

14 The *Yamatodamashi* of the Takasago volunteers of Taiwan

A reading of the postcolonial situation

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Through their extensive colonization, which began in the late nineteenth century, the Japanese acquired considerable experience in interacting with the peoples of Asia and Oceania. What did these encounters mean for the Japanese colonials? And what has this contact meant for those who lived under Japanese colonial rule?

With the exception of Hokkaido and Okinawa, Taiwan was the first colonial territory acquired by Japan as a result of war with another nation. Among the territories colonized by Japan, Taiwan's colonial period (1895–1945) lasted the longest. Unlike most postcolonial situations, however, the Taiwanese people have retained a relatively amiable attitude toward Japan after the end of colonial rule. This attitude is frequently mentioned in travel accounts and guidebooks written by the Japanese who visited Taiwan after the war (for example, Shiba 1994; Daiyamondo Sha 1997). In the few scholarly writings dealing with Japanese colonial rule, this attitude has often been held in contrast with postcolonial Korean sentiments toward the Japanese (Tsurumi 1984; Peattie 1996). These comparisons tend to search for an explanation of this difference in the dissimilar ruling methods used in the colonies. This chapter will address the issue from a different direction: through the use of testimonies and confessions made in the postcolonial era, I intend to delineate the complicated struggle for humanity under colonialism and the cultural multiplicity in its aftermath.

The ethnic composition of postwar Taiwan is rather complicated, with Han and Austronesians constituting the two major ethnic categories.¹ This chapter will limit its scope to the non-Han peoples, namely the Austronesians, who have been praised by some Japanese as “the most friendly of peoples toward Japan in the whole world.” (Ishibashi 1992).² It is especially noteworthy that Austronesian veterans of World War II whom I have interviewed often proudly emphasized their *Yamatodamashi* (literally, “soul of the Yamato people”) or *Nipponseishin* (“Japanese spirit”). Such terms are still currently used in their discourses, even as they have grown obsolete in postwar Japanese society.

The subject of this chapter is a group of these Taiwan Austronesians known as the “Takasago-Giyutai,” who volunteered for service in the Japanese military during World War II. In the 1990s, five books giving accounts of the

Takasago-Giyutai were published. All of these were written by Japanese authors, one of whom is a nonfiction writer and the rest amateurs. Working without knowledge of one another's investigation, these writers conducted research on an identical topic and gathered quite similar data. I myself have interviewed some members of the Takasago-Giyutai while doing fieldwork; as the results of my investigation are in agreement with those recorded in the above-mentioned books, I will use only texts from the later sources for my analysis.

Although the establishment of the Takasago-Giyutai was a clandestine event during the war and an investigation into its historical details is an extremely urgent task, this chapter's use of contemporary oral testimonies does not have historical reconstruction as its major concern. Rather, it examines how the complex messages contained in these materials can be appropriately appreciated in the present day, some 50 years after the end of the war. Some materials offer reminiscences of war experiences, others present claims and dilemmas concerning personal identity, yet others depict the "mutual gazing" encounters between colonizer and colonized in a postcolonial situation. Most significantly, the discourses and conceptualizations regarding *Yamatodamashi* are a linkage running through the prewar, wartime, and postwar periods, and will offer some insights into forms of resistance in the wake of two successive colonialisms. By analyzing the experiences of colonial encounter and interaction in terms of Japanese culture *vis-à-vis* the culture of Others, this chapter will attempt to answer the questions posed earlier.

The last returning imperial soldier

A piece of unusual news at the end of 1974 captured the world's attention: a Japanese soldier was discovered on the Island of Morotai, where he had survived alone for 30 years (Sato 1987). According to the Indonesian soldier who found him, the Japanese soldier lived in a small hut built in the mountains and began each day with exercise and worship of the Japanese Emperor.

After being discovered, however, this last imperial soldier chose to return not to Japan but to his home in Hualian, Taiwan. Born a member of the Ami tribe, he had been drafted by the Japanese government in 1943 at the age of 25. In the army, his name was changed to Nakamura Akio. Upon his return, the 57-year-old soldier discovered that Taiwan had been liberated from Japanese colonial rule and had been taken over by the Nationalist Chinese government from the mainland, which had been defeated in China's civil war and had retreated to its remaining island stronghold. In the recompilation of Taiwan's household registration data after the war, Nakamura's name was arbitrarily changed by government officials to the Chinese Lee Kuang-huei. Hence, in the Japanese press the incident was referred to as the "Nakamura Ittohei event," while in Taiwan it was called the "Lee Kuang-huei event." In both news accounts, the old soldier's original Ami name, Suniyon, was largely

ignored. Suniyon died of lung cancer 4 years after his return – the result of alcoholism and a three-pack-a-day smoking habit – and thus his personal testimony was lost to history. It has been reported that he was totally unwilling to divulge anything to journalists (Sato 1987).

Suniyon belonged to an Austronesian people once referred to as “raw barbarians” in Chinese. Japanese colonizers used the term *Takasago* to refer to these Austronesian tribes, Taiwan’s earliest inhabitants. Over the span of 400 years, successive inroads into the western plains of Taiwan were made by the Dutch, the Spanish, and the Han Chinese, leading to the assimilation or disappearance of ethnic groups in those regions. The Austronesian tribes in the mountains and on the eastern coast were able to retain their autonomous ways of life and they continued to hold on to their respective tribal territories. They frequently engaged in small-scale intertribal conflicts in order to safeguard their hunting grounds and ward off invasions, and some practiced headhunting.

Once Taiwan became a colony in 1895, however, the Japanese education and assimilation policies began to coerce the Austronesians into abandoning their nonliterate, subsistence lifestyle. Japanese anthropological research in Taiwan also started soon after colonization, and the Austronesians were divided according to language and social customs into nine ethnic groups. Significantly, the onset of colonial rule also prompted the nine tribes to adopt a common language – Japanese.

The pervasiveness and success of Japanese-language education was a major feature of Japan’s colonial policy in Taiwan (Tsurumi 1984). Compulsory education for the *Takasago* peoples consisted of only 4 years of primary school, but even this limited schooling afforded more than 80 percent of children the chance to read and write.³ The curricula were devoted to such practical subjects as horticulture, forestry, and mathematics, but the greatest emphasis was placed on the learning and recitation of the *Chokugo* (the Emperor’s edict) as part of Emperor worship. Especially after the declaration of war with China in 1937 and with the proclamation of the National Mobilization Act in 1938, exaltation of military virtues and allegiance to the nation and the Emperor were given the highest priority in schools.

The *Kominka* (“transforming colonials into royal subjects”) movement, initiated in Taiwan in the late 1930s, worked speedily to assimilate the native population by having locals adopt Japanese names, speak Japanese, and worship the Emperor. The colonial government instilled in the Austronesians the notion that the highest spiritual achievement was to be attained by serving the Emperor and the nation, even if that meant sacrificing one’s own life.

Following the escalation of war, the *Takasago* were mobilized for labor and warfare in the South Pacific. In 1942 the military chief of Taiwan, who also served as the supreme commander of the Philippines, began calling up *Takasago* youths to serve in the South Seas (Kondo 1996). In all, eight corps of *Takasago-Giyutai* were dispatched; also, there were other “special volunteers” units enlisted by the Army, Navy, and Air Force. All told, the

number of Takasago youths who volunteered was at least 8,000,⁴ a significant percentage of a total Takasago population numbering less than 200,000.

The Takasago-Giyutai fought in battles in the Philippines, New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Rabaul, Morotai, and other parts of the South Pacific theater. At first they were assigned to transportation and supply divisions. With drastic changes of condition as the war progressed, they were then deployed as riflemen for front-line combat. In the final stages of the war, fifteen officers and forty-five Takasago-Giyutai crew members of the "Kaoru Air Force Attack Corps" (organized in Taiwan before the famous "Kamikaze Attack Corps") "fuselage-landed" their planes on Leyte Island in the Philippines in a suicidal attack on advancing Allied troops.

In Japan's historical documentation of the war, the Takasago-Giyutai are rarely mentioned. Their exact number, battle sites, and military activities remain unclear. One reason for this lack of documentation was the widespread destruction and misrepresentation of records due to fear of impending war crimes trials. The commanding officers of the Takasago-Giyutai were mostly graduates of Nakano Academy, which was founded in 1940 for the express purpose of training guerrilla troops. They had received special instructions (which included the use of poison gas), and were obliged not to divulge any information about their missions. Hence, all things related to this school and its activities are shrouded in mystery. Furthermore, members of the Takasago-Giyutai used Japanese names during the war, making it difficult to separate them from genuine Japanese soldiers. Before its demise at the end of 1943, *Riban no Tomo* (*Friends of Aborigine Administration*), the Japanese government publication most concerned with aboriginal affairs, carried just one item related to the enlistment of Takasago volunteers. That report refers to the battle in the Bataan Peninsula, the only victory of the Takasago corps during its existence. Finally, those who survived and returned to Taiwan were dispersed among various tribes and their Japanese names were replaced by Chinese ones in the reregistration of households. Their "collaboration" with the Japanese also made them subject to indiscriminate arrest and prosecution as "Han traitors,"⁵ so that the surviving Takasago-Giyutai members were unwilling and afraid to speak for themselves. In 1987, the lifting of the 40-year-old "Emergency Act" removed many constraints on the freedom of speech and thought in Taiwan, and accounts of the Takasago-Giyutai began to appear.⁶ The history of the Takasago-Giyutai, long buried and forgotten, is beginning to be disinterred.

Memories recalled and testimonies proffered

The following analysis deals with texts published after 1992: Takashi Ishibashi's *Illegitimate Sons of the Old Colony: Soldiers of the Takasago-Giyutai Today* (1992); Choshyu Kadowaki's *The Takasago-Giyutai of Taiwan: The Spirit Never Dies* (1994); Kazunori Tsuchibashi's *Loyalty Unsurpassed: Soldiers of the Takasago-Giyutai of Taiwan* (1994); and Eidai Hayashi's *The Fifth Takasago-Giyutai of*

Taiwan: Name Rosters, Military Savings Accounts, and Testimonies by Japanese (1994) and his other book *Testimonies: Takasago Volunteers* (1998). All four authors collected their accounts directly from surviving Takasago-Giyutai members and their relatives.

Among the cited authors, only Hayashi is a journalist. Before he took up his research project, he had never heard of the Takasago-Giyutai, even though he was an authority on World War II history. While interviewing Korean “volunteers” sent to the South Pacific during the war, he learned of its existence and started to make inquiries. The other three authors were all first-time writers. Tsuchibashi had never been to the battlefield. Born and raised in Taiwan, he was the son of an official in charge of aboriginal affairs. When he revisited Taiwan after retirement, he was surprised by accounts of the Giyutai and began recording what he heard. Kadowaki was a war veteran who had served in Manchuria and was a member of a veterans’ society of soldiers returned from Mainland China. Ishibashi must also have been in the battles on the mainland; he was detained in Siberia for 5 years after the war. Like Kadowaki, he met some Takasago-Giyutai members by chance while in the mountains of Taiwan. Moved by their stories, he began to write down their accounts.

In all, testimonies by twenty Japanese officers (from interviews conducted in Japan or manuscripts written by them) and thirty members of the Takasago-Giyutai interviewed in Taiwan are gathered in these five books. All of the interviewees were quite elderly when their accounts were collected, and many have passed away since the publication of the books. In their recollections, the Japanese officers were full of praise and gratitude for the Takasago-Giyutai. The following are typical examples.

Suzuki Masami (Major, medical officer of the 18th Army) said:

December 8, 1943. Yamamoto’s troops holding the Buna area on the north coast of New Guinea were all killed (“gyokusai” in Japanese) ... These troops were principally made up of units from maintenance and transportation divisions, and many of the men were members of the Takasago-Giyutai.

Major Yamamoto’s final communication to the headquarters was safely delivered by a member of the Takasago-Giyutai. Yamamoto praised the Takasago’s expertise in jungle combat, their great spiritual strength, their fine-tuned senses of hearing and sight, their alertness in detecting enemy movements and airplanes, and their sharpshooting skills. In jungle combats in the South Seas, they demonstrated an ability several times greater than that of the Japanese soldiers ...

In New Guinea, where the coasts are tropical while snow accumulates on the high mountains, Japanese soldiers had great difficulties, many succumbing to overexertion and passing out by the roadside. It is no exaggeration to say that only the Takasago soldiers maintained their fighting strength. Their spirit held the group together through combat,

re-supplies, and marches. Many units frequently requested Takasago men. They had become the eyes, hands, and legs of their respective units. As we were losing the war, the Takasago were decimated along with Japanese regulars. No one, officer or private, in the three divisions of our 18th Army ever expressed dissatisfaction with the Takasago soldiers.

(Kadowaki 1994: 167–73)

Naoto Yahaneda (First Lieutenant, 27th Commando Materiel Arsenal) also mentioned:

They were very well-disciplined and obeyed their superiors. I trusted them very much. As volunteers, their morale was high. In comparison, the Han Taiwanese of the Agricultural Service Corps were ... untrustworthy. When they were assigned to my unit, I would request they be sent back at once ...

Some of the Takasago-Giyutai personnel had tattoos on their foreheads. Previously I would have thought this a sign of savagery, but I came to the discovery that they were braver than Japanese soldiers.

(Hayashi 1994: 290–1)

Tamotsu Ueno (Squad Leader, 5th Takasago-Giyutai) had this to say:

It was only because of them that I survived in the foodless marshes. In order to pass through these areas, many soldiers had to abandon their guns. In the marshes one had to keep moving even while defecating. The marsh water we drank was contaminated by floating corpses and many of us consequently contracted dysentery ... I ordered three Giyutai men in my squad to look after Second Lieutenant Yahaneda, who was suffering from dysentery and cholera. They obeyed my order readily and took turns carrying the sick. They accomplished their job under circumstances of extreme food shortage. Seeing such all-out and selfless efforts, I had to bow to them in respect, even though they were my subordinates.

(Hayashi 1994: 267)

Yozo Komata (Leader, Saito Squad and the 2nd Giyutai), in particular, continually expressed his inner thoughts through religious ritual after the war. In his own words:

I was involved from the start in the planning and organization of guerrilla warfare by the Takasago in New Guinea. Up to this day, I have never for a single moment forgotten their *ongi* ("beneficence"). I am alive today only because they managed to obtain life-sustaining food when no supplies were forthcoming. Whenever I think of how we ate, slept, and talked together at the time, I always feel as if we had been very close in our previous lives. On every New Year's Day I would lead my family to make

bows in the direction of Taiwan. I light candles on the Buddhist altar at home to offer prayers to members of the Giyutai.

(Kadowaki 1994: 145)

In addition to the themes touched upon in these accounts, the issues of military marching routes and combat strategies are also the major preoccupations of the officers' reminiscences. But these have to be skipped over here because they are not the main concern of this chapter. In any case, when summing up their feelings about the Takasago-Giyutai, these officers almost unanimously mentioned the Austronesians' *Yamatodamashi* and asserted that "they have become Japanese." As Tatemichi Omori (a correspondent attached to the army) maintained: "Crew members of the Kaoru air battle unit were all Takasago youths. They were humble, honest, disciplined, and intelligent. They out-Japanesed the Japanese" (Tsuchibashi 1994: 240). And Nariai Masaharu (*Leader, Odaka Scouting Squad*) had this to say: "They had no fear for death. They had become completely Japanese" (Hayashi 1994: 331). Similarly, Keisuke Hori, a military physician, stated: "There was about a squadron of Takasago in the Solomon Islands. They were truly brave, and were even more loyal to the Emperor than the Japanese" (Tsuchibashi 1994: 188). Shin Moriyama (Instructor to the First Takasago-Giyutai) recalled the transformation in his feelings about the Takasago-Giyutai: "When I was first appointed to instruct the Takasago soldiers, I was a little apprehensive. But when I actually saw them, I found out their skin color was also fair, their features good-looking, and they didn't waste time on idle conversations. Their hearts were ablaze with the *Yamatodamashi* spirit of patriotism and loyalty to the Emperor. In this, they were much superior to new recruits from Japan itself" (Tsuchibashi 1944: 261).

After their contacts with the Takasago in the battlefields, the Japanese officers arrived at the judgment that they had not only metamorphosed into Japanese but had even surpassed the Japanese in certain characteristics. Such estimations are quite unusual; to have "become Japanese" was already such high praise by their standards that surpassing the Japanese must have been an extraordinary compliment.

The manner in which this praise was expressed must be examined in the context of the colony at the end of Japanese rule. Subsequent to the imperial government's proclamation of the "National Spirit Mobilization Act," attainment of the status of Emperor's subject was lauded as the highest value, both in Japan itself and in the colonies. Meanwhile, with the colonial policies prevailing in Taiwan, the Takasago were stigmatized as barbarians and simpletons, and their social status was extremely low. Consequently, "becoming the Emperor's subject" – in other words, to be Japanese – was a peerless achievement repeatedly propagandized by the colonizer. With regard to the question of whether the Takasago could actually be Japanese or "the Emperor's subjects," however, it appears that the colonial government's attitude at the time was ambiguous and unclear. In contrast, the testimonies

of former Japanese military officers clearly assert that the Takasago could and did become Japanese, even more Japanese than the Japanese themselves.

The concept of *Yamatodamashi* was sometimes alternatively expressed by the terms *Nipponseishin* ("Japanese spirit") or *Nippondamashi* ("Japanese soul") in wartime documents; these phrases frequently appeared in government propaganda and the statements of officials, opinion leaders, and teachers. However, the term *Yamatodamashi* itself was not derived from the Emperor's sacred edicts. Nor was it an official creed contained in school textbooks or even administrative papers. Nevertheless, it was almost ceaselessly used and evoked. Its meaning is roughly "loyalty to the Emperor and the nation," as one of the cited officers puts it, and it implies the supreme greatness of Japanese people. As such, *Yamatodamashi* was a very important spiritual guidepost during the war, even though its interpretation could be stretched one way or another. As will be shown later in this chapter, the term is also of great significance to members of the Takasago-Giyutai, and it is repeatedly invoked in their testimonies.

In contrast to the Japanese officers' statements, the most salient themes in the Takasago volunteers' testimonies are the circumstances surrounding their departure from home and their encounters in the battlefield; the latter including the distress of Japanese soldiers and the revolting cases of Japanese cannibalism which the Takasago witnessed. Among the spiritual highs and lows expressed in the accounts, the Takasago unanimously recall excitement at the time when they volunteered their services, for after all that was a moment of supreme glory.

Attol Taukin (Akimoto Takeji in Japanese name, from the Tayal tribe, Army special volunteer) stated:

When the war broke out, I was the only son in the family. My father and other villagers didn't want me to go to war. But I was fascinated by the bravery of the Giyutai. I cut my finger and with the blood wrote a letter volunteering for service. I vowed to His Majesty the Emperor that I would devote my humble self to Him as a national (*kokumin*). After writing this I felt an overwhelming sense of calm.

(Kadowaki 1994: 270)

Buyan Nawi (a.k.a. Tokunaga Mitsuo, from the Tayal tribe, Fifth Takasago-Giyutai) also said:

When my second elder brother volunteered for the Third Giyutai, my father did not shed a tear – he encouraged my brother to serve the country with all his heart. My mother's reaction was more complex; she seemed both joyous and sorrowful. Since ancient times, Tayal men have faced death in battle resolutely, and we would never feel sad about it. When I joined the Fifth Giyutai and was ready to go to war, the whole tribe threw a big farewell party for me and the dancing continued till daybreak. I

made my decision to do great deeds for Japan and the Emperor. We Tayal people have always been brave. We have never been fearful of going to war. We regard it as honorable.”

(Hayashi 1998: 190–1)

In these two cases, it is evident that the Takasago young men's willingness to volunteer was strong, even if their families had different attitudes toward the matter. They were convinced that they were doing this “for Japan and the Emperor,” and it was something a “national” was obliged to carry out. As a matter of fact, these ideas were new and foreign concepts to tribal societies, having been inculcated by the colonizer. Walis Piho (a.k.a. Yonegawa Nobuo, Second Takasago-Giyutai), a Tayal from a different settlement, made it very clear:

We also organized a youth corps in our village of Kawanakajima. Our first task was to learn Japanese. Our mother tongue had been forbidden. The “Speak the National Language Movement” had been promoted in the countryside and police officers were keen on instilling the Japanese Spirit in us. Remarkably, when we began to speak only Japanese we felt quite at ease, as if we had been Japanese all along. We took up military exercises in the Youth Corps every day and night, and we had to recite silently to ourselves the Emperor's *Kyoikuchokugo* (“Edict on Education”) and *Gunjinchokuyu* (“Edict on Military Personnel”). On the day of our departure, all of the tribe came to see us off. They stood along the roadsides waving the *Hinomaru* flag. I felt extremely proud to be a Japanese military man!

(Hayashi 1998: 129)

Walis Piho's reasons for volunteering are significant: “By volunteering for military service, I intended to erase the stain of treachery and regain our honor.⁷ If we could become loyal citizens, then we would be able to be the equals of Japanese.”

In other words, they were not yet “nationals” at the time; regardless of how the concept of *national* and *nation* were conceived by them, they were making great efforts to attain a status equal to the Japanese. Interestingly, these efforts were complemented by an indigenous respect for bravery in the battle mentioned by Buyan Nawi.

When they arrived in the fighting zones of the southwestern Pacific, members of the Takasago-Giyutai, unlike the Japanese officers cited earlier, were placed in a very low position in the military hierarchy. Therefore, they were not very knowledgeable about the strategies of the entire army, or the number of personnel, their location, and so forth. What they were certain about was their mission. In their reminiscences, they consistently dwell upon their perceptions of the Japanese in the battlefield.

Prin Suyan (Japanese name Yasuoka Tsugio, from the Tayal tribe, Third Takasago-Giyutai) emphasized:

The Japanese army was very strong. The Japanese and the Takasago-Giyutai were equal in spirit, and we were not outrun by the Japanese soldiers. When we moved into the jungles, the Japanese got mired down while we marched forward bravely, wielding our traditional knives. We were hailed with the chant “Taiwanese Army, Taiwanese Army.” ... The military spirit of the Takasago-Giyutai was highly admirable, it was on a par with the Japanese spirit.

(Hayashi 1998: 164–5)

The aforementioned Buyan Nawi had this to say:

Whenever the Japanese officers drank unboiled water they would suffer diarrhea. I climbed up a coconut tree and brought down two or three coconuts for them to drink. Sometimes I would gather wild vines, cut them to drain water into a canteen. Eventually, the Japanese soldiers began to salute me, saying, “Taiwanese Army, please pick me a coconut!” This gave me quite a start.

When I was moving alone in the jungles, I witnessed many incidents in which Japanese soldiers killed their comrades and ate their flesh. Even though they were the Emperor’s soldiers, they would still lose their senses when no food was available. Even the high-ranking officers partook of the corpses of their own comrades. Survival is the human instinct of first priority, and anything could be done for its sake. While consuming the flesh of your comrades, the human conscience was held at bay.

(Hayashi 1998: 199)

Pawan Taimo (Japanese name Sato Toshiaki, from the Tayal tribe, the Marine Corps, Fourth Takasago-Giyutai) recalled:

On the island, we were in charge of patrolling and pacifying the natives. We taught them agricultural skills and gave the children lessons in Japanese language. We also learned their language and became good friends with the chief, who accompanied us on patrols.

(Hayashi 1998: 176)

When referring to the Japanese officers, he reflected:

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

birds, we would always examine the food inside their stomachs. Plants edible to birds are equally safe for humans.

(Hayashi 1998: 176–8)

These recollections clearly demonstrate the shock and even scorn which the Takasago felt over the actions of their Japanese superiors. With respect to status hierarchy, the former had to absolutely obey and serve the latter. Hence the shock when the Japanese “salute me” and “lose their senses.” The Takasago’s superiors might be experts in military strategies, but they were embarrassingly incapable of coping with basic survival needs. On the other hand, these narratives also indicate the Takasago’s confidence in their own culture, which proved superior to that of the Japanese in helping them to adapt to battlefield environments and survive in the jungle.

Talpan Pukiringan (Japanese name Gakita Kaizo, from the Paiwan tribe, squadron chief in the Fifth Takasago-Giyutai) observed some changes in Japanese officers after the war:

When the armistice was declared, Japanese soldiers lost their status and became ordinary civilians. One of our superiors, who had inflicted corporal punishment upon us without justification, now began to treat us nicely, softening his speech and flattering us. We were so happy to be able to strike him back. In this hellish world people tend to show their weakest points and do the worst things, especially when in a group. On our return trip, platoon leader Ueno Tamotsu knelt down on the ship’s deck to offer us his apology. One of the Han soldiers from Taiwan told him to go jump overboard.

(Hayashi 1998: 250–2)

Incidentally, the platoon leader mentioned in this account has also offered his own testimony (cited earlier), although he did not say anything about his kneeling down to apologize. There are other discrepancies: almost all members of the Takasago-Giyutai talked about cannibalism as their most distressing experience during the war, while none of the Japanese officers’ recollections mention the practice.

Arucu’ucu Rava (Japanese name Noguchi Yoshikichi, from the Paiwan tribe, First Takasago-Giyutai) continued to suffer from this experience after he returned from the war:

As a human being, this is the most shameful thing I have ever done. We ate the flesh of an Australian soldier. On the brink of death from starvation, people are driven to desperate measures. This is the regret of my life ... After several months without normal food, the dead enemy began to look appetizing. Many Japanese soldiers fell upon a corpse and carved the flesh with knives and ate it raw. Later the corpse was cooked until only white bones were left. In retrospect, it was extremely cruel,

but a man has no choice if he wants to guarantee his own survival. If I had been alone, perhaps I would not have done such a thing, but there was a sense of security committing such a crime in a group.

(Hayashi 1998: 91, 104)

Walis Piho makes a similar confession:

Driven by hunger, I didn't think of it as human flesh, but rather as the meat of a wild boar. If one had done it by oneself, there would have been revulsion of the conscience. But since all of the squad took part, nothing seemed out of the ordinary . . . In our weakened state, a lick of salt could revive a man. With such pervasive starvation, a soldier with rice or salt was in danger of being robbed and killed by his comrades.

(Hayashi 1998: 135-8)

After returning to Taiwan, the Takasago were unable to share these painful experiences with others. Ruraden Ramakao (Japanese name Kawano Eiichi, from the Paiwan tribe, Second Takasago-Giyutai) recalls:

Forty of us disembarked at Kaohsiung and were treated to a welcome by representatives of the women's association, students, and many other citizens waving *Hinomaru* flags. The bereaved wanted to know how their sons and brothers had died. I could not bring myself to tell them about the hunger, disease, or cannibalism. I could only say they had died bravely in battle. I still have nightmares. In particular, I dream of a terrifying hunger which drives me in a state of stupefaction to seek food, until I am awakened by the image of eating an enemy's flesh.

(Hayashi 1998: 86-7)

In addition to being unable to share these unspeakable experiences, some Takasago were also filled with shame when faced with the bereaved relatives of their deceased fellow volunteers. Zakara (Japanese name Nakano Mitsuo, from the Amis tribe, Third Takasago-Giyutai) put it this way:

I would prefer to have died along with my comrades in New Guinea. I am the only survivor and this turn of events has put a heavy burden on my conscience. Nothing has been more excruciating than facing others in the tribe who have lost their beloved in the war. I have always felt guilty about my comrades who died in battle.

(Hayashi 1998: 160)

Returning home after the war, the Giyutai members found a society that had undergone tremendous changes. In the first place, they had to deal with yet another foreign political regime and learn another language. This was entirely unexpected. Iyon Habas (Japanese name Kato Naoichi, from the Bunun tribe, Seventh Takasago-Giyutai) recalled:

Of the 800 members of the Seventh Takasago-Giyutai, only a few more than 100 survived the war. On our return to Taiwan, Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang army regarded us as Japanese soldiers – that is, the enemy. The volunteers were especially singled out and treated as Japanese collaborators and traitors to the nation. Even our families and relatives were afraid to mention the fact that we had been in the Japanese army. We were constantly fearful of being arrested and convicted of crimes. Such were the dangerous lives of the Takasago-Giyutai's surviving members.

(Hayashi 1998: 277–83)

Artul Rava, cited earlier, concurred:

Under the post-war Chiang Kai-shek regime, we couldn't mention the fact that we had volunteered for the Japanese Army. I removed my wartime picture from a photograph album and carried it on my person. We had to cover up our past. It was a hard, repressive time.

(Hayashi 1998: 89–92)

After the war, members of the Takasago-Giyutai found themselves trapped between old and new regimes. On one hand, they had to endure repression from their new rulers. But what made them most unhappy was that the successor to their former colonizer – the postwar Japanese government – abandoned them, and for more than 40 years delayed compensating them for their service by claiming that they were not of Japanese nationality. Walis Piho explained:

I couldn't believe it when I heard the Emperor's proclamation of surrender on August 15th. I fell on the ground, hitting it with my hands, and felt completely at a loss. We the Takasago-Giyutai did not lose the war; what happened was merely that the Emperor had put up his hands in surrender. I do not harbor hatred for Japan. I did what a volunteer Japanese soldier should do. It was an honor In New Guinea our monthly salary was 45 yen, and it is a matter of course to repay us. The Japanese government should deal with this sincerely. At the minimum it should offer us thanks.

(Hayashi 1998: 140–2)

At the time of the interviews, the Takasago-Giyutai members had complicated and contradictory feelings about their situation. Although they expressed sadness at their abandonment, they were proud of their *Yamatodamashi*. Talpan Pukiringan described his feelings in this way:

After we returned to Taiwan, the Japanese military did not pay any tribute (*aisatsu*) to the Takasago-Giyutai, a negligence beyond my comprehension. As a Japanese soldier returning from the New Guinea battles, certainly

I deserved at least some sort of appreciation or thanks. Is losing the war reason enough for such acts of irresponsibility? I was saddened by this. At that point I came to think of the war as a wasted effort. I could, though, sympathize with the viewpoint of the Japanese military. Because of the defeat, they were at a loss as to what was to be done. It means a great deal that the youths of Taiwan, inculcated with the Japanese spirit, went to the war for Japan and sacrificed their lives. As I think about what that war meant to us, an emptiness invades my heart. The Japanese government claims that Taiwanese are of a different nationality, but during the war we were true Japanese soldiers. I hope this is recognized. (Hayashi 1998: 252–3)

According to Iyon Habao:

Three brothers in my family joined the Takasago-Giyutai (my two younger brothers both died in the war) and were willing to sacrifice our lives. At the time, I went to the war as a Japanese national, and was fighting alongside soldiers from Japan. We have sued the Japanese government not for the sake of money, but rather to redress the injustice done to us, who, being equally Japanese, have nevertheless been given the cold shoulder. It has been almost forty years since the war ended, and yet the matter [of compensation] has not been addressed. This is intolerable. I can only say – what a shame! In post-war Taiwan, especially among the Takasago, the Japanese spirit has been highly regarded Loyalty to the country and safeguarding the security of the entire people – this is the *Yamatodamashi*, and perhaps the *Bushido* (“way of the samurai”) too! The Takasago-Giyutai were truer Japanese than the Japanese. I am still Japanese in spirit; I have the *Yamatodamashi* in my soul. Among the Takasago people of Taiwan, the *Yamatodamashi* will never die. (Hayashi 1998: 282–3)

Takasago-Giyutai volunteers’ own assessments of the past often emphasize that they are genuine Japanese who possess *Yamatodamashi*. Artul Rava told Hayashi: “Please tell the Japanese people there are Japanese like us here in Taiwan. We members of the Takasago-Giyutai are perhaps more Japanese than the Japanese” (Hayashi 1998: 89–92). These claims to being 100 percent Japanese soldiers or possessing the *Yamatodamashi* appear repeatedly in the self-evaluations of Giyutai members from various tribal backgrounds. Confronted with these assertions, some of the Japanese writers reacted with puzzlement while others expressed appreciation.

History, texts, and authors

Although the experience of the war naturally varied from person to person, the foregoing narratives concerning the same war zone (the southwestern

Pacific) contain a number of significant common themes. The members of Takasago-Giyutai, despite being drawn from different ethnic groups and tribes, faced the same circumstances before, during, and after the war. Moreover, all their narratives were presented in fluent Japanese. Consequently, no significant ethnic or personal differences distinguish one account from the other. Their common themes can be divided into two categories: reminiscences about actual wartime conditions and postwar retrospection. These focal narratives contain mutual images of “the Other” held by the colonizer and the colonized, images that illuminate the complicated interrelations between the two parties. Clearly, the Takasago’s repeated claims to be Japanese and possess *Yamatodamashi* complicate attempts to define what being Japanese means.

It is significant that in the cited texts the authors all use the term “testimonies” to refer to the narrative records. However, *shogen*, the Japanese equivalent of testimonies, broadly speaking means true words. It is not limited in its connotation to statements made in a court of law. Now, to whom are these testimonies addressed? And what are their goals? The answers to these questions depend on how we choose to look at these texts. Natalie Davis’s analysis of pardon texts from sixteenth-century French archives is a case in point: here, the primary objective of the testimonies was the remission of crimes, and as a consequence the testifying peasant women’s story-telling skill, their style, and how their testimonies got transcribed into documents were all affected. Seen from this perspective, although the texts examined in this chapter were addressed to the visiting writers (who were Japanese), it can be maintained that they were appeals intended for the Japanese people and former colonizers in general, to whom the writers only served as convenient conduits. This is suggested by Artul Rava’s request to Hayashi: “Please tell the Japanese people there are Japanese like us here in Taiwan. We members of the Takasago-Giyutai are perhaps more Japanese than the Japanese” (Hayashi 1998: 89–92).

I would propose that these testimonies were made to serve three purposes. First, the testimony givers wanted to preserve their own memories. In other words, the texts are records of oral history. Second, they serve as appeals for repayments and compensation, to which the Giyutai members felt entitled. Third, and most significant, they are claims of identity made toward former colonizers. This last, in my view, is a form of resistance in the postcolonial situation. It is so because, as stated earlier, their records in the war have been all but erased. Their commanders, graduates of the Nakano Army Academy, were under strict orders of secrecy and they continued to keep silent even after the war (Kadowaki 1994: 139; Hayashi 1998: 24–7). Besides, members of the Takasago-Giyutai had to dodge prosecution as traitors (collaborators) from the Taiwanese government. Furthermore, they were illiterate people to begin with, although they had all gone through some elementary schooling in Japanese reading and writing.⁸ After the war, they felt slighted by society in both Japan and Taiwan. This significant chapter in

their personal history, the result of the lacunae in written archives, could only be reconstructed by means of oral accounts.

A researcher on oral history has pointed out that "all history is selection and the basis of selection is our current concern" (Grele 1991: 251). In accordance with this view, we have to pay attention to the fact that many of the Takasago-Giyutai members expressed in their testimonies a concern for repayment of debts by the Japanese government. The wartime salary of some has yet to be paid. Others received their pay only in postal savings accounts, and these deposits have never been released. Furthermore, unlike native Japanese soldiers, neither they nor their families have received from the government any annuities for survivors of the war-dead (*Choyikin*) or soldiers' special bonuses (*Onkyu*).

In 1977, 30 years after the war's end, the widespread attention given to the return of Suniyon from Morotai prompted a group of former Japanese soldiers and relatives of war-dead from Taiwan to sue the Japanese government and demand that they be paid what was due to them. In the meantime, a support group in Japan itself was organized and led by Shigeki Miyazaki, a Meiji University professor whose father had been a lieutenant general in the Takasago-Giyutai during the war. However, the lawsuit was defeated at both the first- and second-level courts after 15 years of litigation, and in 1992 the Supreme Court decided to overturn the plaintiffs' case. In the view of the Japanese judicial system, the issues can only be resolved by legislation initiated by the administration and passed by the Diet.

As a matter of fact, some members of the Diet took up the task during the later phase of the litigation and legislation was finally passed in 1988, dividing the issues into two categories: compensation and debts. With regard to the former, each Taiwanese war-dead and war-injured was to be awarded 2,000,000 yen by the Japanese government as a token of "condolence." However, as we can see from the Takasago testimonies made in the 1990s, it would appear that no one was satisfied with this. In their statements, the following complaint is often heard, "This is tantamount to an obituary gift and not compensation at all. If any compensation is intended, it should be like the annuities received by relatives of the war-dead in Japan."⁹ The Japanese government maintained that the Takasago were no longer Japanese nationals after the war, and therefore were not to be treated in the same manner as Japanese veterans. On the other hand, the new regime that took over Taiwan after World War II took the position that when these debts were incurred the Takasago were not its subjects, and consequently it did not have any responsibility for their repayment. The government in Taiwan did not make any effort to seek redress from the Japanese government for the Takasago volunteers.

By contrast, the unpaid wartime salaries were considered "confirmed debts." But with regard to this, no agreement has yet been reached, for the inflation of the cost of living since the war has been so enormous that the Japanese government and the Taiwanese debt-holders could not come to a

mutually acceptable rate of conversion. The Japanese government insisted on repaying 200 times the amount of the original debts, whereas debt-holders in Taiwan calculated that the monetary value had increased between 5,000 and 10,000 times and were not satisfied with the Japanese government's offer. All of these debt holders are over 70 years of age now. They are still awaiting some sort of solution even as their number is dwindling.

In the early 1990s when the interviews were conducted, the issues of repayments and compensation were on the agenda, and perhaps this encouraged the Giyutai members to be more enthusiastic in talking about their past and presenting their claims.

In fact, when the Japanese government began in 1996 to offer repayments of 200 times the original debts, very few members of the Takasago-Giyutai were willing to take the offer. Therefore, I should think that this is not an issue to be resolved by money. Indeed, what they were most concerned with was not the amount of recompense, but rather with the question of their identity. They wanted to be recognized as (once) having been Japanese, Japanese nationals, and Japanese soldiers.

The writers of the texts cited in this chapter were the first people to hear these claims. These Japanese interviewers, who came to them purely by accident after the war, served as a bridge between former members of Takasago-Giyutai and the Japanese people. Consequently, the question of why Giyutai members wanted to make testimonies and the question of why Japanese authors wanted to collect the testimonies become two sides of the same coin.

Reading between the lines, we can see that the four Japanese authors have one thing in common: they were all deeply moved. They volunteered to record the history of the Takasago so that a neglected episode of history could be related to the Japanese people, and thus they acted as spokespersons for the Takasago, who were illiterate. In view of the authors' ages at the time of writing and the contents of their books, commercial or some other ulterior considerations were not factors in these undertakings. When his book was published, Kadowaki's greatest wish was to travel to Taiwan to present in person a copy to everyone interviewed in his book. He was 80 years old at the time (Kadowaki 1994: Preface).

Among the four authors, Ishibashi (born 1924) and Hayashi (born 1933) share another characteristic. Yoshikawa (of the Amis tribe) told Ishibashi: "You ask me why I went to the war, but of course it was for the Emperor and Japan. This is what the Japanese spirit means." Ishibashi retorted: "But don't you have any regret now? You are not really Japanese. You were referred to as Takasago and discriminated against. It would only make sense to sacrifice for Japan if you had been a Japanese." To this Yoshikawa replied with disbelief: "Hey, you don't seem to understand. We *were* Japanese at the time during the Great East Asia War! We volunteered for the war from our heart. The sufferings in battles, even death, were undertaken by us willingly!" Ishibashi was deeply moved by this, and he came to realize how much evil the war had

done (Ishibashi 1992: 279–80). Similarly, Hayashi was told by Pirin Suyan: “I am a Japanese and will be even in my death. I feel ashamed to have come back alive from the war.” Hayashi was dumbfounded by this statement. He wrote: “After listening to his words, my reaction was very complicated. I wanted to ask him if he felt used and betrayed. But it was impossible to ask such questions, for he was so innocent at heart” (Hayashi 1998: 164–5). Both of these writers were indignant at the Japanese government’s procrastination in making repayments.

Tsuchibashi (born 1928), an amateur writer, spent 8 years on his book. He confesses that he wanted to complete his book so that he could let his late father and the Takasago soldiers who had died in the war rest in peace. His father had been a police officer in the colony. He held the Takasago in high esteem for their sense of honor and their innocent dispositions. He treated Takasago youths as his own children. In the early period of the war, he was often in tears when he had to send Giyutai volunteers in his precinct off to the war. In its later years, he was transferred to a post on the plains of Taiwan, and as a result he was unaware of the heavy casualties suffered by the Takasago.

His father’s acts and words must have had a tremendous effect on Tsuchibashi, so that in his writings he would himself come to emphasize the Takasago’s brave contributions. “In the history of war,” he maintains, “there has been no case where one people have made so great a military contribution to another people. With gratitude in my heart, I hope this friendship [between the two sides] will survive forever.” He later adds: “The great nation of Japan should not be an ungrateful [*bo-on*] people” (Tsuchibashi 1994: 346). As we read between the lines, however, Tsuchibashi tends to be evasive in his judgment of the war (or, there is no indication that he is negative about it). Kadowaki, who is the oldest of the group, is quite straightforward in his stance: he does not see the war in a negative way. On the contrary, he asks: “Do the words of the victors always stand for justice? My book takes as its point of departure a questioning of and displeasure with the victors” (Kadowaki 1994: 393). He also sees a deep affinity between the Takasago and the Japanese: “Today in the mountains of Taiwan I have discovered a source of the Japanese spirit.” He emphasizes that, in his interview experiences, he found the Takasago had a healthy attitude toward the past, unlike Japanese soldiers whose recollections of New Guinea were full of regret and sorrow (in connection with starvation). When, 50 years after the war, he asked the Takasago how they had managed to overcome all their difficulties during the war, he was unanimously assured: “It was because of the Takasago’s *Yamatodamashi*!” (Kadowaki 1994: 1) In particular, when he was told by the Takasago that “We were not defeated because we possessed *Yamatodamashi*,” he was tremendously moved (Kadowaki 1994: 213). That statement, it seems to me, also reflects his own feelings, and although he did not praise the war he did not want to deny everything in his past.

As stated earlier, the Japanese authors’ attitudes toward Giyutai members’

identity claims were of two sorts: one skeptical, the other affirmative. Quite paradoxically, however, the skeptics were not doubtful because they felt the Takasago couldn't become Japanese; they were skeptical because they considered becoming Japanese to be something negative. On the other hand, those who praised Giyutai members possessing *Yamatodamashi* and being Japanese were affirming the supreme value of *Yamatodamashi* and becoming Japanese. These two attitudes are perhaps to some extent representative. Yet the question of why Giyutai members themselves would make such strong claims remains to be answered. I propose some possible explanations in the following section.

Battlefield trick: reversal and elevation in the hierarchy

In the texts under consideration, the colonizer–colonized hierarchy underwent significant, even dramatic, changes through three time periods: the prewar period, the wartime period, and the present postcolonial period. I believe that the Giyutai members' feelings about their identity claims and the rise of their status can be productively analyzed as a rite of passage.

In the prewar narratives, policemen who kept law and order among the Takasago tribes in the mountains represented the so-called colonizers and rulers. They were in charge of inculcating a sense of loyalty to the nation among the Takasago youths. As a result, they had to present themselves as strict disciplinarians. In fact, in all the colonized territories of the Japanese Empire, the police played a pivotal role. This was especially so in Taiwan, where the police system was first instituted and served as a model (Peattie 1996: 171–89). In the mountains of Taiwan, policemen also functioned as educators, transmitting in person the aura of the nation and the Emperor. As stated in Walis Piho's testimony cited earlier, policemen indoctrinated tribal youths with the so-called "Japanese spirit." To these young Takasago, possessing "Japanese spirit" was not an innate characteristic but a supreme and difficult goal to be striven for with great effort. Therefore, within the colonial system their status was naturally below that of the colonizer. On the battlefields, the hierarchy of military ranks was even more strict and clear-cut.

The Takasago volunteers often served as porters in the early period of the war, in charge of military supplies and communications. They did not participate directly in combat and occupied the lowest ranks of the military. As the Japanese suffered more and more defeats and as they realized that they did not have the necessary survival skills for jungle warfare, they became increasingly dependent on the Takasago. As mentioned in one of the texts, when their superiors begged them to get coconuts, the Takasago were dumbfounded. In other words, under the special circumstances of the battlefield, the difference in rank underwent a transformation. The original strict hierarchy was affected by a type of status reversal.

This type of change occurred in extreme situations and is similar to what Victor Turner (1985 [1969]: 96–7) observed in passage rites; it is a case of *communitas* induced by *liminality*. In such situations, those individuals participating in the ritual are removed from the profane social structure and experience role ambiguity, equality, and even status reversal not encountered in daily life. Afterward, when they return to normal life, this status will transit to a new level. With regard to the cannibalistic episodes described in the texts, Turner's theory can be applied to the critical moments on the battlefield, when the hierarchical status structure was reversed and such an unlikely event as cannibalism could occur. In some sense, going to the war was an act carried out in the name of the nation and the Emperor, and, as defined by the Japanese state apparatus, the war was a "sacred war" (*seisen*), a condition far removed from ordinary life.

In this manner, the Takasago came to witness the embarrassments suffered by their superiors. Their testimonies indicate that what they saw was a lack of survival skills among the Japanese soldiers, who, driven by hunger, would do anything to survive, even to the extent of killing their own comrades in arms. They were surprised by the helplessness shown by Japanese officers at the end of the war, such as the officer who begged for forgiveness aboard the ship. They were also puzzled by the Japanese soldiers' "lostness" before they were sent home from Taiwan. In the eyes of these Takasago volunteers, the Japanese officers were absolute superiors and dominators, but in the war they came to see another side of the officers. In some way, the status difference between the two parties was closed or even reversed. The Takasago, by their survival skills, bravery, discipline, and loyalty to the Emperor, came to exemplify the *Yamatodamashi*, whereas Japanese officers failed to do so. In consequence, as if by a trick of the battlefield, the self-image of the Takasago was transformed from a stereotypic other, inferior and dominated, to one representing *Yamatodamashi*, a virtue that had been trumpeted by the dominators. In other words, the Takasago acquired the status of true Japanese nationals.

The liminality observed by Turner frequently occurs in rituals of status elevation. It is significant that, in the incidents described in the texts, once a person went through the liminal stage of the rite of passage and thus had his status elevated in the hierarchical structure, he would no longer suffer status demotion, even though the collective status of his group remained the same (Turner 1985 [1969]: 170–1). Following their war experiences, the Takasago-Giyutai members continued to believe that they, like the Japanese, had made great sacrifices during the war and had demonstrated their possession of *Yamatodamashi*. Therefore, they thought of themselves as true Japanese. It was the elevation in status, without regard to racial or ethnic identity, which made it possible for them to raise themselves up from the dominated position of the past. However, the collective status of the Takasago, to which they belonged, was not elevated in the same time. It was as though their special battlefield experiences had effected an elevation of their own individual status.

Postcolonial situation after dual colonialism: forms of resistance

When they returned home to Taiwan with their extraordinary war experiences, the Takasago-Giyutai members faced a new international arrangement: the previous colonizers had departed, and a new foreign regime was in power. Since Japan had been forced to yield Taiwan, it was unclear how the Japanese would acknowledge what they had accomplished with so much suffering during the war. Moreover, the Takasago also had to deal with the Han regime coming over from the mainland. In doing so, their emotional reactions were quite distinct from those of the majority ethnic group of Taiwan, the Han; for the latter, the Chinese regime was part of the mother country, whereas for the Takasago it was a new and strange foreign power.

This government demanded that they speak Mandarin and arbitrarily changed their names into Chinese. It also relabeled what the Japanese had called "Takasago Tribes" as "Mountain Tribes." In its education policy, the greatness and supremacy of Chinese culture was emphasized, and other ethnic groups were required to assimilate. Meanwhile, and more seriously, this regime had been at war with Japan, and therefore wanted to abrogate the policies of the previous colonial government. Those educated in the Japanese school system were stigmatized as having been "enslaved," and the veterans who had served in the Japanese army were treated with great hostility. As Artul Rava and Iyon Habao testified, they suffered a great deal under Chiang Kai-Shek's postwar dictatorship.

Under such oppressive circumstances, why didn't the Takasago give up the previous colonizers' culture and adopt that of the new colonizers? Why have they continued to retain a Japanese way of life and persisted in their claim to be Japanese? When Hayashi interviewed Pirin Suyan, he described the latter's living conditions in the following words:

On the wall of their living room hung a three-meters-square picture of the five lakes under the Fuji mountain. *Ranma* and *shoji* separated the rooms, and the bedrooms were furnished with *tatami* and *futon*, with both upper coverings and lower mattresses. The couple spoke Japanese with each other. All this made one almost forget that he was in the high mountains of Taiwan. Pirin Suyan told me: "I am a Japanese, and will be until I die." On hearing this, I had the feeling that he was more Japanese than I was. I really couldn't understand why an aborigine of the Tayal tribe could have such a near-genuine Japanese mind-set. Did he truly regard himself as a Japanese? Or was it only out of courtesy toward a visitor from afar? In any case, it wasn't likely that the house had been built for Japanese to look at!

(Hayashi 1998: 164)

Hayashi goes on to add in amazement that it certainly was not arranged deliberately for the interview.

As I see it, when they made claims of being Japanese, they were experiencing complex emotional turmoil. Their attitude might be explained as a form of postcolonial resistance: identity claims serve as a resistance weapon against both the older colonialism and the one newly imposed upon them after the war. In the postcolonial period, the "former colonizers" who offered their testimonies, i.e. the former Japanese officers, were no longer colonizers, and, in the new relation, many of them expressed their gratitude to the Takasago volunteers for saving their lives during the war. The Giyutai members had been their benefactors. They were unreserved in their praises for the Takasago's exemplification of *Yamatodamashi*, and acknowledged their indebtedness to them in a *giri* relationship. For their part, the Giyutai members strongly emphasized the *Yamatodamashi* that they possessed, and wanted this to be recognized by their former colonizers. Such a recognition would not only give them a status equal to that of the Japanese but also point to the fact that Japanese officers had failed to live up to the spirit of *Yamatodamashi*. In short, only they had truthfully and fully carried out the demands of *Yamatodamashi*, and therefore they had "out-Japanesed the Japanese." To maintain that they have surpassed the Japanese was a way of negating all the discrimination and mistreatment that they had suffered under Japanese colonialism.

If such endeavors of decolonization had occurred during the colonial period, then they would seem to be akin to what Homi Bhabha refers to as "mimicry" and would act as a "camouflage" threatening the colonizer (Bhabha 1994: 85–101). In the case discussed in this chapter, however, this is not valid. The "Japanese spirit" of the Takasago was deliberately inculcated during the colonial period; it was not mimicry by the Takasago. Furthermore, the so-called "Japanese spirit" was an ideal to the Japanese themselves and was only promoted during the war; it was not something that Japanese were born with. Therefore, in the minds of the Takasago, with their dedication to, and sacrifice for, the nation and the Emperor, their claims of having "Japanese spirit" were testimonies to the battlefield weakness of the Japanese officers and proof of their own superiority.

In his study of colonialism in South America, Michael Taussig (1993) proposes that mimesis is one way of coming to know the Other. In the context of complex inter-reflections, he discerns the phenomena of mutual mimesis between colonizer and colonized. The case of the Takasago-Giyutai was different from what happened in South America, for the intensive interactions between it and Japan only occurred over a very brief time span as a result of military mobilization; they were not the consequences of long-term colonization. The study of all means of decolonization in the postcolonial period must, therefore, pay attention to the effects produced by local social contexts and historical circumstances (Barker *et al.* 1994).

What makes the postcolonial situation in Taiwan unique, I maintain, is

the fact that when Taiwan was released from Japanese colonial rule after World War II it was immediately put under another foreign power and engulfed by a new alien culture. As a consequence, what we see in the postcolonial situation in Taiwan today has been the result of dual colonialism. So far as the colonized were concerned, it was not simply that they had been dominated or assimilated; rather, they were put in a position whereby they could compare the two sets of former colonizers, and then make their judgment and choice. As Artul Rava from the Tayal tribe and Iyon Habao from the Bunun both mentioned, because of the hostility from Chiang Kai-Shek's postwar regime, their past as volunteers in the Japanese army had to be kept a secret. During the martial law era in Taiwan, the mass media were forbidden to use Japanese or broadcast Japanese songs. It was only after 1987, when martial law was lifted, that Japanese programs were again received in households through satellites. The writers of the texts analyzed in this chapter were often surprised that members of the Takasago-Giyutai had been familiarizing themselves with contemporary Japan through satellite television (Tsuchibashi 1994: 346). In the case of Zakara, an Amis Giyutai volunteer, his house was furnished with a big Japanese-made television set, and his shelves were stocked with a set of videotapes with military songs and many other tapes by the popular singers Saburo Kitajima and Hibari Misora. As he explained to the visiting Hayashi:

I am nostalgic for the Japanese era. I don't understand Chinese on the TV anyway. I studied in public school during my childhood; the teachers taught me a lot of things about Japan. Up to now I have always regarded myself as a Japanese. I wish Taiwan could revert to what it was before the war, so that we could be together with the Japanese again. I always think this way."

(Hayashi 1998: 154)

On another occasion, Hayashi was told in a very serious manner that "compared to Chiang Kai-Shek's Kuomintang regime, the government of the Japanese era was a bit better." Hayashi was quite shocked by this (Hayashi 1998: 165).

What the cited testimonies indicate is that the Takasago compared the two foreign regimes that they had encountered and expressed a preference for the former regime. This may be due a nostalgic impulse, or the tendency for memories to acquire a positive glow in proportion to their distance from the present day. In any event, we have yet to consider the sufferings the Takasago endured after the war. Since these are not a major part of the text writers' concern, however, they are not presented in the texts. The important point is that, after the departure of their former oppressors, the Takasago did not retaliate against the Japanese, or choose to assert their own ethnic identities as a form of resistance against the new rulers who came after the Japanese. Instead, they elected to retain their previous Japanese identities,

which they had attained through tremendous efforts, even though they had to keep their preferences to themselves until they were free to speak their minds some 40 years later.

Conclusion: the reality and illusion of the *Yamatodamashi*

In 1992 Tetsuo Watanabe, a former Japanese Marine Corps physician who was rescued by the Takasago-Giyutai on the battlefield, paid a visit to an Amis tribe to offer gratitude to his saviors. Unexpectedly, he was met by a grand reception party of about thirty people. The assembled tribesmen sang popular Japanese wartime tunes such as the “Patriotic marching song” and the “Rabaul serenade” and engaged in reminiscences about the past. These songs had long been obscure in postwar Japan. When they were saying good-bye to Watanabe at the airport, they told the former officer: “We have sacrificed our lives for Japan. Our children tell us the time has changed. But we still like Japan today, with *Yamatodamashi* burning in our hearts. Please don’t ever forget us Takasago.” On hearing this, Watanabe was speechless and could only respond with a deep bow. Speaking of the Amis village, he lamented that “the Japan which no longer exists in Japan is alive here” (Kadowaki 1994: 182–90). Such feelings, like Kadowaki’s assertion that he found a source of Japanese soul in the mountains of Taiwan, were immersed in nostalgia for the colonial era. Because of Japan’s defeat, the ideal of *Yamatodamashi* or “Japanese spirit” to which they had aspired during the war was regarded as an obsolete product of militarism. Thus the reencounter with their past among the Takasago was wholly unexpected.

Perhaps this is what makes the Japanese feel that the Takasago are “pro-Japan.” After all, the latter are no less nostalgic for the past. As indicated in my analysis, however, the Takasago’s pro-Japanese sentiment has been engendered by a complicated postwar process of decolonization and is not as simple or as naive as some Japanese believe.

In the accounts of the interactions among the Takasago-Giyutai members, the former Japanese officers, and the visiting writers from Japan, the term *Yamatodamashi* plays a key role. Its invocation opens a passage to the past, helping the Japanese officers and the Giyutai to find each other. *Yamatodamashi* is also something like a chain to link all parties concerned together. But there is a significant difference here: for the former Japanese officers *Yamatodamashi* has only been an illusion pursued but never attained in the war, while for the Giyutai members it has been something real that they have achieved through great personal effort.

This sense of reality may have been consonant with the youth or warrior culture of the Takasago, so that they would mingle the two together during the war. Among the Tayal, for instance, a youth who pretended not to know that his tribe was going to war would be ridiculed as not being a man (Ozawa 1942). In other tribal traditions, the emphases on obedience to authority,

service to the public, tribal security, and self-sacrifice even to the point of giving up one's life were all compatible with the tenets of the *Yamatodamashi*. The spirit to persevere and survive under adverse circumstances, furthermore, was cultivated among the Takasago in their mountainous habitats, and in many tribes youths were required to pass an endurance test as an initiation rite. As a result, they could easily assimilate the *Yamatodamashi* and put it into practice.

On the other hand, the Japanese officers felt gratitude toward the Takasago, and indebted to them in a *giri* relationship. We may recall here Ruth Benedict's (1989 [1946]: 133) succinct statement that "'*giri*,' runs the Japanese saying, is 'hardest to bear.'" This sense of indebtedness drove Japanese officers to make almost religious confessions, and the authors of the books analyzed here all carried the albatross of collective debt, trying to make some kind of redress with the writing of their books. Even though Benedict's analysis has been criticized as deficient in many respects (Aoki 1990: 30–63), I would not agree with the criticism that her perspective is ahistorical, for Benedict is referring to a Japanese people swept up by the tide of militarism. Maurice Pinguet (1986: 286–302) has carried out an exhaustive analysis of these traditions of Bushido spirit and self-sacrifice. In his view, after the schools were mobilized, and people were required to recite *Gunjinchokuyu* and *Kyoikuchokugo* every day, cultural themes that in the Edo era had only prevailed among certain social elite were now inculcated in every citizen. The Takasago youths who volunteered in the Giyutai were trained in the same sort of schools and army and the impact was distinct and deep.

At the same time, because such inculcation of Japanese spirit was also carried out in Japan's other colonies, it is worth asking why the colonial subjects in those areas were not so driven to make sacrifices in Japan's war efforts. For instance, the Korean and Han Chinese soldiers in the South Pacific theater of war were quite lackluster in their performance compared with the Takasago. They demonstrated a passive and desultory resistance.¹⁰

Perhaps because the Takasago did not have a state organization and had no concept of the modern nation-state, when they first came into contact with the state apparatus under Japanese colonial rule they were quickly dragged into an international war. This also partly explains why the Takasago tended to confuse national warfare with traditional tribal conflict.

Participation in the war and change in postwar political conditions had a great impact on the Takasago's self-identity. Joining the military transformed their status from that of the ruled to that of equality with the ruler. Once this status was achieved, their self-identity would not suffer subsequent diminution. But after the war they had difficulty understanding why they had suddenly been deprived of their nationality and had to submit to the sovereignty of others. The rules of international politics were beyond their comprehension. More than that, they were disappointed with their treatment at the hands of the Japanese government. Those, such as T. Pukiringan or I. Habao, who attained high ranks in the military hierarchy were especially

severe in their criticism of the Japanese government. They were not only unhappy with its total neglect of them after the war but were also especially disappointed when they were denied the annuities and compensation given to Japanese soldiers because they were not of "Japanese nationality." They were also indignant at the Japanese government's delay in repaying their wartime salaries. Therefore they felt abandoned, and were overcome by a sense of purposelessness and sorrow. They had devoted their lives to practicing *Yamatodamashi*, but their self-claimed "Japanese" identities, because of the postwar international political rearrangement, turned out to be as illusory as a mirage.

In discussions on Japanese cultural discourse, or *Nihonbunkaron*, the question of how to define "Japaneseness" has frequently been raised. It is apparent that the Japanese government's definition of *Japanese* has disappointed members of the Takasago-Giyutai. In his study of Japanese cultural discourse, Harumi Befu (1997 [1987]) examines the definition of the Japanese within the framework of the nation-state. According to the result of his questionnaire survey conducted in Japan, the largest percentage of the people (49 percent) maintain that the necessary condition for being Japanese is to possess "Japanese nationality." Following in importance are "speaking Japanese" (37 percent), "having a Japanese name" (26 percent), "having Japanese parents" (25 percent), and so on. Obviously, the first viewpoint, which is quite political in nature, is very akin to the position of the postwar Japanese government. But the Takasago fulfill some of the other criteria. It was only because of the failure to meet one condition in the framework of the nation-state that the Takasago were denied what they deserved.

Befu worried about the result of the survey. Political considerations put limits on what could be included in the cultural sense. He was also surprised by the fact that, to the question "Are the Japanese a unique people?" 49 percent of the Japanese respondents answered in the affirmative. Related to this is the fact that all researches on *Nihonbunkaron* tend to emphasize the uniqueness of Japan instead of the commonalities (Befu 1997 [1987]: 253–74), whereas empirical studies indicate that the supposed uniqueness is far from being confirmed (Sugimoto and Mouer 1992 [1982]: 83–103).

In conclusion, the case of the Takasago-Giyutai provides a different way of thinking about the issue of Japanese identity, one which troubles the simplistic binary of Japanese uniqueness and commonality. Properly contextualized with reference to history and geopolitics, the Takasago-Giyutai demonstrate how Japanese culture and the Japanese spirit could be shared, and even exemplified, by an Other.

Notes

- 1 Within the Austronesians, nine tribes are categorized by the Japanese colonial government. These are Amis, Tayal, Paiwan, Bunun, Tsou, Puyuma, Rukai, Saisyat, and Yami groups. Within the Han group, however, a distinction with regard to

the time of immigration must be made between the “mainlanders,” who came after the war, and the “natives” – the majority of the Han population – who began to migrate to Taiwan about 400 years ago and thus lived for 50 years under Japanese colonial rule. The former were citizens of a nation at war with Japan and the latter were Japan’s colonial subjects, and their respective attitudes toward Japan were consequently quite different.

- 2 Almost all Japanese anthropologists who have conducted fieldwork among the Austronesians of Taiwan have had the same impression, and I (using Japanese as my fieldwork language) can personally attest to this.
- 3 According to the statistics contained in “Takasago: Education” (published in 1944 by the Police Commission of the Taiwan Colonial Government), the average enrollment rates among the Takasago for the 5 years from 1938 through 1942 all exceed 80 percent; the rate of 1943 is even as high as 87.7 percent.
- 4 The numbers and dates of dispatch were military secrets at the time, and are still difficult to ascertain today. According to Kadowaki’s (1994: 14) tabulations, the total number of volunteers comes to about 5,000. There are, however, some discrepancies between different sources. For example, Kadowaki puts the number of the second volunteer corps at 100, whereas Hayashi’s (1998: 140) informants attested that the number was 1,000 – among these men only fifty-seven returned alive. Again, Kadowaki estimates the number of the Third Corps to be 618, whereas I myself have been told by a survivor that 1,200 men were dispatched in that group. Kadowaki adds that they were later sent to various locations, so that they returned to Taiwan at different times. Thus the number of those who returned alive is impossible to know. As for the Sixth Corps, Kadowaki doesn’t have any data, but according to one member interviewed by Hayashi (1998: 256) it consisted of 800 men. From all this, I would estimate the total number of the Giyutai to be at least 8,000. With regard to the survivors, their number may be calculated in accordance with the survival rate of the whole Japanese army engaged in eastern New Guinea, in which only 11,000 out of a total of 160,000 survived the war.
- 5 Strangely, they were thus designated as Han, although in fact they were Austronesians.
- 6 First to appear was *The Life of Suniyon* by the novelist Sato Aiko, who reconstructed her subject’s life through interviews with Suniyon’s relatives and other residents in his village. Since this book does not include verbatim statements from Suniyon, it will not be used in my textual analysis.
- 7 He was referring to the aftermath of the Mushya incident of 1930, which was the largest Takasago insurrection during the colonial period. Walis Piho was a descendent of an executed rebel.
- 8 Two of them kept notes (Kadowaki 1994: 110–12) and some wrote diaries during the war, but these were confiscated at the postwar camps. They are now unable to remember the details (Ishibashi 1992: 278).
- 9 Said by Talpan Pukiringan, see Hayashi (1998: 229).
- 10 In his book, Hayashi mentions a Korean volunteer by the name of Kim. His testimony is relevant here:

I was astonished by their discipline, for they would carry out their missions without taking any food themselves, and upon arriving at the destination they would collapse from exhaustion. If it had been us, we would have eaten the provisions ourselves. There was no need to practice *giri* to the Japanese Army; it would be such a stupid thing. But those Giyutai members were so upright in all circumstances. They gave up their lives for Japan. As for us Korean volunteers, we would take our own survival as the first priority.

They didn't hesitate in making sacrifices. In the battles of New Guinea, they were the only real winners.

(Hayashi 1994: 4)

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