Life and Times of A Taiwanese Veteran in Japanese Taiwan: Oral History Interview with Zhengwang Jinzong (鄭王金宗)

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Translator's Note:

Jinzong's oral history interview is part of a collection organised by Caroline Hui-yu Ts'ai of Academia Sinica in Taipei, entitled *The Lives and Times of Taiwanese Veterans* (走過兩個時代的人:台籍日本兵), published by the Academia Sinica's Institute of Taiwan History (中央研究院台灣史研究所) in 1997.[1] This volume was a major contribution to the documentation of the experiences of Taiwanese people under Japanese occupation.

Unlike many of the subjects in Ts'ai's volume, Jinzong is a member of the Amis aboriginal ethnic group. Knowledge of Taiwanese aboriginal people's history is still quite limited, and there are very few accessible primary resources about it—personal accounts are particularly difficult to find. Jinzong's life touches upon many of the major events during and directly after the colonial period, but from

[1] At time of the publication of this collection, it was called the Preparatory Office of the Institute of Taiwan History (臺灣史研究所籌備). The Institute formally opened in 2004.

the position of, as Jinzong put it, 'a third-class citizen' who was neither part of the Japanese occupiers nor the Han Chinese 'liberators'.

Throughout Ts'ai's structured interview, Jinzong recounts major events such as the colonial education reforms, enforced labour conscription of aboriginal people by Japanese officials (with help from Han Chinese 'supervisors'), and deployment of colonial subjects in the Japanese army's invasion of the Philippines—including colonised people's use of the infamous 'Comfort Stations', which were known to traffic in young girls forced into sex work. He also captures many of the unique aspects of Taitung's development, its complex and diverse ethnic demographics, and some of the Amis people's traditions, including matrilineality, boys' coming of age practices, and courtship among youth. For the post-war, when Taiwan was 'gloriously returned' (光復) to the Republic of China under Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang / KMT, 國民黨) rule, Jinzong's views of the dislocations of the land reforms, Sinicization of aboriginal surnames, and continuing experience of marginalisation are a necessary corrective to narrativesof Taiwan's history that settles into a simple triad of Japan-ROC-PRC rivalry.

Interviewer's Note:

Zhengwang Jinzong is a member of the Amis ethnic group (阿美族), and his indigenous name is Pasao. He was born in 1924 in the Falangaw neighbourhood (馬蘭社) of Taitung, in the Taitung Town (台東街) area of the Taitung District.[2] He graduated from the Falan Public School (公學校),[3] after which he worked in the family business.

In March 1942, Jinzong was sent to participate in the 'Dare to Die for the Nation Brigade' (挺身報國隊, Jp. Teishin hōkokutai, or Teishintai, also known as the First Takasago Volunteers Unit, 第一回高砂義勇隊, Jp. Takasago giyūtai). First, he went to the Philippines for seven months as a medic (衛生兵). In the same year, he returned to Taiwan and worked in the Imperial Army 7th Anti-Aircraft Observation Unit in Taitung but left before long and returned to farming at his family home. He was soon forced back into the military, joining the third graduating class of the 'Special Volunteer Naval Unit' (海軍特別志願兵), matriculating in August 1944, and

[2] The Japanese occupation government reorganised previous settlements into Taitung Town in 1920, which eventually became Taitung City.

[3] Beginning from 1905, the Japanese colonial government launched a system of 'public schools' to educate Chinese and aboriginal people. This was distinct from the primary school (小學校) system used for Japanese residents, although both would be called 'citizen schools' (國民學校) by 1941, putting them in line with primary school education in the home islands of Japan.

was stationed at Zuoying, Kaohsiung. Throughout the post-war, he worked on the family farm.

Please tell us about your home life in Taitung.

I am Amis, born in 1924, and my indigenous name is Pasao. After the retrocession of Taiwan to the Republic of China, I had a Han name called 'Zhengwang Jinzong'. Amis people do not [traditionally] have surnames, only given names. If you're a boy, when you take a name you are commonly called 'Butoru' (this refers to the male genitalia), but if you were born when the rice was harvested, you were called 'Panai' (which means 'rice'). 'Kurasu' was the most commonly seen name, but it had no particular meaning. The Amis are a matriarchal society, so I took my mother's name, and my eldest sister was the head of household. My mother was an Amis indigenous person, so the 'wang' in my surname is from my mother, and the 'Zheng' is my wife's surname.

The Amis people usually live together as an extended family. When I was little we had thirteen people in my house. Apart from my paternal grandmother (called A-ma), there was my father, mother, me, five brothers and sisters, and four aunties, all living together. Our relative Huang Zhong (indigenous name Maesan) had a paternal grandfather Kurasu, he was the village headman (頭目), and his household was very wealthy, with dozens of square kilometres (甲) of land, three generations in one household, numbering as many as eighty or more.

The headman is chosen among the wise men of the town, and it isn't necessarily a hereditary position. If the current headman's descendants include someone of high calibre, he can be appointed without any conditions; but if no man of talent emerges, then the post must be passed on to someone else. The eldest grandchild of [our relations], the Kurasu household, Guo Guangye (郭光也), once was a baseball player for the Chiayi Agricultural College team.[4]

I remember when I was little, the 'Torik Incident' (都歷事件) occurred. At that time the Amis people ran for the nearby hills, and the Japanese couldn't get at them, so they had to send the headman up into the mountains to calm them down. This is how they came back to town and 'lived in peace' with the Japanese.[5]

[4] This was the Kagi Agriculture and Forestry Public School (KANO) founded by Japanese authorities in 1919, later to become part of the conglomerated National Chiayi University in 2000.

[5] Interviewer's note: According to Jinzong, the old folks who knew about the 'Duli Incident' are all gone, so there is no method of inquiring further about the events. The details of this incident require further investigation. Translator's note: the incident in question appears to have been an altercation

During the Japanese period, the Taitung area had the Pinuyumayan (卑南八社), including Katratripul, Likavung, Mulivelivek, Puyuma, Kasavakan, Damalagaw, and Pinaski, but the Puyuma ethnic group is the main one. When I was young, most of the Amis lived in the Falangaw neighbourhood of Taitung urban area, and [that community] numbered more than four hundred households. There were a few dozen households of Han Chinese families, as well. Later, as Falangaw became over-populated, the Puyuma also had the same problem, so around 1933 the Japanese established [a new neighbourhood], Peiting (北町), in Taitung. The [whole] area's aboriginal people (including the neighbourhood I lived in), was pretty unique, because it didn't have the pao-chia system (保甲).[6] Because the Puyuma at Hsinfanshe (新蕃社, now known as 番社 in north Taitung) studied Japanese language first, and the Amis were a little slow in picking it up, the security in this area was overseen by the Puyuma headmen. Basically, the boundary of the aboriginal people's settlement in Taitung city is now what we call Po'ai Road (博愛路), with the Amis on the east end and the Puyuma on the west, each with about sixty or more households.

When I was little, the Taitung urban area had three police stations at Hsinting (新町), Pinting (賓町), and Falan (馬蘭), and my neighbourhood was under the jurisdiction of the Hsinting station (which doesn't exist anymore). Hsinting and Pinting station jurisdictions were divided by what is now Chung-shan Road. To the west—just to the right of the exit of the old train station—passing the military police building to the primary school, the public school, is all the Hsinting police station's district (now it's where the county government sits and is part of its authority)—that whole area was a Japanese neighbourhood. East of Chung-shan Road was the jurisdiction of the Pinting Police Station (located at what is now the intersection of Chung-hua Road and Pinsa Road, and which still exists), and was in principle managed by Han Chinese people. Falan Police Station was under the authority of the Falangaw community.

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with corrupt or abusive Japanese police officers in the Amis area, which resulted in violence and possibly the murder of a member of the police force.

[6] The pao-chia / baojia system is an ancient one in areas formerly controlled by Chinese empires, but in the modern era it was similar to the Japanese neighbourhood association (町内会、隣組) in that authorities used local community leaders for self-policing and maintaining order. Locals were encouraged to report on each other, and in memoirs it was often recalled as an instrument of state oppression, although it fulfilled other roles like organising air defence, fire prevention, elder care, and other activities now associated with the welfare state.

What was state school life like?

At that time, the Amis were seen as third-class citizens. Japanese people came first, then the 'pailang' (擺浪, Han Chinese, but used pejoratively [by us] as the Han were known to deceive the aboriginal people and steal their land). The differences in treatment were obvious. Taitung had a primary school that was exclusively reserved for Japanese children, and the Han studied at a public school. Both schools operated according to the six-year primary education system. Taitung only had that public school and then advanced courses (高等科) attached to it.

The aboriginal children typically studied in a four year 'Fantong Education Centre' (蕃童教育所), but in 1922 it was renamed the Fantong Public School—it was still a four year school, though. Only in 1941 did it become a primary school like the Han people had, with six years of primary education. The Japanese, Chinese, and aboriginal people all had different levels of Japanese language, so every school had different textbooks.

In 1931, I entered the Falan Public School (now called the Taitung Hsin-sheng Primary School) to study, and in that year it was reformed to offer six years of instruction. As for the Katratripul (知本), Likavung (利嘉), Mulivelivek (初鹿), and Puyuma people, these four communities had established a four year school, therefore only those aboriginal families who were doing well could send their children to the Falan Public School for five or six years of primary education.

My impression was that all the staff combined (including the headmaster) only numbered eight people, and the teachers were all extremely strict with the students. The school had in total just over three hundred students, and every class year the group numbered seventy or more, divided into two classes each. In 1936, I graduated from the public school and, even though I wanted to advance in my studies, on account of my family's poverty my father had me stay at home and help herding the cattle. Our household relied on rice planting, but we also tended a dozen or so head of cattle. Students at that time who didn't have land went and 'got a job' [day labourers (日傭) or odd job men (打雜)]. Thinking back now to when I was a kid, I don't think it was really that hard a life.

How was it when you went to work as a young man?

According to Amis tradition, when a boy turns 15 or 16 he is called a 'Pakarogai', who have to stay in the community Assembly House (集合所) for at least three years, so that their fighting and hunting abilities can be cultivated. Afterward, accounting for the young man's spirit, age, and physique, at about nineteen years of age (or, just before coming-of-age [成年]), he can become a 'Marakapa'. After coming-of-age at twenty, he becomes a 'Kapa', and only when he is a 'Kapa' can he be married. An unmarried 'Kapa' and a 'Pakarogai' who is not yet mature are similar, in that they have to spend all day and night in the Assembly House. Only when the 'Kapa' has married can he sleep at home. An unmarried 'Kapa', however, can secretly dash over to the house of a girl he likes at night. If the girl in question likes him, she can open the door and let him in to spend the night. But if she doesn't like him, she won't open the door. This custom is called 'Teyaroku'. Amis people do not allow same-sex marriage, and they also forbid the marriage of close relations (cousins and aunts, etc.), but Puyuma have these customs.

For the 'Pakarogai' who live in the Assembly House, apart from receiving instruction and physical training, they must also learn how to cook food for and wait on the 'Kapa'. In addition to this, if they encounter outsiders who encroach on their land or other ethnic groups who rustle cattle or take their rice, the 'Pakarogai' must immediately inform the 'Kapa', and go to the neighbouring areas (e.g., Fukang, 富岡) to seek help. During this period of youth, we still follow the Amis traditions; in the daytime the boys help the families plant rice, and at night they stay in the Assembly Hall.

It's worth mentioning that I was conscripted by the Japanese for 'public works', and road repair was no exception. Once I was sent to the police station to tidy up the grounds and cut the grass (they only conscripted aboriginal people for this sort of work, and never gave it to the Han Chinese, because we were considered third class citizens). In 1923, when the Shōwa Emperor was still a prince, he came to tour Taiwan, but he never made it to the East coast, because at that time East Taiwan didn't have a proper road infrastructure. To celebrate the royal visit, the Taitung and Hualien County governments constructed a commemorative road, linking the county borders together—this was the precursor to the post-war route we have today. The Bishop Wood trees (茄苳樹) you can see there today were planted when this road was built. In the early days, my father participated in the construction of this road, and then I took up after him, doing 'public works' keeping it in good repair.

Apart from this, I once went to Anshuo (安朔, part of the Taitung-Dawu area) to do road maintenance (for roads running to Anshuo, they used local Taiwanese people to dig through the mountains). Pretty quickly we were sent to do repairs and maintenance for the Puyuma dikes and canals through contracts by the public works groups there. At that time I was a 'Pakarogai', and because the aboriginal people were third class citizens, whether it was 'doing public service' or 'mobilisation', Han Chinese people were our 'supervisors' (監工).

Even though what I did was called 'public works', in fact I was sent to aid Japanese private contractors. At that time, the contractors in Taitung who were conducting civil construction projects included the Yasaka, Morita, and Kondō groups, and they all undertook public engineering contracts from the government, and the police station would dispatch local people to help them; so, superficially this was called 'public works'. Whenever this occurred, the contractor association (包商會) sent a car to collect us, and all of the tools were provided by the companies.

It was during my status as a 'Pakarogai' when I first went to perform 'public works', for three cents per day. Basically, a 'Pakarogai' and the 'public works' women earned a basic wage of three cents, but afterwards there were raises according to age and physical strength. Three years later, I was able to get five cents for a day's wages, and right before I became a soldier it was seven cents. Around 1940 or 1941, one *jin* of rice cost about 5 yen.[7]

At that time it was obligatory to perform 'public works', so if you were called up you just went to it, including when farmers were busy with harvest—once you're dispatched you can't refuse. However, most people were in big families, so it was no bother to send somebody out. My family had over eighty people in it—loads of people—so when it came time to 'do public work', we sent three.

The Peiting Falangaw neighbourhood established a Youth Group (壯丁團) around that time, with about thirty members altogether. When the villages had youth of the right age, they commonly sent them to join the Group, and some households even had two people who became members. But I didn't join it, because the members' ages were as young as seventeen or eighteen years old, and when I was seventeen I had already left home. I had been chosen to sign up with the 'Dare to Die Brigade' (挺身報國隊).

[7] Three cents (三角) was probably three Taiwanese cents (三銭), based on the Japanese currency system. It was not a living wage.

How did you join a 'Dare to Die Brigade' back then?

On either the 13th or 15th of March 1942, I was working in the fields when suddenly there came a notice from the police station, which said that in two days' time I had to report to the station with my *fandao* blade (蕃刀).[8] Because I had no idea where I would go, I didn't raise it with my parents, and so in two days I reported to the police station. The officer there told me I was now a member of the 'Dare to Die Brigade', and took me to the Taitung Regional Office. He gave me a 'comfort package' (慰問袋), and inside it were a lot of letters written by Japanese people, some biscuits, and a 'thousand stitch belt'—and then he put me in a car heading to Kaohsiung.[9]

After arriving in Kaohsiung, I was taken to Cihou (旗後, now Cijin, 旗津, in central Kaohsiung) Taiping Elementary School to spend the night, and then on the second day, early in the morning, we were gathered in front of the regional office. The man who met us wore a military uniform, and then we were taken down to Kaohsiung harbour to board a ship. At this time, I had no idea that we might go abroad to fight, as I had never had this experience before, and I hadn't received any conscription notification or received any training. We got on the boat, and I tried to ask others about our destination, but they also didn't know—they only heard that we would be working for six months. Only when the ship touched the shore did I know that we had arrived in the Philippines. Later I found out that, after I'd gone overseas, a district officer went to my home and notified my family. A member of the Patriotic Women's Association also came to provide support, and that was how my family finally knew that I'd gone abroad to the Philippines.

What was the work like in the Philippines?

We disembarked at Lingayen, in the north part of Luzon, and then headed south. During this time, we once received three days' worth of battle training, but the

[8] A *fandao* is a type of traditional knife among Taiwan's aboriginal peoples, sometimes called a 'savage blade' in English.

[9] 'Comfort packages' (Jp. *imonbukuro*) were standardly distributed to Japanese soldiers who were conscripted for the battlefront. They often contained candy, biscuits, cigarettes, and sometimes blank diaries. The letters would have been formulaic messages of support, often written by schoolchildren and members of the Patriotic Women's Association of Japan (*Aikoku fujinkai*, 愛國婦人會).

military men just taught us simple lessons like how to use a rifle, loading and firing. After that, we went with the Japanese troops to attack the American stronghold at Bataan, and this action was about three months long. During the battle, the Japanese attacked the Americans at the front line, we only helped them by carrying ammunition and taking responsibility for supply and logistics. I was lucky by comparison, being sent to the medical unit and being responsible for transporting medical supplies—this was rear area work.

I was attached to a small unit of about 180 men at that time, with four small units comprising one large one, all together seven hundred and twenty men. After attacking Bataan, my unit moved to Tacloban, the provincial capital of Leyte. At the beginning of the month, we lived a short distance from the American headquarters there. Even though we were in a medical unit camp, once the local Filipino guerrilla units saw that the Japanese soldiers were few in number, they frequently harassed us at night (surprise attacks), but our unit didn't suffer any casualties at this time. The first time I heard the rifle fire of the guerrilla units, I thought, 'Oh, so this is what a battle is like.' Because the Japanese at that time were a superior force, I didn't feel any fear or anxiety, I just remembered to look after my physical safety carefully.

Later, the unit moved to the Jaro region south[west] of Tacloban [on Leyte Island], and whenever I had free time I'd go to the local kids and learn the language. In [my area of] the Philippines, the language was some form of either Tagalog or Visayan (in the Visaya plains areas, the Catholic people generally spoke this), and the Amis language is closer to Visayan, as they're both from the Micronesian language family, so I picked it up very quickly. Apart from this, we occasionally might accompany the unit as they attacked and scattered defeated American troops, carrying out mopping up operations. I was a medic, so I only carried my *fandao* knife—I wasn't given a weapon. At that time, the unit would regularly move its position, usually once every three or five days, so I had to use my knife to cut wood, erect a basic tent to let wounded soldiers sleep inside, and then sleep out in the open myself. At the field hospital in the rear area, there were over eight hundred soldiers and staff, including cooks and transport labour, as well as the stretcher team for transporting patients.

At that time, the transport of the sick and wounded, as well as food supplies, relied on trucks, and if things were busy, you could eat twice a day; if you were moving base, however, you'd have nothing to eat at all. And the Comfort Station (慰安所) was only set up in the rear area—there were no facilities like that set up on the

front line of the battlefield; in our unit there were twenty-four or twenty-five Taiwanese who once went there. At that time, I was just nineteen, unmarried, and still didn't know about men and women, so I didn't go. I just listened to the stories my buddies told.[10]

The men who, like me, were sent to the Philippines through the 'Dare to Die Brigade' numbered around eight hundred or one thousand. Because our unit only had about three days together and then were split up into various areas, I can't be sure how many of us there were. I just know that the unit included two Amis from Falan, one from Ashorai (now Fengnian, 豐年), one from Lika (利嘉), two from Torik (都歷), two from Tamalakaw (泰源), two from Puyuma, two from Hsin-kao (新高), two from Mulivelivek (初鹿), two from Fanaw (池上), and more aboriginal people from various places around Shikano (鹿野) and Kinalaungan (關山), but from the Peiting area there was only me. There were also four Atayal and Drekay aboriginal people in the unit (two are still living, though one has passed away). Because the Bunun people were very brave and good at fighting, they were the most numerous.

The Japanese were doing well in the war back then, so for the seven months that I was in the Philippines (originally, they said it was going to be six) the work was pretty light, and I could even write back home, but because the contents of the letters had to be checked by the unit, I never wrote anything. In those seven months, as far as I knew, one Atayal man and one Amis man from Tamalakaw died on the battlefield. About ten days before our work was done, we were notified that we were heading back to Taiwan. When I heard this, I was overjoyed. It was the end of October 1942 when I got back to Taiwan.

How were you treated in the 'Dare to Die Brigade'?

In the Philippines, the 'Dare to Die Brigade' was re-named the 'Takasago Volunteer Corps' (Jp. Takasago giyūdan, 高砂義勇団), so we became members of this unit. But the Takasago Volunteer Corps never once saw action in the field, we just performed manual labour, and the unit only had grunts with no rank. Nevertheless, the sixth and seventh Corps recruitments were different. In these

[10] 'Comfort Stations' refers to the 'Comfort Women', who were transported, with support from the Japanese military, from across the Asia-Pacific to provide sexual services to servicemen. Some were professional sex workers, but many more were forced or deceived by male recruiters to enter the service. Once inside the 'Comfort Station' system, it was very difficult to get out.

instances, the members first received three months' training at Taitung before they could ship out, and once on the battlefield they took part in the fighting, so by the end of 1943 they were seen as proper soldiers.

Because the Takasago unit's first experience on the battlefield was pretty easy, the time was short, and our treatment was good, a lot of people at the time felt that going abroad for the war wasn't so bad. My wages in the Philippines were forty-five yen per month, including five yen petty cash; whether married or a bachelor, you got the same. The unit issued me five yen per month in military script to buy stuff like tobacco or soap, and when I got back to Taiwan the army issued me a savings book (貯金薄). Once I was in Taiwan, I went to the post office and found that I had more than four hundred yen. At that time 150 kilos (一斗) of rice was about one yen and two *jiao*, so I'd made a pretty penny.

I also know an Amis man who died before he set foot on the boat for the war, and yet his family was awarded a placard that said 'Family of Honour'. But when I went to the Philippines, my family got nothing in compensation, and didn't get to put up a sign saying 'Serviceman's Household' (出征家庭).

What did you do for work after you returned to Taiwan?

When I arrived in Taiwan, apart from one month, November 1942, I was conscripted to work for the Japanese Army's anti-aircraft surveillance, and so I served at the 7th Anti-Aircraft Surveillance Station. The 7th was established in Taitung Town, on the highest point of Mt. Liyu (鯉魚山, in the city). Basically, the work for the station was keeping watch of boats coming and going along the coast and, using a telescope, if you detected some movement, or several boats advancing in a particular direction, you needed to immediately ring another station down the hill with the phone.

The 7th had two patrolmen and two soldiers keeping watch, and there were four other workers who carried out their duties there; two people formed a team, going to work three days and then resting one day. You were on the job day and night, twenty four hours per day continuously; each team kept watch for two hours and then took a one hour break, handing back and forth, two hours on again and one hour break—the work was really tough.

These patrolmen and soldiers in the station were really aggravating, always using us workers as errand boys. Every day they'd send us down the hill, three meals a

day, to get bentō boxes (with soup) from this canteen run by a Japanese man surnamed Ikushima (this was formerly next to the Provincial Hospital) and haul it back up to the station. Our rest from doing this delivery work wasn't much of a break, because sometimes we also were sent to the headquarters (near what is now Kuangming Road) to work. Even though my salary at the station was, at best, forty-five yen per month, and my treatment wasn't particularly poor, I still only did the job for three or four months and then quit to tend the farm back home—I didn't want to be that miserable anymore.

Were there any special measures taken in Taitung during war years?

From 1938, Taiwan started rationing, including the sale of pork.I remember different restrictions on goods, but the aboriginal people had fewer of these than the Japanese or the Han Chinese. Because we had our own rice paddies, in comparison with others we didn't run short of it. Also, we went fishing on our own, and we always had fish with every meal. Because clothing was rationed, we had to exchange ration vouchers for cloth, so it was very inconvenient in those days.

At that time, the Japanese initiated the Kōminka Movement (皇民化運動), so the Taitung District Office's Police Division set up a 'Special Emergency Unit (特別警備隊)'[11] (like today's Volunteer Police 義勇警察) in Taitung Town, and they specifically recruited Amis aboriginal people for it; there were five 'pailang' in that unit. Also, Taitung Town had a 'Civil Defence Unit' (警防團) comprised primarily of Japanese and Han Chinese people, with a few aboriginal people in it as well.

The 'Special Emergency Units' were sort of like support for the police, carrying firearms, and their training included the use of infantry rifles and heavy machine guns. They were unlike the youth militia (壯丁團) in that it wasn't important what police station authority they were affiliated with. The militia were managed by specific police station authorities, so only the people in a particular police station could enter such a group; at that time, Taitung Town's Paoting neighbourhood 'pailang' could form a single militia, and Hsinting's Amis organised yet another. Those who entered a militia were not issued rifles.

The Japanese organised the Special Emergency Units to handle exceptional situations; for example, if the Americans landed in Taiwan, these units would need

[11] The Japanese Metropolitan Police set up the Special Emergency Units or *Tokubetsu keibitai* in 1933 to aid ordinary Tokyo police with managing riots, protests, and other large-scale events. They were like a SWAT team, but with an added mission of suppressing dissent.

to collect weapons from their stations and go to the front line. These units were primarily composed of people in the youth militia; when there weren't enough people, they might conscript eighteen- to twenty-year-olds—young people of good health would participate—for a total of about one hundred and fifty men. Of this number, Peiting's Falangaw had one unit, and each unit had twelve people in it, which mainly included rifle training; Falan and Fengnian [Ashorai] were in the same unit.

After I quit my job at the 7th Anti-Aircraft Surveillance Station, I was busy with farming at home. The local police station reckoned I was unemployed, so they came to recruit me for the Special Emergency Unit. Consequently, in February or March 1943 I entered the unit. Every day for two months, after completing work in the morning, I'd go receive training in the afternoon, including Saturdays and Sundays, and so I never had any time off to speak of, although at night there was no training. Apart from training in the Japanese '38 rifle, I also did basic infantry, but most of it was running around to and fro with my gun. The Special Emergency Unit was an [civil service] obligation, so there wasn't any sort of compensation.

When I wasn't in training I stayed at home, busy with planting the rice on our one square kilometre plot. We used to have two square kilometres of rice paddy, but before I came back from the Philippines, about one half of the paddy was forcibly seized by the Japanese to plant sugar cane, in order to supply raw materials for the Falan Sugar Factory (now the Taitung Sugar Factory, on the west side of Taitung). Sugar cane is pretty easy to cultivate, but the profits are low. When aboriginal people sold the 'raw materials' (sugar cane), because they didn't understand the weight system, they were frequently short-changed by the Japanese. Sometimes they would hand over forty thousand *jin*, but the Japanese would say it was thirty thousand, so they were regularly ripped off. In comparison, although rice cultivation was more labour-intensive, it was easier to sell—at the very least, when the rice was harvested, one could eat it, so it was possible to survive.

In the war years, the Japanese launched the 'neighbourhood association' (隣組) system, but locally there was only the organisation and no real implementation, with only Japanese people and those Han Chinese who understood the Japanese language participating. But Taitung Town certainly carried out the Village Associations (部落會). Back then, in Taitung there were fifteen such associations, and where I lived it was the 15th Association; most of the members were Amis and Puyuma people, but it also included Han Chinese and one or two Japanese

people as well. The 15th Village Association was managed by the Hsinting Police Station, and the Association Head was Lu Jinshi, a Han Chinese man nominated by the Japanese.

Why did you later decide to become a volunteer in the Japanese Navy?

In March 1943, I was busy [working] at home. Then one day a police station patrolman asked me why I wasn't serving in the armed forces, and said if I didn't go, at some point I would be forced to perform 'public service'. I felt like this: I had already gone to the Philippines so if I volunteered for the army, I'd definitely be admitted, so I went for the navy instead. On the test, for ten questions I only answered five, and pretended for the rest that I couldn't do them, believing that if I didn't do them, I wouldn't be selected—I had no idea I would pass. At that time, loads of aboriginal people felt that being a soldier was a great honour, and that you would be treated well, so many of them went happily along to volunteer. But I figured they would force me and I had no choice.

Two days after I'd entered the forces, a district patrolman helped me change my name to 'Hanao Hiroshi', including changing my household registry to reflect this. At the time, I had no idea why I needed to change my name and didn't even know what this name meant. When I left Taitung, like the time I was shipped off to the Philippines, I received a 'comfort package', which included farewell letters and a thousand-stitch belt. This was the second time I got a belt, made by Japanese and Koreans, but not Taiwanese.

Please tell us about your life and the conditions while receiving training in the 3rd Volunteers' Navy Special Class.

On 1 August 1944 I joined as a volunteer for the 3rd Class, but until the end of the war I stayed entirely in Taiwan, never going abroad. There were roughly two thousand men in this class, and there were six classes of soldiers, including one thousand sailors and one thousand maintenance crew, mechanics, paymasters, sappers, and medics. When I entered the navy, I was made a sailor, and put into the 20th Regiment's 1st Training Group. […]

Sailors had to study the National Language (Japanese), sailing, artillery, communications, torpedoes, anti-aircraft fire, signalling, rowing, and so on. In Japanese, the regiment's five training groups (with two hundred and fifty students

altogether) all sat in the same class; in rowing, because one boat could only take twenty people, each group's fifty members had to split up so that they could learn. Consequently, the number of people going to class depended on the course organisation, but by and large students in the same group attended classes together.

When I first entered the navy, we got six and a half yen per month and were issued tobacco and soap. If the tobacco we got wasn't adequate, we could use our own allowance to buy more, and it was only two or three cents per pack, so it was really easy to get.

After I got six months of training in the navy, I started in the unit, and was recruited as a guard in the 4th class of the naval volunteers (January 1945). After four or five months, because air raids were becoming more frequent, the navy had to 'evacuate' (disperse) some of the naval units. After the 4th class finished its training, we were all integrated within the marines, but we remained at our naval base. Then, our unit was changed into a Japanese marines base, but I was still with the same group as before. Even though I was a marine, at this point my work was preparing trenches and fortifications at the port in case the US armed forces might land.

How did you feel when Japan lost the war? What was it like when your unit was disbanded?

When Japan surrendered, I was made a Private First Class. Because I never had to serve again, I thought I'd never have to be a third-class citizen again, so I was extremely happy. Because the regiment needed some time to hand over its arms, it was only in mid-October 1945 that we were finally dissolved. The first time I ever saw a one-hundred-yen note was when I got, in cash, my severance pay of roughly six hundred and fifty yen, and after that I went to my parents' house in Taitung. That money I got was gone not long after I got home, because during the war my family members were all evacuated to Mulivelivek and they all had to be transported back home, so the family used it all.

Because the money from my service was all used up, I never to this day participated in any group seeking compensation. I hear that, in recent years, a lot

of Taiwanese who served in the Japanese armed forces have been asking for money, or so A Taiwanese person named Chen Fa (陳發) told me this year (1996).[12]

What was your life like after Taiwan was handed over to the Republic of China?

Not long after I got back to Taitung, one day there was a Taiwanese person (I don't remember his name or where he lived) who came to the house, and he told me, in Japanese: if I signed up now for the [Chinese] military, I could rake in over six hundred yen per month, given thatI had already been a soldier for the Japanese army, had experience, and was treated well. But he didn't explain how long I would have to serve. At that time I thought, I don't understand Mandarin Chinese. The language is different, and I was afraid that I wouldn't be able to communicate in the Chinese army, so I decided not to go. That Taiwanese man went off to propagandise among each of the neighbourhoods, and in my own three people went to serve as Chinese soldiers. Later two of them quietly returned, one of them was abandoned by the military and left behind in mainland China.

During the 2.28 Incident, some folks who had been in the security forces and youth militia came and encouraged me to take part. Although I did at first, I thought I'd better look after my own neighbourhood, so I changed my mind and came home.

After Taiwan became part of the Republic because my family's farm was near the Maoshan area (along the way to the Taitung Hsin-chan railway stop), to make rice cultivation easier we moved house. I got married around that time and just stuck to farming, and never did any cash-cropping—nor did I take up any additional profession. The local cash crop was betel palm, and most were planted by 'pailang' (Han Chinese). Only recently have Amis people started cultivating betel leaves (the leaves used to wrap the betel nut).

Also, I have this relative named Huang Zhongjia, who used to have a lot of land, but because he only used it for rice cultivation, during the [1949] Land Reform (耕地三七五減租) and the [1951] redistribution of land policies (公地放領) at the start of Taiwan's retrocession to the Republic, he was left with just about ten square kilometres of rice paddies. But this land was sold for investments by a distant relation named Guo, so there is nothing left.

[12] Chen Fa was interviewed previously by Caroline Hui-yu Ts'ai. He was recruited in 1940 to become a patrolman for the Japanese armed forces, where he served for five years on Hainan Island. In the 1990s he joined a movement to seek compensation from the Japanese government for his work.

Were there any changes in the neighbourhood after the retrocession of Taiwan to the Republic that you think are worth mentioning?

A few decades after Taiwan became part of the ROC, the KMT government eliminated the village headman system among the mountain communities. Even though my neighbourhood has no headman, we still look up to our elders, and anyone who is learned or intelligent is treated with respect.

Under the KMT government, aboriginal people adopted Han Chinese surnames, and this has gradually become a problem. The reason for adopting them is that our people use their Chinese names for doing business. Because the Chinese surname 'Wang' (王) is easy to write, our female head of household, my aunt, chose it. A lot of aboriginal families were called the 'Takasago people' (高砂族), so they chose 'Gao' (高) as a surname. Some people near my family home chose Chinese surnames that have a Japanese surname equivalent, like 'Lin / Hayashi' (林). But there were no rules for changing surnames, so we've ended up with people in the same extended family with different family names—like my mother's side surnamed Lin and her sister's side surnamed Wu.[13] Although one generation understands this situation, in the next things might become unclear, so you might not realise who is part of your family and who is not.

And another thing: when Taiwan became part of the Republic of China, I thought I'd never have to be a third-class citizen again, and in the years since then, aboriginal people are still called 'hayseeds'.[14] In terms of economic power, from the Japanese period to the present, we are still behind the Han Chinese. As for work, even though we graduate from high school, we still can't get into public service; for example, in the Taitung municipal offices, no matter how many people they employ, they'll only appoint three aboriginal people—but if it reflected our proportion of the population, there should actually be dozens. Thus, the government superficially doesn't practise discrimination, but we aboriginal people are still third-class citizens. The government only *says* it doesn't discriminate, that it wants to improve conditions for us, but it just can't do it.

[13] Bearing in mind Amis matrilineality, in Western contexts this would be comparable to two brothers with the same father bearing different surnames. If lineage is confused or forgotten, this has implications for the Amis restrictions against marrying cousins, for example.

[14] Literally, 'sweet potato seeds' (藩仔). This is a pejorative term used by Han Chinese people against aboriginal Taiwanese.

I am proud to be an aboriginal person. In order to resolve the issues, we face, I think we must do it through educational efforts.