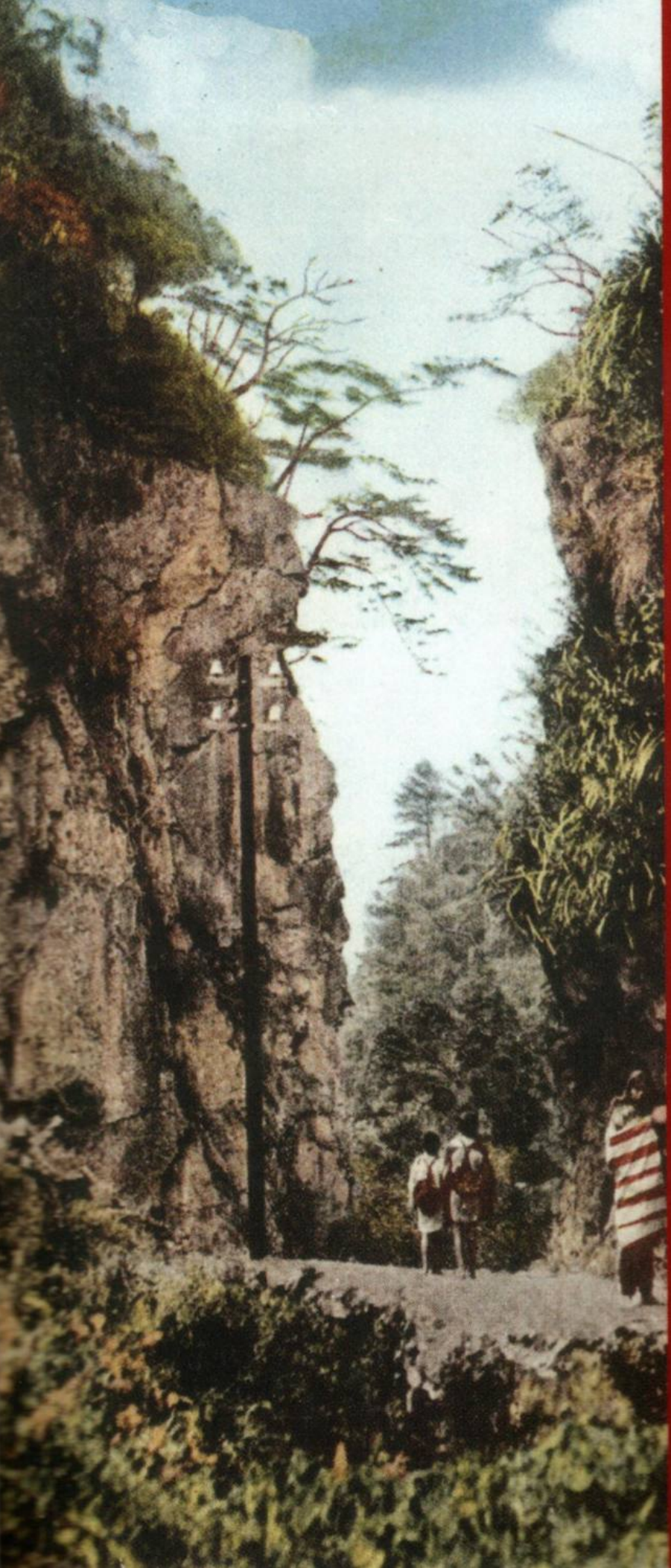

THE MUSHA INCIDENT

A READER ON THE INDIGENOUS UPRISING IN COLONIAL TAIWAN

EDITED BY

MICHAEL BERRY

Columbia University Press wishes to express its appreciation for assistance given by the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange and the Council for Cultural Affairs in the publication of this series.

Columbia University Press
Publishers Since 1893
New York Chichester, West Sussex
cup.columbia.edu

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Berry, Michael, 1974– editor.
Title: The Musha Incident : a reader on the indigenous uprising in colonial Taiwan / edited by Michael Berry.
Description: New York : Columbia University Press, [2022] | Series: Global Chinese culture | Includes index. | Includes bibliographical references.
Identifiers: LCCN 2021035693 (print) | LCCN 2021035694 (ebook) | ISBN 9780231552189 (ebook) | ISBN 9780231197465 (hardback) | ISBN 9780231197472 (trade paperback)
Subjects: LCSH: Musha Rebellion, 1930. | Musha Rebellion, 1930—Historiography. | History in popular culture—Taiwan.
Classification: LCC DS799.7 (ebook) | LCC DS799.7 .M87 2022 (print) | DDC 951.249/04—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2021035693

Columbia University Press books are printed on permanent and durable acid-free paper.
Printed in the United States of America

Cover design: Chang Jae Lee
Cover image: Courtesy of the East Asia Image Collection, Special Collections & College Archives, Skillman Library, Lafayette College

We have so so few opportunities to speak out; and the fact that so many of our elders are now gone makes it even more difficult. Moreover the elders only spoke our native tribal language so in the past it was extremely difficult to find anyone to translate what they said.

If we continue using the perspective of "the Great China" or "the Great Taiwan" to look at indigenous people, I'm afraid you will never see our real history, humanity and culture.

It really doesn't matter what methods you use to present the history of the Musha Incident that our ancestors experienced—it doesn't matter if it is an essay, a graphic novel, a speech, a book or a critical study—as far as we are concerned, our wounds have already formed a thick scab; and yet each time someone scratches at that wound, it is certain that we will sometimes still feel the pain.

As far as I am concerned, I can take the pain, but what I really hope—even though I do sometimes try to resist the pain—we must let people know about the history that transpired here.

—Dakis Pawan

Quoted from Tang Xiangzhu (湯湘竹), "Documenting the Musha Incident: Creative Thoughts on the Documentary Film *Pusu-Qhuni* (記錄霧社事件：紀錄片《餘生》創作談, "Jilu Wusheshijian: Jilupian Yusheng chuangzuotan"), in Bai Ruiwen (白睿文; Michael Berry), *The Musha Incident: A Reader in Taiwan History and Culture* (霧社事件：台灣歷史和文化讀本, *Wusheshijian: Taiwan lishi he wenhua duben*) (Rye Field: Taiwan, 2020), 538.

Contents

Quest for Roots

Trauma and Heroism in Wu He's Yusheng *and Tang Shiang-Chu's* Yusheng: Seediq Bale

Darryl Sterk

COMPARING VERSIONS OF THE MUSHA INCIDENT

"Musha 1930," a chapter in Michael Berry's monograph *A History of Pain: Trauma in Modern Chinese Literature and Film*, details how Taiwanese and Chinese nationalists have appropriated the pain of the Musha Incident, including both Mona Rudao's rebellion and the Japanese reprisal, for nation-building or profit.[1] Numbers can give some sense of the magnitude of the pain. Of the 1,236 people living in the six rebellious Tgdaya villages before the attack that Mona Rudao led on an assembly of Japanese officials on October 27, 1930, only 298 survived the Japanese reprisal.[2] The pain lingers, particularly in memories of the forced relocation to a new village called Chuanzhongdao/Kawanakajima (川中島), which was renamed Qingliu (清流) after the war and is known as "Alang Gluban" to the Seediq people; in the concentration camp–like conditions that the survivors from the rebellious villagers endured there; and in the bad blood between the Tgdaya and the Toda as a result of the Toda collaboration during the reprisal, particularly during the Second Musha Incident, when Toda warriors were allowed to attack the defenseless Tgdaya rebels in two shelters.

Whether or not Mona Rudao was a hero for leading the attack, surely some of the people who fought for and died with him were. Perhaps numbers can also give some sense of their heroism. A total of

85 Tgdaya warriors died in battle, and 296 men, women, and children hanged themselves rather than surrender.[3] Their heroism, as well as Mona's putative heroism, lives on in nationalist and capitalist appropriations of it. Of the many works that Berry discusses, only Deng Shianyang's works of reportage and Wu He's novel *Yusheng* (餘生), which Berry later translated with the title *Remains of Life*, approach the pain and the heroism of the incident without nationalizing it or commercializing it. Yet Deng and Wu took very different approaches to Seediq heroism: Deng affirms it, while Wu deconstructs it.

Since Berry's chapter appeared, three major audiovisual representations of Musha (*Wushe* in Mandarin) have been released: a historical epic, *Seediq Bale* (directed by Wei Te-sheng, 2011), and two documentaries, *Musha Kawanakajima* (霧社川中島 *Wushe chuanzhongdao*, directed by Pilin Yapu, 比令亞布, 2013) and *Yusheng: Seediq Bale* (餘生 賽德克巴萊 *Yusheng Saideke balai*, known as *Pusu Qhuni* in English, directed by Tang Shiang-Chu, 楊湘竹, 2014). Each has received at least some critical attention. There is a collection in English about Wei's oeuvre, particularly this epic film;[4] there is a monograph about the Seediq translation of Wei's Mandarin-language screenplay for *Seediq Bale*, a commercial film and Taiwanese national allegory;[5] and there is a master's thesis in Mandarin on Pilin Yapu, particularly *Musha Kawanakajima*.[6] But so far, Tang's documentary has attracted only an enthusiastic film review in Mandarin.[7] *Yusheng* deserves more attention.

Originally scheduled to appear a few months after Wei Te-sheng's film, Tang's documentary has been described as a micro version of Wei's macro vision of the Musha Incident.[8] It is clearly designed to complement *Seediq Bale*, the former epic, the latter realistic; the former relating what happened up to 1931, the latter what happened since. However, its release was delayed until 2014, by which time the Atayal filmmaker and educator Pilin Yapu had released *Musha Kawanakajima* in 2013, thus preempting Tang.

In *Musha Kawanakajima*, Pilin Yapu critiques Wei's film, particularly Wei's decision to film a scene in which Mona Rudao shoots his wife, Bakan Walis, to spare her suffering at the hands of the Japanese.[9] Generally, Pilin questions Wei's portrayal of Mona Rudao as heroic, considering that Mona was probably a collaborator in the campaign against an Atayal village called Slamaw in 1920.[10] Pilin also critiques

Wei's portrayal of the Toda chief Teymu Walis's collaboration, considering that the Tgdaya-Toda antagonism of 1930 and 1931 remains a source of friction in the Seediq community today. According to Pilin, Wei's celebration of Mona's heroism makes the pain of history more excruciating by forcing the Tgdaya and Toda peoples to relive the trauma of internecine strife. Hence, Pilin focuses on the public ceremonies of *dmahun*, "reconciliation," between Toda and Tgdaya in 2010 and 2011; the voiceover narrator tells the audience that although the atrocities of 1930 and 1931 will not be forgotten, the descendants of the historical actors have reconciled. In response to Pilin, much can be said in Wei's defense: the Teymu Walis portrayed in Wei's epic film is also heroic, as much a *seediq bale*, a true human being (in other words, a hero) as Mona Rudao; moreover, Wei opted not to represent the Second Musha Incident. But my goal in this chapter is to discuss Tang's documentary, not to defend Wei's film.

Like Pilin Yapu, Tang thematizes reconciliation between Tgdaya and Toda, although he does not dwell on the public reconciliation ceremonies. There is only a pan past a flag advertising the ceremony held on the eightieth anniversary of the incident (at 1:19:39 of the documentary). He dwells instead on informal, private instances of reconciliation. Here are four examples. First, Pawan Nawi, who played Mona Rudao's father, Rudao Luhe, in Wei's epic film and who grew up in Alang Gluban, reminds his two sons that his people originally "came from Toda," and that Toda and Tgdaya are two branches of the same tree, both descendants of the Pusu Qhuni. Second, Dakis Pawan, who also grew up in Alang Gluban, accepts that villages like Bwarung, which were Tgdaya until 1931, are now home to Toda (or Truku) people. One of the most charming scenes features a song by Tanah Nawi, Dakis's Truku guide, about his home village:

> A forest breeze is blowing by,
> The sun is shining in the sky.
> So gentle, the water in the stream,
> So tuneful, the bird that sings its theme,
> So tuneful, the bird that sings its song.
> Alang Bwarung is where I belong.

Dakis needs a Truku guide because he simply does not know his way around the hills around Bwarung, which therefore rightly belong to Tanah Nawi. Third, Dakis puts in a good word for the Toda in another scene. The reason so many survived the Second Musha Incident is because the Toda showed the Tgdaya mercy. Finally, the Toda singer Bakan Nawi sings an invocation to Mona Rudao's spirit at the Musha Memorial as Dakis looks on. *Yusheng* testifies to various instances of intraethnic reconciliation. Nevertheless, the lingering tension between the Tgdaya and the Toda is not the only trauma of the Musha Incident, and Tang Shiang-Chu is more interested in how Seediq people have worked though, if not resolved, this trauma.

Tang shares an interest in the historical trauma of the Musha Incident with Wu He. Wu's experimental novel *Yusheng* was in part a meditation on the pain that the Seediq people still felt nearly seven decades after Mona Rudao's attack. Tang's *Yusheng* is hardly experimental—indeed, it may seem disappointingly conventional—but he invites comparison to Wu's work by his choice of title. In comparing Tang's *Yusheng* to Wu's *Yusheng*, I argue the following thesis: Although Tang's documentary, like Wu He's novel, is about the contemporary Seediq community living in the long shadow of the Musha Incident, Tang, unlike Wu, portrays members of this community as heroic, taking up the Seediq hero's task of upholding a cultural tradition that has sustained the people through the pain of the past century. Wu He declares the current era to be antiheroic, while Tang Shiang-Chu sees heroism in the story of Seediq survival from 1931 to the present. This heroism, in turn, is the means by which contemporary Seediq people might work through their historical trauma.

This contrast between Wu's and Tang's works justifies the two different translations of *Yusheng*. Berry's title for Wu He's novel, *Remains of Life*, is a good translation. It is a literal, morpheme-by-morpheme translation: *yu* can be translated as "remains," and *sheng* as "life." But *yusheng* as a word refers to the survivors of a disaster, and Tang's documentary might be translated more affirmatively as *The Survivors*. However, Tang chose a different title for his documentary in English: *Pusu Qhuni*, literally root (*pusu*) tree (*qhuni*). The Pusu Qhuni is the Seediq tree of life, from whose roots Seediq people continue to derive sustenance. The

quest for the Pusu Qhuni that serves as the climax of Tang's documentary is a heroic act that resolves trauma, unlike the anticlimactic quest at the end of Wu's novel.

HEROISM DECONSTRUCTED: WU HE'S *YUSHENG* (*REMAINS OF LIFE*)

Wu He moved to Kawanakajima in late 1997 and lived there for nine months split over two stays, first in the winter of 1997 and second in the fall and winter of 1998. He published *Yusheng*, a novel about his experiences, in 1999. The narrator of the novel appears to be Wu He's avatar. He regards himself as a victim of modern civilization, so he emphasizes his own traumas, his own desires for transcendence. At least initially, the Seediq people he meets seem only accessories to his own concerns. That said, he finds consolation in concerning himself with people who appear even more unfortunate than him. The book *is* about the Seediq people, insofar as it is about the narrator's engagement with the people he meets.

The person who makes the biggest impact on him is Girl, who claims to be the granddaughter of Mona Rudao. But she could not have been. Mona Rudao had a daughter, Mahung Mona (馬紅·莫那), but no granddaughter besides the girl whom Mahung adopted after she moved to Kawanakajima, and Girl is not this person. Michael Berry has suggested (by email) that Girl must mean that she is Mona's granddaughter in a symbolic sense, burdened with the pain of history. I agree. She is also burdened with the pain of her personal history. She is a former prostitute who does not get along with her fellow villagers, especially the men. She therefore conducts a sexual ritual of reconciliation with the men of the village, a ritual intended to absolve her of the shame of prostitution and to heal the men of the pain of the failure of Mona's rebellion and of their many failures since.

Once her ritual is complete, she takes the narrator on a quest to the source of her appropriated family's trauma, to the woods around Alang Mhebu, Mona Rudao's home village, where Seediq men, women, and children hanged themselves during the Japanese reprisal in late 1930. On the way, the narrator indulges in a fantasy of sex with Girl; while in Kawanakajima, he indulges in speculation with Girl upon how intense

the sex must have been for headhunters after a successful expedition. It makes him sound like a primitivist, someone who finds the "primitive" erotically charged, emotionally compelling, and intellectually useful as a means of critiquing modernity. But Wu He is actually equally critical of the heroic ethos that might have inspired Mona Rudao.

Indeed, the novel attempts a deconstruction of all heroism, primitive or modern. To the extent that the novel has a thesis, it is that "'the contemporary' no longer embraces heroes, only grassroots activists like Pihu, brimming with energy and life, they allow the contemporary to come into being and persist."[11] If Pihu embraces heroes, it is unclear how he allows a contemporary that does *not* embrace heroes to exist. At any rate, contemporary intellectuals like Wu He's narrator no longer embrace heroes. In the narrator's view, "the contemporary" requires a researcher like himself to "treat life with dignity" and to "respect life," no matter whose life it is.[12] As a result, he cannot accept what Mona Rudao did, even if Mona carried out a Seediq cultural practice (a headhunting ritual). *Remains of Life* dispels the mystique of "primitive" heroes like Mona Rudao, whom Chinese and Taiwanese nationalists, along with leaders of the Indigenous movement, had appropriated.[13]

To Wu He, any such appropriation is illegitimate because the notion that Mona Rudao was rebelling on behalf of the Chinese nation, the Taiwanese nation, the Indigenous movement, or even the Seediq people at the time is anachronistic. Moreover, what Mona did, as understandable as it might be in a colonial context, is hardly to be lauded in a liberal democracy. Taiwan had carried out its first presidential election in 1996, and Mona Rudao is hardly the kind of hero that a liberal democrat would embrace. One can understand why Wu He might say that we live in an antiheroic age, and why he would want to live in such an age, because in undermining Mona Rudao, he was also undermining the legitimacy of the state that had appropriated Mona and other putative heroes—the very same state that did violence to Wu He himself by forcing him through the school system and mandatory military service, trying to get him to conform and serve, in some small way, the nation in their mold.

But in rejecting heroism, what is the narrator offering as a replacement? In his own words, nothing. Girl's ritual of reconciliation comes to naught, as does the quest to Mhebu. At the end of the novel, the narrator leaves Girl alone at the bridge to Kawanakajima. In the last scene, he

leaves lying in bed, doing nothing, an Old Man who survived the Musha Incident and served as a Takasago Volunteer during the war. According to the narrator, the Old Man says that "at least I've had a good couple decades drunkenly staring at the mountain scenery here, I don't give much thought to the past destroying the present or the present destroying the future, that's how I will spend my Remains of Life—in bed with my mind devoid of all thoughts and contemplation."[14] It seems unlikely that this is a faithful transcript of what the Old Man said, as this is Wu He's own sentiment and idiom.

For Wu He to express himself via a putative quotation from a survivor of the Musha Incident makes him seem self-indulgent, and he is. But his novel is also a masterpiece, one of the most important works of modern Sinophone literature. Its experimental style spurns traditional narrative and discursive norms. There are only six full stops in the entire novel. But the style has a point—to inscribe the flow of thought in an ongoing philosophical and emotional struggle with unsettling, unsettled materials. The philosophizing is deeply felt. If the quest with Girl to Mhebu achieves anything at all, it is a psychological transformation within the narrator. The freedom-loving cold fish manages to make himself feel something on the quest he takes with Girl:

> Girl would stop and wait for me and when I caught up she would help pull me up, I didn't say thank you but the smile Girl had in her eyes was that of someone "taking care of a child," a few times I needed to sit down to rest, each time Girl would wait for me and help me up when I was ready to continue, I didn't feel embarrassed and that smile in her eyes actually warmed my heart, during this half-lifetime of mine devoid of struggle I never needed anyone's help and I certainly never needed anyone to warm my heart, I lived a self-satisfied life of lonely isolation, but at this moment when a woman extended her warm helping hand it felt so urgent and real, I sensed a faint melancholy tinged with a touch of joy.[15]

Perhaps Wu He needs consolation for the pain of life more than Girl, who has the Ancestral Spirits to keep her company as she plays Chopin on the stereo. But to the extent that Seediq characters like Girl suffer, Wu He allows the reader to feel for them.

The novel made a big impression on many people, including Tang Shiang-Chu, who at the screening of *Yusheng* I attended in 2014 described Wu He's novel as his favorite work of fiction. Next, I investigate Tang's very different take on the *yusheng*, the remains of life or the survival of the Seediq people.

HEROISM REAFFIRMED: TANG SHIANG-CHU'S *YUSHENG* (*THE SURVIVORS*)

In Tang's *Yusheng*, the grandchildren of the survivors of the Musha Incident relate how their grandparents found the will to carry on. The survivors thought they were going to die on the way to Alang Gluban, where they were moved in 1931. When they reached the town of Hori (Puli) and saw the sugar refinery belching sparks, they thought they had arrived at the maw of hell. But they made it to Kawanakajima. In Kawanakajima, what else could people do but carry on? The director, Tang, focuses on the struggles of Mona Rudao's daughter, Mahung Mona. Mahung's marriage, arranged by the Japanese, to the son of the chief of Boarung (the Tgdaya spelling of Bwarung), left her childless, so she adopted a girl. When her adoptive daughter married, Mahung enlisted her new son-in-law in her mission to find Mona Rudao's remains and clear his good name. She was so relieved when a historian pointed out that it was her father who had led the rebellion, not the Hanaokas, as was reported in the media. But she never lived to see her father reburied in the family tomb. Instead, the government buried him in Wushe, enshrining him as a martyr to the nation. Before she died, Mahung told her family to continue trying to make her dying wish for this reburial come true: they would continue doing her will on Earth, and she would help them from Heaven. One might get the impression that Mahung was obsessed by the trauma of Musha, and that her family was hag-ridden.

In her analysis of *Why Don't We Sing?* (我們為什麼不歌唱？ *Women weishenme bu gechang?*), a documentary about the White Terror—the Kuomintang's crackdown on leftists real or imagined from the late 1940s to the 1980s—Sylvia Lin describes the film as Janus-faced, "simultaneously backward- and forward-looking."[16] As Lin notes, this is an issue of the audience: if a documentary is too backward-looking, the audience might not see the contemporary significance of the past. They

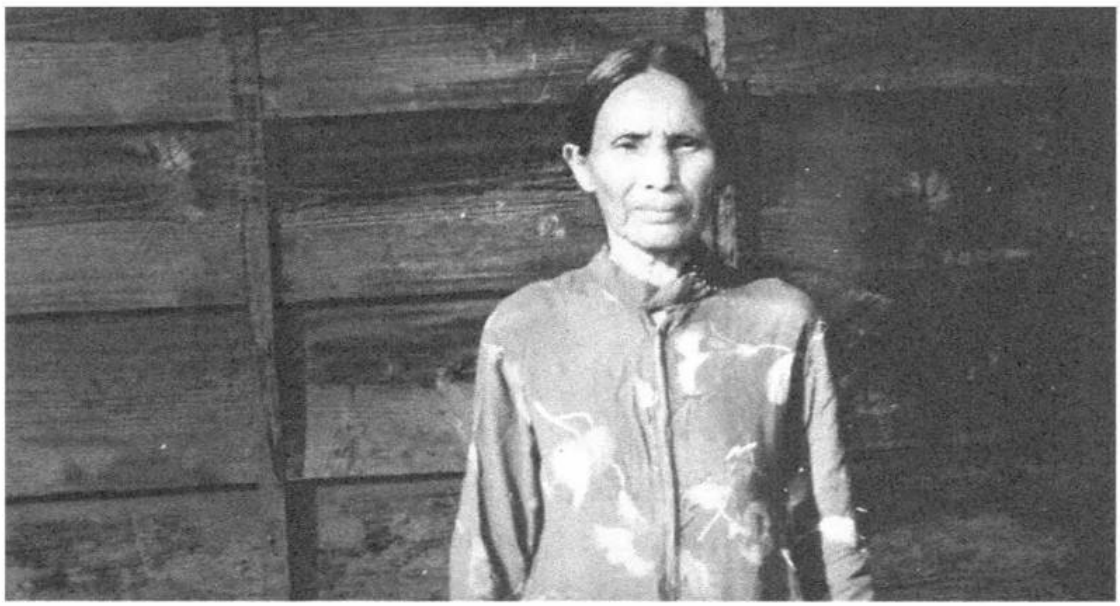

FIGURE 9.1 Mahung Mona, from the film *Pusu Qhuni* dir. Tang Shiang-Chu

might not share what they perceive as the filmmaker's obsession, or the documentary subjects' obsession, with the past. Is Tang's *Yusheng* so backward-looking that it makes its subjects appear obsessed with the past? No, his documentary is not backward-looking at the expense of what Wu He would call the contemporary. The living are not so much haunted by the dead as they are kept company. In his use of candlelit celluloid prints of historical pictures, Tang makes Mahung Mona, Mona Rudao, and all the other ancestral spirits seem like warm, beneficent presences.

The question is, *how* did the living carry on? Problematically for my thesis that the source of their strength was a heroic cultural tradition, Hanaoka Jirō (Dakis Nawi)'s widow, Takayama Hatsuko, appears to found strength in a mission of colonial modernity. Along with her husband, Takayama (Obing Tadao, the daughter of Tadao Nokan, the chief of Gungu Village, later renamed Gao Caiyun) was part of a "model savage" experiment that initially seemed to have failed. The Japanese educated them to serve as schoolteachers or police officers so that they could take over the governmental responsibilities that previously "savage" chiefs like Tadao Nokan and Mona Rudao had performed. When Hanaoka Jirō and his "brother," Hanaoka Ichirō (Dakis Nomin), witnessed the attack that Mona Rudao led, they decided to commit suicide.[17] Takayama was sent to the noncombatant Tgdaya village of Paran on the assumption

that the Japanese would not harm a pregnant woman. Just over six months later, she would trudge through the rain, eight months pregnant, on her way to Kawanakajima. Reflecting on her experience, her nephew comments, "When I think about it now, I realize how tough the women had to be" (1:10:40). In Kawanakajima, she married Nakayama Kiyoshi (Pihu Walis, later renamed Gao Yongqing); together, the couple opened a clinic and treated their fellow villagers with modern medical knowledge, taking up the mission of colonial modernity. Her daughter-in-law recalls that she always spoke Japanese at home in later life and led a Japanese way of life.

However, this does not mean that she had forgotten where she came from. After the two Hanaokas committed suicide with their family members, Hatsuko was taken to identify the bodies. She observed that while Hanaoka Ichirō had committed seppuku, her own husband had hung himself from a tree bough. In an autobiographical essay she wrote six decades after the fact, which is read by her daughter-in-law in the documentary, she wrote that her first husband had died a "beautiful" death. It was beautiful because he chose the traditional Seediq form of suicide, a symbolic return to the Pusu Qhuni, the root tree. Tang's documentary *Yusheng: Pusu Qhuni* shows how the grandchildren of the survivors of the Musha Incident have returned to the Pusu Qhuni, their cultural roots, in their own ways, to define the meaning of their lives.

Here are three examples. First, Hatsuko's grandson, Tadao Nawi, appears in Tang's documentary as the tour guide at the memorial to Mona Rudao. Detailing the role of Seediq culture in the incident, he delivers his narration with a rehearsed polish. His mission parallels the documentary's mission. He is speaking to an audience who does not know much about the Musha Incident, the audience at the memorial, and the audience hearing him in a documentary whose purpose is partly to show us where the memorial came from and what it stands for. Second, Mahung Pawan, Mahung Mona's granddaughter by adoption, initially resisted shouldering the burden not only of her "nation," but also of her given name. But she was encouraged by her adviser in graduate school to compare her nation, the Seediq, to Indigenous peoples elsewhere in East Asia. Instead of living her grandmother's dream, she sets off on her own cultural quest. Third, when Dakis Pawan went to see the popular historian Deng Shian-yang for tests for his liver condition in

the 1980s, he too was sent on a cultural quest to understand himself.[18] Dakis realized that he had forgotten himself after he left Gluban to find success in another world, by that other world's standards. The new quest that Dakis embarked on in a sense culminated in the rectification of names in 2008, when the Seediq were officially recognized as separate from the Atayal, as indicated in the title of a book that can be seen on Dakis's shelf at 43:15.

Elsewhere in the documentary, Dakis remembers how driven every parent was to prepare their kids for the new society. There was a kind of ongoing academic competition in which the parents urged their children on. And ultimately, when the children had gone out into the world to make something of themselves, they started to ask: Who am I? The answer they have ultimately given is that they are the real people, the *seediq bale*. Unlike in Wei's epic film *Seediq Bale*, in which a *seediq* (people) *bale* (real) seems like a fossilized ideal, the idea of a *seediq bale* in *Yusheng*, which is subtitled *Seediq Bale*, is evolutionary, based on a contemporary reinterpretation of cultural tradition. Cultural tradition here takes a narrative form. And the various narratives in the documentary share a master narrative—that of a quest for roots.

This quest for roots is literalized in Pawan Nawi's mountain pilgrimage with his two sons to the Pusu Qhuni, the root tree out of which everything, every plant and animal and all the Seediq people, sprung. On the way, he guides his sons to make ritual offerings of rice wine to the ancestors, who manifest at night in the form of sambar deer attracted to the light of the fire. "We were visited by the ghost of Mona Rudao last night," he tells them the next morning. He also tells them the myths of the people, which they can reinterpret for contemporary purposes. The first story he tells, starting right at the beginning of the documentary, is about the people's heroism at a time when there were two suns shining in the sky:

> Once, in the time when two suns squeezed the sky, and it was too hot for the elders to work in the field, the people found a strong young man and, knowing how long the journey would be, a little boy for him to carry, a little boy who would carry on the mission. All along the way, they planted seeds of flowering trees to mark the way they had come, until the strong young man was old and

FIGURE 9.2 The Sun-Shooting Hero, from the film *Pusu Qhuni*, dir. Tang Shiang-Chu

> could go no further, and the boy, now a man, had to continue alone. When he reached the mountain heights, as near to the suns as he could get, he shot one of them down. Its blood splattered the sky, forming the stars, and the wounded sun became the moon, bringing relief to all the nations by dividing day from night. On the way back he ate the fruit that the flowering trees now bore, all the way to his home village. So it has been since the elders attacked the Japanese. We were almost wiped out, but in Gluban we rebuilt, and carried on. We must never forget, or lose heart.

It is the heroic story of the multigenerational task of carrying on a cultural tradition. This story, and the stories related next, are narrated to woodcuts by the hand of Qiu Ruolong—the best work he has ever done[19]—that are presented in the same way as thephotographs, printed on translucent celluloid, and illuminated from behind by candlelight, producing warmth and presence.

When they approach the Pusu Qhuni, Pawan Nawi sings a song:

M-eyah	*=ku*	*dehuk,*	*rudan*	*rudan.*
af-come	=1s.nom	arrive	elder	elder

I'm almost there, O men of long ago.

Ima	*=ku*	*yaku?*	*P-kla-i*	*ku.*[20]
who	=1s.nom	1s.nom	cause-know-pf.imp	1s.nom

Who am I? I'd like to know.

The answer is *seediq bale*, but it is an open-ended answer because while the sound of *seediq bale* has remained relatively stable in the decades since 1930, its sense has not.

Tang's documentary concludes when the pilgrims make it through the forest to stand at the base of the Pusu Qhuni. In the subtitles, Dakis Pawan translates Pusu Qhuni into *shengshi* 聖石 (2:29:52), "sacred rock" because it is actually a rock, standing straight and massively erect on the side of the mountain slope, supposedly with a cave at the base—a rocky womb that gave birth to all creation.[21] At the base of this rock, Pawan Nawi tells the story of the origin of the Seediq people:

> Long, long ago, there was a great tree on the slope of Mt. Bnuhun, beside which stood a stone. The tree wrapped around the stone, and they grew together; and from their embrace was born a man and a woman, which is why we call it the Root Tree, for it is our origin. The children of the tree coupled to produce progeny, who in turn coupled to produce great numbers of descendants, and down through the generations.

All the B-roll shots of banyan, yumberry, and tung oil trees, some flowering and others bearing fruit, some leafy and others with bare branches, that Tang intercuts with shots of the talking heads throughout the documentary, are symbolic of the continuity of the Seediq tradition and the continued flourishing of the Seediq people.

Pawan Nawi ends the story with a meditation that leaves his two sons, and all Seediq viewers, looking forward:

> Do you know who the land here belongs to? To us, the Seediq people, who belong to the land, and all the Toda and Truku are the same as the Tgdaya.[22] The land belongs not to the Taiwanese, not to the Mainlanders, do you understand? We must never yield the land to anyone else. Do you hear? Never let us forget where we come from. We are so few, and we cannot overcome the many, but let all

know of our good deeds so that none would dare laugh at us. Let them know that we are *seediq bale*.

This is the task that Pawan Nawi sets for the survivors of Musha: to uphold the dignity of the *seediq bale*, whatever they take that to mean.

In a way, the story that Tang Shiang-Chu tells in *Yusheng* is the same one he tells in *How Deep the Ocean?* (還有多深 *Haiyou duoshen?* 2001), a documentary about a working-class man from Orchid Island who tries to succeed in Taiwan, but after suffering a stroke, he has to go back to Orchid Island an ignominious failure. But then he puts his life together, builds himself a new house with his friends, and fishes. The scene of him floating in the sea is a vision of corporeal pleasure and freedom. His is a story of small-time heroism, of the kind of resilience to which we can all aspire.

In telling his story of resilience, unlike Wu He, Tang draws no attention to himself. Although he appeared at promotional events for the movie, the director does not appear in *Yusheng*, not even as an off-camera narrator. He is the hidden cause of the documentary, as a *Yusheng* binder, full of his research notes about the Musha Incident at the Real Guts restaurant, the Ars Films eatery in downtown Taipei, attests. Unlike Wu He, Tang steeped himself in the historical literature on Musha. Without Wu He's irony, he has told a story about the descendants of Musha striving to achieve their various goals in life, including radical political aims like asserting Seediq sovereignty over the mountains of central Taiwan. This may be the difference between the late 1990s and the early 2010s, or it may be a difference in temperament between Wu He and Tang Shiang-Chu. Whatever the reason, these two *Yusheng*, about the remains of life and the survivors, are two versions of the ongoing saga of the Seediq people.

CONCLUSION: TRANSCENDING TRAUMA

It seems to go without saying that a representation of the long-term aftermath of the Musha Incident should be somehow about trauma, and if Freud is to be believed, trauma involves a repetition compulsion, an irresistible urge to revisit repressed images. While there may be some truth to this, it seems inadequate, especially for the two works entitled

Yusheng that I have discussed in this chapter. Too much time, which proverbially heals all wounds, has passed for repetition compulsion to be a persuasive explanation of why people keep talking about Musha. Not to mention that the trauma that people are trying to work through is secondhand.

As several interviews in Tang's documentary make clear, survivors of the Musha Incident did not want to talk about what had happened for most of the postwar period, and their descendants, people like Dakis Pawan, did not even know until the 1970s of their grandparents' participation in the events that were being commemorated in television and newspaper reports. People like Dakis, who were not personally traumatized, started probing the pain by investigating the incident. On his visit with his Truku guide, Tanah Nawi, upriver to the caves above Mhebu, in which Tgdaya villagers took shelter during the reprisal, Dakis insists that he would prefer not to talk about it because it is too painful, and yet he does end up talking about it, at great frequency and length. Why? I do not think he does so out of a compulsion to repeat, or what Sylvia Lin has called an "obligation to remember."[23] Dakis often says that he wants to set the historical record straight from a Seediq perspective. He also gets something out of talking about it—namely, answers to the question he has asked himself for three decades: Who am I?

Anyone like Dakis who talks about Musha runs another risk, that of repeating himself until what he has to say becomes a spiel, like Tadao Nawi's at the memorial. But somehow the testimonies of Dakis, Tadao, and the others never seem repetitive. The footage that Tang captured works; the talking heads are not just going through the motions. For them, talking about Musha is a necessary and productive part of a project of self-understanding because the key to understanding Musha for them is Seediq culture. As part of this project, they revisit Musha in the context of Seediq culture with such regularity that remembering Musha could be described as a ritual.

Rituals also relate them to the people of the past. Over and over in Tang's documentary, the living conduct rituals to pay their respect to their ancestors by sprinkling the land with wine, which in the language is referred to as *dmahun* in the active voice or *mddahun* in the reciprocal, both of which can mean either "reconciliation" or "sharing." They do

not conduct the ritual just for reconciliation, as if they are hag-ridden, haunted. In *mddahun*, they are sharing the land with their ancestors, and vice versa. The living and the dead are keeping each other company. It seems that a "sense of absence" has been filled.[24] When they conduct their rituals to the dead, a sense of presence is conveyed through a kind of ritual repetition that never feels repetitive or traumatic. The contemporary Seediq hero apparently is never alone.

It is in his affirmation of Seediq heroism that Tang clearly distinguishes his take on the *yusheng* of the Seediq people from Wu's. In attaching *seediq bale*, which is arguably a Seediq translation of *yīngxióng* (英雄, "hero"), to *Yusheng* to produce the title of his documentary, he suggests that becoming heroes is the task that Seediq people have to perform to ensure their survival, both cultural and personal.[25] While they may need to deconstruct heroism to understand the past, they reconstruct it to bear the present, wherever they are on their quests from unalterable past to uncertain future. Judging from Tang's documentary, the point of a contemporary Seediq hero's quest is to redefine what a *seediq bale* is—with reference to traditional Seediq culture, to be sure, but also to the contemporary situation. Although for Pawan Nawi, at the conclusion of his pilgrimage with his sons to the Pusu Qhuni, the issue seems very similar—a colonial regime's refusal to respect Seediq sovereignty—the context has changed; not every colonial regime is the same. In 1930, the Japanese thought they had a right to forcibly civilize the "savages," but in 2020, in the wake of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007, settler states like Taiwan have to be, and are more inclined to be, sympathetic to Indigenous sovereignty claims.

Given that the Seediq people now live in a liberal democracy that values pluralism, there can be no orthodoxy about what Seediq sovereignty means or how to be a *seediq bale*, a true man or woman—in other words, a hero. Nor does Pawan Nawi try to lay down the law. My reading of the final scene is that each Seediq hero, or heroine, on his or her personal quest, has the right to define *seediq bale* in his or her own way, so long as he or she hearkens to his exhortation: shoulder the burden of the transmission of tradition by remembering where you came from, for you are the *seediq bale*!

1. The spelling of Mona Rudao's name is based on the romanization of the most common Mandarin transliteration: 莫那・魯道 Mònà Lǔdào [mɔna lutau]. In the original Seediq, the name is pronounced differently depending on dialect and time period. Today, in the Tgdaya dialect, it is pronounced Mona Rudo ['mona 'ɹudo], while in the Toda dialect, it is Mona Rudaw ['mona 'ɹudau]. Tgdaya and Toda once shared the diphthong [au]. In Tgdaya, [au] has been monophthongized into [o] since 1930. In other words, Mona Rudao is a reasonable approximation of the man's name as he would have pronounced it in 1930. Mona is his given name, Rudao a patronym, his father's given name.
2. Deng Shian-yang (Deng Xiangyang), *Fengzhong Feiying: Wushe Shijian Zhenxiang ji Huagang Chuzi de Gushi* (*Mountain Cherry Blossom in the Wind: The Truth of the Musha Incident and the Story of Hanaoka Hatsuko*) (Taipei: Yushan, 2000), 107.
3. Deng, *Fengzhong Feiying*, 107.
4. Chiu Kuei-fang, Ming-yeh Rawnsley, and Gary Rawnsley, eds., Taiwan Cinema: International Reception and Social Change (New York: Routledge, 2017).
5. Darryl Sterk, *Indigenous Cultural Translation: A Thick Description of* Seediq Bale (New York: Routledge, 2020).
6. Zheng Shengyi, *Research on Perspective in Aboriginal Images: Pilin Yapu's Documentaries* (master's thesis, Graduate Institute of Taiwan Literature and Transnational Cultural Studies, Zhongxing University, 2013).
7. Qiu Yunfang, "Yusheng: Seediq Bale *zhi hou*," *Guavanthropology* blog, November 3, 2014, https://guavanthropology.tw/article/6194.
8. Qiu, "Yusheng."
9. Darryl Cameron Sterk, "Critical Women in *Seediq Bale*: A Response to Professor Chin-Ju Lin concerning Seediq Cultural Politics," *Taiwan Insight* (September 4, 2019), https://taiwaninsight.org/2019/09/04/critical-women-in-seediq-bale-a-response-to-professor-chin-ju-lin-concerning-seediq-cultural-politic/.
10. Paul Barclay, *Outcasts of Empire: Japan's Rule on Taiwan's "Savage Border," 1874–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017), 112.
11. Wu He, *Remains of Life*, trans. Michael Berry (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 113.
12. Wu, *Remains of Life*, 116.
13. A few years before Wu He arrived in Kawanakajima, Indigenous intellectuals had declared that "the Mona Rudo spirit is undying" (莫那魯道精神不死 *Mònà Lǔdào jīngshén bùsǐ*) (Deng, *Fengzhong Feiying*, 157). They turned Mona's rebellion against colonial rule into a call for the return of Indigenous sovereignty. Published on the twenty-seventh of the month to commemorate Mona's attack,

the radical journal *Hunter Culture* (獵人文化 *lièrén wénhuà*) called regularly in the early 1990s for a return to acephalous (headless) Indigenous self-rule.

14. Wu, *Remains of Life*, 323.
15. Wu, *Remains of Life*, 306.
16. Sylvia Lin, "Recreating the White Terror on the Screen," in *Documenting Taiwan on Film: Issues and Methods in New Documentaries*, ed. Sylvia Lin and Tze-lan D. Sang (New York: Routledge, 2011), 39.
17. Despite sharing a Japanese surname, the Hanaokas were not brothers. They were born in the Tgdaya village of Gungu as Dakis Nomin and Dakis Nawi, where "Nomin" means "(son) of Umin" and "Nawi" "(son) of Awi."
18. When Dakis Pawan fell ill in the 1980s, Deng Shian-yang was running a medical testing lab to fund his research into the Musha Incident and its aftermath.
19. Qiu published a comic book version of the Musha Incident in 1990, which was one of Wei Te-sheng's main sources when he wrote his screenplay. Wei Te-sheng, *Seediq Bale* (Taipei: Government Information Office, 2000). Qiu has continued to represent Seediq heroism and Japanese cruelty in the same style for thirty years.
20. *Pklai ku*, the last line in Pawan Nawi's song, is *pklai*, a causative (*p-*) patient focus imperative (*-i*) based on *kela*, "to know," and *ku*, the first-person singular nominative clitic pronoun. Literally, *pklai ku* is "make it so that I know."
21. The cave at the base of the Pusu Qhuni is not mentioned in Tang's documentary. Compare Wu He's treatment of the half-wood, half-fossil, semen-producing tree (Wu, *Remains of Life*, 118–19), where the cave was formed by "dripping semen."
22. In Seediq, *tndheran* means both the person to whom the land (*dheran*) belongs and a state of belonging (*tn-*) to the land.
23. Sylvia Lin, *Representing Atrocity: The 2/28 Incident and White Terror in Fiction and Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 46.
24. Lin, *Representing Atrocity*, 43.
25. Comparing Chinese and Seediq sun-shooting myths, the historian Zhou Wanyao argues that the ideal of heroism in the Chinese myth is individualistic, while the Seediq ideal is collective. See Zhou Wanyao, "Yingxiong, Yingxiong Chongbai ji qi Fanmingti (Heroes, Hero-Worship and Its Antithesis), in Guo Mingzheng (Dakis Pawan), *Zhenxiang Balai: Saideke Balai de Lishi Zhenxiang yu Suipai Zhaji* (*Truth Bale: The Historical Truth and a Production Diary of Seediq Bale*) (Taipei: Yuanliu), 2–8.