

Internet Media & Collective Memory —Protesting a Historical Signboard in Okinawa—

Jeffrey J. Hall*

ネットメディアと集合的記憶
—沖縄における歴史説明板に対する抗議—

ホール ジェフリー ジェイムズ*

Abstract

This article examines a recent case of mnemonic dispute in Japan, observing that the emergence of internet communications technology is creating challenges to the methods that society traditionally employs to promote collective memory. It is a study analyzing the on-line activities of Nihon Bunka Channel Sakura, a grassroots conservative media organization that distributes video content via the internet. In 2011 and 2012, Nihon Bunka Channel Sakura used video interviews with a war survivor to fuel a protest campaign against a historical signboard that the Okinawa Prefectural Government intended to erect on a battlefield site, and the sign was eventually rewritten in a manner that matched the demands of the protesters. Using a conceptual framework based upon collective memory theory, this study shows that by producing and uploading videos to the internet, Nihon Bunka Channel Sakura acted as a mnemonic agent that stored and disseminated personal memories. The result was an online site of memory with notable interactivity - allowing viewers to leave feedback, to consume memories in a non-linear manner, and to take part in the dissemination of the memories through social media sharing. The study also shows how conservative activists in Japan employed new mediums of memory distribution in an effort to exercise influence on the processes by which professional mnemonic agents tend to disseminate memories.

*Phd Student, Waseda University Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies

1. Introduction

For decades, scholars have noted the means by which various agents disseminate and influence societies' collective memory of historical events. Many studies have focused on the role of museums, statues, monuments, and other forms of official commemoration.¹ There has also been considerable study of the role of media such as newspapers, books, and television.² In recent years, a growing number of scholars have also begun to study the influence of new forms of internet media.³ Even though studies on internet media have not yet been fully developed, scholars have sought to present theoretical arguments to enhance our understanding of this phenomenon.

This study aims to expand upon the scarce amount of existing literature concerning the connection between internet media and collective memory. The events examined in this paper show how activists used internet media as a tool in a campaign that directly challenged an official form of commemoration. It offers up a noteworthy example of how individual memories recorded and archived in an *interactive* online format can serve as a new means of promoting certain memories of historical events.

Furthermore, this study will provide information on the activism of conservative organizations within Japan that seek to influence the public portrayal of Japan's World War II history. It describes a successful campaign by conservatives to remove descriptions of "comfort women" and the "slaughter of local residents" from a signboard describing the actions of the Imperial Japanese Army in the 1945 Battle of Okinawa.

The study will begin with a discussion of previous research and theories concerning collective memory and the internet, explaining the theoretical underpinning of the analysis of these events and explaining how scholars have noted the importance of the internet's interactivity. It will then describe the media organization that led the protests and summarize the key events that took place. There will also be an analysis of the nature of disseminating eyewitness memories via the internet, focusing on the unique interactivity of internet media.

¹ Glassberg, David. "Public history and the study of memory." *The Public Historian* 18, no. 2 (1996): 7-23.

² Schwartz, Barry. "Collective memory and history." *The Sociological Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (1997): 469-496. And Barnhurst, Kevin G., and Ellen Wartella. "Young citizens, American TV newscasts and the collective memory." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 15, no. 3 (1998): 279-305.

³ For Example: Adkins, Barbara A., Hancox, Donna, & Klaebe, Helen G. "The role of the internet and digital technologies in the struggle for recognition of the forgotten Australians." *In Proceedings of iCS-OII 2011 Symposium on the Dynamics of the Internet and Society: A Decade in Time, Social Science Electronic Publishing*, (2012) University of Oxford, pp. 1-23. And Haskins, Ekaterina. "Between Archive and Participation: Public Memory in a Digital Age." *RSQ* 37.4 (2007): 401-422.

2. Literature Review - Collective Memory and the Internet

This study's analysis is based upon collective memory theory. Collective memory is the means by which a group or society of people remember the past. The concept of collective memory was popularized by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who argued that groups possess a shared memory and an individual's awareness of the past is considerably based upon the shared memory of the group to which he/she belongs.⁴

Scholars of collective memory have come to emphasize that it is formed through the interaction of personal/individual memory and memories from the group, meaning that "for collective expressions of memory to occur, individuals must participate; the memories of individuals, in turn, are structured and influenced by the memory practices of the community to which they belong and by the exchange of memory content with other members of that community."⁵ The formation of collective memory is "an inherently mediated phenomenon,"⁶ one that is "as much a result of conscious manipulation as unconscious absorption." The mediation and manipulation of collective memory "often privileges the interests of the contemporary."⁷

Building upon the basic conclusions of previous scholars, Avishai Margalit has argued that collective or "shared" memory in a modern society is spread by the *mnemonic labor* and mediation of mnemonic agents. Whereas individual ("common") memories are involuntarily formed through direct experience of events, shared memory comes about through voluntary participation in the dissemination of the experiences of other members of a society. It "travels from person to person through institutions such as archives, and through communal mnemonic devices, such as monuments, the names of streets."⁸ This mnemonic labor has been traditionally dominated by professional mnemonic agents, people who are part of powerful institutions, such as the state, church, major universities, or the mainstream media. The work of professional mnemonic agents allows for people who did not personally experience events to expose themselves to the individual memories of others through "channels of description rather than by direct experience."⁹

One well-noted channel of description through which professional mnemonic agents mediate and disseminate memories to society is the establishment of public me-

⁴ Halbwachs, Maurice. *On collective memory*. University of Chicago Press, 1992.

⁵ Gray, Peter, and Kendrick Oliver, eds. *The memory of catastrophe*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004. P. 4

⁶ Neiger, Motti, Oren Meyers, and Eyal Zandberg, eds. *On media memory: Collective memory in a new media age*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. p. 3

⁷ Kansteiner, Wolf. "Finding meaning in memory: A methodological critique of collective memory studies." *History and theory* 41, no. 2 (2002): 179-197.

⁸ Margalit, Avishai. "The ethics of memory." *Cambridge, Mass* (2002): p. 54.

⁹ *Ibid* 52

monials and displays that commemorate historical events. When placed at sites that attract tourists, such mediums are an important influence on the way that visitors come to form collective memories about history.¹⁰

The traditional mediums employed by professional mnemonic agents - whether they be monuments, archives, and museums or newspapers, books, and television - have largely functioned as linear, one-way channels of description. The emergence of internet communications technology and new media has been praised by scholars as bringing a major change to this dynamic. The cost of participation on the internet is far less than that of traditional mediums, providing easy access for non-professionals agents.¹¹ The interactivity of the internet has significant potential to serve as “a two-way street in a world where the dominant medium (television) has been unidirectional.”¹² As Ekaterina Haskins noted in a recent study of *The September 11 Digital Archive*:

“...the users’ ability to supply content, provide feedback, and choose their own paths through a system of hyperlinks marks the experience of navigating the internet as more participatory and active than that of flipping through television channels, scanning a newspaper, or following an audio-tour through a museum. The audience no longer acts as a consumer of a linear story- it takes part in the experience by making choice to connect particular messages and images as well as to register responses to them.”¹³

Through research on online archives of personal testimonies about the Israel-Palestine conflict, Tamar Ashuri reached similar conclusions about the importance of interactivity, arguing that it is a “unique characteristic” that “contributes to the creation of a more active experience of consumption.”¹⁴ The consumer of online video testimonies also serves as an editor, because “the addressee can consume the various items published in any combination desired, as well as to download them and create unique combinations that could be disseminated to others” through the use of social media sharing platforms such as Facebook and YouTube. The consumer shares in the experience of the eyewitnesses who record their memories in video form, as well as sharing some responsibility for the spread of those memories to other members of his/her society.¹⁵ Thus, the “exclusive role of professional mnemonic agents, designated directly

¹⁰ Winter, Caroline. “Tourism, social memory and the Great War.” *Annals of tourism research* 36, no. 4 (2009): 607-626.

¹¹ Weber, Lori M., Alysha Loumakis, and James Bergman. “Who participates and why? An analysis of citizens on the Internet and the mass public.” *Social Science Computer Review* 21, no. 1 (2003): 26-42. And O’Hara, Kieron, and David Stevens. “The Devil’s Long Tail: Religious Moderation and Extremism on the Web.” *Intelligent Systems, IEEE* 24, no. 6 (2009): 37-43.

¹² Gurak, Laura J. *Cyberliteracy: Navigating the Internet with awareness*. Yale University Press, 2003. P.44.

¹³ Haskins, Ekaterina. “Between archive and participation: Public memory in a digital age.” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 37, no. 4 (2007): 401-422.

¹⁴ Ashuri, Tamar. “(Web) sites of memory and the rise of moral mnemonic agents.” *new media & society* 14, no. 3 (2012): 453.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 453.

or obliquely by the church, state, monarchy, and the like, is being now challenged” by the emergence of the internet.¹⁶ This new situation has made it possible for non-professional agents, such as alternative media organizations, citizen journalists, amateur historians and ordinary individuals, to gain a greater role in the dissemination and consumption of historical memory.

The research of such scholars has raised intriguing ideas about internet media and collective memory, but there are still very few academic studies that demonstrate how these concepts actually work in practice.¹⁷ In the following paper, I will examine a dispute in which one organization actively used internet media to spread eyewitness accounts of historical events and sought to disseminate these memories as a tool to pressure a government institution into altering a planned commemoration. Looking at these events in terms of collective memory theory, I argue that it serves as a notable example of how non-professional mnemonic agents employed an interactive medium of memory distribution that challenged the activities of professional mnemonic agents.

3. Background Information: Nihon Bunka Channel Sakura

This study focuses on the actions of Nihon Bunka Channel Sakura (henceforth known as Channel Sakura), a small media organization that produces news reports and programs from a conservative perspective. Channel Sakura was founded in 2004, initially distributing several hours of weekly programming to satellite television subscribers. Since 2008 it has made many of its programs available for free via YouTube.com. At the time of this study’s publication, Channel Sakura had uploaded an archive of over 9,200 videos to YouTube, all of which can be viewed for free.¹⁸

Channel Sakura describes itself as a history and culture network that aims to “preserve and promote Japanese traditions” while seeking to inform the Japanese people of the “truth” that existing media outlets refuse to report.¹⁹ The founder and president of Channel Sakura, Satoru Mizushima, states that they are a “grassroots media” [*soumou media*] organization that can serve as Japan’s “New NHK” [*Shin-NHK*], free from any outside influence by business, political, religious, or foreign groups.²⁰ English language magazines and newspapers have described Mizushima as a “right-

¹⁶ *Ibid* 444

¹⁷ Drinot, Paulo. “Website of memory: The War of the Pacific (1879-84) in the global age of YouTube.” *Memory Studies*, October 2011, 4: 370-38.

¹⁸ “日本文化チャンネル桜”. 日本文化チャンネル桜・YouTube (2012年04月12日). <http://www.youtube.com/user/SakuraSoTV/>. 2012年4月12日閲覧。

¹⁹ *Ibid*

²⁰ 「チャンネル桜 | 創設と委員就任」 <<http://www.ch-sakura.jp/578.html>> (2010/12/10 アクセス) and “【チャンネル桜】 二千人委員会からのご報告 [桜 H22/8/5]”. 日本文化チャンネル桜 (2009年8月5日). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAHY5I-o-CU> 2010年12月10日閲覧。 and “【草莽崛起】 二千人委員会 1年の御礼と、ご支援御継続に関するお願い [桜 H21/10/15]”. 日本文化チャンネル桜 (2009年10月15日). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0coyjhk1EU>. 2010年12月10日閲覧。

winger,” “rightist,” or a member of Japan’s “extreme right-wing.”²¹

Many of Channel Sakura’s programs concern Japanese history, particularly the history of Japanese imperialism and the Second World War. As noted in Channel Sakura’s description of itself, programs generally portray historical events in a manner that challenges the view presented in most of Japan’s traditional mainstream media outlets. Channel Sakura’s message is in tune with the ideology of Japan’s “assertive conservative right,” a group of “politicians and intellectuals whose political capital is based on justifying and honoring prewar Japan.”²²

Although Channel Sakura is a media organization with full-time employees, it would be fair to refer to it as a non-professional mnemonic agent. Such a designation does not place judgment upon technical skills or career professionalism of the people who work for Channel Sakura. The word “professional” is used in collective memory theory to define an agent as part of a powerful institution. When Channel Sakura is defined as a “non-professional” agency, it is to note Channel Sakura’s position as a grassroots organization that functions outside of Japan’s mainstream media. Channel Sakura is an alternative media outlet that lacks the vast resources and visibility available to governmental institutions, universities, major television networks, and newspapers. It is an actor that exists outside of the forces that are traditionally associated with the spreading of collective memory. From the perspective of collective memory theory, it is not a professional mnemonic agent.

Channel Sakura was selected as an object of examination in this study because it frequently produces and uploads video programs that feature eyewitness testimony from war veterans and survivors. In doing so, it acts as a mnemonic agent, seeking to influence the collective memory of Japanese society through the dissemination of memories that challenge the memories that are disseminated by larger, professional mnemonic agents, such as the government and mainstream media. Although Channel Sakura produces eyewitness testimonial videos on a wide variety of historical issues, for the sake of clarity this paper will focus on a single protest campaign: the 2011-2012 dispute over a historical signboard in Okinawa.

4. Remembering the 32nd Army Headquarters - Key Events

Prior to the 1945 Battle of Okinawa, the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) created a

²¹ Morrison, Tim. “Haunted by History.” *Time*, March 1, 2007. Accessed December 08, 2010. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1595004,00.html> and Rapold, Nicolas. “The Truth of Nanking.” *LA Weekly*, November 11, 2008. Accessed December 08, 2010. <http://www.laweekly.com/movies/the-truth-of-nanking-383104/> and *Taipei Times*. “Japanese filmmaker to deny Nanjing Massacre.” January 26, 2007. Accessed December 08, 2010. <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/world/archives/2007/01/26/2003346406/1>

²² Togo, Kazuhiko. “The assertive conservative right in Japan: their formation and perspective.” *SATS Review* 30, no. 1 (2010): 77-89.

series of fortifications around the site of Shuri Castle. When the battle began, many non-combatants sought refuge and protection within the military's underground tunnels and bomb shelters. One such site of refuge was the underground complex that housed the headquarters of the IJA's 32nd Army.²³

The remnants of the 32nd Army headquarters now lie in Shuri Castle Park, one of the most-visited tourist attractions in Okinawa Prefecture. In 1997, the Okinawa Prefectural Government (OPG) created a plan to preserve and open the headquarters to the public. However, the implementation of the plan was delayed due to concerns about the safety of crumbling tunnels. In 2011, the OPG established a committee of five experts to create a draft for an explanation signboard that would be erected above ground near the site of the closed-off headquarters. The committee, chaired by Professor Yoshifumi Ikeda of the University of the Ryukyus, produced a draft in November of that year, delivering it to the OPG for review.²⁴

In its draft, the committee included two items that prompted protest from Channel Sakura: references to the presence of “comfort women” at the headquarters, and text describing the “slaughter of local residents” by Japanese soldiers. One day after the draft was created, Channel Sakura began to call on its viewers to put a halt to the “Leftist Okinawans who are falsely accusing our war dead of crimes.”²⁵ Mizushima and his co-host expressed worry about how children who visited the park might read such a description and believe an “untrue” and “anti-Japanese” version of history. It was evident that they were concerned about the impact the sign could have on Japan's collective memory of the Battle of Okinawa.

Channel Sakura struck back by preparing special programs that used the eyewitness testimony to challenge the OPG committee's assertions. For these programs they interviewed Naeko Ina, a woman who served as a nurse with the 32nd Army headquarters from the beginning of the Battle of Okinawa until the final days of the battle. She acknowledged the presence of female civilians, but strongly denied the existence of “comfort women” at the site. In addition, she declared that there was absolutely no massacre of civilians by Japanese soldiers. Ina tearfully denounced the signboard's “unforgivable” inaccuracies as an insult to the many people who died during the Battle of Okinawa. At the end of the 15 minute testimony video, Channel Sakura announcers appeared on screen and called on viewers to contact the OPG and share their thoughts about the signboard draft.²⁶ They also recommended that viewers check out their

²³ Feifer, George. *The Battle of Okinawa: The Blood and the Bomb*. The Lyons Press, 1992: 69.

²⁴ “OPG to set up an explanation board about the former 32nd Army Headquarters Shelter at Shuri,” *Ryukyu Shimpo*, November 23, 2011. accessed March 28, 2012, <http://english.ryukyushimpo.jp/2011/11/30/4647/>.

²⁵ “【沖縄戦】絶対阻止！英霊に濡れ衣を着せる沖縄左翼 [桜 H23/11/24]”. 日本文化チャンネル桜 (2011年11月24日). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0coyjhk1EU>. 2013年3月10日閲覧。

²⁶ “【伊波苗子】元従軍看護婦の証言・第32軍司令部壕の真実 [桜 H23/11/28]”. 日本文化チャンネル桜 (2011年11月28日). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0coyjhk1EU>. 2013年3月10日閲覧。

older programs about the history of the Battle of Okinawa, several of which also included eyewitness testimony from Ina.

In February 2012, the OPG announced the wording it would use for the explanation signboard. The words “comfort women” and the passage about the “slaughter of local residents” were not included in the final version of the signboard.²⁷ The English, Chinese, and Korean translations also dropped references to Okinawa as a “sacrificial stone” (*suteishi*).²⁸ The conservative protests against the draft had been successful. Newspaper articles stated that changes had taken place because the OPG had responded to protests. The Okinawa Times noted that the OPG had received 82 official complaints via e-mail, telephone, or fax, with many of the complaints coming from outside of Okinawa.²⁹ The Ryuku Shimpo stated that the revision occurred because of protests that had been brought about due to a “satellite television program.”³⁰ As there was no other satellite television channel that covered the issue, Channel Sakura noted the report as an admission that their organization had been the driving force behind the success of the campaign.³¹

The OPG’s decision to revise the signboard was denounced by local groups and the local media. Professor Ikeda and other members of the committee that had written the signboard draft protested the decision.³² The Ryuku Shimpo and Okinawa Times both published editorials criticizing the decision and demanding that the OPG explain its actions.³³ Several citizens’ groups, including some battle survivors who now work as volunteer tour guides, organized study meetings to discuss the issue and voice their opposition to the revised signboard.³⁴

Despite opposition to the OPG’s decision, the prefecture quickly moved ahead with plans to print the signboard.³⁵ It was completed and placed in Shuri Castle Park in late March of 2012.³⁶ On April 12th, Okinawa’s Peace and Gender Equality Division

27 『琉球新報』 2012年2月24日 「慰安婦」を削除 第32軍司令部壕の説明板 県が方針決定
<<http://ryukyushimpo.jp/news/storyid-187846-storytopic-1.html>>

28 McCormack, Gavan, and Satoko Oka Norimatsu. *Resistant Islands: Okinawa Confronts Japan and the United States*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2012. p. 42.

29 『沖縄タイムズ』 2012年2月24日 「住民虐殺」削る 司令部壕の説明板
<http://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/article/2012-02-24_30235/>

30 『琉球新報』 2012年2月25日 「文言削除 高まる批判」 pp.28-29

31 “【伊波苗子】生き証人が語る、第32軍司令部壕の真実[桜 H24/3/1]”. 日本文化チャンネル桜 (2012年03月01日).
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0coyjhk1EU>. 2013年3月10日閲覧。

32 『琉球新報』 2012年2月29日 「第32軍壕説明板 検討委、県に記述削除の撤回求める」
<<http://ryukyushimpo.jp/news/storyid-188070-storytopic-1.html>>

33 『沖縄タイムズ』 2012年3月26日 「社説」 - [32軍壕説明板設置] 県のやり方はおかしい
<http://www.okinawatimes.co.jp/article/2012-03-26_31562/> and 『琉球新報』 2012年2月25日 「32軍壕記述削除 事実の明記は県の責務」 <<http://ryukyushimpo.jp/news/storyid-187895-storytopic-11.html>>

34 『琉球新報』 2012年3月26日 「県強行設置に怒り 平和ガイドら「撤去を」 32軍壕説明板」
<<http://ryukyushimpo.jp/news/storyid-189113-storytopic-1.html>>

35 『琉球新報』 2012年3月28日 「第32軍司令部壕、記述削除再検討を アピール採択」
<<http://ryukyushimpo.jp/news/storyid-188791-storytopic-1.html>>

36 “【超限戦】沖縄・第32軍司令部壕跡説明文の捏造撃退[桜 H24/3/26]”. 日本文化チャンネル桜 (2012年03月26日).
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0coyjhk1EU>. 2013年3月10日閲覧。

uploaded a lengthy official explanation of the government's policy regarding the controversial decision. It stated that the purpose of the signboard was to describe events that took place at the 32nd Army headquarters, and that the government failed to find evidence that it housed "comfort women" or that it was the site of "massacres" of civilians accused of spying. The government denied any intention of covering-up or hiding the existence of atrocities that took place during the Battle of Okinawa. It pointed out that detailed descriptions of the plight of "comfort women" and other civilian victims could be found at the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum.³⁷

The OPG has not stated that the conservative protests were directly responsible for convincing it to make the revision, so it is impossible to be certain that Channel Sakura or protesters were its cause. However, observers have credited Channel Sakura as the organization that launched the protest campaign. Okinawan author Shun Medoruma, a vocal opponent of the revision, claims that conservative-leaning members of the OPG used "the right-wing protest that started with an appeal from Channel Sakura" as an "excuse" or "opportunity" to revise the signboard.³⁸ Similarly, reports from the Ryukyu Shimpo strongly suggested that Channel Sakura was an important driving force behind the protest campaign and that the OPG took notice of the protests. Other factors could have determined the OPG's decision, but the end result matched exactly what the protesters had demanded.

While the OPG was correct to note that it still commemorated the issues in question at other sites, conservative activists had clearly scored a victory in the fight over the explanation signboard. Visitors to Shuri Castle Park who read the sign would not be exposed to descriptions that Channel Sakura and its supporters considered "untrue" and "anti-Japanese."

5. Eyewitness Testimony Videos and Interactivity: Analysis & Results

In its campaign, Channel Sakura hosted its eyewitness testimony videos on YouTube, an online video sharing site. The use of such internet media facilitates interaction between the viewer and the content producer. As noted in the above discussion of collective memory theory, the interactivity of such websites allows the passive viewer to take an active role in consumption and dissemination of content. In this case, viewer feedback, non-linear consumption, and social media sharing were readily observable.

Merely stating that such interactive features exist does not prove that people actu-

³⁷ "第32軍司令部壕説明板設置についての経緯と考え方". 沖縄県の平和・男女共同参画課 (2012年04月12日). <http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/site/kankyo/heiwananjo/heiwa/dai32.html>. 2012年7月30日閲覧。

³⁸ Medoruma, Shun. "We Cannot Allow Governor Nakaima to Falsify the History of the Battle of Okinawa," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol 10, Issue 15, No 2, April 9, 2012.

ally make use of them. Determining whether people actually watched the videos is also important. Therefore, in order to document the use of such features, data was gathered from Google and other sources. This data provides physical evidence that viewers watched the videos took advantage of the available interactive features. The data was gathered for the five Channel Sakura videos that feature eyewitness testimony from Naeko Ina.

Table 1 : Basic Information About Videos³⁹

#	TITLE	UPLOAD DATE	URL
1	3/3 【沖縄県民かく戦へり】 いま明らかとなる牛島大将の 最期 [桜 H22/10/8]	October 08, 2010	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BarRcYZENwE
2	2/3 【沖縄県民かく戦へり】 いま明らかとなる牛島大将の 最期 [桜 H22/10/8]	October 08, 2010	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NmKE_AE58C8
3	3/3 【沖縄県民かく戦へり】 いま明らかとなる牛島大将の 最期 [桜 H22/10/8]	October 08, 2010	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Apjmb66uT0
4	【伊波苗子】元従軍看護婦の 証言・第32軍司令部壕の真実 [桜 H23/11/28]	November 28, 2011	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wUmR4bO_gQ
5	【伊波苗子】生き証人が語る、 第32軍司令部壕の真実 [桜 H24/3/1]	March 01, 2012	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O6i1g0Tu6vY

Videos #1 through #3 are a three-part testimony recorded in 2010, about Ina's experiences serving in General Ushijima's 32nd Army headquarters. Video #4 was an interview recorded shortly after the OPG's expert committee produced a draft of the explanation signboard, and features Ina providing testimony that directly contradicts the draft. Video #5 was recorded in late February of 2012, after the OPG revised the signboard plan in favor of Channel Sakura's protests, and features Ina adding more recollections.

5.1. Viewer Feedback

Channel Sakura allows viewers to directly post feedback on all of its videos. This feedback came in the form of comment forms and voting buttons that are provided by YouTube. The comment form makes it possible for anyone to immediately write a post a comment about the video they just viewed. Comments are visible beneath each

³⁹ Data gathered from YouTube.com on April 10, 2013.

video, so viewers can read what other people have written in response to each video. YouTube also provides a voting system that gives anyone the opportunity to show support or disapproval through a vote of “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” on a video or a comment posted beneath a video. In the case of videos, the total numbers of support and disapproval votes are presented separately. In the case of comments a total score is shown, with approval votes adding one point and disapproval votes subtracting one point from the total. Comments that receive many disapproval votes are hidden from view, while the comments with the highest scores are featured above all other viewer comments.

By examining the data on Channel Sakura’s eyewitness testimony videos, we can see that viewers made use of these feedback features.

Table 2 : YouTube Video Voting and Comment Data⁴⁰

	Up Votes	Down Votes	Number of Comments
Video #1	159 (95%)	9 (5%)	58
Video #2	98 (98%)	2 (2%)	24
Video #3	84 (98%)	2 (2%)	14
Video #4	152 (100%)	0 (2%)	11
Video #5	86 (91%)	9 (9%)	8

Almost all of the visible comments left on videos expressed support for Channel Sakura’s viewpoint. This could be because video owners have the ability to delete negative comments left on their videos. However, the vote tallies for all the videos, which cannot be edited by video owners⁴¹, indicate that the vast majority of people leaving feedback are supporters of Channel Sakura. For all of these videos, over 90% of viewers who used voting features expressed approval.

Discussion and feedback also took place through user comments. Similar to the voting results, most comments expressed approval of Channel Sakura’s campaign. To show the specific type of feedback that was posted, here are a few examples of popular comments:

“もう、事実無根で国家を貶めた売国奴は、処罰できるようにしないと、ダメだと思う。名誉毀損による訴えさえ、できないのか？”— [It’s no good if we don’t punish the traitors who defame our country with lies. Can’t they be sued for defamation?] Gyokusai999 (comment score: 18)⁴²

⁴⁰ Data gathered from YouTube.com on April 10, 2013.

⁴¹ “How do I remove a negative thumbs down on my video?” *Google Product Forums - YouTube*. October 10, 2011, <http://productforums.google.com/forum/#topic/youtube/EnLQHJRKQYU>

⁴² “【伊波苗子】生き証人が語る、第32軍司令部壕の真実 [桜 H24/3/1]”. 日本文化チャンネル桜 (2012年03月01日). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0coyjhk1EU>. 2013年3月10日閲覧。

“チャンネル桜ならではの大変貴重な証言動画であり、また、日本の本当の歴史を後世に伝えていくために、これからも大切にしていけるべき動画だと思います。” [This valuable testimonial footage is characteristic of Channel Sakura. I think we must preserve this video to pass historical truth onto future generations.] – Yokoidawa (comment score: 13)⁴³

“(´；ω；`）この貴重な証言を報道しない大手メディアって何なの・・・” [:(Why the hell is the mainstream media not reporting about this valuable testimony?)] – moffu87usa33 (comment score: 9)⁴⁴

“教科書やNHKが決して伝えない、良質な情報をいつもありがとうございます。” [Thank you for always providing high quality information that textbooks and NHK can never report.] – TokyoMarineCity (comment score: 32)⁴⁵

“あかん、涙がとまりません。
92歳なのにしっかりしていて、おっしゃることに尊敬といたわりの心が感じられ、感動しました。” [Darn, I can't stop the tears. Despite being 92-years-old, she is strong. I can feel her respect and sympathy (for the Japanese soldiers). I was moved.] – grongin2 (comment score: 9)⁴⁶

Other comments recommended other Channel Sakura videos to viewers. For example, under one of the testimony videos from 2011, a popular comment from viewer directed others to videos from 2010 that featured longer interviews with Ina. This overlaps with another important aspect of interactivity: the non-linear nature of content consumption.

5.2. Non-Linear Consumption

Unlike television, YouTube allows users to view its videos in any order or quantity they desire. Nor is it necessary to view an entire program, since users can skip back and forth to different segments of a single video clip. And because YouTube has a sidebar that automatically suggests similar videos, viewers who found their way to one eyewitness testimony video could easily click their way to another video in the same series.

43 “【伊波苗子】元従軍看護婦の証言・第32軍司令部壕の真実 [桜 H23/11/28]”. 日本文化チャンネル桜 (2011年11月28日). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0coyjhk1EU>. 2013年3月10日閲覧。

44 Ibid

45 “1/3【沖縄県民かく戦へり】いま明らかとなる牛島大将の最期 [桜 H22/10/8]”. 日本文化チャンネル桜 (2010年10月08日). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0coyjhk1EU>. 2013年3月10日閲覧。

46 Ibid

Table 3 : YouTube Video View Counts⁴⁷

#	Number of Times Viewed
Video #1	88,160
Video #2	16,564
Video #3	24,493
Video #4	9,954
Video #5	11,304

The video view counts were in the thousands to the tens of thousands, a range similar to videos from other Channel Sakura protest campaigns.

5.3. As the data in Table 3 shows, the videos received a different total number of views. Videos that were uploaded several years earlier are difficult to analyze because they likely received many of their views before the campaign involving the explanation signboard, but because viewers of the 4th and 5th video were referred to the earlier videos by Mizushima and by viewer comments, a portion of the views almost certainly took place during the 2011-2012 campaign. Videos #1, #2, and #3 were sections of a three-part program, and most viewers of the first part apparently did not watch the second and third parts. The third section of the program received more views than the second section, a result that indicates the non-linear manner in which the videos were consumed. Yet, from the view totals we can see that thousands of people have been exposed some of Ina's memories of the 32nd Army and the Battle of Okinawa. The two videos uploaded after the start of the campaign received about 10,000 views each, a considerable number given that the majority of YouTube videos only ever receive less than 500 views⁴⁸. Although YouTube has complex algorithms that are meant to count unique user as a single viewer, it is possible that some viewers have been counted more than once.⁴⁹ However, one can accurately say that thousands of people viewed the videos, and it appears that they did so in a non-linear manner. Social Media Sharing

Another form of interactivity was social media sharing. Through share buttons on the videos, and through accounts on other social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, viewers could share video links with their friends and acquaintances. This action made them active participants in the wider dissemination of Ina's memories.

⁴⁷ Data gathered from YouTube.com on April 10, 2013.

⁴⁸ Angelova, Kamelia and Dan Frommer. "Chart of the Day: Half of YouTube Videos Get Fewer Than 500 Views." *Business Insider*, May 20, 2009. Accessed July 1, 2013. <http://www.businessinsider.com/chart-of-the-day-youtube-videos-by-views-2009-5>

⁴⁹ YouTube Team. "A note about recent changes." YouTube Creators. *Blogspot*. January 6, 2012. Accessed July 1, 2013. <http://youtubecreator.blogspot.jp/2012/01/views-and-3rd-party-services.html>

Using software from SharedCount.com, data was gathered on the number of times that people used Twitter and Facebook to share and comment on each of the videos. In the case of Twitter, data is presented in the form of a single number - the amount of “tweets” that users made including the link to each video. When a user posts a “tweet” to Twitter, it becomes immediately visible to all the users who “follow” his/her account. In the case of Facebook, there are three types of sharing. The first is the “like” feature, an expression of approval for a link that is visible to people who deliberately check what a certain a “friend” has recently liked. The second is the “share” feature, through which a Facebook user actively announces and posts a link, sending it to their “friends.” The third is a comment count, which tallies the number of times that Facebook users have written comments discussing a shared link.

Table 4 : Social Media Sharing Data⁵⁰

#	Shares via Twitter	Likes / Shares / Comments via Facebook
Video #1	585	26/12/ 0
Video #2	13	15/ 5/ 0
Video #3	16	15/ 7/ 8
Video #4	49	40/16/18
Video #5	18	0 / 0/ 0

Observing the data presented in Table 4, we can see that the first part of the three-part video from 2010 received a remarkably large number of shares on Twitter, far more than any other video in this data set. Because the video has been online since 2010, it is not clear how many of the shares took place after 2011 signboard draft was announced. Nonetheless, the data indicates that there was considerable interest in the video, and that many viewers used their Twitter accounts to disseminate Ina’s testimony to others.

There is also an interesting contrast in the sharing data for Videos #4 and #5. Video #4, which was uploaded in November 2011, received a comparatively high number of shares on Twitter and Facebook. Video #5, which was uploaded in March of 2012, was shared far less. This gap between the two videos could reflect the timing of each video program in relation to the progress of the protest campaign. Video #4 was uploaded at the beginning of the protest campaign, when Channel Sakura was urgently calling on viewers to spread the video and send protests to the OPG. Video #5, on the other hand, was uploaded after the fate of the signboard had already been decided. Therefore, viewers would probably feel less need to share Video #5 with their friends and acquaintances.

⁵⁰ Data gathered from Sharedcount.com on April 10, 2013.

The data collected on the five videos provides hard evidence that consumers made use of the interactive features available. It is impossible to know just how influential Ina's testimonial videos were in building support for the campaign, but it is evident that thousands of people were exposed to portions of her individual memory, and some of those consumers went on to employ the interactive features of this online medium to share and discuss her memories with others. In addition, some consumers appear to have followed the course of action suggested in the videos and directly contacted the OPG to demand that the signboard be revised.

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates how Nihon Bunka Channel Sakura placed eyewitness testimony videos online, functioning as a mnemonic agent that sought to influence the collective memory of viewers. It documents the interactive features of the site of memory - viewer feedback, non-linear consumption, and social media sharing. These features allowed consumers of memory to take an active role in the process of memory formation and dissemination. Thus, the consumers themselves functioned as more than passive observers - they could share and discuss the videos, actions that also made them mnemonic agents. By documenting the use of such interactive features, this study has contributed new information that will be helpful for future research into the relationship between interactive online media and collective memory.

The videos were used as tools in a successful campaign of protest against a historical signboard that was to be placed at the site of the 32nd Army headquarters in Shuri Castle Park. The campaign, launched by a small alternative media organization, was an example of a non-professional mnemonic agent challenging the traditional mediums that professional mnemonic agents employ. Professional mnemonic agents had prepared a draft description that mentioned the presence of "comfort women" and the "slaughter of local residents" at the site. Channel Sakura's programs about the issue, which included several videos of eyewitness testimony from a war survivor, helped fuel a stream of protests that ultimately led to the Okinawa Prefectural Government's decision to remove the two descriptions from the final version of the signboard. Thus, in addition to documenting the notable interactivity of the medium used by activists, this study illustrates how the emergence of the internet may be weakening the role of professional mnemonic agents in the formation of collective memory.

(Received 8th May, 2013)

(Accepted 30th July, 2013)