiguity of their status, and discriminated against them.”

²⁰² KALICKI, Konrad, Go MURAKAMI, and Nicholas A. R. FRASER. “The Difference That Security Makes: The Politics of Citizenship in Postwar Japan in a Comparative Perspective.” *Social science Japan journal* 16, no. 2 (2013): 211–234. 217

return on March 30th of 1951 as “the most regretful day” in his 74 years of being alive. Rather than being welcomed, he was rejected. He was stripped of his official status as a Japanese. It was a cruel punishment. It was the complete opposite of what General Imamura had told him and T on the eve of their departure for Japan. They were told by General Imamura that they will be paid the wages owed for their deployment, for the labor they performed as war criminals, and that there was even a role for them to play in the reconstruction and renaissance of Japan.

The rude awakening continued upon the next day when they visited the demobilization bureau (J: fukuin kyoku). The bureau provided Japanese veterans a sum of the wages owed, their pension fund, a train ticket to their hometown, a suit, a wool blanket, and a train schedule. When it was their turn, not a single Yen was given. The explanation the staff provided was that the wages for the war were already given locally, and that they were all fired locally as of January 31st of 1946. In addition, they will not compensate for the labor that Kan and T performed as war criminals, their pensions, or any other compensations and benefits that retired Japanese soldiers were eligible for. The staff then proceeded to comment that things would be better for them if they simply returned to Taiwan, and even questioned why they had come to Japan in the first place.

In fact, when Kan was being released from Manus, he sought to be repatriated to Taiwan. He was concerned for the welfare of his family, as his father had recently deceased. Yet, the camp commander of the concentration camp had told him that according to the paperwork, he must be repatriated to Japan. In addition, according to international laws, the Japanese government was responsible for paying him the wages for the labor he performed as a war criminal. Again, he was told one thing in Manus, and encountered a completely contradictory reality upon landing in Japan. He was adamantly viewed as Japanese by the Australian

government and military—as throughout the war crime trials, Australia was insistent on trying Korean and Taiwanese personnel as Japanese—but was now seen as “foreigners” in Japan.

Everything the staff told them was in contradistinction to the hopeful and rosy image that General Imamura had promised. The bureaucratic machinery possessed neither compassion nor sympathy for the plight of the Taiwanese soldiers. The presence of Kan and T was an inconvenience, and even a nuisance to these bureaucrats. They were unpleasant phantoms that reminded them of an imperial past that postwar Japan society had actively sought to forget and cast out of the collective national memory. They were retroactively excluded from the category of Japanese, and even denied compensation for their military and hard labor. Their identification with Japan as their ancestral country was unreciprocated. Their blood, sweat, tears, and other bodily and mental wounds endured in the name of Japan during the war and its aftermath went unrecognized. A double layered betrayal all simultaneously incurring upon them. It was as though Japan was never their country, their sacrifices for Japan were insignificant, and were of no importance.

On this day, Kan made a vow to renounce his Japanese surname of Takenaga, and to never naturalize as a Japanese citizen. It was this anger born of this moment that sustained his post-Manus life. This was not solely a symbolic act of defiance, but an act of resistance as well. As mentioned in chapter one, the ideology of a racially homogenous nation was the modus operandi of postwar Japan. While White Westerners could be visibly confirmed as foreigners, Koreans, Taiwanese, Chinese and other East Asians have the option of passing. Yet, as noted by Eiko Tai: “in the act of passing as Japanese they accept the power structure of the mainstream Japanese society, and thereby they reinforce and reproduce the established structure, if inadvertently.”²⁰³ By refusing to continue using the Japanese surname that his family adopted

²⁰³ Tai 136

during the *kōminka* movement, and to revert back to his original surname, it was an act of defiance, an act of refusal to comply with the maintenance and reproduction of this power structure, of the mythology of a racially homogenous Japan. Assertion of his ethnicity signified his refusal to accept the stigmatization and erasure forced upon ethnically non-Japanese peoples residing in postwar Japan.

Kan's refusal to naturalize as Japanese was also equally significant. Taiwanese who maintained their Chinese nationality were regulated and monitored by the local administrative office and police through the Alien Registration Law. The Alien Registration Law required fingerprinting, "which was seen as a device for controlling foreigners as if they were criminals." Fingerprinting for permanent residents was only revoked in 1992, but remained mandatory for long-term foreign residents. In addition, the law also required "foreigners to carry a registration card all the time, and to be ready to present it to the police. Failure to do so will result in legal punishment."²⁰⁴ Foreign residents were not only subjected to surveillance, but also excluded from the many rights and privileges enjoyed only by those with Japanese citizenship.

Citizenship could be obtained via naturalization. However, naturalization was neither guaranteed nor an end to discrimination and racism. Naturalization was only possible for "those who apply and satisfy several qualifications such as more than five years' stay in Japan, financial independence, and good behavior. In effect, naturalization to Japanese citizenship does not simply mean a change in citizenship. It is a process which tacitly but strongly requires naturalized people to assimilate to Japanese culture and give up their ethnic heritage." One of the things asked of the applicants is the adoption of Japanese names, though "not formally required, but is highly recommended by administrators."²⁰⁵ In sum, naturalization effectively required the

²⁰⁴ Tai 58-59

²⁰⁵ Tai 61-62

applicants to forgo and renounce their ethnic identities in exchange of the exclusive privilege to become Japanese. Multiculturalism and hybrid identities were unfeasible in postwar Japan, at least not publicly. To naturalize or not naturalize, neither choice gave ethnic minorities living in Japan true equality to ethnically Japanese people. They were forever seen as foreigners.²⁰⁶ Ethnic minorities in Japan frequently were rejected from renting apartments, marrying ethnic Japanese, and even from making hotel reservations.²⁰⁷

Living in the Shadows

Kan and T decided to escape from the prison island. The following morning, while the staff were on a bathroom break, they headed to a nearby port. They found a ship departing for another city. Though they had no money, the captain was willing to give them a ride. Despite knowing who they were—due to the morning radio news—no one aboard the ship held any reservations against them. One of the passengers even gave them three hundred yen. The passenger was a middle aged man named Mori. Upon arrival at Kureshi, the captain told them the shortcuts and how to evade roadblocks. They wanted to head to Hiroshima as they had heard of overseas Taiwanese residing there. In order to avoid spending money on train tickets that cost up to twenty to thirty yen, they decided to head for Hiroshima by foot. It was a distance of thirty kilometers. They walked evasively, to avoid the police. Along the road, they sought out shelter and information at a church. A priest at the church made phone calls to arrange for some Taiwanese in Hiroshima to meet up with them. The next day they met up. Most of the overseas

²⁰⁶ Tai 68. “One way is to keep Chinese citizenship, and stay as foreign residents. The other is to become Japanese citizens. In the former case, they have to endure the problems which occur from not having Japanese citizenship. In the latter case, they can receive the rights and privileges guaranteed for Japanese citizens, but are pressured to give up their ethnic heritage. In either case, they are subject to exclusionary attitudes and practices of Japanese people.”

²⁰⁷ Tai 69

Taiwanese operated Chinese Restaurants.²⁰⁸ After spending a week or so with the overseas Taiwanese, Kan and T decided to go separate ways. With the help of the overseas Taiwanese, Kan arrived at Hamada City, Shimane Prefecture. Here, Kan sought out shelter and work at a Taiwanese owned pachinko shop. His job was to fill the back of each machine with tiny metal balls. Then at the end of the day, he had to take the metal balls stored at the bottom, the ones that did not hit any targets, and manually put them back at the top. He slept in the shop at night and did not venture outside.

To Live

He lived in fear and in hiding. After a year at the pachinko shop, he decided to return to Hiroshima. As the San Francisco Treaty came into effect that year in 1952, the American occupation ended, and Japan regained its sovereignty. As the Korean War progressed, so did demand for Japanese goods by the American military. According to Kan, the resurgence of the Japanese economy made Japan less concerned regarding people such as him. The San Francisco Treaty also marked the loss of Japanese citizenship by the Taiwanese residing in Japan. It must be explicitly noted here that this loss was enacted not by the treaty, or a law, but a notification issued by the Civil Affairs Office of the Ministry of Justice. And so, in “1952 the Taiwanese people in Japan became citizens of the Republic of China, and hence legally became Chinese.”²⁰⁹

Meanwhile, as Taiwanese and Koreans were officially stripped of Japanese citizenship in 1952, those still imprisoned as Class BC War Criminals had hoped that this meant their sentences could end, as they were no longer Japanese. Yet, in a cruel twist of fate, their “petition for the

²⁰⁸ From this point forward, I will refer to overseas Taiwanese as simply Taiwanese. Sometimes in the biography, Kan interchangeably use the terms Taiwanese huaqiao and huaqiao. I am assuming that they are all overseas Taiwanese. 華僑, overseas Chinese (C:huaqiao, J:kakyo)

²⁰⁹ Tai 54

discard of Japanese citizenship was rejected in the Supreme Court on the ground that they were Japanese citizens at the time of their crimes.”²¹⁰ But these war crimes they were tried and found guilty for, only occurred because they were mobilized as Japanese colonial subjects. They would not have otherwise, voluntarily or involuntarily, ventured to these distant lands to fight on behalf of another country.

Kan continued to rely upon the Taiwanese community in Hiroshima. He worked and slept at a Chinese restaurant. He later started working at a men's suits store located in a department store in front of the train station. He had acquired sewing skills earlier in life from his second eldest brother. As he experienced a different kind of world, working at a department store, he started dreaming of Tokyo. His aspirations were to attend sewing school and to apprentice at a tailor shop. He dreamed of opening his own tailor shop. He started saving money for his planned move to Tokyo, so as to afford sewing lessons. He was able to move to Tokyo the following year. He worked at a Taiwanese owned sushi restaurant at the Western exit of the Shinjuku train station as a dishwasher, with room and board included. It was here at this sushi restaurant, he encountered a female student studying at a culinary school, working as a waiter. She brought food she made at school to share with Kan. Her name was never mentioned at any point in this biography. She remains anonymous.

Later when he completed one year of sewing course, he started working as a tailor at a suits store in Shinjuku Nichōme. For the first time, he was able to afford a room of his own, even if it was a six tatami-sized room. In 1953, one day the student from the sushi restaurant paid an unannounced visit to Kan at his apartment. She insisted that she will not be returning to her family home in Fukuoka. Her family was supposedly poor, and she did not want to return. And so, Kan had an uninvited roommate. Kan admitted that though he had some reservations about

²¹⁰ Tai 50

the situation, he was very glad of having someone to live with. Especially so as, “At the time it was very difficult to meet people, and it was difficult for me to reject her. Furthermore, I was a loner nomad in a foreign land, living a lonely existence from day to day.”

Gender, Race & Empire

Over time, they developed an intimate relationship. His plans were to first open his own suits store, and then to formally ask for her family’s blessing. Four months into living together, an incident occurred. One afternoon, upon returning home, two black cars were parked near their apartment with several men standing nearby. Two of the men grabbed Kan, started beating him, and detained him. She was forced into one of the cars and was driven away. Kan was left behind in a state of total bewilderment.

Kan speculated this might be connected to her family situation. He briefly considered relying upon the Taiwanese community in Shinjuku. He chose not to, because the Taiwanese avoided becoming embroiled in conflicts with Japanese people. They were unlikely to offer him assistance in this scenario. Instead, he decided to seek out the help of his fellow wartime friends from Manus, currently serving time at Sugamo Prison. After the San Francisco Treaty came into effect, war criminals still serving sentences abroad by August 1953 were repatriated to Japan, and held at Sugamo Prison—where they were to complete the remainder of their sentences. Including General Imamura, a total of 165 people were repatriated from Manus. Kan’s wartime friends imprisoned in Sugamo provided significant aid. With their assistance, he was able to learn that she was held at Oomori police station.

Six of his wartime Taiwanese friends accompanied him to the station. At the time war criminals held at Sugamo were allowed to venture outside the prison. According to Zhou

Qing-Feng (周慶豐), after they were repatriated from Manus to Sugamo Prison, Japanese war criminals were allowed to return to their respective homes to complete their sentences as house arrests, and only returned to the prison when Allied officials made roll calls at the prison. Angry at this unequal treatment, Taiwanese war criminals protested with the prison warden. As a compromise, they were allowed to go outside to work for money during the daytime and return to the prison at night to sleep. It was necessary for the Taiwanese war criminals to work as they had no family in Japan, and the Japanese military had stopped paying salaries to the Taiwanese since 1944.²¹¹

They arrived at the police station demanding her release. After some physical altercation Kan finally learned of her true family background. Her father was a retired lieutenant general, who had fought in the Battle of Imphal, at Imphal of Northeast India, attacking the Burmese side, and lost. Her uncle was also a famous military educator. Fukuoka was only a temporary evacuation site for her family during the war. Her real familial home was in Chiba. The men who kidnapped her and beat Kan were her brother and his friends. Kan in his own words: “To a son of a retired general, he could not stomach the idea that his own younger sister is living with a Chinese barbarian of a former enemy nation. To him, although I was a former Japanese soldier who grew up under Japanese rule Taiwan, I was ultimately still a Chinese. This was a great shame to him!” They were also an unmarried couple cohabiting together, which was not a socially accepted norm. Discrimination against marriages between ethnically Japanese women and Taiwanese or Korean men could also be found in the legal system.²¹² Racism was also

²¹¹Li Zhanping (2007). 34

²¹² Tai 50. “The Japanese government withheld Japanese citizenship not only from the Taiwanese and the Koreans but also from the ethnically Japanese women who were married to Taiwanese or Koreans. As mentioned earlier, most of the Taiwanese who came to Japan were single men, and therefore many of them married Japanese women. Those women who were married to Taiwanese were registered in the Taiwanese koseki [family registration] under the old Nationality Law of

gendered, and practiced by both the state as well as the people, dating back to pre-war Japan. Interethnic marriages whereby the man was a colonial subject and the woman a metropolitan Japanese inverted the default and standard power dynamics. Such interethnic marriages were officially considered as undesirable even during the apex of Japanese imperialism, as expressed by authors of an official study produced in 1943, entitled *An Investigation of Global Policy with the Yamato Ethnos as Nucleus* (minzoku o chukaku to suru sekai seisaku no kento).²¹³

A couple of days later, the police requested Kan make an appearance. Her brother had filed a lawsuit against him for kidnapping. Kan decided to show up and rebuttal this allegation. Yet, it was her father who appeared. After greeting Kan, he said, “Please work hard, my daughter is to be in your care!” He had even ordered his son to rescind the lawsuit. As it turned out, she was pregnant. Her father interpreted this as karmic retribution, “And to think that the process of karma has resulted so soon upon me. I killed a lot of Chinese during the war, and yet now, my own blood is flowing towards a Chinese man through my daughter. This is fate! Thanks to you, I can now leave this world without worry. I hope you and my daughter can live happily.” This was the reason why her brother kidnapped her. He had even gone as far as to shave her bald, and imprisoned her at a house in Oomori. She was covered tightly in layers of sheets. This was a form of torture, to cover a person with sheets so tightly as to render breathing difficult. She was subjected to this torture for over three days, with the goal of inducing a miscarriage. In a fit of rage her brother said, “Many of father’s subordinates were killed by shinajin (a racist term against Chinese people), why are you carrying a mixed breed shinajin child?!” Her father was the

Japan, which was in effect from 1899 till 1950. The law dictated that the wife should join her husband's koseki upon marriage, and it was the koseki system which determined the nationality of people. It is presumed that there were a few thousand Japanese women who legally became Chinese citizens after the war.”

²¹³ Fujitani 50-51.

only member of her family to recognize their subsequent marriage. At no point did her elder brother, mother, or elder sister ever recognize their marriage. The majority of her family continued to hold a racist attitude toward their marriage and him.

Their first son was born in 1954. They used this occasion to marry. They then had three more children, all registered as ROC citizens in the household registration. Kan worked at the suits store until 1965. He then started working independently. His wife also helped out with sewing new suits at night. The staff uniforms of a number of high-end clubs in Ginza, from cutting, fitting to sewing were all handled by him. He even made sleeves and coats for the singer Taro Shoji. During this time, they moved from Shinjuku to Nakano. They were then able to move into new public housing in Suginami District.

Six months after giving birth to their first son, she contracted hepatitis and peritonitis. She was in a dire state and would have died without treatment. With surgery, there was a fifty percent chance of survival. They proceeded with surgery. Post-surgery, Kan halted all work, and took care of her at her bedside day and night. She gradually recovered. They subsequently had their eldest daughter, second daughter, and second son, all without problems. Kan's father-in-law gifted them fifty thousand yen as consolation money. However, two months of hospitalization alone was thirty thousand yen. This was an astronomical number for him. Exacerbated by the fact they did not participate in the national health insurance program. Being out of work for two months long, on top of the medical expenses, had set him back financially. He had to compensate for this financial setback by borrowing money from countless friends. It took him many years to pay them all back.

At the time, Kan was working as a tailor and started doing extra sewing work at home, the combined income of the two amounted to forty to fifty thousand yen. It was approximately

five times the salary of a college graduate. But after accounting for the costs of the clothes, fuel, transportation, and other production fees, there was not much money left. After his wife's recovery, he continued to work as a tailor at a suit store in Shinjuku during the day, and at night he worked from a rented space near home, to work on suit orders he took on. He even hired a part time assistant. His wife also helped out with sewing clothes and fastening buttons. Yet, as the second half of the Showa 30s started, so too did the era of mass and cheaply manufactured clothes. Due to this onset of low-price competition, small and midsize companies, and independent stores, declared bankruptcy one after another. Although the suit store Kan worked at did not close, its future became bleak.

The dawn of cheaply mass-produced clothing became a catalyst for Kan to seek compensation from the government. In 1958, Year 33 of Showa, Kan began to visit the Ministry of Health and Welfare, and other government offices to seek help. He was hoping to take back the wartime salary, veteran pensions, and salary for the hard labor performed as war criminals, and the huge sum of money deposited in the military postal savings.²¹⁴ The officials always responded, "If you are not Japanese, you are not qualified!" By using the nationality clause in the pension law, they were able to refuse to make any payments. The so-called "Nationality Clause" refers to the Military Veteran Pension "Pension Law" clause nine. It stated that "those who have lost their nationality" automatically have their right to receive military veteran pensions revoked. This clause was set up in order to provide a legal reason for prohibiting payments to Koreans, and Taiwanese. This citizenship clause not only excluded former colonial subjects from military

²¹⁴ The sum of 1500 yen he deposited in the military postal savings while stationed in Borneo.

pensions, but a host of other social welfare programs as well.²¹⁵ The problem was that, when they were deployed to the frontlines, when they became war criminals, they were still Japanese. To Kan, this was a fraudulent policy, enacted at a national level. To Kan, this was all theater. Even if they were ineligible to be compensated as Japanese nationals, as they were no longer Japanese nationals, the government could still have set up another special law or policy. And at least give them the *same* kind of compensation given to Japanese veterans. Perhaps even express some kind of apology for making them go through such extra hurdles.

Imperial Social Contract Voided: Wages, Military Postal Deposits, Pensions, Disability and Death Compensations Gone

The lobbying by Taiwanese veterans for their due compensations was catalyzed by the discovery of the last stranded Japanese soldier in Morotai island, Indonesia in December 1974. Nakamura Teruo, a 55 year-old Indigenous Taiwanese of the Amis people had been living alone by himself in the jungles for 20 years. Over the decades since the end of the war, there have been other instances of discovery and repatriation of stragglers living alone in the jungles entirely unaware that the war had ended. The news of their discoveries often incited public spectacles. Nakamura's case was uniquely so, as he was also a former colonial subject. Nakamura was also known by his Amis names of Shiniyuwu and Attun Palalin, or Li Kuang-Hwei (李光輝), the Chinese name the Nationalist government subsequently forced him to adopt upon repatriation.

Nakamura survived alone in the jungles by constructing “a three-metre-square hut in a cultivated field of twenty by thirty metres fenced off with bamboo”, and cultivating a “vegetable

²¹⁵ Araragi, Shinzo. “The Collapse of the Japanese Empire and the Great Migrations: Repatriation, Assimilation , and Remaining Behind”. In *The Dismantling of Japan's Empire in East Asia*, 66–84. Routledge, 2017. 80.

patch [that] contained red peppers, pawpaw, and taro”. The Indonesian soldiers who oversaw the “arrest” of Nakamura had prepared by “learning the Japanese anthem, Kimigayo, and some old Japanese army songs, and taking with them a Japanese flag and a photo of a geisha.”²¹⁶ Upon detaining Nakamura, he was sent to a hospital in Jakarta for health purposes.

Starting in 1942, Indigenous Taiwanese were deployed in the Takasago-Giuytai, across Southeast Asia. The deployment of the indigenous Taiwanese was just as, if not even more, utilitarian and exploitative than the deployment of Han Taiwanese and Koreans.²¹⁷ In total, “the number of Takasago youths who volunteered was at least 8,000+, a significant percentage of a total Takasago population numbering less than 200,000.”²¹⁸ Just as the Han Taiwanese provided invaluable and unique interpretation services on behalf of the Japanese with local Chinese populations in Sinophone languages across Southeast Asia and China, so too did the indigenous Taiwanese in their Austronesian linguistic abilities and survival skills. The survival skills of the indigenous Taiwanese became indispensable to Japanese officers, especially after “Japan’s retreat

²¹⁶ Trefalt, Beatrice. *Japanese Army Stragglers and Memories of the War in Japan, 1950-75*. Vol. 13. Richmond: Routledge, 2003. 161

²¹⁷ Trefalt 170 “The *Shūkan yomiuri*, which carried by far the longest and most historically informed reportage on Nakamura, contained a number of articles showing that the indigenous Taiwanese who joined the Japanese Army had been discriminated against and also sent on the most difficult and dangerous missions. Common beliefs regarding the indigenous Taiwanese people’s ‘native’ ability to move extremely fast in the jungle and to see in the dark were debunked to show that such myths justified savings on weapons as well as the shoes and shirts that were in increasingly short supply, leaving those soldiers inadequately equipped...indigenous Taiwanese were, ultimately, cannon fodder employed in some of the harshest battlefields of the war, particularly New Guinea and Morotai.”

²¹⁸ Huang, Chi-huei. (2003). “The Yamatodamashi of the Takasago volunteers of Taiwan: A reading of the postcolonial situation”. In H. Befu & S. Guichard-Anguis (Eds.), *Globalizing Japan: Ethnography of the Japanese Presence in Asia, Europe, and America* (pp. 222–250). essay, Routledge. 224

from Guadalcanal in 1943, [when] Allied naval forces cut off resupply routes to New Guinea.”²¹⁹ A member of the Tayal tribe named Pawan Taimo (Japanese name Sato Toshiaki) of the Marine Corps Fourth Takasago-Giyutai stated that the Japanese officers possessed no survival skills, and it was the Takasago-zoku who helped them stay alive in the jungles.²²⁰

Upon hearing the news of his discovery, the Association for the War Welcome of Nakamura Teruo (Nakamura Teruo san o atataku mukaeru kai), a group consisting of former Taiwanese-Japanese veterans and other Taiwanese residing in Japan was formed. They insisted that Nakamura not be sent back to Taiwan, but rather be taken to Japan first. The issue of wartime compensation emerged as a major issue. He was to be compensated at a total of ¥68,000.²²¹ This sum was widely criticized for its meagerness. Especially when compared to the compensation received by other stragglers. Discovered in 1958, Onoda Hirō, at Lubang Island, the Philippines, he received not only the coming-home allowance of ¥30,000, but also qualified for the Pension Law (J: Onkyū-hō); before the age of 54, he can receive ¥17,000 every year, and upon the age of 55, he can receive ¥25,000 every year.²²² In response to this public backlash, the government came up with an additional 2 Million Yen, on top of a ¥750,000 donation from the

²¹⁹ Shirane 149

²²⁰ Huang (2003). 231. “Graduates of the Japanese Navy Academy might know the strategies of warfare, but they certainly lacked elementary survival skills. Despite their intelligence, they were not fit for jungle combat. When they were searching for food, their behavior was ridiculous. Their idea of food was limited to rice and canned goods. It is quite difficult to tell if the plants in tropical jungles are edible or not, and one can die from madness as a result of accidentally eating poisonous grass. The plants on the island were very similar to those in the mountains of Taiwan. When we trapped birds, we would always examine the food inside their stomachs. Plants edible to birds are equally safe for humans.”

²²¹ Trefalt 169

²²² Chen, Yu-ci. “Ong Iok-tek and thinking society of Taiwanese imperial Japan serviceman compensation”. Master’s Thesis—Graduate Institute of Taiwan History College of Liberal Arts National Taiwan Normal University, 2020. 23.

public, and a 1 Million Yen donation from the Association of the Warm Welcome of Nakamura Teruo was given to Nakamura. Though Nakamura as an individual was well compensated, “the ad hoc nature of the government’s funding, and its failure to amend the laws regulating pensions or compensation, still left other non-Japanese veterans out in the cold.”²²³

The unequal treatment of Taiwanese veterans prompted a series of lawsuits and lobbying against the Japanese government and with the Diet, respectively.²²⁴ In 1977, “14 disabled Taiwanese veterans and bereaved families sued the Japanese government in the Tokyo District Court for equal treatment.”²²⁵ Defendants included those who flew from Taiwan to Japan, to speak to the media, to plead with Japanese society, and to make their statements in court. Only after the trial, an appeal with the Tokyo High Court, much lobbying, and a decade later, did the Diet finally agree to pay a fixed sum of 2 million yen per Taiwanese veteran or bereaved family in 1987. This amount was widely considered to be an inadequate rate of conversion for the salaries paid in the 1940s. The conversion rate the Japanese government used was a rate of 120 times, whereas the veterans disputed that the actual rate should be at 7,000 times. The average unpaid salary was 1000 yen, which at the time “would have enabled one to buy two houses in the most prosperous neighborhoods in Taipei, houses that would be worth more than 10 million NT

²²³ Trefalt 167

²²⁴ Trefalt 169 “The Association for the Warm Welcome of Nakamura Teruo grew into the Association for Compensation for Taiwanese Veterans of the Imperial Army (Taiwanjin moto Nihonhei no hoshō o kangaeru kai), located until 1992 in a lawyer’s office in Nishi Ginza in Tokyo. The Association had more than a thousand members and included a number of former Japanese residents in Taiwan and Japanese veterans of the Imperial Army.”

²²⁵ Orr, James. (2017). The Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion in Postcolonial Japan: State, Shrine, and Honor for Ethnic Veterans, the Fallen, and Their Bereaved. In M. Lewis (Ed.), *“History wars” and reconciliation in Japan and Korea the roles of historians, artists and activists* (pp. 33–49). essay, Palgrave Macmillan US. 39

dollars now.”²²⁶ To add insult to injury, this money was “distributed through the Red Cross. So as not to incur state responsibility, it was made explicit that this was a humanitarian act, and did not constitute state compensation as the benefits to Japanese nationals did.”²²⁷ Making the matter even more an act of bad faith, a significant number of indigenous Taiwanese were disqualified from receiving this payment.²²⁸ Furthermore, only former soldiers were entitled to this payment, those who served as gunzoku were excluded from qualifying for this payment.²²⁹ This failure of payment was not solely an issue of employer-employee dispute over pay, but goes to a much deeper sense of betrayal. After all, these Taiwanese veterans were not recruited as mercenaries, or as contract employees, but under the auspices and name of “pious sons of the Emperor Hirohito”.²³⁰ In regards to Kan, in the biography, although he did discuss the 2 million Yen per Taiwanese veteran policy instituted by the Diet, he does not tell us whether he ever applied for the sum. What is certain, was that he too, found this paltry sum to be far less than what Taiwanese-Japanese veterans deserved.

The ability of the Taiwanese veterans to lobby the Japanese government for equal compensation was detrimentally affected by the lack of willingness of the Nationalist

²²⁶ Yingzhen, Chen. “Imperial Army Betrayed.” In *Perilous Memories: the Asia-Pacific War(s)*, 181–198. New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2020.194

²²⁷ Orr 39

²²⁸Trefalt 169 “As a result the Japanese government paid out ¥600 billion to 30,000 Taiwanese individuals, and the Association disbanded in 1992. Some Taiwanese veterans missed out, however, because under the new law applications for compensation had to be lodged between 1988 and 1994. According to the Taipei Times, 659 indigenous Taiwanese failed to lodge an application because, living in remote areas, they were not made aware of their right to apply. Furthermore, many were unable to provide the information needed to apply for compensation. As a result, many indigenous Taiwanese veterans of the Japanese Imperial Army were still pushing to receive compensation in 2000.”

²²⁹ Shirane 172

²³⁰ Chen Yingzhen 197

government. They were in a sense, not “proper victims”. By contrast, Taiwanese comfort women received far greater assistance from the Nationalist government. It not only provided financial aid, but also support for “a lawsuit in 1999 by nine Taiwanese comfort women demanding an official apology and ¥10 million each in compensation from the Japanese government.”²³¹ Kan did in fact, plead with former president Lee Teng-Hui, but it was unfruitful.²³² Even though Lee himself was a Kyoto University educated man, he never fought for the compensations of the Taiwanese veterans of the Imperial Japanese Military. In an interview for an oral history volume commissioned by the General Historical Commission of Taiwan, Kan stated that President Lee Teng-Hui was only interested in visiting tenshu (pre-modern Japanese castles), watching sakura trees, and going on hot spring trips. The ROC representative in Japan, most likely out of fear of offending the Japanese, refused to even discuss the issue of compensation. Kan observed that this was in stark contrast to the South Korean government, whose strong-handed diplomatic stance was actively fighting for its veterans. That Korean veterans in fact received better benefits. As such, without the firm backing of a national government, the Taiwanese veterans did not have a chance.²³³

The discovery of Nakamura was symbolic across many layers. Like the other Japanese soldiers discovered surviving in the jungles across Southeast Asia, he was presumed dead. The dead are not supposed to return. His discovery was also an inconvenient reminder of the Japanese imperial past. He was a haunting phantom—a ghost—that disrupted the victimhood narrative widely adopted within postwar Japan. Though the Japanese people may have been victims of the military and government higher ups who initiated and prolonged the war, they too

²³¹ Shirane 173

²³² Lee Teng-Hui was the first president of the ROC (1988–2000). He oversaw the end of Martial Law, and the democratization of Taiwan.

²³³ Li Zhanping (2007). 66

were complicit in—if not, at the very least benefited from—the exploitation and extraction of human and material resources from the colonies. However, whatever amount of disruption and confrontation with the guilts of empire Nakamura was able to conjure, was in the end insufficient to catalyze any significant and long lasting societal and nationwide movement of decolonization and reconciliation with the sins of the Japanese empire. Nakamura’s discovery was also a phantom for the Nationalist government. Public discussions of any kind regarding the Japanese era was taboo during the four decades of Martial Law. Unless the discussions were negative and critique of the “poisonous” effects of Japanese rule.²³⁴ The very existence of Taiwanese-Japanese veterans was considered problematic, and hence they were censored from speaking of their experience. The high profile nature of Nakamura’s discovery forced the Nationalist government to render his narrative acceptable, by: 1) forcing a Chinese name upon him, as the Nationalist government did to all Indigenous Taiwanese, and only referring to him in his Chinese name, and 2) “by explaining his long exile with reference to his fear of the Japanese Army.”²³⁵ Nakamura was alienated upon his return to a Taiwan unrecognizable to him. His wife had remarried after he was officially declared dead. He was given a new name. He could not speak the new official language of Mandarin. He died of lung cancer, five years after returning to Taiwan, in 1979.

While colonial soldiers were excluded from obtaining back wages, pensions, military postal saving deposits, disability and bereavement compensations, they were included in the Yasukuni Shrine. The Yasukuni Shrine was established in 1869, for the explicit purpose of enshrining “the spirits of all those who died fighting for the restoration of imperial rule.”²³⁶ The

²³⁴ A common phrase used by the Nationalist government to characterize the legacy of the five decades of Japanese rule was leftover poison (C: yidu).

²³⁵ Trefalt 173

²³⁶ Orr 40

Yasukuni became a definitive symbol of Japanese militarism after it enshrined 14 convicted Class A War Criminals in 1978. In fact, the Yasukuni came into “collaboration with the Health and Welfare Ministry, [and] vastly expanded eligibility for enshrinement in general. Beforehand, battle death or wounds suffered on duty was prerequisite. Afterwards, simply dying while on official duty sufficed. A total of 2,091,206 or just under 85% of the 2,466,000 spirits at Yasukuni were enshrined after the war under the later lax rules.”²³⁷ Many, not just Taiwanese, Korean, and Okinawan, but Japanese spirits as well were enshrined without notification or consent of their families. Lawsuits were brought forth, as the “Yasukuni refuses bereaved family requests for the spirits’ removal from the enshrinement rolls. The shrine takes a doctrinal position that once enshrined (gōshi) the comingled spirits cannot be removed.” These lawsuits failed, as the court cites intervention in religion would be a violation of the separation of church and state, a policy instituted during the Allied Occupation.²³⁸ This was an appropriation of the sacrifices, the deaths, and the souls of colonial soldiers to glorify militarism. This was the duplicity of postwar Japan, to only honor the sacrifices of colonial soldiers in name only, but to rescind the financial compensations they were entitled to. Thus, breaking the social contract that Imperial Japan had signed with the peoples of her colonies.²³⁹

²³⁷ Orr 40

²³⁸ Orr 41

²³⁹ Orr 44. “In other words, the social contract that existed in imperial Japan assumed that the imperial state would take care of those who served it, but was replaced with a social contract of ethnic loyalty reified by international circumstance. In this conception, the postwar state had a new social contract with a smaller population. Yet the postwar Japanese state retained the essential prewar symbol of state, the Shōwa Emperor. Ostensibly, he and his successors are now symbols of the unity of the people and the state, but like any symbol, he can represent different things to different people.”

Betrayal by Empire on the “Home Front”

Entering Year 40 of Showa, 1965, Kan’s four children were growing day by day as did their daily food intake and his everyday responsibilities. Some nights he worked part-time at a ramen shop, exhausting himself, and yet making no improvements toward the household income. To a life that no matter how hard he tried and will not improve, he began to feel defeated, and started experiencing stomach pains. Kan was diagnosed with duodenal ulcer. Though the doctor advised surgery, Kan vehemently refused. As surgery and hospitalization for post-surgical care were massive expenses. Kan pleaded for only medication for his treatment. It took months of medication and rest for him to recover. Those months went by without him working, and no income. Working hard to improve his life could only do so much. He had reached the ceiling, the apex of his earning abilities. And yet, even the maximum extraction of labor of himself was insufficient to provide for his family of six. Fortunately, in 1966 they were able to move into the newly built public housing in Suginami District.

At this time, he started considering abandoning the dwindling tailoring industry, and changing his occupation. However, for a Taiwanese who possessed neither a degree nor Japanese citizenship, there were very few opportunities. Though the social tendency of perceiving war criminals as bad people had softened, his livelihood issues remained unresolved. Taking his family back to Taiwan was still unfeasible. The Nationalist government had yet to end Martial Law. His brothers all told him, “It is still very dangerous, do not return.” Also the education and language skills of his children were another issue. Although he did not register them as Japanese, they were basically raised as Japanese. They would have trouble adjusting to a society where Mandarin was the official language.

In 1976, Kan's father-in-law had fallen sick. His wife was called back to take care of him, and started frequently traveling to Chiba. Kan had no reservations about her returning home. Kan worked as well as providing care to their four children, aged from 12 to 4 years old. One day, she said that there were not enough people caring for her father at nighttime, and started coming home less frequently. Then, in 1968, he received a summons from the Tokyo Family Court. She had filed for divorce. Kan was shocked. He phoned his wife's familial home to seek some answers. Not only would she not answer the phone, but no one bothered to contact him. In a state of absolute ignorance, he headed to the Tokyo Family Court on the appointed date. He had never been to a space such as this. His wife alleged that he was lazy and had no drive for making a livelihood, had used violence against her, he liked to gamble, never brought money home, and thus she could no longer tolerate such a marriage. It was as though someone had slapped him in the face. He could not believe her words. Kan had never hit her. Kan admitted that he had let his wife live a life of hardship. Had she only accused him of an inability to provide, that would be it. Yet, she accused him of being physically abusive, lazy, and a gambler. These were all lies. He was anything but lazy, and had worked hard for the family. Kan wanted to confront her on these lies. In his rebuttals to the mediator, he stated that her statements were in absolute contradiction to the truth. He demanded to speak with her, and to solicit statements from the children. However neither of these demands were approved. Regardless, Kan refused to say a single bad word about his wife. When asked by the mediator why, he responded that he refuses to say slanderous things about the woman he loves. The divorce was finalized in February of 1968. The decision of the court was: all four children are to be under his care, his now ex-wife was to provide a monthly childcare fee of 7,500 yen per child, totaling at 30,000 yen per month. It was most bewildering to Kan that the court left the care of all four underage children to him, the impoverished father, and

not the mother. Kan had thought that if he simply refused to provide his seal, then the divorce cannot proceed.

The legal system, in this biography, is one wielded by the officialdom and those able to afford attorneys. Be it his incompetent and overburdened assigned lawyer during his war crime trials held by the Australian government, the Japanese bureaucracy and legislative systems denying him the same benefits that Japanese soldiers were given, and here by the Tokyo family court system and his ex-in-laws who were able to hire a lawyer while Kan could not afford one. The formal legal system was again and again wielded against him. Kan makes a direct comparison, “The decision was made one-sidedly, it was like the Rabaul War Crime Trials.”

This was the victorious result of the strategy employed by his in-laws. They seized on the opportunity when his father-in-law—the only person who approved of their marriage—had befallen ill. First using the cover reason of caring for the bedridden father, in order to manipulate her to live long term with them. Then her mother, sister, and brother brainwashed her daily, pursuing her to divorce. Saying that an impoverished life, with a husband who is a third national person, and so many children; she could have easily internalized these arguments. When his wife was pregnant the first time, other than her father, the rest of her family all angrily lamented at her, “So many of your father’s subordinates were killed by Chinese people, why are you then giving birth to a Chinese man’s child?” To his former in-laws, there was no difference between Taiwanese and Chinese, these two categories were the same to them. Perhaps there is something to be said of the irony here, that a Japanese military family—that of a general’s no less—is so biased and discriminatory towards a Taiwanese. One might assume they would embody some kind of egalitarian or even paternalistic feelings toward someone from a former Japanese colony, and had even served in the Japanese military. Yet, in some ways this is not a surprise, because a

fundamental tenet of colonialism is racial hierarchy. The very act of colonialism is justified by a racial hierarchy that forever gives preferential treatment to the people from the metropole as first-class citizens, and those from the colonies as second-class citizens. Racial hierarchy is necessary to justify the exploitation and mistreatment of the colony and its peoples.

Kan found the trial to be unjust and racist. To Kan, the decision of the court was in part due to bias against him: “I thought to myself, had this been a divorce between two Japanese people, how would it have turned out? Would a judge put the care of a 13 year old son, 12 year old daughter, 8 years old daughter, and a 5 year old son all on an impoverished father? To this day, I still think this was entirely because I was Taiwanese.” To be sued based on unfounded allegations, causing four children to lose their mother, and to negate her duty as a mother to raise her children—he found all of it to be unfair. In Kan’s view, the judge must have felt rather guilty over this result, for it was decided that the monthly childcare fee would be thirty thousand yen. However the childcare fee payment was only made once, and never re-occurred since. Kan does not tell us why he did not pursue the matter further with the court and ensured that the payments continued. He does not tell us why he did not follow up. Whether it was true or not, that the legal system was racist and biased against him, it was his personal impression that the legal system sided with his wife that is of importance to us. It was his takeaway that the outcome would have been different had both parties been Japanese. He strongly viewed the entire proceeding to be one that was already in favor of his ex-wife, due to her Japanese nationality, and against him for lacking one. Since that time in Kureshi when the customs official informed him that his Japanese nationality has been revoked, this was the second time in his life when he felt such anger at the punishment the Japanese have dealt to him. After the divorce finalized, his new circumstances

created a new dilemma: for a man who just recovered from a major illness, how was he to raise four children to adulthood as a single parent?

Becoming a Taxi Driver

The one silver lining of the divorce was not a huge blow to his children. As his ex-wife had been absent from their home for over a year by the time of the divorce, his children had grown accustomed to her absence. This was a small comfort for Kan. At this point, Kan was 43 years old. And what he needed the most was the time and money necessary to raise the children. Now that he is a single parent of four, having temporal autonomy was even more urgent. As a tailor, he did not have flexibility in his work hours. He was desperate for a job that would give him temporal autonomy. The answer to his dilemma was to become a taxi driver. He had already acquired a driver's license two years before.

Luckily, the director of the taxi company in Suginami District sympathized with his predicament and hired him. Although the starting salary was no better than that of a tailor, depending on one's performance, one could make much more. Time wise, he had more autonomy. It was the best choice given his circumstances. Once again, he was able to survive due to the kindness of strangers. He was hired by the taxi company as a "trainee." He was on a fixed salary, using the company's money to obtain the two licenses that taxi drivers must possess. In return, he must work at the taxi company for at least two years.

Taxi driving was physically demanding and draining. Starting at a new occupation meant he had zero experience and lacked specific knowledge on how to perform well. When he first started, it was difficult to get customers. Even when he did catch a customer waving their hand,

either his ignorance of the route incurred the wrath of the customer, or he had to deal with a drunk who made a mess. Even when the morning dawned, the turnover would not increase. Kan wanted to cry every day of that first year. He had intended to utilize his work free days to take care of the children and perform household chores. Yet, he would return home in the morning exhausted, and sleep until dusk. If his daily earnings did not meet a specific standard, his salary would be significantly less than what he made as a tailor. Soon, his duodenal ulcer recurred.

It took time to learn the ropes of being a taxi driver. Some of his senpai also taught him where to go at what times for customers. It took him a year to master these details. Once his performance improved, he was no longer so exhausted, and his health recovered. Gradually he was able to efficiently utilize his free time to care for the children. Finally he could breathe. Once the taxi exited the garage, it was entirely up to the driver as to where to drive. This was an advantage. As long as you made a specific profit before daylight, no one bothered you. His five-year old son was the one in need of most parental care; the only child ineligible for attending school. Kan would make sure to drive by the house during the day, to check up on him. The opening of a public daycare near his house was another instance of Kan benefitting from public good/social welfare institutions, and resolved his worry over his son at home unattended. It is clear from his biography that his four children were the greatest and most meaningful people in his life since his arrival in Japan.

Racism At School

His children without exception were all bullied at school, and called variously as “Taiwanese,” “Chinese,” or “motherless.” Despite this, his four children never skipped school,

and even enjoyed classes. In his opinion, the most incredible of it all were their teachers, specifically when it came to issues of their nationality and ethnicity. When his eldest son was attending sixth grade, one day when he came home, his clothes were very dirty. On his way back home, he had a physical fight with his classmates. The following day, eight parents arrived at the school angrily to complain that their sons were beaten by the Taiwanese student, and pressured the principal to immediately expel the rude Taiwanese. After the school made some investigations, Kan learned that they were playing at a playground near an apartment, had some verbal altercations, which ended in a fight of eight versus one. His son was taking judo classes at the local police station. Thus his son was able to single handedly overpower the other students. The principal said to the parents, “Eight people bullying one person is what is wrong. I will teach your children well. You too, should not have such a racist idea to call for a Taiwanese person to be expelled. Also, a public school carrying out compulsory education cannot use expulsion as a form of punishment.” When Kan heard of this he cried.

Kan’s second eldest daughter was smart. Her grades in school were very good, and she was even selected as the head representative for a school graduation ceremony. Some parents complained, “We need not select a Taiwanese as a representative!” The school responded, “Every year, we let the child with the best grades serve this role, regardless of whether the child is Japanese or not.” This phenomenon is of particular interest, like when Kan himself was being tested while camped deep in the mountains of Brunei. He too was tested first, but could not be formally given the title of first place, due to prohibitions of allowing Taiwanese certain awards. Only this time, the racist attitude was not adopted officially, in this instance of this public school in Japan, decades later.

Kan was deeply grateful to the teachers for not treating his children differently. His children were thus able to grow up healthy, and help one another. They all successfully graduated from highschool, and none of them ended up astray. The public school administration and teachers stood in stark contrast from the parents, who held racist and hostile attitudes to his children. His four children each obtained their driver's license by the time they graduated from highschool. It took quite a bit of money to obtain a license, but Kan had never given them a cent for it. He concluded that they must have earned the money from working part-time jobs. He was very proud that his children were so self-reliant. His one regret was that he could not afford his children to attend university. His four children were very determined in becoming self-reliant. They all completed vocational colleges on their own, picked their own careers, and became members of society, each walking their own paths. Kan as a single parent raised his children over the course of 15 years. In the blink of an eye, he was again living alone.

It gave him much comfort that all of his children married, and led stable lives. Kan speculated that they must have still encountered difficulties in their daily lives, and thus used their weddings as an opportunity to gain Japanese citizenship. Without Japanese citizenship, foreign residents were excluded from a set of rights and privileges that only Japanese citizens enjoyed.²⁴⁰ In total, Kan had seven grandchildren, all of whom are Japanese citizens. Racism

²⁴⁰ Tai 59. "The so-called kokuseki jookoo [requirement of Japanese citizenship] limits the lives of foreign residents in Japan. In actual daily situations, koseki [family register] is the proof of possession of Japanese citizenship. The basic unit of the koseki system is the household, and a Japanese is registered as a member or the head of a household. Koseki are filed at respective local municipal offices. Birth, marriage, death and other kinds of change in family membership are recorded in this register. A copy of koseki is requested for the access to various kinds of privileges such as employment, occupational certificates, public loans, scholarships and licences. Since koseki is the proof of the possession of citizenship, a copy of koseki is required for passport applications. Foreign residents who do not have koseki are usually deprived of those rights, and are subject to other kinds of discrimination. However, kokuseki-jookoo in certain areas has been removed as a result of anti-discrimination movements, which started in the 1970s. The participants of the movements are mainly Korean residents in Japan."

against non-ethnic Japanese was abound in postwar Japan; such as “discrimination in the job market and in their search for marriage partners.”²⁴¹ His children say to him, “Father, please do not be so stubborn, obtaining citizenship can make certain things much more convenient!” Every time he went to the city hall to process the paperwork to renew his foreign registration, the staff would recommend he obtain citizenship. Of course, he is much older now, and has no intention to return to live permanently in Taiwan. But as long as his former “ancestral country” of Japan refuses to make reparations, he would rather die than obtain Japanese citizenship.

Three Decades as a Taxi Driver

Starting in 1969, Kan spent nearly thirty years at the steering wheel. As his taxi income became more steady, he became less passionate in demands for reparations. As his children each went to live on their own, and just when the weight on his shoulders was starting to lighten, suddenly he was at the retirement age of 60. The two and a half years starting from 1985, were some of his hardest days. Originally the taxi company had promised that they would rehire him. However, due to an excess of taxi drivers they did not. So even this last thread of hope had evaporated. He had no source of income. According to the regulations of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, if you have only joined for less than two years into their retirement program, or those who have yet turned 65, are unqualified for pension. He was once again desperate for a job.

The first thought that came across his mind was to look into other taxi companies. As it turned out, no one was willing to employ a 60-year-old Taiwanese. There were four big companies in the taxi world, colloquially referred to as the “Great Japanese Empire.” Everyone knows that they never employ foreigners. He did not bother applying to those four taxi

²⁴¹ Araragi 80

companies. He was able to find a Taiwanese owned taxi company. Yet while sitting next to a divider, he could hear the owner's Japanese wife whispering, "There is no need to go through the trouble of hiring a Taiwanese, on top of being an ojisan." Kan then started trying different odd jobs, such as recycling newspapers. Then recycling used car batteries. Then tried being a door-to-door household item salesman. None of them worked out in the long run.

Although he qualified for unemployment benefits, yet within the blink of an eye the expiration date had come and gone. He was finally at his wit's end. At this moment, he serendipitously overheard someone mentioning that a Korean living in the same neighborhood as he did, who was the owner of a taxi company. He got up the courage to ask for an interview. To his surprise it went successfully. He was asked to start work the next day. Later, Kan found out that the owner of this taxi company was also a former war criminal.

After working at this company for half a year later, the old company he worked at asked him to return. Due to the effects of the bubble economy, the existing number of drivers could not keep up with the demand. He felt that it would be better to work at the old place, so he said yes. Yet upon returning, he learned he was placed in the so-called "Blue Line" time slots. Other than Saturday and Sunday, he must drive from midnight to early morning, this time slot was miserable. Upon returning home in the morning to sleep, and to wake up in the afternoon to get ready for work. At that time, almost every night he would meet unscrupulous office workers. Calling for taxis for ladies from bars to ride from Ginza back to Sokashi or Koshigayashi of Saitama Prefecture, and then take a car of their own, hurrying back in the opposite direction to Yokohama or Kamakura. The bills for drinking and companions were entirely reimbursed by their company social fund. As they were not spending their own money, these office workers were happy to spend money wherever they went. Then the bubble economy burst, and so did

these social funds. Without these customers, a lot of places for night-time socializing were closed, and the taxi company's "Blue Line" was also abolished.

After Kan turned 70, due to the safety regulations of the land transportation department, and rules regarding pensions, he could work no more than eight days per month. He could only work as a part time worker. Even though his own eyes, ears, and reflexes were all in peak shape, and would have no problems working full time. But rules were rules, and there was not much else he could say. A taxi company willing to employ an elderly driver was already hard to find.

Summary

Racism comes in many forms. It comes in the form of a state policy actively denying the compensation for wartime service to former colonial subjects. Compensations it more than willingly gave to its own "citizens". The retraction of citizenship and denial of compensations was a profound psychic shock to Kan. What happens after a war is equally, if not even more, important than what happened during the war in question. How a nation chooses to remember and honor those who had fought in its name, is how it gives meaning and encodes value and honor upon those who had served. This issue of recognition of the state is a recurring one that appears in the next chapter as well, albeit regarding a different nation-state. By denying Koreans and Taiwanese their due compensations, the state was effectively saying to them that their services are not recognized, and of no importance to the state. Racism also comes in direct outright hostility, such as the abject discrimination of Kan's ex-wife's family, the Japanese classmates who called his children various names, the Japanese parents who called for his son's expulsion for defending himself against eight people, and called for his daughter's removal as the speaker of a graduation ceremony solely because she had Taiwanese heritage.

If it were not for the generosity of the Taiwanese community—who gave him employment and shelter when he first arrived, and even lent him money to cover his medical expenses, and the kindness of strangers—ranging from the stranger named Mori who lent him money on a boat, to the Korean man who hired him after he was let go from his former taxi company when no one else would—he would not have survived in Japan. He had no pre-existing familial or communal networks to rely on. The state had abandoned all of its responsibilities and duties towards the Taiwanese veterans that had served and sacrificed for it during the war. Casting them out into the cold to fend for themselves, despite having served on the battlefield as well as in prisons under the charge of Class BC War Criminals. This is utilitarianism at its core; to use something or someone for one's one short term benefits, and to cast the object or person aside once it is no longer of use. Yet, had it not been Han and Indigenous Taiwanese to provide indispensable services that no other Japanese or colonial subjects could have provided, the war would not have lasted as long as it did. Han Taiwanese were able to provide communication across Sinophone languages in China and with Chinese communities residing across Southeast Asia. Indigenous Taiwanese provide communication with Austronesian communities across Southeast Asia, as well as survival skills after supply lines were disrupted—survival skills in which the Japanese officers and soldiers did not possess. The war could not have lasted as long as it did if it were not for the direct and active participation of the peoples of the colonies.

Despite having vociferously used every possible tool available to them (suing the government, going on media interviews, protesting), at the end, Taiwanese veterans were only able to secure a paltry sum of 2 million Yen per person. Meanwhile, Taiwanese comfort women were able to obtain far more support from the ROC government in its fight for compensation from the Japanese government. Whereas Taiwanese-Japanese veterans not only received no

support, but were actively treated with hostility by the ROC government. In the eyes of the Nationalist government, the comfort women were acceptable victims of Japanese imperialism, whereas Taiwanese-Japanese veterans were unacceptable and somehow undeserving of the status of victimhood.

CHAPTER FOUR: VISITS TO MARTIAL LAW TAIWAN

Overview

This chapter deals with the ramifications of the postwar and Cold War context for Taiwan. For the Third World countries, the Cold War was another form of colonialism in disguise, as many struggled to gain autonomy and free themselves of the colonialism that was forced upon them prior to WWII. In the case of Taiwan, though it was free of Japanese colonialism, it was immediately made into a part of Nationalist China. Taiwan went from one colonialism to another. This re-colonization became further consolidated after 1949, when the Communists won the Chinese Civil War, and the Nationalist government along with other waishengren fled across the Taiwan straits. The imposition of Martial Law in 1949 enabled the state to exert totalitarian control over Taiwan. This had tremendous impacts upon Kan—and other diasporic Taiwanese people—in their abilities to travel and access Taiwan during Martial Law. As Taiwan was rendered into the so-called “Free China”, as opposed to the Communist China, it was able to gain substantial ideological, material, and political support by the United States. It was through this unwavering support from the US, that the Nationalist government was able to maintain and sustain its totalitarian control over the Taiwanese population it now ruled over. Returning to Taiwan during the Cold War was not always feasible. Especially for those who chose to engage in transnational political activism, advocating for an independent Taiwan. These activists faced various forms of state retaliation.

The new colonial regime had tremendous impacts upon Taiwanese-Japanese veterans as well. Those who returned to Taiwan in the immediate aftermath of the war became suspicious.

Especially so during 228, for they were the only people among the population with combat experience, and their visibility unfortunately also rendered them as targets in the subsequent crackdown. Those who survived 228 were prohibited from publicly discussing their experience as soldiers of Japan. War criminals who completed their sentences report that after repatriation to Taiwan, they were surveilled by state apparatuses, and prohibited from various rights and privileges. Within this authoritarian context, it was rather serendipitous that Kan received a formal invitation to visit Taiwan. Although it was part of the charm offensive by the Nationalist government to cultivate and expand ties abroad to its favor, as Kan was a diasporic Taiwanese residing in Japan, it provided an opportunity for him to revisit Taiwan after two decades.

Postwar Taiwan: Re-Colonization, Sinicization, and Totalitarianism

With the end of the war accompanied the end of the Japanese Empire. Yet, emancipation from one empire only facilitated the colonization by another. It was determined by the United States, that Taiwan was to be given to the Republic of China.²⁴² The time period of the leaving of the Japanese government, colonists, and soldiers, and the takeover by the Nationalist government is referred to as retrocession (C:guangfu). Retrocession was initially warmly welcomed by the Taiwanese, as they will no longer be governed by foreigners, but instead by fellow brethren. Yet, the Taiwanese were not treated by the mainland Chinese as fellow brethren. Taiwanese were seen

²⁴² Wang, Chih-ming. *Transpacific Articulations: Student Migration and the Remaking of Asian America*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013. 92. “In his book *Formosa Betrayed* (the title later borrowed by Will Tiao and Adam Kane for their film), Kerr argues that the United States had an interest in occupying Taiwan and in supporting Taiwanese independence by placing it under UN trusteeship before the end of World War II. But it withdrew from this plan to support Jiang Jieshi and his KMT regime for the worldwide campaign against communism, a decision that legitimized the KMT’s rule in Taiwan and hence denied the Taiwanese their desire for self-determination.”

with suspicion, as under the influence of the leftover poison (C: yidu) of Japanese colonialism, as traitors of the Han race (C:hanjian), as enslaved (C: nuhua), and as Japanized (C:ribenhua).

Meanwhile in the immediate aftermath of the war, Taiwanese-Japanese personnel stationed in China faced massive retaliations from Chinese civilians “for the wartime violence and discrimination they had experienced at the hands of the Japanese and Taiwanese.” There were approximately 8000 Taiwanese stationed each in Xiamen and Guangzhou, and 24,000 in Hainan.²⁴³ Their situation was exacerbated as the Nationalist government denied them the opportunity to be repatriated back to Taiwan, as well as neglected to allocate them adequate supplies for survival.²⁴⁴ This resulted in thousands of Taiwanese stranded in a war torn country, languished, and died in mass.²⁴⁵ Only the lucky ones were able to return home.

At the end of a war, the soldiers of the winning countries are warmly embraced upon their victorious return by their fellow countrymen. Their sacrifices for their nation are recognized and honored. Statues, monuments, medals and other material objects are created to commemorate their sacrifices in perpetuity. Yet, such commemorations are all but certain for the defeated, especially for Taiwan, which was re-colonized by the Nationalists. The unceremonious end of

²⁴³ Shirane 163

²⁴⁴ Shirane 164. “The GMD coordinated with the United States to prioritize Japanese repatriation from South China back to Japan via Taiwan, which was completed by mid-1946. When Japan’s navy in Hainan offered to ensure the welfare and repatriation of its Taiwanese personnel, the GMD refused on the premise that Taiwanese were now under its jurisdiction.”

²⁴⁵ Lamely, Harry J. Chapter 8 “Taiwan Under Japanese rule, 1895-1945: The Vicissitudes of Colonialism”. Rubinstein, Murray A. *Taiwan: A New History*. Armonk: Taylor & Francis Group, 2007. 247. “On Hainan island, where the largest contingent of Taiwan servicemen was stationed, many were slain by Chinese troops or else perished from disease and starvation before the survivors managed to make unheralded returns to Taiwan.”

the war, and the lack of any public recognition for the sacrifices of the Taiwanese even led some to volunteer to fight for the KMT in the brewing Chinese Civil War on mainland China.²⁴⁶

Taiwan was seen by the mainland Chinese as a war booty, to be ransacked and plundered of its riches accumulated through half a century of Japanese modernization and development.²⁴⁷ Riches to be extracted for the war efforts of the Nationalists' conflict against the Communists; the Chinese Civil War broke out after the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War. The common expression used to summarize the leaving of the Japanese, and the coming of the Chinese was, "dogs left, and pigs came."²⁴⁸ In the process of redirecting their efforts towards the civil war, the Nationalists only sought to extract material and human resources from Taiwan, and held any concern for the welfare of the Taiwanese in name only. The incompetence and corruption of the Nationalist officials sent to oversee retrocession only accelerated the pre-existing economic deterioration caused by the war. The Nationalists seized Japanese as well as Taiwanese owned businesses and properties as their own. Everyone from Chen Yi—who was assigned as civil administrator of Taiwan by Chiang Kai-Shek—down to the lowest ranked soldiers participated in

²⁴⁶Louzon 170-171. "On paper, the retrocession had made Taiwan part of a victorious country, China. But these veterans had fought on the wrong side, and they were hence denied the 'gesture of symbolic reintegration [of] marching in arms and in uniforms before gathered civilians,' which, as an inverted reenactment of mobilization, usually brings the war to a full circle for soldiers on the winning side (Audoin-Rouzeau and Prochasson 2008, 14). To them, the way back home was no victors' parade. A possible way out was enrollment in the Chinese army. It appears that several thousand Formosans made this choice, often based on illusory hopes of decent pay and service on the island—many were shipped to the mainland, against their will, to take part in the civil war (Xu 1995)."

²⁴⁷ Jacobs, J. Bruce. "Taiwanese and the Chinese Nationalists, 1937-1945: The Origins of Taiwan's 'Half-Mountain People' (Banshan Ren)." *Modern China* 16, no. 1 (1990): 84–118. 105.

²⁴⁸ Tai 54. "The Japanese, especially Japanese policemen who exercised a lot of control over Taiwanese, were likened to dogs while the Chinese were called 'pigs' and seen as dirty and stupid by the Taiwanese. In the eyes of the Taiwanese who had gone through industrialization and other social developments under Japan's colonial rule, ill conduct by some of the newly arrived Chinese appeared to be not only morally bad but primitive."

systemic looting and plunder. Looting meant taking any goods that could be sold to Shanghai or physically occupying private homes.²⁴⁹ Retrocession was a re-colonization of Taiwan.²⁵⁰ A conservative estimate of the total value of non-military properties confiscated by Nationalists and mainlanders alike during retrocession at above one billion dollars.²⁵¹ Any of the glee and excitement from the initial news of retrocession soon evaporated into resentment and discontent in the face of the gross incompetence and corruption of the new government.

Then, the 228 Incident occurred. By 1947, within two years of the KMT takeover, the socioeconomic situation became untenable due to skyrocketing inflation and mass unemployment. On February 28, 1947, an old woman on the streets of Taipei was apprehended by policemen for selling cigarettes. Since Japanese rule, alcohol and tobacco were state monopolies and therefore prohibited to be sold by civilians. Passerbys intervened, resulting in a physical altercation. This altercation between policemen—now staffed with only mainlanders—and the Taiwanese people was the last straw. The news of the Taipei cigarette woman spread and sparked impromptu island wide physical clashes. Taiwanese people began to attack any and all mainlanders, identified by their inability to speak Japanese—the only lingua franca spoken across all ethnic lines. This in turn created a highly disproportionate response from the KMT. The result was a months-long island wide conflict—one in which the Taiwanese had

²⁴⁹ Gold 40

²⁵⁰ Edmondson, “Negotiations of Taiwan’s Identity among Generations of Liuxuesheng” (Overseas Students) and Taiwanese Americans” (Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 2002). 27. “They moved into Japanese residences, filled the most important administrative posts, replaced the Japanese as the police force, nationalized the largest industries previously owned by the Japanese, and imposed Mandarin Chinese, a foreign language to the Taiwanese, as the national dialect. Portraits of the Japanese emperor in public schools and offices were replaced by pictures of Sun Yat-sen and Chiang Kai-shek as the new objects of mandatory ritualized state worship, and urban spaces were reordered with place-names evoking a ‘motherland’ that few living Taiwanese had ever seen.”

²⁵¹ Kerr, George H. *Formosa Betrayed*. Upland, CA: Taiwan Publishing Co., 1992. 106

no chance in winning as total demilitarization of the island occurred after Japanese surrender, and the KMT was well armed.

During 228, a wide number of former soldiers entered spontaneous remobilization, as termed by Victor Louzon.²⁵² They were the only Taiwanese who had actual combat experience, and thus were urged by the populace to aid in the resistance. Despite the demilitarization that occurred soon after the end of the war, equipped with very few arms, many went forth and remobilized. Louzon argued that precisely because of the empowerment and upward mobility experienced during mobilization, and the denial of honor to these men upon repatriation, the development of 228 provided an instance for these men to recapture the pride that they once had.²⁵³ Spontaneous remobilization was a way to “re-experience some of the feelings of empowerment of war mobilization.”²⁵⁴

Enlistment in the military was not merely paperwork, but a series of high rituals richly embedded and encoded with meaning. The first ritual was the receiving of the mobilization order: “The policemen wore white gloves and [showed] the utmost reverence. When approaching the house of the [soldier] who was about to leave, he saluted and announced his arrival. The person receiving the order walked out, all dressed up, and took it. [Then], the policeman shouted

²⁵² 228 is meant as a shorthand for both the specific date the conflict occurred, as well as the months-long massacre that occurred after the date.

²⁵³ Louzon 170 “The return to normalcy was especially difficult for Taiwanese veterans of the Imperial Army. Demobilization is always a trying process that entails an identity shift from soldier to civilian, mourning the dead, and social reinsertion. The ‘moral economy of recognition’ (symbolic gratifications such as medals) can facilitate that process by continuing to acknowledge the soldiers’ sacrifices in peacetime (Cabanès and Piketty 2007, 4). Right after the defeat, Taiwanese soldiers had benefited from what was, in the Japanese army, colloquially referred to as the ‘Potsdam promotion’ (Potsudamu shinkyu ポツダム進級), a gain by one rank level. After that, they were dramatically downgraded to POWs, and then to marginalized and frequently unemployed young men, suspected of disloyalty by their new motherland.”

²⁵⁴ Ibid 174

‘Congratulations!’ , bent over a second time and left.”²⁵⁵ The significance lay in that the police usually wielded significant power in the colony. Thus, a policeman saluting and honoring the colonized in such a way was not only remarkable, but a reversal of the usual everyday power dynamics. The second ritual was when the recruits were to leave civilian life and head for the training center. The entire population and officials of the village would accompany the recruits to the train station, everyone holding little flags with the names of the recruits written upon them, and everyone yelling in unison, “Banzai! Banzai!”²⁵⁶ These rituals alongside other facets of mobilization (being given military uniforms, swords, a very good wage in comparison to the jobs available in the colony), constituted mobilization as an act of empowerment, of upward mobility for many. Their return home was not met with any kind of public recognition of their services. In part, because they had fought on the wrong side. This was further exacerbated as the new regime did not permit any kind of public discussion of the experiences of the Taiwanese-Japanese soldiers: “Everything that smacked of Japanese militarism was suspect in the eyes of the new government, and now had to be kept silent.”²⁵⁷

This resistance involved the resurrection of a “Japaneseness”, which Louzon specified to be “not as a national identity, but as a repertoire of behaviors, symbols, and discourses that they mobilized in the course of the rebellion.”²⁵⁸ These were behaviors, symbols, and discourses that they developed during the war mobilization. Given that the Taiwanese had no ammunition for their rifles, or any kind of weapons, they had to resort to a kind of play acting, in which insignias would be traded so that so and so can have a proper title to lead on an assault on an airport. This

²⁵⁵ Ibid 165

²⁵⁶ Ibid 165. (Note: Banzai means to live ten thousand years, to wish eternal life or prosperity. A celebratory cheer.)

²⁵⁷ Ibid 171

²⁵⁸ Ibid 163

had dangerous consequences, especially after March 9th, when reinforcements from mainland China arrived, and “this mimicry fueled mainland Chinese resentment. After eight years of savage Japanese invasion, the role-playing of the young Taiwanese rebels triggered an explosive mixture of anger and fear.” This mimicry led the military intelligence to even speculate that thousands of Japanese soldiers had in fact secretly remained. Yet these imagined Japanese troops to have secretly stayed behind were “nonexistent, and what the secret services feared were Japanese troops were actually Taiwanese clothed in Japanese uniforms.”²⁵⁹ Ah, but this turned out to be a difference without significance to the Nationalist soldiers, for all purposes, they were *seen as* Japanese, and were thus Japanese to them.

The Nationalist soldiers were both indiscriminate—sometimes shooting people on sight without care of their identity—and deliberate in their killings. They targeted the elites, from former Japanese soldiers to the most prominent Taiwanese intellectuals, lawyers, and doctors. Former soldiers—regardless of whether they had been involved in the resistance or not—were at the most risk, for they were the most identifiable. The very material symbols they once proudly possessed—Japanese swords, uniforms, wartime photographs, and even Japanese books, for symbolizing their time and affiliation with the Japanese military, were now fatal markers that must be buried or burned.²⁶⁰

For those who managed to escape death during the 228 Incident, they could not have publicly discussed their experience as former Japanese soldiers and gunzoku. Shortly after, one of the world’s longest Martial Law was enacted. Martial Law lasted from 1949 to 1987, for 38 years. It was a totalitarian state. The 228 Incident is considered the start of White Terror—a term referring to the terror invoked by the systematic killing and imprisonment of any and all

²⁵⁹ Ibid 175

²⁶⁰ Ibid 175

individuals who threatened or were perceived as threatening to the KMT regime.²⁶¹ Any positive discussion of the Japanese era was seen as challenging the legitimacy of the regime. The Nationalist regime imposed an official amnesia of the Japanese colonial era. Amnesia was a necessity for the Nationalist regime, especially after the massive hostility it generated after 228. Given that its highest priority was to retake mainland China (C: guangfu dalu), it could not consolidate its efforts without support from the Taiwanese. Though the Nationalist regime had a monopoly on violence, the waishengren population constituted a minority. Mainlanders constituted 12 percent of the population.²⁶² It had to produce a formula in which it could bypass making judgment for the “crime” of having fought on behalf of the Japanese: amnesia. Amnesia was the solution to giving amnesty to the Taiwanese for having “collaborated” with the Japanese during the war. One cannot pass judgment on an action if that action is no longer part of the public memory. The crime of collaboration could only be forgiven as the very existence of Taiwanese-Japanese veterans was erased from memory and from History.²⁶³ Their experiences being wiped away from public memory was “the price of ‘readmission’ into ‘Chineseness.’”²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ Cheng, Wendy. “‘This Contradictory but Fantastic Thing’: Student Networks and Political Activism in Cold War Taiwanese/America.” *Journal of Asian American studies* 20, no. 2 (2017): 161–191. 166. “This was a period of tremendous state repression and violence during which tens of thousands of people in Taiwan—largely (though not all) ‘native’ Taiwanese—were imprisoned, executed, or went missing. In 1947’s February 28 Incident, which sparked the mass uprisings that led to the imposition of martial law, an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 Taiwanese were summarily executed. By 1960, one internal government report estimated 126,000 Taiwanese missing (in an era when travel abroad was heavily restricted). Over the next several decades, a period known in Taiwan as the White Terror, more than 90,000 were arrested under charges of sedition, and thousands were executed or imprisoned. The population as a whole was subjected to high levels of social control, surveillance, censorship, and intimidation.”

²⁶² Gold, Thomas B. “Retrosession and Authoritarian KMT Rule (1945–1986).” In *Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Taiwan*, 36–50. 1st ed. Routledge, 2016. 46

²⁶³ Lan (2013) 808

²⁶⁴ Ibid 813

The legitimacy and resources of the Nationalist government were significantly reinforced by American support.²⁶⁵ Due to the outbreak of the Korean War, fears over a potential spread of communism across Asia drove the US to support purportedly anti-communism but also deeply authoritarian regimes (ROC/Taiwan, South Korea, South Vietnam, the Philippines). The United States empowered the very totalitarian machinery which enforced systemic state violence and surveillance against the peoples of Taiwan. The United States went as far as to permit the operation of such surveillance within its own borders, as “the FBI cooperated with and allowed the KMT to spy on and intimidate Taiwanese students and migrants.”²⁶⁶

Thus, for at least four decades, the only officially and publicly recognized and known veterans in Taiwan were: waishengren who fought in China, or Taiwanese who served under the KMT military post-1949. Only these veterans were enshrined in the Martyr Shrine, a state institution created after 1949, designed to memorialize those whom the government deemed as having made honorable sacrifices for the ROC. Only these veterans were entitled to veteran pensions and the title of “glorious citizens” (C:rongmin).²⁶⁷ Only these veterans were recognized by the state and part of the public memory. Only they existed in the public imagination. During the Korean War, the PRC deployed its troops to aid North Korea. Some of these soldiers were captured as POWs. When international stakeholders were discussing the repatriation of these

²⁶⁵ Chen Yingzhen 190. “The United States granted the GMD regime international legitimacy by giving Jiang’s government diplomatic recognition, preservation of Taiwan’s seat on the U.N. Security Council, and military and economic aid. This international legitimacy in turn served as strong justification for legitimizing the GMD’s dictatorial internal rule over Taiwan.”

²⁶⁶ Cheng 167

²⁶⁷ Shirane 236. “Exceptions to ROC veteran benefits were Taiwanese who served in the GMD military against the CCP. On Taiwanese soldiers who fought in the Chinese Civil War (1945–49), see Shi-chi Mike Lan, “L’Etranger across the Taiwan Strait: History of the Civil War Taiwanese Kuomintang Soldiers,” in *Becoming Taiwan: from Colonialism to Democracy*, ed. Ann Heylen and Scott Sommers (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010), 135–46.”

PLA (People's Liberation Army) POWs, some of the POWs insisted that they not be repatriated to mainland China, but rather to Taiwan. Approximately 14,000 of these PLA POWs—who had not fought for the ROC for even a day in their lives, were not only taken in but even granted veteran status and benefits.²⁶⁸ The state wielded a tremendous power in deciding who was included, or excluded, in enjoying the status and full benefits of being a veteran.

Seen as Suspicious: Former War Criminals Living in Martial Law Taiwan

Taiwanese war criminals were repatriated to Japan upon completion of sentencing or to serve the remainder of their sentencing in Sugamo Prison. After which, many chose to stay in Japan, while some also chose to return to Taiwan. Zhou Qing-Feng left Taiwan at the age of 18 to serve as a POW guard, then sentenced as a war criminal, and returned to Taiwan 17 years later at the age of 35 in 1956. Zhou was motivated by the salary when he signed up, as his family was poor. He did not think the job would require more than three years at the time. Zhou described that due to his particular background, he came under surveillance from the police and other state apparatuses. From his social contacts, his occupation, and other facets of his life all came under surveillance. In the 1940s and 50s, once a person was under suspicion, they would be barred from employment in state jobs as well as any large private institutions. If one was labeled as “having problematic thoughts,” “having reactionary speech,” or “having interactions with dangwai individuals,” and such, one was guaranteed to be in trouble.²⁶⁹ This was a common

²⁶⁸ Lan (2013) 829

²⁶⁹ Dangwai; meaning outside the party. As the only official and permitted political party during Martial Law was the KMT, anyone whose political affiliation is not with the party were referred to as “outside the party”. This was a dangerous label, as it implies the individual is seeking to overturn or challenge the KMT.

scenario for Taiwanese war criminals who returned. Zhou could not find any good jobs and resorted to work as a butcher.²⁷⁰

When Xu Qing-Quan returned to Taiwan in October 1953, he arrived at Keelung Port. Upon landing, he was taken along with others by the port authorities to be processed: their names were taken, both their hands and feet were fingerprinted, and photos of their headshots were taken. Xu had thought it was the standard procedure for customs. It was later did he learn that this was in fact standard procedure for processing criminals. Xu too was unable to secure a good job. He resorted to becoming a street vendor of vegetables and snacks. His life became an impoverished one. None of his six children were able to study beyond middle school.²⁷¹

The Taiwanese Diaspora: Transnational Political Activism

Kan Shigematsu was by no means a minority. Thousands of Taiwanese chose to leave their homeland during Martial Law. A combination of desires for freedom of political expression, and upward socioeconomic mobility made the United States the primary destination. Between the 1960s and 1980s, more than a hundred thousand student migrants arrived in the United States.²⁷² In fact, “in a survey of Taiwanese students and professionals in 1970, Shu Yuang Chang found that ‘anti-Chiang, pro-democracy sentiment’ was widespread, and almost one-fifth ‘listed ‘escape’ as [a] reason for leaving Taiwan.’”²⁷³ In addition, as Taiwan had limited employment and postgraduate education opportunities, many in the fields of medicine, science and engineering sought out the United States. Between 1960 and 1979, the United States

²⁷⁰ Li Zhanping (2005) 24-25

²⁷¹ Ibid 67-68

²⁷² Cheng 162

²⁷³ Ibid 163

received 90 percent of Taiwanese student migrants.²⁷⁴ This exodus of high skilled labor was facilitated by the 1965 Immigration Act, whereby one of the new immigration categories was designated for those with specialized high skill labor. The United States became the new center of the Taiwanese diaspora as such that, “in 1969 the headquarters of World United Formosans for Independence (WUFI), the first organization of its type, was moved from Tokyo to New York City.”²⁷⁵

Many of those who immigrated pursued a life of political activism, advocating for an independent Taiwan, free of the violence and monopoly wielded by the Nationalist regime. A number of factors made the United States an ideal incubator for transnational political activism. The United States itself was experiencing massive civil right and anti-Vietnam War demonstrations in the 1960s and 70s. This atmosphere of civil disobedience, combined with free access to many books banned within Taiwan, in particular *Formosa Betrayed* by George Kerr.²⁷⁶ Taiwanese students participated in a wide range of political activities, from demonstrations to writing Taiwanese independence propaganda for circulation.²⁷⁷ The activities of Taiwanese student activists became much larger and significant as a series of major political developments occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s.²⁷⁸ Student activists—in concert with Taiwanese

²⁷⁴ Ibid 170

²⁷⁵ Wang, Joan S. H. “In the Name of Legitimacy: Taiwan and Overseas Chinese During the Cold War Era.” *China review* (Hong Kong, China : 1991) 11, no. 2 (2011): 65–90. 71

²⁷⁶ Kerr was a US diplomat stationed in Taiwan who witnessed retrocession and 228, then later published a book on the corruption and violence unleashed by the Nationalists upon Taiwan. His book along with others of its kind were banned during Martial Law.

²⁷⁷ Cheng 177

²⁷⁸ Ibid 180. “...the Presbyterian Church’s Human Rights Declaration advocating Taiwanese independence (1977), the United States’ severing of diplomatic ties with Taiwan and establishment of relations with the People’s Republic of China (1979), the Kaohsiung Incident

Churches and associations—purchased an ad in the *New York Times* for advocating for Taiwanese independence. The Formosa Incident involved a group of activists openly and defiantly called for democracy on Human Rights Day on December 10, 1979 in the city of Kaohsiung. Many of the activists were tried and jailed. The diasporic Taiwanese activists sustained international media attention on these trials by writing letters to prominent publications, sending money secretly to families of the imprisoned, as well as organizing a national speaking tour for “Linda Gail Arrigo (艾琳達), the American wife of Taiwanese dissident Shih Ming-teh (施明德). Arrigo had just been deported from Taiwan for her own involvement in the Kaohsiung Incident.”²⁷⁹ The pursuit of such highly visible transnational political activism came at a heavy personal cost.²⁸⁰

There were two infamous cases of Taiwanese-Americans killed for their Taiwanese independence activism: Dr. Chen Wen-cheng in 1981, and Liu Yi-Liang in 1984. Dr. Chen was an assistant professor of mathematics at Carnegie Mellon University. He had financially supported *Formosa Magazine*, an anti-KMT pro-democracy publication. On a trip visiting Taiwan, Dr. Chen was detained for questioning by the Taiwan Garrison Command, the secret police apparatus. The following morning, his corpse was found lying open on the campus of National Taiwan University. Liu was known for having written an unauthorized biography of Chiang Ching-Kuo, son of Chiang Kai-Shek, and president of the ROC from 1978-1988. He was

(1979), the Lin family murders (1980), and the death of Carnegie Mellon professor Chen Wen-cheng (陳文成) under suspicious circumstances on a return visit to Taiwan (1981).”

²⁷⁹ Ibid 181

²⁸⁰ Ibid 166 “In contrast to later periods of Taiwanese immigrant experience, many who emigrated during this time period were effectively forbidden from returning to Taiwan via the KMT’s blacklist. Those who did return risked arrest and even, in a few cases, murder at the hands of government operatives. Possible consequences for those who stayed in the United States included harassment of relatives remaining in Taiwan, emotional trauma, indefinite separation from loved ones, and, for some, a prolonged period of statelessness.”

murdered in front of his house in Daly City, California. His murderers were members of the Bamboo Union, a gang with a history of affiliation to the Nationalist party.²⁸¹

First Visit in 20 Years

Kan returned to Taiwan for the first time in 1962. He traveled with a group of former Class BC war criminals living in Japan, who in 1958 formed a political organization called the Taiwanese War Criminal Association to negotiate with the Japanese government regarding the issue of wartime reparations.²⁸² Their uniform and hat was purposely designed using a khaki color akin to military uniforms. Their association flag was also deliberately designed to mimic the blue sky and white clouds of the ROC flag. They sometimes even marched to the Diet, to demand the Japanese government for reparations. As the association became active, the Nationalist government invited them to visit Taiwan. It was due to this direct invitation that Kan was able to return to his native land after two decades, as a formal representative of the association. At the time the Nationalists were active in Japan. It intended to cultivate and expand influences favorable to it. Thus it kept courting the Taiwanese diaspora residing in Japan through its embassy in Japan. Post-WWII, ROC ruled Taiwan and Japan maintained a period of time without any formal diplomatic ties. Until 1952, on the day when the San Francisco Peace Treaty came into effect, Japan and the ROC also signed the Treaty of Peace Between the Republic of China and Japan and resumed diplomatic ties. It was only then, that the Taiwanese residing in Japan were able to apply for passports from the ROC embassy in Tokyo, and be able to freely travel back and forth between the two.

²⁸¹ Wang (2013) 100

²⁸² Chinese Name: 台籍戰犯同志會. Japanese Name: 台湾出身戦犯同志会.

As former Japanese soldiers, they feared that their background made them potential targets for arrest, and so for many years they dared not return to Taiwan. His elder brother had sent letters, warning him to not return to Taiwan. When the association was founded, it was made up of around thirty former Class BC War Criminals residing in Japan. At the same time, former war criminals residing in Taiwan started a “Taiwanese Youth Association” (台籍青年同志會), and was amplifying the activities held by its Japan counterpart. Kan speculated that it was out of some kind of political calculation that motivated the Nationalist government to contact such an organization. This trip to Taiwan came at the formal invitation by the Nationalist Government, and their invitation was why Kan was at ease to go on this trip back home. Even though the trip was paid for by the Nationalist Government, only ten people signed up.

The group departed from Yokohama aboard a specially arranged Landing Ship Tank (LST) to arrive at Keelung. It had been 20 years since 1942, when he departed Taiwan from Kaohsiung for the war. The families of those visiting gathered by the port, to welcome their sons who finally made the long-awaited return. Most of the other people on the trip were like Kan, their first time back in Taiwan since the war. The dock was full of families hugging and crying. Kan was received by his mother, elder brother, two younger brothers, and a younger sister. Meeting his own flesh and blood twenty years later, they all cried, unable to suppress themselves. As his eldest brother died in a mine accident before the war, and his father died due to illness at the end of the war, only his youngest brother was unable to come. Upon meeting, his elder brother grabbed his left hand for inspection, after looking carefully, he said to their mother, “Ah! A-bú, it’s definitely A-tsuí!²⁸³” When Kan was around seven or eight years old helping out with weeding, he was accidentally cut by a sickle, and almost lost his index finger. His elder

²⁸³ A-bú is Taiwanese Hokkien for mother. A-tsuí is the nickname his family calls him.

brother used this scar to verify his identity. His elderly mother at this moment could not hold back her tears, hugging him tightly, and told him, “Before dying, your father was still worried about you, he kept saying you will return safely, the heavens have protected you!” He held her hand tightly, and cried as well.

The Nationalist government did not allocate much time for family reunion. They were soon whisked away to board trains and buses, for an island wide tour visiting major cities. They all wore the association uniforms, and received passionate welcomes by the waishengren officials, who spoke in Mandarin, a language they did not understand. The purpose of the tour was to display to them the economic prosperity of Taiwan. Yet, in their eyes, the facial expressions of the benshengren were full of sadness. Kan felt that Taiwan had become even less advanced than when it was under Japanese rule. He could only use a bit of the remaining time at the end of the trip to return to his native Tucheng for a visit. The straw roof house from his childhood was no longer there. In the small hill behind the pond filled with Crucian Carp and Grass Carp from his childhood, is now where the tomb of his father is located. His siblings had all started their own families, living in the Tucheng and Banqiao area. His mother stayed in Tucheng with his elder brother. He also finally met his nephews and nieces for the first time.

The result of the trip was mixed. This trip made him feel despondent about Taiwan. Based on this visit, he assessed that it would be best not to return, especially since almost all the jobs were occupied by waishengren, who displayed arrogance. It was entirely intolerable. On top of which, the economy was developing at a slow pace. For their association—an organization with such limited power, there was not much help they could gain from Taiwan. Other than waiting for a more opportune moment, they had no other choice. However, this trip did entail huge personal significance. Other than being able to visit Taiwan, his biggest joy came from

reuniting with family. The biggest gain of all, was that his passport had been given a 人 mark.²⁸⁴ This special passport was usually given to very rich huaqiao, or to foreigners who have made tremendous contributions to Taiwan. Those who possess this special passport were able to freely enter and exit the borders. It meant that from then on, he could freely at any time return to Taiwan to visit his family.

Pleading With Chiang Kai-Shek

In October of 1971, the association sent representatives to visit president Chiang Kai-Shek. It started out with a desire to see if the ROC government could, on their behalf, negotiate with the Japanese government regarding the issue of compensations for their wartime labor. The association sent a letter to Chiang Kai-Shek. To their surprise, the KMT headquarters immediately responded with an invitation, stating that, “The president will gladly receive you, please send three representatives.” It was decided that President K, Vice President L, and Kan—who was serving as the Director at the time—would be the representatives.²⁸⁵ They knew ahead of time that talking to Chiang was not an ordinary event, and something most people would have avoided given the context of Martial Law. The invitation was to meet at Zhongshan Hall (中山樓) in Yangmingshan for tea.²⁸⁶ Before departing for Taipei, Kan clipped some of his hair and fingernails, put them in an envelope, and handed it to his elder brother. His hair and

²⁸⁴ The Chinese character for human.

²⁸⁵ Kan wished to not list their real names, and thus used pseudonyms.

²⁸⁶ Yangminshan, a mountain and also site of a national park, is located within Taipei. Yangminshan was formerly known as Caoshan (grass mountain). It was renamed by Chiang Kai-Shek himself, a reference to Wang Yang-ming, a Confucian scholar from 16th Century China. This was part of an island-wide renaming initiative to Sinicize Taiwan.

fingernails were safeguarded as a substitution for his body, in case he died and his corpse was not available for burial. He suddenly recalled that he did the exact same thing before he was deployed for the war. The image of his four children back in Tokyo flashed across his mind, but it was too late to back out.

When they arrived at Zhongshan Hall, it was a Chinese style palace. Zhongshan referred to the founding father of the ROC—Sun Wen or Sun Yat-Sen. This site was used to hold important national meetings, or to host state level guests. In other words, they were given a state level reception. Although he was much older than they had imagined, the man dressed in a gray Zhongshan suit was definitely Chiang Kai-Shek. It was after a while he opened his mouth, using a very calm voice, “It is my pleasure to see you today, to know that there are Taiwanese born passionate youths such as yourselves in Japan. I also am reminded of my own time in Japan. If you have anything you would like to say, when we have tea later, please do not hold anything back.” Chiang spoke Mandarin in a thick Ningbo accent. An interpreter was on site to interpret his speech into Taiwanese Hokkien for them. Chiang led them to a luxurious looking dining hall. They were referred to as “passionate youths,” for to the then 85-years-old Chiang Kai-Shek, they were still very young.

In their letter, they questioned why he has yet to attack the mainland. They even suggested that if one day the attack takes place, the potential of them organizing from Japan a group of volunteers to go to the frontlines. In 1971, the fiction of ROC—in other words, Taiwan— as representing the entirety of China had collapsed. The People’s Republic of China had formally entered the United Nations, and Taiwan was forced to leave the UN. The following year, Japan formally resumed ties with China, and simultaneously ceased diplomatic relations with Taiwan. In this change of circumstances, re-taking the mainland dissolved into a fantasy.

Within this context, suddenly a Japan based Taiwanese organization, sending such a message, even recommending Chiang Kai-Shek to take offensive measures, and from a group of veterans no less, perhaps this had provoked some interest in the old dictator. This was Kan's guess. Kan was not entirely wrong. In fact, since the KMT's relocation to Taiwan, it had been actively recruiting and consolidating the Chinese diaspora to its cause. A wide set of institutions (overseas language and educational institutes) operated by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission (OCAC), rituals (Double Ten National Day, Taiwan Restoration Day, Birthday of CKS, all occurring in October), and other tools were created in order to ingratiate the Chinese diaspora to the ROC. This was necessary as the majority of the Chinese diaspora had no personal connection to Taiwan. Such strategies did produce a degree of outcome. October became a very popular month for the Chinese diaspora to visit Taiwan.²⁸⁷ Thus, the invitation of a group of former Taiwanese-Japanese Soldiers should be viewed as an extension of such charm offensives by the Nationalist government towards the diaspora.

People started to appear in the dining hall including Madame Soong Mei-Ling, Chiang Ching-Kuo, generals adorned in sparkling uniforms, and other important figures from the Nationalist party and other sectors of society. To his surprise, Kan was placed right in the middle between Chiang Kai-Shek and Soong Mei-Ling. He was sweating cold sweats. They pushed themselves to ask the question they came here to ask. If they simply leave there without saying a word, then this trip into the tiger's cave would have been in vain. Chiang Kai-Shek answered their questions one by one in detail. That was not at all what they expected. They thought he would simply read from a pre-written statement drafted by a subordinate, and superficially address their inquiries. His attitude was quite sincere, in an almost grandfatherly tone. First, they

²⁸⁷ Wang 2011. 72-73

reported on the reason why they formed the association, as the Japanese government refuses to pay compensations for their wartime services. They wanted to use the association as a way to negotiate, though it is regrettable that they have yet to make any progress. They also raised the question as to why the ROC in the aftermath of the war, was unwilling to accept the UN proposal to divide Japan, and to occupy Shikoku of Japan. In their thinking, had this proposal been realized, perhaps their problems would have been already resolved.

After listening to them, Chiang offered his view. He thought that had Japan become divided, it would have been the same as a death sentence to Japan: the Japanese will forever remain enslaved to the White men. From the position of being a fellow member of the Yellow race, it would be intolerable to accept such an arrangement. Although for a long time, Japan had cooperated with the imperialist White men, extracted China's wealth, and killed the Chinese people. But from a historical perspective, the Japanese are still an offspring of the Chinese. As the saying goes, even a vicious tiger will not eat its own child. He decided thus to forgive the actions of the Japanese, and hope for Japan to rise once again.

In response, they mentioned that in the Treaty of Peace Between the Republic of China and Japan, the ROC should not have forfeited the right to demand reparations from Japan, and that Chiang should begin negotiations for claims with the Japanese government immediately.²⁸⁸ This question was the primary motive as to why they sent the letter to Chiang. "After losing the war, the Japanese were in unprecedentedly difficult circumstances, to exploit this opportunity to

²⁸⁸ Orr. 35 "As for the Taiwanese, Japan signed a treaty with the Nationalist Chinese government in 1952 that left the issue to future discussion, but neither government was overly motivated to deal with it, and the situation was further complicated when Japan switched diplomatic recognition to the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the early 1970s. At that time, the PRC waived all claims, effectively leaving former colonials in the Republic of China without a state advocate."

kick them while they are down, this is not something in my nature. What kind of parents would end the life of children who are near the brink of death?” Chiang responded. The answer he had given was no different from his prior response, although this response was within their expectations, it was still very shocking to hear. The paternalistic metaphor that Chiang used is noteworthy. In his own conceptualization, Japan is a “child” of China. His speech implied that of a father speaking of his misbehaved child, where China is the father and Japan is the child.

Chiang proceeded to lecture them, “We must forgive the crimes of Japan, and also reversely praise their performance as well!” This was his famous “rewarding hatred with virtue” speech. Here we must contextualize this response within the long spanned eerily collaborative and amicable ROC-Japan relationship that developed after Japan’s surrender. The Second Sino-Japanese War had lasted for eight years, incurring tremendous damages across China. China—at this point still predominantly under ROC control—could have easily demanded retaliation. However, the Nationalist government was not in full control of the entire territory, with parts under Communist control. Given these conditions, Chiang decided to prioritize the task of taking back all territory under Communist control over seeking retaliation against Japan. He thus made his speech of “rewarding hatred with virtue,” and spoke against taking revenge upon the Japanese. This strategic act paid off, as the Imperial Japanese Army was genuinely taken by Chiang’s forgiveness, and aided Chiang in his efforts to prevail against the Communists.²⁸⁹ This cordial and cooperative relationship continued even after the KMT fled to Taiwan after losing the Chinese Civil War.²⁹⁰ However, this also meant that the ROC became

²⁸⁹ Kato, Kiyofumi. “The Decline of the Japanese Empire and the Transformation of the Regional Order in East Asia.” In *The Dismantling of Japan’s Empire in East Asia*, 29–43. Routledge, 2016. 24.

²⁹⁰ Ibid 25

synonymous with Taiwan to Japan, and the cordial relationship with Chiang came to overshadow and eclipse the harsh and totalitarian conditions that the Taiwanese were subjected to. The legacy and memory of Taiwan as a former Japanese colony was replaced by the image and reputation of Taiwan as the Free China in the Cold War framework.²⁹¹

Although they never held any great hopes on this trip, they had not anticipated such a response from Chiang Kai-Shek. Thinking back on it now at the present of writing this biography, Kan cries out at the injustice of it all: “Right! You sing better than you speak! You waishengren who fled from the mainland to Taiwan. You did not need to waste a single soldier or civilian to acquire all Japanese finances and properties. To you it was a bargain, but to us Taiwanese it was horrific. Not only were we oppressed by the Japanese, we now have to be trampled by the waishengren, we do not accept your patronizing.” Of course, at the time, Kan could not calmly make such a rhetorical response. He described it as “like listening to an oracle, you unwittingly start nodding your head.” Four years later, Chiang died at the age of 89.

This happened against the backdrop of major geopolitical shifts. After the start of the 1970s, the PRC had begun to rapidly gain in international recognition, reaching its peak in 1979 when the United States and the PRC resumed diplomatic ties. The ROC became diplomatically isolated. Some Taiwanese-Japanese wartime personnel deliberately sought to embarrass Chiang Kai-Shek by embracing the PRC. In an attempt to prevent a tide of Japan-residing diaspora from turning towards the PRC, the Nationalist government used everything they could. Kan noted that

²⁹¹ Ibid 25. “As the war ended, nothing changed more than the Japanese public’s evaluation of Chiang Kai-shek. Despite being a target of hate up until Japan’s defeat, Chiang Kai-shek was now exalted to such a degree that he was considered an outstanding leader after the war. This evaluation continued during his rule after fleeing with remnants of his KMT troops to Taiwan, when the Cold War began in earnest. Chiang became the ideological backbone of Japan’s political support of Taiwan as a member of the international liberal camp.”

since that meeting with Chiang Kai-Shek, every year the association received an invitation to attend the Double Ten Holiday celebration.²⁹² Kan did not attend every year, as he had everyday responsibilities to attend to. So he was only able to attend once or twice. Yet, every visit was met with warm reception, including tours across Taiwan, as well as receptions by local county governors and high officials. These trips should also be seen as an extension of the tactic already practiced by the Nationalist government toward the Chinese diaspora.²⁹³

Summary

The new colonial regime of the Nationalist government was both unforgiving and unsympathetic. It was unforgiving of the Taiwanese people of the crime of having fought for Japan, of having been Japanese subjects. Race is contextual. It was not an accident that at one point during 228, that the military intelligence had mistaken the Taiwanese wearing Japanese uniforms and carrying Japanese swords as Japanese soldiers that have secretly stayed behind, despite the repatriation of all Japanese military personnel and civilians in the immediate aftermath of the war. The Nationalists did not perceive Taiwanese as brethren, they were seen as having fought for the wrong side. It was unsympathetic, for it did not care about the wellbeing of the Taiwanese people. It looted and took every object and property it could claim as its own. It prohibited Japanese arrangements for the repatriation of Taiwanese soldiers and gunzoku stranded in China—especially Hainan. It maintained that it was its responsibility to oversee their

²⁹² Double Ten, or the 10th of October, commemorates the Wuchang Uprising of 1911 against the Qing dynasty. This is the official national day of the ROC, to this day.

²⁹³ Wang 2011. 78-79. “To encourage the appreciation of Chinese culture among younger generations overseas, the OCAC held summer camps and language training programs annually, as well as overseas Chinese art festivals and sports activities. These activities were held either on the island of Taiwan or, in many more cases, in overseas communities.”

repatriation, yet not only did it do nothing to help them return home, it also neglected to provide them with adequate supplies. Leaving the approximately 20,000 of them stranded on Hainan, to find their own way back home. Many of such attempts ended in shipwrecks.²⁹⁴ Though the Nationalist government nominally claimed the Taiwanese as Chinese in the aftermath of the war, every single action it undertook after the war contradicted such a claim. In spite of whatever feelings of brotherhood or belonging to the same race it claimed to feel, it held the Taiwanese in contempt for having fought for the Japanese, for being Japanized. It—in the form of Chiang Kai-Shek—could not at all care for, let alone sympathize with the destitute conditions of the Taiwanese-Japanese veterans, as evidenced in his casual disregard and dismissal of their plea in his meeting with Kan and other members of their association.

There were multiple instances throughout his narrative, when encountering a stranger in Japan, where he is told or asked why he does not simply go back to Taiwan. This question itself served two purposes: 1) implying that he does not belong here, and should return to his “real” place of belonging, and 2) assuming that returning to Taiwan during Martial Law was not only an equally viable alternative to living in postwar Japan, but also somehow desirable. The first could be easily attributable to racism. The second however, is more sinister. It is not merely ignorance, but a gross misunderstanding. The eerily amicable and collaborative relationship between Chiang Kai-Shek and Japan that developed in the immediate postwar continued well after the Nationalist government fled to Taiwan. The Cold War binary of Communism versus the Free World (Chinese Communists versus the Nationalists) also took over as the main framework through which to understand Taiwan. The legacies of its five decades of colonial rule were

²⁹⁴ Tang Xi-yong. “Tuoli kunjing: Zhan hou chuqi hainan dao zhi taiwan ren de fantai” (Escape from Tragedy: The Return of Taiwanese from Hainan Island in the Immediate Post War). *Taiwan shi yanjiu*. 2005. 167-208.

forgotten, and the struggles of the Taiwanese to maintain autonomy and self determination were overlooked. And thus, Japan forgot about its former colonial subjects, who were desperately struggling against the Nationalists who took over its role as a colonial regime.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁵ Kato 27

CONCLUSION

The General's Letter Declassified

In June of 1998, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs declassified diplomatic documents regarding Class BC War Criminals for the first time. One of the documents was a two-page letter on Navy issued stationary entitled “(○○○○Surname Possessed) ○○ General's Letter” with the name of the sender redacted.²⁹⁶ The contents included this statement:

1. Around every six months, the Naval authority and the prison warden of Manus Island of Australia would hint that we would soon be repatriated back to Japan. The goal was to prevent the Japanese from deteriorating in their mentality, and to also extract free labor from us. Recently they again were hinting that we will be repatriated by the first month of next year. The Manus Island residents are native ○○, and so the White laborers tend to be intolerable of the local climate. If it were not for the labor of the Japanese, they could not possibly have finished the construction of the local naval base.

When our Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in negotiations, this point must be given special attention. Be sure to demand the precise date of the repatriation of war criminals, or else the Australian Navy will most certainly delay indefinitely until the naval base has been completely constructed. May the Veterans Bureau forward this matter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs immediately.

2. In the past when we negotiated with Australia, it was often through personal letters to communicate, if possible, it would be better to go through the Veterans Bureau using formal communications. [...]

The letter could have only been written by General Imamura, as he was the only general on Manus Island at the time. The letter was addressed to the veteran bureau, as the text mentioned “please notify the Ministry of Foreign Affairs”, one can speculate the letter was subsequently transferred to the ministry of foreign affairs (MOFA). It was also stamped with the note “Asia

²⁹⁶ This letter is transcribed and translated directly from the biography. The biography only cited the letter partially. I have attempted to locate this letter document digitally. However, it requires one to be physically in Japan in order to access it. The relevant details of this document have been included, and can be corroborated.

Bureau Third Desk 27.9.25 (Showa Year 27 September 25th) and the “Asia Bureau First Desk 1952.9.26” date stamp. It included other officials of various desks, adding up to about five people’s signatures or stamps. From the stamped date, it was about a year and a half after T and Kan had been discharged from the army. In March of that year, the San Francisco Peace Treaty had come into effect. The treaty had stated, upon the restoration of Japan’s sovereignty, it bears the responsibility to continue to oversee war criminals who have yet completed their sentencing. In other words, Japan must extradite all war criminals still remaining overseas, and hold them at Sugamo Prison until they have fulfilled their sentencing.

The letter of General Imamura clearly expressed the atmosphere of the Manus Concentration Camp at the time. Upon learning that the San Francisco Treaty had come into effect, the mood of the war criminals was elated. Everyone hoped the day of repatriation would come soon. But the date of repatriation was delayed again and again, causing much restlessness within the camp. Yet the Australian authorities had again and again falsely signaled that the repatriation will come soon, as a tactic to elate the mood of the war criminals, so that it could continue to command the war criminals in accordance to their own will. Upon learning of this situation, General Imamura sought for the Australians to repatriate the war criminals immediately as promised. Through the letter, he requested the party responsible for negotiations—the Japanese MOFA—to address this. Also, a mystery that had been bothering Kan over the years was finally resolved when he saw this letter.

The Letter continues:

4. I have heard that the compensations for those who have yet to be discharged, have been distributed on a monthly basis to the families of the war criminals. Regarding this matter, I would like to express my gratitude to the Veteran Bureau. In addition, regarding the compensations for the families of Taiwan-born war criminals, I personally believe that you will be able to equally pay. In case the Ministry of Treasury and other authorities

use the reason of being foreigners to reject providing equal treatment, I hope you will uphold your duty and fight to provide equal treatment. As they were mobilized under the identity of Japanese, and to this date unable to be discharged and return home. According to the decision of the high court, it has been confirmed that Taiwan, Choseon born War Criminals, must not be treated differently from Japanese Naichi people. I think that this issue can be addressed through former Diet member Hayashisaki (seven empty spaces) to contact the government regarding this issue. [...]

In addition, if there are effects caused by exchange rates, and thus unable to directly send these sums to the families in Taiwan, I recommend that they be safeguarded by the veterans bureau. To wait until they are discharged and returned to the Naichi, and let the individual take the sum back home.

Regarding this point, please be sure to respond and report on the status of resolving the issue.

5. Regarding war criminals who unfortunately were executed or died while serving sentencing, I do not know whether their families are allocated any compensation. It is my consideration that they be given the same treatment as families of soldiers who died on the battlefield. In this issue, I hope for those from Japan and Taiwan, there should not be unequal treatment.

Regarding the handling of this matter, please respond to this letter on the matter.

General Imamura repeatedly stated that Taiwan born individuals must be given equal treatment as Naichi people. On the eve before T and Kan were repatriated, even though General Imamura had encouraged them, saying that the Japanese government will do everything in its power to take care of them. Yet at the time General Imamura already knew, they were already abandoned by the Japanese government. The purpose of this letter was to attempt to stop the Japanese government from doing any more harm to Taiwan and Korean war criminals.

The Melting of Misunderstanding

After reading General Imamura's letter, Kan was greatly moved. Regarding the issue of compensation, General Imamura did consider it from the point of view of former colonial subjects. To realize this belief, he even sought to remind his own government from Manus

Island. Thinking of this, Kan was so happy that he could not suppress the hot tears flowing across his face. Until these letters were declassified, he still resented General Imamura. Because at the time the general had promised that they would be entirely cared for by the Japanese government. This turned out to be a lie. When they arrived at the port in Kureshi, and then sent to a prison island, in that cold cell, his resentment and anger started to build up. He had considered General Imamura to be a hypocrite. As such, when all war criminals from Manus Island were later repatriated to Sugamo Prison, and were able to freely receive any visitors, Kan did not visit General Imamura. Imamura Hitoshi died in 1968.

This declassified letter resolved his misunderstanding with General Imamura. At the time General Imamura truly believed that the Japanese government would care for them properly, and as such had said those words in good faith. To Kan, the declassification of these diplomatic documents held huge significance. Had Kan not seen this letter, he could have left this world without ever truly knowing what General Imamura was feeling. At last, someone in a position of power had not abandoned their duty. Someone with authority within the Japanese government had some sense of decency and ethics. Kan devoted an entire chapter on this letter in the biography because General Imamura was one of the few Japanese superiors that treated the Taiwanese the same as he did the Japanese war criminals, was not racist, and always advocated equal treatment. So many times in his interaction with the Japanese state, after his repatriation, he was met with absolute indifference and lack of sympathy from government officials. Often faced with comments such as, “Why don’t you go back to Taiwan?” or “You are not Japanese, so you are not qualified for any compensation.” Thus the significance of this letter cannot be overstated, for it represented someone who was unwavering and sincere to the former colonial veterans. In fact, Imamura had not only used the royalties from his memoirs, but his paid lecture

as well to assist the bereaved families of soldiers who died on the battlefield. General Imamura had continued to care for his former subordinates well after Sugamo Prison.²⁹⁷

What Kan and other Taiwanese-Japanese veterans wanted to find out most, was which government entity, what kind of people came up with the “nationality clause” in order to nullify the responsibility of compensating former colonial subjects. They wanted to understand the truth of this history, but the related documents were not publicized. From the related new reports Kan learned that, a document called “Complications of handling war criminals after the treaty: regarding Taiwanese and Koreans”, was also planned to be released as well. However, its release was canceled. MOFA provided an explanation, that because these information were primarily booklets of names, out of the policy of not disclosing names, so as to have redacted various names, causing the documents to have lost their value. To Kan, this reasoning was ridiculous. Whether or not a set of documents has any value, could only be judged by the individuals reading them, and should not be determined by managerial officials on their own. Even if the documents only have titles left on them, they could still be clues that help the public understand historical truths. This was not a total declassification. The government officials still thought they have the right to decide what matters should or should not its own people know. To Kan, this arrogant mentality is no different than the attitude from the war. During the war, only public reports of benefit to the authorities were released. The historical truth about the legal nullification of their owed compensations will never see the light of day.

In addition, Kan could not understand why the signature that General Imamura left on the letter was blackened out. Everyone knew that there was only one general on Manus Island: General Imamura. In the letter, all he expressed was his honest intentions, and was absolutely not

²⁹⁷ Ushimura 219, 317.

as the officials claimed to be “causing disturbance to the individual”. Decades ago, the names of all the war criminals were already published by the former Veteran Bureau, and yet in the present using the reason of protection of privacy, redacted several names, seems somewhat meaningless. Not to mention that Imamura was a well-known war criminal. Such an act only further emphasized the mentality of those in charge. To Kan, the MOFA officials were robots that solely perform actions as told, in the logic of “redacting the names of war criminals,” they thoughtlessly redacted the honorable name of Imamura. To Kan, this kind of redacting was no different than how customs officials treated imported pornographic materials. At the time, magazines from America such as *Penthouse* or *Playboy*, where any nude photos revealing body hair would be blackened out by the custom officials. To Kan, the way MOFA conducted itself was a great insult to General Imamura. The MOFA officials of the past were unable to fulfill the wishes of the general, and the officials of today unhesitatingly crossed out the general's name. Kan was enraged that after the passage of half a century, to be once again subjected to such inexplicable humiliation, that these young bureaucrats responsible for handling these documents, perhaps do not even know who General Imamura is, and perhaps have not even read the contents of the letter closely.

The End of the Biography

The last time he visited Taiwan was in 1990, which coincided with his mother's passing. It was followed by a long gap. He decided to visit Taiwan again in December of 1997, as his siblings have grown older, and few of his wartime friends still remain alive. The ones still alive were either bedridden, or he would phone them, and they would respond coldly, “I have no energy to speak. Push harder on demands for compensation with the Japanese government”. He

felt disimpassioned to search for them. In the end, he did not meet any of them. He also found it difficult to communicate in Taiwanese Hokkien in Taiwan. Although Lee Teng-Hui had become president, Taiwanese Hokkien was still not widely spoken. Whether it was at the hotel or at government institutions, it was very difficult for him to communicate with young people, whom were only fluent in Mandarin. This really incensed him. He had to demand the hotel concierge to locate someone who can speak Taiwanese Hokkien to come to the front desk.

On November 10th 1999, around 2:00 pm, for the first time in his thirty years of driving, he got hit by another car, and suffered a light concussion. The person who hit him called for an ambulance, and he was sent to the nearest hospital. Although the concussion was not severe, he did keep visiting the hospital for a month until it was fully recovered. Yet, there was one matter that still concerned him, as the date of renewing his employment contract was coming soon. As he was an elderly individual, his employment contract was renewed once per year. On December 14th, he received his termination notice. The reason was “ineligible for renewal”. Without further inquiry he understood, for he was nearly 75 years old. He had no complaint. The day of parting from his career had come. Of course, he was no longer suitable for work at this age. Yet, he asks the reader, how is he to survive in Tokyo solely relying on the one million Yen per year of retirement benefits?

The last publicly available records of Kan Shigematsu that I could locate was a newspaper report from October 2008.²⁹⁸ Kan was visiting Taiwan Historica (台灣文獻館), an archive, based in Nantou, Taiwan. He made this visit especially so to thank Li Zhan-ping (李展平), for publishing a second volume of oral history interviews with Taiwanese POW guards. Both works by Lee have been used throughout this thesis as well. This article reported Kan as

²⁹⁸ 「簡茂松哭訴 台籍日兵淪戰俘：孤魂野鬼沒人管」，聯合報（地方版）彰化，10月7日，2008.

having said the following: “There are only fourteen fellow wartime comrades still alive in Japan, with the passage of time our numbers have dwindled. The ability to realize their demands with the Japanese government is now increasingly remote. As such I am glad that Taiwan Historica has made a preservation of the testament of this history.” To know that at the very least, their experiences will not be lost, and will remain a part of written history was a small comfort.

Race: Becoming, Unbecoming, and Interpellation

Throughout his narrative, there have been multiple points, depending upon the context, he was interpellated by others variously as Japanese, Taiwanese, or Chinese. Race is in and of itself never stable. In modern history, as peoples are constantly being absorbed into new nation-states, as boundaries are ever evolving, racial categories are constantly negotiated, incorporated, expanded, made permeable and fluid. Whether the racial category is expanded in order to allow a more inclusive and multicultural framework, or is being reduced in order to exclude groups of peoples that were formerly part of the category, race is being renegotiated for socio-political reasons of the day. Race is never stable. During war mobilization, the Japanese empire was more than willing and desirous to rapidly assimilate its colonies, and to instill Japanese-ness via the *kōminka* movement. As Takashi Fujitani phrased it, it does not matter whether wartime Japan was sincere about elevating its colonial subjects into the category of the Japanese. What matters is that its claims and discourse of equality produced its own palpable effect. It cannot both denounce racism, and not produce some policies of equality.²⁹⁹ As a result, not all, but some of the Taiwanese of that generation truly believed and felt they were indeed Japanese. Yet, policy wise, Taiwanese were made into Japanese because it was a necessity to

²⁹⁹ Fujitani 48

bind the colonial subjects closer to the metropole, to ensure undying loyalty and support. So perhaps it should not be a surprise that after the war, all colonial subjects were officially unmade as Japanese. But to the Taiwanese who truly and sincerely believed they became Japanese, many do not accept this one sided unmaking. For it was not trivial, it was real, it was sincere, it was an embodiment, it was becoming. Becoming is transformative. You cannot unbecome. Unbecoming is not possible for the individual. Unbecoming is possible for the nation-state, for after all, with the click of a pen, an entry into a database, and a re-shuffling of papers, a person can easily become or un-become a citizen. Indisputable evidence of the irreversible assimilation and transformation of Taiwanese into and as Japanese was when the Indonesian soldiers assigned to detain Nakamura Teruo in Morotai were instructed to learn the Japanese anthem, various Japanese army song, taking along a Japanese flag, and a photo of a geisha. Because in spite of all the official policies regarding nationalities, they knew that he would only respond to these very specific and particular cultural signifiers, for they knew he was of the generation that had been heavily assimilated.

Race is fluid. Race is context dependent. Just as when Kan was captured by the Bidayuh people in Southern Brunei, and the daughter of the village chief interpellated him as Chinese because he was able to communicate with her in Hokkien. They considered him to be akin to the Chinese merchants they come into daily contact with—and hence not Japanese. This interpellation had life-saving consequences. Just as when the Nationalist military intelligence, after the outbreak of 228, had falsely interpellated Taiwanese in Japanese uniforms to be nonexistent Japanese troops who had secretly remained behind. Racial interpellation is contextual, and based on how one is perceived by others. Racial interpellation is also unfixed, and subject to change. Just as when the Nationalist government realized that it cannot keep on

forever judging the Taiwanese for having “collaborated” with the Japanese, and had to impose an official amnesia of their experiences, in order to re-admit them into “Chinese-ness.”

Nation-State, Citizenship, and Labor

In many ways, imperial citizenship was a precursor to modern nation-state citizenship. That is to say, the modern nation-state is no less exploitative, arbitrary, and calculating in deciding who to grant the formal status of citizenship, who to exclude and cast outside of its holy gates. The citizen is demanded by the state to perform specific duties, such as paying taxes and military service. In turn, the citizen expects the state to reciprocate, to provide pensions, welfare, and to even advocate on behalf and protect the citizen when they are in crisis, such as when they are held hostage by another nation. This reciprocity is possibly best encapsulated by the idiom “No Taxation Without Representation,” coined by the 18th Century American Revolutionary against British colonial rule. However, as seen in this case study, the nation-state sometimes refuses to hold up its end of this social contract, even after the citizen(s) have provided incredible services at great personal expense. Taiwanese and Koreans alike were treated as second-class citizens, or even non-citizens. To be precise, the Japanese Empire held up its end of the contract for as long as it required to extract manpower from its colonial subjects. The second it surrendered to the Allied nations, the services of its colonial subjects were no longer needed, and it refused to continue honoring the terms of this contract. The services the nation-state is willing to provide to its second-class citizens, is hence contingent and conditional. It is not a contract signed between two equal parties. It is a contract signed between two unequal parties, with the nation-state holding absolute power to arbitrarily terminate the contract, and refuse to hold up its promises whenever it pleases.

In the 21st Century East Asia, from the debris of war arose neoliberal and highly advanced economies well integrated with the global market. This stunning transformation from war torn nation-states to highly advanced economies was accompanied by equally stunning demographic changes. Taiwan and South Korea in the recent decade have been alternatively occupying the position of the nation with the lowest birth rate on earth. East Asian nation-states increasingly face the consequences of a rapidly aging society, where the elderly population rises at a much faster pace than the youth population, creating a number of socioeconomic crises: increasing burden on national health care programs, less taxable population, and insufficient number of workers. The policy answer has been to import migrant laborers from Southeast Asia. East Asian nation-states have been more than happy to exploit Southeast Asians for their raw manual labor. However they are less than willing to accommodate their needs as people. Migrant laborers most often work in labor intensive jobs that are dangerous, dirty, and difficult.

In Taiwan, Southeast Asian migrant laborers are subjected to a different kind of labor system, where not only they are subject to a different and lower minimum wage standard, but are under constant surveillance from the state, job brokers, and their employers. They are not treated as people who have come to help prevent societal collapse, but rather as racialized foreigners who must be under constant suspicion, for they are not wanted as whole persons, but only as pieces of replaceable clogs in the production machine. They are not allowed to switch jobs, regardless of circumstances, even if their employer is abusive.³⁰⁰ They are not paid workplace hazard compensations when injured on the job.³⁰¹ There are few pathways to citizenship for

³⁰⁰ Hioe , Brian. “Migrant Workers Demonstrate on Sunday for Right to Change Employment .” *New Bloom* , January 17, 2022. <https://newbloommag.net/2022/01/17/migrant-worker-employment-change/> .

³⁰¹ Hioe, Brian. “Industrial Accident in Miaoli Provokes Outrage.” *New Bloom* , March 6, 2022. <https://newbloommag.net/2022/03/06/miaoli-accident-controversy/> .

migrant laborers other than marriage with a Taiwanese person. Most often it is Southeast Asian women marrying Taiwanese men. Even then, they must formally renounce their nationality in order to gain Taiwanese citizenship. This is especially unfair as Taiwanese nationals are allowed to be dual citizens. Migrant laborers who are unable to secure citizenship—the majority—have to navigate the labyrinth of racist immigration laws from the nation-state, greedy brokers who charge them numerous exorbitant fees, and exploitative employers who not only wield control at the workplace but as well as their living space—as many live in dormitories owned by the factory or with their employers as they provide care to elderly patients.³⁰² Though they may not be citizens as far as the nation-state is concerned, they most certainly provide indispensable work, work in which no citizens of its own are willing to perform, without whom many factories would come to a halt, and many families would be unable to provide around the clock home and medical care to their elderly family members. Though they may not be performing the role of computer engineers at TSMC (Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company) churning out world renown and globally demanded semiconductor chips, the value of their labor is no less important to the basic function and maintenance of the socioeconomic fabric of Taiwan. Yet, the nation-state treats them with such hostility, racism, and xenophobia as though their very presence within the borders could disrupt or threaten a specific notion of Taiwan as predominantly Han-Taiwanese—a notion that is threatened by the demographic crisis.

³⁰² Sang, Hyun Tam, and Wen-Chin Cheng . “Taiwan’s Migrant Workers Versus Labour Brokerage System”. *Taiwan Insight*. January 19, 2022.
<https://taiwaninsight.org/2022/01/19/taiwans-migrant-workers-versus-labour-brokerage-system/>

Narratives of Victimhood and Decolonization

To further complicate the picture, the case study of Kan Shigematsu forces us to visit a common historical narrative when told by Han Taiwanese about the history of Taiwan. Just as Kan was reluctant to discuss the violence that Taiwanese POW guards practiced upon Allied POWs, Han Taiwanese often emphasize the suffering a collective “we” have endured under the regimes of the Japanese, and the Nationalists. That “we” have been victims of outside regimes. There are even ongoing processes, led primarily by civil society organizations, of bringing about transitional justice for the White Terror victims and their surviving families.³⁰³ Yet, only seeking to decolonize the most recent colonial regime is insufficient. To truly de-colonize Taiwan, we must go back to the first harm produced in the 1600s when the Dutch and the Han settlers came to Taiwan as “co-colonizers”, termed by Tonio Andrade.³⁰⁴ The common historical narrative produced by Han Taiwanese that “we” have only been victims is not only inaccurate but also insidious. This narrative whitewashes and erases the tremendous pain and violence that “we” brought to the Indigenous Taiwanese as settler-colonists. Succeeding and massive flows of Han settler colonists displaced the Indigenous Taiwanese from their lands, their way of living, and from their own languages and traditional cultural practices. Yet this historical violence which continues to this present day is not widely acknowledged. Racism ranging from slurs to systemic policies continue to harm Indigenous Taiwanese peoples from obtaining autonomy and the pursuit of happiness. Indigenous Taiwanese have a shorter life expectancy, lower educational levels, lower family income, higher rates of single-parent families and unemployment than the

³⁰³ Zhou Wan-yao. *Zhaunxing zhengyi zhi lu: Daoyu de guoqu yu weilai*. (The Road to Transitional Justice: The Past and Future of the Island). Taipei City. Yushan, 2022.

³⁰⁴ Andrade, Tonio. *How Taiwan Became Chinese : Dutch, Spanish, and Han Colonization in the Seventeenth Century*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

Han Taiwanese.³⁰⁵ They are unable to practice their cultural heritage such as hunting, or exercise autonomy over their traditional territory.³⁰⁶ If we are going to tell stories of victimhood, we must not be selective and choose to tell some, but not others. It is of course inconvenient, uncomfortable, and even disruptive to the narrative of Han Taiwanese as solely victims of colonialism, and rarely as agents and perpetrators of colonialism. Yet, if we do not admit to and fully confront this historical truth, we can never truly and fully de-colonize, and the cycle of colonial violence will only continue unabated, as it does today in the miasma of bureaucratic regulations that restrict, constrain and disempower Indigenous Taiwanese peoples from gaining autonomy. Contradictions are not easy. They are meant to be difficult. They do not present easy, quick, and guilt free solutions. They require difficult, time and labor-intensive costs to resolve. History is full of contradictions.

Who Does the Nation Choose to Remember?

The historical grievances of Taiwanese-Japanese veterans is not one that has been fully resolved or reconciled in neither Taiwan nor Japan. Neither government has been willing to fully rectify the harms done to them, or fully recognize the sacrifices that these young men were forced to bear. Perhaps nothing best exemplifies this status of double limbo than the account captured in *From A'olan to New Guinea*, a work of oral history and ethnography by Futuru (Cai

³⁰⁵ Wang, Jiun-Hao, and Szu-Yung Wang. "Indigenous Social Policy and Social Inclusion in Taiwan." *Sustainability (Basel, Switzerland)* 11, no. 12 (2019): 3458-.

³⁰⁶ Hioe, Brian. "Ruling on Indigenous Hunting Laws Disappoints Advocates for Change." *New Bloom*, May 8, 2021. <https://newbloommag.net/2021/05/08/tama-talum-hunting-ruling/>. Hioe, Brian. "Indigenous Protest Over Solar Farm in Early May Reflects Recurring Issues." *New Bloom*, May 17, 2021. <https://newbloommag.net/2021/05/17/solar-farm-indigenous-protest/>

Zhengliang), a Han Taiwanese anthropologist and documentary maker who had adopted an Amis name as well as an adoptive Amis family.³⁰⁷

This work was an accompanying piece to a documentary film that followed his trip to Papua New Guinea in 2009. His adoptive grandfather Ro'eng was part of the fifth deployment of Taksagao giyūtai, and was sent to fight in Papua New Guinea. During this trip, Futuru visited a stele of honorable dead (J: eireihi, C: yinglingbei) constructed by the Japanese in Boy's Town, located in Wewak District of East Sepik Province in Papua New Guinea. Atop the stone memorial were weapons and helmets left by the Japanese military. To his astonishment, not a single name carved into this memorial belonged to any Takasago giyūtai members. Futuru satirically remarked that if the Japanese soldiers who died here were yingling (the honorable dead), then what does that make of the Taksagao giyūtai? Are they then yuanhun (wronged souls)?³⁰⁸

On top of which, two months prior to his travel to Papua New Guinea, Taiwan's Ministry of Defense had sent its own staff to the island of Rabaul, thousands of miles away from Taiwan. Their mission was to recover the remains and souls of the Nationalist soldiers who were captured as POWs in China and transported to Rabaul, and subsequently died there. Upon recovery, the remains and souls were interred in the Martyr Shrine in Taiwan, a country they had never been to. And thus, Futuru asks reflexively to himself and to the reader, then what about the souls of

³⁰⁷ Futuru (Cai Zhengliang) *Cong Dulan dao Xinji neiya (From A'tolan to New Guinea)* (Taipei: Yushanshe, 2011).

³⁰⁸ Wronged souls, vengeful souls, or souls with grievances. It refers to those who died with grievances, who died unjustly. It usually means that these souls, despite having died and become ghosts, still have matters in the realm of the living that remain unresolved—to have an unjust cause or action in need of being undone so they may be pacified. They continue to haunt the realm of the living until their cause has been resolved.

the thousands of Taiwanese indigenous men who died here fighting the war? Forgotten in the memorial set up by the Japanese in Papua New Guinea, and also forgotten by the ROC government in its recovery of remains and souls.³⁰⁹

Although the Yasukuni Shrine does exist, it is a configuration which reinforces nationalist narratives of the war. The enshrinement of 20,000 Taiwanese names at the Yasukuni is only a superficial and hollow gesture, without meaningful state actions to address the debts owed to Taiwanese-Japanese veterans and to recognize their sacrifices.³¹⁰ On the other hand, to this day despite the two decades since the end of Martial Law, in Taiwan there is still “no national-level memorial to commemorate those who died during the war, and, equally important, to remember those of the bereaved families who survived the war.”³¹¹

³⁰⁹ Cai Zhengliang 115, 126-127.

³¹⁰ Lan (2013) 835

³¹¹ Ibid 836

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: FIGURE

本書傳主簡茂松青年（圖①）、中年（圖②）與目前（圖③，新潮社提供）的照片。

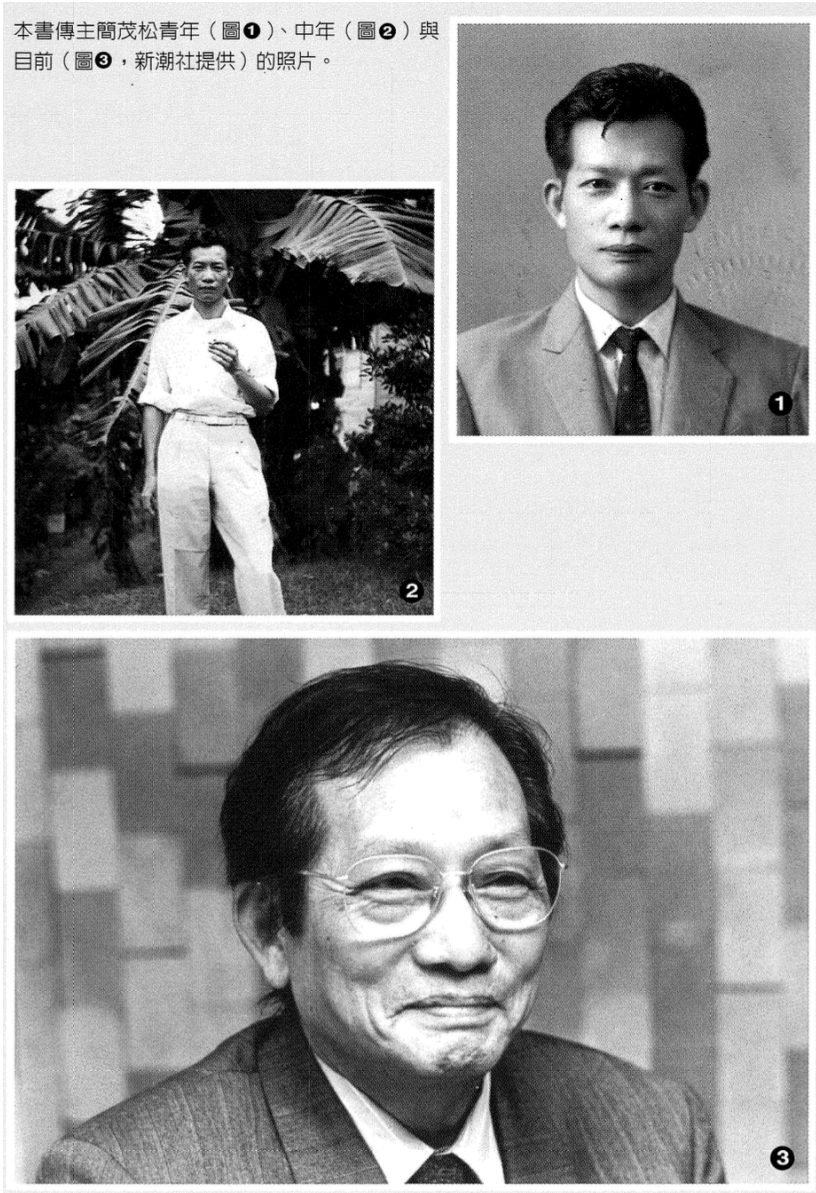


Figure 1: Photos of Kan Shigematsu provided by Shinchosha; 1) Youth, 2) Middle-age, and 3) At the time of the publishing of the biography.³¹²

³¹² Hamazaki Koichi (Binqi Xuanyi), *Wo A!: Yige Taiwan ren Riben bing Jian Maosong de rensheng (I!: Life of a Taiwanese Japanese Soldier Jian Maosong)*, trans. Qiu Zhenrui (Taipei: Yuanshen, 2001). i

APPENDIX B: MAPS



Map1: Regional Overview³¹³

³¹³ Fitzpatrick, Georgina, Timothy L. H. McCormack, and Narrelle. Morris. *Australia's War Crimes Trials 1945-51*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill Nijhoff., 2016. xxxix.



Map 2: Malaya and Western Netherland East Indies³¹⁴

³¹⁴ Ibid xli



Map 3: Location of Australian War Crime Trials³¹⁵

³¹⁵ Ibid xxxviii

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