

## Okaerinasai: the Postcolonial discontents of Nihongo-sedai and Wanseis

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War history has long been a contested subject for postwar Japan. History textbooks are rebuked by its Asian neighbors for not delving deeper into Japan's role as a perpetrator in Asia. At the same time, they have been criticized for the opposite reason, for promoting an image of self-deprecation as a defeated nation. As Japan struggles to regain its footing in the post-war international order, little dialogue could be spared between Japan and Taiwan regarding their colonial relationship. Although former Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui and his favorable view of Japanese colonialism enjoy media coverage in Taiwan as well as in Japan, colonized ordinary people's memories of their Japanization experience are met with limited response from their Japanese counterparts. Without documentation or acknowledgment, the Japanized generation's invocations of the past are mere communications with a living ghost, that is, their story-telling serves no other ends than the mere action of telling it.

As Taiwan attempts to reconnect with its colonial history through new documentaries and films, in recent years Japan has also seen a rise in interest in reconnecting with this shared past. I will examine recent cinematic texts produced by two young female Japanese producers, Sakai Atsuko 酒井充子 and Tanaka Mika 田中実加, whose projects, I contend, actively invite the missing dialogue from the Japanese part, albeit from private sectors. Sakai's documentaries, *Taiwan Jinsei* (2008) and *Taiwan Identity* (2013), aim to expose to the Japanese audience how the generation who received Japanese education as colonial subjects in their formative years, known also as "Japanese-speaking generation (*nihongo sedai*, 日本語世代)," carried on with their lives after Japan's withdrawal from and KMT China's arrival on the island. Sakai defines her subjects as "the people who were once Japanese," and in the films they still demonstrate a strong sense of belonging to the "Japan" in their memory.

Tanaka's production, on the other hand, is a discourse progressing in the exact opposite direction. Her *Wansei Back Home* (*wansheng huei jia* 「灣生回家」 for the Taiwanese audience, or *wansei kaika* <灣生回家> for the Japanese) uncovers the neglected history of *wanseis* 灣生, Japanese people born in Taiwan between the years 1895 and 1946 but forced to return to Japan by Taiwan's new Chinese Nationalist ruler when Japan lost the war. On the surface, the subjects in her documentary were beneficiaries of a colonial mechanism while it lasted. However, when they returned home to a war-torn Japan where people distrusted the returnees as outsiders, they soon realized they would identify themselves more as "Taiwanese" than anybody else. The social constructions of the *nihongosedai* and *wanseis* are peculiar to colonial Taiwan. They emerge from the same backdrop of history and space, but interestingly their identity and

identification move in opposite directions like two parallel lines. While wartime relationships between the two nations seem to be garnering more attention from Japan's younger generation, does this signify a more promising response from Japan to begin a dialogue on the two nations' tumultuous past? It seems that before official reconnection occurs, writing from the margins, as Sakai and Tanaka's productions manifest, is an effective starting point.

### *Taiwan Jinsei* (2008) and *Taiwan Identity* (2013)

Aimed to enlighten the modern Japanese on "those who were once Japanese," *Taiwan Jinsei*, (literally meaning "Life in Taiwan"), Sakai Atsuko's 2008 presentation features the lives of five Japanized Taiwanese from varying social backgrounds and ethnicities: a tea farm worker who learned her Japanese while working in a Japanese-owned coffee farm; a doctor's wife who graduated from an elite school and boasts of proficiency in tea ceremony and Japanese flower arrangement; an aboriginal legislator who fought as a Japanese soldier; a former worker at the Japanese navy who fondly remembers his Japanese teacher and annually visits his grave; and a history museum volunteer who also fought as a Japanese soldier and is also a victim of the atrocious 228 Incident.<sup>1</sup> Sakai's documentary attempts to map out the nostalgic discourses in Taiwan, and her presentation reveals that although the subjects share fluency in the Japanese language and a sense of colonial nostalgia, "Japan" is derived from various fibers of remembrance.

In the documentary, Chen Ching-hsiang 陳清香 (1926-), for instance, attends her elementary school class reunion in a private box in a restaurant. The large group of men and women are all in their 80s, but the atmosphere is buoyant as they converse with each other loudly in Taiwanese and Japanese. Then the crowd sang their old Japanese school anthem in unison, the heaving of their chests suggesting their enthusiasm. Chen later tells the camera that she is more Japanese than the Japanese, and that if she were a man, she would have volunteered herself for the Kamikaze during the war. This may sound unsettling even for Japan today. However, as William Cunningham Bissell notes, nostalgia is a longing for something that is lost, and could not be repeated.<sup>2</sup> Her strong stance is not based on a desire for the return of the colony but on the knowledge those days are firmly grounded in the past. In fact, later in the documentary, she solicits Japan's support for Taiwanese independence. On the other hand, Hsiao Ching-wen's 蕭錦文 memory of his loyalty foregrounds his discontent and disillusion against "Japan." Hsiao fought in Burma as a Japanese soldier. He indignantly protests to his interviewer: "we have been deserted by Japan. Of course, different blood ran in our veins from the Japanese, but our minds are alike when it comes to protecting the nation!" Unlike Chen's fantastical wish of dying for the Empire, Hsiao's statement reads more like an accusation against colonial discrimination, and a demand to Japan to recognize the sacrifices he and other Taiwanese

soldiers made. The contradictory juxtaposition of Chen's and Hsiao's testimonies renders a strong sense of futility to their lives as former Japanese. Although they have sworn allegiance to the Japanese Empire at certain points of their lives, it is now rendered useless, or even inappropriate.

In her second documentary, *Taiwan Identity*, Sakai shifts focus onto Taiwan's colonial nostalgia across nations and regions, their locations spanning from the high mountains of Taiwan's Mount Ali across the waters to Yokohama, Japan, and Jakarta, Indonesia. Though continuing the vein of multiplicity in nostalgic discourse and the "Japanese-language generation's" sense of "having been deserted," her questions depart from the indulgence in nostalgic feelings for the past to their struggles to survive under a new government, the KMT regime, that saw them as enemies. Compared with subjects in *Taiwan Jinsei*, their nostalgic discourse is further complicated by a truly dark time of torment as they suffered prosecution or the Pacific War first-hand. Each subject also has at least double identities, proven by an array of names given to them at different historical junctures. Their postwar struggle to survive in a transnational context deepens an overwhelming sense of being "left behind" by the Japanese Empire.

Director Sakai says that she, as a woman, felt most connected with, among other interviewees, Kao Chu-hua 高菊花 (1932-2016) known as Yata Kikuko 矢多喜久子, a Tsao tribeswoman who has demonstrated resilience against her misfortunes. Neither Taiwanese nor Japanese audience may be familiar with her, but she is a prominent figure to historians documenting Taiwan's White Terror period of suppression. Shortly after the end of WWII, her famous father, Kao I-sheng 高一生, a highly educated aboriginal man was imprisoned for two years before being murdered by KMT government officials. Since her father's captivity she had been constantly coerced by secret agents to do their biddings and placed under government surveillance for more than two decades. She told Sakai that before the end of the war, she had always believed herself to be Japanese, living the life of a Japanese. Her family wore *wafuku* (Japanese clothes), ate *miso* soup, and mingled with neighbors who were also believed to be Japanese. After the war, they returned to the traditional way of life in the Tsao tribe, and she found herself unable to eat with her hands like her people. Her nostalgia for the past is evident, but it is not clear whether it is geared towards its Japaneseness or life with her Japanized father. In the documentary, at her childhood home, now reformed into a tourist information center, she tells Sakai about her childhood, when her father played the piano for the children. She quickly turns her back and leaves the scene when Sakai asks about her father's arrest.

Kao's life before and after the end of WWII is a drastic contrast. Her description of life under the wings of her father offers a glimpse of her Japanese era through rosy, idyllic lenses. The somberness conveyed through her words, however, deepens the discrepancy between her life as Kikuko and life as Chu-hua. In one scene, Kao displays her father's numerous letters sent home during his time in imprisonment. Sakai notices a repeated emergence of a word, Usanao, written in katakana alphabet. Kao explains that it is a code to evade police scrutiny,

and means that he wished for his family to visit him. Until he was executed for treason, his wish of seeing his family again was never granted. As Chu-hua, she was a fatherless young woman who had to learn quickly to conceal her Japaneseness for protection.

Cheng Mao-li 鄭茂李 (1927-), also known as Tejima Yoshinori 手島義矩 or Awai Teyakiana in his tribe, is Kao's uncle and a soft spoken man nearly in his 90s. In the documentary, he tells Sakai that he did not despise the war, much to her surprise. Like many other young men of his time, he felt that being a soldier was an honorable symbol of masculinity.<sup>3</sup> At that time he considered himself a "complete Japanese" (*kanzenma nihonjin*, 完全な日本人), and made plans to study in Japan proper after the war. When Japan lost the war, he cried when he realized that his hopes were dashed. "I wasn't ... I couldn't become a Japanese," he said, followed by a quiet laugh. "We were all working for Japan," he quietly chuckles again, but stops himself abruptly as if feeling awkward, and runs a hand through his hair. Suddenly his eyes swell with tears, his voice cracks: "when Japan lost the war, we also lost. If Japan hadn't lost, we would still be working for Japan, and we would be taken care of." At this point Sakai must have started weeping off camera, because the old man started comforting his interlocutor, "Don't cry, don't cry. This is our fate. There's nothing we can do." As he says this, his niece Kao Chu-hua sits next to him in complete silence.

Cheng's nostalgic discourse seems to depart from Chen Ching-hsiang's and Hsiao Ching-wen's in *Taiwan Jinsei* and somehow falls in a category somewhere in between. His embarrassment at his "inappropriate" strife to become Japanese, and his connection of the capitulation of the Empire to the demise of the future of his family gently remind Sakai and her Japanese viewers of how he has been "left behind" by Japan. After the war, the souls of about 280,000 deceased Taiwanese soldiers were enshrined at the Yasukuni Shrine, yet ironically their family and other Taiwanese soldiers are rejected compensation because they were not truly considered Japanese citizens. As revealed by his light chuckling, Cheng's nostalgia is convoluted by the recognition of his naïveté and memories of his family's subsequent suffering under the new Chinese ruler. The Empire that had indoctrinated him about the glory of war not only refused to reward him for his loyalty, but in a sense had left him to fend himself against its enemy. This scene where he comforts his interviewer is significant in that Sakai, a post-war Japanese woman who set out to study and document her nation's former colonial subjects, becomes so enraptured by their colonial discourse that her emotions could not be contained within the boundary between an observer and her subject. Cheng's reversed role as a consoler to an emotional Sakai to curb her sadness is also telling in how the nostalgia discourse traverses across generations and boundaries of a former colonized and (a representation of) a former colonizer. His memories invoked in Sakai not only empathy for his fate, but perhaps something related to her reflection as a representative (to the elders she interviews) of a lost empire and her effort to understand it.

Sakai's next subject takes the Taiwanese nostalgic discourse across the South Seas. The

life of Miyahara Eiji 宮原永治 (1922–2013) is a more fortunate, yet equally fraught with twists, version of Taiwanese Japanese soldiers. Born in Taiwan as Lee Po-ching 李柏青, he would later use the name Miyahara in compliance with colonial Japan's name reformation policy. He was conscripted as a volunteer soldier, and was dispatched to the Philippines, Burma, and eventually Indonesia, where he continued to fight as a Japanese, even four years after Japan was defeated. Along with 900 other Japanese soldiers who refused to surrender to the allies after Japan lost the war, they fought guerrilla wars for the Indonesian National Revolution (1945–1949) that eventually won the nation's independence from the Netherlands. Subsequently, he and 300 Japanese surviving soldiers declined repatriation to Japan. He and his comrades were acknowledged as national heroes by the Indonesian government, who gave him his third alias, Umar Hartono.

In the documentary, Miyahara leads Sakai to tour the Kalibata Heroes Cemetery, where many of the Japanese heroes and his former friends are interred. "I will lie here one day," he tells the camera, and will be forever enshrined as an Indonesian hero. Sakai asks Miyahara/Lee/Hartono "when the time comes, what nationality will you die with?" (「なに人として死んでいくんでしょうか?」) To which he gives an ambiguous reply, "me? I would go with Indonesia. [...] But on my tombstone they will also have to write my Japanese name and state I am Japanese." Here, the Taiwanese identity seems to have been ruled out, which is understandable or not surprising, given that he has few ties with modern-day Taiwan. Nevertheless the intermittent pauses that punctuate his sentences reveal the discursiveness of his thoughts. He tells Sakai that he returned to Taiwan briefly in the 1974 on a business trip. At his father's behest, he left in haste due to the precarious circumstances during the White Terror period. After another short pause, he quotes former Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui's "sorrow of being Taiwanese" (「生為台灣人的悲哀」) and grieves over the absence of innocence in his youth due to the wars.<sup>4</sup> While he is certain what would be engraved on his tombstone, his rambling on his thinning ties with Taiwan and the island's precarious state of nationality is telling. Yet even if he does consider Taiwanese identity an option, his definition of being Taiwanese would differ from the others who still live there. Sakai's question about which country he would commit himself to after death is especially provoking. What is identity to a dead man? Though death may not necessarily finish off shifty, unsettled issues, it delineates a finite boundary. How the dead is remembered seems to be a final call, an undebatable definition of the person. Sakai's question is an attempt in finalizing Miyahara's choice, but that he is unable, or unwilling to adhere to a singular identity reveals the possibility of multiple, distinct allegiances co-existing.

The documentary closes with Kao Chu-hua's visit to her parents' grave. As requested by her father before his death, she and her siblings bring beer to pour over his grave, and play him a particular piece of classical music. Here, after a long hike up to reach the site, Kao's brother realizes that he has brought the wrong music. He embarrassingly calls out to his older

sister in Japanese. “Kiku-chan! I forgot the CD.” “You forgot?” Kao Chu-hua/Kikuko solemnly looks on as the group scramble to locate and play the correct music on a mobile phone. This comical episode in an otherwise somber scene is a stark reminder that the Kao siblings, and the audience are situated in a vastly different historical and spatial context from the nation’s scarring White Terror period that marred the siblings’ lives. Not only is the “correct” item easily replaced, but mistakes are not irreparable. With things in order, the siblings align themselves in front of the grave. Her younger brother starts speaking to the ghosts, in Japanese. For the surviving Kao siblings, 70 years after the end of the Japanese era, Japanese remains the language they use to communicate within their family and the language that Kao Chu-hua is most comfortable in. In other interviews with Taiwanese historians, her articulation in mandarin Chinese is often punctuated by a slip of Japanese words, or cut short by her halting search for words. In the documentary, Sakai has not pressed her on how she identifies herself. But if she must choose, and if the choice of language is any indicator, it can be deduced that it would be the identity she shared with her father before his persecution.

Upon examining the background of Sakai’s subjects, their identity formation seems to be dominated by accidental incidents. Through almost no fault of their own, their lives fortuitously unfolded as one historical happenstance led to another: The Pacific War took an 18-year-old Miyahara to Indonesia where he became an Indonesian hero but dared not return home to a Chinese nationalist Taiwan; Yokohama resident Wu Masao 吳正男 missed his window of opportunity to return to Taiwan due to his detainment in Siberia after the war; Kao Chu-hua had plans to study at Columbia University in the year of her father’s arrest and the family’s public fall; By a stroke of luck, Kao’s uncle, Cheng Mao-li who was also arrested during the White Terror period, was spared and remade his life as a tea farmer; Chang Mikio 張幹男 lost eight years out of the prime of his life in a dissident prison, for having translated a Japanese pamphlet on Taiwan independence. Their articulation of their life stories expresses a yearning for subjectivity, which was stolen from them by a grander historical narrative. “The times were bad,” (「時代が悪かった。」) said Kao Chu-hua. “It was a time that nothing could be helped,” (「仕様がな時代。」) said Wu Masao. Neither the Japanese empire nor the Chinese Nationalist-ruled Taiwan treated them well, and neither was held accountable for the misfortunes of the people. In this vein, their words indeed echo President Lee Teng-hui’s “sorrow of being Taiwanese,” a sorrow of being passed on from one foreign power to the next.

However, the “Japanese generation’s” postcolonial sensibility of destitution and nostalgia for the Japanese past should not be read as a collective desire for the return of the colonizer. Chang Mikio, for one, stresses his belief that Taiwan needs to be its own master despite having gone through eight years of reformation by the nationalist KMT. Their shared sensibility does not mean that their nostalgia is unified, and can be lumped together as one monolithic discourse. As ethnographer William Cunningham Bissell points out in his study on postcolonial Zanzibar: “[nostalgia discourses] circulate in a social terrain in which diverse forms of memory are at

play.” When enlisting the nostalgic discourses to reexamine and reshape postcolonial relationships between Taiwan and Japan, it is crucial to “account for multiple strands of remembrance.”<sup>5</sup>

Sakai describes her subjects as “people that were once Japanese,” and their fate as living “at the mercy of the undulation of the era after Japan left Taiwan,” conveying a strong sense of helplessness of the ordinary people in a struggle against the changing tides of global politics. Perhaps, Kao Chu-hua’s segment illustrates this best, when the camera pans over to a small herd of scrawny cats that the old woman has taken in: “Everyone here are stray cats,” she tells the camera, “mi-ahn! Mi-ahn!” As former subjects of an empire that molded them to its liking but subsequently forsook them, their fate was no less capricious than stray cats. Some, like Miyahara/Hartono, managed to survive the war and displacement unscathed, while others, like Kao Chu-hua, were knocked off their feet and had their hands tied down. Their varying remembrance of “Japan” renders this 2013 presentation of nostalgia more complex than the simple indulgence in the lost good times and “having been Japanese.”

### *Wansei Back Home* (2015)

In a short 1941 essay “Wansei and Wansei [湾生と湾製],” Chou Chin-po 周金波, who would later be dishonorably labeled a *Kouminka* writer, enlisted wordplay to reinvent the meaning of *wansei* 湾生.<sup>6</sup> Originally a derogatory term that people from Japan proper used to refer to a second generation Japanese born in Taiwan, Chou’s replacement of a character modified the word as *wansei* 湾製 to mean “made in Taiwan,” which, for Chou, represents the blurring of the boundary between the Taiwan-born Japanese and Taiwanese. Chou vividly recounted his initial reluctance to greet a Taiwan-born Japanese at a gathering in Tokyo. He described the tension that instinctively rose in him when they were introduced. But the tension was soon replaced by a surge of familiarity when the Japanese said: “I am a *wansei*, too! (Chou’s rendition was: I was made in Taiwan too.) Pleased to meet you.” The word play flipped the original connotation of a belittled origin into a code of identity that blurred the boundary between Taiwanized Japanese and Japanized Taiwanese. Chou’s play on the meaning of *wansei* is lost on the modern-day Taiwanese as well as Japanese. As a term that belongs to a specific historical and spatial context, it has—as Taiwanese historian Chung Shu-min points out—become “an extinct language,” forgotten in history archives and no longer in active use.<sup>7</sup>

In 2015, the term and the amicable exchange between a *wansei* Japanese and Taiwanese were revived, with much fanfare, in Tanaka Mika’s documentary *Wansei Back Home*. The film opens with a Taiwan-born Japanese man in his 80s, Tominaga Masaru’s 富永勝 (1927–), searching for his Taiwanese childhood buddies. With a crumpled list of names in his hand, he returns to his village in Hualien, Taiwan, asking locals that cross his path if they have information of the people on his list. The camera captures a series of blows to Tominaga as he crosses one

name out after another when he hears that they have already passed away, his pained frown and teary eyes magnified in closeups. He reminisces how his circle of friends included Taiwanese children as well children from the Atayal tribe, and proclaims that there was no discrimination in his play group. After many disappointments he manages to find three of his playmates. The men remember each other well, and the joyful reunion dissipates the previously downcast mood. They stand on the plot of land where Tominaga's home once stood, discussing how large it was and how its yard was full of fruits that Tominaga's family never ate. One of the old men recalls that because his family was poor and he was always hungry, he would sneak into the Tominaga yard and steal fruits. The men chuckle gaily, immersed in past memories. However, this innocent exchange seems to offer a glimpse into the colonial divide between the Japanese boy and his Taiwanese friends, though as playmates they were unaware of this difference.

Tanaka's documentary, however, does not intend to explore the discriminatory structure in colonialism. Instead her intention is to uncover the story of *wanseis* and their affection for the island that they consider as their homeland. Either consciously or unconsciously, she uses very little language associated with the colonial mechanism in her presentation. Her project highlights the *wanseis'* continual longing for their lost "homeland," and bring to the fore different narratives between colonial Taiwan and Japan. As she maps out the "frontier villages" in the remote locations of east coast Taiwan, the Japanese citizens who answered the government's calls for land reclamation in the untamed east were not aggressive expansionists who robbed the natives of their established enterprise. Rather, they are characterized as adventurous, hand-picked immigrants who harbored dreams of starting anew. The camera moves back to Tominaga's residence in Japan, where Tominaga is joined by a Japanese friend for his interview. The non-*wansei* friend chimes in and recounts a memory of what he learned from his grandmother, neither of them having been to Taiwan: "it was challenging to be approved to go [settle in Hualien]. First you must not have any criminals in your family, secondly you can't have a record of being arrested, thirdly you can't have been spoken ill of by your neighbors! And lastly you must be a property owner. [...] I always joke to Tominaga, your ancestors must be quality folks." These prerequisites disabuse of the notion that the settlers were possibly thugs and vagabonds, or other marginalized plebeians that the Empire cast away to Taiwan. On the contrary, the carefully selected crew demonstrates the engagement of the Empire to advance the remote "backlands" of the island. For Tanaka, the empire's resolve in developing the rural area at the expense of some of its "quality citizens" differentiates the settlers from the unilateral, exploitative faces of colonialism.

A slideshow of Hualien in a primitive state around the time of 1910 in the documentary *Wansei Back Home* further delves into the definition of the Japanese presence in the rural context as settlers. Grainy images that contain farmers and laborers in work clothes depart from the official portraits of Japanese colonialism set in the metropolitan Taipei. According to Tanaka, in order to ensure full commitment to the frontiers, the immigration policies decreed

that the settlers must bring along all members in their family and dispose of all their real estate properties in Japan.<sup>8</sup> This complete lack of a security net, combined with the suggested hardship, not only serves to underscore the Japanese settlers' determination to permanently settle in Taiwan, but more importantly, to divorce Tanaka's *wanseis* from the stereotypical image of colonizers who were guaranteed advantageous positions over the local subjects in the colonial mechanism.

But precisely because the memories that she is rewriting emerge from the geographically marginalized region of Hualien, Tanaka might be able to get away with portraying her subjects as immigrants or settlers rather as the colonizer. Located on the rocky east coast, Hualien was regarded as the "Back Mountain" (後山, referencing the region's quality of being barren, remote and untamed) by the Chinese Ching Empire and developed much later than the west coast plains. Its less approachable landscape and harsher elements further distanced it from the political heavyweight locales like Taipei, granting it more leniency from the colonial hierarchy. The Japanese settlers she documented were more laborers than politicians: the memories that were presented were peppered with idyllic, innocent images of life in the countryside. Tanaka is careful to separate their nostalgia for "home" from a colonizer's political yearning for a lost colony, so that the affection her subjects articulate cannot be interpreted as a lament for the empire's loss.

Iekura Taeko 家倉多恵子 (1930-), whose father worked for governor-general, is the only one of Tanaka's interviewees in the film who brushes shoulders with the colonial ruling class. She visits the campus of Taipei Municipal First Girls' High School, whose predecessor at the former Taihoku First Girls' High School (台北州立高等女学校) was Iekura's alma mater. As she strolls through the buildings, she recognizes many features that she found familiar, including the crimson wooden cabinets that have been in use since her time: "the wood was bare back then. They must have painted over them many times...but it's still the same." In Iekura's words, seeing the old structures feels like she is "going back in time," and things are "just like they used to be." When she visits the Presidential Hall—which formerly housed the Office of Governor-General, the familiarity diffusing from the office building compels her to feel that "[her] father might come out from around a corner and start speaking to her." For her, the building and the school cabinets represent a nostalgic form of constancy. Although they have been painted over many times, its integrity remains the same. The problematics of Iekura's nostalgic discourse, however, lies in the fact that Taiwan has not been the same since its colonial times. While the shell of the Presidential building or her school cabinets remain, their contents have been long replaced. What she deems as a token that signifies her connection with the past and Taiwan may bear very different significance. An alumna or alumni from another time could easily make similar comments about the same structures but refer to different symbolic meanings. This does not matter for the old lady, who was clearly elated to see her distant memories so tangible and within reach.

Iekura's indulgence in the past, however, does not indicate her desire for the return of Japan's colonialism. She tells the camera that her high school only admitted a handful of Taiwanese students. There was an impression that the Taiwanese minority always performed exceedingly well academically. Years later after returning to Japan, another classmate revealed to Iekura the reason for their constant academic success—the Taiwanese seniors would advise the Taiwanese juniors that the only way to avoid being belittled by the Japanese is by excelling academically. "I was stunned to find out. [...] As a Japanese student, one is admitted even with mediocre grades," Iekura says quietly. Her contemplation on this matter suggests remorse in her unawareness of her Taiwanese classmates' then struggle with social boundaries, and implies a renewed perspective of the colonial past from the side of the colonizer. It is only in retrospect that the innocent members of the ruling class recognize the colonial structure.

Iekura's postcolonial reflection on her nation's role in colonialism and war is continued when she revisits the shores of Hualian. At the height of the war, her family evacuated from the metropole of Taipei to Hualian. She remembers how fighting airplanes departed from the Hualian shorelines and glided into the unknown distance. Meanwhile, on land, she and other students dug protective trenches in the sand. In hindsight, she realizes the danger they were positioned in, and how foolish she was of daydreaming about bombing an enemy plane with a hand grenade from where she was digging. "It would have gotten all of us killed, too. But we wanted to do it for our country. War does that to you... this mind control thing." This confession is significant in representing her awakening from Japan's imperial dreams, and it bears striking resemblance to the words of Sakai Atsuko's Taiwanese volunteer soldiers. Her then placing the empire over her personal welfare resonates with the others' visceral wish to fight in the imperial army. Be it a Japanese school girl or Taiwanese colonial subjects, Japan's mobilization movement in the heat of the war seems to have provoked a shared sensibility in Japanese and Taiwanese subjects alike. In other words, its objectification of people to utilize as an instrument to fight the war was not privy to colonial subjects. Japanese subjects, too, were indoctrinated to die for the sake of the empire.

Paradoxically, despite the *wanseis'* dedication to the Japanese Empire, the actual Empire itself seems to be an abstract, exotic entity to the children born in its extended territory. According to Tominaga, when it snowed in Taiwan's Niitakayama one year (新高山, referring to Mount Jade in Taiwan, Japan's then new highest mountain), his teacher sent for someone to fetch snow from the mountain so the schoolchildren can learn about this climatic feature in Japan proper. It was a big event at school when the jug of snow finally arrived from the mountain. But having taken three days to reach the children, the snow had already consolidated into a large frozen chunk of ice. As the teacher described snowfall to the pupils, Tominaga pictured heavy clumps of ice falling from the sky. This memory illustrates the imagining of the motherland through the eye of a child who has little physical connection with the said land, other than the language (which Tominaga spoke with an accent, as he proclaims) and certain

cultural codes. The fundamental difference in climate alone seems to trump other cultural efforts to construct a unified community. Despite the schoolteacher's attempt to make the Empire/Motherland vivid and tangible to the pupils, it is abstract and distant to the child's fantastical perception. The Japanese Empire—which had long held an exotic view of its untamed, tropical territory—reversely turned into the stuff of exoticism itself to its overseas subjects.

Tominaga's first encounter with snow in Hualian manifested the imagined motherland's distance and disjuncture to a person who had not set foot on it. It can also be read as a precursor of the *wanseis'* struggle to rehabilitate in the motherland after the war. As subjects of a defeated nation, they lost their estates and most of their possessions. What was left to take back to Japan was a stringent list of daily-use items and small sum of cash. In other words, they returned almost empty-handedly. Their return to an impoverished, war-torn Japan proved to be another chapter of hard knocks as they faced discrimination as losers that cost Japan the war, and carriers of foreign diseases and weak characteristics importable from a different climate. The discrimination pushed them further into the margins of the empire, as their fellow Japanese turned them out, unwilling or unable to accommodate them. What they returned to was not the metropole that represented the empire, but a scant prospect for survival, far removed from the modernization that had characterized colonial rule. This diasporic experience in their own land, compounded with their more advantageous positions in the colonial mechanism as one of the colonizers, contributed to their constant yearning for their Taiwanese days.

After their repatriation, it became increasingly evident to the *wanseis* that they were different from the Japanese in Japan proper. For one, they were not welcomed home. Once off the ship, according to Tominaga, they were doused with DDT, then quarantined at a stopgap facility at the port. Due to the shortage of medical facilities, they were confined with consumption patients, which exacerbated their chance of survival. The act of sanitization and isolation may have been executed out of necessity. However, the ensuing social assumption that the returnees' body and spirit were contaminated, or compromised by their experience in the colony speaks volumes. Is there anything in need of cleansing other than possibility of disease? Many altered their names, or kept their *wansei* identity a secret to shun humiliation. When I met with Tanaka to discuss her work in August 2015, she revealed that among the 223 *wanseis* she interviewed, only the 22 agreed to have their names and life stories exposed. She assumed that the others' wish to remain in obscurity has to do with the then dominant view that their Japaneseness is compromised as a *wansei*.<sup>9</sup> But otherwise, Tanaka stresses, when the two hundred plus *wanseis* speak of Taiwan, most of them express a strong sense of longing for the land and eagerness to return, which Tanaka defines as homesickness.

Besides being treated as alien citizens, the *wanseis* also became aware of their inner aberrance. Matsumoto Kosei 松本洽勝 (1937-) attributes his relaxed and spacey nature—which a succession of his teachers have criticized—to having been influenced by the Taiwanese

climate. His daughter also testifies to his “exotic” personality, saying that she has often wondered whether her father is actually Taiwanese masquerading as a Japanese. Iekura Taeko, who spoke of her fervor to fight for the empire as a schoolgirl, paradoxically identifies herself as a “forever foreigner” (「永久異邦人」) in Japan proper, due to a constant void she feels when she is homesick about Taiwan. Their identity comes from their memories which foreground their connection with the land they once lived in. Ethnicity or nationality has very little to do with the formation of such identity. Rather, the perception of their Taiwanese-ness demonstrates the reciprocal influences between the empire and its colony. Furthermore, the overachieving tendency in a predominantly Japanese setting that Iekura observed in her Taiwanese peers is interestingly manifested in Tominaga’s story. Having been scorned due to his *wansei* identity and foreign accent after returning to Japan, Tominaga says that he strived to counter the notion of his inferiority by reading *Genji Monogatari* 源氏物語 out loud everyday. Later when he built his house, the first in his area to be constructed with steel pillars, he announced to everyone that all this was accomplished by a *wansei*. He proudly displays the name plate at his door, “this marble is from Taiwan, too. [...] The [kanji characters of] my family name are coated in gold powder. People say I’ve made the grade.” Such nostalgic discourse not only contests against mutual influence between the colonized and the colonizer, but changes the ways in which we perceive Japan/Taiwan relationship. Despite the Japanese Empire’s effort to assimilate Taiwan, the *wansei*’s diasporic experiences and internalized foreignness reveal that the colony is not a mere recipient of Japanese influence, but is a contributor to societal and cultural changes in Japanese (at least, in the case of the *wanseis*).

*Wanseis*’ nostalgia for Taiwan after their repatriation prompts them to re-examine the Taiwanese influence on their Japaneseness. But subversively, it also calls attention to how these self-proclaimed “Taiwanese” imagine postcolonial Taiwan. This is demonstrated in Matsumoto Kosei’s knowledge of Taiwan’s national anthem, as observed when he drops by an elementary school graduation ceremony during a trip in Hualian. He sings along with the choir when the ceremony commences: “[san min chu yi.] wu dang suo zong [三民主義] 吾黨所宗.../ [The Three Principles of the People] is the foundation of our party...” His Taiwanese companions commended him on being so well-informed. He explains that when the Chinese Nationalists took over Taiwan after the war, as he and his family were waiting to be repatriated, he learned to sing Taiwan’s new anthem. Perhaps, Tanaka inserted this particular episode with the simple intention to demonstrate the *wansei*’s engrossment with Taiwan. However, how the *wanseis* come to identify *their* Taiwan with the national anthem of Taiwan’s incoming ruler is interesting and problematic. The lyrics to the anthem is rife with allusions to the KMT party and its principle in its construction of a nation. The part that Matsumoto was filmed vocalizing translates into “the foundation of *our party*,” which many contend refers to the KMT party.<sup>10</sup> In this context, domestically speaking, the symbolic meaning of the Taiwanese national anthem is a contested terrain in terms of political representation. While many in the audience in Taiwan

are impressed by the *wanseis*' emotional embrace of Taiwan as a nation, one cannot overlook the possible disjuncture between *wanseis*' imagined "Taiwan" and the actual multiplicity of the nation.<sup>11</sup> Political symbolism observed in the nationalist anthem by many Taiwanese people appears to be lost in translation/ transition for *wanseis* like Matsumoto. His seemingly apolitical association of the anthem with his "homeland" indicates a disjunction between such imagined "homeland" and Taiwan's political reality. Furthermore, because the anthem was taught to him by the "victors" of the war whose ruling eventually drove his family out of the island, Matsumoto's link between the anthem and "homeland" suggests a disconnection with the lost empire he was repatriated to.

For the *wanseis*, under the pretext that their nostalgia is disconnected with political disputes in Taiwan, the National Anthem is emblematic of their connection with Taiwan. By the same token, other popular Taiwanese ballades from the period could also sufficiently convey their tie to the island.<sup>12</sup> Tanaka stresses that the nostalgic discourse has more to do with an emotional affiliation with the land, a form of "love" that "crosses national boundaries and transcends life and death."<sup>13</sup> She tirelessly iterates that her motivation to bring visibility to *wanseis* is not political, but one that encourages the love of and ties between the lands and people. Given that *wanseis* is, after all, a term born from the particular colonial discourse, it is not entirely possible to avoid politics. This is probably why Tanaka chooses to let visceral emotions dominate scenes of the Japanese elderlies retracing their lives in Taiwan, and especially when receiving printed copies of their birth certificate. When Iekura receives her copy with the help of officers of a Taipei Household Registration Office, her eyes tear up and she is overcome with emotions. She tells the camera that she feels as if she is reuniting with her past and her family through the piece of form. After taking moments to recompose herself, she bursts out: "it is wonderful to have been born in Taiwan." The documentary then concludes with shots of other *wanseis* receiving their certificates in a formal ceremony in Hualian, against the backdrop of a female soprano singing *Furusato* (ふるさと, homeland). This act of root-seeking and eventually receiving official affirmation of their connection to their "homeland," according to Tanaka's interview with the elderlies, is what dispels the sense of void that many of them have carried with them since leaving the island.

## Japanized Taiwanese and Taiwanized Japanese

For both Sakai Atsuko and Tanaka Mika, their gathering of oral reports and making of the documentaries commenced in a manner of serendipity. On a trip to Taiwan, Sakai encountered a Taiwanese elderly woman at a bus stop who told her in Japanese that she misses her Japanese teacher. Before she could learn more, her bus arrived. She hopped on and spent her entire trip wondering about the old lady and her Japanese teacher, which prompted her

to research more on the “Japanese generation” of Taiwan. For Tanaka, who is a descendent of a *wanseï* grandmother who kept this identity secret from her granddaughter while she lived. It is at her funeral when the now grown Tanaka was offered a glimpse into the grandmother’s past from other *wanseï*s who came to mourn her. Like so many of the young Taiwanese people, the initiation into the underground society of secret pasts came after the loss of a loved one, and the piecing together of memories and legacies is conducted through bits of clues and anecdotes. The research is therefore personal and overflowing with emotions. Clues and connections come in forms of faded birth certificates, or carefully preserved scribbles in familial notes. To find a link that would successfully lead one to the next meaningful link depends solely on stumbling upon luck. Many times it also depends on their race with time, as the elderlies perish before facts can be confirmed. Sakai’s and Tanaka’s approach of unravelling the memories by befriending their subjects and gradually extracting personal tales provide an alternative, somewhat disorderly discourse that departs from official history. Theirs is a social history of the common people, that is constituted of quotidian practices and personal desires.

Sakai’s delineation of the Japanized Taiwanese as “people who have been teased and tossed about by the undulating tides of the times” can be extended to describe Tanaka’s Taiwanized Japanese. The particular historical and spatial context they once shared dictates their loss of and separation from family and home. It also compels the hybridity and complexity of their identity—of being simultaneously Japanese and Taiwanese—despite the Empire’s seemingly indomitable imposition of Japanization. When we juxtapose the documentaries, it becomes evident that both Japanese and Taiwanese subjects in Taiwan, more or less, appropriated the same indoctrination of conforming to an ideal that the Japanese Empire had constructed for them, which is to selflessly dedicate oneself to the empire.

Perhaps one can boldly deduce from the fact that *Taiwan Jinsei*’s Chen Ching-hsiang 陳清香 and *Wanseï Back Home*’s Iekura Taeko 家倉多惠子 both testified to their past fervor to die for the nation, that they were equally exploited and stripped of subjectivity in face of war. Strangely, even after the colonized and colonizer parted ways, they faced similar constrictions—albeit in different political climates—that obstructed the articulation of their memories. Political persecution or social discrimination regarding their identity has taught them to be careful about articulating their nostalgia. That many of them felt the need to hide their past laid down the base for their constant feeling of displacement, and consequent experiences of diaspora in their respective actual homelands. Sakai’s Japanized Taiwanese and Tanaka’s Taiwanized Japanese both long to reconnect with a past that is irretrievable. Yet at the same time, they realize that their past memories are complicated by their awkward involvement in the colonial framework, and that their nostalgia runs the risk of being presented as a desire for colonialism. Hence, some of Sakai’s interviewees appear uncertain of their identity, while Tanaka’s subjects keep their nostalgia in check by speaking of redemption towards war and colonialism, and the importance of keeping peace.

However, in spite of their similarities in historical background and wartime experiences, the trajectories of their nostalgic discourse move in opposing directions. Tanaka Mika recounted in a talk that when she met with the Japanese elders, they wanted her to sing Taiwan's National Anthem, or *Yu Yeh Hua* (雨夜花, Flower in a Rainy Night). Contrarily, when she met with Taiwanese elders, they wanted to sing *Kimigayo* (君が代, National Anthem of Japan) or Japanese military songs. Shots taken of the interviewees in front of their bookshelves interestingly reveal that they have been continuously studying each other since they parted ways: the Taiwanese man's bookshelf was full of references on the Japanese language, and his Japanese counterpart stocked his shelf with books on Taiwanese culture and history. Where Taiwan's "Japanese language generation" reveres the virtues of "Japanese spirit," Japan's *wanseis* conversely heeds the "Taiwanese spirit" as his moral guideline.<sup>14</sup> In a way, each side has been seeking to maintain certain levels of understanding and connection to the other. If Sakai's and Tanaka's subjects could meet, which songs would they sing? What dialogue would unfold between these two groups of people? It is my wish that they can regale in certain jovial moments during their reunion. But I also wish, after exchanging social pleasantries, they could delve into their old relationship as a colonized and a colonizer, and engage in a dialectics of loss and identities.

*Taiwan Jinsei's* Hsiao Chin-wen's 蕭錦文 accusation of having been "deserted" by the Japanese Empire would make for an important thread for such fantastical dialogue. Hsiao acknowledges that "different blood running in our veins" fundamentally sets him apart from other "real" Japanese, but his belief in the Japanese Empire, which was coercively produced by Japan's indoctrination, bears no difference from them. His determination to "protect the nation" was betrayed when the defeated Japan revealed that they were not Japanese. In Judith Butler's view of war, the affected population is divided into two camps, one that is grievable, the other constituted of lives that "cannot be mourned because it has never lived, that is, it has never counted as life at all."<sup>15</sup> Therefore, excluded from the empire's frame of "grievability," the Japanized Taiwanese's loss went unacknowledged and uncompensated. Furthermore, to add insult to injury, a new nationalist government that held antagonist views against Japan, as well as a younger, Chinese-ized generation who were uninterested in their loss, exacerbated their notion of being left behind. For them, what could the *wanseis'* own tales of being marginalized and discriminated against because of their presumed "Taiwanese-ness" offer? Would they feel a strange sense of condolence that the "real Japanese" they competed with had also been scorned? Or would they see their constant revisiting of the island as an (unofficial) Japanese effort of saying they are not deserted?

Either way, Sakai's and Tanaka's quests to understand the generation with a complicated past highlight the precariousness of existence under a rule that requested its subjects to surrender their subjectivity. Their works provide a means of articulation for the elders as well as actively preserving and remembering these memories. In his observation of postcolonial

Taiwan, historian Andrew D. Morris contends that the “explicit recognition of the importance of the colonial era provides an important political context for Taiwanese people’s notions of exactly how ‘Chinese’ they are.”<sup>16</sup> I agree with Morris that colonial memories of “Japan” in Taiwan were used to separate itself from the Chineseness imposed on them by a Chinese nationalist government, and that memories of “Japan” are indeed instrumental in organizing and shaping what constitutes “Taiwanese-ness.” However, I contend that there is more to the constant revocation of memories. It enables the coming to terms with a history of loss, the repatriation of the formerly ungrievable into the realm of the grievable. The two female directors’ efforts of documenting the longings of the two groups of colonial subjects have supplemented an integral component of Taiwanese (Japanese) history.

In April 2015, Taiwan’s Ministry of Culture announced *Wansei Back Home* the winner of the nonfiction category in its annual Golden Tripod Award 金鼎獎. Later in September, the National Academy for Educational Research 國家教育研究院 announced its decision to include the *wanseis*’ connection with Taiwan in supplementary material of history textbooks.<sup>17</sup> Three weeks after its release on October 16th, 2015, the film’s production crew announced its success as the 7th best film of the year for its blockbuster performance, a rarity for documentary films. However, Sakai’s production has not received as much fanfare. Although this is probably a result of different marketing strategies, the vitriolic attacks on President Lee Teng-hui’s memories and experience of fighting for Japan during the war in August of the same year is evident of the challenges of coming to terms with a Taiwanese’s nostalgic discourse. As the Taiwanese society embraces the *wanseis*’ “homecoming” as part of its collective memory, it is important to see that the same sentiment is extended to the Japanized Taiwanese’s memories to ensure that they, too, can be at home.

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<sup>1</sup> In October 1945, the Allied Forces ceded Taiwan to the KMT-administered Republic of China, an idea which the Taiwanese people initially warmed up to in the hope of gaining national autonomy with a government who shares the same (imagined) ethnicity. However, the people grew disillusioned with the party's oppressive discriminatory policies against them, in addition to its political corruption and devastating economic blunders. On February 27th, 1947, an argument between a cigarette vendor and a police sparked an uprising, which quickly escalated to bloody government clamp down on civilians know as the 228 Massacre, resulting in the death of estimated 10,000 to 30,000 people. The incident further instigated the commencement of KMT's White Terror period (1947-1987), during which many were imprisoned, executed, or had simply disappeared without explanation. Most of the people who were prosecuted were charged with espionage or treason. For detailed accounts of this national trauma, which had been tabooed in Taiwan until the lift of martial law in 1987, please refer to 《台灣戰後史資料選一 二二八事件專輯》 / Postwar Taiwan Information— Special Collection on the 228 Incident, edited by Chen, Fang-ming, Chou, Wan-Yao's

A New Illustrated History of Taiwan (2009) According to historian Cheng Ya-ru, it can be deduced that the Taiwanese nostalgia for Japanese rule developed after having experienced KMT ruling. See Cheng's essay 『消失的「多桑」—戰後台灣歷史記憶的斷裂、掩蓋與重塑』 [The disappearing "tousans"— The interruption, hiding, and reconstruction of Postwar Taiwanese History], Kám-Á-Tiám Forum of History: Perspective from Taiwan (August 8, 2014), accessed July 31, 2016, <http://kam-a-tiam.typepad.com/blog/2014/08/消失的多桑.html>.

<sup>2</sup> See William Cunningham Bissell, "Engaging Colonial Nostalgia," *Cultural Anthropology* 20, No. 2 (May 2005): 215-48.

<sup>3</sup> Sakai notes here that over 210,000 Taiwanese men fought in the WWII as Japanese soldiers, about 30,000 of which died during the war.

<sup>4</sup> Lee Teng-hui famously spoke of "the sorrow of being Taiwanese" in an interview with Japanese writer Shiba Ryotaro 司馬遼太郎 in 1994, published in Shiba's *Notes of Travels in Taiwan* 台灣紀行. Lee's "sorrow" refers to Taiwan's constant state of being occupied by foreign powers, and the Taiwanese people's subsequent deprivation of subjectivity. 司馬遼太郎 [Shiba, Ryotaro], 臺灣紀行：街道漫步 [Notes of Travels in Taiwan], trans. Lee Jin-song (Taipei: Taiwan Tohan, 2011), 519-39.

<sup>5</sup> See Bissell, William Cunningham, 216.

<sup>6</sup> See 周金波 [Chou, Chin-po], 「灣生與灣製」 [*wansei* (born in Taiwan) and *wansei* (made in Taiwan)], in 周金波集 [Collection of Chou Chin-po's essays], ed. Nakajima Toshio (Taipei: Avanguard publishing, 2002), 193-195.

<sup>7</sup> See 鍾淑敏 [Chung, Shu-ming], 「為大時代的變動留下珍貴的證言」 [Important testimonies for a turbulent times], in 灣生回家 [Wansei Back Home], by Tanaka Mika (Taipei: Yuan-liu Publishing, 2014), 8.

<sup>8</sup> See 田中實加 [Tanaka, Mika], 灣生回家 [Wansei Back Home] (Taipei: Yuan-liu Publishing, 2014). Prior to the official release of her documentary film on October 16th 2015, Tanaka published a book of the same title in 2014 and held approximately 300 talks in Taiwan as an effort to promote understanding of *wansei* and the advent of her film.

<sup>9</sup> I met with Tanaka Mika in Tainan's National Museum of Taiwanese History on August 15, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> In 1952, democracy fighter and politics critic Lei Zhen 雷震 wrote in his *Future of Control Yuan/ jian cha yuan zhi 監察院之將來* that it is "unwise" to use a "Party Anthem" as a "National Anthem." He elaborated on how the implied exclusivity—which is evident in lines like "foundation of our party"— would inflict hesitation and division among the people who are not members of the KMT party. In modern Taiwan, when the occasion arises, officials and Presidents that are affiliated with other political parties are known to selectively skip over the lines alluding to the KMT party.

<sup>11</sup> For more media coverage on the *wanseis* and their emotional affiliation with Taiwan's National Anthem, see 『想台灣就哼國歌 83歲「灣生」回家了』 [Whenever she misses Taiwan, she sings the National Anthem (of Taiwan), 83-year-old Wansei comes home]. United Daily, accessed July 21, 2016, <http://udn.com/news/story/7314/1357905-想台灣就哼國歌...83歲灣生>回家了. And 『「灣生」爺奶回家，松本領唱國歌』 [Wansei grandfathers and grandmothers return home, Matsumoto lead sings the National Anthem (of Taiwan)], Liberty Times, accessed July 21, 2016, <http://ent.ltn.com.tw/news/breakingnews/1476429>.

<sup>12</sup> For instance, in the documentary Tominaga repeatedly hums and plays the tune of famous Taiwanese ballade "Yu Yeh Hua" 雨夜花 / Flowers in a Rainy Night (1934) on his harmonica. "Yu

Yeh Hua” tells the sad tale of a maiden who, after being deserted by her lover, led a lonely and tragic existence. It has been interpreted by some as a national allegory of Taiwan under Japanese occupation. (see <http://www.hyes.tyc.edu.tw/~sk7/s32.htm> for example). When Placido Domingo performed this song in 2002 in his concert, it was elevated from a local ballade to international high art status and has since come to represent Taiwan in various situations.

<sup>13</sup> As stated on the book jacket of Tanaka’s book of the same title. *Wansei Back Home* (2015, second edition).

<sup>14</sup> See Tominaga Masaru’s letter to the Liberty Times. 『感動！因為一條「台灣魂」毛巾 89 歲灣生寄信「自由」尋人』 [Touching! 89-year-old Wansei writes Liberty Times in search of owner to a towel with imprints of “Taiwan Spirit“], accessed July 21, 2016. <http://ent.ltn.com.tw/news/breakingnews/1541870>.

<sup>15</sup> Judith Butler. *Frames Of War: When is Life Grievable?* (London/ New York: Verso, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> See Andrew D. Morris. *Japanese Taiwan: Colonial Rule and its Contested Legacy*. (London/ New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 13.

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