



The Struggle To Attain Justice For Former “Comfort Women” In Taiwan

Emilie Hu



THE AMA MUSEUM, TAIPEI TAIWAN



THE WEDNESDAY PROTESTS OUTSIDE OF THE JAPANESE EMBASSY IN SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

The Political Significance of an Official Apology from the Japanese Government

- **Transitional justice** refers to the way countries emerging from periods of conflict and repression address large-scale or systematic human rights violations so numerous and so serious that the normal justice system will not be able to provide an adequate response

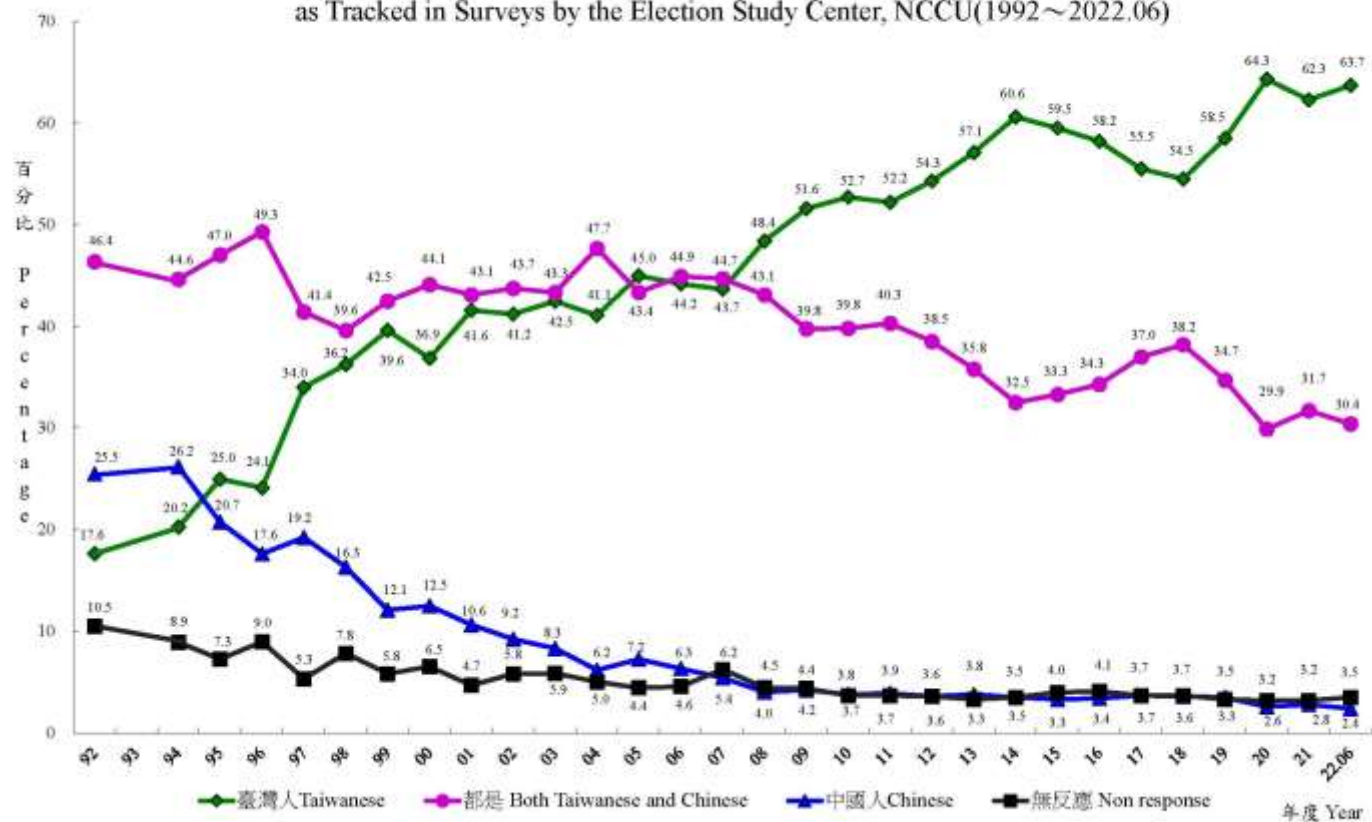


The Taipei Women's Rescue Foundation (TWRF, 慰安婦援基金會), a feminist civil society organization, estimates that more than 2,000 Taiwanese women were forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese during World War II.

Figure 1: A spectrum of Taiwan MOFA's discursive framing of the "comfort women" issue throughout the years



臺灣民眾臺灣人／中國人認同趨勢分佈 (1992~2022.06)
 Changes in the Taiwanese/Chinese Identity of Taiwanese
 as Tracked in Surveys by the Election Study Center, NCCU(1992~2022.06)



國立政治大學選舉研究中心 製

CONSTRUCTIONS OF TAIWANESE NATIONAL IDENTITY

Conducted by Election Study Center at National Chengchi University



Chen Shui-bian (DPP) and Identity Politics

- The first administration where the MOFA issued a public statement regarding the “comfort women” issue
- One of President Chen’s trusted advisors, Hsu Wen-lung (許文龍) created controversy between DPP and KMT politicians when he asserted that the former “comfort women” had volunteered to serve the Japanese imperial military.



Ma Ying-jeou and the KMT's Nationalist Historical Narrative

- Following the monumental agreement between South Korea and Japan in December 2015 for an apology and 1 billion yen (USD \$9.4 million) in reparations for South Korean survivors and their families, Ma demanded that Japan apologize and compensate former Taiwanese “comfort women” as well.

Tsai Ing-wen (DPP) and Relations with Japan

- One of President Tsai's long-term projects has been to redress Taiwan's complicated human rights record, specifically during the KMT's martial law period.
- President Tsai has not made any public statement regarding the "comfort women" issue.



How to move forward

- While revisiting the controversial and traumatic “comfort women” issue may be uncomfortable for Taiwan, not doing so would only perpetuate the lack of consensus on important matters of national history.
- All of the publicly-known former Taiwanese “comfort women” have since passed away.