

# Last Words of the Tiger of Malaya, General Yamashita Tomoyuki

**Yuki Tanaka**

## Last Words of the Tiger of Malaya, General Yamashita Tomoyuki

By Yuki Tanaka

*The final reflections of a convicted war criminal enshrined at Yasukuni Jinja*

One of the major reasons for Chinese and Korean public criticism of Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine is that 14 out of 28 A-Class Japanese war criminals are enshrined there. Seven among them including Tojo Hideki and Matsui Iwane were executed at the conclusion of the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal and the other seven died either during the tribunal or while serving their sentences. Yasukuni Shrine also sanctifies many B and C-Class war criminals, many of whom were directly responsible for atrocities committed throughout the Asia-Pacific region. One of those is Tomoyuki Yamashita, who was enshrined on 17 October 1959. As the commander who led the Japanese Imperial Army troops to invade Singapore in February 1942, he was nicknamed the 'Tiger of Malaya.'

At 2:15 am on the morning of 8 December 1941, advance troops of the 25th Army led by Lieutenant General Yamashita landed at Kota Bharu on the east coast of the Malay Peninsula with the aim of seizing Singapore. This landing was an hour and 20 minutes before the attack on Pearl Harbor and thus, strictly speaking, marks the beginning of the Pacific War. The

25th Army swiftly advanced south towards Singapore, completely unsuspected by the British forces armed with large-bore artillery that were defending Singapore from seaborne attack via the Straits of Malacca. The Japanese troops numbered 20,000; the defending troops consisted of 88,000 British, Australian, and Indian soldiers and Malay volunteers. Although the British forces had the advantage of much greater numbers, Singapore fell relatively quickly, the British not only having underestimated the ability of the Japanese forces, but being insufficiently trained in jungle warfare and lacking adequate communication among their forces.

On the evening of 15 February 1942, Yamashita and Lieutenant General A.E. Percival of the British Forces met at the Ford Motor factory outside Singapore to negotiate the surrender of the Commonwealth forces. Japanese correspondents reporting the meeting claimed that Yamashita aggressively demanded: "Is the British Army going to surrender immediately? Answer 'Yes' or 'No'." In fact, he had simply instructed his interpreter to ask Percival whether he was prepared to accept unconditional surrender. The story of this negotiation was, however, embellished and proudly publicized by the Japanese media as emblematic of Japan's new confidence and strength. Due to the swift victory of his military campaign and the successful capture of Singapore, Yamashita won the sobriquet 'Tiger of Malaya.' A feature film under the same title was screened throughout Japan and the occupied territories of Asia, creating an image of him as a ruthless militarist. Less than five months after the fall of Singapore, he was

posted to remote northern Manchuria as commander of the First Area Army by General Hideki Tojo, the then Prime Minister and Minister of the Army. Effectively, Tojo demoted Yamashita whom he perceived as a threat, Yamashita belonging to a different military faction to his own.

Yamashita was promoted to General in February 1943, but in 1944, with the war situation deteriorating for Japan, he was dispatched as Commander of the 14th Area Army in the Philippines. He arrived in Manila on 6 October 1944, just two weeks prior to the landing of U.S. forces on Leyte Island. He opposed the plan devised by the Imperial Headquarters in Tokyo to send some of his troops to Leyte because of the lack of food and ammunition supplies as well as ships to transport them there. Eventually, however, he was unable to disobey his immediate superior, General Terauchi Hisaichi, General-Commander of the Southern Army, and sent approximately 80,000 troops to Leyte by early December. The result was a disaster -- 97 percent died, many from starvation. In the middle of the Battle of Leyte, Terauchi moved his headquarters from Manila to Saigon in Vietnam, thereby escaping the dangerous battlefield situation that enveloped all Japanese forces in the Philippines.

As large quantities of supplies had already been exhausted in the Battle of Leyte, there were insufficient arms and ammunition for the 287,000 Japanese troops stationed across Luzon Island under Yamashita's command as they faced 191,000 U.S. troops who landed at the island's Lingaen Bay on 9 January 1945. In mid-December 1944, anticipating the landing of the U.S. forces, Yamashita had ordered all troops stationed in Manila to evacuate the city within six weeks and his headquarters was also moved to Baguio in the mountains of northern Luzon. About 20,000 troops of the 31st Naval Base Force, initially under the command of Rear-Admiral Iwabuchi, came under

Yamashita's command by late December, but they refused to move. For four weeks, these troops fought fiercely against the U.S. forces that entered the city on 3 February. As a result, about 100,000 Filipino civilians were killed. In the course of the campaign, Japanese tortured and killed many civilians believed to be members or collaborators of guerrilla groups opposing Japan. Many women were raped by the Japanese troops, and numerous civilians became victims of aerial bombing conducted by the U.S. forces. Eventually all the Japanese troops who had remained in the city to fight the Americans perished.

Yamashita's troops continued to fight in the mountains despite suffering widespread disease and starvation. By the time Yamashita surrendered to the U.S. forces in June 1945, 210,000 Japanese soldiers were dead.

Immediately after the surrender, Yamashita, as commander of all Japanese forces in the Philippines, was arrested as a war criminal, charged with responsibility for atrocities committed by Japanese forces under his command against civilians in Manila. The evidence suggests, however, that he was unaware of the crimes committed by the members of the Naval Base Force who had refused to obey his order to move out of Manila, and that he exercised no command over those forces during the battle. Despite weak legal grounds for his personal responsibility for those crimes, the U.S. court martial conducted a swift trial and sentenced him to death on 7 December 1945. The background to this affair was General MacArthur's determination to turn the trial of the 'Tiger of Malaya' into a showcase. MacArthur, who had been Governor of the Philippines, fled shortly after the Japanese invasion in late December 1941. A group of American military lawyers who defended Yamashita appealed the verdict to the U.S. Supreme Court. However, the appeal was rejected by five to two. Yamashita was hanged

in Manila on 23 February 1946.



What was Yamashita's responsibility for the crimes committed by Japanese troops against local civilians and POWs in the Philippines? When he arrived in Manila as Commander of the 14th Area Army in October 1944, the Japanese communication and supply system was already in turmoil, and the morale of the troops was very low. These problems intensified after his headquarters was moved to Baguio while the troops were scattered throughout the mountains of northern Luzon. By this stage the soldiers were desperate in the face of severe shortages of food, medicine and ammunition. Many soldiers never received Yamashita's orders and instructions, and many commands were ignored, even by junior officers. The rejection by the 31st Naval Base Force of Yamashita's order to evacuate Manila was a typical example of a situation aggravated by the longstanding Army-Navy rivalry. For this reason, the defense lawyers, themselves members of the American armed forces, thought the trial a "kangaroo court" -- a political exercise -- staged by the U.S. Army, particularly General MacArthur.

However, this does not automatically exempt Yamashita from responsibility for all Japanese military atrocities. On 18 February 1942, three days after the capture of Singapore, Yamashita issued an order to 'select and remove hostile Chinese.' At the time, about 600,000 Chinese lived in Singapore and anti-Japanese sentiment was rife after a decade of Japanese invasion and war beginning in Manchuria in 1931 and continuing in China from 1937. Indeed, a Chinese guerilla force set up with the help of British forces support fought fiercely against the invading Japanese troops after the fall of Singapore. For their part, the Japanese occupation force amassed and interrogated 200,000 Chinese men aged between 15 and 50, in an attempt to root out the so-called "anti-Japanese elements," such as communists and supporters of the Guomindang, as well as criminals. One officer, Masanobu Tsuji, reportedly boasted that he would reduce the Chinese population of Singapore to half by implementing Yamashita's order. Due to the haphazard methods used to find these "anti-Japanese elements," however, the exercise ended as a massacre of large numbers of innocent civilians. Estimates of the toll varied between 6,000 and 100,000, although it was probably around 40,000. Similar atrocities were also carried out across the Malaya Peninsula, resulting in the deaths of a further 60,000 Chinese. If the British forces had conducted Yamashita's war crime tribunal, he would certainly have been found guilty for this appalling large-scale massacre of Chinese.

Surprisingly, it seems that Yamashita was profoundly affected by the tribunal, even though the proceedings conducted by the US Army were patently unfair. At the hearing, about 200 victims and witnesses to various Japanese atrocities gave detailed accounts of Japanese atrocities. It must have been an excruciating experience for Yamashita, listening day after day to painful stories of the victimization of many men, women and children. In the courtroom, on the advice of his

American lawyers, he denied responsibility for the crimes committed by those under his command, but in his personal will he humbly acknowledged his failure as commander to discipline his soldiers and punish those who committed crimes against the people of the Philippines. Moreover, he appears to have internalized the pain of the victims of Japanese atrocities, displaying remorse for his troops' war crimes, somehow overcoming his own old-fashioned militarist ideology and replacing it with a remarkable self-criticism. This is clear from his last words, dictated to Buddhist prison chaplain Morita Shokaku, shortly before he was hanged. These words, a message to the Japanese people, were an addition to his written will, in which he sincerely apologized to all the people of the Philippines for the atrocities that his troops committed.

His dictated message started in a state of confusion -- many ideas must have rushed to mind just hours before his execution. Thus some of his words in the first few paragraphs do not really make sense. It seems that he wished to justify his decision to surrender rather than commit suicide. He obviously had a deep sense of guilt at having survived while many men under his command died. Such statements of remorse at not having died in combat are not unusual and most war criminals' final statements are full of self-justification for what they did during the war. Interestingly however, in contrast to other Generals, Yamashita made no excuses for the atrocities that his soldiers committed against the people of the Philippines. On the contrary, he clearly accepted responsibility as commander and the judgment "by rigorous but impartial law." It seems ironic that many conservative politicians who support Prime Minister Koizumi's official visits to Yasukuni Shrine now claim that the war crime tribunals conducted by the Allied forces were simply "victor's justice" and therefore had no legal validity.

Undoubtedly the trials were unfair because the Allies ruled out consideration of war crimes committed by their own forces -- the most obvious example of war crimes committed by the United States being the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. (The A-bomb dropped on Hiroshima killed between 70,000 and 80,000 people in an instant, and an estimated 140,000 died by the end of 1945. In Nagasaki, 70,000 people are believed to have died by the end of the same year. Many more would die agonizing deaths in subsequent years from the blast, wounds, and radiation. It is a well-established fact that the killing of civilians in wartime is contrary to international law.) However, unfairness in the tribunals themselves does not invalidate the criminality of the numerous atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers during the Asia-Pacific War, nor does it call into question the responsibility of their commanders, including that of the Supreme Commander, Emperor Hirohito.

When Yamashita overcame his initial difficulty in explaining himself and started talking about his hopes for the Japanese people, his tone became quite straightforward and confident. He ascribed the fundamental cause of war crimes to the Japanese peoples' inability to make independent moral judgments. Although he did not use the term "human rights" (and probably he was not familiar with that terminology), the words "moral judgment" are repeatedly used in order to urge the Japanese people to respect the human rights of others. This is indicated by his expression "your personal responsibility in relations with other people" (emphasis added). By the time he faced execution, he clearly had come to the realization that Japan's brutal military actions were due to the lack of a sense of personal responsibility toward others that may be equated with the concept of "human rights", and that this eventually led people in Asia and elsewhere to distrust Japan. He concluded that this was one of the crucial reasons for Japan's defeat in war. He welcomed the prospect that

the Japanese in defeat would belatedly be given the freedom to make their own moral judgments. But he remained apprehensive about their ability to do so, and urged the Japanese to become "cultured and dignified" people. We need to reflect on this statement carefully, particularly in the current situation where some nationalist scholars and many Japanese politicians -- including Prime Minister Koizumi -- seek to sanitize Japan's military conduct during the Asia-Pacific War.

Yamashita's second point was that there could be no weapons or military strategies to defend ourselves against nuclear weapons. This should also be re-emphasized on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 2005, and above all in light of the failure of the NPT Review Conference in May 2005 to advance the abolition of nuclear weapons. Politicians like Mr. Abe Shinzo, who think that Japan should develop nuclear arms for defense purposes, should also be reminded of General Yamashita's words that the "only method to defend ourselves against atomic bombs" is "to establish nations all over the world that would never contemplate the use of such weapons." Indeed, these words of a Japanese general at the hour of his execution are fully consistent with the spirit of eternal peace that the A-bomb victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have long advocated.

It is remarkable that half of his final words were addressed to women. Here we can discern Yamashita's hope that the new Japanese society should be built on the principles of women, not those of men, specifically power and violence. His statement that "the driving force of peace is in the heart of women" sums up his thoughts on this issue. He was surely that rare person amongst Japanese military leaders who was able to see the fundamental link between war and male violence. He came to hold the view that women should play more important roles in building peace, especially in the field of

education. I am not sure how he overcame his own patriarchal beliefs in the eight months between his surrender and execution. During the conduct of his trial, something must have occurred that led him to dramatically change his views on gender and society, and indeed on war and peace.

His last point emphasizing the importance of mothers educating their children sounds like male chauvinism, imposing all responsibilities for raising children on women. We must understand, however, that his views on this issue were closely intertwined with his deep sense of personal responsibility for the deaths of many young men under his command. Perhaps for this reason he romanticized the bond between mothers and their children, using "breastfeeding" as an overriding metaphor for nurturing and educating children. It should be noted that his goal was to educate Japanese youth "to be able to live independently, cope with various circumstances, love peace, appreciate cooperation with others and have a strong will to contribute to mankind when they grow up."

Closely examining Yamashita's last words, it becomes crystal-clear that the conclusions he drew from his war experience are fundamentally at odds with the reigning ideology of Yasukuni Shrine and its supporters. It is an historical irony that General Yamashita is worshipped by neo-nationalist politicians who claim that Yasukuni Shrine is sacred, deride the legality of the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal as victor's justice, deny Japan's war responsibilities, promote nationalistic education policies and textbooks, advocate the abolition of the Peace Constitution, suggest the necessity of possessing nuclear arms "for the purpose of defending the country," and show no interest at all in improving women's social and economic status.

Yamashita Tomoyuki's Last Message to the Japanese People



Due to my carelessness and personal crassness, I committed an inexcusable blunder as the commander of the entire [14th Area] Army and consequently caused the deaths of your precious sons and dearest husbands. I am really sorry and cannot find appropriate words for sincere apologies as I am really confused because of my excruciating agony. As the commander of your beloved men, I am soon to receive the death penalty, having been judged by rigorous but impartial law. It is a strange coincidence that the execution is to be carried out on the birthday of the first U.S. president, George Washington.

I do not know how to express my apology, but the time has come to atone for my guilt with my death. However, I do not think that all the crimes for which I am responsible can easily be liquidated simply by my death. Various indelible stains that I left on the history of mankind cannot be offset by the mechanical termination of my life.

For a person like me who constantly faced death, to die is not at all difficult. Of course I should have committed suicide when I surrendered, as ordered by the emperor in accordance with the Japanese code of the samurai. In fact, I once decided to do so when I attended the surrender ceremonies at Kiangnan and Baguio, at which General Percival, whom I had defeated [in Singapore], was also present. What prevented me from committing such an egocentric act was the presence of my soldiers, who did not yet know that the war was over at that time. By refusing to take my own life, I was able to set my men free from meaningless deaths, as those stationed around Kiangnan were ready to commit suicide. I really felt pain from the shame of remaining alive, in violation of the samurai's code of "dying at the appropriate time in an appropriate place." I therefore can imagine how much more difficult it is for people like you to remain alive and rebuild Japan rather than being executed as a war criminal. If I were not a war criminal, I

would still have chosen a difficult path, bearing shame to stay alive and atone for my sins until natural death comes, no matter how you all might despise me.

Sun Tzu said 'The art of war is of vital importance to the State. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin. Hence it is a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected.' From these words, we learn that our military forces were lethal weapons and their very existence was a crime. I tried my best to prevent the war. I am really ashamed of having been unable to do so because of my weakness. You may think that I am a born aggressor and a typical militarist, because my campaign in Malaya and the fall of Singapore excited the entire Japanese nation. I understand that this is quite natural. I do not excuse myself, as I was a professional soldier and dedicated myself to the military. But even while being a military man, I also have a relatively strong sense as a Japanese citizen. There is no resurrection any longer for the ruined nation and the dead. From ancient times, war has always been a matter for exceptional prudence by wise rulers and sensible soldiers. It was entirely due to our military authorities' arbitrary decisions, which were made by just a handful of people, that a large number of our people died and the rest of the nation was dragged into its present unbearable suffering. I feel as if my heart will break when I think that we professional soldiers will become the object of your bitter resentment. I believe that the Potsdam Declaration will wipe out the leaders of military cliques who led the nation to its downfall, and Japan will start rebuilding as a peaceful nation under new leaders elected by the popular will. However, the path of rebuilding the nation will not be easy in the face of many obstacles.

The experience that you went through, enduring various difficulties and poverty in the last ten years of war, will inevitably give you some strength, even though it was as an

unwelcome result of pressure from the military authorities. To construct a new Japan, you really must not include militarists who are the relics of the past or opportunistic unprincipled politicians, or scholars patronized by the government who try to rationalize an aggressive war.

Probably some appropriate policies will be adopted by the Allied Occupation Forces. But I would like to say something on this point, as I am just about to die and thus have great concern about Japan's future. Weeds have a strong life force, and grow again when spring comes, no matter how hard they are trodden underfoot. I am confident that, with strong determination for development, you will rebuild our nation now completely destroyed, and make it a highly cultured one like Denmark. Denmark lost its fertile land in Schleswig-Holstein as the result of the German-Denmark War in 1863, but gave up rearming themselves and made their infertile areas into one of the most cultured of European nations. As a ruined people, we repent having done wrong. I will pray for Japan's restoration from a grave in a foreign country.

Japanese people, you have expelled the militarists and will gain your own independence. Please stand up firmly after the ravages of war. That is my wish. I am a simple soldier. Faced with execution in a very short time, a thousand emotions overwhelm me. But in addition to apologizing, I want to express my views on certain matters. I feel sorry that I cannot express myself very well, because I am a man of action, reticent and with a limited vocabulary. The time of my execution is drawing near. I have only one hour and forty minutes left. Probably only convicts on death row are capable of comprehending the value of one hour and forty minutes. I asked Mr. Morita, a prison chaplain, to record these words and I hope he will pass my ideas on to you some day.

Facing death, I have four things to say to you,

the people of the nation of Japan as it resurrects.

First, is about carrying out one's duty. From ancient times, this topic has repeatedly been discussed by scholars, yet it remains most difficult to achieve. Without a sense of duty, a democratic and cooperative society cannot exist. Duty has to be fulfilled as a result of self-regulating and naturally motivated action. I feel some misgivings in thinking about this, considering that you are suddenly to be liberated from the social restraints under which you have long lived.

I often discussed this with my junior officers. The moral decay of our military was so grave that the Imperial Code of Military Conduct as well as the Field Service Code were simply dead letters. Therefore, we had to remind people of this all the time, even in the military where obedience was strongly demanded and defying orders was not allowed at all. In this war, it was far from true that officers under my command carried out their duties satisfactorily.

They were unable to fulfill even the duties that were imposed upon them. Therefore I have some concern over your ability to fulfill your duty voluntarily and independently, after being released from long-standing social restraints. I wonder if you'll be dazzled by suddenly bestowed freedom, and whether some may fail to carry out your duty as required in relations with others, as you've received basically the same education as military men. In a free society, you should nurture your own ability to make moral judgments in order to carry out your duties. Duties can only be carried out correctly by a socially mature person with an independent mind and with culture and dignity.

The fundamental reason why the world has lost confidence in our nation, and why we have so many war-crime suspects who left ugly scars on our history, was this lack of morals. I would like you to cultivate and accept the common moral

judgment of the world, and become a people who fulfill duties on your own responsibility. You are expected to be independent and carve out your own future. No one can avoid this responsibility and choose an easy way. Only through that path can eternal peace be attained in the world.

Second, I would like you to promote education in science. No one can deny that the level of Japan's modern science, apart from certain minor areas, is well below world standards. If you travel outside Japan, the first thing you notice is the unscientific way of life of the Japanese. To search for truth with Japan's irrational and cliquish mentality is like searching for fish among the trees.

We soldiers had great difficulties in securing the necessary materials to fight and to make up for the lack of scientific knowledge. We tried to fight against the superior forces of the United States and to win the war by throwing away the priceless lives of our nation as substitutes for bullets and bombs. Various methods of horrendous suicide attack were invented. We exposed our pilots to danger by stripping vital equipment from the planes in order to just slightly improve their mobility. This shows how little knowledge we had for conducting war. We made the greatest mistake -- unprecedented in world history -- by trying to make up for the lack of materials and scientific knowledge with human bodies.

My present state of mind is quite different from that at the time of surrender. In the car on the way to Baguio from Kiangnan, Mr. Robert MacMillan, a journalist of the magazine Youth asked, what I thought was the fundamental reason for Japan's defeat. Something suppressed for a long time in my subconsciousness suddenly burst out and I instantly responded "science," before referring to other important issues. This was because my long-lasting frustration and intense anger were loosened all at once when the war was over.

I am not saying that this is the only reason, but it was clearly one important reason for Japan's defeat. If there will be another war somewhere in the world (although I hope there won't be), it is expected end in a short time through the use of horrific scientific weapons. The foolish methods of war that Japan adopted will be regarded as the illusions of an idiot. Human beings throughout the world, I presume, will make efforts to prevent such a terrible war -- not just the Japanese who thoroughly endured the horror of this war. This is the task that is given to humanity.

The atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were horrendous weapons. Never before have so many people been killed instantly in the long history of slaughtering human beings. As I have been in prison, I have not had enough time to study the A-bomb, but I think that no weapon will be invented to defend against atomic weapons. It used to be said that it would always be possible to fight against a new method of attack. This is still true. If there is any method to defend against atomic bombs -- the weapon that has made obsolete all past warfare -- it would simply be to create nations all over the world that would never contemplate the use of such weapons.

A defeated officer like me reflects sadly that if we had had superior scientific knowledge and sufficient scientific weapons, we would not have killed so many of our own men. Instead we could have sent them back home to use the knowledge as the foundation to rebuild a glorious and peaceful country. However, the science that I mean is not science that leads mankind to destruction. It is science that will develop natural resources still to be tapped, that will make human life rich, and will be used for peaceful purposes to free human beings from misery and poverty.

Third, I want to mention the education of women. I have heard that Japanese women have been liberated from the feudal state



authorities and been given the privilege of suffrage. From my experience of living in foreign countries for a long time, I can say that the position of modern Japanese women is inferior to that of women in the west.

I am slightly apprehensive about the fact that freedom for Japanese women is a generous gift from the Occupation Forces, not one that they struggled to acquire themselves. A gift is often enjoyed as an object of appreciation and not actually put to direct use. The highest virtues for Japanese women used to be "obedience" and "fidelity." That was no different from "obedient allegiance" in the military. A person who respects such castrated and slave-like virtues has been called a "chaste woman" or praised as a "loyal and brave soldier." In such values, there is no freedom of action or freedom of thought, and they are not the virtues by which one can self-examine autonomously. My hope is that you will break out of your old shell, enrich your education, and become new active Japanese women, while maintaining only the good elements of existing values. The driving force for peace is the heart of women. Please utilize your newly gained freedom effectively and appropriately. Your freedom should not be violated or taken away by anyone. As free women, you should be united with women throughout the world and give full play to your unique abilities as women. If not, you will be squandering all the privileges that you have been given.

Finally, there is one more thing that I would like to tell women -- you are either already a mother or will become a mother in future. You should clearly realize that one of a mother's responsibilities is a very important role in the "human education" of the next generation.

I have always been unhappy about the idea that modern education begins at school. The home is the most appropriate place for educating infants and the most appropriate teacher is the mother. You alone can lay the foundation for

education in its true meaning. If you do not want to be criticized as worthless women, please do your best in educating your own children. Education does not begin at kindergarten or on entry to elementary school. It should begin when you breastfeed a newborn baby. It is a mother's privilege to have a special feeling that no one else can have when she cuddles and breastfeeds her baby. Mothers should give their love to their baby both physically and mentally, as they are the baby's source of life. Breastfeeding can be done by another, and nourishment can be provided by other animals, or can be substituted for by a bottle. Yet nothing else can substitute for mother's love.

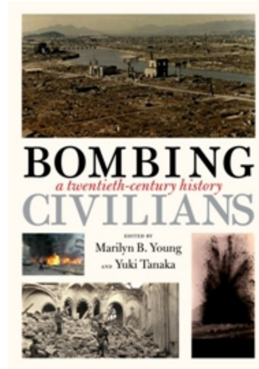
It is not enough for a mother to think only about how to keep her children alive. She should raise them to be able to live independently, cope with various circumstances, love peace, appreciate cooperation with others and have a strong desire to contribute to humanity when they grow up.

You should raise the joyful feeling of breastfeeding to the level of intellectual emotion and refined love. Mother's love will constantly flow into her baby's body through breastfeeding. The fundamental elements of future education must exist in embryo in mother's milk. Attention to the baby's needs can be the basis for education. Untiring mothering skills should naturally develop into a higher level of educational skill. I am not a specialist on education and therefore I am not sure how appropriate it is, but I would like to call this kind of education "breastfeeding education." Please bear this simple and ordinary phrase in your mind. These are the last words of the person who took your children's lives away from you.

Yuki Tanaka is research professor at the Hiroshima Peace Institute, a Coordinator of

Japan Focus, and author of Japan's Comfort Women. Sexual slavery and prostitution during

World War II and the US Occupation. He prepared this article for Japan Focus. Posted September 22, 2005.



Click on the cover to order.