



The Politics of Memory in Japan and East Asia

Sven Saaler and Justin Aukema

Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus

**Course Reader no. 7
2013**



VOLUME EDITOR

SVEN SAALER AND JUSTIN AUKEMA

Sophia University

SERIES EDITOR

LAURA HEIN

Northwestern University

EDITORIAL BOARD

Mark Caprio

Lonny Carlile

Parks Coble

Sabine Frühstück

Tom Grunfeld

Laura Hein

James Huffman

Jeffrey Kingston

Susan Long

Laura Miller

Mark Ravina

Mark Selden

Stephen Vlastos

The copyright of all material in this course reader is held by the respective authors, except where otherwise noted.

The copyright for the essay “Heroic Resistance and Victims of Atrocity: Negotiating the Memory of Japanese Imperialism in Chinese Museums,” originally published under the title “Horror and Atrocity: Memory of Japanese Imperialism in Chinese Museums,” is owned by the Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Stanford University Press. All rights reserved.

The volume editors can be contacted at svensaaler@web.de and aukemajk@gmail.com.

The Politics of Memory in Japan and East Asia

<u>Introduction</u>	9
<u>Part 1: Introduction to the Topic: Memory, Responsibility, Reconciliation</u>	10
<u>Miriam Silverberg</u>	12
<p>Miriam Silverberg, "War Responsibility Revisited: Auschwitz in Japan," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i>, July 11, 2007.</p>	
<u>Richard Falk</u>	31
<p>Richard Falk, "War, War Crimes, Power and Justice: Toward a Jurisprudence of Conscience," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> 10.4.3, January 23, 2012.</p>	
<u>Lily Gardner Feldman</u>	43
<p>Lily Gardner Feldman, "German-Polish Reconciliation in Comparative Perspective: Lessons for Japan?," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> 10.16.1, April 19, 2010.</p>	
<u>Kazuhiko TOGO</u>	62
<p>Kazuhiko Togo, "Japan's historical Memory: Reconciliation With Asia," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> 8.52.4, December 23, 2008.</p>	
<u>WADA Haruki</u>	71
<p>Wada Haruki, "Maritime Asia and the Future of a Northeast Asia Community," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i>, October 27, 2008.</p>	
<p>Part 2: Topics of Historical Memory in Japan</p>	
<u>Section A: War Responsibility and Reparations</u>	79
<u>AWAYA Kentaro</u>	82
<p>Awaya Kentaro, "The Tokyo Tribunal, War Responsibility and the Japanese People," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i>, February 2, 2006.</p>	

The Politics of Memory in Japan and East Asia	4
Yuki TANAKA	88
Yuki Tanaka, "Crime and Responsibility: War, the State, and Japanese Society," <i>The Asia Pacific Journal</i> , August 20, 2006.	
Tessa Morris-Suzuki	99
Tessa Morris-Suzuki, "Who is Responsible? The Yomiuri Project and the Enduring Legacy of the Asia-Pacific War," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> , June 19, 2007.	
William Underwood	110
William Underwood, "The Aso Mining Company in World War II: History and Japan's Would-Be Premier," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> , October 6, 2007.	
Ivy Lee	121
Ivy Lee, "Toward Reconciliation: The Nishimatsu Settlements for Chinese Forced Labor in World War Two," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> 10.32.6, August 9, 2010.	
KANG Jian with an Introduction by William Underwood	140
Kang Jian, "Rejected by All Plaintiffs: Failure of the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa 'Settlement' with Chinese Forced Laborers in Wartime Japan," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> 10.32.5, August 9, 2010.	
Section B: War Crimes	155
Mark Selden	157
Mark Selden, "War Crimes, Atrocities, and State Terrorism," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> , April 15, 2008.	
Yoshiko NOZAKI	178
Yoshiko Nozaki, "The Comfort Women Controversy: History and Testimony," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> , n.d.	

The Politics of Memory in Japan and East Asia	5
Kinue TOKUDOME	195
Kinue Tokudome, "The Japanese Apology on the 'Comfort Women' Cannot Be Considered Official: Interview with Congressman Michael Honda," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> , May 31, 2007.	
Frederick R. Dickinson	201
Frederick R. Dickinson, "Biohazard: Unit 731 in Postwar Japanese Politics of National 'Forgetfulness,'" <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> , October 12, 2007.	
SUZUKI Chieko	220
Suzuki Chieko, "The Hundred Head Contest: Reassessing the Nanjing Massacre," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> , n.d.	
Section C: War Apologies	224
Jennifer Lind	225
Jennifer Lind, "Memory, Apology, and International Reconciliation," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> 8.47.7, November 21, 2008.	
Alexis Dudden	232
Alexis Dudden, "Memories and Aporias in the Japan-Korea Relationship," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> 10.14.3, April 5, 2010.	
Wada Haruki	247
Wada Haruki, "The Comfort Women, the Asian Women's Fund and the Digital Museum," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> , February 1, 2008.	
Mark E. Caprio	251
Mark E. Caprio, "Neo-Nationalist Interpretations of Japan's Annexation of Korea: The Colonization Debate in Japan and South Korea," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> 10.44.4, November 1, 2010.	

The Politics of Memory in Japan and East Asia	6
Section D: The History Textbook Controversy	270
Yoshiko NOZAKI and Mark Selden	272
<p>Yoshiko Nozaki and Mark Selden, "Japanese Textbook Controversies, Nationalism, and Historical Memory: Intra- and Inter-national Conflicts," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> 9.24.5, June 15, 2009.</p>	
NAKAJIMA Takeshi	299
<p>Nakajima Takeshi, "The Tokyo Tribunal, Justice Pal and the Revisionist Distortion of History," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i> 9.44.3, October 31, 2011.</p>	
Mikyoungh KIM	317
<p>Mikyoungh Kim, "Myth and Fact in Northeast Asia's History Textbook Controversies," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i>, August 15, 2008.</p>	
Takashi YOSHIDA	333
<p>Takashi Yoshida, "The Nanjing Massacre. Changing Contours of History and Memory in Japan, China, and the U.S.," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i>, December 19, 2006.</p>	
Part 3: Sites of Japanese Memory: Museums, Memorials, Commemoration	
Section A: Yasukuni Shrine, its War Museum, and other World War II Museums	340
TAKAHASHI Tetsuya	343
<p>Takahashi Tetsuya, "The National Politics of the Yasukuni Shrine." Trans. Philip Seaton. <i>Nationalisms in Japan</i>. Ed. Naoko Shimazu. New York: Routledge, 2006. 155-80.</p>	
John Breen	363
<p>John Breen, "Yasukuni Shrine: Ritual and Memory," <i>The Asia-Pacific Journal</i>, June 3, 2005.</p>	

[Mark Selden](#)

369

Mark Selden, "Japan, the United States and Yasukuni Nationalism: War, Historical Memory and the Future of the Asia Pacific," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, September 10, 2008.

[WAKAMIYA Yoshibumi and WATANABE Tsuneo](#)

393

Wakamiya Yoshibumi and Watanabe Tsuneo, "Yomiuri and Asahi Editors Call for a National Memorial to Replace Yasukuni," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, February 14, 2006.

[Takashi Yoshida](#)

399

Takashi Yoshida, "Revising the Past, Complicating the Future: The Yushukan War Museum in Modern Japanese History," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, December 2, 2007.

[Kirk A. Denton](#)

409

Denton, Kirk A. "Heroic Resistance and Victims of Atrocity: Negotiating the Memory of Japanese Imperialism in Chinese Museums." *Re-envisioning the Chinese Revolution: The Politics and Poetics of Collective Memories in Reform China*. Ed. Ching Kwan Lee and Guobin Yang. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2007. 245-86.

[Jeff Kingston](#)

443

Jeff Kingston, "Nanjing's Massacre Memorial: Renovating War Memory in Nanjing and Tokyo," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, August 22, 2008.

[Section B: Kamikaze and Mass Suicide](#)

471

[James L. Huffman](#)

473

James L. Huffman, "Challenging Kamikaze Stereotypes: 'Wings of Defeat' on the Silver Screen," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, n.d.

[Yuki Tanaka](#)

481

Yuki Tanaka, "The Songs of Nippon, the Yamato Museum and the Inculcation of Japanese Nationalism," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, May 8, 2008.

[ANIYA Masaaki](#)

494

Aniya Masaaki, "Compulsory Mass Suicide, the Battle of Okinawa, and Japan's Textbook Controversy," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, January 6, 2008.

[Mark Ealey](#)

508

Mark Ealey, "The Martyrdom: Children and the Battle of Okinawa," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, November 6, 2005.

Introduction

This course reader explores issues of memory-making and memory-shaping in modern Japan. The debates over historical memory in recent decades in Japan have major contemporary significance, as do the problems emerging from “memory wars” in modern societies more generally. We also explore the larger question of the uses and abuses of history and its implications for contemporary and future political developments both in Japan and in international relations. This includes a discussion of issues such as war responsibility, reparations for war and war crimes, apologies for war, and reconciliation.

After a general introduction to the problem of historical and social memory related to the Asia-Pacific War and Japanese imperialism, we identify important sites of memory in Japan and their functions and historical development. Additionally, we investigate representations of memory in Japanese society, and controversies surrounding memorialization projects and history textbooks. Japan is divided, still today, about the ways the past is presented in the public sphere. While a number of controversial memorials seek to justify Japan’s wars and war crimes and some even beautify the Asia-Pacific War as a war of Asian liberation, in recent years, criticism has emerged within Japan that challenges these kinds of unreflective narratives. In addition, the war is being memorialized in other parts of Asia, often in ways that emphasize the ways that Japanese imperialism brought disaster its former colonies or for neighboring countries.

Questions that will be explored in detail include: What are the political, ideological and aesthetic presuppositions of memory-making and of representations of history? Who are the major actors in memory-making in modern Japan? What can we say about the relations of the individual and the state through the analysis of the politics of memory?

Introduction to the Topic: Memory, Responsibility, Reconciliation**“War Responsibility Revisited: Auschwitz in Japan”**

Miriam Silverberg

July 11, 2007

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Miriam-Silverberg/2470>**“War, War Crimes, Power and Justice: Toward a Jurisprudence of Conscience”**

Richard Falk

January 23, 2012

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Richard-Falk/3681>**“German-Polish Reconciliation in Comparative Perspective: Lessons for Japan?”**

Lily Gardner Feldman

April 19, 2010

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Lily-Gardner-Feldman/3344>**“Japan’s Historical Memory: Reconciliation with Asia”**

Kazuhiko Togo

December 23, 2008

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Kazuhiko-TOGO/2997>**“Maritime Asia and the Future of a Northeast Asia Community”**

Wada Haruki

October 27, 2008

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Wada-Haruki/2934>

This section will familiarize students with the concepts of “memory,” “war responsibility” and “reconciliation” in global perspective. Miriam Silverberg’s essay, “War Responsibility Revisited: Auschwitz in Japan,” asks how intellectuals deal with war, why they support war, and how they revisit war. Referring to Japan, she points to the ambiguity of the term “war responsibility,” and introduces a variety of views expressed by intellectuals, including philosophers and literary critics, on Japanese war responsibility. As the title suggests, she includes in her discussion a review of how Japanese intellectuals have addressed the issue of Auschwitz—the legacy of the largest concentration camp in Nazi Germany, and pre-eminent symbol of the destruction of European Jews.

Then, Richard Falk discusses the issue of criminal accountability, “of those who commit crimes against peace, crimes against humanity, and war crimes on behalf of a sovereign state,” and traces the quest to achieve global justice through the use of international law from the Nuremberg Trials in Germany and the Tokyo Trials after World War II, to the foundation of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2002. Falk notes that the common tendency of the victors, or those with the most wealth and power, to selectively prosecute and distribute judgment unfairly, poses significant challenges to justice and equality. As one example of the consequences of such “victor’s justice” judgments, Falk points to the continued threat and proliferation of nuclear weapons after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Finally, Lily Gardner Feldman proposes the example of German-Polish discussions about war and genocide as a possible framework for Japan's process of reconciliation. She gives a working definition of "reconciliation," explains the role of "history" in reconciliation, and introduces institutions involved in reconciliation activities in Europe. As former diplomat Kazuhiko Togo explains, though, the reconciliation process in Japan has been hindered by the sharp split between right-wing and left-wing historical views among Japanese. Overcoming this division, in Togo's opinion, is the main task Japanese face before they can come to terms with their past and achieve reconciliation with their Asian neighbors. Then, Wada Haruki offers a forward-looking perspective, expressing hope that national boundaries will be transcended and the creation of an East Asian Community, or, as he calls it, a "Common House of Northeast Asia," will be achieved. However, the basic condition, Wada stresses, is dialogue about historical issues and true reconciliation between Japan and its neighbors about their common past. As an example of how to reach reconciliation, he quotes the resolution adopted by both houses of the U.S. Congress on Nov. 23, 1993, which apologized for overthrowing the government of the Hawaiian Kingdom and declaring Hawaii an American protectorate in 1893. Without similar steps by Japan, Wada claims, true reconciliation in East Asia will be difficult to achieve.

War Responsibility Revisited: Auschwitz in Japan

Miriam Silverberg

Introduced by Ann Sherif



Miriam Silverberg

For more than five decades after the end of the World War II, Japan articulated an official identity as a pacifist, anti-nuclear nation both domestically and in the international arena (its formidable Self Defense Force notwithstanding). Since the end of the Cold War and the first Gulf War in the early 1990s, however, the debate over revising Japan's "Peace Constitution" intensified. In particular, Article 9 of the Constitution, by which Japan renounces offensive war, has been under attack by politicians proclaiming the goal of becoming "a normal nation", and the present Abe administration has prioritized Constitutional revision. Along with politicians and the citizenry, many intellectuals and artists have spoken against the possibility of Japan identifying itself as a "nation that wages war"--thus rejecting its assumed role as advocate of peace and foe of nuclear arms. In June 2004, Nobel Prize winner Oe Kenzaburo, along with artists and intellectuals Inoue Hisashi, Komori Yoichi, and Kato Shuichi and others, formed [the Article 9 Association](#), which advocates "protection" or preservation of the present Constitution.



Members of Article 9 Association

In her article, Miriam Silverberg urges us to consider two complex questions: How do intellectuals go to war? How do intellectuals revisit war? Although Silverberg frames these questions primarily in the context of the United States' war on terror, she also certainly would want readers to reflect on the involvement of Japan's Self Defense Forces in the Iraq war, as

well as the debate over revision of the Constitution. The issues are intimately related to the raging controversy over Prime Ministerial visits to Yasukuni Shrine, where casualties of past wars are enshrined. While Prime Minister Abe has thus far refrained from making a high profile Yasukuni Shrine visit, discussion of the need for new sites of mourning persists. Some envision a new government memorial for the dead of past wars separate from the Shinto shrine, while others assert the need for places to lay to rest and mourn the dead in future Japanese wars, wars unimaginable under the present Constitution.

Silverberg reminds us of the extent to which Japan is haunted by its most recent major war, a war that ended over sixty years ago. Entangled with ongoing debates over atrocities and barbarisms committed in the course of battle are the inhumane acts “unrelated to war and committed mostly against innocent civilians,” that is, the former colonial subjects of the Japanese empire. We are reminded of the aborted process, in the early postwar, of “serious self-reflection” about war responsibility, complicity, and guilt by intellectuals such as Odagiri Hideo and others for whom the war and imperialism was lived experience. Silverberg demands that we shift our attention in revisiting “Japanese war-time behavior and post-war post-mortems” to the question of how intellectuals become complicit with or resist the road to war, rather than “why?” If we do not understand the how—process and practice—we risk missing the interaction between larger social forces and more intimate motives and ideas as part of history, whether in relation to Japan’s Asia-Pacific War or contemporary American wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In discussing the sometimes problematic media representation of visits to Auschwitz by Japanese intellectuals such as Mori Tatsuya, Silverberg points out the conflicting demands between historicity and cultural specificity, on the one hand, and the necessity for appealing to universality and human empathy. Reluctantly, Silverberg critiques Mori’s glossy color images of Auschwitz as “giving style to the Holocaust,” of somehow aestheticizing (and thus commodifying) the horrifying pile of shoes belonging to those murdered in the concentration camps. Yet Mori is not alone in succumbing to the seduction of beautifying the suffering of others. Indeed the annual World Press Photo Exhibition makes the viewer squirm with guilt and pleasure at the gorgeous images by photojournalists, spectacular color photos of a slaughtered corpse in Darfur, or the pleading eyes of a starving child. But we must also pose the questions—is there only one proper mode of representation of atrocity? If the formal and aesthetic properties of the image or text serve to facilitate empathy, awareness, a desire to know more, and even action—is making it beautiful, appealing, compelling always wrong?

Finally, Silverberg makes the point that many intellectuals and artists in Japan, along with ordinary people, are far more aware of the world outside of Japan than are their American counterparts. This simple fact is one worth revisiting again and again. The imbalance of knowledge, translation, and information between the U.S. and other countries goes a long way in explaining America’s hubris and willingness to go to war with peoples in cultures it hardly knows and whose languages it has not bothered to learn. Whether American and Japanese intellectuals will find themselves allies in coming wars is another question. —Ann Sherif

How do intellectuals go to war? My first query emerged from the events that all too rapidly took form following what came to be known as “September 11.” It may be no accident that the only other day commemorated here in the United States by enunciating the date, is the “4th of July.” Even the historian suspicious of linearity must admit that all interpretations of cause-and-effect are rendered suspect by this form of dating. Without notation of a calendar year the referenced

event is taken out of history and brought closer to the realm of myth, a realm much more hospitable to the cyclical rituals of patriotism.

Without the date in terms of month, day, and year my second question, “How do intellectuals revisit war?” is rendered almost unanswerable. Not only does one war merge into the next, pronouncements in the months preceding the declaration of and thereby the legalization of battle, are rendered invisible. How does the post September 11 War on Terrorism follow from the saber-rattling of the preceding weeks? What date was the Patriot Act passed in relationship to September 11? And how long after our government had begun to redefine the rights of citizenship, along with the privileges of the immigrant? We do not know; we were not paying attention; we were out buying flags.

There were the exceptions. Within days of September 11, Susan Sontag pointed to a “disconnect between the monstrous dose of reality and the self-righteous drivel and outright deceptions being peddled by public figures and TV commentators.”



Susan Sontag

The media chose to repeat her assessment of those responsible for the violence “Whatever may be said of the Perpetrators of Tuesday’s slaughter, they were not cowards.” Sontag was then ostracized for calling the enemy courageous. One year later, she was still trying to combat the mainstream press with her reference to a “pseudo-declaration of a “pseudo-war.” Her explanation, “...There are no endless wars; but there are declarations of the extension of power by a state that believes it cannot be challenged” was all but ignored. (cf. Arundhati Roy’s similar reference to “what President Bush rather biblically calls ‘the task that does not end.’” Roy’s response was also similar to Sontag’s indictment of Bush’s will to power: “I find myself thinking a great deal of the relationships between citizens and the state.”) And in a chilling reminder of the rampant excesses of McCarthy’s reign, comedian and talk-show host, Bill Maher, saw his program cancelled after a not dissimilar remark.[1]

My second query, “How do Intellectuals Revisit War?” was prompted by the work of Japanese scholars, so many of whom looked toward the new millennium by looking back on the century as an era of warfare. Equally important in directing me to my second question was the repetition of the term *jiko sekinin* (self or personal responsibility) in the Japanese media after three young Japanese citizens were taken hostage in Iraq in the Spring of 2004, at a time when I was privileged to be affiliated with the Center for Asian and Pacific Studies at Seikei University. The repeated use of the term appeared to me to coincide with an intensified attention to the question of *senso sekinin*, the literal translation for which is “war responsibility.” The meaning of both terms eluded me. While “self responsibility seemed somehow redundant, “war responsibility” was ambiguous. An article in the April 30, 2004 issue of *Shukan Asahi* placed “self

responsibility” in its recent context for me: It was the twisted strategy of the Koizumi administration to discredit the hostages by publicly emphasizing their lack of “self – responsibility” and by spreading innuendos accusing the three young citizens of staging the event. The Weekly Asahi showed how the Yomiuri Shimbun had picked up the refrain: The three had brought the situation on themselves and had greatly burdened the government by rushing irresponsibly into a dangerous region with no concern for self-responsibility [emphasis added]. They were to be held accountable to pay for their ransom because of “self-responsibility.” The Weekly Asahi article went on to cite a media expert who placed the term *jiko sekinin* within its place in the contemporary parole of late capitalist Japan. Over the past several years, the term had been adopted as one of accusation by those in power eager to abnegate responsibility. The media expert who contextualized the term, noted how industry had begun to talk in terms of the “‘self responsibility’ of the consumer,” and that “even crime was now the ‘self-responsibility’ of the citizenry.” She explained that it had become the means, not only of denying responsibility but also of claiming authority and legitimacy in taking the offense in order to ensure the elimination of anyone different.[2]

The term *senso sekinin* is not as easily defined as the mean-spirited *jiko sekinin*. Within contemporary Japanese popular and academic parlance it seems to imply war guilt as associated with war crimes, loosely defined. However, as German writer, Gitta Sereny, has shown in her memoir, *The Healing Wound: Experiences and Reflections, Germany 1938-2001*, the language attached to the revisitation of war has consequences for the interpretation and adjudication of wartime actions. She emphasizes the accomplishments of the Central Agency for Investigation in contrast with the work of the so-called ‘war crime trials’ conducted by the Allies. The Agency, whose determinations, based on the distinction between a war crime (committed in the course of war actions) and an ‘NS (Nationalist Socialist) crime’ (unrelated to war and committed mostly against innocent civilians) was able to conduct landmark trials of national Socialist acts, leading to the conviction of almost 6,500 individuals between 1958 and 1996. The Allies incorrectly considered crimes committed by the SS or the Wehrmacht in occupied countries and concentration and extermination camps outside of Germany to be war crimes, and thus out of the reach of the German courts which only had jurisdiction over crimes committed by Germans against Germans. When, by 1950, most of those tried for ‘war crimes’ were released, those guilty of what the German courts considered “NS crimes” were out of the reach of the court because of the ruling of the Allies that these individuals could only be tried once.[3]

While I am herein interested in most recent history, and will not address the premises, rulings, or institutional and psychological legacies of the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, Serenyi’s discussion suggests the need for study of analogous developments, including the connections and distinction between war crimes and inhumane acts that must be associated with both war and the arrangements of Japanese colonialism.[4] Instead, I would like to briefly examine some uses of the term “wartime responsibility” before modifying my initial query, in order to ask how Japanese intellectuals have gone to war.

The preface to the inaugural issue of *Senso Sekinin Kenkyu* (Studies in War Responsibility), the journal of the Japan Resource Center for War Responsibility, confronted the ambiguity allowed for by the term war responsibility: In order to ensure that acknowledgment of and apologies for responsibility would go beyond lip service it was necessary to clarify “Who has what kind of responsibility to whom?”[5] In 1998, the first issue of *Dainiki Senso Sekinin* traced the process whereby intellectuals in the literary world, most specifically those affiliated with Shin Nihon

Bungaku, approached “tracking down war responsibility” as early as October of 1945. By December, Nakano Shigeharu was linking the necessity of “self-criticism” by “democratic” writers as part of his proposal to trace war responsibility, at the rally establishing the Shin Nihon Bungakukai (New Japan Literary Organization). Those who had willingly and eagerly supported “the war of invasion” as well as those who had been coerced were equally responsible for producing self-criticism that would show how their literature had contributed to the war effort.[6]

It was literary critic, Odagiri Hideo, who pointed to the question of the language being appropriated by intellectuals revisiting their actions in the June 1946 issue of Shin Nihon Bungaku (New Japanese Literature). Therein, he argued that in the case of literature the term “war responsibility” rather than “war crimes” was apposite. Odagiri’s rejection of the phrase “ichi oku sozange” (one hundred million all penitent), the mea culpa of the period immediately following the end of the war, shows how the ambiguity surrounding war responsibility could place the blame in varied sites. Odagiri’s “war responsibility” entailed serious self-reflection on the part of authors. To talk in terms that placed the blame on the entire populace was “idiotic.” To place the blame on the Japanese people was to remove blame from those directly responsible. Putting the blame at the feet of the “one hundred million” most definitely shifted blame away from the guilty. Another contributing factor was the inability of the In the end, however, New Japan Literary Organization was unable to follow through on its promise to do more than name names: to conduct in-depth analysis of how exactly literature had helped the war effort. It was blocked from moving forward because a continuation in the naming of names (and literary works, etc.) would have meant that the culpability of authors on the left would become even more evident.[7]

Today, the specificity that the term “war responsibility” was supposed to give to the process of assigning guilt is largely absent, as is any reference to “war crimes.” The ‘one hundred million’ (the Japanese subjects) are no longer guilty, but then, nobody is guilty. Thus no one is obligated to discuss the grotesquerie of the violent acts and there is no subject attached to the term “war responsibility.” There appears to be a consensus that *senso sekinin* refers to some kind of War atrocity committed by some kind of group or individual. I am fully aware that this discussion can begin to sound much too literal. It can be argued that the term “war guilt” is commonly used when translating *senso sekinin*. But this both begs the question “guilty of what” and the question, “responsible to whom?” In fact when Prime Minister Higashikuni Naruhiko in fall 1945 called for mass contrition of the 100,000,000 he was proclaiming that the people were guilty of losing the war. He was asserting that the Japanese people had engaged in any kind of crime against humanity. According to this logic, the Japanese people were responsible for carrying out the Emperor’s wishes and were thus guilty of losing his war. This was in marked contrast to the approach of the Allies, who equated guilt with taking the initiative to go to war. If we accept the argument of Shukan Asahi that the Koizumi administration wielded the term “self responsibility” as a diversionary tactic deflecting the attention of the populace away from examining Koizumi’s dispatch of Japanese troops to Iraq in the first place, a repetition reveals itself. Just as Koizumi blamed the young free-lance journalists and welfare worker for putting the Japanese nation at risk, Higashikuni had concealed the responsibility of the Japanese leadership -- going back almost two decades -- among the one hundred million guilty subjects. Shielded from view also, were the Japanese intellectuals who went to war.[8]

How Have Japanese Intellectuals Gone to War?

Nishikawa Nagao's *Senso no seiki wo koete*, an example of Japanese scholarship revisiting the past century as a century marked by warfare, includes a compelling discussion of the "out of the ordinary moment" (*iyo na shunkan*) awaited by intellectuals. He quotes from literary works, diaries and poetry by such writers as Dazai Osamu, and Takamura Kotaro that responded to that out of the ordinary moment that arrived on December 8, 1941. Nishikawa wishes to make it clear that literary figures were flooded by the emotions and excitement felt by the populace at large. Writers actually embraced the moment "when words were not necessary."^[9] While Nishikawa refers to fascism and notes the similarities to reminiscent of Nazi rhetoric, he holds the modern nation-state responsible for similar responses to the onset of war both at other times in the history of the modern Japanese nation-state and in other nations. Nonetheless it is Japanese history that Nishikawa is discussing and the history of Japan that determined the nature of the emotional responses. How, then, I would like to ask, could the Japanese intellectual of the 1930s and 1940s go to war, as an intellectual?

My answer is that the options were fairly limited during the 1930s and 1940s. There were those, like the writers of **Jinmin Bunko**, who expressed their sentiments in a literary magazine with no overt claim to a political agenda. At a time when the journal **Bungei Seiki** was naming names for the Tokkotai (Secret Police) by pointing a finger at who was "Red" and who was "a leftist in disguise" in each of its issues, *Jinmin Bunko* editor Takami Jun and colleagues engaged in their own political activism by rushing to bookstores to flip through the pages of each new issue of *Bungei Seiki* before the authorities could study the names. The fictional pieces published in their journal carried on the heritage of the Proletarian literature movement in a more muted fashion. Similarly, the intellectuals among the *Kibei* (Japanese-American who received education in Japan) who were incarcerated in the United States during the Pacific War started their own literary magazines. To include these writers within Japanese literary history is not to deny them the rights of US citizens as was done to them by their own government. My point is that the cultural orientation of these young people was forged within the context of pre-Pacific War Japan, as is clear from the format of the literary magazines produced from within each concentration camp that was established for American citizens of Japanese descent and for their Japan-born parents.

The journals, such as *Doto* (Raging Waves) the magazine that was an outgrowth of the Tule Lake *seinendan* (youth corps) published from July 1944 through the June 22, 1945 issue, skirted censorship with such images as the Statue of Liberty in tears, and articles such as "On National History Education." The date was October 7, 1944; the nation in question was Japan. The concern was consideration of 'the Japanese spirit.' These literary journals were a way for intellectuals who acted as intellectuals through the medium of the Japanese language to go to war after they had been deemed un-American and incarcerated.

Most recently the journal *Zenya* has taken up the political cause of expressing the urgent need to counter war, discrimination and colonialism through cultural commentary. I include it here, within the context of visiting, rather than revisiting, because of its concern with our current state of war. Its sense of urgency is expressed in its credo:

That the eve of catastrophe will become an eve of rebirth
The eve of war the eve of liberation
We will not abandon that hope; that desire.^[10]

Other wartime intellectuals, less cautious in their opposition or less lucky, went to prison, where they continued to write. I would argue that the prison diaries and the letters written from prison by Proletarian writers along with such figures as Kawakami Hajime and Fukumoto Kazuo should be studied as a genre of prison literature alongside such post-war autobiographical writing as Yamashiro Tomoe's multi-volume work.[11]

Finally there were those who collaborated with the state. In the Japanese context the words "cooperated" or *tenko* (political apostasy) have been used to refer to intellectuals who produced culture at the behest of the state. It is not my intent here to engage in an in depth discussion of the scholarship on *tenko*. [12] The topic is too important and complex to treat in a cursory fashion. For example there is the case of Sata Ineko. Since interviewing Sata Ineko three times during the 1980's I have spent a great deal of time trying to understand, "why?" Why one of the leading figures of the Proletarian literature movement -- I will not qualify her place in Japanese literary history as "woman" Proletarian literature writer -- abandoned her overt anti-imperialist position to champion Japan's occupation of virtually all of Asia? Recently I have begun to think that the relevant question here, and in other interrogations of Japanese war-time behavior and post-war post-mortems cannot be why, but must be "how?"

How Have Japanese Intellectuals Revisited War?

The postwar Japanese discourse on war responsibility has been one form of revisiting, and I would include Sata Ineko's attempts to explain her wartime collusion with the state in her postwar literature and essays as examples of revisiting. In the post-war era, the practice of starting new journals with political ramifications, which, as I have mentioned was one way of "going to war", became a form of going back to (or revisiting) war. For example, the theme of the inaugural issue of *Josei Senso Jinken* (Women, War, Human Rights) was "What is war responsibility?" The prefatory comments to this first issue by philosopher Shimizu Kiyoko emphasized that neither in the pre-war years nor in the post-war moment had the Japanese people been able to consider themselves as autonomous citizens. Neither Unit 731 nor the Rape of Nanking nor even the "Comfort Woman" problem had been taught in the schools. The students had been taught that Japan's role as victim nation was to act as a virtuous example by spreading an anti-war message. There was no room in this discourse for dissenting voices. It was the goal of the journal *Women, War, Human Rights* to foster debate on precisely these issues and make available documentation through research. Hannah Arendt scholar Okano Yayo took up the theme of *senso sekinin* by sharing the story of her awakening from the complacent position that the state as "subject" was responsible for bringing about the war and therefore those with no direct engagement were not guilty of any responsibility.[13]

More localized publications such as the booklet *Our Inner Responsibility*, published by high school administrator Nagao Yuzo, have concurred with Okano. This re-publication of the anti-war writing of Watanabe Kiyoshi, who had joined the navy in 1941,[14] held the Japanese people and the Emperor accountable for the atrocities on the Asian continent. In the preface the editor, Nagao, attributes war responsibility to the people, but his is a different position from the ideological call for "one hundred million in contrition." War responsibility is not just a matter of the Emperor at the top of a leadership; it is also the responsibility of the people of the nation. His position regarding the call to contrition points to the speed with which those in power shifted their language in the immediate aftermath of the war without serious reflection. For example,

“100 million in Contrition” was quickly displaced by “democracy” and “Building a cultured nation” (bunka kokka kensetsu).”[15]

These are but a small sample of the work of intellectuals who have revisited the Pacific War in order to take responsibility for it. But there is another form of revisiting which seems to have begun during the past decade. This is the Japanese pilgrimage to Auschwitz.

Auschwitz in Japan

Auschwitz may indeed be the most historiographically challenging topic for the historian of 20th century Europe and the most emotionally loaded for historian and reader alike. Auschwitz has become short-hand for the Holocaust, the term adopted in post World War Two parlance to refer to the mass murder of over eleven million Europeans, among them Jews, the disabled including the mentally ill, gypsies, homosexuals and political opponents of the Nazi regime which ruled over Europe. It conjures up not only the question, “How can the historian find the language and the form to represent Auschwitz as history, in history?” but also the intense query “Can and should the intellectual write about Auschwitz?”[16]



Entrance to Auschwitz

Central issues, which historians of Auschwitz who have determined that the Holocaust can and must be written into history must confront, are the question of representation (how to write this history), the commodification of the Holocaust, and the question of how testimony of the survivor can be used as historical document. But perhaps the most daunting of the problems facing these historians is the question of how to communicate with survivors and survivors of survivors of this human experience of such tragic magnitude. The call from survivors has been “Never Again;” the mandate they have given to the historian is “give us the history so that it will not be forgotten and therefore not repeated.” Within this dialogue, emotion, which is always inseparable from memory, is even more daunting in its ability to hang on. In the words of Giorgio Agamben, “The aporia of Auschwitz is, indeed, the very aporia of historical knowledge: a non-coincidence between facts and truth, between verification and comprehension.”[17]



Auschwitz in today's Poland

The historian of Auschwitz recounts the nightmares of those who dreamt and continued to dream those nightmares. The question of universalizing must be faced head-on. In other words are these nightmares qualitatively different from the nightmares of others tortured and massacred en masse? By universalizing is one depriving the historical record of any iota of the horror that must be preserved? Does not the term “holocaust” apply equally to the genocide of the Armenians earlier in the century? And there is always Adorno’s haunting judgment -- poetry cannot be written after Auschwitz; this would be a barbarism.[18]

Leading historiographer and historian of medieval Europe, Gabrielle Spiegel argues that it is not the fear that the history will be forgotten that drives those who push for the documentation of the Holocaust, but the fear that it will become “normalized” as just another one of many historical events. It is, in other words, an exceptionalist stance.

What does it mean for the Japanese intellectual who would produce culture today? What purpose does such a revisiting presume to serve? What message is sent by the Japanese intellectual “going back” to Auschwitz? The case of the artist Nara Yoshitomo, transnational celebrity, known for his paintings and drawings of angry little girls, provides one set of answers.

Nara Yoshitomo at Auschwitz

Nara Yoshitomo (b. 1959), latch-key son of a petty bureaucrat and working mother, talented art student in Japan and Germany, expatriate in Cologne, and at UCLA, and now international cause-celebre. It would seem that the author of *Slashed With a Knife*, *Who Snatched the Babies*, *Lullaby Supermarket*, and *I Don’t Mind If You Forget Me* should belong in another study. Most Nara fans would indeed be surprised that I have placed this superstar in an essay about intellectuals going to war. The image of Nara which appears in the American and the Japanese press is not one of a politicized artist, yet a close reading of Nara’s writings – and I would argue, his imagery – reveals an intellectual who transgresses both conventional norms and political positions. Of course, this raises the question “can art be transgressive if nobody notices that it is?” and the question “how can we track the transgressive nature of trans-national art?” in other words, is it transgressive if it challenges the power of some of the national sites on which it lands and not all? Can one country’s kitsch be treacherous to the audience in a different country? If so does it deserve the sobriquet kitsch? And does kitsch have to be a pejorative term? Let me limit myself here to a focus on Nara Yoshitomo as anti-war intellectual.[19]

If we take Nara Yoshitomo at his word, in terms of what he has said about his art and his place in the world, we find a marked contrast between his positions and what has been attributed to him both in the U.S. and Japan. It is important to study Nara's own language because as all scholars of Japan know, according to the unwritten law of cultural exchange between Japan and the west over the past two centuries, the Japanese intellectual, the Japanese artist, and the Japanese mass audience know western art, literature, and icons. Yet there is no reciprocity and little attempt at reciprocity. In other words, Japanese cultural producers and consumers are closely familiar with western culture and their western counterparts remain ignorant of the complexities of Japanese cultural transformations. In the case of Nara, the Western audience has access to a cultural phenomenon but it presumes that there is nothing there to be translated. Nara is seen merely as a cartoonist from a Japan-based, transnational anime culture. No critic in the West listens to the language of the beings he creates, although they are quite vocal in more than one tongue. His children, mostly little girls, express themselves in German, English, and Japanese. This is the inverse of the transnational phenomenon that Anne Allison has tracked. Just as her *Pokemon* loses national character, Nara is marked as Japanese because supposedly the figures he produces are cartoons (manga). No critic in any art review that I have read takes Nara's art at more than face value. No critic imagines the need to analyze the nature of these so-called cartoons or to imagine the social implications of their polyglot, polymorphous presence. In Japan, Nara's young girl fans are enamoured of the ostensible cuteness of the creatures he creates. But the fact is that Nara sends a clear anti-war message in his drawings, his diary and most recently, his photographs. Part of that anti-war message is aimed at World War Two, and most specifically, albeit briefly, at Auschwitz.



Nara Yoshitomo's *Light My Fire* from 2001

The first entry in Nara's published diary[20] is dated August 21, 1999. The afterword is dated May 24, 2001. It follows him from Japan to Germany and to the United States and back to Japan. The contradiction between the personal nature of the entries and their public status in a published work is but one example of the tension between the representation of Nara as the simple, lonely, reclusive artist and the phenomenal acclaim he has achieved internationally. There is also the contradiction between his dismissal of pure art and his privileged place in the highest of art magazines. The most direct political commentary in Nara's illustrated picture books (most of

which are exhibition catalogs) is the figure of a kamikaze pilot of indeterminate gender and attitude. Nor does the diary, which focuses on the artist's adjustment to moving across borders and his self-conscious attempt at assessing his own work, appear to depart from such introspection. Therefore, the artist's reference to Auschwitz is a sudden, jarring surprise to the historian:

After breakfast I take the 7:35 IC to Krakow
 It takes two hours and thirty minutes to get to Krakow
 I can see field after field of fog from the window of the train from Warsaw
 The train station in Krakow had been remodeled
 Was it six years ago that I came here with Drota?
 Saving my sightseeing for Krakow I go to Auschwitz
 I tour Auschwitz and Birkenau
 The scale of the land of the concentration camp when viewed from the tower is more real
 than the items on display
 I saw the room where father [Kolbe](#) died
 There's too much to think about and all I can do is tremble; there is no way I can write ...

Nara's discussion of Auschwitz extends no further. The following year Nara as intellectual would go into the war zone in Afghanistan to take the photos that were to appear alongside photos by Kawauchi Rinko in the first issue of *Foil*. This was a special with the title of "no war." These photographs, many of them of children, send an upbeat message through their composition: they contain a flash of pink – a child's shoe; the cap on a plastic container of radiator coolant; a flower.[21] By the following year Nara's drawings have gone to war as is evident in his exhibit "new works 2004" at the Blum & Poe Gallery in Los Angeles. Auschwitz also reappears, in the slide-show room of Nara's Los Angeles exhibit. Over fifty slides rotate to be projected on one wall. Some are from the Afghanistan trip. Others are winsome pictures of children who are clearly the offspring of his personal friends, in Europe. The Auschwitz image, only one of many, goes by quickly, but the picture of the gate is unmistakable. Auschwitz has become an integral part of Nara's narrative. It is history brought into the present, world history belonging to not only one place but to all places. In contrast, the pilgrimage taken to Auschwitz in 1996 by Suh Kyung-sik and Takahashi Tetsuya was more site-specific.

Suh Kyungsik and Takahashi Tetsuya: Meeting up with Auschwitz

Although I am treating the pilgrimage to Auschwitz by zainichi writer Suh Kyungsik and Japanese philosopher Takahashi Tetsuya out of historic chronology in as much as it occurred before Nara's visit, I do so for reasons that will become clear. But first let me recapitulate how Auschwitz appears in *Danzetsu no Seiki Shogen no Jidai: Senso no kioku o meguru taiwa* (A Century of Breaks, an Era of Witnessing: Dialogues on Memories of War).[22] This book consists of transcriptions of a series of dialogues between the two intellectuals staged by Iwanami Publishers in 1998 and 1999 and published in Sekai in 1999. By the time Suh wrote the preface to the book, he had published his award-winning *Travelling to Primo Levi* and Takahashi had published both *Auschwitz and Us* and his book on Japan's "post-war responsibility." [23] Following the preface, the book opens with a section titled "Meeting up at Auschwitz" (*Aushwitzdu de no deai*) recounting the visit to the site when the two traveled to Poland together in the summer of 1996. Takahashi recounts the reason for the visit: Suh was interested in the Auschwitz survivor, writer Primo Levi. When he had made his pilgrimage to the grave of Primo

Levi, the sight of the number 174517 carved on Levi's grave along with his name and dates had made a strong impact. Claude Lanzmann's film, *Shoah* along with Takahashi's studies in twentieth century European philosophy had led Takahashi to what Lanzmann had called "the non-places of memory" (*non-lieux de la memoire*).[24]

This experience of Auschwitz is shaped by the images and preconceptions both bring with them. A railroad crossing en route to the camp, from the station at Krakow, conjures forth for Suh an image of inmates from throughout Europe being transported to that spot in trains. When he visits the I.G. Farben factory the business as usual production being conducted in the factory is chilling because he can image the history left unrecounted by the words "Approximately 30,000 people were killed at this site", on a small memorial monument. But Suh's meeting up with Auschwitz is also occasion for him to insert his new knowledge of Auschwitz into his own personal witnessing of history. At Auschwitz, it is block 11, the place within the death camp where, he explains, those inmates who resisted were executed and tortured, that calls up the most intense horror for him. Here, as elsewhere Suh makes clear that he brings with him to Auschwitz his experience of the violence endured by his brothers who were imprisoned and tortured for two decades by the South Korean government.

Takahashi's understanding of Suh's responses to Auschwitz leads to elaboration regarding Suh Kyungsik's place in Japan as a *zainichi*. (Korean in Japan). While the interpellation *zainichi* has come to be translated as "resident Korean," I employ the more literal translation here, in an attempt to capture what I perceive to be a bluntness in categorizing those of Korean descent born and brought up in Japan, who are treated legally as foreigners and who live their lives as a type of foreign native. Takahashi calls Suh a survivor of colonial rule by Japanese imperialism and a living witness. He also calls Suh a survivor of the cold war system in East Asia because of the experiences of his brothers.

Takahashi elaborates on his own position, which as he explains is totally different from Suh's because he was brought up like any other Japanese person. By this he refers to the version of war history as victims' history that he was taught throughout childhood. Takahashi's agenda at Auschwitz is the tracking of Japanese war responsibility (*senso sekinin*). He explains that members of his post-war generation of Japanese come into contact with memories of the war in three ways: First there are stories told by those in the war. Secondly, they can confront the issue of memory through contact with Koreans-in-Japan and Chinese-in-Japan. The third source is the testimony from Asian victims that began to appear in the early 1990s. It is the third avenue that most concerns Takahashi. Most specifically, the "Comfort Women" are the quintessential victim survivors for the two intellectuals visiting Auschwitz from Japan. And for Suh and Takahashi, the racism informing the Japanese colonial presence in Korea, which now allows contemporary Japanese critics to deny the veracity of the testimony of the "Comfort Women," appears to be analogous to the racialism suffered by the Jews of the Holocaust.

Almost a decade later, and three years following the publication of the recollections of Takahashi and Suh, a second pairing of a Korean intellectual in Japan and a Japanese intellectual made the same pilgrimage to Auschwitz. To what extent this was an accident of history is not clear, but the book, *Traversing a Century of War: There Are Memories of War Which Must be Spoken of at Those Places*, casts history in a very different form.[25]

Kang Sang Jung and Mori Tatsuya: Auschwitz in Color

In 2003, the second pair of intellectuals, one Zainichi and one Japanese, traveled to Auschwitz in order to conduct a dialogue on site. This was one of four places of memory visited by Kang Sang Jung, Tokyo University professor and media personality, and Mori Tatsuya, writer and director of documentary films A and A2, about the Aum Shinrikyo sect. Their focus on place, as opposed to the non place in the dialogue on Auschwitz by Takahashi and Suh, was not the only difference in the two approaches. Although, like the first pair, they revisit war, they do so in order to return to war in the present. The road trip takes the two to Auschwitz and to such sites of war as Saxonhausen, the Ichigaya Kinenkan, site of the Tokyo war crimes tribunal, and to the war museum in Seoul, which is dedicated to colonial and war-time outrages. Suh and Takahashi have done their homework over the years; they know their Hannah Arendt, Adorno is quoted, and they admit to the influence of the stock imagery of the Holocaust. But it is their own use of imagery which sets this inquiry so apart from *A Century of Breaks* and *An Era of Witnessing*.



Ichigaya Kinenkan in Shinjuku, Tokyo

Let us begin to follow the series of images of Auschwitz that open the book, starting with a two-page spread. On the left hand page, Tokyo professor, Kang, stands arms by his side, hands open. He is dressed in black jacket, white oxford shirt, and dark jeans; a picture of the worker-intellectual. On the page facing, Mori, director stands arms akimbo, in short sleeves, and baggy pants: the artist-intellectual. They face the camera; they are standing at that divide that is emblematic of our remembered history of that nightmare that was Auschwitz. In other words they stand where the tracks split and the caption is self-explanatory: “Auschwitz second concentration camp; the entrance to Birkenau. It is said (?) that when the freight trains carrying Jews arrived, this is where they were divided into laborers and non-laborers (those going to the gas chamber).” I have added the question mark.

The above is common knowledge; the image of the tracks omnipresent in our histories of Auschwitz as signifier of the Holocaust. What is so different here is the camera eye which foregrounds the two visitors. The tracks recede away from them and the gate is minimized. The horror of that moment and place appears secondary, also because both men face away from the tracks. (Kang appears to be looking down; is Mori staring into the distance?) Nowhere do I recall having seen this space peopled in any published image. The central presence of the two men raises the question “why?” Perhaps the conceit of showing the shape of the tracks only has retained its hegemony because to place emptiness is to force the imagining of the dead and the living dead while at the same time granting them respect and dignity.

On to the second two-page spread whose caption refers to the oppressive air and smell of the underground prison of Auschwitz and to the despairing cries of the Jews. These photos glow with a golden light that works against the reference to despair. The following two pages are a revisiting, again, of one of the most repeated images of the Holocaust, the mountain of shoes. The caption asks, "What does the mountain of shoes taken from the incarcerated Jewish people say to us living in the present? To just be at a loss for words does not resolve anything." Again, the perspective differs. The canonized image that has been repeated for half a century is a black and white picture of an undifferentiated mass of dulled leather, which the camera faces head on. In other words, the pile of shoes rises before the observer, just as it does for the spectator who would visit Auschwitz as museum, today. There, in person, the shoes appear as colorless up close as in the authoritative black and white version. But here we have an itemizing of Auschwitz in color. It is a pathway of shoes led by a red and gold sandal that is more appropriate to a festive occasion than as apparel worn into a death camp. This is at first glance an aestheticization of a gruesome theft. It gives style to the Holocaust. The picture will most likely not be unfamiliar to the consumer of the ubiquitous Japanese fashion magazine. One is tempted to confront the filmmaker of not one but two documentaries coming out of the Aum Shinrikyo incident wherein the technocratic youth trained to be the leaders of tomorrow's Japan turned against their society by releasing gas into the public space of the subway. One is tempted to accuse Mori, the artist responsible for award-winning cinema, of willful blindness to the power of pretty pictures. The historian must ask the two men to place the colored imagery in relation to their conversations.

We here confront the question, "How to represent the Holocaust?" Related to this problem is the question of reception. For one, the image is much more clearly gendered. A man's shoe lies discarded alongside a fashionable woman's sandal from the 1940's atop a more comfortable woman's shoe, and one of a pair of boots. Because it is aestheticized and familiarized it will speak to the young Japanese consumer. Could the shock of this re-representation provide a form of distancing for those more jaded with the Holocaust narrative? These delineated objects were among those rejected by Nara as non-compelling and yet here is a photo that in some ways partakes of his style. (This is to say that a flash of color can remind the viewer of life even within devastation).[26]

Aestheticization can be seen as trivializing or as a re-imagining, and the exchanges between Kang and Mori speak to the latter. Although their ability to track down places of memory (Pierre Nora's *lieux de memoire*?) contrasts with the emphasis on the Nazi desire to eliminate traces and the ensuing "non-places" foregrounded by Takahashi and Suh, it is the book that advertises through glossy photographs – photographs not unreminiscent of the staged images of the strange favored by retailer Parco in its advertisements at one time -- which more directly places Auschwitz more directly in the zone revisited in the writing of Primo Levi. This is the "gray zone" -- a zone where death (and life) take on unprecedented meaning with an unprecedented logic. This is a logic unfathomable to those not forced to live by its rules and its attendant morality, Primo Levi's "gray zone." Again, Agamben's paraphrasing provides relevant elaboration. Agamben calls Levi's gray zone "an area that is independent of every establishment of responsibility" and a "zone of responsibility"[27] This is an unimaginable place that must be imagined and Mori and Kang actively and openly struggle with this task. Before entering the space of Auschwitz, Mori tries to grasp the meaning of Auschwitz as cynical tourist site. Questions are posed: for the two of them is it a litmus test? Will it be a catalyst?[28]

Kang struggles to imagine the everyday of the SS in control of Auschwitz. The proximity of their dining quarters to the crematorium puzzles and horrifies him. How is his response tempered by his identity as *zainichi*? His answer is indirect. For it is Mori who brings up the parallel of the massacre of Koreans after the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. (But it is Kang who names Akutagawa Ryunosuke as member of a vigilante group.) Kang also sends readers to [Zainichi](#), his autobiography, for an account of former Korean Imperial soldiers' drunken reminiscences. His approach to Auschwitz as the limit of experience is to consider *ningen wo koeta ningen* (The human who transcends the human). Through his search for understanding the "regular" (*futsuu na*) victimizer, he is able to introduce the topic of 731. (The SS man went home after work; the 731 unit staff conducted their human experiments before attending a field day - a family time for bento lunches and relaxed chitchat.) He is interested in the perverted logic informing the "rational" standardization of the process of mass murder that Auschwitz made possible.[29] It is Kang who connects racism, eugenics, and colonial rule. And it is also Kang who says that after much pondering, he has concluded that it is less important to ask "why Auschwitz" than to examine how processes changed.[30] The distinction between *zainichi* and Japanese intellectual for Suh and Takahashi, is the difference between a survivor of colonialism and a "regular" Japanese citizen raised on post-war Japanese ideology. Kang is most overtly singled out as *zainichi* in a caption to one of the twenty-some photographs (with only a few exceptions these feature both Mori and Kang.) As if to explain their broad smiles as they pose in front of the Independence Memorial Hall in Seoul, the explanation reads: "The second generation *zainichi*, Kang, gently accepts Mori, who is prone to be nervous, and their conversation continues to expand."

Why did these two intellectuals revisit war? Mori wants the Emperor accountable (responsible) for war. Kang wants to revisit the last century of war in order to be able to respond to this emerging century of war. The visit to Auschwitz is part of that process. Kang and Mori hope that by clarifying accountability in the last world war, including the accountability of the U.S., a sense of responsibility, in the best sense, can be fostered -- responsibility for the Other. And so we come full circle.

Susan Sontag's insight of September 2002, that we Americans were in a war with no foreseeable end, and that this anti-terror war can never end, is rephrased by Kang Sang Jung: 'We are now living in a wartime with no beginning and no end.'[31] The concluding pages to *Traversing a Century of War* describe the process whereby the war against terror has divided societies into the "normal" and the "out of the ordinary." By the same token there is no acceptance of the Other. Here is an example of the environment wherein the term *jiko sekinin* prospered. And what about Auschwitz in Japan?

I introduced my three cases in relationship to three historiographical issues: representation, commodification, and testimony. Let me review in order to seek some preliminary connections: Nara Yoshitomo provides almost no detail, background, or context for his entry. Nor does he raise any of the three topics. Yet his simple reference to shivering while trying to shape his visit to Auschwitz into words, when paired with the malleable girl figures (of indeterminate race, nationality or class, for that matter) that he creates, implies an expression of the kind of empathy with the traumatized called for by Dominic LaCapra.[32] For LaCapra, such empathizing involves affect and may counter victimization or self-victimization. The scholarship historicizing traumatic events like the Holocaust must be premised on what LaCapra terms "empathetic unsettlement." This is possible and preferable, even if, like LaCapra, the historian's experiences

do not include the traumatic event. Nara's direct, seemingly unmediated response is thus an instance of empathetic unsettlement.

Suh Kyungsik and Takahashi Tetsuya use a language of witnessing, with brief reference to the two most well known intellectual-survivors, Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi. There is no discussion of testimony by Auschwitz survivors, nor of problems involving the use of testimony in terms of veracity and the legitimacy of equating individual to group experience. Yet the two intellectuals cannot be faulted. A close reading of their dialogues reveals an agenda at a specific historic juncture. The "Comfort Women" had come forth to testify. They were accused of lying by a newly powerful group of revisionist scholars who wished to "rectify" history teaching in the schools. Suh and Takahashi were recalling a past trip to Auschwitz, for present purposes. By the same token, the two were responding to the picture of world war given by Susan Sontag and Kang Sang Jung. Moving into the more recent past, if we follow Suh's starting point for discussing Korea-Japan relations, in a recent collection of writings, he no longer seems to identify with Jewish-European survivors. The dyads are no longer Jew is to Nazi as Korean is to Japanese. The Palestinians have displaced Jews, as victims, and the Jewish survivors of victimization, as Kang notes, have bumped themselves into the position of victimizer.[33]

I have given the benefit of the doubt to the shiny photographs in *Traversing a Century of War*. However they do appear too close to the beautifully grotesque aesthetic of retailer Parco. At best they are fashion shots of public intellectuals. In the conclusion to the book of dialogues between Mori and Kang, Auschwitz appears as a cautionary tale: the trauma of the Holocaust is the source of the oppression of the Palestinians. None of the cases described briefly above as sites of Auschwitz published in Japan offers any detail of the everyday for inmates in Auschwitz. This is in part understandable in the case of Kang's concern to come to terms with the SS mentality. But the predominance of Kang and Mori in their book, including the use of their inner thoughts, renders them almost a substitute for the Europeans brought in box cars, the more fortunate of whom survived with "camp esperanto" and a will to live that enabled them to fatefully alter their moral structure.

The revisiting of Auschwitz has become a way for Japanese intellectuals to claim responsibility for the nation's past and future. A more pessimistic reading of these treatments of Auschwitz in Japan, is that unless they begin to be more peopled by inmates and survivors, they run the risk of recapitulating the rendering invisible of victims, just as the Japanese colonial discourse by intellectuals who had turned to embrace the state neglected to acknowledge the Asians already resident in Asia, before the intrusion of Japanese foreigners throughout Asia and the Pacific. Granted, fast and hard pronouncements are less than appropriate after the examination of a limited number of cases. Also, related topics bear examination. For example, Auschwitz in Japanese, in the vernacular language of Japanese mass culture has a different function in the Japanese hit drama, **Shiroi Kyoto**. Therein, documentary materials serve to encourage the forgetting of trauma. Auschwitz is used to humanize the self-centered hero, an ambitious young surgeon. He is especially shaken by the account of the Nazi medical experiments. But this history stops at Auschwitz; neither the doctor nor the Japanese audience is told that this is also the story of the Japanese in Asia. The responsibility of the intellectual going into war, the responsibility to reject the exceptional and the universal but to associate with specifics has been betrayed. One place of memory (or of non-place -- either will do) is being used to deny another. Not always, but here, talking about war is a means of forgetting war. It is still a form of silencing, one of the most powerful weapons in our arsenal of war as we attempt to look into the

future, knowing full well that the past cannot repeat itself, and that even repeated nightmares are reformulated compositions.

*Miriam Silverberg is Professor of History, UCLA. Her most recent book is [Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times](#). This article appeared in *Review of Asia and Pacific Studies*, 29, 2005. It was edited, and published with a new introduction at *Japan Focus* on July 11, 2007.*

Ann Sherif is the director, East Asian Studies Program, Oberlin College and a Japan Focus associate. She is the translator most recently of Yoshimoto Banana's [N.P.](#)

*After a long bout with illness, Miriam Rom Silverberg passed away in the early hours of Sunday, March 16, 2008. Miriam spent her formative years in Tokyo where she graduated from the International School of the Sacred Heart before returning to the United States. With a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago (1984), she became one of the most self-consciously theoretical historians of modern Japan in the US and remained a relentless and original critic of Japanese Imperial history, popular culture, femininity, and social justice. As Professor of History and Director of the Center for the Study of Women at UCLA, Miriam organized numerous groundbreaking workshops and conferences, including one entitled "Feminism Confronts Disability" in which she unfolded her own confrontation with Parkinson's into the academic-humanistic register of disability studies. While struggling with illness, Miriam Silverberg completed her masterful study of Japan's inter-war mass culture, *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense* (University of California Press, 2007) and until the last, she was a devoted teacher and mentor. Miriam Silverberg is deeply missed by colleagues and friends across Pacific and Atlantic. H-Japan carried [fuller notes](#) remembering Miriam Silverberg by James Fujii on March 18, 2008.*

Notes:

[1] Susan Sontag, "A Mature Democracy," *The New Yorker* September 24, 2001, p. 32; Susan Sontag, "Real Battles and Empty Metaphors," *The New York Times*, op ed page, September 10, 2002. Maher's statement was: "We have been the cowards, lobbing cruise missiles from 2,000 miles away. That's cowardly. Staying in the airplane when it hits the building -- say what you want about it, it's not cowardly." Arundhati Roy, "Come September," in *Roy War Talk* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2003), 46-47. (Originally a talk given on September 18, 2002)

[2] "'Jiko sekinin' itateru Koizumi seiken no mujun," *Shukan Asahi*, April 30, 2004, 27-29.

[3] Gitta Serenyi, *The Healing Wound: Experiences and Reflections, Germany 1938-2001* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co.2001), xix-xx.

[4] See, for example the curtailing of testimony by expert witness Fujime Yuki during the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery in Tokyo in December, 2000.

[5] Arai Shinichi, "Sokan no Ji," writing on behalf of the Japan War Responsibility Resource Center, *Senso Sekinin Kenkyu*, sokango, 1993, 2.

[6] Taguchi Hiroshi, "Bungakusha no Senso Sekinin Tsuikyū," in *Ajia ni taisuru nihon no senso sekinin wo tou*, Minshu hotei junbi kai, ed. Dainiki senso sekinin, vol. 1. 1998, 31.

- [7] Odagiri Hideo, *Watashi no mita Showa no shiso to bungaku no gojunen*, vol I (Shueisha, 1988), 289-290.
- [8] Suzuki Yuko traces the history of the slogan by carefully following press coverage. Suzuki Yuko, "Ianfu" mondai to senso sekinin (Miraisha, 1996), 25-26.
- [9] Nishikawa Nagao, *Senso no seiki o koete: gurooobaruka jidai no kokka. rekishi. minzoku* (Heibonsha, 2002).
- [10] Hagiwara Takuya, "Kokush kyoiku e no ichi kosatsu," *Doto*, October 7, 1944, 4-15. See the first issue of *Zenya*, on the theme of culture and resistance, *Zenya*, Sokango, Autumn, 2004. *Zenya* is carrying forth its pre-war legacy by continuing the tradition of the sponsoring lecture series and public forums. The sense of overlapping yet transitional time expressed in the credo is reflected the inclusion of an unusual combination of modernist and postmodern visual images.
- [11] Yamashiro Tomoe, *Toraware no onnatachi*, (Komichi Sobo, 1986). See especially vol. 1. *Muhyo no hana I I* for vivid documentation of everyday life for an anti-war "thought crime offender" in what was intended to be "the number one woman's prison in the Orient." *Ibid.*, p. 56.
- [12] The collaborative work by Tsurumi Shunsuke et al, *Tenko*, still remains the best overview. See *Shiso no Kagaku Kenyukai hen*, *Tenko*, 3 vols. (Heibonsha, 1959-1962).
- [13] Shimizu, Kiyoko, "Josei. Senso. Jinken" *Gakkaishi sokango hakkan ni attate*, *Josei. Senso. Jinken*, Sokango, May 1998, 3-4. See also Okano Yayo, "Jugun ianfu mondai ga terashidasu watashi" no shoso, *Ibid.* 62-92.
- [14] Nagao Yuzo, Ed., *Waga uchinaru senso sekinin : Ajia Taiheiyo senso. Watanabe Kiyoshi no kokuhatsu sekinin*.
- [15] Nagao, pp. 2, 111
- [16] For a sophisticated discussion of such historiographical questions, see Saul Friedlander, ed., *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the Final Solution*, (Harvard University Press, 1992).
- [17] Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (New York: Zone Books, 2002) 12.
- [18] Regarding Adorno's famous pronouncement, see Klaus Hofman, "Poetry After Auschwitz – Adorno's Dictum," *German Life and Letters* 58:2 April 2005, 0016-877 (print); 1468-0483 (online).
- [19] See Nara Yoshitomo, *Slash With a Knife* (Little More, 2003), Nara, *Who Snatched the Babies* (Tomio Koyama Gallery, 2002), Nara, *Lullaby Supermarket* (Last Gasp, 2003), Nara, *I Don't Mind if You Forget Me* (Tankosha, 2001). Among the essayists for the catalog accompanying Nara's 2003 show, *Nothing Ever Happens*, Deborah Harry best captures the sensibility of Nara's little girls. Harry's essay "Insist on Little Girls" stands apart from much of the English language commentary: "...I knew this guy Nara had a keen insight. No cute, coy innocents these. No Keane paintings pleading for sympathy. / These girls had ideas, intentions. They knew the truth, like art does,..." See also Leonard Nimoy's bold graphic, and cf. Ingrid Schaffner's discussion of Yoshida Kenko's *Essays in Idleness* in "Idle Reflections on Yoshitomo

Nara's Pop Art." Nara Yoshitomo, *Nothing Ever Happens* (Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland: Perceval Press, 2003) pp. 81, 86. 57-61. Perhaps it is no surprise that Blondie, the rock singer, would be most simpatico with Nara, who thrives on rock music and works closely with the language of rock.

[20] Nara Yoshitomo, *Nara Note* (Chikuma Shobo, 2001).

[21] See *Foil* vol. I, "no war," (Little More), April, 2003. According to the editor of *Foil*, when he called Nara to ask whether he wanted to join in the venture of going onsite to Afghanistan, for the anti-war issue of *Foil*, Nara replied "It's not very persuasive to say one is anti-war from a far away safe country. We might not be able to do anything, but let's go."

[22] Suh Kyungsik and Takahashi Tetsuya, *Danzetsu no seiki shogen no jidai: senso no kioku o meguru taiwa* (Iwanami Shoten, 2000).

[23] See Suh Kyungsik, *Purimo Reebui e no tabi* (Asahi Shanbun, 1999) and Takahashi Testuya, *Sengo sekininron* (Kodansha, 1999).

[24] Suh and Takahashi, *Danzetsu*, pp.5-9.

[25] Mori Tatsuya and Kang Sang jung, *Senso no seiki o koete: sono basho de katarareru beki senso no kioku ga aru* (Kodansha, 2004)

[26] This reference to the use of color may bring to mind the red dress in the film *Schindler's List*. However I am referring only to Nara here. Regarding American consumption and commodification of the Holocaust, see Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (New York: Houghton Mifflin: 1999).

[27] For a discussion of the moral universe of Primo Levi's "Gray Zone" see Levi, "The Gray Zone," in Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (Vintage International, 1988). See also Agamben, *Remnants*, pp.20-21

[28] Mori and Kang, *Senso*, p.31.

[29] *Ibid.*, pp.56-7.

[30] *Ibid.*, pp.74-75, 79-80.

[31] *Ibid.*, p.285.

[32] LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001). pp. 40-42.

[33] Suh Kyungsik, *Hakari ni kakete wa naranai:Niccho mondai o kangaeru zahyojiku* (Kage shobo, 2003).

War, War Crimes, Power and Justice: Toward a Jurisprudence of Conscience

Richard Falk

Ever since German and Japanese leaders were prosecuted, convicted, and punished after World War II at Nuremberg and Tokyo, there has been a wide split at the core of the global effort to impose criminal accountability on those who commit crimes against peace, crimes against humanity, and war crimes on behalf of a sovereign state. The law is always expected to push toward consistency of application as a condition of its legitimacy. In the setting of international criminality the greatest danger to widely shared values is posed by those with the greatest power and wealth, and it is precisely these leaders that are least likely to be held responsible or to feel threatened by the prospect of being charged with international crimes. The global pattern of enforcement to date has been one in which the comparatively petty criminals are increasingly held to account while the Mafia bosses escape almost altogether from existing mechanisms of international accountability. Such double standards are too rarely acknowledged in discussions of international criminal law nor are their corrosive effects considered, but once understood, it becomes clear that this pattern seriously compromises the claim that international criminal law is capable of achieving global justice.

Nuremberg and Tokyo War Crimes Tribunals

In a sense the pattern of double standards was encoded immediately after World War II in the seminal undertakings at Nuremberg and Tokyo that assumed the partially discrediting form of 'victors' justice' in the weak sense of the term. The strong sense of victors' justice involves imposing punishment on those who are innocent of substantive wrongdoing beyond the misfortune of being on the losing side in a war. The weak sense is that the implementation of international criminal law is undertaken only against individuals on the losing side who are indeed responsible for substantive wrongdoing, while exempting seemingly guilty individuals on the winning side. This results in double standards that weaken claims to be acting on the basis of the rule of law. Nevertheless, the possibility often, but not always, exists of sentencing procedures that can be sensitive to different degrees of criminality. Some efforts can and should be made to close the gap between law as vengeance and law as justice. The prospects of securing justice vary from case to case and tribunal to tribunal, depending on the context and auspices.

The Atomic Bomb Attacks

Yet even a weak sense of victors' justice is not a minor flaw, its unacceptable inequality of enforcement aside. It may act to exempt even the most severe and harmful forms of criminal behavior from legal scrutiny, and thereby badly confuse our understanding of the distinction between criminal and non-criminal activity. Surely the indiscriminate bombings of German and Japanese cities by Allied bomber fleets—no less than German and Japanese indiscriminate bombing of Britain and China—and the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, were 'crimes' that should have been investigated and prosecuted if the tribunals had been truly 'legal' in the sense of imposing individual accountability on both victors and vanquished for their combat operations.

What is more, by refusing to prosecute victors, their substantive 'crimes' attained a kind of perverse de facto legality. There is little doubt that had Germany or Japan developed the atomic bomb first, and then used it, the individuals responsible would have been charged with and

convicted of crimes against humanity and war crimes by the victorious allied powers, and their behavior stigmatized in the annals of customary international law.

The one judicial body to pass judgment on the atomic bomb attacks on Japanese cities was a lower Tokyo court in the *Shimoda* decision handed down on December 7, 1963, that is, with a subtle touch of Japanese humility, the exact day of the 22nd anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attacks.



US battleship sinks at Pearl Harbor

The decision, relying on expert testimony by respected Japanese specialists in international law, did conclude that the attacks on large cities violated existing international law because of their indiscriminate and toxic characteristics. The case had been initiated by survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki who sought nominal damages and lacked any legal standing to put forward criminal allegations.

As might have been expected Japan as a defeated state and one that remained

subordinate to American military power and diplomatic influence, was not inclined to pursue the matter any further, and seemed precluded from doing so by the peace treaty with the United States. Not surprisingly the *Shimoda* judgment virtually disappeared down the memory hole of atomic diplomacy. In 1996 the International Court of Justice in an Advisory Opinion responding to a question put to it by the UN General Assembly narrowly defined the conditions under which it might possibly be lawful to resort to nuclear weapons in situations of extreme self-defense that if applied to the 1945 atomic attacks would definitely result in their criminalization. As far as is known no effort has been made by any nuclear weapons state to alter its doctrine governing threat and use, including the threat of nuclear annihilation, in light of this most authoritative assessment of the international law issues at stake by the World Court.

Had the defeated states used an atomic bomb and the perpetrators been charged and convicted, this might have made it somewhat more difficult for the victors to rely upon nuclear weaponry in the future, and might have encouraged them to work diligently and reasonably to negotiate a treaty regime of unconditional prohibition. Instead, the victorious United States Government has never been willing to express formally even remorse for these wartime atrocities that completely lacked the partially redeeming feature of military necessity. It has retained, developed,



Firebombing of Tokyo March 9-10, 1945

possessed, deployed, and threatened other nations with the use of nuclear weapons on numerous occasions, including the possibility of using weaponry with payloads many times the magnitude of those first bombs dropped on Japan. As well, having opened this ultimate Pandora's Box, others have acquired the weaponry and relied upon its ultra-hazardous energy technology to produce nuclear power.

It is not just the inherent unfairness of victors' justice, but its tendency to normalize unacceptable wartime behavior if done by the winning side in a major war, which nullifies the very possibility of a jurisprudence of conscience. The closest that the United States Government has come to acknowledge officially its culpability in relation to Hiroshima and Nagasaki was contained in a single line in Barack Obama's speech of April 5, 2009 in Prague that envisioned a world without nuclear weapons: "...as the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility to act." Unfortunately, such a sentiment was neither a belated apology nor was it repeated in Obama's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech a few months later, nor have any concrete steps been taken to initiate a nuclear disarmament process in the course of the Obama administration.

Fairness of Procedure



Tokyo Trial

There are important matters of degree that either mitigate or aggravate the contention of victors' justice. It was the case, especially in Tokyo, that the tribunal allowed defendants to be represented by competent lawyers and that the judges assessed fairly the evidence against defendants that alleged criminality. The Tokyo process even produced a celebrated dissenting opinion by the Indian jurist, Radhabinod Pal, and three Nazi defendants were acquitted by the Nuremberg tribunal. In short, there was a measure of procedural fairness in these trials. It seems clear that Justice Pal's long dissenting opinion came as an unpleasant surprise to those who had arranged the tribunal. After all, Pal questioned in form and substance the

overall legitimacy of what he believed to be a one-sided prosecutorial approach to the administration of criminal justice. He particularly lamented the failure of the court to take into account the Japanese rationale for recourse to war, especially the damaging impacts of coercive encirclement of Japan by American grand strategy, which was perceived by Japanese leaders, reasonably in Pal's understanding, as threatening the viability of the country. Pal also did little to hide his contempt for colonial powers sitting in judgment of the behavior of an Asian country. I suppose it is part of the educative function of victors' justice in a liberal society to note that it became almost impossible for many years to obtain a copy of Judge Pal's exhaustively reasoned rejection of the major premise of the Tokyo war crimes tribunal.¹

Selectively Prosecuting the Guilty

Without doubt those who were accused of these international crimes at Nuremberg and Tokyo did engage in activity that could in many instances be properly be viewed as morally depraved, as well as criminal and deserving of punishment. And it was deemed relevant to constructing a peaceful world order at the time to send a clear signal to future political leaders and military commanders that they would be henceforth held criminally responsible for their behavior, and could no longer hide behind claims of sovereign immunity and superior orders. But such a signal as delivered conveyed, at best, an ambiguous message to the extent that it seemed that future victors in major wars were likely to continue to avoid accountability even if they appeared to be manifestly guilty of committing international crimes.



Japanese Commemoration of Justice Pal

This split notion of accountability as between winners and losers remains descriptive of how international criminal law is currently implemented. Indeed, the gap has widened over time, or at least become more evident. This awareness is partly a result of increasing efforts by the inter-governmental system of states to hold losers and vulnerable political actors accountable while holding firm the exemption of the powerful and their friends. The NGO community has by and large been opportunistic, supporting efforts to hold officials accountable for their criminality without worrying too much about double standards and selective implementation, seeming to reason that a glass half full was to be preferred to an empty glass. This has had the unfortunate effect of seeming to legitimate the hierarchical character of world order. By ignoring the crimes of the powerful political actors on the world stage while applauding the criminal prosecution of weaker political actors, an attitude of normalcy or indifference becomes associated with double standards in international criminal law.

The recent trend has exhibited a gradual increase in the availability of international mechanisms to hold leaders accountable, including the establishment of a variety of special or ad hoc international tribunals, including those constituted by civil society initiatives, to address serious criminal allegations (former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, Japanese comfort women, indigenous peoples) relating to genocide and crimes against humanity.

Crimes Against Peace

A more permanent venue for some initiatives along these lines came into being in 2002 with the unexpected establishment of the International Criminal Court. For reasons relevant to the argument made here, the negotiations of the ICC had to stop short of incorporating crimes against peace into its claim of jurisdictional authority, reflecting the interest of major states in not acknowledging restrictions on their use of what geopolitically oriented diplomats call 'the military option,' which reflects a thinly disguised insistence on discretion to use force as an instrument of foreign policy despite the unconditional prohibitions of threats or uses of force in

Article 2(4) of the UN Charter. The recent Israel, American, and British military threats directed at Iran is a flagrant instance of relying on a non-defensive threat to use force against a sovereign state. By Nuremberg or Charter standards such threat diplomacy would appear to be a naked example of a crime against peace.

Again the issue of victors' justice lurks in the background, but this time in a reverse relationship to that pertaining to the atomic bomb. Here the World War II tribunals were most intent at the time on criminalizing recourse to aggressive war, and were here on strong substantive grounds as both the European and Asian theaters of warfare were definitely initiated by the states that went on to lose the war and whose surviving leaders were being prosecuted. At Nuremberg, the judgment went out of its way to declare that crimes against peace are the worst possible offense against the law of nations, encompassing the lesser realities of crimes against humanity and war crimes, and except for Justice Pal, the judges in both tribunals had little trouble reaching such a legal conclusion.

It was this conclusion that underlay the original conception of the UN as being a war prevention institution ("to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" in the language of the preamble to the charter) whose charter restricted valid claims to use force to situations of self-defense against a prior armed attack or to occasions on which the Security Council mandated a use of force for the sake of international peace and security.

Despite such a legal foregrounding of this war prevention priority, the Security Council veto given to the winners in World War II conferred a permanent exemption from accountability of a sort that continued and widened the failure to hold the winners criminally accountable at Nuremberg or Tokyo. The practice of the UN has confirmed the refusal of these five permanent members of the Security Council, along with a few other states, to live according to the precepts of the charter. Indeed, they would bring geopolitical pressures to bear so that the Security Council, as it did a few months ago, would mandate an interventionary use of force in Libya that was neither defensive nor necessary for the sake of international peace and security.² Because of its challenge to militarism and geopolitical reliance on force, crimes against peace has been basically marginalized as an international crime, supposedly because there was no agreement among governments as to a definition of aggression, but more genuinely, because geopolitical actors refused to accede to any formal challenge to their discretion to threaten and use force to resolve international conflicts or impose their political will. Here the leverage of geopolitical pressure keeps the legal precedent set at Nuremberg and Tokyo after World War II from becoming a behavioral norm. That is, it was appropriate to criminalize the aggression of Germany and Japan, but it is not acceptable to hamper the activities of geopolitical 'peacekeepers' by the application of such a restrictive norm to their behavior. At present, for instance, the standard American approach to its efforts to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear bomb is to announce with due gravity that the military option remains on the table, that is, a threat to initiate a non-defensive war. This threat is reinforced by a series of other coercive measures, including UN sanctions and diplomatic pressures on third parties to forego economic relations with Iran or to increase oil production so that Iran's oil revenues will diminish. Such a package of measures is designed to achieve the diplomatic goal of Iran's renunciation of its nuclear enrichment program.

Tribunals and Historical Validation

There were other messages to the world arising from these seminal war crimes trials at the end of World War II. For instance, the presentation of the case against the defendants was a way of prosecuting the losing states while vindicating the winners. It was a matter of certifying the justice by way of an extended judicial narrative that strengthened the moral credibility of the battlefield outcome. The winning side by conducting trials of this kind takes advantage of the opportunity to reinforce claims as to the justice of battlefield verdicts by pronouncing on the criminality of losers while overlooking the criminality of its own actions. This attempt to control the judgments of history is more influential with short-run public opinion than it is with historians who over time look more objectively at the evidence except to the extent blinkered by their national or civilizational orientations. It also tends to make occupation seem reasonable, as well as imposing restrictions on the future sovereignty of the defeated country.

But there were also short-term consequences of such a validation of the outcome of the war that extended beyond securing the peace. The validation provided cover for the establishment of more or less permanent American military bases in the Asia Pacific region, including in Okinawa, mainland Japan, and South Korea, as well as establishing strategic claims over the entire region and exerting direct control over Micronesia and other Pacific Islands. In effect, geopolitical expansionism and a triumphalist American grand strategy that extended its reach beyond maintaining peace in the region after 1945. Undoubtedly, the unquestioned accompaniment of holding the losers accountable and writing without critical commentary the official history of the war enabled this geopolitical project to go forward without debate, much less criticism. In effect, the dynamics of establishing World War II as a 'just war' prepared the ground for constructing what in some respect is an 'unjust peace' that has endured despite its serious compromising of the sovereignty of several Pacific states.

The Nuremberg Promise

There was also another deferred effect of victors' justice that was sensitive to its challenge to the legitimacy of the original legal process. It made an attempt to overcome the flaw of double standards by offering an informal commitment to being evenhanded in the future. This gesture to remove criminal accountability from the domain of geopolitics can be labeled as 'the Nuremberg promise,' and involves a commitment by the victors *in the future* to abide by the norms and procedures used to punish the German and Japanese surviving military and political leaders. In effect, to correct this flaw associated with victors' justice by converting criminal accountability from rule of power to rule of law applicable to all rather than a consequence of the outcome of wars or a reflection of geopolitical hierarchy.

The Chief Prosecutor at Nuremberg, Justice Robert Jackson (who had been excused temporarily from serving as a member of the U.S. Supreme Court), gave this promise an enduring relevance in his official statement to the court: "If certain acts and violations of treaties are crimes, they are crimes whether the United State does them or whether Germany does them. We are not prepared to lay down a rule of criminal conduct against others which we would not be willing to have invoked against us." Peace activists frequently quote Jackson's words, yet political leaders who take no notice of either the original flaw at Nuremberg or the obligation to remove it consistently ignore them. Jackson's promise at Nuremberg was made in good faith, but its irrelevance to what evolved over time suggests that the rhetoric at the time was not sufficient to generate a sense of

obligation on the part of American leaders who subsequently acted on behalf of the United States.

A parallel issue arises in relation to the willingness of a defeated country to accept the criminalization of its leadership. The German philosopher, Karl Jaspers in his *The Future of German Guilt* argued that the acceptability of these convictions and punishments of German leaders would have to wait until it becomes clear in the future whether the Nuremberg promise was going to be kept by the victors. If the promise was broken then in retrospect the Nuremberg process should be treated as a legal form of vengeance rather than an expression of criminal justice. Taking Jaspers seriously in this respect would raise questions about the liberal embrace of international criminal law despite its incorporation of double standards.

Since 1945 crimes by the victors in conflict, along with other geopolitical actors of regional ambition, have continued to be overlooked by international criminal law, while prosecutions reflecting geopolitical leverage have been happening at an accelerating pace without any concerted intergovernmental or UN effort to correct the imbalance. Since the end of the Cold War implementation of criminal responsibility has been increasingly imposed on losers in world politics, including heads of state such as Slobodan Milosevic, Saddam Hussein, and Muammar Qaddafi each of whom were deposed by Western military force, and either summarily executed or prosecuted.³

Institutionalizing International Criminal Law

This dual pattern of criminal accountability that cannot be fully reconciled with law or legitimacy has given rise to several reformist efforts. Civil society and some governments have favored a less imperfect legalization of criminal accountability, and raised liberal hopes by extraordinary efforts of a global coalition of NGOs and the commitment of a group of middle powers in establishing the ICC despite the opposition of a geopolitical consensus. Fearful of losing or compromising their impunity, such geopolitical heavyweights as the United States, China, India, and Russia have refused to ratify the ICC, and the United States has gone further, pressuring over 100 countries to sign statements agreeing not to hand over to the ICC Americans accused at The Hague of international crimes.

The result is that this and other formal and informal initiatives have not yet seriously impinged on the hierarchal realities of world politics, which continue to exhibit an embrace of the Melian ethos when it comes to criminal accountability: “the strong do what they will, the weak do what they must.” Such an ethos marked, for Thucydides, unmistakable evidence of Athenian decline, but for contemporary realists a different reading has been prevalent. Underpinning political realism has been the premise that hard power calls the shots in history, and the losers have no choice but to cope as best they can. Double standards persist: those who are enemies of the West or evildoers in Africa are targets of global prosecutorial zeal, while those in the West who wage aggressive war or mandate torture as national policies continue to enjoy impunity as far as formal legal proceedings are concerned.

As suggested, the veto in the Security Council both complements the ‘naturalness’ of victors’ justice and is a prime instance of constitutionalizing double standards. The veto power, while sounding the death knell for the UN in its assigned role of ensuring war prevention based on law rather than geopolitics, is not without providing certain benefits to world order. This exit option for several major actors is probably responsible for allowing the Organization to achieve and

maintain universality of membership even during times of intense geopolitical conflict. Without the veto, the West would have likely pushed the Soviet Union and China out the door during the Cold War years, and the UN would have lost its inclusive and universalist character in a manner similar to the discrediting of the League of Nations, an experience after the end of World War I that transformed Woodrow Wilson's dream into a nightmare. Arguably the veto and victors' justice are examples of Faustian bargains that enable a semblance of law and justice to be present in international life, and to convey the impression that there is a morally evolutionary process at work that introduces a gradually increasing measure of civility into the conduct of world politics. The question is whether this appearance of civility is to be treated as a form of moral progress, however slow or halting, or rather as the prostitution of law and institutions to geopolitical abuses and ambitions. There is no assurance that the evolution of international criminal law has any prospect of overcoming the current pattern of an open ended geopolitical right of exception.

Yet even this realist world of unequal states has been embodied imperfectly within the United Nations. So conceived, even if the UN is judged by way of a geopolitical optic, the anachronistic character of the 1945 Security Council persists as a remnant of the colonial era. This is delegitimizing. 2012 is not 1945, but the difficulty of achieving constitutional reform within the UN means that India, Brazil, Turkey, Indonesia, Germany, Japan, and South Africa seem destined to remain permanent ladies in waiting as the UN goes about its serious geopolitical business. What this means for UN authority, including its sponsorship of the politics of individual criminal accountability, is that all that is 'legal' is more often than not 'illegitimate,' and lacking in moral force.

My argument seeks to make two main points: first, double standards pervade the treatment of war crimes eroding the authority and legitimacy of international criminal law; and secondly, those geopolitical hierarchies that are embedded in the UN framework lose their authority and legitimacy by not adapting to changing times and conditions, especially the collapse of the colonial order and the rise of non-Western centers of soft and hard power. In this latter instance, it is the inability to reflect the geopolitical ratio of power that partially hampers the legitimacy of the UN, not its realist tendency to express its legitimacy by exhibiting in its procedures and structures the relative strength of political actors. This durability of the original UN distribution of authority in the Security Council both reflects the difficulty of overcoming formally entrenched positions of status and the political sense that the existing five permanent members maintain a certain internal balance geographically (West versus Asia) that remains reflective of world power relations despite the hegemonic role played by the United States within and outside of the UN. Of course, even if the UN enhanced its *geopolitical* legitimacy by taking account of global shifts in capabilities and influence, this would not necessarily pose a challenge to hierarchy and double standards.

Universal Jurisdiction

There are different kinds of initiatives taken to close this gap between the legal and the legitimate in relation to the criminality of political leaders and military commanders. One move is at the level of the sovereign state, which is to encourage domestic criminal law to extend its reach to cover international crimes. Such authority is known as Universal Jurisdiction (UJ), a hallowed effort by states to overcome the enforcement weaknesses of international law, initially developed to deal with the crime of piracy, which being interpreted as a crime against the whole world could be prosecuted anywhere regardless of where the pirate operated. Many liberal democracies

in particular have regarded themselves to varying degrees as agents of the international legal order as well as providing for the rule of law for relations within their national boundaries. This has led governments to endow their judicial systems with some authority to apprehend and prosecute those viewed as criminally responsible for crimes of state even if the criminal acts were performed outside of geographic boundaries. The legislating of UJ represented a strong tendency during the latter half of the twentieth century in the liberal democracies, especially in Western Europe to be proactive with respect to the implementation of international criminal law by escaping to some extent from the constraints of geography.

This development reached public awareness in relation to the dramatic 1998 detention in Britain of Augusto Pinochet, former ruler of Chile, in response to an extradition request from Spain where criminal charges had been judicially approved. The ambit of UJ is wider than its formal implementation as its mere threat is intimidating, leading those prominent individuals who might be detained and charged to avoid visits to countries where such claims might be plausibly made. In late 2011 George W. Bush cancelled a speaking engagement in Switzerland because of indications that he might be arrested and charged with international crimes if he ventured across the Swiss borders. Similar reports have suggested that high Israeli officials have changed travel plans in response to warnings that they could face arrest, detention or extradition for alleged crimes, especially in recent years those associated with either the Lebanon War of 2006 or the 2008-09 Israeli military attack on Gaza bearing the code name of Operation Cast Lead. In other words, the possibility of an assertion of UJ may have a behavioral and psychological impact even if the defendant is not brought physically before the court to stand trial.

As might be expected, UJ gave rise to a vigorous geopolitical campaign of pushback, especially by the governments of the United States and Israel. These governments exhibited the most anxiety that their leaders might be subject to criminal apprehension by foreign national courts even in countries that were political friends. As a result of intense pressures, several of the European UJ states have rolled back their legislation in response to Washington's demands, thereby calming somewhat the worries of travelers with records of public service on behalf of their countries that was potentially vulnerable to criminal prosecutions in foreign courts!



Pinochet brought to trial

Civil Society Tribunals

There is another approach to spreading the net of criminal accountability that has been taken, remains controversial, and yet seems responsive to the current global atmosphere of populist discontent. It involves claims by civil society, by the peoples of the world, to establish institutions and procedures designed to close the gap between law and legitimacy in relation to the application of international criminal law. Such initiatives can be traced back to the 1966-67

establishment of the Bertrand Russell International Criminal Tribunal that examined charges of aggression and war crimes associated with the American role in the Vietnam War. The charges were weighed by a distinguished jury of private citizens composed of moral and cultural authority figures headed by Jean-Paul Sartre. The Russell Tribunal was derided by critics at the time as a 'kangaroo court' or a 'circus' because its legal conclusions were predetermined, and amounted to foregone conclusions. The critics condemned this initiative on several overlapping grounds: that its outcome could be accurately anticipated in advance, that its authority was self-proclaimed and without governmental approval, that it had no control over those accused, that its proceedings were one-sided, and that its capabilities fell far short of enforcement.

What was overlooked in such criticism was the degree to which this dismissal of the Russell experiment reflected the monopolistic and self-serving claims of the state and state system to control the administration of law, ignoring the contrary claims of society to have law administered fairly in accord with justice, or at least to expose its distortions and double standards. Also ignored by the critics was the fact that only such spontaneous initiatives of concerned persons and groups could overcome the blackout of truth on the matters of criminality achieved by the geopolitics of impunity. The Russell Tribunal may not have been 'legal' understood in the sense of deriving its authority from the state or from international organizations, but it was 'legitimate' in responding to double standards, by calling attention to massive crimes and dangerous criminals who otherwise might enjoy a free pass, and by producing a generally reliable and comprehensive narrative account of criminal patterns of wrongdoing and flagrant violations of international law that destroy or disrupt the lives of entire societies and millions of people. Such societal initiatives require great efforts that lack the benefit of public funding, and only occur where the criminality being legally condemned seems severe and extreme, and where geopolitical forces effectively preclude systematic inquiry by established institutions of criminal law.⁴

It is against this background that we understand a steady stream of initiatives that build upon the Russell experience in the 1960s. Starting in 1979, the Basso Foundation in Rome sponsored a series of such proceedings under the rubric of the Permanent Peoples Tribunal that explored a wide variety of unattended criminal wrongs, including dispossession of indigenous peoples, the Marcos dictatorship in the Philippines, massacres of Armenians, and self-determination claims of oppressed peoples in Central America and elsewhere. In 2005 the Istanbul World Tribunal on Iraq examined contentions of aggression and crimes against peace, crimes against humanity, and war crimes associated with the U.S./UK invasion and occupation of Iraq, commencing in 2003, causing as many as one million Iraqis to lose their lives, and several million to be permanently displaced from home and country.⁵

In November 2011 the Russell Tribunal on Palestine, a direct institutional descendant of the original Russell undertaking, held a session in South Africa to investigate charges of apartheid, as a crime against humanity, being made against Israel. A few days later, the Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Tribunal launched an inquiry into charges of criminality made against George W. Bush and Tony Blair for their roles in planning, initiating, and prosecuting the Iraq War, to be followed a year later by a subsequent inquiry into torture charges made against Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and Alberto Gonzales.⁶

Without doubt such societal efforts to bring at large war criminals to symbolic justice should become a feature of the growing demand around the world for real global democracy sustained

by a rule of law that does not exempt from criminal accountability the rich and powerful whether they are acting internally or internationally.

Conclusion

The problems of victors' justice and double standards pervade and subvert the proper application of international law. As long as power, influence, and diplomatic skills are unevenly divided, there will be some tendency for this to happen. Civil society is seeking to increase the ethical and political relevance of international law in two ways: by illuminating the geopolitical manipulation of law and by forming its own parallel institutions that focus on the criminality of the strong and the victimization of the weak. There remain many obstacles on this road to global justice, but at least some clearing of the geopolitical debris is beginning to take place. By geopolitical debris is meant this opportunistic reliance on law when it serves the interests of the powerful and victorious, and its determined avoidance and suppression whenever it restrains or censures their behavior. Until international law has the capacity to treat equals equally the corrective checks of progressive civil society are a vital ingredient of a jurisprudence of conscience despite their lack of governmental legitimacy.⁷

Richard Falk is Albert G. Milbank Professor Emeritus of International Law, Princeton University, and United Nations Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur for the Occupied Palestinian Territories. His recent books include Richard Falk and Mark Juergensmeyer, eds., [Legality and Legitimacy in Global Affairs](#) and Richard Falk and David Krieger, [The Path to Zero: Dialogues on Nuclear Danger](#).

Notes

I would like to thank Mark Selden for his editorial and substantive contributions this text, and to Ayca Cubukcu for her most thoughtful comments on an initial draft.

¹ *International Military Tribunal for the Far East: Dissident judgment of Justice R. B. Pal* (Calcutta: Sanyal, 1953).

² The authorizing resolution of the Security Council seemed limited to providing humanitarian protection to the civilian population of the Libyan city of Benghazi,

but was operationally expanded by NATO to include a full-scale military air effort

to tip the balance in an internal civil war in favor of the anti-Qaddafi forces. UN Security Council Resolution 1973, 17 March 2011 was officially delimited as establishing a 'No-Fly-Zone' over Libya, although there was accompanying language that should never have been accepted by the five abstaining states to the effect that 'all necessary measures' were approved.

³ In Qaddafi's case he was brutally killed by the military forces that captured him in his home town of Sirte on 20 October 2011.

⁴ Investigative journalism does act as a partial complement to these efforts of citizens' tribunals. In Vietnam, for instance, Seymour Hersh made a notable contribution by exposing the execution by American military personnel of Vietnamese villagers. See Seymour M. Hersh, *Mylai 4: a report on the massacre and its aftermath* (New York: Random House, 1970)

⁵ See Müge Gürsöy Sökmen, ed., *World Tribunal on Iraq: making the case against the war* (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2008)

⁶ I have written blog posts on both of these initiatives. [Falk](#), “Israel and Apartheid? Reflections on the Russell Tribunal on Palestine Session in South Africa,” [Falk](#), “Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Tribunal: Bush and Blair Guilty.”

⁷ There is a need to clarify what is meant by ‘a jurisprudence of conscience’ beyond the narrow claim of this article that law should treat equally all offenders of norms of international criminal law. It is true that many who subjectively act on the basis of their conscience engage in behavior that from other societal perspectives constitute crimes. For instance, the assassination of doctors who perform abortions by right to life advocates offers one clear illustration.

German-Polish Reconciliation in Comparative Perspective: Lessons for Japan?¹

Lily Gardner Feldman

The Japanese Case and the Benefits of Comparison

In 2008 and 2009, a series of historical issues once again defined the public space of Japanese-South Korean and Japanese-Chinese relations: the revisionist essay of General Tamogami Toshio; Prime Minister Aso Taro's acknowledgement of the use of slave labor in his family's wartime mine; new flare-ups in the longstanding territorial disputes over the Senkaku/Diaoyu and Takeshima/Dokdo islets; ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine; and Japanese government approval of another amnesiac history textbook whitewashing Japan's World War II aggression.²

These developments could be viewed as another episode in the periodic eruption of history-related problems that have affected Japan's bilateral ties openly since 1982, with the anticipation that they will ebb and flow depending on domestic and international circumstances. Alternatively, these events also could be understood as contaminants that severely impede Japan's foreign policy, with the hope that now is a time to imagine fundamental change.

Hatoyama Yukio, the new Prime Minister of Japan, has chosen to entertain the possibility of a paradigm shift in how Japan deals with China and South Korea. In a June 2009 visit to the Republic of Korea as head of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), when elaborating on his vision for an East Asian or Asian-Pacific Community, Hatoyama drew on the Franco-German experience of creating a regional organization for embedding their relationship on foundations of permanent peace.

Since assuming office, Prime Minister Hatoyama's first visit to Seoul instead of Washington, D.C. (usually the first destination), and his pledge that neither he nor any of his cabinet members will visit the Yasukuni Shrine, have signaled his interest in Japan's Asian neighbors and his emphasis on a reconciliatory tone toward them.

In addition to the election victory of the Democratic Party of Japan, there are signs that a path toward genuine reconciliation in Northeast Asia might now be approachable. First, there is the reality of generational change, which means the physical disappearance of some conservative, nationalist, and right-wing forces opposed to reconciliation and the emergence of a cohort with no historical experience of World War II. Second, there is evidence of a growing differentiated view among some conservatives, for example the Yomiuri Shimbun's War Responsibility Reexamination Committee and Watanabe Tsuneo's criticism of ministerial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine.³ Third, public opinion surveys demonstrate that "the affirmative view of the war...is being rejected by the wider society."⁴

As scholars and practitioners have sought to understand the power of history issues in Asia and the possibilities for ending the logjam over reconciliation, in the last decade many have looked to Germany's experience with a foreign policy of reconciliation. The literature on Northeast Asian



Hatoyama (left) and Lee in Seoul, October 9, 2009

reconciliation that considers the German case is welcome, but it is limited in four significant ways: (1) Often the references to Germany are glancing or anecdotal.⁵ (2) Where greater elaboration does occur, it centers on single topics, such as memory, narratives, textbooks, education, or territorial disputes, largely ignoring the many other examples of Germany's non-governmental bilateral institutions and most of the governmental illustrations.⁶ (3) The most developed arguments for learning from the German case focus on either Franco-German or German-Polish relations, excluding the rich lessons provided by Germany's partnerships with Israel and the Czech Republic, the two cases where history issues in fact have been stickiest. (4) Even where there is a fuller treatment of Germany, the understanding of the German model of reconciliation is flawed, overestimating harmony and perfect peace as the goal and underestimating the considerable obstacles, crises, and vicissitudes that have accompanied these long processes of bilateral peace-making, and whose surmounting has permitted authentication of reconciliation. Particularly notable in Jennifer Lind's work is the assumption that there has been no backlash to the German government's confrontation with the past. While not as ferocious as the right-wing backlash in Japan, there was intense German opposition to government and societal reconciliation behavior on a variety of occasions. The key lesson to be learned from those German experiences is that eventually (?) political and moral vision by German leaders successfully challenged the opposition and thereby authenticated and strengthened reconciliation. Political and moral avoidance are not part of the toolbox of reconciliation.⁷

The following analysis of German-Polish experience with reconciliation is useful for the Japanese case as it reveals both the persistence of historical issues and a robust institutionalization that can limit the past's explosive potential. It also refers to three other cases of reconciliation in German foreign policy – relations with France, Israel and the Czech Republic – to demonstrate the pattern and richness of the German example. The essay concludes with a brief review of the Japanese case under Prime Minister Hatoyama. Comparison is utilized here as an analytical framework and as a clarifier of choices with keen awareness that simple replication is neither desirable nor possible for the Japanese situation. Even when there are inevitable systemic and political culture differences, comparison can sharpen the contours of debate and illuminate policy preferences. Thomas Berger alerts us to three key differences between Germany and Japan: in historical experiences; in allied involvement in shaping new narratives; and in the international/regional settings in which the two countries evolved from pariah status after World War II.⁸ Yet, as he points out, the two countries face the same challenge of confronting the indelibility of the past at a time when history issues are high on the global agenda. At a time when Japan shows signs of a political will and commitment to grapple with the past, Germany can provide an important guide for the opportunities and hurdles etched in the long, arduous and necessary process of reconciliation.

The Significance of the Polish Case

I have a maximal, "thick" definition of reconciliation that has also been called "structural." By "reconciliation" I mean the process of building long-term peace and cooperation between former enemies through bilateral institutions and relationships across governments and societies. Reconciliation involves the development of friendship, trust, empathy and magnanimity. It involves both ethical and emotional dimensions and practical and material aspects. In fact, two German words, according to Polish analyst Artur Hajnicz, embrace the full meaning of reconciliation: *Versöhnung* and *Aussöhnung*.⁹ Germany's pursuit of reconciliation has

consistently reflected both meanings, melding moral imperative with pragmatic interest. This concept of reconciliation does not infuse peace with a vision of harmony and tension-free coexistence, but rather integrates differences between peoples. Productive contention about history in a shared and cooperative framework for identifying and softening (but not eliminating) divergence is a more realistic goal than perfect peace. Authentication of reconciliation thus emerges from challenge.

The sense of reconciliation used here for the German-Polish relationship accords with the characterizations of Marek Prawda - reconciliation means the management of diversity in a cooperative framework; of Wladyslaw Bartoszewski – reconciliation incorporates squabbles within a family; and of Dieter Bingen - reconciliation means a community of fate that involves vicissitudes.¹⁰ Reconciliation is a long and difficult process, as German chancellor Willy Brandt noted when writing about German-Polish reconciliation in 1976: “The soil in which reconciliation could flourish required careful spadework.”¹¹ Germany’s first chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, had also used a gardening metaphor when speaking of Franco-German reconciliation and the 1963 friendship treaty between the two countries: “This friendship between France and Germany is like a rose that will always have buds and flowers,” and he added “thorns.”¹² It is this dual character of abundant blooms and sharp points that is at the heart of my understanding of reconciliation.

In outlining my framework of reconciliation, I try to answer the basic question of whether German-Polish relations are durable, and therefore reparable, after the downturn in their relationship in the years 2000-2007 (particularly the last two years under Jaroslaw Kaczynski as Prime Minister), or whether they were permanently damaged. The downturn was real, but it has to be considered against the backdrop of the accumulated relationship built over forty years and against the reality of less public, stable and positive institutional relations at both the governmental and societal levels. My approach is to see relations both horizontally (over time) and vertically (across levels). In many respects, the dimensions of reconciliation evident in German-Polish relations can be identified also in Germany’s relations with France, Israel and the Czech Republic.

The Four Dimensions of Reconciliation

In reconciliation, the mix of pragmatism and morality as motives differs depending on history, leadership, institutions and international context, that is the political dynamics of the process. I will address these four dimensions in the German-Polish case and refer to findings from the other cases. Using the four factors permits a full panorama of the relationship rather than a snap-shot.

History

In the recasting of relations after conflict, there are three sequential factors which may take the form of stages relating to history: the past as stimulus, the acknowledgement of grievances, and the past as present. Looking at “History” in this nuanced sense gives us a greater capacity to situate contemporary German-Polish relations.

The Past as Stimulus

In the Franco-German and German-Israeli cases, the French and Israeli governments were initially very reluctant to deal with Germany because of the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust. These attitudes changed quite quickly, beginning around 1950, and there was a

willingness to engage on both sides using moral arguments, as a direct response to the past. There was a similar reticence in Poland, due to the nature of the Nazi crimes. In all three cases, one can describe the starting position as one of enmity. Due to the Cold War, governmental action initiating a process of reconciliation occurred much later in the Polish case, coming only with détente in the 1970s, and even later in the German-Czech case, after 1989.

Religious organizations in society played an important role in lubricating the government process in the cases of France and Israel, just as they did in the German-Polish case in the 1950s and 1960s, as acknowledged by government leaders. As with France and Israel, religious efforts began early in Poland. As with France, in the Polish case it was both Protestant and Catholic actors who led the way, as would be the case much later in the German-Czech example, after 1989. In the German-Israeli case, spiritual initiatives transcended religions, for example the Societies for Christian-Jewish Cooperation (*Gesellschaften für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit*) and the Protestant-backed Peace with Israel (*Friede mit Israel*) movement.

Acknowledgment of Grievances

The second stage of history's shaping role in reconciliation, Germany's acknowledgment of grievances, involved converting the affective, moral component into pragmatic and material needs and formal political commitment. In the Polish case, as with France, Israel and the Czech Republic, the acknowledgment entailed the language referring to historical issues in bilateral treaties and in major statements as well as symbolic expressions of reconciliation. For example, the December 1970 Treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the People's Republic of Poland on the Basis for Normalizing Their Relations acknowledged Poland as "the first victim" of a murderous World War II and recognized the Oder-Neisse line as Poland's western border, albeit *de facto* and not *de jure*.¹³

Other agreements recognizing historical grievances followed: 1972 diplomatic relations; 1990 Border Treaty; 1991 Good Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation Treaty; 1972, 1975 and 1991 compensation payments (without calling them restitution to individuals or reparations to the state); 2000 agreement on slave and forced labor (with Poland providing roughly one quarter of the recipients and receiving approximately one quarter of the funds). The Polish case demonstrates that some issues of history can be frozen and revived only years later, mirroring the German-Israeli case; for example, it was only in 1965, thirteen years after the 1952 Reparations Agreement, that diplomatic relations were concluded between Germany and Israel. In the Czech case, victims of Nazism received their first compensation from Germany only in 1997.



The 1970 Warsaw Treaty between Germany and Poland settled outstanding border issues with the Oder-Neisse line

With respect to statements and symbolic events, we should note their appearance before and after 1989. Before 1989 there were at least ten instances in the Polish case, including the 1958 speech at Warsaw university by Carlo Schmid, a key Social Democratic leader, who was also involved in reconciliation with France and Israel; Brandt's 1970 kneeling at the memorial for the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; and the 1981 "Package Initiative" (*Paket-Initiative*) through which ordinary

Germans demonstrated their help for Polish society after the promulgation of martial law. There were also ten “firsts” after 1989, including the November 1989 joint mass by Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Helmut Kohl in Krzyzowa/Kreisau; the first speech of a German president, Roman Herzog, for the fiftieth anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising in 1994; the first speech of a Polish Foreign Minister, Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, to the German parliament in April 1995; the first speech of a German president, Johannes Rau, to the Sejm in 2004. There are similar examples from Germany’s relations with France, Israel and the Czech Republic: treaties, agreements, statements, symbolic acts that acknowledged past misdeeds, memorialized historical events or asserted a fresh start in relations compared to the past.

Positive manifestations do not preclude missteps such as Chancellor Kohl’s first choice of location for the joint mass with Prime Minister Mazowiecki: Gora Swietej Anny (Annaberg, as it is known in German), which was vigorously rejected by Poles for the Nazis had memorialized there the Germans killed during the Polish uprisings of 1920-21. This faux pas was reminiscent of the German-Israeli case: In 1971, the German government opened its first cultural week in Israel on the anniversary of Kristallnacht.

The Past as Present

The third expression of history’s importance for reconciliation has two main features: (1) debates about the past, which can be divisive but necessary to authenticate the relationship; and (2) affirmative commitments in joint efforts to confront the past. The past is neither forgotten nor represents a mere footnote; rather it is a “productive irritant” to be confronted constantly. Regarding the debates, there are the three familiar historical issues that have separated Germans and Poles in the period 2000-2007: the Center against Expulsion (*Vertreibungszentrum*) first proposed by Erika Steinbach (Christian Democratic Union Bundestag member and president of the Federation of Expellees) and to be created in Berlin with official approval; restitution and compensation claims initiated by the Prussian Claims Society (*Preußische Treuhand*) that provoked the Polish Sejm claim for reparations from Germany to the Polish state; and the return or restitution of confiscated, looted and displaced cultural assets.

Despite many heated debates in society and on the part of politicians, the first and second issues do seem susceptible to resolution by the two governments. Even under the last (Jaroslaw Kaczynski) Polish government, there were bilateral consultations on the Expulsion Center, and a German commitment to Europeanize the subject matter. With the new Donald Tusk government, there seems to be acceptance of the reality of the Center combined with a German-Polish agreement to work collaboratively on joint historical projects such as the exchange of exhibitions and the creation of a World War II museum in Danzig. Yet, the past does not disappear completely, for example in the contentious debate about membership of the board that will oversee the creation of the Expulsion Center.

On the issue of restitution and reparations, in the Schroeder government there were joint German-Polish statements and actions rejecting the Prussian Claims Society’s initiatives and the Sejm’s counter response. Even though Chancellor Angela Merkel rejected Prime Minister Kaczynski’s October 2006 proposal for the mutual relinquishment of claims (the so-called “zero option”), she has repeatedly come out against any German claims for compensation from Poland, most recently during Tusk’s trip to Berlin in December 2007.

The art question seems to be the thorniest in terms of resolution, with entrenched positions on both sides, and German observers labeling cultural property in Poland the “last German prisoners of war.”¹⁴ In 2006, Klaus Ziemer, director of the German Historical Institute in Warsaw, proposed that governments draw on the experience of deliberations between German and Polish art historians who together have effected a paradigm shift by developing the concept of “common cultural legacy” (*ein gemeinsames Kulturerbe*) for sharing rather than a national, sovereign focus.

The “return of the past” has also been evident in German-Czech relations: the property claims of Sudeten Germans; their call for rescission of the immediate postwar Benes Decrees and related laws that permitted expropriation and exonerated Czech excesses in the expulsion of Sudeten Germans from Czechoslovakia; the prolonged German unwillingness to provide restitution to Czech victims of Nazism; and the planned Expulsion Center in Berlin. In the case of Israel, the past has also returned, both in the statements of the German literary figure Martin Walser about the oppressive obligation to memorialize the Holocaust, and in anti-Semitic statements of the mainstream German politicians Jürgen Möllemann (FDP) and Martin Hohmann (CDU). Like Polish leaders, Israeli leaders have warned Germans not to confuse victims and perpetrators. Concerning anti-Semitism in Germany, while the Israeli government has expressed concern, as Germany’s partner in reconciliation it has also lauded the German government’s efforts to combat this phenomenon. There are also recent, outstanding restitution issues for some citizens of Israel, which the German government has refused to recognize. We should note, however, that Germany has paid 62 billion Euros in total restitution and reparations payments since 1952 (about one third to individual Israelis and the state of Israel). Even in Franco-German relations, where the past has played a lesser role than in the cases of Poland, Israel and the Czech Republic, there was significant concern over President Jacques Chirac’s 2004 invitation to Schröder to attend the commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of D-Day.



Chirac, Schröder and Blair at D-Day Ceremony

The second set of activities dealing on a regular basis with the past, but in an affirmative way, are the actions of various civil society organizations. There are too many to enumerate, but we can identify three that are present in the Polish case and across the other three cases: the bilateral textbook commission, the Action Reconciliation/Service for Peace (*Aktion Sühnezeichen/Friedensdienste*) and the German Historical Institute. Neither Israel nor the Czech Republic has the latter in formal terms, but they do have some equivalent: the German-Czech Historians Commission (*Deutsch-Tschechische Historikerkommission*) and the Institutes of

German History in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. These three organizations in all cases are linked in their goals (education about the past; inculcation of a “culture of remembrance” - *Erinnerungskultur*), means (meetings, publications) nature of history (broad conception but with a focus also on World War II and the Holocaust) and effect (creation of bilateral networks; successor generations; and a model for other international dyads).

Leadership

The second factor determining reconciliation is leadership. In relations of reconciliation, leadership has to be visionary, willing to overcome domestic opposition, and capable of creating leadership duos, often based on personal chemistry with political leaders in the other country, and often spanning ideological lines. In the Franco-German and German-Israeli reconciliation this happened early on with Adenauer's special relationship with de Gaulle and with Ben-Gurion, but has continued throughout the life of the relationships (Schmidt-Giscard; Kohl-Mitterrand; Schröder-Chirac) (Brandt-Meir; Strauss-Peres, Fischer-Sharon, Merkel-Olmert). The close personal relationship between Vaclav Havel and Richard von Weizsäcker is often mentioned in the German-Czech case, as is the personal link between Schröder and Czech Prime Minister Spidla. Merkel's time as a student in Prague, and her ability to speak Czech, contributed to the personal connections she has developed to Czech leaders. In all of these cases, personal ties helped ease difficult political relations.

Unlike in the French and Israeli cases, but similar to the Czech case, during the early years of the Cold War, what Helmut Schmidt described as the "formal" impersonal diplomacy of communism made it difficult to develop friendly relations between German and Polish leaders, but it was not impossible, as the personal ties between Helmut Schmidt and Edward Gierek demonstrated.

As an East German who grew up in the German Democratic Republic near the Polish border, Angela Merkel has been unique among German chancellors in her ability to connect with Polish leaders on a personal level. Interaction with the new Polish Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz during her December 2005 trip to Warsaw was aided by the fact that both leaders were physicists by training, and that she recognized the personal dimension in all aspects of politics. When relations were tense between Germany and Poland in spring 2007 and needed redirection, both sides sought to develop a positive personal chemistry between Chancellor Merkel and President Lech Kaczynski. With the new Polish government in fall 2007, there was the sense, later borne out, that the long-standing personal connection (since the early 1990s) between Merkel and Donald Tusk would contribute to the airing and resolution of bilateral and EU differences.

Institutions

Relations of reconciliation are distinguished by a very high degree of bilateral institutionalization at both the societal and governmental levels. The Franco-German tandem, dating from the 1963 Elysée Treaty, is the best known example, but the German-Israeli relationship is a close second, and German-Polish ties also display significant dimensions of institutionalization at both levels. The German-Czech case is the least institutionalized, in part due to the hermetically-sealed nature of Czechoslovak communism after 1968.

Societal Organizations

The plethora of societal connections between Germany and Poland are quite well-known, but five features that cross the four cases bear emphasis: (1) The institutions are not ad hoc, but exist with regularity over time and involve regeneration; (2) they span every area of societal life from culture to economics, from science to trade unions, from sports encounters to religious organizations, from sister cities to youth exchange, from German political foundations to

individual party ties, from friendship associations to academic connections; (3) they often have as patrons government or former government officials; (4) they maintain independent agendas, even when they receive government funding; and (5) they show solidarity with the bilateral partner in times of official crisis. As in the French and Israeli cases, the Polish-German societal connections predated official relations.

A sixth characteristic of societal organizations in reconciliation relates to their relationships to governments. There are four distinct roles that societal actors can play:

- (1) Catalysts, where they provide the initial stimulus for official relations (e.g., lay and church hierarchy in the Polish and French cases; economic actors in the Polish and Israeli cases; academic and student connections in the Polish and Israeli cases; dissidents in the Polish and Czech cases).
- (2) Complements, where they augment official behavior on a daily basis (much of the societal activity in the Polish, French, Israeli and Czech cases).
- (3) Conduits, where they perform tasks, e.g. dealing with political oppositions, that officialdom cannot always do. Here we see the German political foundations in the Polish case (offices after 1989) and in the other three country cases with similar goals (confrontation with the past – *Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit*; European integration; comparative public policy), means (meetings, exchanges, publications) and outcomes. In the Polish and Czech cases, there was the additional goal of democratization. In the Polish case, before 1989 the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (in the 1970s) and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (after 1982) had contacts that were useful to their German parties in power.
- (4) Competitors, where societal actors oppose official behavior (German expellee attitudes regarding the Oder-Neisse border in the 1960s and 1970s; the activity of German non-governmental actors during the emergence of Solidarnosc; the German expellee calls from 2000 on for a Center Against Expulsion). In all three Polish cases, the non-governmental actors influenced governments either in the short-term or the long-term. Recent examples of competition are present in the other country cases, for example the German media criticism of Israel during the second intifada in the Middle East when the German government showed solidarity with Israel; the opposition of the Sudetendeutsche Expellee Association (*Sudetendeutsche Landsmannschaft*) to the German government's strong support of Czech membership in the EU).

Governmental Institutions

As in Franco-German and German-Israeli relations, the connections between German and Polish societal actors dominated until the first major official breakthrough, in 1970, although there were governmental interactions and institutions in economics beforehand, echoing the priority given to this area in Germany's relations with Israel (Reparations Agreement 1952) and with France (European Coal and Steel Community 1952). Like the other three cases, German-Polish institutional ties evolved gradually. There have been three main stages of institutional developments: 1970-1989 in which the new legal framework of the 1970 treaty produced new institutions, but in a circumscribed way due to the reality of communism in Poland; 1989-2000, the "golden years" of phenomenal bilateral growth in institutions following the 1989 agreements and the 1991 treaty on the heels of the Cold War's end;¹⁵ and (3) 2000-2007 when the

relationship was severely tested by differences between the two governments but institutional developments remained stable.

As with Franco-German and German-Israeli relations and even in the more infant German-Czech partnership, the first hallmark of reconciliation is institutionalization across all policy fields: defense, economics, science and technology, the environment, law, transportation. In the Polish case, as in the French and Czech cases, there is the added dimension of cross-border cooperation. Secondly, parallel to Franco-German and German-Israeli relations, the first period of German-Polish institutionalization did not witness massive proliferation, which then did take place in the second period. As a third feature of institutionalization, there is the creation and realization of a framework for regular government-to-government consultations and visits. As with Franco-German and German-Israeli relations, there are also joint cabinet meetings. German-Polish institutionalization has been deliberately patterned after the Franco-German case.

My focus here is on the third German-Polish period, labeled as “frosty” or an “ice age” from 2000-2007,¹⁶ beginning with Erika Steinbach’s initiative for a Center Against Expulsion and continuing with the installation in Poland of the Kaczynski twins. The latter introduced into officialdom a heavy dose of populist nationalism that meant frequent public criticisms of Germany over history, often in response to societal actors in Germany, such as the Prussian Claims Society, and sometimes in response to German government initiatives, for example the German-Russian gas pipeline agreement between Gerhard Schröder and Vladimir Putin.

Analysts differ over whether this period between 2005-2007 constituted a defining moment for ties, moving them away permanently from partnership, or whether this was a temporary breakdown in an otherwise solid relationship of reconciliation. Observers who emphasize the ingrained nature of differences see only ritual in the relationship. Those who believe that the process of reconciliation has not been irretrievably interrupted emphasize the strength of societal ties, and the blending of interests and values that join Poland and Germany. As in German-Israeli, Franco-German and German-Czech relations, reconciliation is occasionally punctuated by crisis. The test of reconciliation is the ability to weather such periods.

The view advanced here is one of optimism for German-Polish relations, where reconciliation’s robustness is borne out by three developments in the period 2000-2007: the continuity and purpose of bilateral visits; the style and substance of statements about the relationship; and the nature of proposed solutions to disputes.

Continuity and Purpose. With the exception of Lech Kaczynski’s June 2006 cancellation of a Weimar Triangle (Germany, France and Poland) meeting after he was lampooned by the German paper *die tageszeitung*, there was a regular exchange of visits at the level of heads of government and state, including President Köhler (August 2005 and May 2006), Chancellor Merkel (December 2005 and March 2007), President Lech Kaczynski (March 2006) and Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski (October 2006). There were also six joint meetings between the two cabinets in the period 2000 and 2006, as well as frequent meetings of the defense ministers and foreign ministers. The uniform purpose, even on the Polish side, was to “improve” and “deepen” the relationship.¹⁷

Style and Substance. The German government used the occasion of visits to be non-confrontational and patient in style, with the goal of not inflaming relations. Polish leaders during visits also tried to be less confrontational than on other occasions, reprising a German

emphasis on the need for openness, honesty and a constructive approach to differences.¹⁸ The sober and pragmatic style of Germany in these visits was accompanied by references to the substance of relations as a “partnership” denoted by “trust” and “friendship”, as well as a sensitivity to the “dark chapters” of German history, indirectly elevating the moral dimension of ties, quite similar to the characterization of German-Israeli and Franco-German relations in their mature stage.¹⁹

Solutions to Disputes. Institutional responses to problems in German-Polish relations took two forms: the establishment of a broad framework to help guide relations, and the creation of issue-specific mechanisms. Already in late 2004 (taking effect in 2005), there were two major responses to the difficulties in relations surrounding the reparations and restitution issue: the appointment in the German and Polish foreign ministries of Coordinators for German-Polish Societal and Cross-Border Cooperation, and the announcement of the German-Polish Year under the patronage of the German and Polish presidents. These choices reminded one of the developments in Franco-German relations with the inauguration of the Blaesheim Process of even more regular official meetings (following the Franco-German discord at the 2000 EU Nice summit on new decision-making rules) and the creation of a second level of coordinators (as part of the 40th anniversary of the Elysée treaty in 2003). Issue-specific consultation mechanisms in German-Polish relations included the working group on energy and the dialogue between the German Minister of State for Culture and the Polish Culture Minister over the Center for Expulsion.

Finally, beyond the highly public institutional responses to general and specific problems, the optimistic scenario would point to the quotidian, detailed and often quiet policy cooperation between 2000 and 2007 in three policy arenas: cross-border activity, the environment and defense.

International Context

“International Context” covers both the larger global setting (relations with the US, with Russia and NATO) and the specific regional framework of the EU. On the issue of relations with the US and Russia, Germany and Poland continued to disagree over the German-Russian gas pipeline, over US policy in Iraq and over missile defense (before the Russian invasion of Georgia), although the Tusk government is looking for a détente with Russia and for less of a lock-step with the US. Other ties of reconciliation have tolerated well such differences, for example concerning the US in German-Israeli relations and concerning Russia in German-Czech relations. NATO has constituted an important framework within which German-Czech and German-Polish close military ties have evolved, both before membership in the Partnership for Peace and since. At the same time, the two East European countries have differed with Germany over NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine.

The dominant international framework for reconciliation has been the EU, and here again we can identify the dualities that have marked the other three factors of reconciliation we have considered so far. Similar to the case of Israel’s Free Trade Agreement, Association Agreement and Action Plan with the EU, Germany has been the key advocate for Poland (and the Czech Republic) in every step towards membership. Yet, the reality of Poland’s EU membership has revealed differences with Germany over the budget, constitutional questions and the climate and energy package. All three issues were resolved with Germany extending itself beyond the regular, formal negotiations in order to secure an agreement with Poland. We should remember

that divergence does not have to be debilitating. In the case of the Franco-German pair in the EU, research has shown that the larger the initial policy divergence, the greater the ultimate jointness and influence, for example on economic and monetary union and common foreign and security policy.²⁰ There is barely an economic or foreign policy arena in the EU in which France and Germany have not floated joint proposals. A growing sense of common purpose can be seen in the German-Polish efforts toward democratization in Ukraine (e.g., the joint visit of the German and Polish foreign ministers to Kiev) and towards the EU's Eastern Partnership (with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine).

There is an additional point that leads one to long-term optimism concerning the German-Polish dyad in the EU. As in the bilateral relationship, divergence is necessary to authenticate the relationship. By asserting itself in contentious policy debates, Poland feels it is converting into fact, even if tentatively, the theoretical formula of equality of rights and responsibilities of all EU member-states.²¹ As with France, the Polish sense of greater structural symmetry between Germany and Poland is an important ingredient of reconciliation.

Conclusion

This essay has provided the main contours of German-Polish reconciliation and of its navigation of treacherous history issues; and has indicated that similar features define Germany's other reconciliations, notably those with France, Israel and the Czech Republic. While the Japanese case is clearly in its infancy, a sketch of Japan's new reconciliation thinking and tentative practice is worthwhile along the four dimensions outlined at the beginning of the German case. Without doubt, the process in Northeast Asia will be long and difficult, requiring extreme patience on the part of governments and societies in an environment of in-grown skepticism and deep tradition. Yet as the German case demonstrates, small initial steps can yield to larger strides even when "many stones are scattered on the path" of reconciliation.²² Moreover, Sino-Japanese and Japanese-South Korean relations are not starting from square one: there are already powerful economic and financial links and vibrant ties in popular culture.

History

The new Japanese government has expressed its intention to be pro-active regarding the past, as in Prime Minister Hatoyama's statement to the South Korean President during a September 2009 meeting at the UN: "The new Democratic Party of Japan has the courage to face up to history."²³ Foreign Minister Okada repeated this perspective in his commitment to the 1995 statement by Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi apology for Japan's past behavior in the region. In the February 2010 report of a joint Sino-Japanese history study, endorsed by the two governments, for the first time Japan agreed to use "aggression" to characterize its behavior toward China from 1937 to 1945.²⁴ While there was no agreement about the number of Chinese killed in the 1937 Nanjing Massacre, the study was based on a common periodization. In many ways, it is an auspicious start that could learn useful lessons from the way the German-Czech Historians Commission has proceeded, including its willingness to entertain differing perspectives on history within a framework of ongoing dialogue and engagement. Similarly, in a February 2010 visit to South Korea Foreign Minister Okada expressed his regret for the Japanese occupation of Korea.²⁵

The reasoning of Prime Minister Hatoyama and Foreign Minister Okada appears both philosophical - as outlined below - and pragmatic - the need for a new approach to an expansive

China. Three specific historical disputes still clog the road to reconciliation: rights and demands of victims' groups, including Korean and Chinese sex slaves ("comfort women") and slave laborers; textbook issues; and territorial disputes.

On the first issue, as an opposition party since 2000, together with the Social Democratic Party and the Communist Party, the DPJ initiated repeatedly bills in the Diet to address the emotional and material needs of "comfort women." Yet, the Japanese legal system has proved unbending in its rejection of Korean and Chinese victims' claims, arguing that the compensation issue had been made moot by post-war Sino-Japanese (Joint Statement) and Japanese-South Korean (1965 treaty) agreements.²⁶

Whether apology will now take the form the victims require – a resolution of the Diet, not just of the government – is unclear, but two aspects of the German slave labor case are relevant. First, the passage of time (six decades for Germany) mitigates neither the victims' pain nor the perpetrators' responsibility for action. Second, pragmatic motives (American lawsuits) had to be joined by moral imperative (President Rau's apology and request for forgiveness) to make the German slave labor negotiations successful. The general issue of apology appears to dominate the debate about appropriate Japanese initiatives. In all four German cases, the government faced significant domestic opposition to reconciliation overtures, including acknowledgement of grievances (a form of apology), yet persevered as an affirmation of the genuine desire for reconciliation without major domestic consequence. Germany has also demonstrated that legal formalities do not preclude governments from making extra-legal political exceptions: first in its decision in the 1950s to initiate reparations negotiations with Israel, a country that did not exist at the time of the Holocaust; and second in the "special funds" it created on various occasions for individual Jewish victims who were excluded from German domestic compensation legislation.

Regarding the history textbook issue, Japanese textbook characterization of the past continues to divide Japan and her neighbors, although Prime Minister Hatoyama has tried to moderate the tone.²⁷ At the same time, the new Japanese Foreign Minister has been quick to suggest a government-sanctioned common history textbook among Japan, South Korea and China to build on the existing trilateral work of scholars. Critics of the idea point to the fact that it took six decades for France and Germany to write and use a government-sponsored common history book. What is overlooked is the fact that there were path-breaking achievements long before the book: the early creation of a Franco-German textbook commission and the conclusion already in 1951, shortly after the war, of a "Franco-German Agreement on Contentious Questions of European History." The commission periodically produces recommendations for the teaching of history and geography. The Franco-German experience was not unique: even during communism in Poland, the German-Polish textbook commission could be created and issue recommendations for teaching history as early as the 1970s. And similar commissions have produced results in the German-Israeli and German-Czech cases. While the product is important, the process of jointly confronting the past with the goal of airing differences, and not history's homogenization, is a fruitful end itself.

Territorial issues deeply divide governments and societies in Northeast Asia. Prime Minister Hatoyama has called for accelerating negotiations for a treaty that would make possible joint development of undersea resources between China and Japan, and sees the Dokdo/Takeshima islands as contested between Japan and South Korea (rather than belonging to Japan). However, observers are skeptical of any rapid movement on territorial disputes over either the

Senkaku/Diaoyu islands or the Dokdo/Takeshima islands, and, therefore, of the prospects for reconciliation in general. Again, the German-Polish case is instructive: it was not until German unification in 1990 that Germany recognized *de jure* the Oder-Neisse border with Poland, although it had been recognized *de facto* in 1970 as part of Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik. During the intervening twenty years, Germany and Poland were building important governmental and societal networks even as Poland's desire for *de jure* recognition of the border went unfulfilled.

A final dimension of "History" is the occurrence of symbolic events that can either propel or impair the chances of reconciliation. Past visits to the Yasukuni Shrine by Japanese Prime Ministers clearly disturbed China and South Korea. Hatoyama not only has promised not to make such visits, but acted vigorously on his commitment. When over fifty Japanese lawmakers visited the shrine for the annual fall festival in October 2009, no member of Hatoyama's cabinet participated. Another action of immense symbolic complexity is South Korean president Lee Myung-bak's invitation to Japanese Emperor Akihito to visit Seoul in 2010, the centennial of Japan's annexation of Korea. Similarly, there is the initiative for Prime Minister Hatoyama to visit Nanjing to apologize for the 1937 massacre and for Chinese President Hu subsequently to visit Hiroshima as an expression of Chinese peaceful aspirations.²⁸ Even if the visits do not ultimately materialize, the German cases suggest that the joint process of trying to fashion symbolic events can itself contribute to reconciliation.

Leadership

It is too soon to tell whether Hatoyama's new style of domestic politics prioritizing reconciliation in East Asia will succeed and how other East Asian leaders will respond with their own agendas, but we do know that his approach of emphasizing *yu-ai* (fraternity, friendliness) does color his foreign policy philosophy. It encompasses cooperation and mutual respect while recognizing differences.²⁹ Hatoyama specifically used the term to characterize his goals vis-à-vis China, including his call to view the East China Sea as a "sea of fraternity" rather than a "sea of conflict."³⁰ His leadership has also been demonstrated in the speed with which he has met with South Korean and Chinese leaders: at the UN in New York, in Seoul, in Beijing for trilateral meetings and in Thailand for the ASEAN-plus meetings – all within one month. South Korean and Chinese leaders are certainly looking to Japan for initiatives in reshaping relations.³¹ Noteworthy in the German cases was the reality that on a number of occasions it was leaders in the victim countries, for example Robert Schuman in France and Vaclav Havel in Czechoslovakia, who made overtures concerning reconciliation.

Institutions

The trilateral meeting among Japan, China and South Korea in Beijing on October 10, 2009 was only the second time the threesome had met outside the ASEAN-plus 3 meetings (the first was in December 2008 in Japan).

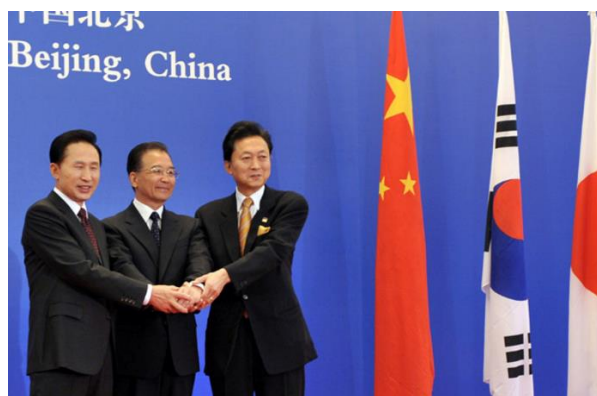
The joint statement that emerged gave a clear indication of intentions, even if the mechanisms will take time to fashion: There were agreements to “1) build mutual trust in the political field, 2) deepen economic cooperation taking full advantage of high complementarities of the three economies, 3) expand people-to-people exchanges, 4) develop regional and sub-regional cooperation, and 5) actively respond to global issues.” They also agreed to confront together “sensitive issues,” meaning the past.³² Three immediate challenges identified for continued deliberation by the triad are economic

cooperation, the environment, and North Korean de-nuclearization, all highly practical issues. The long-term perspective includes a plan for a free-trade area. The senior-level diplomatic dialogue, launched in 2007, then met in February 2010 to implement the Beijing summit’s conclusions. Additionally, South Korea is pushing for security to be part of trilateral deliberations. As they seek to develop trilateral cooperation, the Weimar Triangle, created among Germany, France, and Poland in 1991 (combining two sets of reconciliation), could furnish lessons in terms of sectors of cooperation, mechanisms, and barriers to exchange.

On the bilateral front, in the Sino-Japanese and Japanese-Korean relationships both high politics issues, such as defense and North Korea, and technical issues, such as economic cooperation, food safety and green technology, have been on the agenda of the numerous official and bureaucratic visits in the first six months of the Hatoyama government. Our Franco-German and German-Israeli reconciliation cases indicate the early priority to defense and economics, while the German-Polish and German-Czech examples point to the importance of economic and technical issues during communism and defense only after the end of the Cold War.

In his October 26, 2009 major policy address to the Diet, Prime Minister Hatoyama emphasized the active role of citizens and society in his new vision of politics. This initiative, if it bears fruit, could begin to counter the argument that German reconciliation’s central role for civil society cannot be replicated in the Japanese case where non-governmental actors have been anemic due to legal and financial strictures. Indeed, the role of non-governmental organizations are evident as Hatoyama reaches out to South Korea and China. The first China-Japan-Republic of Korea Business Summit was held in Beijing in October, highlighting the role the private sector can play in new commercial and trade connections. Prior to his trip to Beijing, the chairman of the Japan Business Federation impressed on Hatoyama the need for an intensification of economic relations with China, while protecting Japan’s intellectual property rights.

Just before Hatoyama’s visit to Seoul in October more than thirty Japanese civil society groups (including “comfort women” and slave labor representatives) welcomed the Prime Minister’s views on history, while repeating their demands for apology and compensation. At the end of October, the citizens’ group Japan Network on Wartime Sexual Violence Against Women reiterated their concerns in a meeting with DPJ Diet members. There, the DPJ’s Tsuji Megumi underlined the cost of inaction for Japanese plans for an East Asian Community: “If we don’t solve this problem, it would be impossible for Japan to speak out to East Asia on an equal footing.”³³ When Korean “comfort women” mounted their nine hundredth protest before the



Lee, Wen and Hatoyama meet in Beijing

Japanese Embassy in Seoul in January, Japanese civil society groups in Tokyo, Osaka and Fukuoka organized signature collection drives to support the victims' goals.³⁴

International Context

There is no clarity regarding the role the US might play in fledgling reconciliation efforts by the Japanese government due to the turmoil in the US-Japan relationship itself as Hatoyama calls for a more equal economic and security relationship, moves that were met with stern admonition during Secretary of Defense Robert Gates October, 2009 visit to Japan.³⁵ There is greater clarity about the new Japanese government's goal of pragmatic cooperation concerning the creation of a regional East Asian Community (EAC), even if the precise form remains elusive. According to Foreign Minister Okada, the US would not be part of the EAC, which has some American observers concerned while others view it as a vehicle to embed China in a way that serves American interests.³⁶ Relying specifically on the Franco-German model (the 1950 Schuman Plan) that led to the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952 and the European Economic Community in 1958, the proposal appears to involve an ASEAN plus 3 arrangement, but issues of wider membership remain unresolved. As plans for a regional organization evolve, Japan's new government should keep in mind that the novelty of the Franco-German model was the surrender of sovereignty by both countries, a *sui generis* departure in international relations. Rather than the supranational features of the current European Union, its intergovernmental dimensions are more relevant, as are the practices of other postwar economic intergovernmental organizations such as the European Free Trade Area. The European experience, while not fully replicable, does tell us that bilateral reconciliation and regional reconciliation go hand in hand. The same is surely true with respect to the three East Asian powers, China, Japan and South Korea, and could have important repercussions for relations with North Korea as well.

As the new Japanese government explores possibilities for reconciliation, it would behoove it to take from the German experience the insight that divergence, debate and dissension are a natural part of relations of reconciliation, and that crisis is necessary to test and authenticate the new relationship. Reconciliation is distinguished from lesser partnerships by its ability to manage differences in a cooperative framework. This view is clear in the words of Willy Brandt, writing about Franco-German reconciliation decades ago:

Bonn... [took] advantage of the... occasion to point out that the two nations' special circumstances would continue to yield differences of interest and opinion in many fields. Friendship did not connote a neglect of one's own interests or a lack of candor towards others.³⁷

In the end, then, reconciliation is about both realism and idealism, a fact Prime Minister Hatoyama seems to have recognized. Whether his notion of reconciliation resonates fully with China and South Korea remains to be seen.

Lily Gardner-Feldman is the Harry and Helen Gray Senior Fellow and Director of the Society, Culture & Politics Program at the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies/The Johns Hopkins University. She is the author of [Germany's Foreign Policy of Reconciliation: From Enmity to Amity](#), Rowman & Littlefield, 2012.

Notes

¹ This essay is based on a lecture on German-Polish relations given February 25, 2008 at the German Historical Institute in Warsaw, with sponsorship from the Center for International

Relations and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Warsaw. The ideas presented are drawn from the author's book *From Enmity to Amity*, forthcoming. Copyright: Lily Gardner Feldman 2010.

² On territorial disputes, see: [Reinhard Drifte](#), "Territorial Conflicts in the East China Sea – From Missed Opportunities to Negotiation Stalemate," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*. On Aso mining see: [Michael Bazzyler](#), "Japan Should Follow the International Trend and Face Its History of World War II Forced Labor," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*. On textbook issues, see: [Yoshiko Nozaki and Mark Selden](#), "Japanese Textbook Controversies, Nationalism and Historical Memory: Intra- and Inter-national Conflicts," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*.

³ On the Yomiuri project, see: ["Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Who is Responsible? The Yomiuri Project and the Enduring Legacy of the Asia-Pacific War,"](#) *The Asia-Pacific Journal*.

⁴ Sven Saaler, *Politics, Memory and Public Opinion. The History Textbook Controversy and Japanese Society* (Tokyo: Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien, 2005), 168. Phillip A. Seaton reaches a similar conclusion in *Japan's Contested Memories: The 'Memory Rifts' in Historical Consciousness of World War II* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

⁵ See, for example, Masaru Tamamoto, "After the Tsunami, How Can Japan Lead," *Far East Economic Review*, Jan/Feb 2005; James C. Hsiung, "Periscoping the Future: Will China and Japan Ever Be Like France and Germany?" in James C. Hsiung, ed., *China and Japan at Odds. Deciphering the Perpetual Conflict* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Linbo Jin, "Historical Disputes in Sino-Japanese Relations," paper presented to the Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies, Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 9 June 2009; Youngshik Bong, "Domestic Politics of Dokdo," paper presented to the conference "Dokdo, Takeshima, Liancourt Rocks: History, Territory, and Sovereignty in Northeast Asia," School of Advanced International Studies/Johns Hopkins University, Washington, D.C., 26 June 2009.

⁶ One of the earliest comparative examinations is Ernestine Schlant and J. Thomas Rimer, *Legacies and Ambiguities: Postwar Fiction and Culture in West Germany and Japan* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991). More recent publications include Takashi Inoguchi and Lyn Jackson, *Memories of War: The Second World War and Japanese Historical Memory in Comparative Perspective* (Tokyo: The United Nations University Press, 1998); Akiko Hashimoto, "Japanese and German Projects of Moral Recovery: Toward a New Understanding of War Memories in Defeated Nations," *Occasional Papers in Japanese Studies*, March 1999, Edwin O. Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies, Harvard University; Charles S. Maier, "Foreword" in Joshua A. Fogel, ed., *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography* (Berkeley: University of California, 2000); Sebastian Conrad, "Entangled Memories: Versions of the Past in Germany and Japan, 1945-2001," in *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 38 (1), 2003; Gi-Wook Shin, Soon-Won Park, and Daqing Yang, "Introduction"; and Andrew Horvat, "A Strong State, Weak Civil Society, and Cold War Geopolitics: Why Japan Lags Behind Europe in Confronting a Negative Past," in Gi-Wook Shin, Soon-Won Park, and Daqing Yang, eds., *Rethinking Historical Injustice and Reconciliation in Northeast Asia. The Korean Experience* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007); Thomas U. Berger, "A Model Penitent? German Historical Memory and Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective," paper presented to the 47th ISA Convention, San Diego, California, 23 March 2006; Thomas U. Berger, "Dealing with Difficult Pasts: Japan's 'History Problem' from a Theoretical and Comparative Perspective," in Kazuhiko Togo and Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, eds., *East Asia's Haunted Present: Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism* (Westport, Conn: Praeger Security

International, 2008); Julian Dierkes, *Postwar History Education in Japan and the Germans. Guilty Lessons* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010); Soon-Won Park, "History that Opens to the Future: the First Common History of Northeast Asia"; and Daniel Chirot, "Europe's Troubled World War II Memories: Are They That Different?" in Gi-Wook Shin and Daniel Sneider, eds., *Divided Memories: History Textbooks and the Wars in Asia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010 forthcoming).

⁷ On the German-Polish comparison, see Yinan He, *The Search for Reconciliation. Sino-Japanese and German-Polish Relations Since World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). On the Franco-German comparison, see Jennifer Lind, *Sorry States. Apologies in International Politics* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008). As suggested above, this work does not capture the complexity and ambiguity that have characterized the German case. A further comparative work that looks beyond memory and apology by considering the role of political leadership and NGOs is Yangmo Ku, "International Reconciliation in the Postwar Era, 1945-2005: A Comparative Study of Japan-ROK and Franco-German Relations," *Asian Perspective*, vol. 32, no. 3, 2008.

⁸ Thomas U. Berger, *Different Beds, Same Nightmare: The Politics of History in Germany and Japan*, AICGS Policy Report no. 39 (Washington, D.C.: The American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, 2009).

⁹ For the dual meaning, see: Artur Hajnicz, *Polens Wende und Deutschlands Vereinigung. Die Öffnung zur Normalität* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1995), pp. 142-61.

¹⁰ See Marek Prawda's statement when Ambassador to Sweden at the Stockholm International Forum Truth, Justice and Reconciliation, April 23-24, 2002 [here](#) (accessed December 15, 2002); the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung interview with Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, March 29, 2007 [here](#) (accessed April 17, 2007); Dieter Bingen, "Die deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen und die polnische Innenpolitik. Bilanz 15 Jahre nach der Unterzeichnung des Partnerschaftsvertrags," June 28, 2006, Hamburg University, Ringvorlesung "Osteuropa heute" [here](#) (accessed January 23, 2007).

¹¹ Willy Brandt, *People and Politics: The Years 1960-1975* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company: 1978), p. 181.

¹² For the text of the exchange between Adenauer and de Gaulle on the 1963 Franco-German friendship treaty, using the rose metaphor, see: André Passeron, *De Gaulle Parle 1962-1966* (Paris: Fayard, 1966), p. 341.

¹³ According to the 1945 Potsdam Agreement among the US, France, the UK and the Soviet Union, formal recognition of the border would have to await a settlement between the four powers and a united Germany.

¹⁴ Reinhard Müller, "Rückgabe von Beutekunst. Die letzten deutschen Kriegsgefangenen," *Frankfurter Allgemeine FAZ.NET*, July 26, 2007 [here](#). Konrad Schuller, "Streit um 'Beutekunst'. Goethe in Krakau," *Frankfurter Allgemeine FAZ.NET*, July 27, 2007 [here](#) (accessed January 8, 2008).

¹⁵ The term is Dieter Bingen's. See "Die deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen nach 1945," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 5-6/2005, January 31, 2005.

¹⁶ Thomas Roser, "Deutsch-polnische Beziehungen; Schwieriger Gast, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, October 30, 2006; *Spiegel Online*, "Merkel wünscht sich Freundschaft zu Polen," *Spiegel Online*, October 28, 2006.

¹⁷ See, for example, Jacques Schuster, "Polens Präsident verabschiedet sich mit Gesprächsangeboten aus Berlin," *Die Welt*, March 10, 2006; Sybille Korte, "Erste positive Signale nach Monaten der Abkühlung," *Agence France Presse*, October 27, 2006; Associated Press, "Merkel für bessere Zusammenarbeit mit Polen in der EU," *Associated Press*, October 28, 2006; Associated Press, "Steinmeier wirbt für Verbesserung von deutsch-polnischem Verhältnis," *Associated Press*, October 26, 2006.

¹⁸ Der Bundespräsident, "Tischrede von Bundespräsident Horst Köhler beim Abendessen zu Ehren des polnischen Präsidenten Lech Kaczynski und Frau Maria Kaczynski im Schloss Bellevue," March 8, 2006 [here](#) (accessed May 19, 2006); Agence France Presse, "Kaczynski: Gute Beziehungen wichtig für Polen und Deutschland," *Agence France Presse*, March 8, 2006; *General-Anzeiger (Bonn)*, "Kein Grund zur Sorge," *General-Anzeiger (Bonn)*, October 30, 2006.

¹⁹ Bundesregierung, "Nie wieder Politik zu Lasten unserer Nachbarn," December 2, 2005, [here](#) (accessed December 12, 2005); Bundeskanzlerin, "Looking ahead to the Future in German-Polish Relations," December 2, 2005 [here](#) (accessed January 17, 2006); *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, "Polen will Zwist mit Deutschland beilegen," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, March 9, 2006; Holger Schmale, "Der Charme des kleinen Mannes," *Berliner Zeitung*, March 31, 2006; Michael Fischer, "Neuer Ton in den deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen," *Associated Press*, October 30, 2006; Die Bundeskanzlerin, "Rede von Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel an der Universität Warschau," March 16, 2007 [here](#) (accessed March 20, 2007); *Associated Press*, "Merkel: Wir wollen freundschaftliches Verhältnis zu Polen," *Associated Press*, October 28, 2006.

²⁰ On the relationship between initial divergence on the one hand and ultimate jointness and influence on the other, see: Douglas Webber, ed., *The Franco-German Relationship in the European Union* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), particularly "Conclusions."

²¹ Interview with Janusz Reiter, former Polish ambassador to Germany, *Der Spiegel*, no. 2, January 7, 2008.

²² This is the title of a book by one of the important societal architects of German-Israeli reconciliation, Erich Lüth

²³ Quoted in *The Korea Herald*, September 25, 2009.

²⁴ China Daily, "Japan Admits War 'Act of Aggression,'" *China Daily*, February 2, 2010.

²⁵ The Japan Times, "Foreign Minister in Seoul," *The Japan Times*, February 14, 2010.

²⁶ BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, "China Blasts Japan Court Ruling on Compensation for Wartime Sex Slaves," *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, March 5, 2010; China Daily, "China Goads Japan for Quick Action on Sex Slaves," *China Daily*, March 6, 2010; Jung Sung-ki, "Tokyo urged to Compensate for 'Comfort Women,'" *Korea Times*, March 15, 2010; Korea Times, "Individual War Victims," *Korea Times*, March 15, 2010.

²⁷ BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, "South Korea Raps Japan's New Education Handbook on Disputed Islands," *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, December 25, 2009.

²⁸ BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, "Japan Seeks 'New Beginning' with South Korea in 2010 – Envoy," *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, January 28, 2010; Martin Fackler, "With Japan, U.S. May Be Losing Diplomatic Ground to China," *The New York Times*, January 24, 2010

²⁹ BBC Worldwide Monitoring, "Japan PM Interviewed on 'Enriching' Japan-China Ties," *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, October 9, 2009.

³⁰ Quoted in David McNeill, "New Japanese Prime Minister Aims to Spread a Little love Among Asian Rivals," *The Irish Times*, October 23, 2009.

³¹ Na Jeong-ju, "'Lee, Hatoyama Vow Constructive Ties,'" *Korea Times*, September 24, 2009; BBC Worldwide Monitoring, "China-Japan Ties Get Good Statr in Japan's New Government – Official," *BBC Worldwide Monitoring*, October 9, 2009.

³² The Korea Herald, "Korea, China, Japan," *The Korea Herald*, October 14, 2009.

³³ Quoted in Mariko Kato, "'Comfort Women' Bill Gets New Life," *The Japan Times*, October 29, 2009.

³⁴ Oh Young-jin, "Ex-'Comfort Women' To Hold 900th Protest," *Korea Times*, January 10, 2010.

³⁵ For an overview of US-Japan relations with the new Hatoyama government, see: Congressional Research Service, "Japan-U.S. Relations: Issues for Congress," *CRS Report for Congress*, 7-5700, November 25, 2009. See also: [Mark Beeson](#), "East Asian Regionalism and the End of the Asia-Pacific: After American Hegemony," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*; and [Mark Beeson](#), "The United States and East Asia: The Decline of Long-Distance Leadership," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*.

³⁶ G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan article, "A New Japan, a New Asia," *The New York Times*, January 22, 2010.

³⁷ Brandt, *People and Politics*, p. 129.

Japan's Historical Memory: Reconciliation with Asia

Kazuhiko Togo

Introduction

Historical issues haunt Japan. The world is facing a crisis, which may become a once in a century depression in the wake of Wall Street's financial meltdown and the subsequent recession throughout the world. Japan is no exception. At this time of crisis each country must show its resilience to alleviate immediate pain while implementing a long-term policy to strengthen the fundamentals of its economy and society. Japan is asked to come up with a powerful economic policy to overcome its crisis and contribute to global solutions. Barack Obama was elected president of the United States, and expectations are rising not only in the States but throughout the world that the U.S. will confront this challenge effectively. This is a golden opportunity for Japan because the fundamentals of Japan-US relations are solid and much of Obama's agenda coincides precisely with what the Japanese government has asserted for decades: the necessity for a sustainable global economy, emphasis on the environment, need for a long-term energy policy, serious concern about nuclear disarmament, cooperation through the United Nations and so on. Why not come up with creative ideas to attract the attention of Obama's new team and consolidate the alliance?

At a time when Japan needs to concentrate its energy on such urgent problems, Gen. Tamogami Toshio published a prize-winning thesis justifying pre-war Japanese wartime actions and claiming that Japan was a victim of Kuomintang and Soviet intrigues forcing the nation to go to war with the United States. Tamogami, the Air Self-Defense Force Chief-of-Staff, was immediately dismissed from the service, but because he was an officer of the highest rank the event left uncertainty whether the post-war Japanese Self Defense Forces have developed a balanced and appropriate perspective on the nation's past.



General Tamogami

Historical memory is a thorny issue in Japan where opinions are divided, and in particular, in recent years views from the right have become louder and more shrill in attacking the left. I argue, however, that there is a centrist view and that there is a need to be cognizant of it and to help consolidate it. The analysis which follows largely draws on my new book *Rekishi to Gaiko: Yasukuni-Ajia-Tokyosaiban (History and Foreign Policy: Yasukuni-Asia-The Tokyo Tribunal)*.

Historical memory in relation to Asia

In analyzing Japan's war memory in relation to Asia, the central feeling which I wanted to convey in this book was one of contrition generally shared by the Japanese of my generation. My generation did not participate in the war and most of us have no direct memory of war. But we recall vividly the destruction which led to Japan's defeat. In the process of post-war recovery from that destruction, we learned of information disclosed at the Tokyo Tribunal on past wrongdoings, including the Nanjing massacre, accounts of soldiers who came back from the front, particularly from China, speaking of atrocities they committed, [1] reports by Japanese journalists such as Honda Katsuichi who collected testimony from victimized Chinese in the 1970s, [2] and the publication of Morimura Seiichi's *Devil's Gluttony* (*Akuma no hoshoku*), a 1982 best seller describing the biological weapons experiments conducted by Unit 731.

The Nanjing massacre, which was disclosed during the Tokyo Tribunal, was heavily debated in the first half of the 1980's. The numbers of Chinese who perished in the massacre continued to be debated, but Japanese of my generation wanted to know what happened and to draw moral lessons from the incident. The following conclusion drawn by the veterans' organization Kaikosha well represents my generation's memory of that incident. After the heated textbook controversy in 1982, Kaikosha conducted its own research and concluded that there were at least 3,000 to 13,000 unlawful killings at Nanjing. This number was far less than those presented by some Japanese scholars, and the 300,000 figure given by the Chinese government, but in announcing its conclusion, Kaikosha made the following statement in the monthly journal *Kaiko* in March 1985:

We apologize deeply to the people of China. We say again, 13,000, and even our minimum figure of 3,000, is an astonishingly huge number. We began our work of checking the military history, knowing that we were not completely clean. But with this huge number, we simply have no words. Whatever the severity of war or specificity of war psychology, we just lose words faced with this mass illegal killing. As those associated with the prewar military, we apologize deeply to the people of China. It was truly a regrettable act of barbarity.



Nanjing Memorial: the iconic 300,000 figure

Many of my generation remember Nanjing with this spirit of contrition. The numbers presented diverge from other sources, but for many the fundamental issue was not the numbers but the fact that large-scale atrocities were committed. In this way the issue has been etched in historical

memory to be transmitted to future generations with a sense of contrition and questioning: how could we have done this?

During the first half of the 1990's serious talks were conducted between the Japanese and South Korean governments on the issue of the comfort women. Recognition of the physical and spiritual pain of these women led to the 1993 Kono Statement, which acknowledged government involvement, accepted Japanese responsibility, and expressed apology and determination to seek ways of making concrete the nation's apology and atonement. The statement became the basis for the activities of the Asian Women's Fund from 1995 to apologize, provide financial compensation, and atone individually to former comfort women. [3]



Asian Women's Fund digital museum

The first half of the 1990's was also the period when apologies to Korea and China were most powerfully expressed by the Japanese side. The apology to Korea was most vividly expressed during President Roh Tae Woo's visit to Japan in 1990. In relation to China, Emperor Akihito expressed in his visit to China in 1992 his "deep sorrow" regarding the "period when our country created tremendous suffering to the people of China." The series of apologies culminated in Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi's comprehensive statement of 1995. The key paragraph reads as follows:

"During a certain period in the not too distant past, Japan, following a mistaken national policy, advanced along the road to war, only to ensnare the Japanese people in a fateful crisis, and, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations. In the hope that no such mistake be made in the future, I regard, in a spirit of humility, these irrefutable facts of history, and express here once again my feelings of deep remorse and state my heartfelt apology. Allow me also to express my feelings of profound mourning for all victims, both at home and abroad, of that history."

From the time of its pronouncement, the weight of this statement has been undermined by rebukes from conservative politicians and opinion leaders. But this statement had much greater importance than has been appreciated, particularly by analysts and opinion leaders on Japan relying on English texts. Above all, the wording and the spirit of this statement reflect well the feeling of the Japanese of my generation who recognize that something was profoundly wrong in the behavior of our soldiers in China acting so inhumanly. It also reflects our historical understanding that policies of rigorous Japanization in Korea hurt deeply the feeling of Koreans. The Murayama Statement was adopted by cabinet decision, which is the highest format of government decision making. Furthermore, as a member of the Japanese foreign ministry until 2002, I personally witnessed vividly that the statement had real life meaning, pointing the way in reconciliation talks with Great Britain, Korea and China in 1998 and the Netherlands in 2000. Prime Minister Koizumi expressed historical contrition by practically confirming the Murayama statement word for word at the Asia-African leaders' meeting at Bandung in 2005 with added

emphasis on the record of post-war pacifism in Japan. The statement remains the official position of the Japanese government.



Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi

Current situation and immediate task

Japan's centrist position has been subjected to criticisms both by the left and the right. On Nanjing, the number of victims shown by Kaikosha was far less than some scholars maintained, and less than ten percent of the official number of 300,000 insisted on by the Chinese government. On comfort women, the centrist position under the Kono Statement was attacked from the left for its failure to accept legal responsibility and because atonement was provided by funding from private citizens rather than by taxpayers' money. Even when taxpayers' money was used, budgetary expenditures were made through the appropriation of humanitarian-medical assistance, hence lacking the structure of contrition. The Murayama Statement was criticized on the grounds that the expressions were too vague, failing to accept legal responsibility for Japan's wars of aggression from the Meiji to the end of World War II. It was said to be no more than the result of careful "bureaucratic writing" devoid of personal spontaneity, in contrast to Willy Brandt's "kneeling down" at the Warsaw Ghetto in 1970. Koizumi's Bandung statement, moreover, was quickly overshadowed by his yearly Yasukuni visits and is scarcely remembered.

But recently the right in Japan has been more vocal than the left in trying to bring down the above-mentioned centrist position. They constitute a powerful minority. There are those who argue that no "massacre" took place in Nanjing and that the perception of atrocities was generated primarily by the Kuomintang's war propaganda. The Kono Statement was heavily criticized in the 1990's on the basis that it led to a fundamental misconception of the comfort station as a "rape center." The Murayama Statement was rebuked as a symbol of "self negation" of pre-war honor and a distortion of history. Koizumi's historical apology was criticized as harshly as Murayama's by several prominent scholars from the right.

All the more because the centrist position rests on a still fragile foundation, the fundamental need remains for Japan to make further efforts to consolidate that position. One might argue that a policy to perpetuate memories of the Nanjing massacre in the form of war museums in China is no way to achieve reconciliation, but there is a need to make Kaikosha's position better known among all those who are interested in this issue, Japanese or otherwise. One may not accept the

view that the comfort station was a rape center, but what comes first is the sympathy and contrition directed to the women who suffered there. The April 2007 Supreme Court verdict relieving the state of legal responsibility for pre-war forced labor and the comfort stations is a genuine opportunity for the state to revive and extend on a moral basis the Asian Women Fund's activity. Even if that does not occur, there should be a way to uphold the spirit of the Kono Statement. Supporting the Murayama Statement does not mean that all Japan's pre-WWII activities should be considered wrong and aggressive. There were genuine acts of idealism based on the reality of the international situation which existed then. For instance, some Manchurian Japanese tried to establish a land of harmony of five peoples in Manchuria toward the end of the 1920's; Hirota Koki's foreign policy after the establishment of Manchukuo was to limit Japan's expansion outside Manchuria; and Shigemitsu Mamoru asserted a policy of complete withdrawal from China after the conclusion of the Pacific War. But these initiatives were rapidly overtaken by expansionist moves or were articulated too late. In reality, there were irrefutable atrocities and arrogance in China. In this situation the Murayama Statement must be upheld as an important pillar of Japanese historical memory. In the latest controversy around General Tamogami, most of the media reports described his views as "diverging from the government's view as formulated by the Murayama Statement." That divergence cost General Tamogami his position as soon as his article became public knowledge. It indicates the continued salience of the Murayama Statement in the historical consciousness of the Japanese.

Is the consolidation of the centrists' position really necessary?

Jennifer Lind wrote an inspiring article in *Japan Focus* questioning the traditional view that apology is a prerequisite for reconciliation. [4] Historical records show that contrition was not necessarily required for reconciliation. Furthermore, contrition expressed eloquently sometimes aroused a backlash from nationalists at home. This, in turn, fueled emotions on the part of those countries with which apologists sought reconciliation. There is undeniable truth in Lind's observation.

When reconciliation between Japan and China was achieved in 1972, the history issue was just one of many factors under consideration. It was primarily political considerations of the power balance under the Sino-Soviet split and U.S. detente policy that governed Mao and Zhou's thinking in normalizing relations with Japan. When Japan and Korea established diplomatic relations in 1965 after 14 years of negotiations, it was primarily President Park Chung-Hee's determination to rebuild the South Korean economy rather than reconciliation achieved by both sides that became the motive of normalization. Conversely, the Kono Statement became one of the major objects of attack from the right in the latter part of the 1990's, and its continuous criticisms inflated Japan's non-apologetic image. The Murayama Statement has long been remembered for the right wing's rebukes against it rather than its genuine apologetic intent, and these right wing images fueled more anger in China and Korea. Ienaga Saburo's victory in 1997 at the Supreme Court after 34 years of a court case against the state on history textbooks was probably a vital factor which invigorated the Tsukurukai movement demanding textbook revision. All of these examples clearly indicate that had there not been major steps expressing contrition, there would have been less backlash from the right, and, therefore, less occasion for China and Korea to fuel further anger against Japan.

Having acknowledged all these factors, questions are bound to be raised: should such steps taken to express contrition be avoided? After all, Japan has come to terms with all pre-war related

issues through the treaty structure of the 1950's and 1960's. Could not Japan just stay quiet under this structure to avoid stirring emotions either from the left or from the right? Furthermore, henceforward, should Japan stay away from efforts to strengthen the middle road which fundamentally express contrition, because these renewed efforts might invite a costly backlash? These are questions raised by Lind, and they merit thorough consideration. I do not pretend that I have full answers, but I consider that there are several reasons for continuing to consolidate the middle.

First, it is important to understand all of Japan's historical memory discourse in the context of Japan's own reconciliation with the past. This takes us back to the psychological hollow into which Japan was thrown in August 1945, the overwhelming rise of negativism about pre-war activities among opinion leaders, intellectuals, the media, and opposition leaders, followed by timid efforts, which started in the 1960's, to see pre-war history in better balance, acknowledging some honor. Reconciliation with Asia was an important factor underlining the discourse, but more often than not, how the Japanese could reach historical truth and reconcile with history was the primary agenda. It is not easy just to halt that discourse until there emerges a middle road as a consensus within society, or at least, as a common framework in which that discourse can be conducted in a non-emotional manner.

Second, even if the way Japanese became embroiled in their historical discourse was not the wisest way to achieve reconciliation with Asia, history has already etched its lines on Japan's historical memory. Even if one contends that Nakasone's visit to Yasukuni in 1985 and Murayama's apology statement in 1995 were not the wisest moves, we have passed the point of erasing them. The accumulated line of apology has already become part of historical reality. If the right, as a backlash against this centrist line, would dictate Japan's historical memory anew and establish a national memory outside the Kaikosha-Kono-Murayama statements, this would be taken by the international community as a denial of past wrongdoings. As Lind underlined in her article, perceived denials provoke anger in the minds and hearts of all those who bear victim consciousness. I see no alternative, so as to keep Japan's reconciliation with its own history and eventually with Asia, to maintaining the positions expressed in the Kaikosha-Kono-Murayama statements. The dialectical truth of human nature and politics is that, if one side intends to modify the status quo and the other side just stays immobile hoping that the status quo is preserved, the immobile side invariably loses. If one considers the Kaikosha-Kono-Murayama statements to be the centrist line around which Japan might create a consensus, those who think that way have to act to consolidate that position, even at the risk of provoking some sort of backlash.

Third, I, therefore, argue that there is further need to consolidate the middle road by way of resolving concrete issues which have split the historical discourse inside Japan. Yasukuni is another example. I have argued already for more than two years that there is a need to introduce some fundamental reform to Yasukuni, and while this reform is proceeding, prime ministers should impose a moratorium on their visits. Since Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni on August 15, 2006, no prime ministers have visited, but no reform has been introduced. Should this reform be introduced, it may entail some political row from fundamentalists. That row itself might prove to be provocative to the Chinese and Koreans, reminding them of their haunting historical memories. But then, could the Japanese just leave the Yasukuni issue in today's suspended situation, where the Emperor's visit is de facto prohibited and prime ministers are at best put under a moratorium? In my view, this domestic contradiction must be overcome.



Prime Minister Koizumi at Yasukuni Shrine, August 15, 2006

How to achieve reconciliation with Asia?

This leads to the next crucial question: can Japan continue to seek harmonization of its own memory with history, while achieving reconciliation with Asia simultaneously? This is again a very difficult question about which I do not have a definite answer. But I can outline the relevant circumstances and indicate that further strengthening of the centrists' position on historical memory may lead to, or at least be compatible with, reconciliation with Asia.

First, it is axiomatic to say that “apology is a one-way action, whereas reconciliation requires a two-sided action. You apologize because you think your actions were wrong. You do not apologize on the condition that the apology be accepted.” [5] Keeping the centrist position strong is partly based on the hope that this may be helpful to achieve reconciliation, but that does not mean that Japan is in a position to enforce reconciliation. China and Korea might have reasons to accept or refuse reconciliation depending on their national memory and national interests. Should an apology not immediately result in reconciliation, this should be well understood right from the beginning.

Second, China and Korea have a clear policy option in dealing with the apology-backlash situation in Japan. If China and Korea find it in their own interest to fuel anger against Japan's backlash, they may, of course, do so. But by responding emotionally against the backlash in Japan, they risk fueling another backlash in Japan. Political relations between Japan and that country would inevitably deteriorate. Would China or Korea invariably react emotionally against a Japanese backlash? Not necessarily. The latest response by the Chinese and Korean governments to the Tamogami's incident could be considered reasonably contained, taking into consideration Aso's swift decision to relieve Tamogami of his official duties. Had the Chinese or Korean government wanted to fuel nationalist emotions, Tamogami could have given ample reason to point to him as a symbol of Japan's growing non-apologetic behavior. This did not happen. This may leave some hope that even if a nationalist backlash occurred in the future against a strengthened centralist position, China and Korea's reactions could remain reasonably contained.

Third, consolidation of the centrist position is certainly compatible with other measures which would help to enhance reconciliation, as suggested by Lind. One of the clearest examples is recently begun by countries in Northeast Asia to improve mutual understanding on history textbooks. [6] Joint study and publication of history textbooks is a significant step toward reconciliation. It must not, and it cannot, start with the objective to achieve a common textbook. But it certainly should be able to compare how textbooks differ from one country to another and discuss why these differences emerge. A third party can be usefully involved. The latest project of comparing history textbooks published in Japan, China, Korea, the U.S., and Taiwan at Stanford University is one of the best examples.

Conclusion

The central theme of my new book is to urge Japanese society that the time has come to overcome the sharp split between the right and the left and develop a synthetic and centrist position on historical memory. What I wanted to convey is a message which I have developed in the course of my own trajectory (in spending six years abroad). Has not the time come to end Japan's drift on historical memory for 60 years and terminate the harsh split between the right and the left? Differences of views would not be discontinued, but is there not a way to overcome them and respect each other as Japanese and find a broad consensus on an all-Japan basis? [7]

If so, how can we realistically achieve it? As Lind argues, part of the answer derives from Japan's domestic situation and the surrounding international situation. But in order to achieve that centrist position, I also urge that all Japanese become more interested in history, that individually they read writings from the left and the right and that each develops his/her own perspective on historical memory. I have learned much by reading narratives from both the right and the left. I believe in the strength of reason. If everyone has the opportunity to consider diverging views, ultimately, as individuals and as a nation, there should be a way to reach a synthetic position.

It is my earnest hope that through the consolidation of these non-extremist centrist positions, Japan would find a way to depoliticize historical memory issues in relation to China and Korea and, ultimately, achieve reconciliation with Asia. There is also the issue of historical memory in relation to the U.S., but that is a subject best dealt with in a separate article.

*Kazuhiko Togo is the author of *Rekishi to Gaiko: Yasukuni-Ajia-Tokyosaiban (History and Foreign Policy: Yasukuni-Asia-The Tokyo Tribunal)* (Kodansha 2008). He retired from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2002. The book draws on personal experience in confronting historical memory issues while teaching and researching in Leiden, Princeton, Tansui (Taiwan), Santa Barbara (California) and Seoul in the years 2002-2007. He also co-edited *East Asia's Haunted Present: Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism* (Praeger Security International, 2008) with Professor Tsuyoshi Hasegawa of the University of California, Santa Barbara.*

Notes

[1] The accounts are [here](#). (access December 17, 2008)

[2] Honda Katsuichi, *Chugokuno Tabi*, 1971 (Asahibunko, 1981).

[3] For the activities of the Asian Women's Fund, see their [website](#): (access December 17, 2008). Also refer to the report by [Wada Haruki](#).

[4] Access the article [here](#).

[5] Kazuhiko Togo, "A Moratorium on Yasukuni Visits," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, June 2006, p.13

[6] See Mitani Hiroshi "The History Textbook Issue in Japan and East Asia: Institutional Framework, Controversies, and International Efforts for Common Histories," and Mikiyoung Kim "Myths, Milieu, and Facts: History Textbook Controversies in Northeast Asia," in Tsuyoshi Hasegawa and Kazuhiko Togo eds., *East Asia's Haunted Present: Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism* (Westport: Praeger Security International, 2008)

[7] *Rekishi to Gaiko: Yasukuni-Ajia-Tokyosaiban* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2008), pp.19-20.

Maritime Asia and the Future of a Northeast Asia Community

Wada Haruki

Translated by Kyoko Selden

I. Transcending National Boundaries

We are now facing a critical situation. Not just Japan, but the world as a whole is in crisis. With America at the center, globalization is racing ahead, but there are also strong countercurrents with nationalism becoming stronger in various places. In the midst of war and terror, the threat of global warming is becoming clear to all. In this world, I believe that we should advance toward regionalism. In 2003 I hoisted this flag in a book entitled *The Common House of Northeast Asia — Declaration of a New Regionalism* published by Heibonsha.

We cannot live by denying the existence of states. However, it is necessary to relativize the nation state and to transcend state boundaries. This means that even as we belong to a state, we belong to a region and to the world. In 2006 Karatani Kojin wrote a book called *Toward the World Republic* (Iwanami Shinsho). But this proposal to go beyond states and aim toward a world republic is more dangerous than promising. If we think about the socialist Soviet Russia that came to an end, it was precisely aiming at a single world state. To turn humanity into a single state would require colossal violence. Moreover, the goal is unachievable. I think of the future of humanity as a league of regional communities (*chiiki kyodotai*). It can be said that regionalism is our utopia.

The idea of regionalism existed in the past. Japan has a failed history of trying to put regionalism into practice. The Greater East Union of Nations (*Daitogappo ron*) of Tarui Tokichi, who proposed a great united nation of the countries of Asian yellow peoples (*Ajia ojin-koku no ichidai renpo*), ended in Japan's annexation of Korea. Out of the Manchurian Incident, Ishihara Kanji's idea of an East Asian League (*To-A Renmei*) was created. Amidst the Sino-Japanese War, the theory of an East Asia Community (*To-A Kyodotai*) (1938) was proposed by Royama Masamichi, who called for a regional economy of Japan, China and Manchuria. When these ideas reached a dead end, the concept of a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (*Dai-To-A Kyoeiken*) was born. This was one with the Greater East Asia War. The practice of regionalism was a billboard that covered aggression. So, with Japan's surrender, regionalism too came to be forgotten.

After experiencing the nation's defeat and the Korean War, Japanese people came to oppose the military. But at the same time, they depended on the United States. After the Asia Pacific War, Asian peoples embarked on wars between communists and anti-communists. So in that period, regionalism could exist only as an anti-communist alliance and a military bloc of Northeast Asia. From that perspective, too, the Japanese people rejected regionalism.

However, in the late 1980s, the Cold War and state socialism ended, and in the 1990s new conditions were created in East Asia: China's economic development and South Korea's democratization were remarkable, while North Korea experienced a crisis. At this point, interest in regionalism emerged afresh.

ASEAN in 1997 invited China, South Korea and Japan to join a summit conference of ASEAN +3 out of which was born an East Asia Vision group. In 2001 it submitted a report called "We

hope to create an East Asian Community (Kyodotai) for peace, prosperity and progress.” ASEAN leaders supported that dream-like concept and in 2005 an East Asia Summit was held. However, Japan and China were in conflict about who should participate. The US, which was not invited, was dissatisfied, so the process has not been proceeding smoothly.



Map of ASEAN +3

On the other hand, Northeast Asia has been strongly coming to the fore. In February 2003 South Korean Pres. Roh Moo-hyun, in his inaugural speech, talked about the advent of a new era of Northeast Asia and stated that a community of regional peace and prosperity is his dream, surprising the Korean people. However, in August of that year, the Six-Party Talks for halting North Korean nuclear development began and, after much agonizing, in September 2005, the fourth round of talks issued a joint communiqué. In that communiqué, along with a solution to nuclear problems, “the six parties pledged to make joint efforts for long lasting peace and stability in the Northeast Asia region” and “agreed to continue to support measures to promote cooperative security throughout Northeast Asia”.

The six parties referred to China, South Korea, North Korea, Russia, the United States and Japan. In fact, in 1990, when I proposed in Seoul the construction of the Northeast Asian People’s House of Cohabitation (Tohoku Ajia jinrui kyosei no ie), I called for the participation of these six countries.



Wada's map outlining his conception of Northeast Asia: Hawaii (left) and Alaska (below)

Since 1995 I have been calling this the Common House of Northeast Asia (Tohoku Ajia kyodo no ie). The concept in which steps toward regional community begin from cooperation in peace and security is no longer a mere dream. It is a goal that the governments of the six countries pledge.

II. Without Reconciliation There Can Be No Communal Life (Kyosei)

Those who think seriously about Northeast Asia Community (kyodotai) have no choice but to directly confront the area's special character. Its character is one of successive wars for 80 years from 1894 to 1975.

No area anywhere in the world is so smeared with war (*senso mamire*). Thus it won't suffice that this area is simply at peace. In the absence of reconciliation, the area cannot live together.

The first fifty years of the eighty-year period was characterized by Japanese wars. The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-5, from the perspective of the issues contested and the battlefield can be called the first Korean War. Japan launched the Russo-Japanese War that followed in 1905 in order to force Russia to recognize Japanese rule of Korea. As a result of the war, Japan succeeded in making Korea a protectorate, then annexed it, and finally colonized it. In China, from the Manchurian Incident of 1931, Japan made war in China and elsewhere for fifteen years. Japan fought Russia in the Siberian War of 1918 with the dispatch of soldiers, again in the Nomonhon Incident of 1939, and then in the Russo-Japanese War in August 1945. With the US, Japan fought the 'Greater East Asia War.'



The First Sino-Japanese War fought in Korea in a contemporary Japanese woodblock print

Indeed, for half a century, Japan fought once or more than once with all neighboring countries to the West, North and East. Japan was always the attacker, and in the majority of cases, Japan was the aggressor. Those who were attacked and invaded were left with ineradicable scars and indelible pain. The murder of empress Myeonseong, the Port Arthur Incident and Tsushima Incident, and the Eulsa Treaty of 1905 making Korea a Japanese protectorate, Japan's repression of the March 1, 1919 Korean movement, the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in China in 1937, the Nanjing Massacre, and the Comfort Women, Pearl Harbor—these can never be forgotten.



The Geoncheonggung Residence in the Gyeongbok Palace, the site of the murder of Empress Myeonseong, was reopened in 2007 for the first time in 98 years

Of course, on the Japanese side, too, there are indelible memories such as the Tokyo air raids, the Battle of Okinawa, and the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings.

When the war ended on August 15, 1945, the Japanese military was dismantled, the emperor was stripped of military command, and Japan came to live under Article 9. However, the fact that Japan's war ended did not mean that the era of war in the area came to an end. Immediately, civil war began in China between Guomindang and Communist forces and this lasted until 1949. In Indochina, too, the Vietminh of Ho Chi Minh fought the French.

In 1950 the Korean War began. The two states born in the South and the North, occupied separately by the United States and the Soviet Union, fought to achieve unification. But both sides failed to achieve reunification. The war became a US-China war fought on Korean soil. The Korean War achieved a moratorium in 1953, but did not go beyond that to sign a peace treaty. The Indochina War ended, but in 1960 Vietnam became anew the main theatre in the struggle between Communists and US-supported anti-Communists.

South Korea participated in this war and continued to fight for ten years. North Korea, too, dispatched air force pilots. The US conducted the most cruel operations, producing large numbers of deformed children through the use of Agent Orange.

Japan did not fight in these wars, but it supported the US and profited from them. The thirty-year war in Japan's neighborhood, involving national communism versus anti-communists and the US, ended for the US in Vietnam in 1975.

Dreadful memories of the eighty-year war and pains that continue today still tear apart the peoples of these areas. Assailants have to apologize, and the sorrow and pain of the victims have to be healed. Damages that can be rectified should be compensated, hatred must be conquered, and forgiveness given.

Throughout the thirty-year war, Japan was unable to criticize itself and apologize for its own wars. In 1972, the 27th year after the war, Japan expressed self-reflection (*hansei*) to the Chinese people over the damage it had wrought by the war.

In 1995 the fiftieth year since the war, Japan's Prime Minister Murayama spoke of self-reflection and apology for the fact that Japan had inflicted damage and pain by colonial rule and aggression. Concerning comfort women issues, in 1993, Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono expressed reflection and apology.

In this, I think Japan made the minimum apologies that could become the basis for seeking reconciliation with the various countries in the area.

Of course, it is necessary to deepen and put soul into this. In 2007, debate over whether to really hew to the Murayama and Kōno statements became the moment for Prime Minister Abe Shinzo to resign. The anger of the Okinawan people shattered the attempt to erase the truth of the Okinawan War from Japanese textbooks.

On the other hand, the US has not yet apologized thirty-two years after the Vietnam War. Naturally, no compensation is being given to the victims of Agent Orange.

As for the Korean War, whether the moratorium can shift to a peaceful order (*heiwa taisei*) has become an issue in the Six-Party Talks.

The people of this region that was at war for eighty years aspire to total reconciliation. Only when everyone begins to walk in this direction will progress toward a common house for Northeast Asia be possible. The passion for reconciliation is an identity that unites this area.

III. Toward a Cooperative Body (kyoryoku tai) Through Joining Hands (renkei) in the Islands

Northeast Asian countries are extremely diverse and heterogeneous historically, politically, economically and culturally. Three countries have become parliamentary democracies (gikaisei) (Japan, South Korea and Taiwan), two are former communist countries (Russia and Mongolia), and in two (China and North Korea) the Communist Party still rules. It is difficult for such diverse countries of Northeast Asia to become a cooperative body. However, should that be realized, this would have epochal significance for overcoming the divisions of humankind. Something that binds Northeast Asia is the presence of Koreans who live in far-flung countries, notably Japan, China, Sakhalin, and the former Soviet Union, as diaspora as a result of an unfortunate history.

There are 2,400,000 Koreans in China, making possible the formation of a Korean autonomous region in Yanbian, where the largest number reside. The US has 2,050,000 immigrants from Korea. In Japan, including people from North and South, there are said to be 870,000 Korean residents, but if you add those who obtained Japanese citizenship, the number is at least one million. In the former Soviet Union, in and around Central Asia, there are 480,000 Koreans. As Southeast Asia is the world of the overseas Chinese (with smaller numbers in Northeast Asia), Northeast Asia is the world of the overseas Koreans.

Without neglecting their ethnic origins (minzokuteki sokoku), thinking about the nations in which they currently live, they are a presence that shapes all Northeast Asia. They are Northeast Asians. In particular, more than 90% of Korean residents in Japan come from South Korea and they are members of Japanese society. They have relatives who migrated to North Korea, so they have body and heart split into three elements. Kang Sangjung, a Korean resident intellectual in Japan, proposes a common house of Northeast Asia in the Japanese parliament committee. That, one can say, demonstrates the potential of Koreans as Northeast Asians.

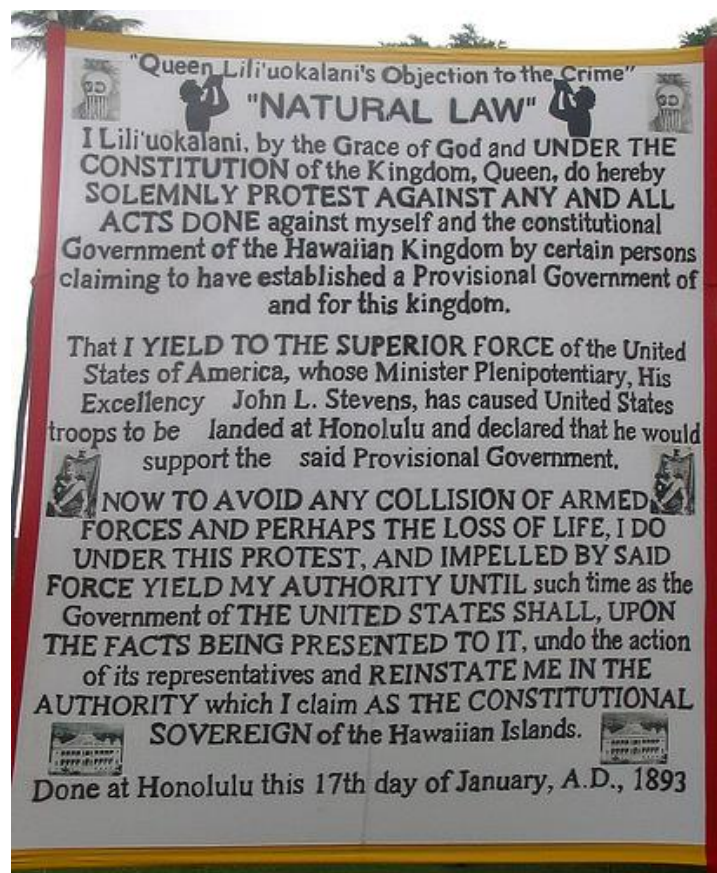
Another thing that unifies the area is the network of large islands throughout Northeast Asia. What is important for Northeast Asian peace, along with Korean issues, is resolution of the Taiwan problem. Taiwan has taken steps toward claiming statehood, but it has not been recognized as a state. Therefore, it is impossible for Taiwan to participate in Northeast Asian activities as a state. To break through this, we can consider Taiwan as one island and create a union of Northeast Asian islands in which Taiwan participates.

The population of Taiwan is 20,700,000, making it the largest island in Northeast Asia (excluding Japan's main islands). Next to Taiwan comes Okinawa with a population of 1,340,000. Hawaii has a population of 1,210,000. Then there is Cheju with 550,000, and Sakhalin with 540,000. In thinking of the US as a member of Northeast Asia, I think of the presence of American residents in Japan and Korea, of American Army people throughout the area, and the populations of Hawaii and Alaska should be included.

Many of these islands have a history of having been independent states. They were often the targets of competition for plunder by powerful countries, and had frequent changes of masters.

And in war, fierce battles took place. Pearl Harbor, Okinawa, and the battle in Sakhalin are not yet forgotten. Cheju Island, which could have become a second Okinawa, was guarded tightly by Japan. In Taiwan and Cheju, the most tragic repression occurred after Japan's war ended. These were the February 28 Incident in Taipei (1947) and the April 3 Uprising in Cheju (1948). As a result, all islanders sincerely hope for peace. Cheju was formally named the Island of Peace by the ROK government. However, apart from Cheju, all these islands are armed. They are islands of military bases. For this very reason, it is hoped that these islands will join hands to protect peace and link those states that constitute Northeast Asia. They should play that role. These islands, because of this history, comprise a world in which the most diverse ethnicities and cultures live together. They have a vision that is open to all.

What is noticed here is that the apology (shazai) resolution adopted by both houses of the US Congress on Nov. 23, 1993 states that despite the fact that the US and Hawaiian Kingdom had diplomatic relations for 67 years, in 1893 the American ambassador conspired to overthrow the kingdom and declare Hawaii an American protectorate. It quotes the protest by Queen Liliuokalani, which said that she gives up her political power in order to avoid bloodshed before the landing of US Marines. Further, the apology records that President Cleveland, when informed of this, did not approve the overthrow of the kingdom and demanded that the Queen be restored to her position despite the fact that those who supported the overthrow of the government had declared a Republic of Hawaii. Finally in 1898, President McKinley annexed Hawaii.



Liliuokalani proclamation

The US Congress, on the 100th anniversary of the illegitimate overthrow of the Hawaiian kingdom recognized that the sovereignty of the indigenous Hawaiians had been crushed and resolved that the US apologize and turn this apology into a basis for reconciliation with indigenous Hawaiians. President Clinton signed the resolution. Behind the President's signing the resolution stood the congressmen from Hawaii. Two of them were Hawaiian natives, and two were Japanese Hawaiians.

This is the America which has not taken the important action of apologizing for the Vietnam War. This makes us reflect on what attitude Japan should take toward its incorporation of the Ryukyu Kingdom and the annexation of Korea. The 100th anniversary of Korean annexation is coming in 2010.

Wada Haruki is professor emeritus, Institute of Social Science, Tokyo University and a specialist on Russia, Korea, and the Korean War.

This is a slightly revised version of three columns that were published in the Ryukyu Shimpo on January 7, 8, and 9, 2008.

Topics of Historical Memory in Japan
War Responsibility and Reparations

“The Tokyo Tribunal, War Responsibility and the Japanese People”

Awaya Kentaro

February 2, 2006

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Awaya-Kentaro/2061>

“Crime and Responsibility: War, the State, and Japanese Society”

Yuki Tanaka

August 20, 2006

<http://japanfocus.org/-Yuki-TANAKA/2200>

“Who is Responsible? The Yomiuri Project and the Enduring Legacy of the Asia-Pacific War”

Tessa Morris-Suzuki

June 19, 2007

http://www.japanfocus.org/-Tessa-Morris_Suzuki/2455

“The Aso Mining Company in World War II: History and Japan’s Would-Be Premier”

William Underwood

June 26, 2007

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-William-Underwood/2537>

“Toward Reconciliation: The Nishimatsu Settlements for Chinese Forced Labor in World War Two”

Ivy Lee with an Introduction by William Underwood

August 9, 2010

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Ivy-Lee/3400>

“Rejected by All Plaintiffs: Failure of the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa ‘Settlement’ with Chinese Forced Laborers in Wartime Japan”

Kang Jian, with an Introduction by William Underwood

August 9, 2010

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Kang-Jian/3399>

The issue of reparations for wartime damages is closely linked to establishing the war responsibility of the Japanese state. One starting point for a study of reparations are the Tokyo War Crimes Trials. There, the wartime Japanese leadership was prosecuted for crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, based on both the Briand-Kellogg Pact (signed 1928), in which the signatories promised “not to use war to resolve disputes,” and the Geneva Convention (1929) on the treatment of prisoners of war. At this Tokyo Tribunal, Japan formally accepted responsibility for the war in Asia and the Pacific. Later, this acceptance of responsibility was reconfirmed in the Treaty of San Francisco, signed in 1951. Japan also paid reparations to a number of Asian nations throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Because Korea had been a part of the Empire of Japan, Japan insisted

that it did not qualify for receiving reparations. However, after diplomatic relations between Japan and South Korea were established (in 1965), Japan agreed to give long-term, low-interest loans to Korea, which generally were seen as a substitute for reparations by both governments. When diplomatic relations between Japan and the People's Republic of China were established in 1972, a similar deal was inked: China did not claim reparations from Japan, but Japan started to pay "Official Development Assistance" to China, which both sides saw as a substitute for reparations. Japan and North Korea have never resolved this issue and, moreover, have yet to establish diplomatic relations to this day.

But such treaties have not settled other issues surrounding Japan's war responsibility. In fact, as Awaya Kentaro points out, the actions of many postwar Japanese politicians have only served to muddle the issues. For example, politicians' highly controversial visits to the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, where a dozen war criminals are among the enshrined deities, argues Awaya, actually violate the Treaty of San Francisco, which included a confirmation of the judgment of the Tokyo Trials. For Awaya, visits to Yasukuni compound the larger problem that Japan's postwar era has been characterized by forgetfulness of the wartime past rather than critical self-reflection of Japan's role as a perpetrator. In the same vein, Yuki Tanaka uses the memory landscape of Hiroshima to emphasize the way that "victim consciousness" in postwar Japan thwarts acceptance of war. There "the Japanese" are presented foremost as victims of the war, while Japanese aggression is fading into the background of public awareness. But, as Tessa Morris-Suzuki indicates, such developments have not gone unnoticed. She points to a project of the largest daily newspaper, the *Yomiuri Shinbun*, to "clarify" war responsibility. The project, a part of escalating discussions in society since the 1990s about Japan's war responsibility, was the result of the often-heard claim that postwar Japan had not done enough to address its wartime past. The publication identified the leadership of the army as the main culprit responsible for Japan taking a path towards war, acknowledging Japanese war responsibility while pinning it on a group that lost power in 1945. While the *Yomiuri* does not argue that the war was justified, it focuses on military strategies and war diplomacy, and still neglects war crimes and the treatment of citizens of other countries.

The second part of this section provides concrete examples of reparations for specific war crimes, beginning with forced labor. William Underwood's essay looks at forced labor in Japanese mines during the war, unveiling connections of contemporary heavyweight politicians to prewar injustices. One of his examples is the company owned by the family of former Prime Minister Asô Tarô, which made use of Korean and Chinese POWs as forced laborers. Such personal connections, Underwood's essay seems to shout, help explain why the Japanese political elite appear so unwilling to address historical issues. Next, Underwood presents two conflicting opinions on a recent case of compensation paid to wartime forced laborers from China in an out-of-court compensation agreement. The two views, in intriguing and sometimes contradictory ways, demonstrate the issues at stake in discussions on war responsibility and reparations for war crimes, as well as the diversity among Japanese in their degree of acknowledgement of war responsibility. In the first, Ivy Lee argues for the "need to fully appreciate" the efforts of Japanese lawyers and courts to reach agreements on compensation for Chinese forced laborers. The 2010 settlement between Chinese forced laborers and Nishimatsu Corporation, according to Lee, is particularly noteworthy, because it resulted not only in compensation, but also included an apology for crimes committed and the promise to build

“a memorial to memorialize the victims and to educate the public.” She sees much similarity between this settlement and the German “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future Fund” created in 2001 to pay compensation for wartime slave laborers from Eastern Europe. On the other hand, Kang Jian, a Chinese lawyer representing the plaintiffs in lawsuits against the Japanese state and Japanese corporations, strongly criticizes the out-of-court agreements. Regarding the 2000 agreement between Kajima Corporation and Chinese forced laborers, she claims that it only led to a concealment of the facts that “the Kajima Corporation enslaved the Chinese forced labor victims (...), evaded the facts of perpetration, evaded its responsibility, gave charitable ‘relief’ to the Chinese forced labor victims to terminate its legal liability, and crowned the charitable relief fund with the laurel of ‘Friendship Fund.’” In both cases, Underwood’s introductions stress that “legal claims against Japan arising from war and colonialism have been dismissed by the top courts in Japan (...), reflecting the nation-centric interpretations of international law.” Internationally, it is still generally believed that individuals are not entitled to claim any compensation from states, and this is the basis for a ruling by Japan’s Supreme Court in 2007, that the “1972 treaty between Japan and China extinguished the right of Chinese citizens to seek war-related damages.” On the other hand, it is exactly this international “custom” of excluding individual plaintiffs that the former forced laborers from China hope to overturn by participating in a lawsuit in Japan.

The Tokyo Tribunal, War Responsibility and the Japanese People

Awaya Kentaro

Translated by Timothy Amos

Approaching the 60th anniversary of the opening of the Tokyo Tribunal in 2006, public opinion was divided over Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine. One reason for opposition to the visit was that Tokyo Tribunal Class A war criminals are enshrined there.

On August 15 1985, then Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro, despite strong domestic and international criticism, carried out an official visit to Yasukuni. The government later acknowledged during parliamentary questioning that it had accepted the verdict of the Tokyo Tribunal through the San Francisco Peace Treaty. As a result, Prime Minister Nakasone refrained from further visits to the shrine from the following year. Though aware of these historical developments, Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro has persisted in visiting Yasukuni Shrine since his assumption of office in 2001. In 2005, he again visited the shrine in the face of strong criticism in Japan and abroad. Conservative newspapers like the Sankei Shinbun take the view that "visiting the shrine is not a Treaty violation." This argument, however, is not in the least compelling. [1]

In public opinion surveys, while opposition to Prime Minister Koizumi's Yasukuni Shrine visits is marginally greater, the numbers of those who voice support are not insignificant. This is, I believe, a reflection of popular attitudes toward the Tokyo Tribunal. This article will focus on the problem of 'The Tokyo Tribunal and the contrition of Japanese people at that time.'

Tojo Hideki's disgraceful behavior

The Tokyo Tribunal was convened on May 3 1946. After the testimony, counter-testimony, rebuttal, counter-rebuttal, and closing statements of both the prosecutor and the defense, the trial was concluded on April 16 1948 and the court adjourned. The court then reconvened on November 4 1948, the reading of the verdict concluded on November 12, and sentences were handed down.

With the convening of the Tokyo Tribunal, the Allied Powers and especially the U.S. Government and GHQ (SCAP) had a particularly strong interest in the reaction of the Japanese people to the Tokyo Tribunal and their sense of war responsibility. For the Japanese, the initial shock came with the first war arrest warrants by the Occupation Forces on September 11, 1945. When the U.S. forces sought to execute these warrants, former Prime Minister Tojo Hideki unsuccessfully attempted to take his own life. The sensation caused by the attempted suicide of the man who had been responsible for issuing the admonition in the Senjinkun (Imperial Japanese Army Field Service Code) to "live without the humiliation of being taken prisoner and die without leaving a blemish on your name" was immense.



Tojo Hideki awaits sentencing, November 24, 1948.

The Home Affairs Ministry compiled a report on popular reactions from each region, but recorded the overall situation as follows: “Regarding General Tojo’s decision to commit suicide, those completely sympathetic to the timing, method, and attitude shown in the suicide are exceedingly rare, and most people are thoroughly critical and reproving. The main reactions are as follows:

1. The entire population has had their expectations completely betrayed because they believed that General Tojo had refrained from taking his life till now in order to be able to stand before the allied tribunal as the person bearing highest responsibility for the war and proudly uphold the justice of the Japanese cause.
2. If Tojo was going to attempt suicide, he should have done it directly after the Imperial declaration of the end of the war.
3. Hurriedly attempting to shoot himself with a pistol when the American troops arrived is not the mark of a soldier. If he had died then and there, well and good, but to survive was truly humiliating. Then to let himself go and to blather away saying things that did not need to be said - well, we can only hope he will not cause the country harm ...”

America’s exoneration of the Emperor

Elsewhere a September 13 report from police headquarters commented that “there is concern that the emperor might be affected.” With Tojo’s failed suicide attempt, anxiety began to surface that the search for those with war responsibility would reach the Showa Emperor. The arrest of war criminals continued after this and there was tacit consent or support amongst the people. Because the Occupation forces were letting various truths about the war be known through the press, the understanding amongst the population that they had been ‘deceived’ by military leaders and bureaucrats intensified and disaffection with these groups increased.

The Showa Emperor was the exception. A radical movement to pursue the Emperor as a war criminal developed among the core group of the newly re-established Communist Party, while from a different perspective, other groups, primarily intellectuals, began to favor the idea that the emperor ought to abdicate to accept a certain measure of war responsibility. The fact remains,

however, that public opinion at the time supported the protection of the Emperor. An important factor here may have been the American anti-Japanese propaganda during the latter years of the Asia Pacific War. The U.S. tried to drive a wedge between the military, which it attacked, and the Emperor and the people, which it did not attack. This continued as part of Occupation strategy and the political myth that ‘the Emperor and the people were fooled by the military’ permeated deeply throughout the population. As a result, popular acceptance of criticism of military leaders and of the responsibility of leaders revealed at the Tokyo Tribunal gradually strengthened and coalesced around the exclusion of the Emperor from war responsibility.



Hirohito remade in a civilian image and guarded by U.S. forces, September 1945.

Nonetheless, the popular view of ‘the responsibility of the leaders’ was mostly passive, overshadowed by a consciousness that the people were in fact victims. Virtually no sense of responsibility for attacks against the peoples of Asia was evident, nor was there any movement to pursue in a positive way questions of war responsibility. This may be seen as the origin of the failure of many people to accept war responsibility or to adopt as their own the task of ‘overcoming the past.’

Through the Tokyo Tribunal, people became aware of and were shocked by the brutal actions of the military such as the Nanking Massacre and similar matters revealed by the prosecution. But as proceedings became drawn out, interest diminished and the spectacle even arose of ‘Tojo popularity’ (Tojo ninki). This was due to the fact that while many defendants were only interested in self-vindication, Tojo resolutely defended the policies of the Japanese government during the war and stood up to Prosecutor Keenan.

This strategy, however, also met with a degree of failure. Tojo’s testimony on New Years Eve 1947 hinted at the Emperor’s war responsibility. This worried Prosecutor Keenan and those close to the Imperial Court who had decided that the Emperor should be immune from responsibility. Ultimately, however, through behind-the-scenes manoeuvring, Tojo revised his comments early the following year, and this was the only point during the Tribunal when the actions of the Emperor surfaced.

Conscientious criticism blocked

The U.S. authorities were paying attention to the reactions of the Japanese people, and the report “Japanese reactions to the Class A War Crimes Tribunal” prepared in August 1948 by the Far Eastern Section of the State Department’s Bureau of Investigation analysed it in this way: “The

attitude of many Japanese towards the trial is acquiescence to it as something that was bound to happen because Japan lost the war.

rather than focusing on the war responsibility of the defendants resulting from their war crimes, criticism is concentrated on their responsibility for leading the nation into defeat and bringing shame and misery. That is, rather than responsibility for waging the war, the people are problematizing their leaders' responsibility for losing it." The report continued: "The coolness of the Japanese people towards the trial, if that can be considered their true sentiment, is also related to the fact that the Emperor's war responsibility is not being questioned. Moreover, even if there is deep opposition to the abdication of the Emperor, at the very least the people consider the Emperor morally responsible for the war."

The report went on to affirm that, "For a time after the end of the war, the Japanese people clearly demanded that the war responsibility of former leaders who lead their country into a tragic war be exposed. The Japanese people publicly censured the militarists and their supporters, and on occasion, even the role played by the Emperor during the war became the subject of wide-ranging debate. At present, however, the demand to clarify war responsibility is slowly being replaced by the belief that national unity is indispensable for the rapid reconstruction of the country" [2].

The same report suggests that as the Cold War between East and West intensified, the U.S. halted the war crimes tribunal and began to emphasize economic development over the pursuit of Japanese war responsibility. Japanese popular responses also began to shift in this direction. But it should not be forgotten that this report was based on an analysis of newspaper bulletins at a time when GHQ was censoring all publications. It should also be kept in mind that GHQ in principle forbade criticism of the Tokyo Tribunal whether from the left or right, and that public opinion was moulded by the censors to suit GHQ. The materials in the Prange Collection at the University of Maryland, (which holds Japanese newspapers, publications, and films produced during the Occupation) reveal that most rightwing criticism of the Tokyo Tribunal was censored. Conversely, the pioneer human rights activist and lawyer Fuse Tatsuji and others at their symposium reported in *Jiyu konwakai* (Talk on Freedom) called for appointment of a Japanese prosecutor and pointed out the Emperor's war responsibility.

Chofumi Tsura, a journalist and historian who attended that symposium, commented that "it is absurd that the Japanese colonial rule of Taiwan and Korea is not being tried at the Tokyo Tribunal." He commented not only on the war responsibility of the Emperor but also on the war responsibility of the Japanese people themselves. His article about the symposium was completely deleted by the censors. The Occupation forces did not permit even the kind of speech that might be considered by today's standards legitimate criticism. The case of *Jiyu konwakai* is but one example among many.

The shameful behaviour of the Japanese

Six years after the conclusion of the Tokyo Tribunal in August 1955, the Japanese government surveyed 3000 men and women on "The attitude of people towards war responsibility" (64.7% response rate). During the interval between the Tokyo Tribunal and the survey, the 'reverse course' had occurred, the Korean War began, and the San Francisco Peace Treaty was ratified, but it is clear from the survey that subjective self-awareness surrounding the Tokyo Tribunal had grown more warped and degenerate. To the question "Political and military leaders during the

war were punished by the victor nation through a military court: do you think it natural for this to happen after having started a war? Do you think it inevitable considering Japan lost the war?" 19% responded that they thought it was 'natural,' 66% answered that they thought it 'inevitable,' and 15% said that it was 'unclear.' Furthermore, to the question "Even if Japan lost, do you think that the Tokyo Tribunal was an abysmal way to resolve matters?" 63% of people answered that they thought it was "utterly appalling" (*hidosugiru*) while only 31% answered "I don't think so" [3].

The mitigation of the sentences of war criminals and the agitations for parole symbolized the popular reaction to the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal. After the Peace Treaty went into effect, 'Sugamo Prison' had its name changed to Sugamo Detention Centre. Utsumi Aiko from Keisen University points out that "the parole-for-war-criminals movement was driven by two groups: those from outside who had 'a sense of pity' for the prisoners; and the war criminals themselves who called for their own release as part of an anti-war peace movement. The movement that arose out of 'a sense of pity' demanded 'just set them free (*tonikaku shakuho o*) regardless of how it is done'. The situation heated up to such an extent that expressions like 'if you are Japanese, sign!' became a catch phrase."



Sugamo Prison, 1947

More than ten million people supported the 1952 campaign petitioning for the release of war criminals. In the face of this surge of public opinion, the government commented that "public sentiment in our country is that the war criminals are not criminals. Rather, they gather great sympathy as victims of the war, and the number of people concerned about the war crimes tribunal system itself is steadily increasing." Not only that, but visits to Sugamo to express support for the inmates by entertainers including dancing troupes, *rakugo* storytellers, and *manzai* comics, as well as 'Sugamo visitations' (*Sugamo mode*) by prefectural friendship societies, boomed. "The cold stare directed at war criminals transformed into a sympathetic gaze on them as war victims; they even began to be referred to as war heroes ... and little by little the sense of war responsibility eroded" [4].

This trend amounted to forgetting about Article 11 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in which Japan accepted the verdicts of the Tokyo Tribunal and the B and C level tribunals.



Four Japanese officers await trial for war crimes at Labuan Island, December 1945.

Yasukuni Shrine visits became the symbol of this loss of memory, not only for the people but also for the government. We cannot talk of great gaps in post-war history without understanding this forgetfulness. The popular attitude towards the Tokyo Tribunal that tried the A-class war crimes was from beginning to end lacking in subjective self-consciousness, and even today provides grounds for the criticism of the people of Asia about Japan's 'inability to deal with the past.'

Awaya Kentaro is Professor at Rikkyo University and the author of numerous works on the Tokyo Trials and wartime Japan. This article was published in Shukan Kinyobi on December 23, 2005. Posted at Japan Focus February 2, 2006.

*Timothy Amos recently completed his PhD thesis *Ambiguous Bodies: Writings on the Japanese Outcaste* at the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University. He is a visiting fellow in the Division of Pacific and Asian History.*

[1] Awaya Kentaro, Tokyo Saibanron. Tokyo: Otsuki Shoten, 1989.

[2] Quoted in Yoshida Yutaka, Nihonjin no sensokan. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995.

[3] Cabinet and Prime Minister's Office Deliberative Council, Sengo junen no kaiko to tenbo: kokumin no seijiteki iken, 1956; Quoted in Yoshida Yutaka, Nihonjin no sensokan.

[4] Quoted in Sugamo Purison. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 2004.

Crime and Responsibility: War, the state, and Japanese society

Yuki Tanaka

'Forgetting, even getting history wrong, is an essential factor in the formation of a nation, which is why the progress of historical studies is often a danger to nationality.' Ernest Renan

In 2002, the Japanese government built the "Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims" within the Hiroshima Peace Park. It is located less than two hundred meters from the A-Bomb Peace Museum operated by the Hiroshima City Council. This new Memorial Hall, funded and run by the Japanese government, includes the following message on one of the wall panels:

'At one point in the 20th century, Japan walked the path of war. Then, on December 8, 1941, Japan initiated hostilities against the U.S., Great Britain and others, plunging into what came to be known as the Pacific War. This war was largely fought elsewhere in the Asia Pacific region, but when the tide turned against Japan, American warplanes began bombing the homeland, and Okinawa became a bloody battlefield. Within this context of war, on August 6, 1945, the world's first atomic weapon, a bomb of unprecedented destructive power, was dropped on the city of Hiroshima.'

Other panels present the following statements:

'The Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims is an effort by the Japanese national government to remember and mourn the *sacred sacrifice* of the atomic bomb victims.'

'We hereby mourn those who perished in the atomic bombing. At the same time, we recall with great sorrow *the many lives sacrificed* to mistaken national policy.' (emphases added)



1. Hiroshima following the atomic bombing

These formal statements clearly reflect the Japanese government's assessment, but they also articulate widely held popular attitudes concerning Japan's war responsibility. In other words, in the absence of explanation of any kind, the viewer is left to conclude that Japan simply, inexplicably, "walked the path of war" and the "real" war started with the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 8, 1941. That "real" war, in other words, did not begin on September 18, 1931, the day that the Japanese Army detonated an explosion on the South Manchurian railway, providing the pretext for the seizure of Manchuria and the establishment of Manchukuo under Japanese aegis. Nor did it begin on July 7, 1937, when the Marco Polo Bridge Incident plunged Japan into full-scale war leading to the occupation of large areas of China. In the Memorial Hall's rendering, Japan's major enemies in the Asia-Pacific War were the U.S. and Great Britain, not China, still less the other Asian peoples that Japan conquered following the attack on Pearl Harbor. In short, Japan was defeated by Anglo-Saxons not by Asians. Such an interpretation of the history of the 15 year war (1931-45) naturally hinders full recognition of responsibility for Japan's abhorrent military acts and the war losses that its Asian neighbors suffered as a result of war and colonialism. It also fundamentally distorts the dynamics of power played out on the fields of colonialism and war in the first half of the twentieth century.

On the other hand, the atomic bomb is said to have been "dropped on the city of Hiroshima" as if it were a natural calamity, without identified human agency, the consequence being that many people were "sacrificed to mistaken national policy." Thus the responsibility of American forces for the killing of large numbers of civilians is not seriously questioned. Instead, the victims of atomic bombing are simply presented as the "sacred sacrifice" of war, just as the nature of Japan's "mistaken national policies" is left unexamined. In particular, the words "sacred sacrifice" remove any reference to who killed so many people or why and for what these people had to be "sacrificed." This is partly due to the fact that the word "sacred" possesses a kind of religious function that blurs the historical process whereby these people became victims of war. The word "sacred" tends to refute any mundane queries regarding the background of a "sacred person." In other words, it is widely accepted that once a person is apotheosized and becomes "sacred," no one should catechize about his or her past. Here we can find a similarity with the "sacred souls" of soldiers enshrined at Yasukuni Shrine, where the issue of Japanese war crimes remains unquestioned.

Because non-explanations of this kind are the characteristic not only of the Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall but of most school textbooks and the school curriculum generally, the result is that the majority of Japanese people remain ignorant not only of Japan's war responsibility, but also of the history of the Asia-Pacific War in general.

It is often said that the Japanese people tend to see themselves as victims of war rather than as assailants, largely due to the experience of U.S. aerial bombing towards the end of the war, culminating in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Undoubtedly this was one of many factors that contributed to such a popular perception.

Indeed, the A-Bomb Peace Museum operated by the Hiroshima City Council is filled predominantly with exhibits highlighting the victimization of the citizens of Hiroshima as a result of indiscriminate bombing using the atomic bomb. Although there is a brief explanation of the Nanjing Massacre in relation to the activities of the Imperial Army dispatched from Hiroshima to China prior to the atomic bombing, the museum invariably presents the atomic bombing of the city as the historically unprecedented and unparalleled victimization of Japanese

citizens. Indubitably the museum conveys a powerful anti-nuclear message. Yet it is interesting to note that the museum exhibits scarcely nothing except information on the bombing of Hiroshima, and even the bombing of Nagasaki and other landmarks of nuclear history are hardly mentioned. Hence the museum fails to bring to light fundamental features common to all victims of atomic bombings, nuclear tests, indiscriminate bombing, and war in general.



2. Collecting and classifying rubble that would eventually be exhibited at the Peace Memorial Museum.

Yet even this perception of “war victims” is rapidly fading, and younger generations no longer recognize their nation’s war responsibility or even the price that war exacted on their own society. Indeed, few have sufficient knowledge of Japan’s modern and contemporary history to hold opinions concerning Japan and war.

We cannot give a simple answer to the question of why many Japanese failed to nurture a strong sense of war responsibility. In this essay, I examine some important factors that have hindered the cultivation of a clear public sense of Japanese war responsibility. I will particularly concentrate on the 15 years after the war (1945 – 1960), the period in which the fundamental framework of the Japanese popular concept of “war responsibility” was molded. This is because of my strong belief that a lack of war responsibility among younger generations is not simply due to a lack of education, but is deeply rooted in the very fabric of Japanese popular thinking on war issues formulated and implanted in the early post-war period.

One of the new programs that GHQ (General Headquarters of the Allied Occupation Forces) introduced in the early stages of the occupation was “the re-education of the Japanese.” The CIE (Civil Information and Education Section) of GHQ was given the task of teaching Japanese citizens “the truth” about the war by revealing Japanese war crimes and highlighting the

devastating consequences of the war including Japan's destruction and defeat. Between December 8 and 17, 1945, the CIE required all Japanese national newspapers to publish a series of articles drafted by CIE on the history of the Pacific War. At the same time, NHK (the Japan Broadcasting Commission) ran a serial radio program called "This is the Truth." This series, designed and produced by CIE, was broadcast once a week over 10 weeks from December 9, 1945. The content of the two series of articles and broadcasts can be summarized in the following points.

- 1) Although they pinpoint the Manchurian Incident of 1931 as the start of the war and acknowledge the continuity between Japan's invasion of China and the Sino-Japanese War as well as the Pacific War, Japan's colonial rule of Taiwan and Korea is completely ignored.
- 2) The decisive role of U.S military forces in determining the outcome of the war in the Pacific is singularly emphasized, while the anti-Japanese resistance carried out by Chinese forces over fifteen years, and by various Southeast Asian forces over four years, are ignored. The single exception is brief mention of Filipino guerrillas who collaborated with American forces.
- 3) The responsibility of a handful of Japanese military leaders is emphasized, while Emperor Hirohito and his close associates within the Imperial Court as well as business and media leaders, are simply characterized as "moderate groups" in contrast to the militarists.
- 4) Emphasizing Japanese military leaders' concealment of the actual circumstances of the war creates a popular image that the Japanese people were deceived by their military leaders. The result was therefore to ignore the structural foundations that led Japan on the road to colonialism and war.

On December 8, 1945, the same day that the newspaper series commenced, General MacArthur issued an order to set up the IPS (International Prosecution Section) for the IMTFE (International Military Tribunal for the Far East, popularly known as the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal) and appointed an American lawyer, Joseph Keenan, as the chief prosecutor. A-class war crime suspects had already been arrested and the IMTFE was planned to open in May 1946. In short, one of the aims of the media exercises directed by CIE was to prepare the Japanese people to accept the legitimacy of the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal on basis of the official American interpretation of the Asia-Pacific War.

The judges of the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal were chosen from U.S. allies who fought in the Pacific War. The result is that the justices were from 11 nations, namely the U.S., the U.K., the Soviet Union, France, Australia, Canada, China, Holland, New Zealand, India and the Philippines. There were three Asian judges including one from China, which sustained by far the largest casualties of Japanese invasion (serious estimates range between ten and twenty million war-related deaths), as well as India and the Philippines. However, despite that fact that millions of Asian died in the war and it was Asia that bore the brunt both of Japanese colonialism and war deaths, no legal representative was drawn from Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Burma, Indo-China, Korea or Taiwan, and the court was dominated by Western allies of the U.S. It should also be noted that the U.K., France and Holland as well as the United States were the colonial rulers of large areas of Asia, in which national independence movements were underway including the Dutch East Indies, Malaya, Singapore, Burma, the Philippines and Indochina. Therefore, it is not surprising that Japanese responsibility toward Asian people was framed by the tribunal in ways that focused on war atrocities and elided issues of colonialism.

In addition, General MacArthur and the U.S. government protected Emperor Hirohito from indictment as a war criminal, kept him on the throne, and shielded him even the necessity to testify. Their goal was, of course, to exploit the emperor system in order to smooth occupation control of Japan. For this purpose, GHQ presented Hirohito as having been manipulated by the military leaders, denying all direct exercise of power over the Imperial Forces - in other words, the emperor, too, was a victim of the war. Further, Hirohito was credited with taking the crucial initiative to end the war, that is, he emerged during the occupation as the peacemaker who saved Japan from annihilation. MacArthur skillfully burnished the image of Hirohito of the peacemaker as well as the key figure who “voluntarily” led the Japanese government to formulate the new democratic Constitution renouncing all Japanese military forces. The U.S. in short, with the enthusiastic support of the Japanese government thus propagated an image of a “democratic monarch” and a “peace monarch.”

In short, CIE’s “re-education programs” together with the American framing of the War Crimes Tribunal and the projection of the myth of the peace emperor, had a huge impact upon the formation of the postwar Japanese self-image. That is, the Japanese were pitiable war-victims like their humane emperor, who were deceived by military leaders represented by General Tojo Hideki. The result was to relieve the Japanese people of the necessity to reflect seriously upon the colonization and oppressive rule of Taiwan and Korea by Japan, war crimes such as the Nanjing Massacre that their troops committed against the people of various nations in Asia, and the emperor’s ultimate responsibility for the sufferings of vast numbers of Asian people. This lack of reflection concerning responsibility towards their Asian neighbors is central to understanding why many Japanese still cannot overcome their prejudice toward other Asians. John Dower makes the point well in his book, *Embracing Defeat*, as follows: ‘One of the most pernicious aspects of the occupation was that the Asian peoples who had suffered most from imperial Japan’s depredation – the Chinese, Koreans, Indonesians and Filipinos – had no serious role, no influential presence at all in the defeated land. They became invisible. Asian contributions to defeating the emperor’s soldiers and sailors were displaced by an all-consuming focus on the American victory in the Pacific War.’ (p.27)

It should also be noted that one third of young Japanese men, who were born between 1920 and 1922, and who comprised the largest segment of the Japanese Imperial Forces, died by the end of the war. Consequently many surviving men came to hold a deep sense of guilt about not having died. This quite probably contributed to preventing them from engendering an acute sense of responsibility for the Asian victims of the war. Typical of their attitude, was the determination to adopt a strong resolve to work hard to help rebuild Japan on behalf of their deceased friends, i.e., “true war victims” in their eyes.

This popular self-perception, which highlighted Japanese “victim-hood” and downplayed their war responsibility to Asia, was further augmented with signing of the San Francisco Peace Treaty in September 1951. This treaty marked the formal cessation of the Asia-Pacific War, ended the occupation of Japan by the Allied (primarily American) forces, and simultaneously restored Japan’s independence, and consummated a US-Japan security treaty that provided for the permanent stationing of U.S. forces that continues to this day, and lashed Japan firmly within the arc of U.S. military power. With the refusal of the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia to sign the treaty, and with neither the People’s Republic of China (Beijing government) nor the Republic of China (Taiwan) invited to attend, despite the fact that China had suffered the heaviest casualties in the war against Japan, the treaty was clearly revealed as a Cold War

instrument of the U.S. In addition neither North Korea, fighting the U.S. in the Korean War, nor South Korea were invited to attend, on the dubious ground that Korea was not a state at the time of Japan's surrender in 1945. India and Burma refused to participate in the conference, regarding it as a "rigged affair" so that only four Asian nations – the Philippines, Indonesia, Ceylon and Pakistan – attended the conference. Yet Indonesia never ratified the treaty, but signed a separate peace treaty with Japan in 1958. The Philippines only ratified the treaty after it came into effect. In this way, the "invisibility of Asia" was again conspicuous at the San Francisco Peace Treaty Conference.



3. Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru signing the San Francisco Peace Treaty

The question of reparation is similarly important for locating Japan in comparative perspective, particularly vis-à-vis German behavior. Under U.S. pressure the Allied nations waived all reparation claims in accordance with Article 14 of the treaty. Later, Taiwan, China (both Beijing and Taipei), the Soviet Union and India likewise renounced the right to reparations. Thus, Japan eventually paid modest war reparations only to Burma, the Philippines, Indonesia, and South Vietnam. In addition, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea eventually received small amounts of economic aid and cooperation as Japan rejected the idea of paying reparations.

We have shown that the San Francisco Peace Treaty was less a peace treaty than an agreement to lash Japan to U.S. aims in the Asia Pacific. The combination of the Treaty and the AMPO Security Pact signed on the same day strongly reflected America's anti-communist policy and intention to use Japan to contain the Pacific side of the communist bloc (namely the Soviet Union, China and North Korea) by retaining U.S. military bases in Japan, in particular, in Okinawa. Therefore the treaty as a whole was lenient with respect to Japan's war responsibility. The Japanese government did perfunctorily acknowledge its war responsibility described in Article 11: "Japan accepts the judgments of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East and of other Allied War Crimes Courts both within and outside Japan, and will carry out the sentences imposed thereby upon Japanese nationals imprisoned in Japan." However, the same article also opened the possibility that Japanese B- and C-class war criminals who were tried for crimes against humanity such as war atrocities, and who constituted the great majority of war criminals, would be granted clemency, reduction of sentences or parole if the foreign government that conducted the war crimes tribunal agreed. Therefore, shortly after the San Francisco Peace Treaty came into effect in April 1952, a movement demanding the release of B- and C-class war criminals began, emphasizing the "unfairness of the war crimes tribunals" and the "misery and hardship of the families of war criminals." In this way, Japanese B- and C-class war criminals came to be viewed as "victims of war" by Japanese people generally. By the end of 1958, all Japanese war criminals, including A-, B- and C-class were released from prison and politically rehabilitated.

As a result, by the early 1950s the basic framework of popular thinking on war issues, which has hamstrung the development of a clear and deep sense of Japan's national responsibility ever

since, was well implanted within Japanese society. For its part, the Japanese government had adopted a kind of double-standard — on the one hand it officially accepted as a foreign policy Article 11 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, including the judgment of the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, while refusing to accept war responsibility as a domestic policy. This is evident both in the large-scale amnesty of those convicted by the Tokyo and the B- and C-class trials, and in the failure to embed responsibility for the consequences of the war in its public statements, in its textbooks, or in substantial reparations to the victims of colonialism and war. This contradiction, which continues today, has been the main cause of friction between Japan and other Asian nations, in particular China and South Korea. It is interesting to note that even such hawkish politicians as Nakasone Yasuhiro could not openly negate the legality of Article 11 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty while serving as prime minister. Even the current Prime Minister, Koizumi Junichiro, does not publicly contradict the Japanese government's official interpretation of the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal.

From around 1950, military histories written by former staff officers of the Japanese Imperial Army and Navy Forces, such as Tsuji Masanobu, Kusaka Ryunosuke and Hattori Takushiro, began to be published and many became bestsellers. However, as typified by Hattori's *Daitowa Senso Zenshi* (General History of the Great East Asian War), these popular books are written strictly from the perspective of explaining Japan's defeat, invariably attributed to the lack of natural resources and economic power. None address questions of Japanese colonialism, aggression or the atrocities that Japanese troops committed throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Indeed, Hattori does not even mention Japan's warfare against guerilla forces in China, the Philippines or elsewhere, as he did not regard "guerrillas" as proper military forces. For him "military history" was the history of war conducted only by regular military troops, i.e., in this case the Japanese Imperial Forces versus the Allied Forces.

However, in the late 1940s and early 1950s a number of books containing moving stories conveying strong anti-war sentiment began to be published. One such influential publication was *Kike Wadatsumi no Koe* (Listen to the Voices from the Sea), a 1949 collection of the letters home, diaries and wills of young student soldiers (mostly kamikaze pilots). Although this book had a profound anti-war message, one that resonated deeply with the Japanese people who had experienced the destruction of their cities from the air in the final months of the war, it raised few questions of Japanese responsibility for their deaths. It powerfully presents the young students who died during the war as sympathetic "victims" of a war waged by irresponsible military leaders. Nowhere, however, does it suggest Japanese responsibility for Asian victims of the war. Two other remarkable books which appeared in the same period were semi-autobiographical novels — *Furyoki* (Prisoner of War) and *Nobi* (Fires on the Plain) — both written by Ooka Shohei, a former Japanese POW captured by the U.S forces in a jungle in the Philippines. (*Fires on the Plain* was made into a film in 1959.) In these novels Ooka skillfully describes the painful physical and psychological problems of a sick and emaciated Japanese soldier struggling to survive the jungle fighting. These outstanding literary works convey a profound anti-war sentiment. Yet again, in both novels, the focal point is a young Japanese victimized by war, and little attention is paid to the Filipinos who were the targets of brutal Japanese military conduct.



4. Listen to the Voices From the Sea

Another book which became very popular in this period was *Biruma no Tategoto* (The Harp of Burma) by Takeyama Michio. It is a story about a young Japanese soldier in Burma, who deserted his troop and became a Buddhist monk. Even after the end of the war, he remained in Burma in order to appease the souls of his dead comrades. Here too, the plight of the Burmese people is completely ignored. Indeed, the author did not ever visit Burma. (The Harp of Burma was made into a film in 1956, and again in 1985.)

From the mid 1950s, numerous memoirs of former soldiers were published. Most were written by low ranking officers and noncommissioned officers, explaining how hard and bravely ordinary Japanese men like themselves had fought during the war and how honorably they had fulfilled their duties as Imperial soldiers. An interesting characteristic of these memoirs is that many authors criticized military leaders' conduct of the war, including the abandonment of their soldiers in the final months of the war. In this sense there is a certain similarity with the book, *Listen to the Voice from the Sea*. Yet these publications, too, contributed to the existing popular perception of the Japanese as war-victims, and failed to address questions of war crimes committed by Japanese against Asians.

In the latter half of the 1950s, partly due to popular peace movements in Japan against U.S. nuclear tests conducted in the Pacific, the re-militarization of Japan and the existence of U.S. military bases on Japanese soil, lively discussions regarding the Japanese people's war responsibility took place among the so-called progressive intellectuals. One product of this ferment was the publication of the book *Showa-shi* (A History of Showa) coauthored by three prominent Marxist historians, Toyama Shigeki, Imai Seiichi and Fujiwara Akira. The question of "war responsibility" in this case, however, centered on the failure of Japanese citizens to prevent the invasion of China. That is, the focus was on citizens' failure to halt militarism and fascism. An important issue, to be sure. But little was said about the nature of Japanese killing and atrocities in China and nothing about the impact of Japanese militarism on other Asian nations. Another important book published in this period is *Gendai Seiji no Shiso to Kozo* (The Thought and Structure of Modern [Japanese] Politics) by political scientist Maruyama Masao. Maruyama provided a theoretical explanation of the development of Japanese fascism and militarism in conjunction with the strengthening of emperor ideology from the Meiji era, but nowhere did he address the question of the Japanese people's war responsibility. In short, all of these works were heavily inward-looking rather than outward-looking. Furthermore, these debates were conducted within a limited academic circle and in left-wing circles associated with the communist and socialist parties. The result was that they had limited impact on popular perceptions of the war.

Popular feature films produced in the 1950s also shaped popular images of the Japanese as war victims, including feature films directly dealing with B- and C-class war criminals. Among them the most widely viewed was the 1958 film *Watashi wa Kai ni Naritai* (I Want be a Shellfish). This is a story of an innocent man, who happily returned home to his wife after the war to

resume a normal life as a local barber only to be arrested as a war criminal and given the death sentence. His crime was to have carried out the execution of an American POW, a surviving crew-member of a B-29 bomber that was shot down over Japan. The film depicts him as an extremely unfortunate man in the lowest rank of the Japanese Imperial Army, who could not refuse an order handed down from senior officers. The result is that he emerges not only as a typical victim of Japanese militarism but also of the capriciousness of the war crimes tribunal. (This film was remade for television in 1994.) Another film, *Kabe Atsuki Heya* (Room With a Thick Wall), produced in 1953 is about B- and C-class war criminals detained in Sugamo Prison and it too presents the prisoners as victims of war, while highlighting some legal defects of the tribunal.

Two other types of war-related feature films were produced in the 1950s: films on the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and those presenting the brutality experienced by Japanese rank and file soldiers in the Imperial Army. Between 1950 and 1955, several films about Hiroshima and Nagasaki were produced. Amongst them were *Nagasaki no Kane* (The Bell of Nagasaki, 1950), *Nagasaki no Uta Wasureji* (Never Forget the Song of Nagasaki, 1952), *Genbaku no Ko* (Child of the A-Bomb, 1952), *Hiroshima*, 1953, and Kurosawa Akira's *Ikimono no Kiroku* (Record of A Living Being, 1955). The last three films are particularly impressive from storytelling and filmic perspectives, and do not simply present Hibakusha (A-bomb victims) as the Japanese victims of war. Each has a profound and universal anti-nuclear weapon message. Yet none examines the impact of Japanese war on Asian people, and none poses serious questions of Japanese war responsibility.

The second group of films is represented by *Shinku Chitai* (Zone of Emptiness, 1952), based on the novel of the same title by Noma Hiroshi, and *Ningen no Joken* (Human Condition, 1960) based on a long story written by Gomikawa Junpei. Both films denounce the extreme brutality inflicted upon Japanese soldiers by their superiors. Although the latter film briefly touches on the atrocities Japanese troops committed against the Chinese, the main theme of these films is still the victimization of Japanese men through widespread inhumane conduct within the Japanese military forces. At the time, the most popular work in this category was a series of comedies called *Nitohei Monogatari* (The Story of A Private). In total ten films were produced in this immensely successful series between 1955 and 1961. It ridiculed the military system and ideology of the Japanese Imperial Forces. In each film, rank and file soldiers are severely maltreated by their seniors, and commanding officers are invariably corrupt and selfish. Each film ends, moreover, with a revolt by rank and file soldiers against their officers at the end of the war – a happy ending for audiences empathizing with the soldiers. In one film in this series, Japanese soldiers rescue Japanese comfort women captured by merciless Chinese soldiers, and a Chinese merchant closely collaborating with Chinese forces is presented in a dark light. However, not one of the films in this series depicts Japanese atrocities against local people in occupied territories.

Another popular film that deeply shaped the Japanese self-image as war-victims was *Godzilla*, particularly its original 1954 version. As I analyzed in an earlier article, '[Godzilla and the Bravo Shot: Who Created and killed the Monster?](#)', in many aspects *Godzilla* symbolized B-29 bombers that repeatedly attacked cities from Hokkaido to Okinawa and dropped A-bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Many scenes in this film evoked U.S. aerial attacks that took the lives of hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians in the final months of the war. Thus, although the film's effect is indirect, presented as it is through an entertaining monster film, it reaffirmed and

strengthened the Japanese popular concept of being war victims not perpetrators of war crimes. Overall, these films sent a remarkably consistent message and hence their effect in shaping popular understanding of the Asia-Pacific War was vast.

Considering that feature films screened at local cinemas were one of the few sources of entertainment available to the Japanese public in the post-war period, the above-mentioned films undoubtedly played a considerable role in shaping a widely shared view of the Asia-Pacific War amongst the general population. In 1958, for example, Japanese films attracted more than 1.1 billion viewers throughout the country.

In early 1965, U.S. forces began full-scale bombing of North Vietnam. Over the next decade, large numbers of bombers, troops and military supplies were dispatched from U.S. military bases in Japan, including Okinawa. In April that year, “Beheiren” (Japan Peace for Vietnam Alliance) was formed to oppose U.S. aggression and resist Japanese support for the U.S. war effort in Vietnam. Popular fears that Japan might again be dragged into war provided an important foundation for a relatively strong anti-war movement. Oda Makoto, a writer who led this movement, promoted the idea that the Japanese people should avoid becoming “war perpetrators” by refusing to collaborate with the U.S. in bombing and killing Vietnamese. He pointed out that, with respect to Japan’s own war experiences, hitherto ample attention had been paid to the aspect of their own victimization, but few had addressed the responsibility of the Japanese as assailants. To grasp the possibility of Japanese becoming assailants in the Vietnam War, he stressed the necessity to clearly recognize the historical fact that the Japanese people had been both victims and assailants in the Asia-Pacific War. It was a powerful appeal at a time when not only the general population but also the majority of intellectuals were preoccupied with only one side of their war experiences, that as victims both of the Japanese military and of U.S. bombing.

In addition to the Beheiren movement, efforts to normalize the relationship between Japan and China that started in the early 1970s stimulated debate on Japan’s war responsibility to the Chinese people. In this context, journalists such as Honda Katsuichi published detailed reports about the Chinese victims of Japanese military atrocities, notably those committed during the Nanjing Massacre. Some academics also started conducting research on war crimes that Japanese troops committed in China and other occupied territories of Asia. From the late 1970s, scholars such as Ienaga Saburo, Fujiwara Akira, Eguchi Keiichi and Oe Shinobu wrote about Japan’s war responsibility, posing serious moral questions. Encouraged by the work of these scholars, detailed accounts of hitherto unknown cases of Japanese war crimes – e.g., bacteriological warfare, massacre of POWs and exploitation of “comfort women” - were produced in the 1980s and 90s by historians such as Tsuneishi Keiichi, Yoshimi Yoshiaki, Kasahara Tokuji, Utsumi Aiko and others. The impact of such scholarly work upon intellectual circles was profound.

Yet the effects that progressive political movements such as Beheiren and academic research on Japanese war crimes had upon popular attitudes in Japan was insufficient to overcome the one-sided victimization perspective on the Asia-Pacific War. The dominant Japanese self-image as war victims infiltrated deeply into the psyche of many Japanese throughout the nation in the 1950s and 60s through both official and popular culture channels. It was no easy task for a progressive political or academic movement to overcome that established view.

From the early 1990s, a backlash against the above-mentioned progressive academic work was touched off by nationalist scholars, who denied the historical record of Japanese wartime

atrocities such as the Nanjing Massacre and the comfort women, and called on Japanese to take pride in their war record. Cartoonist Kobayashi Yoshinori was particularly influential in transmitting their views to a vast popular audience, and achieving a certain success in undermining the credibility of critical scholars. This backlash reverberated through the Japanese Ministry of Education's approval of the school textbook produced by nationalist scholars associated with the Tsukurukai (The Association for Producing New Textbooks) group and government introduction of a nation-wide school program to inculcate patriotism. In addition, as a result of Prime Minister Koizumi's stern rejection of the criticism of neighboring nations regarding his visits to Yasukuni Shrine, where Class A-war criminals are enshrined, and Foreign Minister Aso Taro's publicly urging the Emperor to visit Yasukuni Shrine, the issue of war responsibility is again a national and international issue. The Liberal Democratic Party's plan to amend the Japanese Peace Constitution in order to convert Japan's Self Defense Forces to a fully legitimate military force should be viewed in light of the question of war responsibility.

To grasp the rise of neo-nationalism in Japan in the 1990s, it is necessary to understand its close interrelationship with contemporary socio-economic phenomena such as "the bursting of the bubble economy," "financial crisis," "globalization," and "growing inequality." But we should also contemplate the entire framework of ethics, including the sense of moral responsibility. Only when the Japanese people fully accept moral responsibility for the hardships inflicted on Asian people through colonialism and war, will it be possible to achieve the aim described in the preface of their Constitution "to occupy an honored place in an international society striving for the preservation of peace, and the banishment of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance for all time from the earth."

References

- * John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (W.W. Norton & Company/The New York Press, New York, 1999)
- * Awaya Kentaro, '[The Tokyo Tribunal, War Responsibility and the Japanese People](#)' translated by Timothy Amos.
- * Oda Makoto, *Nanshi no Shiso* (Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, 1991)
- * Takahashi Tetsuya, *Sengo Sekinin-Ron* (Kodansha, Tokyo, 2005)
- * Takahashi Tetsuya, *Kokka to Gisei* (Nippon Hosho Kyokai, Tokyo, 2005)
- * Yoshida Yutaka, *Nipponjin no Senso-kan* (Iwanami Shoten, Tokyo, 1995)

Yuki Tanaka is Research Professor, Hiroshima Peace Institute, author of [Japan's Comfort Women. Sexual slavery and prostitution during World War II and the US Occupation](#), and a coordinator of Japan Focus.

Who is Responsible? The Yomiuri Project and the Enduring Legacy of the Asia-Pacific War

Tessa Morris-Suzuki

When, in mid-2005, Japan's Yomiuri newspaper began to publish a series of articles on the question of "war responsibility", the event attracted nationwide and even international interest. Now the newspaper series has become a book, published in a two-volume version in Japanese and in a one-volume abridged English translation entitled *Who Was Responsible? From Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbour*. There can be no doubt that these publications mark an important moment in the long and vexed history of East Asia's "history wars" – the ongoing conflicts between Japan and its neighbors (particularly China and both Koreas) about memory of and responsibility for Japan's 20th century military expansion in Asia.

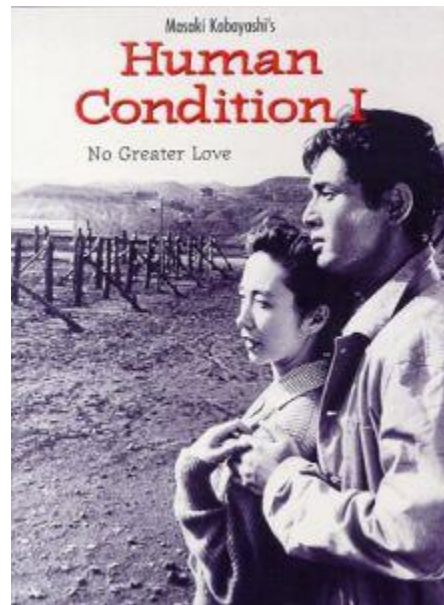
To assess the significance and impact of the Yomiuri project, though, it is important to see it in the context of history-writing in Japan and of contemporary Northeast Asian international relations. Before beginning to assess the content of the English-language volume, therefore, it is worth emphasizing what is not new about this work: There is nothing novel or unusual in Japanese historians or journalists publicly debating the problem of war responsibility. They have been doing so, with much passion and soul-searching, for more than sixty years.

During a recent visit to Tokyo, a Japanese colleague showed me the cover of a journal he had unearthed from the early 1950s, published by a group affiliated to the Japanese Communist Party. The cover featured a striking cartoon of Emperor Hirohito standing atop a mountain of skulls. Such graphic imagery is certainly highly risqué in the Japanese political context, where a miasma of taboo still surrounds critical comment on the person of the Emperor, and it is almost impossible to imagine any major journal agreeing to publish such an image. But its presence on the cover of this long-forgotten small-circulation magazine provides a stark reminder of the fact that questions of war responsibility, including those of the responsibility of Emperor Hirohito himself, have been ongoing topics of heated discussion in Japan. Indeed for historians of twentieth century Japan, a key task has been the search for an understanding of the processes that led to the "Manchurian Incident", the war in China, Pearl Harbour, Hiroshima and Japan's disastrous defeat in war.

One of the most influential early attempts to address this conundrum was the best-selling paperback *Showashi* ["A History of Showa" – Showa being the reign of the Emperor Hirohito], which was published in 1955, sold more than 100,000 copies in the six weeks following its publication, and generated a prolonged public controversy now remembered in Japan as the "Showashi Debate". Written by the eminent Marxian historians Toyama Shigeki, Imai Seiichi and Fujiwara Akira, *Showashi*'s approach was very different from that of the current Yomiuri volume. It sought, not so much to judge personal war guilt, as to define the underlying social and economic forces that led to war. [1]

The popular success of *Showashi* is a reminder of the powerful influence which Marxism exerted on postwar Japanese intellectual (though not political) life. However, searching criticisms of war responsibility were of course not confined to Marxists. Critical liberal intellectuals such as Maruyama Masao made profound contributions to the debate – Maruyama's work focusing particularly on the aspects of Japanese social structure and patterns of thought which had created fertile ground for the rise of militarism. [2] In the 1950s and 1960s, war responsibility was

debated not only in such academic works, but also in massively popular novels and films such as Gomikawa Jumpei's *Ningen no Joken* [The Human Condition], which appeared in novel, movie and manga form, and included graphic representations of acts of brutality committed by members of the Japanese armed forces in China. [3]



Ningen no Joken [The Human Condition]

Such criticism was only feebly echoed, however, at the political level, where Japan's postwar political leaders tended as far as possible to avoid the entire subject of war memory and responsibility, making apologetic comments only when pushed, and even then in guarded and ambiguous language which almost inevitably failed to satisfy those to whom the apologies were addressed. A symbolically significant and politically decisive moment in this history of evasiveness came in the late 1950s, when the Japanese government addressed the task of paying compensation to the Southeast Asian nations it had occupied during the Pacific War. With strong support from the United States, Japan reached a series of bilateral reparations agreements which involved government-to-government transfers of money for large-scale development and infrastructure projects. Many of these projects were carried out by Japanese companies which thus acquired the opportunity to re-establish an investment presence in the region. [4] No personal payments were made to the individual victims of the occupation.

Similarly, when relations were later established with South Korea and the People's Republic of China, development aid was used as a "substitute" for personal compensation. This process has had ongoing consequences. On the one hand, it has created a lingering sense of injustice on the part of many Asian victims of the war; on the other, it has left many people in Japan with the belief that their country has already paid its dues, and therefore that continuing demands from Asian critics that Japan "face its responsibilities" for wartime aggression are unreasonable.

An opportunity to resolve this unhappy legacy of history seemed to appear in the mid-1990s, as the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Asia-Pacific War approached. At that time, the Liberal Democratic Party, which had long held power in Japan (and is again in government today), was in a state of some disarray, and the political situation was unusually fluid. In 1993 indeed, Prime

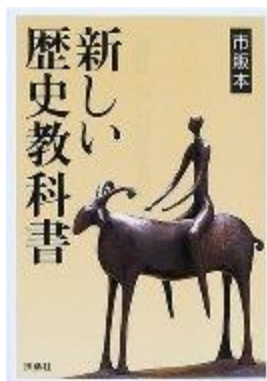
Minister Hosokawa made what many see as the most full and explicit apology by a Japanese leader, expressing his belief that:

it is important at this juncture that we state clearly before all the world our remorse at our past history and our renewed determination to do better. I would thus like to take this opportunity to express anew our profound remorse and apologies for the fact that past Japanese actions, including aggression and colonial rule, caused unbearable suffering and sorrow for so many people and to state that we will demonstrate our new determination by contributing more than ever to world peace. [5]

This, however, was not followed up by substantial practical measures by the Japanese government. The most significant step taken to mark the occasion by the coalition Murayama government (in power at the time of the anniversary of defeat) was the establishment of a relatively modest fund for international research on the war and related issues: an act which was seen by many as a characteristically timid and inadequate approach to the profound problem of war responsibility.

In fact, if the mid-1990s marked a turning point, it proved to be a turn in the opposite direction: away from efforts to acknowledge war responsibility and towards a nationalistic reassertion of pride in Japan's past (including significant aspects of its wartime past). The years immediately following the fiftieth anniversary witnessed an upsurge of revisionist writings by scholars and journalists seeking to justify Japan's prewar expansion and wartime policies. Most notable, perhaps, was the creation in 1996 of the Society for History Textbook Reform [Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho o Tsukuru Kai] which sought to promote a nationalistic approach to history teaching, and developed history texts that minimized criticism of Japan's colonialism and wartime activities. [6] Of course, the revisionists did not have things all their own way. A number of Japanese public figures, ranging from philosopher Takahashi Tetsuya to Miki Mutsuko (widow of former Liberal Democratic Party Prime Minister Miki Takeo) have continued to write and speak eloquently of the need for Japanese society and government to confront the unresolved problem of war responsibility. [7] Meanwhile, an expanding number of collaborative history projects by scholars in Japan, China and Korea have also been seeking paths to common understandings of the past. [8]

The growing visibility of the revisionists, and the rising tide of nationalist sentiment in Japan, however, brought a chorus of criticism from Japan's neighbours, particularly China and South Korea. Though the underlying causes of regional tensions are complex, and include economic rivalry and domestic political problems, the most visible trigger for friction has been the question of historical responsibility. Thus, when large groups of Chinese demonstrators attacked Japanese-owned businesses and offices in April 2005, the overt cause of the conflict was the Japanese Ministry of Education's decision to approve a new edition of the Society for History Textbook Reform's nationalistic textbook for use in schools. Throughout 2006 a major source of regional tension was Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro's insistence on making public visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, the Shinto shrine to "those who fell in war" (that is, to members of the military killed in action), in which executed war criminals are among those whose spirits are revered.



Tsukurukai's New History Textbook

II

The Yomiuri project, then, is in a sense just part of a long history of contests within Japan surrounding the memory of war. What is unusual about the project, however, is that it is a re-examination of the problem of war responsibility initiated by a newspaper generally considered to be “right-of-centre”, and therefore expected to support a more nationalistic approach to the past. The project can indeed be seen as one symptom of an interesting re-alignment in Japanese political and intellectual life, in which some aspects of the traditional distinction between “right” and “left” are being destabilized.

Conventionally, it has been the “right” which was expected to push the cause of nationalism, and “left” which was expected to espouse an internationalist attitude of remorse for past aggression against Japan’s Asian neighbours. But the regional tensions intensified by Koizumi’s visits to the Yasukuni Shrine and by nationalistic statements from some ruling-party politicians alarmed some people (including significant sections of Japan’s business community and more liberal members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party itself) whose general political stance is very far from being “left-wing”.

Among those people was Watanabe Tsuneo, the 80-year-old Editor-in-Chief of the Yomiuri Newspaper. As Watanabe makes clear in his Foreword to *From Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbor*, his perspective on contemporary Japanese nationalism is influenced by his painful personal memories of having been a wartime conscript soldier. He expresses deep discomfort at the prospect of a Japan where memories of war are rapidly fading, while events like Koizumi’s visits to the Yasukuni Shrine offer an implicit indulgence to the convicted war criminals who are enshrined there alongside other fallen soldiers. “If things are left as they are,” writes Watanabe, “a skewed perception of history – without knowledge of the horrors of the war – will be handed down to future generations.” (p. 8) A key problem emphasized in Watanabe’s Foreword is the fact that the Tokyo War Crimes Trials were conducted by the postwar Allied occupation authorities, and that the Japanese judicial system never attempted its own prosecutions of war criminals. As a result, it has been all too easy for Japanese people to dismiss the Tokyo Trial verdicts as a hollow form of “victors’ justice”, without attempting to offer their own alternative assessment of war guilt. Although Watanabe is quick to emphasize that the Yomiuri project is an autonomous initiative and “not due to pressure from China and/or South Korea”, he also emphasizes that a sincere effort by Japanese people to reconsider the problem of war

responsibility is indispensable if Japan is to “forge friendship and peace with its neighbors in the future”. (p. 9)

It was against the background of such concerns that the newspaper established the Yomiuri Shimbun War Responsibility Reexamination Committee, which was entrusted with the task of revisiting the events of the war and making their own re-assessment of the judgments of the Tokyo Trials. Though the members of the Committee were all Yomiuri journalists, they consulted with a number of historians, whose opinions they drew on in reaching their own conclusions on war responsibility. The project was launched at the time of the sixtieth anniversary of Japan’s defeat in war, and was one of a number of retrospective studies produced by Japanese media to mark the occasion. (Other large-scale projects timed to coincide with the sixtieth anniversary included the eight volume series *Ajia Taiheiyo Senso* [The Asia-Pacific War], produced by the publishing house Iwanami Shoten. [9])

The results of the Yomiuri team’s labors were two series of articles: the first serialized in the Yomiuri newspaper from August 2005 to March 2006, and republished in Volume 1 of the project’s Japanese language book, which is entitled *Kensho – Senso Sekinin* [Examining War Responsibility]; the second serialized from March to August 2006, and republished in Volume 2. [10] It is the second of the two volumes which (with some editing) provides the basis of the English translation. The English version also includes a collection of contemporary documents, not included in the Japanese original.

The decision to translate only Volume 2 seems to me to have been a regrettable one, since it leaves English-language readers with a slightly misleading impression of the nature of the project. In the Japanese version, the first volume is thematic, presenting a series of discussions of issues such as the economic background to the war, the issue of political terrorism, the role of the media, and the nature of war responsibility itself. The volume also contains interviews with two foreign scholars – American China scholar Mark Selden and the Chinese historian Liu Jie (currently based at Tokyo’s Waseda University) – and a panel table discussion between a group of Japanese public figures including writers and politicians.

By contrast, the second volume is essentially a chronological account of the war from the “Manchurian Incident” of 1931 to Japan’s defeat and occupation, in which the main emphasis is on a re-evaluation of the judgments of personal war responsibility made at the Tokyo War Crimes Trials. The penultimate chapter offers a “re-trial”, in which the Yomiuri team presents its own list of those most responsible for the disasters and sufferings of the War. Unsurprisingly, they concur with the original Allied decision not to prosecute Emperor Hirohito, emphasizing the image of Hirohito as an essentially peace-loving man who “stayed within the framework for a constitutional head of state”. (p. 260) They also agree with the Tokyo Trial judgment of wartime Prime Minister Tojo Hideki as holding major responsibility for launching aggression and maintaining even when defeat was inevitable. (pp. 245-249)

On the other hand, they differ from the Tokyo Trials in emphasizing the war responsibility of Konoe Fumimaro, Prime Minister from 1937-1939 and from 1940-1941, who committed suicide before he could be brought to trial, and in highlighting the roles of several others (including Kwantung Army officer Ishihara Kanji) who were never brought to trial. At the same time, the Yomiuri project also highlights the fact that blame for the wrongs of the war does not lie with Japan alone. The US is criticized for its firebombing of Japanese cities and its decision to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, while the Soviet Union is criticized for unilaterally

revoking its neutrality pact and declaring war on Japan in early August 1945. (pp. 263-264). Interestingly enough, James Auer, the American editor of the *From Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbor*, distances himself from the Yomiuri journalists' condemnation of the atomic bombings: one of the few instances I have encountered of an editor firmly contradicting a key conclusion of the book to which his name is attached. (p. 11-12)



Konoe Fumimaro

Because the English version excludes the thematic Volume 1, it gives the impression that the Yomiuri Project is a dry and traditionally empirical account of the events of the War, providing little discussion of social, economic or intellectual background. Such a criticism would be unfair, since (as we have seen) the background issues are addressed in some detail in the un-translated first half of the project. But, even though Volume 1 offers a more reflective approach to the problems of understanding the meaning of war responsibility, it remains true that the project as a whole takes a relatively orthodox approach to the determination of historical truth: it appears to tell its readers the answer to the question “who was responsible?”, rather than encouraging them to generate their own answers to that question.

I will not attempt here to discuss the merits of each individual assessment of personal responsibility made by the Yomiuri team, but would instead like to offer some more general comments about the strengths and weaknesses of the project as a whole.

III

The most valuable contribution of the project has been its role in stimulating renewed public debate in Japan about the question of war responsibility. As Japan's largest-selling newspaper, with a circulation of 10 million, the Yomiuri is particularly well-placed to bring the issue to wide public attention. The project team's findings make use of the opinions of relatively conservative historians such as Hata Ikuhiko (who is known for his low estimate of the number of victims of the Nanjing Massacre and of institutionalized sexual abuse by the Japanese military [11]). Precisely by placing the discussion of war responsibility within this conservative framework, however, the Yomiuri project has helped to make critical discussion of war responsibility "respectable", and encouraged participation in the debate by those who might otherwise have feared to approach such a sensitive topic. Meanwhile, their project has also encouraged emulation by others: the Asahi newspaper – conventionally regarded as occupying the "liberal-left" end of the spectrum of Japanese broadsheet newspapers – was quick to respond by starting its own re-examination of war responsibility.

The careful blow-by-blow account of the events of the war presented in *From Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbor* also sheds light on a number of aspects of the path to war which are probably not as well known as they should be, either in Japan or elsewhere: among them the ideological background to the Manchurian Incident, the complex political divisions which beset the Japanese cabinets of the late 1930s, the story of the desperate last-minute efforts to avert war on the eve of Pearl Harbor, and details of strategic blunders of Guadalcanal and the Battle of Okinawa. Incidentally, it should be said that the temporal scope of the book is a good deal wider than its English title suggests: rather than spanning the period from the Marco Polo Bridge incident of 1937 to the Pearl Harbour attack of 1941, it actually covers the entire period from 1931 to the immediate aftermath of Japan's defeat in 1945.

On the other hand, the decision to focus on a re-examination of the Tokyo verdicts in itself imposes some important limitations on the project. The Yomiuri Shimbun War Responsibility Reexamination Committee, in other words, have chosen to place themselves within the distinctly mid-twentieth century ethical and intellectual framework of the postwar war crimes trials, despite the fact that (as later commentators have pointed out) this framework leaves important questions of historical responsibility unexamined. The problem of war responsibility is, after all, not only a matter of determining "Who was responsible?" It is also necessary to ask, "For what crimes for which culprits to be judged?" In this project, two lacunae are particularly significant.

First, the Tokyo Trial prosecutors, who included representatives from the UK, Australia and the Netherlands, unsurprisingly chose not to address the problem of the oppression of colonized peoples. Their brief was to consider acts of aggression against independent nations, but colonial expansion itself was not held up to critical scrutiny, nor was the treatment of colonial subjects. The Yomiuri project, examining historical responsibility within the Tokyo Trials framework, similarly has virtually nothing to say about Japan's two major colonies, Korea and Taiwan. It does not (for example) look at contentious issues of historical responsibility such as the killing of Taiwanese Aboriginal people in the wake of the 1930 Musha uprising, or the use of forced labor from Korea during the Pacific War. [12] From this perspective, it is possible to question how far the Yomiuri project will address Taiwanese and particularly Korea concerns about Japanese historical amnesia.

Second, the Tokyo Trials paid relatively scant attention to the problem of war crimes against women, and had nothing at all to say about the institutionalized sexual abuse of Asian women in so-called “Comfort Stations” [ianjo], military and other officially sanctioned brothels. This problem, however, began to be a topic of heated debate in Japan and other Asian countries in the 1990s. In the year 2000, a group of Asian women including the late Matsui Yayori organized the Tokyo Women’s War Crimes Tribunal, which aimed to address this omission. The event was largely ignored by the mainstream media: the one extensive TV report on the Tribunal, produced by the Japanese national broadcaster NHK was altered (according to plausible accounts) as a result of pressure from conservative politicians including Japan’s present Prime Minister, Abe Shinzo. In reviewing the Tokyo Trials’ original judgments on individual war responsibility, the Yomiuri team once again draws a veil of silence over the problem of war crimes against women, and thus their study leaves another of the most contentious issues of historical responsibility un-addressed.

These criticisms, however, should not prevent a recognition of the achievements of this ambitious project, and particularly of its role in influencing historical debate at a crucial moment in Northeast Asian international relations. Perhaps the most interesting and significant sections of *From Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbour*, indeed, are the final chapter, entitled “What We Should Learn from the Showa War”, and the Afterword, written by senior Yomiuri journalist Asaumi Nobuo. These deal with the present and future as much as with the past. Asaumi’s Afterword reveals a real sense of concern on the part of sections of the Japanese social elite that the country is repeating mistakes of the past. Implicit parallels are drawn between the irresponsible adventurism of prewar politicians and the nationalistic posturing of some of Japan’s contemporary leaders. (pp. 282-290) The closing sections of the book also note the responsibility of the prewar media which, in Asaumi’s words “lost the spirit of upholding the principle of freedom of speech” (p. 290), and emphasize the problems the lack of widespread respect for human rights in prewar Japan. The lessons for the present are unmistakable.

The Yomiuri project’s answers to the question “Who Was Responsible?” are open to debate. But its concluding message is clear, powerful and timely. Those who were directly responsible for causing the disasters of the Asia-Pacific War have almost all passed on. But a different kind of historical responsibility survives into the present. This is the responsibility (incumbent on the people of all countries) to know about their past and to heed its lessons. In that sense, all sections of Japanese society, from government and the mass media to the ordinary person in the street, are responsible in the present for ensuring that their country does not once again slide towards tension and conflict with its closest Asian neighbors. And in that sense, this project can be seen as a valuable experiment in “responsible journalism”.

Tessa Morris-Suzuki is Professor of Japanese History, Convenor of the Division of Pacific and Asian History in the College of Asia and the Pacific, Australian National University, and a Japan Focus associate. Her book [Exodus to North Korea: Shadows from Japan's Cold War](#) has just been published at Rowman & Littlefield, James E. Auer ed., [Who Was Responsible? From Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbor](#). Tokyo, Yomiuri Shimbun, 2006, ISBN 4-643-06012-3.

*This is a slightly revised and expanded version of an article that appeared in a special issue of *Asian Perspective* 31.1, Spring 2007 on “Reconciliation Between China and Japan.” It was published at Japan Focus on June 19, 2007.*

Notes

1. Toyama Shigeki, Imai Seiichi and Fujiwara Akira, *Showashi* [A History of Showa] (Tokyo, Iwanami Shinsho, 1955); for a discussion see also Vanessa Buffy Ward, *Intellectuals and Publishing: Communicating Ideas in Post-War Japan* (Ph.D diss., Australian National University, Canberra, 2004), pp. 221-231.
2. For example, Masao Maruyama, "The Ideology and Movement of Japanese Fascism". *Japan Annual of Law and Politics*, 1952, vol. 1, pp. 95-128; Masao Maruyama, (Trans. I. Morris), *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1963)
3. Gomikawa Junpei, *Ningen no Joken* [The Human Condition] (Tokyo, San-Ichi Shobo, 1967); for further discussion of the tradition of critical popular writings in Japan see also Matthew Penney, ["The Most Crucial Education": Saotome Katsumoto and Japanese Anti-War Thought](#), *Japan Focus*, 3 December 2005.
4. See for example Kunio Yoshihara, *Japanese Investment in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1978) pp. 53 and 72.
5. [Policy Speech](#) by Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro to the 127th session of the national Diet.
6. Nishio Kanji et al., *Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho* [New History Textbook] (Tokyo, Fusosha, 2001), for a discussion, see Gavan McCormack, "The Japanese Movement to 'Correct' History", in Laura Hein and Mark Selden eds., *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany and the United States* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), pp 53-73.
7. See for example Takahashi Tetsuya, *Rekishi/Shuseishugi* [History / Revisionism] (Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 2001); Takahashi Tetsuya, *Yasukuni Mondai* [The Yasukuni Problem] (Tokyo, Chikuma Shinsho, 2005). On Miki Mutsuko, see for example ["Japan's Burden"](#), *Asiaweek*, 7 June 1996, (accessed 26 January 2007)
8. These projects include the Historical Reconciliation Workshop [Rekishi Wakai Wakushoppu] headed by Asahi journalist Funabashi Yoichi and the Committee for Japan-China-South Korea Three Country Common Historical Materials [Nicchukan 3-koku Kyotsu Rekishi Kyozaï Iinkai]. See Funabashi Yoichi ed., *Nihon no Senso Sekinin o dou Kangaeru ka* [How to Think About Japan's War Responsibility] (Tokyo, Asahi Shimbunsha, 2001); Nicchukan 3-goku Kyotsu Rekishi Kyozaï Iinkai ed., *Mirai o Hiraku Rekishi: Higashi Ajia 3-goku no Kingendai-Shi* [History opens the Future: The Modern and Contemporary History of Three East Asian Countries] (Tokyo, Kobunken, 2005).
9. Kurasawa Aiko, Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Narita Ryuichi, Sugita Toru, Yoshida Yutaka and Yui Daizaburo eds. *Koza – Ajia Taiheiyo Senso*. [The Asia-Pacific War] Vols 1-8. (Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 2005-2006)
10. Yomiuri Shimbun Senso Sekinen Kensho Iinkai ed., *Kensho – Senso Sekinin* Vols. 1-2 (Tokyo, Chuo Koronsha, 2006)
11. See Hata, Ikuhiko, *Showashi no Nazo o Ou*, Vols. 1-2, [Pursuing the Mysteries of Showa History], (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjusha, 1993); Hata Ikuhiko, *Ianjo to Senjo no Sei*, [The Comfort Stations and Sex on the Battle Front] (Tokyo, Shinchosha, 1999); for a discussion, see Soh Chung-Hee Sarah, "Teikoku Nihon no 'Gun Ian Seido' Ron" [Debates on the 'Military Comfort

System' in Imperial Japan"] in Kurasawa Aiko, Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Narita Ryuichi, Sugita Toru, Yoshida Yutaka and Yui Daizaburo eds. *Koza – Ajia Taiheiyo Senso*. [The Asia-Pacific War] Vol. 2. (Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 2005), pp. 347-380.

12. On the Musha uprising, see Leo Ching, *Becoming Japanese: Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2001), pp. 133-173; On the problem of forced labor, see for example William Underwood, "Names, Bones and Unpaid Wages: Seeking redress for Korean Forced Laborer", [Parts 1](#) and [2](#), Japan Focus, 10 September 2006, and , accessed 15 November 2006.

References

Ching, Leo, *Becoming Japanese: Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2001)

Funabashi Yoichi ed., *Nihon no Senso Sekinin o dou Kangaeru ka*, [How to Think About Japan's War Responsibility] (Tokyo, Asahi Shimbunsha, 2001)

Hata, Ikuhiko, *Showashi no Nazo o Ou*, Vols. 1-2, [Pursuing the Mysteries of Showa History], (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjusha, 1993)

Hata Ikuhiko, *Ianjo to Senjo no Sei*, [The Comfort Stations and Sex on the Battle Front] (Tokyo, Shinchosha, 1999).

Kurasawa Aiko, Morris-Suzuki, Tessa, Narita Ryuichi, Sugita Toru, Yoshida Yutaka and Yui Daizaburo eds. 2005-2006. *Koza – Ajia Taiheiyo Senso*. [The Asia-Pacific War] Vols 1-8. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten.

Mackie, Vera. 2003. *Feminism in Modern Japan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Maruyama, Masao. 1952. "The Ideology and Movement of Japanese Fascism". *Japan Annual of Law and Politics*. 1: 95-128.

Maruyama, Masao. 1963. (Trans. I. Morris). *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McCormack, Gavan. 2001. "The Japanese Movement to 'Correct' History". In *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany and the United States*. Eds. Laura Hein and Mark Selden. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe. 53-73.

Morris-Suzuki, Tessa, "Free Speech, Silenced Voices : the Japanese Media and the NHK Affair", [Asiarights Journal, issue 4](#), 2005.

Nicchukan 3-goku Kyotsu Rekishi Kyozaï Iinkai ed., *Mirai o Hiraku Rekishi: Higashi Ajia 3-goku no Kingendai-Shi* [History opens the Future: The Modern and Contemporary History of Three East Asian Countries] (Tokyo, Kobunken, 2005).

Nishio Kanji et al., *Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho* [New History Textbook] (Tokyo, Fusosha, 2001)

Soh Chung-Hee Sarah, "Teikoku Nihon no 'Gun Ian Seido' Ron" [Debates on the 'Military Comfort System' in Imperial Japan"] in Kurasawa Aiko, Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Narita Ryuichi,

Sugita Toru, Yoshida Yutaka and Yui Daizaburo eds. *Koza – Ajia Taiheiyo Senso*. [The Asia-Pacific War] Vol. 2. (Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 2005), pp. 347-380.

Takahashi Tetsuya, *Rekishi/Shuseishugi* [History / Revisionism] (Tokyo, Iwanami Shoten, 2001)

Takahashi Tetsuya, *Yasukuni Mondai* [The Yasukuni Problem] (Tokyo, Chikuma Shinsho, 2005)

Toyama Shigeki, Imai Seiichi and Fujiwara Akira, *Showashi* [A History of Showa] (Tokyo, Iwanami Shinsho, 1955).

Underwood, William, “Names, Bones and Unpaid Wages: Seeking redress for Korean Forced Laborer”, [Parts 1](#) and [2](#), Japan Focus, 10 September 2006.

Ward, Vanessa Buffy, *Intellectuals and Publishing: Communicating Ideas in Post-War Japan*. (PhD diss., Australian National University, Canberra, 2004).

Yomiuri Shimbun *Senso Sekinen Kensho* linkai ed., *Kensho – Senso Sekinin* Vols. 1-2. (Tokyo, Chuo Koronsha, 2006)

Yoshihara, Kunio, *Japanese Investment in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1978)

The Aso Mining Company in World War II: History and Japan's Would-Be Premier

William Underwood

Despite his recently failed third attempt to become prime minister, Aso Taro remains one of Japan's best-known and most influential politicians. The former foreign minister still aspires to the top post and in two books published earlier this year he has sketched a road map for the nation.

Japan the Tremendous, a bestseller written in a populist tone, highlights the peaceful nature of postwar Japan and calls the country a "fount of moral lessons" for Asia. *Arc of Freedom and Prosperity: Japan's Expanding Diplomatic Horizons* expatiates on Aso's tenure as foreign minister from October 2005 to August 2007.



Aso Taro: Japan's future leader?

But a 1975 book called *The 100-Year History of Aso* sends a different message about the would-be prime minister's view of World War II and his vision for Japan's future.[1]

Aso Taro oversaw publication of the 1,500-page company history as president and CEO of Aso Cement Co. Marking the centennial of the family firm, the book suggests the United States tricked Japan into attacking Pearl Harbor and glorifies the Japanese war effort with little critical commentary.

The World War II chapter of *The 100-Year History of Aso* begins by recapping the Imperial Japanese Army's move into Manchuria in 1931, followed in 1932 by the spread of war to Shanghai and the establishment of the Japanese puppet state, Manchukuo. The book recounts the 42-1 vote by which the League of Nations condemned Japanese expansionism in China in 1933 and Japan's withdrawal from the world body.

Aso Takakichi, Aso Taro's father, became the second president of Aso Mining Co. in 1934 at age 24. Aso Taro's great-grandfather founded the business in 1872, supplying "black diamonds" from the Kyushu coalfields to fuel Japan's fast-modernizing economy. Aso Taro's grandfather died prematurely and never headed the firm.

Aso Takakichi forged his own identity as the new boss by establishing Aso Academy (Aso Juku), aiming at the cultivation of the "Aso man" capable of serving the nation in "spirit, body and technical ability." The school styled itself as a "Showa Shoin Juku," evoking the academy founded by Yoshida Shoin in nearby Yamaguchi Prefecture that nurtured leaders of the early Meiji era.

Japan's shift to a war production economy in the course of the 1930s prompted Aso Mining to open a Tokyo office and new coal pits in Kyushu. Domestic business operations expanded in Wakamatsu, Kobe, Osaka and Nagoya, while the company's young president assessed the international situation during an overseas fact-finding trip for five months in 1936-37. By the end of the decade Japan was waging all-out war in China and on a military collision course with the West.

In a section called "Aso Fights," the corporate history quotes for several pages the January 1940 address to assembled employees by Aso Takakichi, whose son Taro would be born later that year. Aso sought to motivate the miners by portraying the firm as a front-line unit in Japan's war of economic production, resolving as unit leader to share the fate of his troops.



Aso Takakichi, left, took charge of Aso Mining in the 1930s, while Aso Taro was running the family firm when the corporate history was published in 1975. (*The 100-Year History of Aso*)

"In our country labor and management are one, facing in the same direction—toward the emperor. We must advance on the path of national duty," Aso solemnly told his workforce, stressing the sacred nature of coal mining and the urgent need for greater self-sacrifice. "If it is possible that anyone here does not understand this spirit of service to the nation, as a Japanese subject he should be truly ashamed."

Aso Takakichi struck an anti-capitalist chord by insisting that the corporation's goal was not to make money. He told the employees that while some profit was required to fulfill his duty of continuing the family business, additional profits would be gladly distributed to workers first. He pledged to reward workers by building facilities for their benefit and helping to improve public services.

Noting that 1940 was the 2,600th anniversary of Japan's mythical founding, Aso's address inventoried the challenges confronting the nation: the raging war in "Shina" (the diminutive Japanese name for China), hostile relations with the Soviet Union and increasing friction with the United States and the United Kingdom.

Japan “forcibly advanced” into French Indochina in 1941, the book continues. In response the U.S., the U.K., France and Holland “tightened the net” around Japan by freezing overseas financial assets and halting oil shipments to the nation. Late-1941 diplomatic negotiations between Tokyo and Washington are reviewed in considerable detail.

“Whether we liked it or not and even as the world busily tried to avert war,” the Aso chronicle states, “the unfortunate year of Showa sixteen (1941) was just like a pus-filled tumor that resists medical treatment and bursts open. Charging into an economic war to secure natural resources became unavoidable.”

Top U.S. leaders had detailed knowledge of Japanese military plans before the attack on Pearl Harbor, according to Aso historians, who add that the Imperial Navy initially wanted to fight America two years later. Japan was purposely allowed to strike the first blow in December 1941, so that “Remember Pearl Harbor” could become a rallying cry for Americans.

“This cleverly united American opinion for war against Japan,” the book says. “But America lost the backbone of its Pacific fleet as a result. Moreover, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States, expanding the conflict into a world war.”

Aso Mining responded to this “most desperate crisis in Japanese history” by digging coal in record quantities. The company became like a “kamikaze special attack production unit.”

“Coal is the mother of greater military strength,” wartime Prime Minister Tojo Hideki is quoted as saying. Given Japan’s vulnerability with respect to oil, coal was indeed crucial to the Japanese economy.

“In response to the enemy’s materiel offensive, we will fight by means of increased coal production,” said Kishi Nobusuke, then Japan’s minister of commerce and industry. “All miners must come together in spirit and the patriotic mining industry must dash forward.”



Left: Aso miners doing calisthenics during the war; right: ore cars at the Aso Yoshikuma mine.
(*The 100-Year History of Aso*)

Tojo was executed as a Class A war criminal in 1948. Kishi was imprisoned for three years as a Class A war crimes suspect but never tried. He served as Japanese prime minister from 1957 to 1960, and was a main founder of the LDP. Abe Shinzo, whose rocky year as prime minister ended in September, is Kishi’s grandson.

Aso Taro’s grandfather was Prime Minister Yoshida Shigeru, the most powerful Japanese leader of the occupation era, while his wife is the daughter of former Prime Minister Suzuki Zenko. Aso’s sister is married to Prince Tomohito of Mikasa, a first cousin of the current emperor. His

great-great-grandfather, Okubo Toshimichi, was a chief architect of the modern Japanese state. Aso's family lineage thus runs from the upper echelons of the Meiji Restoration through postwar Japan's top political leadership to the royal family.

The 1975 book recalls wartime initiatives like the "Certain Decisive Victory Increased Production Campaign." Government slogans included "Planes, ships and bullets: all thanks to coal," and "One lump of coal equals one drop of blood."

Weekends disappeared during the move to a seven-day workweek, jokingly replaced by two Mondays and two Fridays. But coal production eventually plunged as skilled miners became soldiers and shipped out for overseas battlefields. The lack of mining materials and equipment during the desperate late-war years led to reckless mining and ruined mines.

Aso Mining and Forced Labor

Severe manpower shortages necessitated the widespread use of forced labor in wartime Japan—and at Aso Mining. Some 700,000 Korean labor conscripts were brought to Japan using varying degrees of coercion beginning in 1939. The Japanese military transported more than 30,000 Allied prisoners of war to Japan beginning in 1942, while nearly 40,000 Chinese arrived under similarly forcible conditions starting in 1943.

Aso Mining was employing 7,996 Korean conscripts as of January 1944, according to a wartime report by the Special Higher Police (Tokubetsu Koto Keisatsu), and 56 conscripts had recently died. Fukuoka-based historians estimate Aso used a total of 12,000 Koreans between 1939 and 1945. The wartime police report shows that 61.5 percent of Aso's Korean laborers resisted conscription by fleeing their work sites, the highest percentage of runaways in the region. While this figure indicates that security conditions were not prison-like, most Korean conscripts in Japan were never properly paid for their work.



Young Korean labor conscripts at Aso Mining's Atago mine: workers assigned to the Jowa dormitory in 1942 (right) and the Yamato dormitory in 1943. (Hayashi Eidai photos)

There were also 300 Allied POWs at the Aso Yoshikuma mine in Fukuoka Prefecture. Documentation includes the Aso Company Report of January 1946 and other records produced by the postwar Japanese government, as described by [Japan Focus](#) in May 2007.

Yet the family conglomerate, now known as Aso Group and headed by Aso Taro's younger brother, has never publicly acknowledged or commented on its POW legacy. Recent phone calls to the Fukuoka office of Aso Lafarge Cement were not returned.

A spokesperson for then-Foreign Minister Aso addressed the POW issue for the first time in June 2007, but stopped short of acknowledging the historical record (see article below). Previously, the Foreign Ministry had cast doubt on foreign media reports about the Aso-POW connection. Japanese-language media have avoided reporting the issue.

The 1,500-page Aso corporate history contains a single cryptic reference to wartime forced labor. As Japanese miners left for military service, the book says, "people like Korean laborers and Chinese prisoners of war filled the void" in Japan's mining industry.

Although 6,090 Chinese forced laborers were used at 16 sites in Fukuoka, and 11 percent of them died, Aso Mining was not one of the five Japanese companies involved. It is unclear why the book mentions Chinese workers (and accurately describes them as "prisoners") but omits the Allied POWs that Aso did use three decades earlier.

The Seoul government's Truth Commission on Forced Mobilization Under Japanese Imperialism has been vigorously researching wartime labor conscription since 2005. Assisted by Japanese citizens, commission members spent a week in Kyushu in early 2007, searching mostly in vain for information about Aso Mining's extensive use of Korean conscripts.

Shortly after Aso Taro became foreign minister in late 2005, a South Korean truth commission official charged that Japanese companies were not cooperating in efforts to locate the remains of Korean workers still in Japan.

"The corporations' survey of remains has been insincere," the South Korean official said. "It is also strange that the family company of the foreign minister, who should be setting an example, has provided no information whatsoever." [2]



Aso Mining's former Akasaka mine in the late 1970s and a Korean forced to work there during World War II. (Hayashi Eidai photos)

[Aso Group](#) today consists of more than 60 companies in diverse fields such as health care, education, construction and real estate, while also supplying gasoline and running a golf course located beside the former Yoshikuma mine. Aso Cement merged with Lafarge, the French multinational and world's largest cement maker, in 2001. Aso ceased coal mining in the 1960s.

Highlighting the company motto, "We deliver the best," the flashy Aso Group website plays up the family's Meiji-era business roots and provides excerpts from *The 100-Year History of Aso*. Yet wartime records related to Aso's use of forced labor have apparently vanished.

"We couldn't investigate into the history of Aso Mining even if we wanted to, because records just aren't available from so long ago," an Aso Group official told the Associated Press in November 2005. "All we can say is that everybody employed forced labour during the war. There must have been a dozen mining companies in Kyushu at the time, and they all used forced labour. So it wasn't a practice limited to Aso Mining." [3]

Disappearing Korean Remains

In February 2006 the Japanese Foreign Ministry (headed by Aso Taro) was informed by Aso Group (headed by Aso Yutaka) that Aso Cement had returned six sets of Korean remains to family members living in the vicinity of the Aso Yoshikuma coal mine in 1984-85. [4]

During redevelopment in the 1960s, a communal cemetery containing the cremated remains of an estimated 504 people was discovered near the entrance to the recently closed Yoshikuma mine. Aso Mining soon built a charnel house a few hundred meters from the cemetery and transferred the remains into it.

In the early 1970s, Zainichi Korean and Japanese activists began researching the Fukuoka area's legacy of Korean forced labor. Hayashi Eidai, a respected local historian who has written 50 books about forced labor and other aspects of Japanese war conduct over the past four decades, was one of the researchers involved.

Hayashi gained access to the Aso-built charnel house in 1975 and photographed six remains containers (known as tsubo), each of them bearing a Korean name. The rest of the remains were either unidentified or belonged to working-class Japanese with no known next of kin. Hayashi returned to the Yoshikuma charnel house the following year to gather information for a television documentary.

By 1976, however, all six sets of Korean remains had been removed from the charnel house shelves. Hayashi was shown a small hole beneath the shelves and told by the Buddhist priest in charge that the Korean remains had been deposited in an underground storage area. The unusual funerary practice was not further explained.



1975 images of the exterior and interior of the Aso Yoshikuma charnel house. Six containers of Korean ashes (right) disappeared the following year. (Hayashi Eidai photos)

Aso Taro was president of Aso Cement at the time; he left the post upon his election to the House of Representatives in 1979. Korean conscript remains may have been removed from the shelves of the Aso Yoshikuma charnel house in 1975-76 because they were viewed as a potential liability for the family scion's political career.

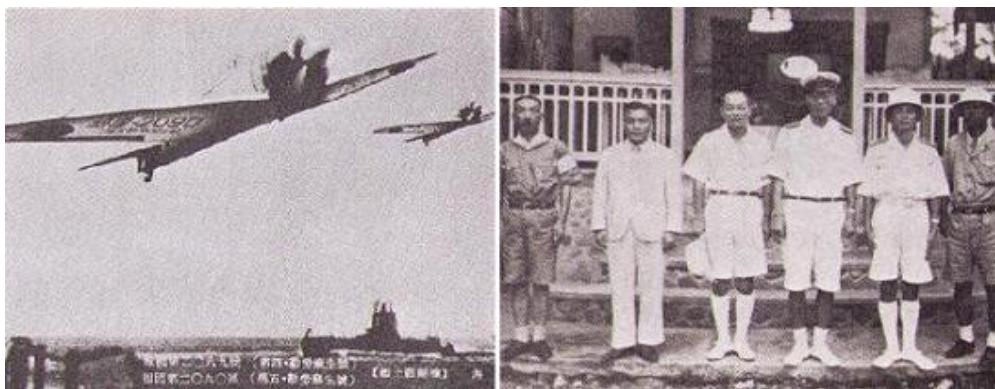
Today, Hayashi and other Fukuoka-based researchers doubt the veracity of Aso Group's claim that the six sets of Korean remains were returned to family members.

Instead, the Fukuoka researchers suspect the ashes were removed from their individual containers and dumped into the storage space beneath the Aso Yoshikuma charnel house. There were no Korean families still living around the Yoshikuma mine to receive the remains in the mid-1980s, according to Hayashi.

It is also unclear why Aso Cement supposedly handed over the ashes at that time: four decades after the war's end, two decades after the remains were exhumed from the cemetery at the Yoshikuma site, and one decade after they disappeared from the charnel house shelves following the first researcher inquiries.[5]

The World War II chapter of the Aso history book concludes by describing the company's late-war mining venture on the island of Celebes, now part of Indonesia. Two hundred Aso employees were dispatched for the project at the request of the Imperial Navy and the Coal Control Association. Aso's hefty financial investment in the Celebes mine was lost due to Japan's defeat.

Photographs in the book depict Aso workers doing calisthenics before entering the Kyushu mines, a site visit by top sumo wrestlers, and various aspects of coal and cement production. Another photo shows two carrier-based warplanes that Aso employees presented to the Imperial Navy through their donated labor. Lyrics of patriotic mining songs are provided.



Left: Imperial Navy warplanes; right: Aso Mining officials in the Celebes. (*The 100-Year History of Aso*)

It is not surprising that an account of Aso Mining's wartime activities includes the imperial ideology and spiritual mobilization so central to the period. It is also true that the Aso dynasty has made many positive contributions to the Fukuoka region since 1872, not only economically but in fields such as education and health care.

Yet the book's silence about the company's own use of forced labor, and the suggestion that Japan fought a morally just war it did not desire, are more troubling. A string of provocative comments by Aso Taro appears to be connected to the version of Japanese history found in the company book project.

Aso has infuriated Koreans by defending Japan's colonial rule and insisting that Koreans had voluntarily requested Japanese names. He has also described contemporary Chinese military spending as a "considerable threat" and expressed his desire for Japan's emperor to visit Yasukuni shrine.

The Aso company line on World War II resembles the revisionist narrative being advanced by Yasukuni's controversial history museum, which seeks to justify Japan's colonial rule and military aggression. Aso opined as leader of Japan's diplomatic corps—and before the most offensive exhibits were toned down—that the Yasukuni museum "merely shows what the wartime situations were."

"Historical perspectives based on masochistic views don't correspond with my philosophy," Aso said last month during a key debate with Fukuda Yasuo, referring to how he would approach contentious war-related issues. Fukuda, who seeks to address Northeast Asia's history problem in a more conciliatory fashion, defeated Aso to become the current LDP president and Japanese prime minister.

"Masochistic" (*jigyakuteki*) is a codeword used by Japanese groups, in and out of the LDP, advocating a historical perspective that Japan's neighbors say whitewashes Japanese war misconduct. Whereas as Fukuda pledged during the campaign to avoid visiting Yasukuni while heading the government, Aso insisted the opinions of foreign governments should be disregarded when considering the question.

Aso left the helm of the Foreign Ministry and became LDP secretary general last August, following the party's disastrous showing in Upper House elections in July. The new job was viewed as the ideal springboard for Aso to eventually succeed Abe Shinzo as prime minister.

Most news reports of Abe's sudden resignation in September mentioned Aso as the probable next prime minister. LDP factions soon united around the grandfatherly Fukuda instead, but Aso still received far more party support than expected, especially from local LDP chapters. Younger Japanese are said to appreciate Aso's unvarnished speaking style and identify with his passion for manga comic books.

Although [Aso Taro](#), 67, held key cabinet posts in both the Abe and Koizumi administrations, he turned down Prime Minister Fukuda's request to join the current cabinet. "I want to have my hands free," Aso told reporters, signaling that his prime ministerial ambitions remain intact.

Despite his reputation as an assertive nationalist, Aso served as the point man for Japan's "values-oriented diplomacy" during his stint as foreign minister, while seeking a more proactive role for Japan on the world stage. The related slogan for Aso's recent campaign for the premiership was "Japan's Potential Power—Seeking Vitality and Security."

Readers of *The 100-Year History of Aso* may sense a mismatch between the vision and the man who would be prime minister.

.....

Aso questions content of 1946 records

Aso Taro now possesses the postwar records proving that Aso Mining used Allied POW forced labor, but his spokesperson has made conflicting statements about their meaning.

Last June, I mailed the then-foreign minister both Japanese and English versions of the Aso Company Report, produced by his family's firm on Jan. 24, 1946. Ordered by Occupation authorities investigating war crimes against Allied prisoners, the report clearly shows that 300 POWs were assigned to the Aso Yoshikuma coal mine.



Ex-POW Arthur Gigger was forced to work without pay for Aso Mining in 1945 (Ian Millard photo). Two of Gigger's fellow Australians died at the Yoshikuma mine and are buried in the Commonwealth War Cemetery in Yokohama.

Muramatsu Ichiro, Aso's policy secretary, was then interviewed by telephone twice. "The authenticity of the documents is very high," he said during a freewheeling, hour-long conversation on June 21. The report is written on company stationery and bears an official seal.

Muramatsu seemed to readily agree that the Australian, British and Dutch prisoners had dug coal for Aso Mining beginning in May 1945. But he questioned whether their work could be described as "forced labor," stressing that the Aso Company Report says wages were paid. Australian survivors of the Yoshikuma labor camp, however, have insisted they received no money from Aso.

"How was a POW any different from a conscripted Japanese worker?" Muramatsu asked.

He also raised the subject of Japanese POWs who were taken to Siberia by the Soviet Union to perform forced labor after the war. About ten percent of the Japanese prisoners died. None have ever been compensated for their mistreatment by the Soviet Union, Russia or Japan.

The compensation fund for Nazi-era forced labor set up by Germany's government and corporations recently finished paying out some \$6 billion to 1.7 million people living in 100 countries. Many of these recipients received wages during the war; some even lived in their own homes.

Muramatsu also said that Aso Mining Co. had no connection to Aso Cement Co., which was headed by Aso Taro during most of the 1970s. But the Aso Group [website](#) today proudly highlights the historical continuity of the family's various businesses.



The abandoned Aso Yoshikuma work office (left) and ruined Yoshikuma mine buildings in the late 1970s.
(Hayashi Eidai photos)

A shorter, less cordial phone call to Aso's policy secretary took place on June 22. I asked Muramatsu to clarify whether the Allied prisoners performed "forced labor" at Yoshikuma and why they do not appear in *The 100-Year History of Aso*.

Muramatsu then reversed his previous position, refusing to acknowledge that Aso Mining used Allied POWs at all.

He said the contents of the 1946 Aso Company Report should be accepted or rejected in their entirety. With American war crimes investigators as its target audience, the report claims the Western prisoners were treated better than Japanese workers and thanked Aso Mining staff by giving them gifts after the war.

"Selectively using the records is dishonest," Muramatsu said.

William Underwood, a faculty member at Kurume Institute of Technology and a Japan Focus coordinator, completed his doctoral dissertation at Kyushu University on forced labor in wartime Japan.

Japan Focus thanks Hayashi Eidai for access to his photo archives.

This is an expanded and updated version of an article that originally appeared in the Japan Times on June 26, 2007.

Endnotes

[1] *Aso Hyakunen Shi*. Iizuka, Fukuoka: Aso Cement Co., 1975.

[2] "Aso gaisho no kankei kaisha, choyosha ikotsu joho teikyo sezu, Kankoku de hihan." *Yomiuri Shimbun* online (Kyushu edition), Dec. 24, 2005.

[3] "Japan FM family firm in spotlight." *BBC News* online. Nov. 30, 2005. [Available](#). It should be noted that the Aso spokesman likely used the term "choyo" (best translated as labor "conscription"), not "kyosei renko" (best translated as "forced labor").

[4] “Aso gaisho no shinzoku kigyo, tanko shikichinai no Chosenjin ikotsu 6 tai wo henkan.” *Yomiuri Shimbun* online (Kyushu edition), Feb. 28, 2006. See also “Firm of Aso’s father returned remains of 6 Korean workers to kin.” *Kyodo News International* online, Feb. 28, 2006. [Available](#).

[5] This account of Korean remains at the Aso Yoshikuma charnel house ([Japanese version here](#)) is based on an unpublished manuscript, “Human Remains at the Aso Yoshikuma Coal Mine,” received from Hayashi Eidai in July 2006 and follow-up conversations with him. Hayashi prepared the manuscript for possible use by a Japanese Diet member during an interpellation session, but the issue has never been raised in the Diet.

Toward Reconciliation: The Nishimatsu Settlements for Chinese Forced Labor in World War Two

Ivy Lee

Introduced by William Underwood

Introduction

As a recently retired sociology professor in the United States, Ivy Lee became actively involved with global efforts to redress Japanese war crimes a few years before Kajima Co.'s controversial settlement in 2000 with Chinese forced laborers from the notorious Hanaoka worksite. Kajima's approach to resolving the Hanaoka injustice raised serious doubts about its corporate sincerity, but the professional honesty and good faith of Japanese lawyers who provided pro bono representation for the Chinese victims were also called into question by some critics in ways that suggested the need for careful investigation.

Lee's article below is motivated by a desire to advance the best interests of the aging survivors of forced labor in wartime Japan and their heirs, and to avoid an unnecessary repeat of such Hanaoka-type acrimony that also pitted victims who accepted the Kajima money against victims who did not. She seeks to clarify the content of the pair of compensation pacts Nishimatsu Construction Co. concluded in 2009 and 2010, and in the process appraises the Nishimatsu deals far more positively than Chinese attorney Kang Jian, whose sharp [critique](#) of the settlements Lee systematically deconstructs.

This article also provides insight into the multibillion-dollar fund set up in Germany in 2000 to compensate Nazi-era forced laborers, concluding that the path chosen by Nishimatsu generally resembles the German precedent. Michael Bazylar, an authority on the Holocaust restitution lawsuits of the 1990s and Germany's forced labor fund, similarly compared the Japanese and German cases in a 2009 [article](#) for The Asia-Pacific Journal. Bazylar also contributed to the article below.

Lee suggests the efforts of Japanese lawyers who have long pursued reparations on behalf of Chinese, and the challenges confronting them within Japan, need to be fully appreciated. In fact, the progressive leaders of the Japanese lawyers group that has litigated nearly all the Chinese legal claims since 1995 typically came of age during Japan's student movements of the 1960s. A number of key players have passed from the scene already, and younger Japanese attorneys engaged in the forced labor redress struggle will be hard pressed to match their seniors' dedication and ability. Lee calls for greater awareness of the gap between the ideal settlement that would be attainable in a perfect world and what can be realistically achieved in Japan today in the wake of the Japan Supreme Court decision holding that Japan is not legally liable for compensation to wartime forced laborers.

Over the longer term, the broad sweep of global political, economic and social conditions may make the righting of historical wrongs, in some manner, nearly unavoidable. On August 6, the U.S. government for the first time sent official representatives to the annual commemoration of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. This was closely tied to the Obama administration's proclaimed objective of nuclear non-proliferation and eventual nuclear disarmament, and to the extent those goals remain important, could become a step toward a forthright American apology at some future A-bomb memorial service.

Likewise amid the steady integration of the economies of Northeast Asia and shifting power dynamics across the region, Japan may find its economic and political plans more and more dependent on forthrightly addressing the legacy of World War Two. The sooner comprehensive action is taken on [ripe issues](#) such as Chinese forced labor redress, the greater is the likelihood that authentic reconciliation will result. - William Underwood

During the Asia-Pacific War, roughly 40,000 Chinese were abducted to perform hard labor at 135 sites in Japan under a 1942 Decree issued by the wartime Japanese Cabinet. The postwar Japanese government has remained obdurately mute regarding its responsibility for Chinese forced labor to date. Of the 35 Japanese companies that used Chinese forced labor, about two dozen are still in operation. These companies also uniformly sought to evade their responsibility for over five decades until 2000 when Kajima Corp., at the exhortation of a Japanese judge, secured a settlement with the Chinese forced laborers at its Hanaoka site.

Almost a decade elapsed before another Japanese company, Nishimatsu Construction Co., Ltd., voluntarily agreed to compensate Chinese forced laborers at its two wartime worksites in Japan: Yasuno and Shinanogawa. The 2009 Yasuno agreement set up a compensation trust fund of 250 million yen (at 93 yen = 1 USD, approximately \$2.69 million) for 360 Chinese forced laborers; the 2010 Shinanogawa settlement contributed 128 million yen (approximately \$1.38 million) to another trust fund for 183 Chinese forced laborers. The forward momentum generated by the two recent Nishimatsu agreements would seem sufficient to propel the issue of Chinese forced labor toward a comprehensive resolution. Yet criticisms abound of these settlements both within and outside of China. The redress movement is splintered at this point into two camps, creating a deeply divisive atmosphere within the Chinese forced labor community. This paper examines the opposing responses to the recent 2010 Shinanogawa settlement and evaluates their contrasting approaches to settlements as an instrument for redressing historical injustice. It suggests that a comprehensive resolution of the forced labor issue may best be obtained in the political arena and that the redress movement may well be advised to target the Japanese government as it bears prime responsibility for the use of Chinese forced labor.

Confusion and Conflict in the Chinese Forced Labor Community

On April 26, 2010, Nishimatsu reached a settlement with the Chinese forced laborers (CFLs) who were abducted to perform hard labor under inhumane conditions at the Shinanogawa site from June of 1944 to January of 1945. As with the Nishimatsu Yasuno agreement in October 2009, the Shinanogawa settlement did not put to rest criticisms by redress activists in Canada, the U.S., and China (hereafter referred to as "activists"), nor did it bring about the closure Japanese attorneys and supporters of the CFLs (hereafter referred to as "supporters") had hoped for. Instead, new charges are now being leveled directly at Nishimatsu and indirectly at the supporters.

At first glance, the Shinanogawa settlement is even more controversial than the Yasuno agreement. Kang Jian, the only Chinese lawyer in the team of Japanese attorneys who first filed suit against Nishimatsu in Japan in 1997, charged the company with going around the five original plaintiffs when negotiation was at an impasse to persuade other CFLs and their descendants, who were not involved in the protracted litigation, to settle instead. She argued that CFLs are once again being abducted as they were during the Asia-Pacific War.^[1] On April 27,

2010, the day after the settlement, Kang held a press conference in Beijing in which some survivors accused Nishimatsu of an abduction-style settlement that was rejected by all the original plaintiffs.^[2] A number of websites in China featured similar headlines.^[3]

Han Yinlin, aged 93, the only surviving CFL of the five original plaintiffs, told his two sons that the Shinanogawa settlement was something with which "to coax children only."^[4] As he was too frail to travel, his sons hurried to Beijing to express their opposition to the settlement in the April 27 press conference. Descendants and relatives of other CFLs also attended. Holding photographs of the deceased loved ones, they insisted that money could not salve the wounds of yesteryear's atrocities. They echoed what attorney Kang and other critics have said of the settlement, namely, that it contains an apology without substance and compensation colored by charity. For a small sum, Nishimatsu has bought off some CFLs' right to claim, Kang declared^[5]; by not settling on these terms, however, other CFLs retain their right to sue, she insisted.^[6] To buttress Kang's words and the original plaintiffs' determination, activists announced at the same time that a fund has been set up to support the original and other plaintiffs who refused to settle and help maintain their dignity in their continuing fight to claim compensation against Nishimatsu.^[7]



Relatives of wartime Chinese workers walk toward the Tokyo Summary Court, where the second Nishimatsu settlement was finalized on April 26, 2010. In a message aimed mainly at Japanese lawmakers, their banner urges a comprehensive solution to the Chinese forced labor redress issue.
([Xinhua](#) / Ji Chunpeng photo)

On the same day as the Beijing press conference, Fukushima Mizuho, Chair of the Social Democratic Party of Japan and then Minister for Consumer and Food Safety, received the descendants and representatives of the CFLs who accepted the settlement in the Senate Hall in Tokyo. She congratulated them on triumphing after years of legal struggle, vowing she would do all she could to push for more settlements of the Chinese forced labor cases.^[8] Back in China, Lu Tangsuo, a CFL who rejected Kajima Corp.'s Hanaoka settlement in 2000, observed that most of the Shinanogawa survivors chose settlement primarily because Nishimatsu voluntarily proposed to issue an unambiguous apology on paper. "That's what Chinese demand and live for!" Lu said.^[9] Yet even those who accepted the current settlement could hardly resign themselves to the fact that signing on a piece of paper meant completely absolving Nishimatsu of its legal responsibility for their enslavement.^[10]

The same controversy plagues Nishimatsu's 2009 settlement with CFLs from its Yasuno worksite. Tempers flared at a December 2009 gathering in which disbursement of individual money orders in the amount of 45,366 RMB (at 6.8 RMB = 1 USD, equivalent to \$6,671) with a copy of the Yasuno settlement was made to the first group of actual survivors and widows of the deceased. Li Liangjie, a CFL abducted to perform hard labor for Mitsui, loudly accused those who settled as "traitors" who accepted because of the money.^[11] Shao Yicheng, the lead plaintiff of the Yasuno litigation, angrily retorted, "(Since) you are a hero, why don't you go and do something (for the Chinese forced labor redress issue)?"^[12]

The roots of this conflict can be traced back to the very first settlement in 2000 between Kajima and the CFLs at its notorious Hanaoka worksite. The lead plaintiff, Geng Chun, signed off initially on the settlement agreement but later reversed his stance to become a staunch opponent. Activists also organized a fund in 2004 to dispense to CFLs who refused to settle monetary support equivalent to what they would have received from Kajima.^[13]

Thus the CFL community, once united in its quest for justice, is now splintered into two groups: those who accepted or approved of and those who rejected or disapproved of the settlements, with little chance of reconciling their positions in the foreseeable future. Yet the Nishimatsu settlements in general, and the latest one in particular, seemingly satisfy the three non-negotiable demands of the Chinese forced labor redress movement: 1) Acknowledging atrocities to extend an apology for crimes committed; 2) Erecting a memorial to memorialize the victims and to educate the public; and 3) Compensating the victims.^[14] What then causes these bitter recriminations among the former Chinese forced laborers?

The Long and Tortuous Road to Reparations

When litigation was first initiated in the 1990s against the Japanese state and corporations that used Chinese forced labor, the focus was on the victims and their vindication in Japanese courtrooms. As the prospect of a final court victory receded over the years, and when out-of-court settlement remains seemingly the only option, the unity between the activists and the supporters fractured. While CFLs are at loggerheads, their harsh words merely reflect the divisions within and outside of China and among Chinese activists and supporters. As laborers who survived under unspeakable Japanese atrocities, dispersed to toil again in postwar China, CFLs probably know little of legal subtleties and ramifications, mostly viewing the settlement terms through the lens of those who are more knowledgeable in the law, more persuasive, or better able to exert more pressure on them.

Supporters consisting of Japanese and Chinese residing in Japan were the first to organize trips to China in the mid-1980s and early 1990s to locate CFL survivors. They approached Japanese attorneys who worked *pro bono* to file various forced labor lawsuits in Japanese courts. After years of legal battle, the Japan Supreme Court finally ruled on April 27, 2007, that the right of individual Chinese victims to file legal claims in Japan was extinguished under the 1972 Sino-Japanese Joint Communiqué. Accordingly, the supporters concluded that non-litigation settlements may be the most realistic and attainable alternative at this point.^[15] In standing behind the settlements, these supporters hope to see the few remaining elderly victims derive some solace from settling within their lifetime. Realizing time is not on the CFLs' side, supporters would accept settlement terms that may be less than perfect, then try to negotiate for better terms in a future settlement.

Japanese attorney Uchida Masatoshi, a member of the legal team responsible for both the 2009 Yasuno and the 2000 Hanaoka negotiations, said as much when he pointed out that without the first Hanaoka settlement, there would not be the "more perfect" Yasuno settlement.^[16] Statements from various CFLs illustrate that supporters correctly assess the sentiments of most survivors in this respect. For example, Shao Yicheng, the lead plaintiff of the Yasuno case, said, "My heart is at ease now that I can live until I am compensated."^[17] On the day her husband flew to Japan as a representative of CFLs who accepted the Shinanogawa settlement, Yang Xi'en's daughter-in-law told reporters, eyes brimming with tears, "Now my father-in-law and fellow Chinese forced laborers can rest in peace ..."^[18]

A second group of later arrivals to the CFL redress fight, mostly ethnic Chinese activists in the U.S. and Canada, as well as attorney Kang and others in China, have also worked ceaselessly on different unresolved legacies of the Japanese invasion since the mid-1990s. They are not against settlements *per se* but would rather fight on until they secure one in which the defendant company acknowledges legal responsibility and pays out an adequate amount of compensation which would not compromise the dignity of CFLs who settle. As a model for Chinese forced labor settlements, they look to Germany's solution embodied in the Remembrance, Responsibility and the Future Foundation. They also point to the US\$20,000 the American government, in its landmark 1988 legislation, awarded each Japanese American internee for internment during WWII. This camp has subtly hinted that the CFLs might have been misled by their Japanese attorneys, tapping into a pervasive mistrust, understandable in light of the Sino-Japanese war. Kang wrote in 2009:



The first disbursement of compensation from Nishimatsu to workers from the Yasuno site took place in December 2009. Shao Yicheng, lead plaintiff in the Yasuno litigation in Japan, is shown holding his money order at left. (ND Daily photo)

The case of Chinese laborers enslaved at the Yasuno worksite was represented exclusively by lawyers and a support group in Japan, with no participation from Chinese lawyers. While we should trust the integrity and sincerity of these Japanese lawyers and supporters in helping the Chinese victims, can we expect the victims to fully and accurately understand the terms of the settlement and their implications, given the fact they were represented by lawyers who were foreigners to them? I have some reservations about this.^[19]

With their latest call for overseas ethnic Chinese to unite behind them in supporting all CFLs who have not settled and to oppose deals similar to the Nishimatsu agreements, activists in Canada and the U.S. seem prepared to carry on the fight for their version of settlement for as long as necessary.^[20] They scored public relations victories in Japan and internationally in describing how insulting to Chinese dignity these "so-called" settlements are. As newspapers and websites in China carry their eye-catching headlines, they are impacting public opinion there as well. Supporters of the Nishimatsu approach, on the other hand, are more reticent, refraining from open criticism of the other side, working step by step to achieve their goal and hoping their strategy will finally be vindicated by the results. They rely on their personal ties to the CFLs and the latter's trust and appreciation of their support and efforts developed over the long years of litigation. Wang Xuan, a supporter who works primarily with victims of Japan's biochemical warfare in China, questioned the strategy of not settling: "What could the Chinese gain if they don't accept the settlements? ... Do we want them (CFLs) to go to their graves with a grudging hatred in their hearts? ... Where is the hope? Japanese attorneys who support litigation and Japanese peace supporters over the decades not only spend enormous sums of money, but are growing old and dying off ..."^[21]

Calls within China to respect the wishes of the CFLs, as to whether they desire to settle or not, went unheeded.^[22] In fact, the actual wishes of the survivors before the sound and fury began

may never be known. To the quest for justice from the Japanese state and corporations is now added an ideological dimension of conflict, a dimension that is no longer about the CFLs but, sadly, is fought through them.

Quibbling over Words

Activists' objections to the Shinanogawa settlement are a repeat of those against the earlier Yasuno agreement. To frame the provisions which follow, the preamble to the settlement quotes a passage from the 2007 Japan Supreme Court decision where the Court concludes that the individual right to claim was waived by China in the 1972 Sino-Japanese Joint Communiqué. However, due to the immense suffering of the CFLs, and the reimbursements Nishimatsu received from the government after the war, the Court goes on to urge all (both) sides to work toward providing relief to the plaintiffs.^[23] Activists claim that "the liability for damages caused by such severe violation of human rights is distorted by Nishimatsu into an act of providing 'charitable relief.'"^[24]

Expecting challenges to be made, as in the first Nishimatsu settlement debate, regarding the use of the word "relief (救済)", an allusion that is unavoidable when quoting from the Japan Supreme Court ruling, the translator of the Chinese version of the settlement offers explanatory notes to clarify its meaning. The notes point out that "Chinese may have the impression that (the word) relief means 'charity' and 'benefaction' but (the phrase) 'provide relief to victims' in the settlement provision does not have either meaning."^[25] Rather, in legal language, when used in reference to an individual's rights, it means to restore his/her rights and when used in relation to victims, it signifies compensation to the victims for injuries/damages sustained. The notes conclude: "'Provide relief to victims' in the settlement's provision has the latter meaning."^[26]

The notes' explanation is not unique. Any search of online Chinese or English legal dictionaries will yield the same definition for relief as given above. More interestingly, as "relief" also appeared in some Japanese newspapers' discussion of the controversy surrounding the 2000 Hanaoka settlement, an article, in a 2002 published collection of works in Chinese entitled, *Abduction, Litigation, and Settlement*, delves into its meaning and usage at some length. The author, Lin Xin, of the Law Research Center, College of China Sociological Studies, affirms that "relief" in the context of settlements has no connotation of charity; he further distinguishes "charitable relief" which is voluntary from "legal relief" which is mandatory.^[27]

Another settlement term attorney Kang considers problematic is "compensation (償い金)", which she claims is not used in Japanese legal documents. As used in everyday language, it embraces a range of interpretations including repayment for what is owed. However, it does not, according to Kang, denote compensation for crimes committed.^[28] The notes to the Chinese version of the settlement contradict Kang's contention. Not only does the term signify compensation, but its meaning is so broad as to encompass in its fold, shades of "repayment, compensation, money for atonement and so on."^[29]

Kang further links the use of this term "compensation" to the Asian Women Fund (AWF), 1995-2007, set up for compensating the so-called Comfort Women, and to Japanese officialdom in its frequent communications regarding the AWF. The eventual failure of the AWF coupled with the Japanese officials' willingness to use this word, she reasons, is an indication that the word simply means "help" or "support" and not actual compensation.^[30] Such reasoning constitutes an

argument by association, and although illogical, has strong emotional appeal with an implicit suggestion that the Nishimatsu approach cannot produce meaningful reconciliation.

More importantly, Kang's allegation trivializes the debate surrounding the AWF. Rather than dwelling on the details of the AWF controversy here, suffice it to say that while the Japanese government was the only culprit in setting up a system of sexual slavery during the war, the money for compensation came from citizen donations with the government contributing funds to cover administrative costs only. In other words, the AWF failed because most Comfort Women refused to accept money from the Fund when the Japanese government refused at the time and still refuses to acknowledge its responsibility.

Evasion of Legal Responsibility and Waiver of Right to Claim in Settlements

Activists also castigate Nishimatsu for its denial of legal responsibility in both the Yasuno and Shinanogawa settlements. They either overlook or regard as irrelevant that on April 27, 2007, Japan's Supreme Court ruled the 1972 Sino-Japanese Joint Communiqué effectively extinguished Chinese victims' right to claim. The Chinese Foreign Ministry responded to the ruling two days later. On April 29, it declared that although under the Communiqué, China had renounced war reparations in the interest of "friendly relations between the two peoples," it was strongly opposed to "the unbridled interpretation on this clause by the Supreme Court of Japan regardless of China's repeated solemn representations."^[31] The Ministry concluded that the Japan Supreme Court's interpretation of the 1972 Communiqué was "illegal and null."^[32]

Nonetheless, Japanese courts are not bound by the Chinese government's interpretation. Instead, in Japan under Japanese law as announced by Japan's Supreme Court, neither Nishimatsu nor other companies have any legal responsibility toward the CFLs.

The concept of legal responsibility bears further examination since CFLs who accepted the settlements take issue likewise with Nishimatsu's refusal to admit legal responsibility. To CFLs who are not schooled in legal intricacies, the company's refusal is probably equated with a repudiation of their having wronged the victims. Such sentiments are reinforced by activists' assertions that Nishimatsu has "whitewashed" its "extreme violation of human rights ... into a moral obligation."^[33]

Legal liability, however, is ascribed not only to heinous crimes; it also follows from various minor and inadvertent legal violations. A driver inadvertently running into another car and causing damage is legally liable for the damage but may not be morally culpable. Further, the cultivation of a sense of moral obligation to humanity is essential when the goal is to prevent a recurrence of genocides and atrocities and to ensure future peace. In fact, it may be preferable to have an individual or entity refrain from committing an offense out of a sense of moral obligation than to have the individual or entity be punished (held legally responsible) after the fact. The activists are not doing the redress or peace movement a service in downgrading moral obligation in comparison to legal responsibility.



Out of a total of 183 forced laborers at the Shinanogawa worksite, 60 survivors or their descendants had been located by last May 6, when they attended a meeting in China explaining the details of the settlement. (hbgrb.net photo)

As noted above, legal responsibility has become immaterial to the discussion of Chinese forced labor settlements in Japan ever since the 2007 Japan Supreme Court ruling. But the concept assumes a central role in settlement disputes since criticisms of various other aspects of the settlements are ultimately linked to it. For example, the first provision of the Hanaoka settlement reaffirms a 1990 Joint Statement issued by the CFLs and Kajima Corp. in which the latter admits to responsibility for abducting CFLs to work under tremendous hardships at the Hanaoka site *based on* a 1942 Decree from the wartime Japanese Cabinet. A similar statement also appears in both Nishimatsu settlements.

Activists stoutly denounce this description as a "dilution of historical facts" aimed at escaping legal responsibility.^[34]

However, the wartime Cabinet did issue a Decree for forced labor. More importantly, without the Decree, the companies that used forced labor could never have proceeded to abduct, with the central involvement of the Japanese Army, peasants from China's countryside. The fact that industries and companies facing a labor shortage might have first approached the state for such an order^[35] is inconsequential. If responsibility were to be assigned to the root cause of Chinese forced labor, the Japanese government should shoulder the bulk of the blame since it started a war which led to the labor shortage in the first place. Debating whether use of the phrase "based on" dilutes one's responsibility leads nowhere; there is enough blame to go around for both the government and industries concerned.

Further, although activists embrace working toward a negotiated settlement, they decry provisions in the Kajima and both Nishimatsu agreements that deny the victims the right to make further claims within and outside of Japan. Companies, however, do not settle out of a sense of guilt or altruism so much as to put an end to lawsuits and legal hassles. Kajima entered into a settlement at the urging of the Tokyo High Court which stated: "This Court ... took account of the serious sufferings experienced by the appellants ... and considered it appropriate to aim at an overall solution on the basis of the Statement (the 1990 Joint Statement between CFLs and Kajima Corp.). Thus, on September 10, 1999, the Court recommended a compromise *ex officio*."^[36] Nishimatsu approached the CFLs' attorneys when its channeling of illegal funds to politicians through dummy organizations came to light in March of 2009, hoping that a resolution with the CFLs would restore its tarnished reputation.^[37] It would be foolhardy for any corporation regardless of its motivation to leave the door ajar for future claims after settling.

Activists not only seem to have missed the central point of the defendant's having a settlement, but also fail to comprehend that the denial of the right to claim and the denial of legal liability are two sides of the same coin. After all, a settlement is a negotiated compromise to resolve all issues usually involving "waiver of any right to reopen or appeal the matter from both sides, ... mutual release of any further claim by each party, a statement that neither side is admitting fault ..."^[38] Therefore, had Kajima and Nishimatsu explicitly acknowledged legal responsibility and not required a waiver of right to claim, it would defeat their purpose in having a settlement. And

with respect to the Nishimatsu agreements, whether such provisions are included in the settlements is irrelevant as Japan's Supreme Court already ruled the CFLs' right to claim to be non-existent.

Thus, despite Nishimatsu's expression in the settlements of an "apology for crimes committed," a literal translation of the Japanese/Chinese characters (謝罪), activists bemoan its lack of sincerity when comparing these settlements to the German Remembrance, Responsibility and Future Fund, where the latter "squarely faced history and explicitly assumed responsibility, comforting the hearts of victims."^[39] Had the activists delved into the motivation for and the history of the German negotiations, they would have found striking similarities between the German and Japanese responses to forced labor claims.

The German Model for Reconciliation

The issue of legal responsibility that roils the Chinese activists and the CFL community was seldom raised in the lead-up to the negotiations for the Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (RR&F) Fund. Instead, survivors of the slave labor as well as those of the Holocaust were more consumed with the question of moral accountability. Many objected to translating a quest for justice into a tangible process of claims and compensations for they feared moral issues were being obscured. Opponents of compensation held a huge demonstration outside the Knesset when legislators gathered to discuss the issue of claims in 1952.^[40] Eventually, however, most slave labor survivors, accepted compensations as a symbolic form of justice.

German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's memorable 1951 speech refers to Germany's moral and restitutive responsibility only: "Unspeakable crimes were perpetrated in the name of the German people which impose upon them the obligation to make moral and material amends ..."^[41] When the agreement was reached on the capped amount for the RR&F Fund on December 17, 1999, German President Johannes Rau read from a statement which again contains no admission of legal responsibility: "... both government and business accept the shared responsibility and moral duty arising from the injustices of the past."^[42] It is therefore "worth emphasizing," wrote Michael Bazyler, a leading authority on Nazi-era settlements, "that Germany never admitted any legal liability and, upon settlement, insisted that its only liability is moral and not legal."^[43]

Activists repeatedly question why Japanese corporations have not followed the path laid down by the German industries in establishing the RR&F Fund together with the German government. Yet the German corporations too had the same overriding concern with legal immunity as Kajima and Nishimatsu.^[44] Nazi Germany's slave and forced labor workers were obtained by the German police and army under the then-existing racist laws. Much of that workforce was employed by the Third Reich's public sector including schools and hospitals. After the war when reparations were being contemplated for various Nazi-era crimes, German companies insisted any payments for slave and forced laborers should come from the state since they had to use them in support of Nazi Germany's wartime economy.^[45] As compensation for these were eventually excluded from any postwar reparations Germany made, the German firms too wanted to put a decisive end to the flurry of legal claims that came after the first slave labor lawsuit against Ford and its German subsidiary was filed in March of 1998 in Newark, New Jersey. They feared the damage that was being done to their reputation in the U.S. where they had considerable business dealings.

The German industries then called on the newly-elected Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder to assist them with their legal troubles. To its credit, the German government stepped up to shoulder its share of the responsibility. However, even then, its motivation was "to counter lawsuits, particularly class action lawsuits, and to remove the basis of the campaign being led against German industry and our country."^[46] In agreeing to compensation, German corporations wanted in return "legal peace", a term which entails an end to all existing and future claims in U.S. courts. Accordingly, early in 1999, Schroeder sought to resolve the issue on a state-to-state basis with the U.S. Together, American and German negotiators devised a solution that would address the issues of moral and historical responsibility while ensuring a lasting and all-embracing "legal peace" for German companies in the U.S.^[47]

The solution was the creation of a national foundation, the sole forum outside of the courts, for resolving all claims, including slave and forced labor, arising out of the Nazi-era. The Berlin Accords, a set of agreements ratifying the compromises arrived at in the negotiations, consisted of a Joint Statement of Principles signed by the U.S., Germany and other governments who had an interest and participated in the talks, as well as an Executive Agreement between U.S. and Germany promising "legal peace." Pursuant to these Agreements, the German Bundestag enacted legislation to establish the RR&F Foundation endowed with 10 billion DM, half funded by the industries and half by the government.^[48] In 2001 when the Bundestag ascertained "legal peace" was sufficiently achieved, funds were released to be distributed to the victims.^[49]

Thus it can be seen that in practical terms, the situation of the German companies does not greatly differ from that of Kajima and Nishimatsu. Their concern with legal peace is equivalent to the waivers of right to claim Kajima and Nishimatsu stipulated in the settlements; the insistence that their responsibility extends to the moral and historical but not the legal realm is identical. Since CFLs know little of the German solution other than from the activists' high praise, their belief that Kajima and Nishimatsu should not be allowed to evade their legal responsibility persists even among many of those who accepted the settlements.

Further, it should be noted that German companies' initial insistence that it was the state which bears prime responsibility for the use of slave and forced labor is no different from the Japanese companies'. Their motivation for coming to the bargaining table is also the same. German companies may have had a more sincere desire to do the right thing but this, being an intangible factor, is difficult to ascertain and substantiate.

A significant difference does exist, however, between the German government's ready acceptance of responsibility and the Japanese government's steady denial. With the involvement of the German government, the solution arrived at is on a state-to-state basis, able to guarantee an enduring legal peace. Yet even the German government admitted no legal responsibility, and though ready to compensate, refused to consider a comprehensive out-of-court settlement as a solution, as it implied the slave and forced labor survivors might have a legal basis for pursuing their claims. As to keeping its end of the bargain within a framework of separation of powers, the U.S. Department of Justice had to file numerous Statements of Interest to press for dismissal of all claims against German companies in U.S. courts. Eventually almost 70 such lawsuits were dismissed.^[50] In 2003 the U.S. Supreme Court upheld President Clinton's power to enter into the Executive Agreement of the Berlin Accords, a decision which had the same effect as the Japan Supreme Court's dismissal of the CFLs' right to claim. The door to filing claims in U.S. courts was effectively closed from then on.

Without the government's participation in Japan, the Japanese companies have been left to their own devices to resolve the legacy of forced labor claims on a piecemeal and individual basis. A questionable stipulation found in all three of the Japanese corporate settlements might have been included for the very purpose of ensuring legal peace. This provision asks those who accepted the settlement either to prevent other CFLs from suing Kajima, or to resolve the matter among themselves so Nishimatsu would not bear the burden of claims again.^[51] Whatever the rationale for its inclusion, the provision may not be enforceable when challenged in court as its execution involves stripping other CFLs who had not participated in the settlement of their right to sue. Viewed in the context of the German negotiations, the provision may be seen as the two companies' solution to the quest for legal peace. In the eyes of the activists, however, the provision enables Nishimatsu to lure and buy off "accessories" with a paltry sum.^[52] Unfortunately, with this accusation the integrity of the Japanese attorneys who negotiated for, and CFLs who accepted, the settlements is also called into question.

Setting a Price for True Remorse

Supporters and activists alike realize that no amount of money could ever compensate the CFLs for their horrendous suffering, and loss of health or life. Their efforts are directed at obtaining validation for the enslavement CFLs endured and delayed justice for the crimes committed against them. But money does matter as a signal that they have achieved their goal. So the CFL redress movement is not about - yet at the same time is also about - the money CFLs should receive in restitution.

Under the RR&F Fund the slave laborers of Germany, i.e., those who were taken from concentration camps to be worked to death, were paid \$7,500, and the forced laborers were paid \$2,500, unless they endured extreme hardships (as the CFLs in Japan routinely did), in which case they were entitled to the same amount as the slave laborers.^[53] Few slave and forced labor survivors and descendants were satisfied with their compensation, but most accepted it eventually as symbolic and the best they could do under the circumstances.^[54] In 1999 German President Rau correctly assessed their sentiments in these words, "What they want is for their suffering to be recognized as suffering and for the injustice done to them to be named injustice ... we will not forget their suffering."^[55]

Beginning in June of this year, the CFLs or their descendants in the Shinanogawa settlement will be receiving approximately 50,000 RMB (at 6.8 RMB=1 USD, roughly equivalent to \$7,352) in compensation^[56]; the CFLs or their descendants in the Yasuno settlement started receiving 45,366 RMB (at 6.8 RMB= 1 USD, roughly equivalent to \$6,671) in December of 2009.^[57] President Rau's words mentioned above express CFLs' sentiments as well. Perhaps Liu Huanxin, almost 70 years old, whose father was abducted, best captured the complex and conflicting attitudes CFLs have toward compensation. Liu could not hold back his tears when he returned home on April 27, 2010, after learning of the settlement,



Last May 8 the first meeting of the Administrative Committee of the Shinanogawa Peace Fund was held by the China Human Rights Development Foundation, the Beijing organization entrusted with making disbursements. (humanrights.com.cn photo)

saying "Half a decade - the day we waited for finally arrived ... this settlement gives us comfort and yet it's hard to accept because what we want is dignity, not money; the tragic experience of abduction can never be wiped out by money."^[58]

The Nishimatsu CFLs are, or will be, receiving compensation comparable to Germany's slave and forced laborers. Activists object to national dignity being compromised at this amount while more reasonable voices in China urge that CFLs not be burdened with a fight for national dignity when they had fought so hard simply to survive under unspeakable Japanese atrocities during the war.^[59] Attorney Kang considers Nishimatsu's compensation too trifling a sum to indicate true remorse or a genuine desire for reconciliation.^[60] Apparently, in compensation amount, activists desist from using the German model for comparison. Instead, they turn to \$20,000, the sum the U.S. government paid to each ethnic Japanese person it interned during the Second World War.^[61]

Admittedly, Nishimatsu's compensation, like the compensation the German fund paid out, is too little and comes too late, but it does have a symbolic value beyond its monetary one. The money CFLs received from funds ethnic Chinese activists set up to support them after they rejected either the Kajima or the Nishimatsu settlements (See Endnotes 7 and 13) simply did not deliver the same emotional payload. Consequently most of the located Shinanogawa victims accepted the compensation from Nishimatsu in spite of the press conference attorney Kang held to mobilize public opinion in China against the settlement. The activists could afford to wait for compensation amounts that would "demonstrate" true remorse. Surviving CFLs in their late 80s and 90s cannot, a consideration the Japanese attorneys and their supporters are keenly aware of when they urge settlement as an option.

Progress Made from the Hanaoka to the Shinanogawa Settlements

The splintering of the forced labor redress movement created so much confusion that it has tended to obscure the most significant achievement the movement produced to date. Through initiating legal proceedings in the 1990s, supporters and Japanese attorneys have successfully used the legal system in Japan to establish on record the historical facts of and the moral responsibility for Chinese forced labor on the part of both the Japanese government and companies during the Asia-Pacific War.

Rather than recognizing this achievement and focusing on the future, activists rehash instead the legal minutia of past agreements. They either deny or downplay supporters' claim that improvements have been made in the terms of the agreements from Hanaoka to Yasuno and Shinanogawa; they question the possibility of progress when all three settlements are built on the twin "false" premises of victims' waiver of right to claim and the companies' non-admission of legal liability. To evaluate these assertions and counter-assertions, an analysis will be made of the extent to which these settlements meet the three non-negotiable demands of the Chinese forced labor redress movement: 1) Acknowledging atrocities to extend an apology for crimes committed; 2) Erecting a memorial to memorialize the victims and to educate the public; and 3) Compensating the victims.

Apology (for crimes committed): The Hanaoka settlement does not contain an expression of apology in the agreement itself. Instead its first provision reaffirms the Joint Statement Kajima and the CFLs issued in 1990, in which Kajima acknowledges historical responsibility and

extends its apology. Both Nishimatsu settlements explicitly acknowledge historical responsibility and proffer a sincere apology in the documents themselves.

The first Hanaoka provision ends with a jarring and abrupt sentence to the effect that the CFLs note Kajima admits no legal liability.^[62] In contrast, both Nishimatsu settlements do not claim the company has no legal liability, probably because it is unnecessary after the 2007 Supreme Court ruling.

Erecting a Memorial and Educating the Public. In addition to the apology, the Shinanogawa agreement provides for a "Shinanogawa Peace Fund" to be set up for compensating the CFLs, memorial services for the deceased, research to locate the rest of the 183 Shinanogawa CFLs and other matters.^[63] Sufficient funds to build a memorial exist if the victims so desire, although the settlement itself does not explicitly mention a memorial. Erecting a memorial is explicitly included in Yasuno, the first Nishimatsu settlement.^[64] On the other hand, the "Hanaoka Peace and Goodwill Foundation" Kajima established only provided for "memorial services for the victims, the self-help efforts and care of the victims and their families, and education of their children."^[65] No stipulation exists to provide for erecting a Hanaoka memorial.

Compensation: The money the victims received from the "Hanaoka Peace and Goodwill Foundation" is for their "care" and other matters as quoted above; it is not for compensation, or at least not explicitly named as such.^[66] In the Nishimatsu settlements, the amount the victims have received or will receive is called "compensation," although, as previously discussed, activists claim otherwise in their semantic critique of the Shinanogawa agreement. Further, in the Yasuno settlement funds to be used for compensation are specifically referred to as "reconciliation money".^[67]

By September of 2001, the Hanaoka Peace and Goodwill Foundation had disbursed funds to 21 Chinese forced laborers, each of whom received 250,000 yen.^[68] The exchange rate as of September 15, 2001, was 117.35 yen = 1 USD; the amount worked out to slightly more than \$2,000 per victim. As noted above, Nishimatsu began its first disbursement of the Yasuno Friendship Fund at US\$6,671 per victim in December of 2009 while the Shinanogawa victims are expected to receive US\$7,352 starting mid-2010.

The above analysis shows that, in addition to the overall success in establishing historical and moral responsibility, Japanese attorneys and supporters secured progressively better settlement terms from the Hanaoka to the Shinanogawa agreements. Activists' demand for an admission of legal liability and retention of CFLs' right to claim goes beyond what could be accommodated within the framework of a negotiated settlement. It bears repeating that German companies never admitted legal liability and the activists' model for reconciliation, the RR&F Foundation, was founded partly on President Clinton's promise of "legal peace."

Japanese attorneys worked *pro bono* and long and hard on behalf of the victims. The separate teams of attorneys for Yasuno and Shinanogawa, in response to the critique that the Hanaoka settlement compromises the right to sue of CFLs who refuse to settle, negotiated a "confirmation statement" in which Nishimatsu explicitly affirms this right is not extinguished. The Shinanogawa team of Japanese attorneys negotiated for more concessions in a settlement that is only six months apart from the earlier Yasuno settlement. Not only is the compensation amount increased for a shorter duration of enslavement in Japan, but the compensation fund is, for the first time, deposited with a Chinese organization which is responsible for its administration, thus

demonstrating the Japanese attorneys' responsiveness to the wishes of the activists and Chinese public.^[69] There is, of course, always room for improvement. In future negotiations, the Japanese attorneys could aim to remove the provision which foists on the victims and the organization holding the compensation fund the responsibility to relieve the settling Japanese company of further claims.

Activists make little allowance for pressures that might be exerted by other Japanese companies and historical revisionists on Nishimatsu for its readiness to settle, nor do they show any understanding of factors that limit the concessions the company could make in the final agreement. They might have won a short-term, public-relations victory by proclaiming the Shinanogawa settlement to be one "without the original plaintiffs." They might even have set themselves up to be the sole arbiter of Nishimatsu's sincerity and depth of remorse. Yet whether Nishimatsu is sincere and adequately remorseful are intangibles, subject to interpretation and therefore irrelevant. What is relevant, however, is the example Nishimatsu sets in its willingness to reconcile even though the Japan Supreme Court had extinguished the CFLs' legal right to claim in 2007. Hopefully other companies will follow this example in the near future.

The Way Forward

The main obstacle to achieving a comprehensive redress of the Chinese forced labor issue is the Japanese government's unyielding intransigence in denying responsibility. If all the Japanese companies that used Chinese forced labor were to enter into individual compensation agreements, the resolution of the issue is still incomplete without holding the Japanese government responsible. On the other hand, if the Japanese government were to accept responsibility, show repentance and provide the necessary restitution, other Japanese companies would surely follow suit. Therefore, having effectively utilized the Japanese legal system to establish historical and moral responsibility, the CFL redress movement may well be advised to move onto the political arena, training its sights on the Japanese government.

In the last decade China's phenomenal economic growth has been likened by some to a rising tide that lifts all boats of the other nations in Asia, including Japan. China became the largest trading partner of Japan in 2009, putting it ahead of the U.S., its share being a record 20.5 percent of Japan's total trade.^[70] If the Chinese government were to become more vocal in its support of the CFLs^[71] and/or Japanese companies were to exert pressure on its own government in the interest of retaining the goodwill of Chinese consumers and their already established market positions in China, then the Japanese government might be brought around to the bargaining table. A comprehensive resolution of the Chinese forced labor issue is therefore not necessarily out of reach. Indeed, voices urging the Japanese government to take action can be heard from Japan to China.^[72] With time and the gathering momentum of the Nishimatsu settlements, these voices will hopefully grow too loud and insistent to be ignored.

Ivy Lee is a Professor Emeritus of Sociology at California State University, Sacramento. Since her retirement in 1997, she has worked toward and written on redressing Japanese atrocities committed in the Asia-Pacific War. She was the co-leader of a nationwide coalition of ethnic Chinese and American POWs who pushed for legislation to declassify Japanese war crimes documents held in the U.S. In December of 2000, after a two-year drive, the legislation was signed into law by President Clinton, under the "Japanese Imperial Government Disclosure Act of 2000," Title VIII of Public Law 106-567. Lee was the 2001-2002 president of Global Alliance for Preserving the History of WW II in Asia, and an appointed member of the California

Taskforce on Holocaust, Genocide, Human Rights, and Tolerance Education, created by Assembly Bill (AB) 2002 in 2003 and extended by AB 1175 through 2007.

Editor's Note: This article does not necessarily represent the views of the current leadership of the Global Alliance for Preserving the History of WW II in Asia.

William Underwood researches ongoing reparations movements for forced labor in wartime Japan.

*Michael Bazylar, Professor of Law at Chapman University, contributed to this article. A leading authority on the use of American and European courts to redress genocide and other historical wrongs, Bazylar wrote the book, *Holocaust Justice: The Battle for Restitution in America's Courts* (New York University Press, 2003), which was cited by the U.S. Supreme Court and reviewed, among others, in the *Harvard Law Review*, and *Financial Times* (London). Bazylar is currently serving on the legal team that filed the first case in the U.S. for the return of religious/cultural objects arising out of the Armenian genocide.*

Endnotes

[1] http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqcj/zxqxb/2010-04-29/content_236115.html, accessed 4/29/2010

[2] <http://bjyouth.ynet.com/article.jsp?oid=65155321>, accessed 4/29/2010

[3] http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqcj/zxqxb/2010-04-29/content_236115.html;

<http://bj.yzdsb.com.cn/system/2010/04/27/010462988.shtml>

http://intl.ce.cn/zgysj/201004/29/t20100429_21341426.shtml, accessed 4/29/2010

[4] http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/hqcj/zxqxb/2010-04-29/content_236115.html

[5] <http://bjyouth.ynet.com/article.jsp?oid=65155321>

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] <http://newnews.ca/?action-viewnews-itemid-51076>,

<http://www.anpopo.com/show-35637-1.html>, accessed 4/30/2010

On April 26, 2010, in a press release sent to the Chinese media in Canada, Canada ALPHA announced that together with Wai Ming Charitable Foundation Fund, Ltd. of Hong Kong, they will solicit money from overseas ethnic Chinese to found a fund in support of Chinese forced laborers to continue their struggle for obtaining historical justice. In addition, Canada ALPHA and Wai Ming will each contribute 350,000 RMB (at 6.8 RMB = 1 USD, equivalent to \$51,470 each) toward the founding of this fund. The five original plaintiffs and two other CFLs who have indicated they will reject the settlement, will receive 50,000 RMB, the same amount as those who settled, from this fund.

[8] <http://news.163.com/10/0428/10/65BOH53I000146BD.html>, accessed 4/30/2010

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] <http://gcontent.nddaily.com/3/40/340a39045c40d50d/Blog/6d7/ca5653.html>, accessed 5/1/2010

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] The Global Alliance for Preserving the History of WW II in Asia announced that the organization, together with concerned individuals in China, founded a Subsidy to Victims Rejecting Kajima's Hanaoka Settlement Fund in December of 2004. Money had already been raised from GA affiliates, with British Columbia chapter of Association for Learning and Preserving the History of WW II in Asia, British Columbia (BC ALPHA), and Toronto ALPHA contributing 25,000 RMB each, a member of another San Francisco GA affiliate contributing 100,000 RMB and various individuals in China contributing a total of 6,200 RMB. The Fund would solicit donations from all overseas ethnic Chinese toward the goal of a fund total of 225,000 RMB. It started its first distribution toward the end of 2004 of 25,000 RMB (at 8.28 RMB = 1 USD on December 15, 2004, equivalent to \$3,048) to each Hanaoka victim who rejected the settlement.

[14] <http://news.sohu.com/20091103/n267921800.shtml>, accessed 5/1/2010. The three non-negotiable demands are described by Prof. Liu Bao Chen, a researcher at the Forced Labor Research Center, Hebei University, who was first approached by Chinese residing in Japan to locate the Hanaoka survivors and who participated throughout the whole course of the Yasuno litigation and negotiations.

[15] http://big5.china.com.cn/international/txt/2009-11/03/content_18819279_2.htm, accessed 5/27/2010

[16] <http://gcontent.nddaily.com/3/40/340a39045c40d50d/Blog/6d7/ca5653.html>

[17] <http://news.sohu.com/20091103/n267921800.shtml>,

[18] <http://www.longevitys.com/n489992c26.aspx>, accessed 4/28/2010

[19] Kang Jian, Arimitsu Ken and William Underwood, "Assessing the Nishimatsu Corporate Approach to Redressing Chinese Forced Labor in Wartime Japan," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, 47-1-09, November 23, 2009;

[20] <http://www.anpopo.com/show-35637-1.html>, <http://newnews.ca/?action-viewnews-itemid-51076>

[21] <http://www.ccvic.com/guoji/redianpinglun/20100427/144264.shtml>, accessed 4/29/2010

[22] http://www.chinaqll.com/Html/qyjm/14_187.htm, accessed 4/20/2010

[23] <http://www.china918.cn/news/suopei/xisonghj/2010/0510/497.html>, accessed 5/14/2010

[24] <http://www.stopracism.ca/content/nishimatsu-construction-co-ltd-slave-labour-settlement>, accessed 4/30/2010

[25] <http://www.china918.cn/news/suopei/xisonghj/2010/0510/497.html>

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] Lin Yin, "The Legal Meaning of the Hanaoka Compensation Case Settlement and Related Questions," in *Abduction, Litigation, and Settlement*, edited by Luo Wei-Long (Academy Press, China, 2002) 164-165

[28] <http://www.china918.cn/news/suopei/xisonghj/2010/0513/498.html>, accessed 5/15/2010

[29] <http://www.china918.cn/news/suopei/xisonghj/2010/0510/497.html>

[30] <http://www.china918.cn/news/suopei/xisonghj/2010/0513/498.html>

[31] <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2535/t315036.htm>, accessed 5/26/2010. Liu Jianchao's statement clearly implies China has not given up the individual citizens' right to claim although it has renounced war reparations between the two states in the Joint Communique.

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] Kang Jian et al, (November 23, 2009)

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] *Ibid.*

[36] <http://www.iwanami.co.jp/jpworld/text/hanaoka02.html>, accessed 5/25/2010

[37] http://www.66law.cn/archive/news/2010-05-10/38678_1.aspx, accessed 5/24/2010

[38] <http://dictionary.law.com/Default.aspx?selected=750>, accessed 5/2/2010

[39] Kang Jian et al, (November 23, 2009)

[40] Gideon Taylor, "Where Morality Meets Money," in *Holocaust Restitution* edited by Michael Bazyler and Roger Alford (New York: New York University Press, 2006) 163-169

[41] <http://www.claimscon.org/?url=history>, accessed 5/27/2010

[42] Gideon Taylor (2006), 163-169

[43] Michael Bazyler, "Japan Should Follow the International Trend and Face Its History of World War II Forced Labor" *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Vol. 5-3-09, January 29, 2009.

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Michael-Bazyler/3030>

[44] Michael Bazyler, *Holocaust Justice: The Battle for Restitution in American's Courts* (NY: New York University Press, 2003), 83

[45] *Ibid.*, 61

[46] Roger Cohen, "German Companies Set Up Fund for Slave Laborers under Nazis." *New York Times*, February 17, 1999, A1. Quoted in Bazyler (2003) 83

[47] Michael Bazyler (November 23, 2003), 83-88

[48] *Ibid.*, 79-83

[49] *Ibid.*, 89-92

[50] Roger Witten, "How Swiss Banks and German Companies Came to Terms with the Wrenching Legacies of the Holocaust and World War II," *Holocaust Restitution* edited by Michael Bazyler and Roger Alford (NY: New York University Press, 2006) 88

[51] <http://www.china918.cn/news/suopei/xisonghj/2010/0510/497.html>

[52] <http://www.china918.cn/news/suopei/xisonghj/2010/0513/498.html>

[53] Michael Bazyler (2003), 81

[54] *Ibid.*, 101-105

[55] Gideon Taylor (2006), 166

[56] http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2010-04/26/c_1257467.htm, accessed 5/24/2010

[57] <http://gcontent.nddaily.com/3/40/340a39045c40d50d/Blog/6d7/ca5653.html>

[58] <http://www.longevitys.com/n489992c26.aspx>

[59] http://www.chinaqll.com/Html/qyjm/14_187.htm

[60] <http://www.china918.cn/news/suopei/xisonghj/2010/0513/498.html>

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] <http://www.jca.apc.org/hanaokajiken/eng%20provisions.htm>, accessed 5/1/2010

[63] <http://www.china918.cn/news/suopei/xisonghj/2010/0510/497.html>

[64] <http://www.china918.cn/news/suopei/2009/1023/322.html>, accessed 5/1/2010

[65] <http://www.jca.apc.org/hanaokajiken/eng%20provisions.htm>

[66] *Ibid.*

[67] <http://www.china918.cn/news/suopei/2009/1023/322.html>

[68] Miki Y. Ishikida, *Toward Peace: War Responsibility, Postwar Compensation, and Peace Movements and Education in Japan* (NE: Center for US-Japan Comparative Social Studies, 2005) 43

[69] http://www.hr-china.org/human/2010-05/10/content_3504418.htm, accessed 5/24/2010

[70] <http://www.jetro.go.jp/en/news/releases/20100217809-news>, accessed 5/30/2010

[71] <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2535/t315036.htm>

On occasions when queried about the Chinese forced labor issue, the Chinese Foreign Ministry has spoken out and asked Japan to face squarely its unresolved war legacy. For example, when responding to the Japan Supreme Court's 2007 ruling, the Ministry spokesperson said on April 29, 2007, "The conscription of the forced and enslaved labour is a grave crime committed by Japanese militarism against the Chinese people. It is also an existing major human rights issue yet to be properly addressed. China has requested Japan to properly handle relevant issues in an attitude responsible for history."

<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2535/t628660.htm>

The same words were repeated again on November 23, 2009, when the spokesperson was asked about another verdict on Chinese forced labor at Sakata port, Yamagata prefecture.

<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/s2510/2511/t335373.htm>

The Ministry has also remarked on Japan's other unresolved war legacies. Regarding the issue of Comfort Women, for example, the Ministry spokesperson said on June 30, 2007, "The position of China on the "comfort women" issue is consistent and clear-cut. The conscription of "comfort women" is one of the grave crimes committed by the Japanese militarism against the people of the invaded countries including China during the Second World War. We request the Japanese government to listen to the just appeal of the international community, properly and earnestly handle the issue left over from history in an attitude responsible for history."

[72] <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Arimitsu-Ken/3256>

Ken Arimitsu wrote in the companion piece in Kang Jian et al., (November 23, 2009), that "Clarifying Japan's national responsibility and securing the necessary redress funding will be a sure step towards an age of trust and peace-building."

<http://news.163.com/10/0428/10/65BOH53I000146BD.html>

Recognizing that the path to litigation is closed, Deng Jianguo, the head of the Attorneys Association for Forced Labor Issues is quoted as having remarked "We feel it is time for the Japanese Government to speak up," noting the only way to resolve the problem now is through politics.

Rejected by All Plaintiffs: Failure of the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa “Settlement” with Chinese Forced Laborers in Wartime Japan

Kang Jian^[1]

Introduced by William Underwood

Introduction

Japanese lawyers and activists supporting compensation lawsuits for Chinese forced labor in wartime Japan once called Chinese attorney Kang Jian the “window.” The term acknowledged Kang’s pivotal role in coordinating between plaintiffs typically located in the Chinese countryside and Japanese legal teams pressing claims on their behalf in a dozen courtrooms across Japan over the past decade.

However, the close cooperation between Kang and the Japanese Lawyers Group for Chinese War Victims’ Compensation Claims broke down in April 2010, at least temporarily, following the out-of-court compensation agreement by Nishimatsu Construction Co. with forced laborers from its Shinanogawa worksite in Niigata. Late in the process of hammering out the settlement fund worth 128 million yen (about \$1.28 million), the five plaintiffs’ Japanese lawyers began negotiating with Nishimatsu on behalf of the larger group of Shinanogawa victims who had not participated in litigation. Flanked by Kang, these five plaintiffs rejected the Nishimatsu pact at a press conference in Beijing the day after it was finalized in Tokyo.

Attorney Kang in the article below severely criticizes the twin pillars of the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa accord: the Japan Supreme Court’s ruling in 2007 that the 1972 treaty between Japan and China extinguished the right of Chinese citizens to seek war-related damages, and Nishimatsu’s insistence that it bears no legal liability for wartime forced labor. The article also suggests deeper questions about the justice of group settlements for historical wrongdoing that include symbolic compensation to victims who have not agreed with settlement terms in advance.

Kang raised similar objections in a previous Asia-Pacific Journal [article](#) about Nishimatsu’s first voluntary settlement last October with Chinese laborers from its Yasuno worksite in Hiroshima, following one of the few lawsuits in which neither Kang nor the main Japanese lawyers group was involved. (See [Redress Crossroads in Japan: Decisive Phase in Campaigns to Compensate Korean and Chinese Wartime Forced Laborers](#) for recent developments involving forced labor redress for Chinese, Koreans and Allied POWs.)

The reparations claim for Chinese forced laborers remains particularly compelling and potentially resolvable. Many victims were farmers abducted from their fields by Japanese soldiers in the final two years of the war, and then taken to Japan for harsh labor at corporate-owned worksites with fatality rates of up to 50 percent. There were 38,935 workers according to detailed records that were secretly produced by the Japanese government in 1946, and then suppressed or destroyed once the very real threat of widespread war crimes prosecutions had blown over. The 35 companies involved received postwar indemnification payments from the state for losses supposedly incurred, even though wages were almost never paid during the war. Less than 1,000 former workers are believed to be alive today and their identities (if not in all cases exact locations) are well known.

Most significantly, Japanese courts in recent years have established the forcible, illegal nature of the Chinese labor program beyond any doubt, and ruled that it was jointly carried out by the Japanese state and industrial sector. Prior to the “death-knell” decision by the Japan Supreme Court in 2007, lower courts usually let the government and corporations off the legal hook on the respective grounds of state immunity and time limits for filing claims. Yet even in rejecting lawsuits Japanese judges on multiple occasions recommended that non-judicial avenues of redress be explored, while four actual courtroom victories infused Chinese forced labor redress efforts with a rare sense of legal momentum.

The Tokyo District Court in July 2001 ordered the state to pay the family of Liu Lianren for the 13 years he spent in hiding after he escaped from a Hokkaido mine just before the war ended. The Fukuoka District Court in April 2002 described Mitsui & Co.’s conduct as “evil” and ordered the company to compensate plaintiffs. The Niigata District Court in March 2004 found both the state and the transport company Rinko Co. liable for damages. The Hiroshima High Court in July 2004 ordered Nishimatsu to compensate plaintiffs from the Yasuno site.

The last was the ruling overturned by the Supreme Court on treaty-based grounds, ensuring that neither the Japanese government nor the companies will ever be required by Japanese courts to pay damages to Chinese claimants. It was a highly orthodox and largely expected decision by the top court, even if the claims waiver language in Japan’s 1972 treaty with China was (for reasons related to Japan’s 1952 treaty with Taiwan) more ambiguous than that found in treaties with the Allied nations in 1951 or with South Korea in 1965.

Basically all of the myriad legal claims against Japan arising from war and colonialism have now been dismissed by the top courts in Japan and/or claimants’ own countries, reflecting the nation-centric interpretations of international law that currently prevail. This means that war redress demands have per force moved into the political, economic and moral arenas, with legislative action having emerged within an ongoing global trend as the most effective means of repairing past injustices.

In the case of Chinese forced labor, the best way forward might be for the generally ambivalent Chinese government to bring more pressure to bear on the Japanese government and the corporate users of forced labor that are becoming increasingly dependent on the Chinese market. If China were to permit compensation lawsuits to proceed in Chinese courts, for example, the public relations fallout would probably send major companies like Mitsubishi Materials to the negotiation table even if the suits were never actually adjudicated. Mitsubishi is today a prime target of attorneys and citizens groups in both China and Japan, as the firm has indicated its willingness to settle Chinese claims on the condition the Japanese government participates in the process.

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, meanwhile, announced in July 2010 that it would open compensation talks with Korean women deceived as teenagers into working without pay at its wartime aircraft factory in Nagoya. That surprise move in the teishintai (or “volunteer corps”) case came only after many years of grassroots activism, first by Japanese and later by Koreans, as well as direct involvement by Seoul authorities in the form of the Truth Commission on Forced Mobilization Under Japanese Imperialism. Mitsubishi’s resistance to addressing the teishintai matter was finally broken by a petition signed by more than 130,000 South Korean citizens and 100 members of the National Assembly – along with a credible threat of organized consumer boycotts.

Japanese attorney Takahashi Toru has told The Asia-Pacific Journal that the Lawyers Group for Chinese War Victims' Compensation Claims plans to meet soon with the 20 or so still-extant companies that used Chinese forced labor, to encourage them to follow the Nishimatsu example. Two firms, Hazama Co. and Tekken Construction Co., were co-defendants with Nishimatsu (and the Japanese state) in the Shinanogawa lawsuit, but have taken no steps toward reconciliation. It is hoped that a critical mass of these Japanese companies will eventually recognize that resolution of the Chinese forced labor issue is in their corporate self-interest, and that they will in turn help persuade the Japanese government to set up a comprehensive state-industry compensation mechanism just as Germany did in 2000.

Prior to assuming the reins of power one year ago, the Democratic Party of Japan had established a party subcommittee for addressing the Chinese forced labor problem, along with subcommittees for issues involving Allied POWs and the repatriation of war-related remains. The DPJ also campaigned on proactively settling historical matters that had festered during a half-century of rule by the Liberal Democratic Party. But meaningful legislative or administrative action on forced labor by Japan will not occur unless the DPJ, which fared poorly in July's national elections, can consolidate its political position, or in the absence of significant domestic and/or international pressure on the issue.

Given both the Japan Supreme Court ruling and the German precedent, future Japanese measures concerning Chinese forced labor, at the state or corporate level, will almost surely be couched in moral and humanitarian—not legal—terms. Upcoming agreements likely will be explicitly premised on the April 2007 ruling and a denial of legal liability by the Japanese side, and it is the inclusion of these premises in the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa deal that is Kang Jian's central objection in the article that follows. The reparations road ahead may, however, involve both Japanese government creation of a framework for settlement and corporate payments to victims.

Kang's voice is that of a ground-floor participant and major figure in a transnational movement and legal process now approaching a decisive stage. Her important role of many years in fighting for justice for Chinese forced laborers, and her influential position in Chinese legal circles, entitle her views to a respectful hearing. —William Underwood

On April 26, 2010, Japan's Nishimatsu Construction Corporation (hereafter called Nishimatsu) and descendants of a number of Chinese victims of wartime forced labor at the Shinanogawa worksite in Japan signed an out-of-court settlement agreement. Some media phrased this action as "*Nishimatsu arrived at a settlement with the Chinese forced laborer plaintiffs*", or "*Nishimatsu will pay damages to 183 Chinese victims of forced labor*".

The truth is that all the plaintiffs of the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa forced labor lawsuit in Japan, who were confirmed by both Nishimatsu and the plaintiffs' Japanese attorneys in June 2009 as the representatives to negotiate with the company, did not sign any settlement agreement with Nishimatsu. The root cause for this are: (a) Nishimatsu insisted to state in the content of the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa Settlement Agreement^[2] that "Chinese people's right to claim had been waived", but did not allow the plaintiffs to express side by side in the Settlement Agreement that they could not accept this wrong viewpoint; (b) In order to make clear its unyielding position of not taking any legal liability, Nishimatsu deliberately uses the term "atonement money (償い金)"

to ambiguously name the damages that they should have paid to the Chinese victims; and (c) Moreover, Nishimatsu unreasonably requires those who accept the "settlement" to bear hereafter the obligation of ensuring that the corporation will be immune from any future liability from any other parties for this case. This article discusses these and other shortcomings of the unacceptable "settlement" in detail.



The five plaintiffs in the Shinanogawa lawsuit against Nishimatsu, along with heirs of two other victims, announce their opposition to the compensation pact at a Beijing press conference on April 27. (photo courtesy of Kang Jian)

The position of rejecting the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa Settlement Agreement by all plaintiffs is supported by many concerned individuals and organizations including Canada ALPHA (Association for Learning and Preserving the History of WWII in Asia).^[3]

1. Initiation of the settlement for Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa forced laborer lawsuit

Han Yinglin (deceased on June 7, 2010), Hou Zhenhai (deceased), Guo Zhen (deceased), Li Shu (deceased), and Li Xiang (deceased)^[4] are five of the victims of wartime forced labor who were abducted to Nishimatsu's Shinanogawa worksite in Niigata Prefecture of Japan for hard labor in 1944. At the Tokyo District Court on

September 18, 1997, they sued the Japanese government, Nishimatsu, Hazama Co. and Tekken Construction Co. for abduction and enslavement, demanding that the defendants openly apologize to the Chinese victims in both Chinese and Japanese media and pay each plaintiff damages of 20 million yen.

On March 11, 2003, the Tokyo District Court made the judgment of the first trial. The Court did not verify the facts of perpetration and dismissed the claim of the plaintiffs on the ground of statutory time limit.

The plaintiffs appealed immediately. On June 16, 2006, the Tokyo High Court made the judgment of the second trial. The court verified in detail the facts of victimization presented by each of the plaintiffs and the tortuous acts jointly committed by the State of Japan and the Japanese corporations, in which they abducted and enslaved the Chinese victims of forced labor. The plaintiffs' claim, however, was dismissed again on the ground of statutory time limit.

The plaintiffs then appealed to the Supreme Court of Japan. On June 15, 2007, the Second Petty Bench of the Supreme Court summarily dismissed the appeal of the plaintiffs without citing any legal grounds.

In 2009, senior officials of Nishimatsu were investigated by Japanese authorities for illegal political contributions and the senior management was then reorganized. In consideration of the corporation's business strategy and other factors such as improvement of its public image, Nishimatsu expressed in May 2009 its wish to resolve the historical issue by settling out of court with the Chinese victims of forced labor at its Shinanogawa worksite (as well as victims from the separate Yasuno worksite). The Chinese victims responded positively to this. In June 2009, the author went to Tokyo in the capacity of agent for the Chinese plaintiffs from Shinanogawa and,

together with the Japanese lawyers who represented the Chinese plaintiffs, negotiated with Nishimatsu.

At that time, the Nishimatsu representatives indicated that they would handle this case following the Hanaoka "settlement" model. The author unambiguously expressed that the Hanaoka "settlement" model should not be used because the Hanaoka "settlement" was characterized by the following features: the Kajima Corporation that enslaved the Chinese forced labor victims at its Hanaoka worksite evaded the facts of perpetration, evaded its responsibility, gave charitable "relief" to the Chinese forced labor victims to terminate its legal liability, and crowned the charitable relief fund with the laurel of "Friendship Fund". In addition, the Hanaoka Settlement Agreement contains a provision that inappropriately restricts the rights of any third party, including those who refuse to accept this "settlement", to claim damages from Kajima, the perpetrating corporation.

As the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa settlement negotiation stemmed from the lawsuit claims for damages by the plaintiffs, both parties established the principle at the initial stage of negotiation that the plaintiffs in the litigation be the representatives of the victims' side throughout the negotiation.



Chinese-language materials used to rally support for the strong redress claim stemming from Chinese forced labor. The man at left worked at the Nishimatsu Yasuno site, while the man at right was pressed into unpaid service for Mitsui & Co. (photo courtesy of Kang Jian)

A few months later, when proposing the settlement provisions, Nishimatsu insisted on including in the settlement agreement the wrong judgment made on April 27, 2007, by the Supreme Court of Japan. In that landmark ruling, the court held that the Chinese people's right to claim for damages had been waived in 1972, yet it also stated there is an expectation that the Chinese plaintiffs be given appropriate relief. Nishimatsu has taken this ruling as the premise for making a settlement with the Chinese victims of forced labor.

As representatives of the Chinese forced labor victims of the Shinanogawa worksite at the negotiation, all the plaintiffs made clear that the wrong conclusion derived from the unilateral interpretation of the *China-Japan Joint Communiqué* of 1972 by the Supreme Court of Japan should not be written into the Settlement Agreement. In compromise and to allow the opposite positions of the two sides on this issue to be expressed, the plaintiffs proposed that the Chinese victims' position of not accepting that "Chinese people's right to claim had been waived" should

also be written into the same provision of the Settlement Agreement. Another proposed option was moving this controversial content from the Settlement Agreement to the Confirmation Items document. Nishimatsu rejected the plaintiffs' proposals categorically.

2. Nishimatsu's intention to insist that "Chinese people's right to claim had been waived" as the premise for settlement

The Chinese victims of Japan's war of aggression against China brought over 20 legal claims for damages, one after the other, to Japanese courts against the Japanese government and corporations. The Japanese courts that undertook the trial of these cases had made many rulings already before April 27, 2007, but none of these judgments ruled that the Chinese people's right to claim had been waived.

On April 27, 2007, the Supreme Court of Japan made a ruling (hereafter called the 4/27 ruling) on the Nishimatsu-Yasuno forced labor case, deciding that the government of China, on signing the *China-Japan Joint Communiqué*, had waived fully the right to claim, including that of the Chinese nationals.

On the same day that the Supreme Court of Japan made the ruling, the spokesperson of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a firmly worded statement expressing explicitly that "*the interpretation of the China-Japan Joint Communiqué made by the Supreme Court of Japan is illegal and invalid.*"

After the 4/27 ruling was made, some Chinese and Japanese scholars of law and history studied and discussed the court ruling. They arrived at a common understanding that it is an obvious violation of the basic principle of international laws for the Supreme Court of Japan to use the *San Francisco Peace Treaty*, to which China was not a party, as its framework to unilaterally interpret the *China-Japan Joint Communiqué* and to rule that "Chinese people's right to claim for damages from Japan had been waived". Thus, the court's conclusion that "Chinese people's right to claim for damages had been waived" cannot be established. How to correct this wrong ruling will become a major issue from now on for both China and Japan in relation to finding ways to truly resolve the wartime legacy.

In June 2007, when the Supreme Court of Japan dismissed the appeal of the plaintiffs of the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa forced labor case, it did not give any reason and only simply stated in a few lines that the appeal was dismissed. The verdict did not mention anything at all about "Chinese people's right to claim had been waived". Hence, the ruling of the second trial at the Tokyo High Court on the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa forced labor case came into effect. In its verdict, the Tokyo High Court affirmed in detail the facts about the sufferings of Han Yinglin and the other four plaintiffs, affirmed also the illegal acts committed against the Chinese forced labor victims by the Japanese government, Nishimatsu and other perpetrating corporations. This court dismissed the victims' claim on the ground of exceeding the time limitations and the repose period for filing suit, but it did not rule that the Chinese people's right to claim had been waived. The Japanese lawyers who represent the plaintiffs also agree with the above analysis of the course of events.

If Nishimatsu really has the sincerity to make a settlement with the Chinese victims of forced labor, and if the company must cite a Japanese court ruling as a preamble of the Settlement Agreement, then the logical choice should be the verdict of the second trial made by the Tokyo

High Court. Nishimatsu, however, insisted on quoting the 4/27 ruling, which was not specifically made for the Shinanogawa case. The reason for this choice is self-explanatory. It is precisely because this 4/27 ruling decided that the "Chinese people's right to claim damages from Japan had been waived".

The Yasuno Settlement Agreement signed on October 23, 2009, between Nishimatsu and some Chinese forced labor victims and their descendants of the Yasuno worksite also included similar content asserting that "Chinese people's right to claim damages had been waived".

Nishimatsu insisted to insert also in the Shinanogawa Settlement Agreement the 4/27 ruling. Its intention is to forcibly establish a "settlement" model on the premise that "Chinese people's right to claim damages had been waived". This "settlement" model is to help the Japanese side to evade legal liabilities regarding their serious violations of human rights and international laws.

This "settlement" model will also produce another effect: Although various spokespersons of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs repeatedly denounced the wrong rulings made by the different levels of Japanese courts on or after April 27, 2007, the fact that there are Chinese victims who accept settlement agreements based on this model implies that they accept the wrong rulings regarding "Chinese people's right to claim damages had been waived". The construction of this reality will inevitably have adverse impacts on the resolution of war legacy issues.

3. Plaintiffs being involuntarily and forcibly included as part of the "Settlement" defined by Nishimatsu

Ignoring the principle of reciprocity, Nishimatsu insisted on writing into the Settlement Agreement that "Chinese people's right to claim had been waived" and objected to the inclusion of the plaintiffs' position of not accepting the 4/27 ruling in the same provision. In the spirit of compromise, the plaintiffs then proposed moving all such contents to the Confirmation Items document, but even this rightful demand was rejected by Nishimatsu. According to the Japanese lawyers of the plaintiffs, the President of Nishimatsu had explicitly stated that not a single word of the Settlement Agreement (the version finalized in December 2009) would be changed, and that the lawyers could write whatever they liked in the Confirmation Items because after all the President would not sign on the Confirmation Items document. This confession of the President indicates that Nishimatsu has no intention to truly reflect on the facts of perpetration or to sincerely apologize. It also shows that Nishimatsu knows the difference in terms of legal status between the Settlement Agreement and the Confirmation Items document.^[5]

On March 22, 2010, all the plaintiffs who had been confirmed as the representative body at the beginning of the negotiation with Nishimatsu, issued a statement rejecting the insincere Settlement Agreement offered by Nishimatsu. At the same time, the plaintiffs' statement expressed explicitly,

"If your corporation signs this Settlement Agreement with other Chinese forced labor victims or their descendants of the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa worksite, then it should state clearly in the Settlement Agreement that the proposed "solution" for the forced laborers at the Shinanogawa worksite does not include us in terms of the number of victims to be paid and the amount of money involved, and also deduct the sum meant for us from the total amount of the so-called

'atonement money'; otherwise we shall take it as a new violation of our legal rights and interests, and will hold your corporation accountable for such deed.'

Nevertheless, when Nishimatsu disclosed information about the "settlement" to the Japanese media on April 17, 2010, it continued to include the plaintiffs as part of its "settlement" arrangements.

As the agent of the Chinese plaintiffs, the author therefore issued a protest letter to Nishimatsu on April 19, 2010, but the corporation has not made any response. In the Settlement Agreement signed on April 26, 2010, Nishimatsu continued to include the plaintiffs who had already openly stated their rejection of this Settlement Agreement in its "settlement" arrangements. While Nishimatsu has yet to resolve its wartime forced labor issue, it violates de facto the human rights of the Chinese forced labor victims once again.



Chinese news coverage of the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa settlement and its rejection by plaintiffs involved in the lengthy litigation.

Nishimatsu has pushed aggressively this problematic "settlement" model, deliberately creating a false impression that the legacy issue of abducting and enslaving Chinese forced labor victims has achieved a "complete resolution". The purpose is to buy out its legal liability for severe human rights violation with a small sum of money. Once some Chinese victims accept and sign on to such a "settlement", despite the fact that these signatories do not have authorization from all other victims, Nishimatsu will regard "Chinese people's right to claim had been waived" to be an established fact and a "complete resolution" of the issue to be achieved. This is the effect of such a "settlement" model.

From a legal point of view, unless one is authorized, one has no authority to sign on behalf of others. However, this principle is violated in the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa "settlement" as the victims who have explicitly rejected the Settlement Agreement and those who have not yet been located are all involuntarily included in the binding provisions of this Settlement Agreement. Their claim issues are also unilaterally regarded as resolved within the "complete resolution". Such a deed is in obvious violation of law and blatantly disrespects the human rights of these victims.

Nishimatsu dodges with ease its legal liability and historical responsibility of severe human rights violation by paying a petty sum of less than 50,000 Chinese Yuan Renminbi to each victim of the Shinanogawa worksite or their heirs. The Chinese victims' side, on the other hand, pays a heavy price of losing the right to legal recourse henceforth as stipulated in Clause 6-1 of the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa Settlement Agreement, that *"... the victims' side gives up all the rights to claim from the appellant (i.e. Nishimatsu) in Japan as well as in other countries and regions"*.

4. The "relief (救济)" in the Settlement Agreement is not relief under legal rights

The preamble of the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa Settlement Agreement cites the 4/27 ruling of the Supreme Court of Japan. The Court ruled that Chinese people's legal right to claim had been waived. The Court, at the same time, opined, *"It is expected that the concerned parties, including*

the appellant (i.e. Nishimatsu), will make an effort to provide relief for the losses suffered by the victims in this case".

According to the original text of the 4/27 ruling, the term "relief" mentioned in the verdict is obviously NOT implying relief in the judicial sense. In the legal domain, "judicial relief" refers to relief as the right of the litigant. For the term "relief (救済)" outside the judicial domain, it refers to "*helping people in want or living in a disaster area with money or materials*", according to the Modern Chinese Dictionary.

The 4/27 ruling of the Supreme Court of Japan already concluded clearly that legally the Chinese people had lost their right to claim, implying that they had thus also lost the right to judicial relief in court. Hence, the type of "relief", as opined by the Court, from Nishimatsu and other concerned parties for the Chinese forced labor victims certainly does not refer to judicial relief. Thus, the meaning of the term "relief (救済)" used in the Settlement Agreement can only be relief of a charitable nature.

5. "Atonement Money (償い金)" is not "Damages (賠償金)"

"Atonement money" (償い金) is not a legal term. In Japanese, the term is of daily usage with a broad connotation, having emotional hues and the meaning of repaying indebtedness.

"Damages" (賠償金) is a legal term with clear connotation, meaning to assume liability by making payment to the victim. This term in both Japanese kanji (賠償金) and traditional Chinese characters (賠償金) is identical and has essentially the same meaning.

In 1995, under pressure from different quarters, the government of Japan set up the Asian Women's Fund to handle the issue of "comfort women" forced into sexual servitude by the Japanese military.

Based on the Japanese government's position that the issue of "comfort women" was already resolved in the peace treaties made by Japan with the victims' countries, the money paid to the victims should not be termed as damages or compensation. Hence, the term "consolation money (慰問金)" was used in the tentative plan released to the public through the media in August 1994. This term was repudiated by various stakeholders. In order to uphold its position of not assuming the liability, the Japanese government sought out another term, "atonement money (償い金)", and used it to replace "consolation money". Thereafter, the term "atonement money" appeared many times in the planning and promotion documents of the Asian Women's Fund issued by the then-Chief Cabinet Secretary and other top politicians.

In the Asian Women's Fund, the Japanese government ambiguously shifted its liability from paying damages to giving out "humanitarian" aid, including medical assistance, to the victims. Such a shift reflected the charitable relief hue of the Fund. The term "atonement money", according to the goals of the Asian Women's Fund, became the substitute term for "aid", and was used frequently in the official documents of the Fund. It was exactly due to the insincerity of the Japanese government and its unwillingness to undertake liability that the Asian Women's Fund was boycotted and criticized by the overwhelming majority of the victims and concerned organizations in Asia. At present, the Fund has concluded its payouts and related activities.

If Nishimatsu officials had the sincerity to make settlement, to offer apology and pay damages to the Chinese forced labor victims, why do they not use the term "damages (賠償金)" that has the same written characters in both Chinese and Japanese, and has the same and unambiguous connotation in the two languages?

The term "atonement money" in the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa Settlement Agreement echoes the purpose of citing the 4/27 ruling in the preamble of this Agreement. The purpose of insisting that the "Chinese people's right to claim damages had been waived" is to shirk the legal liability. Hence, in provisions regarding payment to the Chinese victims, the Agreement vigorously avoided using the term "damages", a proper legal term that implies undertaking liability.

Therefore, the term "atonement money (償い金)" viewed in the context of its intentional usage in the Asian Women's Fund and in the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa Settlement Agreement is, without doubt, not "damages" as claimed by some supporters of this Settlement Agreement.

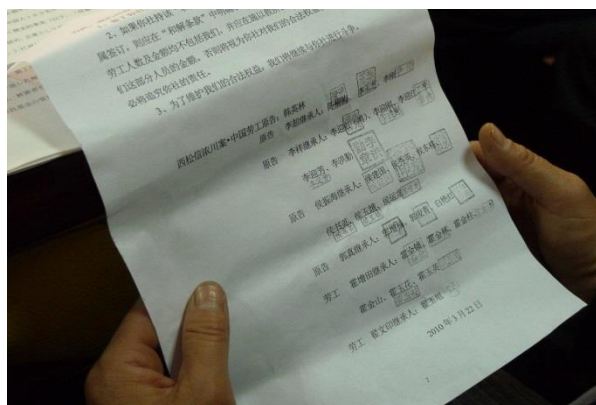
It is also worth mentioning that the legally valid version of the Settlement Agreement confirmed in the Tokyo Summary Court is the Japanese version, not the translated Chinese one. Therefore, in the Chinese version as provided by the Japanese lawyers, the term "atonement money (償い金)" being translated as "damages (賠償金)" is misleading to Chinese readers.

6. Subsequent obligations for those who have accepted the "settlement" and also for their agents

Clause 6-2 of the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa Settlement Agreement stipulated that *"the other party (i.e. the Chinese forced labor victims and their descendants) and their agents..., from now on have the responsibility, regardless of whether they have submitted the required document as mentioned in Clause 5-7, to ensure that the appellant (i.e. Nishimatsu) would not have any burden whenever anyone outside the other party makes a damage claim against the appellant."*

The implication of Clause 6-2 of the Settlement Agreement is that from now on, whenever anybody makes a damage claim against Nishimatsu regarding its enslavement of Chinese forced laborers (even though the person who makes the claim has not accepted this "settlement"), those who have accepted this "settlement" and their agents will have the responsibility to come forward to resolve this claim issue, making sure that Nishimatsu will not have any further burden. In plain language, Nishimatsu has paid out a small sum of money to enlist some helping hands.

In this provision (i.e. Clause 6-2), reference is made to Clause 5-7 which stipulates that the China Human Rights Development Foundation has the obligation to explain the purpose of this "settlement" to those who request payment of the "atonement money". Clause 5-7 also states that the Chinese victims who accept the "atonement money" have to sign two copies of the document



Letter sent by Chinese plaintiffs to Nishimatsu and the plaintiffs' Japanese lawyers last March, opposing the Shinanogawa settlement that was concluded the following month with other victims and descendants. (photo courtesy of Kang Jian)

acknowledging the purpose of the "settlement", and that one of the copies will be submitted to Nishimatsu by the China Human Development Foundation.

7. Different Legal Status of the Settlement Agreement and the Confirmation Items Document

Two documents arose from the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa "settlement", the Settlement Agreement signed by both parties (i.e. the President of Nishimatsu and some non-plaintiff victims' heirs) and the Confirmation Items document signed only by the lawyers of Nishimatsu and the Japanese lawyers, who were authorized to sign by the non-plaintiff victims and descendants - even as the five actual plaintiffs whom the Japanese lawyers had been representing refused to take part in the agreements. Similar arrangement was made in the case of the Nishimatsu-Yasuno "settlement" on October 23, 2009.

Why are there two documents arising from one "settlement"? An analysis of the status and the legal efficacy of the two documents is necessary.

Firstly, in terms of process and format, the Settlement Agreement was signed by Nishimatsu and some descendants of some victim laborers, and was also verified by the Tokyo Summary Court. The Confirmation Items, on the other hand, was signed only by the Japanese lawyers commissioned by the respective parties, but was not verified by the Tokyo Summary Court.



In Beijing last April at the office of attorney Kang Jian, far left, plaintiffs and family members in the Chinese forced labor lawsuit against Nishimatsu discuss their rejection of the Shinanogawa pact.
(photo courtesy of Kang Jian)

Hence, the Settlement Agreement is a judicial document and the Confirmation Items document is not.

Secondly, in terms of contents, the Confirmation Items list out the two parties' opposite positions and their different understandings concerning some critical contents of the Settlement Agreement.

However, some parts of the statements made in the Confirmation Items, in fact, exceed the stipulated meaning of the concerned provisions in the Settlement Agreement. Moreover, in the Settlement Agreement that was verified by the Tokyo Summary Court, there is no mention about the status of the Confirmation Items document in this "settlement" nor even about its

existence. Therefore, the legal efficacy of the Confirmation Items is highly questionable. Even if both parties may ratify afterwards what their Japanese lawyers have done regarding the Confirmation Items, since the Confirmation Items document was not verified in the court, its legal status is not comparable to the Settlement Agreement.

Obviously, in terms of format, the Settlement Agreement is in a superior position and the Confirmation Items document, which is in an inferior position, does not have the legal efficacy that supersedes the Settlement Agreement.

8. Conclusion

As agent of the Chinese plaintiffs, the author participated in many compensation lawsuits brought to the courts of Japan by victims of forced labor and "comfort women". In the course of these litigations of more than ten years, having been in contact with hundreds of victims and learned from their painful stories, I feel strongly the evils of the war that caused extremely serious pain and suffering to the Chinese. Until now, the government of Japan and the concerned Japanese corporations have not yet undertaken their liability towards the victims. As an attorney, I feel obliged to help the victims to realize their fundamental desires for defending their dignity and human rights.

In the process of negotiation with Nishimatsu for almost a whole year, the Shinanogawa lawsuit plaintiffs made huge efforts in attempting to reach a sincere settlement while upholding their rightful position. Together with the author, they gave frank opinions, via their Japanese lawyers, on the proposed settlement terms to Nishimatsu. For example, in the draft of the Shinanogawa Settlement Agreement, Nishimatsu used similar wordings as in the Yasuno Settlement Agreement to acknowledge its "historical responsibility". However, without putting this in the context of Nishimatsu's acts of enslaving the victimized Chinese laborers, such acknowledgment becomes vague and empty.

With input from the plaintiffs and the author, Nishimatsu agreed to specify in Clause 1 of the Settlement Agreement the time when the violations occurred, i.e. "during World War II", and to replace the term "labor" with "forced labor". For another example, the plaintiffs and the author believed the name of the fund for settlement should reflect, to a certain extent, the gravity and liability of the serious human rights violations committed by Nishimatsu. However, Nishimatsu at first proposed to name it as "Peace and Friendship Fund", the same name used in the Yasuno "settlement". We did not agree to follow the Yasuno "settlement" in having the term "friendship" in the name of the fund. Instead, we proposed two options: (1) "Historical Responsibility Fund" or (2) "Peace Fund". Eventually Nishimatsu accepted naming the fund as "Peace Fund".

In the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa Settlement Agreement, there are words like "apology" and "deep and profound retrospection". As Guan Jianqiang, Professor of International Law at East China University of Political Science and Law, pointed out in his March 2010 article, *"Suggestions Made Before the Finalization of the Shinanogawa Settlement"*:

"Although the apology of the Japanese corporation is stated in the Agreement, it lacks an explanation of why the Japanese corporation apologizes. In other words, without adding in the apology provision statements like: 'the corporation enslaved the victims and obtained benefits from doing so...', any apology made to the victims is really confusing in logic."^[6]

Around the time of the Nishimatsu Yasuno and Nishimatsu Shinanogawa Settlements, the supporters of those "settlements" pointed out that the surviving Chinese victims were getting senior in age and it would be of comfort to surviving victims if they could receive some monetary "compensation" while still alive.

However, the author feels these supporters are confused about a principle: that the violations perpetrated by the concerned Japanese corporations have caused serious and permanent harm to the bodies and minds of the victims. So unquestionably the perpetrators owe the responsibility to pay damages to the victims. Yet if their reasoning becomes that of only providing some

monetary assistance for the victims, they can realize this simply by fund-raising from the public. So it is wrong to use such reasoning to give up the rightful demand for damages from the perpetrating corporations. Monetary assistance and fulfilling responsibility to pay damages are two approaches with two distinct and different implications. These two approaches should not be confused, otherwise the perpetrators can easily evade their liability.



Attorney Kang Jian, far right, at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan in 2007. To the left of Kang is Thekla Lit of the activist group Canada ALPHA. To the left of Lit is a survivor of Chinese forced labor in Japan. (photo courtesy of Kang Jian)

Upon learning that the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa plaintiffs rejected publicly the insincere "settlement" agreement, concerned Chinese people, including overseas Chinese, are deeply touched. Despite their own not-so-well-off financial situations, these surviving victims or their heirs have stood their ground to defend human rights, their own dignity, and China's national dignity. To show support and respect for these plaintiffs, some concerned Chinese individuals and groups came forward to offer financial assistance. Such act is a realization of the universal desire to uphold human rights, to offer mutual respect and support in a united struggle against injustice. This generous act of supporting struggle against injustice is by nature totally different from Nishimatsu's offer of charitable relief, cloaked under the name of "atonement money". Such generosity from the broader community also proves that it is not impossible to solicit public donations to financially assist the victims in their struggle to demand damages from the perpetrators.

There are those who feel the amount granted to each Nazi slave laborer under the German Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" is somewhat lower than what was offered by Nishimatsu's settlement funds, so the fact that the former fund was praised while the latter was criticized appears to be unfair to the Japanese side.

The author would like to point out that the above opinion holders might have overlooked the legislations and the series of actions postwar Germany has been undertaking, which reflect Germany's resolve to face history and to deal with its war responsibilities squarely. In these aspects, Germany is far ahead of Japan, as agreed by the international community. The primary concern in this Nishimatsu "settlement" is its premise-that Nishimatsu evades its liability and offers "atonement money" that is tinted with hues of charity. Thus the Nishimatsu "settlement"

fund cannot be compared to the Remembrance, Responsibility and Future Foundation of Germany.

The Japanese lawyers representing the Chinese forced labor plaintiffs in nearly all the damage claim lawsuits suggested setting up a foundation for comprehensively settling all compensation issues regarding Chinese forced labor. As the Chinese lawyer involved in the Shinanogawa lawsuit and numerous other compensation lawsuits brought to the courts of Japan by victims of forced labor, the author and various plaintiffs supported this suggestion. So on November 5, 2008, 103 plaintiffs of Chinese forced labor lawsuits officially sent to the Japanese Government and concerned corporations the "Proposal on the Complete Resolution for the Issue of Abduction of Chinese People to Japan for Forced Labor during Wartime".^[7] The thrust of this proposal is to seek an out-of-court settlement and to set up a foundation to settle once and for all the issues around the severe human rights violations involved in the abduction of Chinese people to Japan for forced labor.

The author does not deny that out-of-court settlement is one of the means to resolve issues of wartime legacy. While this proposed settlement implies certain compromise, it does not sacrifice basic principle. Being the liable parties, the Japanese Government and the concerned corporations should face the historical facts squarely, undertake the liability, apologize to the Chinese victims, and pay compensation-this is the uncompromisable principle within a settlement.

Undoubtedly both the Japanese government and the concerned corporations should sincerely apologize and compensate the forced labor victims for the brutal mistreatment during their captivity. However, Nishimatsu only offered some money of charitable relief hue to the victims. This perfunctory and casual approach adopted by Nishimatsu to end its liabilities for such grave human rights violations is not acceptable because it totally contradicts the plaintiffs' original objective in the damages claim.

Since the Nishimatsu "settlements" have so many problems, the Chinese forced labor victim plaintiffs in 13 compensation lawsuits in Japan assume the core member roles and have united with other non-plaintiff forced labor victims and their descendents to form the Federation of WWII Chinese Forced Laborers. The objective of the Federation is to defend the legal rights of the nearly 40,000 Chinese abducted to Japan for forced labor, and to steadfastly demand that Japan and the concerned corporations make sincere apology and compensations.

In addition, the International Labor Organization of the United Nations has repeatedly issued statements urging the Japanese government to offer apology and compensation to victims of its forced labor and military sexual slavery ("comfort women") during wartime.

Since 2007, the United States of America, the Netherlands, Canada, the European Union, and some two dozen municipalities in Japan have passed resolutions urging Japan to apologize to and compensate the "comfort women" victims. Recently I learned that the State of California, while calling for tenders for its High Speed Railway construction, plans to include a provision that the companies tendering will be checked for its activities during WWII.

The above series of events prove that the international community has never given up its concern about the atrocities committed by Japan during WWII and Japan's war crime responsibilities.

Such atrocities and responsibilities will not be forgotten nor disappear with time: the only option for Japan is to sincerely apologize and compensate its victims.

Kang Jian is an attorney and Director of Beijing Fang Yuan Law Firm, member of the Constitutional Human Rights Committee of the All Chinese Lawyers Association (ACLA), member of the Disciplinary Committee of Beijing Lawyers Association, Deputy Director of the ACLA Steering Committee of Compensation Litigations Against Japan for WWII Chinese Victims, and Executive Director of the Investigation Committee on Atrocities Committed Against Former Chinese "Comfort Women". As agent for former Chinese "comfort women" and forced laborers, Kang Jian participated in a total of 13 damage claim lawsuits against the Japanese government and Japanese corporations in the courts of Tokyo, Fukuoka, Niigata, Gunma, Kyoto, Sapporo, Yamagata and elsewhere since 1995.

William Underwood researches ongoing reparations movements for forced labor in wartime Japan.

This is the English translation of an updated version of Kang's article originally written in Chinese. The updated article was prepared for The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus. The English translation was provided by Thekla Lit, Co-chair of [Canada ALPHA \(Association for Learning and Preserving the History of WWII in Asia\)](#).

Endnotes

[1] This article is a revised version of my previous article entitled A "Settlement" Based on the Premise of the Right to Claim Being Waived - Comment on the Nishimatsu-Shinanogawa "Settlement" published in China Legal Daily and People's Daily OnlinePeopl on May 18, 2010.

[2] For the Nishimatsu-Shinanagawa Settlement Agreement refer to [Appendix A](#) for the Japanese version and [Appendix B](#) for the translated Chinese version as provided by the Japanese lawyers representing the Chinese victims.

[3] Refer to [Appendix E](#) - Statement issued by Canada ALPHA on March 25, 2010.

[4] Besides Han Yinglin, the other 4 forced labor plaintiffs all passed away during the course of the litigation. Their descendants who inherited their legal status as plaintiffs were formally recognized by the Japan courts.

[5] For Confirmation Items refer to [Appendix C](#) for the Japanese version and [Appendix D](#) for the translated Chinese version as provided by the Japanese lawyers representing the Chinese victims.

[6] For Prof. Guan Jianqiang's article refer to [Appendix F](#).

[7] For the "Proposal on the Complete Resolution of the Issue of Abduction of the Chinese People to Japan for Forced Labor during Wartime" refer to [Appendix G](#).

The online version of this article contains seven Japanese-language appendices in PDF format.

Topics of Historical Memory in Japan*War Crimes***“War Crimes, Atrocities, and State Terrorism”**

Mark Selden

April 15, 2008

<http://japanfocus.org/-Mark-Selden/2724>**“The Comfort Women Controversy: History and Testimony”**

Yoshiko Nozaki

N.D.

<http://japanfocus.org/-Yoshiko-Nozaki/2063>**“The Japanese Apology on the ‘Comfort Women’ Cannot Be Considered Official: Interview with Congressman Michael Honda”**

Kinue Tokudome

May 31, 2007

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Michael-Honda/2438>**“Biohazard: Unit 731 in Postwar Japanese Politics of National ‘Forgetfulness’”**

Frederick R. Dickinson

October 12, 2007

http://www.japanfocus.org/-Frederick_R.-Dickinson/2543**“The Hundred Head Contest: Reassessing the Nanjing Massacre”**

Suzuki Chieko

December 12, 2003

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Suzuki-Chieko/1792>

This section focuses on Japanese war crimes, beyond the act of war itself, that are at the center of discussions about whether Japanese have adequately reflected on their war responsibility. Mark Selden offers “a comparative framework for understanding war atrocities and the ways in which they are remembered, forgotten and memorialized,” emphasizing the ubiquity and perseverance of these issues. He deals with the “politics of denial” in reference to both the Nanjing Massacre (1937-38) by Japan and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the firebombing of Tokyo by the United States of America. Selden emphasizes that nationalism often has “obfuscated, even eradicated, memories of the war crimes and atrocities committed by one’s own nation.” In this context, he contrasts Japan and the U.S.A. to Germany, with the two former countries both strongly resisting apology and compensations to the present day.

Yoshiko Nozaki and Kinue Tokudome delve further into this issue to discuss the “military comfort women”—forced labor in the form of sex slavery by the Japanese military—and the question of apology and compensation for the victims. Neonationalists (and conservative historians) have argued that the oral testimony by the now-aged women does not carry sufficient weight as authoritative historical sources and that written sources are the only reliable basis for historical writing. Nozaki introduces the arguments of

progressive and feminist historians, who advocate for oral testimonies as a way to establish the history of the comfort women, or any other group of imprisoned people, and respect them as historical actors. Tokudome also interviews California Congressman Mike Honda, who has lobbied for a U.S. Congressional resolution demanding that Japan “formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner” for the comfort women. His move shows that the comfort women issue is receiving broad attention in the international arena. Moving to another issue the Japanese government has never formally addressed, Frederick Dickinson introduces the history of Unit 731, an Army unit that conducted experiments with chemical and biological weapons on prisoners of war (POWs). Lastly, Suzuki Chieko's article looks at the historiography and recent court rulings revolving around the Nanjing Massacre, an event that conservative Japanese politicians such as Ishihara Shintarô, the former longtime governor of Tokyo, and more recently, Kawamura Takashi, the mayor of Nagoya, have insisted never took place.

Japanese and American War Atrocities, Historical Memory and Reconciliation: World War II to Today

Mark Selden

War Crimes, Atrocities and State Terrorism

The controversies that continue to swirl around the Nanjing Massacre, the military comfort women, Unit 731 and other Japanese military atrocities rooted in colonialism and the Asia Pacific War are critical not only to understanding the dynamics of war, peace, and terror in the long twentieth century. They are also vital for understanding war memory and denial, with implications for peace and regional accommodation in the Asia Pacific region and the US-Japan relationship. [1]

This article offers a comparative framework for understanding war atrocities and the ways in which they are remembered, forgotten and memorialized. It examines a number of high profile atrocities in an effort to understand their character and the reasons why recognizing and accepting responsibility for their actions have been so difficult. Neither committing atrocities nor suppressing their memories is the exclusive property of a single nation. The issues examined here begin with atrocities committed during the Asia Pacific War and continue to the present.

What explains the fact that Japanese denial and refusal to provide compensation to victims has long been the subject of sharp domestic and international contention, while there has been relatively little analysis of United States atrocities, less criticism or recrimination for that nation's commission and denial of atrocities, and still less demand for reparations? What are the consequences of this difference for the two nations and the contemporary international relations of the Asia Pacific?

Among the war crimes and atrocities committed in World War II, the Nanjing Massacre . . . or Rape of Nanjing, or Nankin Daigyakusatsu, or Nankin Jiken (Japanese) or Nanjing Datusha (Chinese) . . . remains the most controversial. These different names signal alternative Japanese, Chinese and international perceptions of the event: as "incident", as "massacre", as "rape", as "massive butchery".

The Nanjing Massacre is controversial not because the most basic facts are in doubt, although historians continue to contest the number of deaths and the interpretation of certain events. Rather it is controversial because of the shocking scale of the killing of Chinese civilians and prisoners of war in a single locale, because of the politics of denial, and because the relationship between the massacre and the character of the wider war remains little understood despite the outstanding research of Japanese and other scholars and journalists. [2]

Japanese neonationalists deny the very existence of a massacre and successive postwar Japanese governments have refused to accept responsibility for either the massacre or the wider war of aggression in which ten to thirty million Chinese died, explaining why these issues remain controversial. To understand why the Japanese government continues to fight this and other war memory battles in ways that poison its relations not only with its Asian neighbors but also with the United States and European nations requires reconsideration not only of contemporary Japanese nationalism, but also of the Cold War power structure that the US set in place during the occupation.

The US insulated Japan from war responsibility, first by maintaining Hirohito on the throne and shielding him from war crimes charges, second by protecting the Japanese state from war reparations claims from victims of colonialism, invasion, and atrocities, and finally by using its troops and bases both to guarantee Japan's defense and to isolate it from China, the Soviet Union, and other US rivals.

Before turning to this issue, one other question should be posed: more than six decades since Japan's defeat in the Pacific War, by what right does an American critically address issues of the Nanjing Massacre and Japan's wartime atrocities? Stated differently, in the course of those six decades US military forces have repeatedly violated international law and humanitarian ethics, notably in Korea, Indochina, Iraq and Afghanistan. In the course of those decades, Japan has never fought a war, although it has steadfastly backed the US in each of its wars. Yet Asian and global attention continues to focus on Japanese war atrocities and their denial, while paying little attention to those committed and denied by the United States.

Attempts to gauge war atrocities and to understand the ways in which they are remembered and suppressed, require the application of universal standards as articulated in the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials. In an age of nationalism, it is particularly important to apply such standards to the conduct of one's own nation. The German case, to which I return below, is particularly instructive. Germany, like Japan, was defeated by a US-led coalition, and the US played a key role in shaping institutions, war memories, and responses to war atrocities in both Germany and Japan. [3] Nevertheless, the outcomes in the two nations in the form of historical memory and reconciliation in the wake of war atrocities have differed sharply.

To unravel the most contentious memory wars in the Asia Pacific, I begin by offering a comparative framework for assessing Japanese and American war atrocities. I examine Japan's Nanjing Massacre and the American firebombing and atomic bombing of Japanese cities during World War II as each nation's signature atrocities. In each instance, I cast the issues in relation to the wider conduct of the war, and in the American case consider the legacy of the bombing for subsequent wars down to the present. At the center of the analysis is the assessment of these examples in light of principles of international law developed over many decades from the late nineteenth century, notably those enshrined in the Nuremberg and Tokyo Trials, and the Geneva Convention of 1949, that identify as acts of terrorism and crimes against humanity the slaughter of civilians and noncombatants by states and their militaries. [4] It is only by considering crimes by the victors as well as the vanquished in the Asia Pacific War and other wars that it is possible to lay to rest the ghosts of suppressed memories in order to build foundations for a peaceful cooperative order in the Asia Pacific.

But first, Nanjing.

The Nanjing Massacre and Structures of Violence in the Sino-Japanese War

Substantial portions of the Nanjing Massacre literature in English and Chinese—both the scholarship and the public debate—treat the event as emblematic of the wartime conduct of the Japanese, thereby essentializing the massacre as the embodiment of the Japanese character. In the discussion that follows, I seek to locate the unique and conjunctural features of the massacre in order to understand its relationship to the character of Japan's protracted China war and the wider Asia Pacific War.

Just as a small staged event by Japanese officers in 1931 provided the pretext for Japan's seizure of China's Northeast and creation of the dependent state of Manchukuo, the minor clash between Japanese and Chinese troops at the Marco Polo Bridge on July 7, 1937 paved the way for full-scale invasion of China south of the Great Wall. By July 27, Japanese reinforcements from Korea and Manchuria as well as Naval Air Force units had joined the fight. The Army High Command dispatched three divisions from Japan and called up 209,000 men. With Japan's seizure of Beiping and Tianjin the next day, and an attack on Shanghai in August, the (undeclared) war began in earnest. In October, a Shanghai Expeditionary Army (SEA) under Gen. Matsui Iwane with six divisions was ordered to destroy enemy forces in and around Shanghai. The Tenth Army commanded by Gen. Yanagawa Heisuke with four divisions soon joined in. Anticipating rapid surrender by Chiang Kai-shek's National Government, the Japanese military encountered stiff resistance: 9,185 Japanese were killed and 31,125 wounded at Shanghai. But after landing at Hangzhou Bay, Japanese forces quickly gained control of Shanghai. By November 7, the two Japanese armies combined to form a Central China Area Army (CCAA) with an estimated 160,000-200,000 men. [5]

With Chinese forces in flight, Matsui's CCAA, with no orders from Tokyo, set out to capture the Chinese capital, Nanjing. Each unit competed for the honor of being the first to enter the capital. Historians such as Fujiwara Akira and Yoshida Yutaka sensibly date the start of the Nanjing Massacre to the atrocities committed against civilians en route to Nanjing. "Thus began," Fujiwara wrote, "the most enormous, expensive, and deadly war in modern Japanese history—one waged without just cause or cogent reason." And one that paved the way toward the Asia Pacific War that followed.

Japan's behavior at Nanjing departed dramatically from that in the capture of cities in earlier Japanese military engagements from the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 forward. One reason for the barbarity of Japanese troops at Nanjing and subsequently was that, counting on the "shock and awe" of the November attack on Shanghai to produce surrender, they were unprepared for the fierce resistance and heavy casualties that they encountered, prompting a desire for revenge. Indeed, throughout the war, like the Americans in Vietnam decades later, the Japanese displayed a profound inability to grasp the roots and strength of the nationalist resistance in the face of invading forces who enjoyed overwhelming weapons and logistical superiority. A second reason for the atrocities was that, as the two armies raced to capture Nanjing, the high command lost control, resulting in a volatile and violent situation.

The contempt felt by the Japanese military for Chinese military forces and the Chinese people set in motion a dynamic that led to the massacre. In the absence of a declaration of war, as Utsumi Aiko notes, the Japanese high command held that it was under no obligation to treat captured Chinese soldiers as POWs or observe other international principles of warfare that Japan had scrupulously adhered to in the 1904-05 Russo-Japanese War, such as the protection of the rights of civilians. Later, Japan would recognize captured US and Allied forces as POWs, although they too were treated badly. [6]

As Yoshida Yutaka notes, Japanese forces were subjected to extreme physical and mental abuse. Regularly sent on forced marches carrying 30-60 kilograms of equipment, they also faced ruthless military discipline. Perhaps most important for understanding the pattern of atrocities that emerged in 1937, in the absence of food provisions, as the troops raced toward Nanjing, they plundered villages and slaughtered their inhabitants in order to provision themselves. [7]



Gen. Matsui enters Nanjing

Chinese forces were belatedly ordered to retreat from Nanjing on the evening of December 12, but Japanese troops had already surrounded the city and many were captured. Other Chinese troops discarded weapons and uniforms and sought to blend in with the civilian population or surrender. Using diaries, battle reports, press accounts and interviews, Fujiwara Akira documents the slaughter of tens of thousands of POWs, including 14,777 by the Yamada Detachment of the 13th Division. Yang Daqing points out that Gen. Yamada had his troops execute the prisoners after twice being told by Shanghai Expeditionary Army headquarters to “kill them all”. [8]

Major Gen. Sasaki Toichi confided to his diary on December 13:

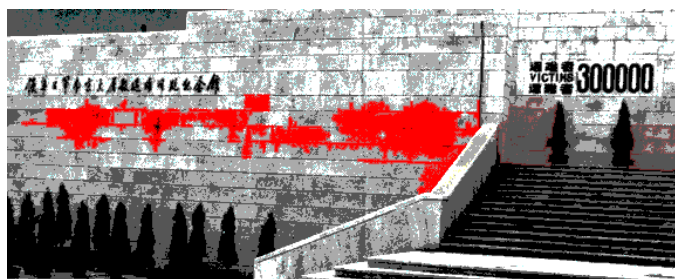
. . . our detachment alone must have taken care of over 20,000. Later, the enemy surrendered in the thousands. Frenzied troops--rebuffing efforts by superiors to restrain them--finished off these POWs one after another. . . . men would yell, ‘Kill the whole damn lot!’ after recalling the past ten days of bloody fighting in which so many buddies had shed so much blood.”

The killing at Nanjing was not limited to captured Chinese soldiers. Large numbers of civilians were raped and/or killed. Lt. Gen. Okamura Yasuji, who in 1938 became commander of the 10th Army, recalled “that tens of thousands of acts of violence, such as looting and rape, took place against civilians during the assault on Nanjing. Second, front-line troops indulged in the evil practice of executing POWs on the pretext of [lacking] rations.”

Chinese and foreigners in Nanjing comprehensively documented the crimes committed in the immediate aftermath of Japanese capture of the city. Nevertheless, as the above evidence indicates, the most important and telling evidence of the massacre is that provided by Japanese troops who participated in the capture of the city. What should have been a fatal blow to “Nanjing denial” occurred when the Kaikosha, a fraternal order of former military officers and neonationalist revisionists, issued a call to soldiers who had fought in Nanjing to describe their experience. Publishing the responses in a March 1985 “Summing Up”, editor Katogawa Kotaro cited reports by Unemoto Masami that he saw 3-6,000 victims, and by Itakura Masaaki of 13,000 deaths. Katogawa concluded: “No matter what the conditions of battle were, and no matter how that affected the hearts of men, such large-scale illegal killings cannot be justified. As someone affiliated with the former Japanese army, I can only apologize deeply to the Chinese people.”

A fatal blow . . . except that incontrovertible evidence provided by unimpeachable sources has never stayed the hands of incorrigible deniers. I have highlighted the direct testimony of Japanese generals and enlisted men who documented the range and scale of atrocities committed during the Nanjing Massacre in order to show how difficult it is, even under such circumstances, to overcome denial.

Two other points emerge clearly from this discussion. The first is that the atrocities at Nanjing—just as with the comfort women— have been the subject of fierce public controversy. This controversy has erupted again and again over the textbook content and the statements of leaders ever since Japan's surrender, and particularly since the 1990s. The second is that, unlike their leaders, many Japanese citizens have consistently recognized and deeply regretted Japanese atrocities. Many have also supported reparations for victims.



Nanjing Memorial Museum with figure of 300,000 deaths

The massacre had consequences far beyond Nanjing. The Japanese high command, up to Emperor Hirohito, the commander-in-chief, while closely monitoring events at Nanjing, issued no reprimand and meted out no punishment to the officers and men who perpetrated these crimes. Instead, the leadership and the press celebrated the victory at the Chinese capital in ways that invite comparison with the elation of an American president as US forces seized Baghdad within weeks of the 2003 invasion. [9] In both cases, the 'victory' initiated what proved to be the beginning not the end of a war that could neither be won nor terminated for years to come. In both instances, it was followed by atrocities that intensified and were extended from the capital to the entire country.

Following the Nanjing Massacre, the Japanese high command did move determinedly to rein in troops to prevent further anarchic violence, particularly violence played out in front of the Chinese and international press. Leaders feared that such wanton acts could undermine efforts to win over, or at least neutralize, the Chinese population and lead to Japan's international isolation.

A measure of the success of the leadership's response to the Nanjing Massacre is that no incident of comparable proportions occurred during the capture of a major Chinese city over the next eight years of war. Japan succeeded in capturing and pacifying major Chinese cities, not least by winning the accommodation of significant elites in Manchukuo and in the Nanjing government of Wang Jingwei, as well as in cities directly ruled by Japanese forces and administrators. [10]

This was not, however, the end of the slaughter of Chinese civilians and captives. Far from it. Throughout the war, Japan continued to rain destruction from the air on Chongqing, Chiang Kai-shek's wartime capital, and in the final years of the war it deployed chemical and biological bombs against Ningbo and throughout Zhejiang and Hunan provinces. [11]

Above all, the slaughter of civilians that characterized the Nanjing Massacre was subsequently enacted throughout the rural areas where resistance stalemated Japanese forces in the course of eight years of war. This is illustrated by the *sanko sakusen* or Three-All Policies implemented throughout rural North China by Japanese forces seeking to crush both the Communist-led resistance in guerrilla base areas behind Japanese lines and in areas dominated by Guomindang and warlord troops. [12] Other measures implemented at Nanjing would exact a heavy toll on the countryside: military units regularly relied on plunder to secure provisions, conducted systematic slaughter of villagers in contested areas, and denied POW status to Chinese captives, often killing all prisoners. Above all, where Japanese forces encountered resistance, they adopted scorched earth policies depriving villagers of subsistence.

One leadership response to the adverse effects of the massacre is the establishment of the comfort woman system immediately after the capture of Nanjing, in an effort to control and channel the sexual energies of Japanese soldiers. [13] The comfort woman system offers a compelling example of the structural character of atrocities associated with Japan's China invasion and subsequently with the Asia Pacific War.

In short, the anarchy first seen at Nanjing paved the way for more systematic policies of slaughter carried out by the Japanese military throughout the countryside. The comfort woman system and the three-all policies reveal important ways in which systematic oppression occurred in every theater of war and was orchestrated by the military high command in Tokyo.

Nanjing then is less a typical atrocity than a key event that shaped the everyday structure of Japanese atrocities over eight years of war. While postwar Japanese and American leaders have chosen primarily to "remember" Japan's defeat at the hands of the Americans, the China war took a heavy toll on both Japanese forces and Chinese lives. In the end, Japan faced a stalemated war in China, but one that paved the way for the Pacific War, in which Japan confronted the US and its allies.

The Nanjing Massacre was a signature atrocity of twentieth century warfare. But war atrocities were not unique to Japan.

American War Atrocities: Civilian Bombing, State Terror and International Law

Throughout the long twentieth century, and particularly since World War II, the inexorable advance of weapons technology has gone hand-in-hand with international efforts to place limits on killing and the barbarism associated with war, notably indiscriminate bombing raids and other attacks directed against civilians. Advances in international law have provided important points of reference for establishing international governance norms and for inspiring and guiding social movements seeking to control the ravages of war and advance the cause of world peace.

In the following sections I consider the conduct of US warfare from the perspective of the emerging norms. In light of these norms, international criticism has long centered on German and Japanese atrocities, notably the Holocaust and specific atrocities including the Nanjing Massacre, the comfort women and the bio-warfare conducted by Unit 731. Rarely has the United States been systematically criticized, still less punished, for war atrocities. Its actions, notably the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and its conduct of the Indochina Wars prompted international controversy. [14] However, It has never been required to change the fundamental

character of the wars it wages, to engage in self-criticism at the level of state or people, or to pay reparations to other nations or to individual victims of war atrocities.

While the strategic impact and ethical implications of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have generated a vast contentious literature, US destruction of more than sixty Japanese cities prior to Hiroshima has until recently been slighted both in the scholarly literatures in English and Japanese, and in popular consciousness in Japan, the US, and globally. [15]

Germany, England and Japan led the way in what is euphemistically known as “area bombing”, the targeting for destruction of entire cities with conventional weapons. From 1932 to the early years of World War II, the United States repeatedly criticized the bombing of cities. President Franklin Roosevelt appealed to the warring nations in 1939 on the first day of World War II, “under no circumstances [to] undertake the bombardment from the air of civilian populations or of unfortified cities.” [16] After Pearl Harbor, the US continued to claim the moral high ground by abjuring civilian bombing. This stance was consistent with the prevailing Air Force view that the most efficient bombing strategies were those that pinpointed destruction of enemy forces and strategic installations, not those designed to terrorize or kill noncombatants.

Nevertheless, the US collaborated with Britain in indiscriminate bombing at Casablanca in 1943. While the British sought to destroy entire cities, the Americans continued to target military and industrial sites. On February 13-14, 1945, British bombers followed by US planes destroyed Dresden, a historic cultural center with no significant military industry or bases. By conservative estimate, 35,000 people were incinerated in that single raid. [17]

But it was in Japan, in the final six months of the war, that the US deployed air power in a campaign to burn whole cities to the ground and terrorize, incapacitate, and kill their largely defenseless residents, in order to force surrender. In those months the American way of war, with the bombing of cities at its center, was set in place.

Maj. Gen. Curtis LeMay, appointed commander of the 21st Bomber Command in the Pacific on January 20, 1945, became the primary architect, a strategic innovator, and most quotable spokesman for the US policy of putting enemy cities to the torch. The full fury of firebombing was first unleashed on the night of March 9-10, 1945 when LeMay sent 334 B-29s low over Tokyo, unloading 496,000 incendiaries in that single raid. Their mission was to reduce the city to rubble, kill its citizens, and instill terror in the survivors. The attack on an area that the US Strategic Bombing Survey estimated to be 84.7 percent residential succeeded beyond the planners’ wildest dreams. Whipped by fierce winds, flames detonated by the bombs leaped across a fifteen-square-mile area of Tokyo generating immense firestorms.



Tokyo after the firebombing

How many people died on the night of March 9-10, in what flight commander Gen. Thomas Power termed “the greatest single disaster incurred by any enemy in military history?” The figure of roughly 100,000 deaths and one million homes destroyed, provided by Japanese and American authorities may understate the destruction, given the population density, wind conditions, and survivors’ accounts. [18] An estimated 1.5 million people lived in the burned out areas. Given a near total inability to fight fires of the magnitude and speed produced by the bombs, casualties could have been several times higher than these estimates. The figure of 100,000 deaths in Tokyo may be compared with total US casualties in the four years of the Pacific War—103,000—and Japanese war casualties of more than three million.



Police photographer Ishikawa Toyo's closeup of Tokyo after the firebombing

Following the Tokyo raid of March 9-10, the US extended firebombing nationwide. In the ten-day period beginning on March 9, 9,373 tons of bombs destroyed 31 square miles of Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Kobe. Overall, bombing strikes pulverized 40 percent of the 66 Japanese cities targeted. [19]

Many more (primarily civilians) died in the firebombing of Japanese cities than in Hiroshima (140,000 by the end of 1945) and Nagasaki (70,000). The bombing was driven not only by a belief that it could end the war but also, as Max Hastings shows, by the attempt by the Air Force to claim credit for the US victory, and to redeem the enormous costs of developing and producing thousands of B-29s and the \$2 billion cost of the atomic bomb. [20]



Ishikawa Toyo. A child's corpse in the Tokyo bombing

The most important way in which World War II shaped the moral and tenor of mass destruction was the erosion of the stigma associated with the targeting of civilian populations from the air. If area bombing remained controversial throughout much of World War II, something to be concealed or denied by its practitioners, by the end of the war, with the enormous increase in destructive power of bombing, it had become the centerpiece of US war making, and therefore the international norm. [21] This approach to the destruction of cities, which was perfected in 1944-45, melded technological predominance with minimization of US casualties to produce overwhelming “kill ratios”.

The USAAF offered this ecstatic assessment of LeMay’s missions claiming that the firebombing and atomic bombing secured US victory and averted a costly land battle: [22]

In its climactic five months of jellied fire attacks, the vaunted Twentieth killed outright 310,000 Japanese, injured 412,000 more, and rendered 9,200,000 homeless . . . Never in the history of war had such colossal devastation been visited on an enemy at so slight a cost to the conqueror . . . The 1945 application of American Power, so destructive and concentrated as to cremate 65 Japanese cities in five months, forced an enemy’s surrender without land invasion for the first time in military history. . . . Very long range air power gained victory, decisive and complete.

This triumphalist (and flawed) account, which exaggerated the efficacy of air power and ignored the critical importance of sea power, the Soviet attack on Japan, and US softening of the terms of the Potsdam Declaration to guarantee the security of Hirohito, would not only deeply inflect American remembrance of victory in the Pacific War, it would profoundly shape the conduct of all subsequent American wars.

How should we compare the Nanjing Massacre and the bombing of cities? The Nanjing Massacre involved face-to-face slaughter of civilians and captured soldiers. By contrast, in US bombing of cities technological annihilation from the air distanced victim from assailant. [23] Yet it is worth reflecting on the common elements. Most notably, mass slaughter of civilians.

Why have only the atrocities of Japan at Nanjing and elsewhere drawn consistent international condemnation and vigorous debate, despite the fact that the US likewise engaged—and continues to engage—in mass slaughter of civilians in violation both of international law and ethics?

American War Crimes and the Problem of Impunity

Victory in World War II propelled the US to a hegemonic position globally. It also gave it, together with its allies, authority to define and punish war crimes committed by vanquished nations. This privileged position was and remains a major obstacle to a thoroughgoing reassessment of the American conduct of World War II and subsequent wars.

The logical starting point for such an investigation is reexamination of the systematic bombing of civilians in Japanese cities. Only by engaging the issues raised by such a reexamination—from which Americans were explicitly shielded by judges during the Tokyo Tribunals—is it possible to begin to approach the Nuremberg ideal, which holds victors as well as vanquished to the same standard with respect to crimes against humanity, or the yardstick of the 1949 Geneva Accord, which mandates the protection of all civilians in time of war. This is the principle of universality proclaimed at Nuremberg and violated in practice by the US ever since.

Every US president from Franklin D. Roosevelt to George W. Bush has endorsed *in practice* an approach to warfare that targets entire populations for annihilation, one that eliminates all vestiges of distinction between combatant and noncombatant. The centrality of the use of air power to target civilian populations runs like a red line from the US bombings of Germany and Japan 1944-45 through the Korean and Indochinese wars to the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq wars. [24]

In the course of three years, US/UN forces in Korea flew 1,040,708 sorties and dropped 386,037 tons of bombs and 32,357 tons of napalm. Counting all types of airborne ordnance, including rockets and machine-gun ammunition, the total comes to 698,000 tons. Using UN data, Marilyn Young estimates the death toll in Korea, mostly noncombatants, at two to four million. [25]

Three examples from the Indochina War illustrate the nature of US bombing of civilians. In a burst of anger on Dec. 9, 1970, President Richard M. Nixon railed at what he saw as the Air Force's lackluster bombing campaign in Cambodia. "I want them to hit everything. I want them to use the big planes, the small planes, everything they can that will help out there, and let's start giving them a little shock." Kissinger relayed the order: "A massive bombing campaign in Cambodia. Anything that flies on anything that moves." [26] In the course of the Vietnam War, the US also embraced cluster bombs and chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction as integral parts of its arsenal.

An important US strategic development of the Indochina War was the extension of the arc of civilian bombing from cities to the countryside. In addition to firebombs and cluster bombs, the US introduced Agent Orange (chemical defoliation), which not only eliminated the forest cover, but exacted a heavy long-term toll on the local population including large-scale intergenerational damage in the form of birth defects. [27]

In Iraq, the US military, while continuing to pursue massive bombing of neighborhoods in Fallujah, Baghdad and elsewhere, has thrown a cloak of silence over the air war. While the media has averted its eyes and cameras, air power remains among the major causes of death, destruction, dislocation and division in contemporary Iraq. [28] The war had taken approximately 655,000 lives by the summer of 2006 and close to twice that number by the fall of 2007, according to the most authoritative study to date, that of The Lancet. Air war has also played a major part in creating the world's most acute refugee problem. By early 2006 the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees estimated that 1.7 million Iraqis had fled the country while approximately the same number were internal refugees, with the total number of refugees rising well over 4 million by 2008. [29] Nearly all of the dead and displaced are civilians.



Destroying Fallujah in order to save it

Both the plight of refugees and the intensification of aerial bombing of 2007 and 2008 have been largely invisible in the US mainstream press. This is the central reality of American state terror in Iraq. Nevertheless, despite America's unchallenged air supremacy in Iraq since 1991, despite the creation of an array of military bases to permanently occupy that country and anchor American power in the Middle East, as the war enters its sixth year there is no end in sight to US warfare in Iraq and throughout the region. [30] Indeed, as the presidential debate makes clear, there is little prospect of exit for the US from an Iraq located at the epicenter of the world's richest oil holdings, regardless of the outcome of the election. It is of course a region in which the geopolitical stakes far exceed those in Korea or Vietnam.



Iraqi refugees on the Syrian border

Historical Memory and the Future of the Asia Pacific

I began by considering the Nanjing Massacre's relationship to structural and ideological foundations of Japanese colonialism and war making and US bombing of Japanese civilians in

the Pacific War in 1945, and subsequently of Korean, Indochinese and Iraqi civilians. In each instance the primary focus has not been the headlined atrocity—Nanjing, Hiroshima, Nogunri, Mylai, Abu Ghraib—but the foundational practices that systematically violate international law provisions designed to protect civilians.

In both the Japanese and US cases, nationalism and national pride in the service of war and empire eased the path for war crimes perpetrated against civilian populations. In both countries, nationalism has obfuscated, even eradicated, memories of the war crimes and atrocities committed by one's own nation, while privileging memory of the atrocities committed by adversaries. Consider, for example, American memories of the killing of 2,800 mainly Americans on September 11, 2001 compared with more than one million Iraqi deaths, millions more injured, and more than four million refugees. Heroic virtue reigns supreme in official memory and in representations such as museums, monuments, and textbooks, and often, but not always, in popular memory.

Striking differences distinguish Japanese and US responses to their respective war atrocities and war crimes. Occupied Japan looked back at the war from the midst of bombed out cities and an economy in ruins, grieving the loss of three million compatriots. But also, buoyed by postwar hopes, significant numbers of Japanese reflected on and criticized imperial Japan's war crimes. Many embraced and continue to embrace the peace provision of the Constitution, which renounced war-making capacity for Japan. A Japan that was perpetually at war between 1895 and 1945 has not gone to war for more than six decades. It is fair to attribute this transformation in part to the widespread aversion toward war and embrace of the principles enshrined in Article 9 of the peace constitution, though it is equally necessary to factor in Japan's position of subordination to American power and its financial and logistical support for every US war since Korea.

In the decades since 1945, the issues of war have remained alive and contentious in public memory and in the actions of the Japanese state. After the formal independence promulgated by the 1951 San Francisco Treaty, with Hirohito still on the throne, Japanese governments reaffirmed the aims of colonialism and war of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere of the 1931-45 era. They released from prison and restored the reputations of former war criminals, making possible the election of Kishi Nobusuke as Prime Minister (and subsequently his grandson Abe Shinzo). In 1955, when the Liberal Democratic Party inaugurated its nearly forty-year grip on power, the Ministry of Education, tried to force authors of textbooks to downplay or omit altogether reference to the Nanjing Massacre, the comfort women, Unit 731, and military-coerced suicides of Okinawan citizens during the Battle of Okinawa. Yet these official efforts, then and since, have never gone unchallenged by the victims, by historians, or by peace activists.

From the early 1980s, memory controversies over textbook treatments of colonialism and war precipitated international disputes with China and Korea as well as in Okinawa. In Japan, conservative governments backed by neonationalist groups clashed with citizens and scholars who embraced criticism of Japan's war crimes and supported the peace constitution. [31]

In contrast to this half-century debate within Japan, not only the US government but also most Americans remain oblivious to the war atrocities committed by US forces as outlined above. The exceptions are important. Investigative reporting revealing atrocities such as the massacres at Nogunri in Korea and My Lai in Vietnam, and torture at Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, have convinced most Americans that these events took place. Yet,

precisely as presented in the official story and reiterated in the press, most of them see these as aberrant crimes committed by a handful of low-ranking officers and enlisted men. In each case, prosecution and sentencing burnished the image of American justice. The embedded structure of violence, the strategic thinking that lay behind the specific incident, and the responsibility for the atrocities committed up the chain of command, were silenced or ignored.

Two exceptions to the lack of reflection and resistance to apology provide perspective on American complacency about its conduct of wars. President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which offered apologies and reparations to survivors among the 110,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans who had been interned by the US government in the years 1942-45. Then, in 1993 on the one hundredth anniversary of the US overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy, President Bill Clinton offered an apology (but no recompense) to native Hawai'ans. In both cases, the crucial fact is that the victims' descendants are American citizens and apologies proved to be good politics for the incumbent. [32]

One additional quasi-apology bears mention. In March 1999, Clinton, speaking in Guatemala City of the US role in the killing of 200,000 Guatemalans over previous decades, made this statement: "For the United States, it is important that I state clearly that support for military forces and intelligence units which engaged in violence and widespread repression was wrong and the United States must not repeat that mistake." The remarks had a certain political significance at the time, yet they had more of the weight of a feather than of Mt. Tai. No word of apology was included. No remuneration was made to victims. And, above all, the United States did not act to end its violent interventions in scores of countries in Latin America, Asia or elsewhere. [33]

There have of course been no apologies or reparations for US firebombing or atomic bombing of Japan, or for killing millions and creating vast numbers of refugees in Korea, Vietnam or Iraq, or for US interventions in scores of other ongoing conflicts in the Americas and Asia. Such is the prerogative of impunity of the world's most powerful nation. [34]

However, there has been one important act of recognition of the systemic character of American atrocities in Vietnam, and subsequently in Iraq. Just as Japanese troops provided the most compelling testimony on Japanese wartime atrocities, it is American veterans whose testimony most effectively unmasked the deep structure of the American way of war in Vietnam and Iraq.

In the Winter Soldier investigation in Detroit on January 31 to February 2, 1971, Vietnam Veterans Against the War organized testimony by 109 discharged veterans and 16 civilians. John Kerry, later a US Senator and presidential candidate testified two months later in hearings at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as representative of the Winter Soldier event. Kerry summed up the testimony: [35]

They had personally raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blown up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks, and generally ravaged the countryside of South Vietnam. . ."

Kerry continued: “We rationalized destroying villages in order to save them We learned the meaning of free fire zones, shooting anything that moves, and we watched while America placed a cheapness on the lives of orientals.”

On March 13-16, 2008 a second Winter Soldier gathering took place in Washington DC, with hundreds of Iraq War veterans providing testimony, photographs and videos documenting brutality, torture and murder in cases such as the Haditha Massacre and the Abu Ghraib torture. [36] As in the first Winter Soldier, the mainstream media ignored the event organized by Iraq Veterans Against War. Again, however, the voices of these veterans have reached out to some through films and new electronic and broadcast media such as YouTube.



IVAW prepare for Winter Soldier 2008

The importance of apology and reparations lies in the fact that through processes of recognition of wrongdoing and efforts to make amends (however belated or inadequate) to victims, the poisonous legacies of war and colonialism may be alleviated or overcome and foundations laid for a harmonious future. In Germany, this involved renunciation of Nazism, the formation of a new government distinctive from and critical of the former government; consensus expressed in the nation's textbooks and curricula critical of Nazi genocide and aggression; monuments and museums commemorating the victims; and payment of substantial reparations to individual victims (albeit under US pressure). All of these actions paved the way for Germany's reemergence at the center of the European Union.

In contrast to their German counterparts, Japanese and American leaders have strongly resisted apology and reparations. While many Japanese people have reflected deeply on their nation's war atrocities, Japanese leaders, sheltered from Asia by the US-Japan security relationship, had little incentive to reflect deeply on the nation's wartime record in China or elsewhere. Americans, for their part, have felt little pressure either domestic or international to apologize or provide reparations to victims from other nations.

Material foundations for a breakthrough in international relations in the Asia Pacific exist in the booming economic, financial, and trade ties across the region. In particular, strong links exist among Japan, China and South Korea, each of which are among the others' first or second leading trade and investment partners. Nor is the opening limited to economics. Equally notable are burgeoning cultural relations. For example, "the Korean wave" in TV and film is taking China, Japan and parts of Southeast Asia by storm. Japanese manga, anime and TV dramas are widely disseminated throughout the Asia Pacific. [37] Similarly, Chinese pop music and TV dramas also span the region, particularly, but not exclusively, where overseas Chinese are numerous. In addition, Pan-Asian collaborations in film, anime, and music are widespread. Such cultural interpenetration has not waited for political accommodation. Indeed, it has proceeded apace even during times when Japan-Korea and Japan-China tensions over territorial and historical memory issues are high. And for the first time, we can see in the six-party talks on North Korean nuclear weapons and the possibility of an end to Cold War divisions, possibilities for the emergence of a regional framework.

It has been widely recognized that a major obstacle to the emergence of a harmonious order in the Asia Pacific is the politics of denial of atrocities associated with war and empire. China, Korea and other former victims of Japanese invasion and colonization have repeatedly criticized Japan. [38] Largely ignored in debates over the future of the Asia Pacific has been the responsibility of the US to recognize and provide reparations for its own numerous war atrocities as detailed above, notably in the bombing of Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese and Iraqi civilians.

Such responsible actions by the world's most powerful nation would make it possible to bring to closure unresolved war issues both for the many individual victims of US bombing and other atrocities, and the continued hostilities between states, above all the US-North Korea conflict and the division of the two Koreas. It would also pave the way for a Japan that remains within the American embrace to acknowledge and recompense victims of its own war crimes. Might it not help pave the way for an end to US wars without end across the Asia Pacific and beyond?

Mark Selden is a coordinator of Japan Focus and a research associate in the East Asia Program at Cornell University.

Notes

[*] I am indebted to Herbert Bix, Richard Falk, and especially Laura Hein for criticism and suggestions on earlier drafts of this paper. This is a revised and expanded version of a talk delivered on December 15, 2007 at the Tokyo International Symposium to Commemorate the Seventieth Anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre.

[1] Most discussion of historical memory issues has centered on the Japan-China and the Japan-Korea relationships. However, the controversy that erupted in 2007 over the US congressional resolution calling on Japan to formally apologize and provide compensation for the former comfort women illustrates the ways in which the US-Japan relationship is also at stake. [Kinue Tokudome, "Passage of H.Res. 121 on 'Comfort Women', the US Congress and Historical Memory in Japan," Japan Focus](#). Tessa [Morris-Suzuki, "Japan's 'Comfort Women': It's time for the truth \(in the ordinary, everyday sense of the word\)," Japan Focus](#).

[2] Fierce debate continues among historians, activists and nations over the number of victims. The issue involves differences over both the temporal and spatial definition of the massacre. The

official Chinese claim inscribed on the Nanjing Massacre Memorial is that 300,000 were killed. The most careful attempts to record the numbers by Japanese historians, which include deaths of civilians and soldiers during the march from Shanghai to Nanjing as well as deaths following the capture of the capital suggest numbers in the 80,000 to 200,000 range. In recent years, the first serious Chinese research examining the massacre, built on 55 volumes of documents, has begun to appear. See Kasahara Tokushi, *Nankin Jiken Ronsoshi. Nihonjin wa shijitsu o do ninshiki shite kita ka?* (The Nanjing Incident Debate. How Have Japanese Understood the Historical Evidence?) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2007) for the changing contours of the Japanese debate over the decades. Kasahara Tokushi and Daqing Yang explore “The Nanjing Incident in World History,” (Sekaishi no naka no Nankin Jiken) in a discussion in *Ronza*, January, 2008, 184-95, ranging widely across international and joint research and the importance of new documentation from the 1970s to the present. Reiji Yoshida and Jun Hongo, “Nanjing Massacre: Toll will elude certitude. Casualty counts mirror nations' extremes, and flexibility by both sides in middle,” *Japan Times*, Dec 13, 2007.

[3] I first addressed these issues in Laura Hein and Mark Selden, eds., *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, China and the United States* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2000).

[4] For discussion of the international legal issues and definition of state terrorism see the introduction and chapter two of Mark Selden and Alvin So, eds., *War and State Terrorism: The United States, Japan and the Asia-Pacific in the Long Twentieth Century* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), pp. 1-40. See also Richard Falk's chapter in that volume, “State Terror versus Humanitarian Law,” pp. 41-62.

[5] The following discussion of the Nanjing Massacre and its antecedents draws heavily on the diverse contributions to Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, ed., *The Nanking Atrocity 1937-38: Complicating the Picture* (New York and London: Berghahn Books, 2007) and particularly the chapter by the late Fujiwara Akira, “The Nanking Atrocity: An Interpretive Overview,” available in [a revised version at Japan Focus](#). Wakabayashi, dates the start of the “Nanjing atrocity”, as he styles it, to Japanese bombing of Nanjing by the imperial navy on August 15. “The Messiness of Historical Reality”, p. 15. Chapters in the Wakabayashi volume closely examine and refute the exaggerated claims not only of official Chinese historiography and Japanese deniers, but also of progressive critics of the massacre. While recognizing legitimate points in the arguments of all of these, the work is devastating toward the deniers who hew to their mantra in the face of overwhelming evidence, e.g. p. 143.

[6] Utsumi Aiko, “Japanese Racism, War, and the POW Experience,” in Mark Selden and Alvin So, eds., *War and State Terrorism*, pp. 119-42.

[7] Presentation at the Tokyo International Symposium to Commemorate the Seventieth Anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre, December 15, 2007.

[8] Yang Daqing, “Atrocities in Nanjing: Searching for Explanations,” in Diana Lary and Stephen MacKinnon, eds., *Scars of War. The Impact of Warfare on Modern China* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001), pp. 76-97.

[9] The signature statement was that of George W. Bush on March 19, 2003: “My fellow citizens, at this hour, American and coalition forces are in the early stages of military operations to disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger... My fellow

citizens, the dangers to our country and the world will be overcome. We will pass through this time of peril and carry on the work of peace. We will defend our freedom. We will bring freedom to others and we will prevail."

[10] Timothy Brook, *Collaboration: Japanese Agents and Local Elites in Wartime China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

[11] [Tsuneishi Keiichi, "Unit 731 and the Japanese Imperial Army's Biological Warfare Program,"](#) John Junkerman trans., *Japan Focus*.

[12] Mark Selden, *China in Revolution: The Yen'an Way Revisited* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1995); Chen Yung-fa, *Making Revolution: The Chinese Communist Revolution in Eastern and Central China, 1937-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); Edward Friedman, Paul G. Pickowicz and Mark Selden, *Chinese Village, Socialist State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); Chalmers Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962). In carrying out a reign of terror in resistance base areas Japanese forces anticipated many of the strategic approaches that the US would later apply in Vietnam. For example, Japanese forces pioneered in constructing "strategic hamlets" involving relocation of rural people, torching of entire resistance villages, terrorizing the local population, and imposing heavy taxation and labor burdens.

[13] Yuki Tanaka, *Japan's comfort women: sexual slavery and prostitution during World War II and the US occupation* (London ; New York : Routledge, 2002). This systematic atrocity against women has haunted Japan since the 1980s when the first former comfort women broke silence and began public testimony. The Japanese government eventually responded to international protest by recognizing the atrocities committed under the comfort woman system, while denying official and military responsibility. It established a government-supported but ostensibly private Asian Women's Fund to apologize and pay reparations to former comfort women, many of whom rejected the terms of a private settlement. See [Alexis Dudden and Kozo Yamaguchi, "Abe's Violent Denial: Japan's Prime Minister and the 'Comfort Women,'"](#) *Japan Focus*. See [Wada Haruki, "The Comfort Women, the Asian Women's Fund and the Digital Museum,"](#) *Japan Focus*

for Japanese and English discussion and documents archived at the website.

[14] Peter J. Kuznick, ["The Decision to Risk the Future: Harry Truman, the Atomic Bomb and the Apocalyptic Narrative,"](#) *Japan Focus*.

[15] Early works that drew attention to US war atrocities often centered on the torture, killing and desecration of the remains of captured Japanese soldiers are Peter Schrijvers, *The GI War Against Japan. American Soldiers in Asia and the Pacific During World War II* (New York: NYU Press, 2002) and John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986). The Wartime Journals of Charles Lindbergh (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970) is seminal in disclosing atrocities committed against Japanese POWs. A growing literature has begun to examine U.S. bombing policies. A. C. Grayling, *Among the Dead Cities*, provides a thorough assessment of US and British strategic bombing (including atomic bombing) through the lenses of ethics and international law. Grayling concludes that the US and British killing of noncombatants "did in fact involve the commission of wrongs" on a very large

scale. Pp. 5-6; 276-77. See Herbert P. Bix, "War Crimes Law and American Wars in 20th Century Asia," *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (July 2001), pp. 119-132.

[16] Quoted in Sven Lindqvist, *A History of Bombing* (New York: New Press, 2000), p. 81. The US debate over the bombing of cities is detailed in Michael Sherry, *The Rise of American Air Power: The Creation of Armageddon* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1987), pp. 23-28, pp. 57-59. Ronald Schaffer, *Wings of Judgment: American Bombing in World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 20-30, 108-9; and Sahr Conway-Lanz, *Collateral Damage, Americans, Noncombatant Immunity, and Atrocity After World War II* (London: Routledge, 2006). p. 10. For a more detailed account of US bombing see [Mark Selden, A Forgotten Holocaust: US Bombing Strategy, the Destruction of Japanese Cities and the American Way of War from the Pacific War to Iraq.](#) Japan Focus.

[17] Sherry, *Air Power*, p. 260. With much U.S. bombing already relying on radar, the distinction between tactical and strategic bombing had long been violated in practice. The top brass, from George Marshall to Air Force chief Henry Arnold to Dwight Eisenhower, had all earlier given tacit approval for area bombing, yet no orders from on high spelled out a new bombing strategy.

[18] The Committee for the Compilation of Materials on Damage Caused by the Atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, *Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Physical, Medical and Social Effects of the Atomic Bombing* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), pp. 420-21; Cf. U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey, *Field Report Covering Air Raid Protection and Allied Subjects Tokyo* (n.p. 1946), pp. 3, 79; The U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey study of Effects of Air Attack on Urban Complex Tokyo-Kawasaki-Yokohama (n.p. 1947). In contrast to the vast survivor testimony on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in addition to poems, short stories, novels, manga, anime and film documenting the atomic bombing, the testimony for the firebombing of Tokyo and other cities is sparse. Max Hastings provides valuable first person accounts of the Tokyo bombing based on survivor recollection. *Retribution. The Battle for Japan 1944-45* (New York: Knopf, 2008), pp. 297-306.

[19] All but five cities of any size were destroyed. Of these cities, four were designated atomic bomb targets, while Kyoto, was spared. John W. Dower, "Sensational Rumors, Seditious Graffiti, and the Nightmares of the Thought Police," in *Japan in War and Peace* (New York: The New Press, 1993), p. 117. United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *Summary Report*, Vol I, pp. 16-20.

[20] *Retribution*, pp. 296-97. Hastings, p. 318, makes a compelling case that the Japanese surrender owed most to the naval blockade which isolated Japan and denied it access to the oil, steel and much more in severing the links to the empire.

[21] The horror felt round the world at the German bombing at Guernica, Japanese bombing of Shanghai and Chongqing, and the British bombing of Dresden would not be felt so intensely and universally ever again, regardless of the scale of bombing in Korea, Vietnam or Iraq . . . with the possible exception of the outpouring of sympathy for the 2,800 victims of the 9/11 terror bombing of the New York World Trade Center.

[22] "Postwar Narrative," quoted in Hastings, *Retribution*, p. 317.

[23] Another important factor is the difference in the character of the two wars. Japan's invasion of China involved very different dynamics from the US-Japan conflict between two expansionist powers. The present article does not explore this issue.

[24] In practice. Sahr Conway-Lanz provides the definitive study of the "collateral damage" argument that has been repeatedly used to deny deliberate killing of civilians in US bombing. *Collateral Damage, Americans, Noncombatant Immunity, and Atrocity After World War II*.

[25] Marilyn Young, "Total War," forthcoming chapter in *Bombing Civilians*, Marilyn Young and Yuki Tanaka eds. (New York: The New Press).

[26] Elizabeth Becker, "Kissinger Tapes Describe Crises, War and Stark Photos of Abuse," *The New York Times*, May 27, 2004.

[27] Seymour Hersh, *Chemical and Biological Warfare* (New York: Anchor Books, 1969), pp. 131-33. Hersh notes that the \$60 million worth of defoliants and herbicides in the 1967 Pentagon budget would have been sufficient to defoliate 3.6 million acres if all were used optimally.

[28] In contrast to the Vietnam War in particular, in which critical journalism in major media eventually played a powerful role in fueling and reinforcing the antiwar movement, the major print and broadcasting media in the Iraq War have dutifully averted their eyes from the air war in deference to the Bush administration's wishes. On the air war, see, for example, Seymour Hersh, "Up in the Air. Where is the Iraq war headed next?" *The New Yorker*, Dec 5, 2005; Dahr Jamail, "Living Under the Bombs," *TomDispatch*, February 2, 2005; Michael Schwartz, "A Formula for Slaughter. The American Rules of Engagement from the Air," *TomDispatch*, January 14, 2005; Nick Turse, America's Secret Air War in Iraq, *TomDispatch*, February 7, 2007; Tom Engelhardt, "9 Propositions on the U.S. Air War for Terror," *TomDispatch*, April 8, 2008. The invisibility of the air war is nicely revealed in conducting a Google search for "Iraq War" and "Air War in Iraq". The former produces numerous references to the New York Times, the Washington Post, CNN, Wikipedia and a wide range of powerful media. The latter produces references almost exclusively to blogs and critical sources such as those cited in this note.

[29] Sabrina Tavernese, "For Iraqis, Exodus to Syria, Jordan Continues," *New York Times*, June 14, 2006. Michael Schwartz, "Iraq's Tidal Wave of Misery. The First History of the Planet's Worst Refugee Crisis," *TomDispatch*, February 10, 2008. The UN estimates that there are 1.25 million Iraqi refugees in Syria and 500,000 in Jordan, 200,000 throughout the Gulf states, 100,000 more in Europe. The United States accepted 463 refugees between the start of the war in 2003 and mid-2007. The International Organization for Migration estimated the displacement rate throughout 2006-07 at 60,000 per month, with the American "surge" accelerating displacement, already more than one in seven Iraqis a nation of 28 million people have been displaced.

[30] Anthony Arnove, "Four Years Later... And Counting. Billboarding the Iraqi Disaster," *TomDispatch*, March 18, 2007. Seymour Hersh, "The Redirection. Is the Administration's new policy benefiting our enemies in the war on terrorism?" *The New Yorker* March 3, 2007. Michael Schwartz, "Baghdad Surges into Hell. First Results from the President's Offensive", *TomDispatch*, February 12, 2007.

[31] [Mark Selden, "Nationalism, Historical Memory and Contemporary Conflicts in the Asia Pacific: the Yasukuni Phenomenon, Japan, and the United States"](#) *Japan Focus*; Yoshiko Nozaki

and Mark Selden, “Historical Memory, International Conflict and Japanese Textbook Controversies in Three Epochs,” forthcoming *Contexts: The Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society*, Vol I, Number 1; [Takashi Yoshida, “Revising the Past, Complicating the Future: The Yushukan War Museum in Modern Japanese History,” *Japan Focus*](#); [Laura Hein and Akiko Takenaka, “Exhibiting World War II in Japan and the United States,” *Japan Focus*](#); [Aniya Masaaki, “Compulsory Mass Suicide, the Battle of Okinawa, and Japan’s Textbook Controversy,” *Japan Focus*](#).

[32] Thanks to Laura Hein for suggesting the framing of this issue. On the Reagan decision, reparations and the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, see

Mitchell T Maki, Harry H Kitano, and S Megan Berthold, *Achieving the Impossible Dream: How Japanese Americans Obtained Redress* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1999); see also [the following](#) and [Clinton’s apology to Hawaiians took the form of Public Law 103-150](#). The formal apology recognized the devastating effects of subsequent social changes on the Hawaiian people and looked to reconciliation. But offered no reparations or other specific measures to alleviate the sufferings caused by US actions.

[33] Emily Rosenberg drew my attention to the Guatemala quasi-apology. Clinton’s remarks were prompted by the February 1999 publication of the findings of the independent Historical Clarification Commission which concluded that the US was responsible for most of the human rights abuses committed during the 36-year war in which 200,000 died. [Martin Kettle and Jeremy Lennard, “Clinton Apology to Guatemala,” *The Guardian*, March 12, 1999](#). [Mark Weisbrot, “Clinton’s Apology to Guatemala is a Necessary First Step,” March 15, 1999, *Knight-Ridder/Tribune Media Services*](#).

[34] How are we to define power? If no nation remotely rivals American military power, particularly in the wake of the demise of the Soviet Union, if the United States military budget in 2008 is larger than that of all other nations combined — before counting the special appropriations for wars in Iraq and Afghanistan — the striking fact is that the US has fought to stalemate or defeat in each of the major wars it has entered since World War II.

[35] Kerry’s testimony, ignored by the mass media but made available through film and other media, is available [here](#).

[36] See the testimony and the historical record [here](#) and [here](#).

[37] [Nissim Kadosh Otmazgin, “Japanese Popular Culture in East and Southeast Asia: Time for a Regional Paradigm?”](#)

[38] We have underlined the deleterious effects of Japanese nationalism in preventing recognition and apology for atrocities. Reconciliation is made more difficult by exaggerated claims with respect to the Nanjing Massacre by nationalists in China and the Chinese diaspora.

The “Comfort Women” Controversy: History and Testimony*

Yoshiko Nozaki

[A] conference of historians, psychoanalysts, and artists, gathered to reflect on the relation of education to the Holocaust, watched the videotaped testimony of the woman in an attempt to better understand the era. A lively debate ensued. The testimony was not accurate, historians claimed. The number of chimneys was misrepresented. Historically, only one chimney was blown up, not all four. Since the memory of the testifying woman turned out to be, in this way, fallible, one could not accept--nor give credence to--her account of the events. It was utterly important to remain accurate, [lest] the revisionists in history discredit everything. A psychoanalyst . . . profoundly disagreed. “The woman was testifying,” he insisted, “not to the number of the chimneys blown up, but to something else, more radical, more crucial: the reality of an unimaginable occurrence.”—Dori Laub[1]

Introduction

In recent years, women’s testimonies have provided crucial evidence for challenging normative views of history. Testimony as such has been “an act of memory situated in time,” “vital” to historical knowledge, as it “dislocate[d] established frameworks and shift[ed] paradigms” of the discipline.[2] The power of words has also been evident in current educational practices. Teachers working at different levels of education--from a classroom where twelfth grade students read I, Rigoberta Menchu[3] to a classroom at Yale where college students watched films of Holocaust survivors[4]-- have reported that the testimonial narratives of previously marginalized voices have powerful transformative effects upon the consciousness and actions of students.

The use of testimony in history, however, often brings with it tension, uncertainty, and conflict--be it epistemological, methodological, ethical, or otherwise--with respect to research and teaching practices. As one critic observes, I, Rigoberta Menchu “played a conspicuous role in the ideological conflicts that burst out in the field of education in the United States” in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[5] Clearly, history involves social and cultural struggles over interpretations of the past. Feminist historian Joan Scott has called this the “politics of history,” as historical interpretations are “not fixed . . . but are rather dynamic, always in flux.” It is important that historians to attend to the “conflictual processes that establish meanings . . . [and] the play of force involved in any society’s construction and implementation of meanings.”[6]

This article examines the Japanese controversy over the “comfort women” (ianfu) system during Japan’s Asia-Pacific War (1931-1945) and attempts to include that history in school textbooks.[7] The testimonies given by former comfort women in the 1990s forever changed the paradigm of historical research on the subject and became the focus of charged debate among intellectuals of different disciplinary and ideological backgrounds, as well as the target of Japanese neonationalist attacks.[8]

The existence of comfort women was ubiquitous knowledge in Japan from the late 1930s, despite censorship. In the 1990s, feminist movements inside and outside Japan, and above all the victims who broke silence and gave testimonies,[9] showed the direct role of the Japanese state and military in creating and maintaining a system of forced prostitution and systematic rape of women from colonized and occupied territories. When the voices of victims were reinforced by

the research findings of Japanese scholars who unearthed documents proving the role of the Japanese military in maintaining the system, official denials melted away. By examining the process, through which the challenges to the normative interpretation were posed and the ways they were countered, this article provides a comparative perspective for understanding contemporary controversies over women’s voices, testimony, and history generally.[10]

Challenges to the Meaning of Comfort Women in Postwar Japan

A number of reports, diaries, and memoirs published in Japan during and after World War II mentioned military comfort facilities on various war fronts and throughout territories occupied by Japanese imperial forces.[11] In these writings, the term *ianfu* (comfort women) was a euphemism for prostitutes who provided sex to men in service. Although the story had no place in Japan’s official war history, it was told and retold privately as a nostalgic (and sometimes romantic) episode in men’s memoirs and novels.

In the 1970s and 1980s, several publications appeared that took somewhat more critical views of the comfort women issue. One of the first was a book written by the non-fiction writer Senda Kako in 1973.[12] Senda, a former journalist, conducted extensive research and interviews, and from these he concluded that the women's situations had been “pitiful.”[13] Senda's work was based almost wholly on sources and recollections of Japanese men who had served in the war--only a few Japanese former comfort women spoke of their experiences, and the two Korean former comfort women he interviewed remained silent. Senda’s book became a best seller. The term he used for the women *jugun-ianfu* (comfort women serving in the war), would later become contentious, came to have a wide circulation.

Feminist approaches began to appear after the Japanese journalist and feminist Matsui Yayori (1934-2003) took up the issue. In 1984, Matsui published a short article in *Asahi Shinbun*, which marked the first time for any major newspaper to address the issue. Matsui’s interviewee, a former comfort woman whose name was not disclosed, was a Korean living in Thailand. She spoke of her experience this way:

The life of comfort women was this--during the day doing laundry of soldiers’ clothes, cleaning the barracks, and some heavy labor such as carrying ammunition, and at night being the plaything for the soldiers. There were days when I was made to serve scores of men beginning in the morning. When I resisted--even just a little--I was beaten by the supervisor, pulled by my hair, and dragged around half-naked. It was a subhuman life.[14]

Matsui’s article triggered no significant public reaction. It was only after the successes of South Korean democratic and feminist movements in the late 1980s, freeing former comfort women to speak of their experiences for the first time, that the issue became international, forcing the Japanese government to recognize the comfort women as a significant part of Japan’s unresolved war issues. Yun Chung-ok, a professor at Korea's Ewha Womans University, was an important catalyst in this development. In the late 1980's she met with Matsui to exchange information about the comfort women, and in 1990 she wrote a series of reports on the issue for a Korean newspaper.[15] Yun’s reports ignited and enraged the South Korean public, prompting calls for redress from the Japanese government. They also catalyzed Japanese women’s groups and political parties, many of which began to call for a governmental inquiry into the issue as a war atrocity.

In a Diet session in June 1991, the Japanese government denied the involvement of the wartime state and its military in the matter--further enraging South Koreans. Former comfort woman Kim Hak-soon was so angry that she decided to "come out" as a way of forcing the Japanese government to confront the issue. She was the first Korean woman residing in South Korea to reveal herself in public as a former comfort woman.[16] In the fall of 1991, Kim testified before the Japanese public. Her testimony, translated, recorded, and later published, began with her half century of silence and the decision eventually to break that silence:

For these fifty years, I have lived, by bearing and again bearing [the unbearable]. For fifty years, I have had a heavy, painful feeling, but kept thinking in my heart about telling my experience some day. . . . As I try to speak now, my heart pounds against my chest, because what happened in the past was something extremely unconscionable Why does [the Japanese government] tell such a lie [to deny its knowledge of comfort women system]? Actually, I was made into a comfort woman, and I'm here alive.[17]

Kim's testimony was the most significant event in establishing a new interpretation of the comfort women system. Hearing her story on Japanese television, historian Yoshimi Yoshiaki went straight to the archives of the Self-Defense Agency (Boeicho), where he found evidence that conclusively demonstrated the involvement of the Japanese Imperial Army in organizing the comfort women system for its soldiers (though the nature of the comfort women system and the state/military involvement, including the use of force and coercion, still required further study). In 1992, he published his findings in major Japanese newspapers. Faced with documentary evidence from its own archives, the Japanese government had no choice but to acknowledge military involvement, and Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi officially apologized to South Korea.

In 1993, a Japanese government hearing for fifteen former comfort women in Seoul revealed that many women had been made to serve as comfort women involuntarily. Later that year, Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono Yohei made an official statement (*danwa*), essentially admitting that the Japanese Imperial Army had been directly and indirectly involved in the establishment and administration of comfort facilities. The government also acknowledged that coercion had been used in the recruitment and retention of the women, and called for historical research and education aimed at remembering the fact. The Kono statement became the basis for addressing the issue of comfort women in education, and by 1997 almost all school history textbooks and those in related subjects included a brief reference to comfort women.[18] One history textbook for junior high school read, "[M]any women, such as Korean women, were sent to the front as comfort women serving in the war." [19] Such statements, however bland, served as a legitimate window through which teachers and students could address the issue in classrooms.

Subsequent historical research has uncovered more disturbing details about the comfort women system.[20] Scholars estimate that between fifty thousand and two hundred thousand women were enslaved to provide sexual service to Japanese officers and soldiers. The majority of these women were Korean and Chinese (there were also some Japanese), but they included women from many other countries, including Thailand, Taiwan, Indonesia, East Timor, Malaya, and Holland. Many non-Japanese women were minors, rounded up by deception or under conditions of debt slavery, and some were violently abducted.[21]

Prostitution for military personnel in war zones and occupied territories was widely practiced during and prior to World War II,[22] but Japan's comfort women system was unusual in the extreme forms of coercion and oppression imposed on women, including teenage girls brought

from Korea and Taiwan. The evidence reveals that state and military authorities at the highest levels were extensively involved in the policymaking, establishment, and maintenance of the system, and in recruiting and transporting women across international borders.[23]

One result of both the Japanese government's apologies and of recent scholarship on comfort women was backlash from neonationalist groups. In particular, neonationalists objected strongly to both the government's admission of state involvement in the matter and to the inclusion of the issue in school textbooks. They have attacked politicians who support the government's apologies as well as historians' findings about comfort women. They have also targeted contradictions in the testimonies of comfort women in an effort to discredit their accounts.

Historical Debates: Neonationalists vs. Progressive and Feminist Historians

Making and keeping the issue of comfort women controversial has been one of the most effective strategies pursued by neonationalists. In particular, they have focused on minor or technical details of the facts presented by women's testimonies and historical research, pointing out errors and the impossibility of verification.[24] For example, in the early 1990s, some school textbooks referred to the women in question as *jugun-ianfu* (comfort women serving in the war). Neonationalists, however, argued that *jugun-ianfu* was not the “historical term,” meaning that it was not the term that was used officially (and unofficially) during the war. Therefore, they have insisted, the term must be deleted from school textbooks.[25]

There is a modicum of truth in the nationalist claim: the term *jugun-ianfu* was a postwar invention, gaining a wide currency with Senda's work. During the war, the military officially called the comfort facilities *ianjo* or *ianshisetsu* (*ian* means “comfort”), designating for the most part the military comfort facilities but sometimes referring to private brothels. For example, one of the key documents Yoshimi discovered in 1991 (one that led to Prime Minister Miyazawa's official apology in 1992) was subject indexed as “*Gun Ianjo Jugyofu-to Boshu ni kansuru Ken*” (Matters concerning the recruitment of women to work in military comfort stations).[26] The women were variously called as *ianfu* (comfort women), *shugyofu* (women of indecent occupation), *shakufu* (women serving sake), and *tokushu-ianfu* (special kind of comfort women), but not *jugun-ianfu*. [27]

Semantic issues aside, however, neonationalist efforts to undermine the history of the comfort women--and to erase it from school textbooks--seem manipulative at best. They argue, for example, that the term *jugun*, as part of a compound noun (e.g., *jugun-kisha*, the term for war correspondents; and *jugun-kangofu*, the term for war nurses), indicates the status of *gunzoku*, or civilian war workers (those officially on the payroll of the army and/or navy). The comfort women, they argue, were not in that category. Historians such as Yoshimi have refuted this argument by pointing out that the term *jugun* was (and is) commonly used to mean “going to the front,” or “serving in the war,” and as such it was not used in the same way as *gunzoku*. For example, most war correspondents were not employed by the Japanese military (the army only came to have its own correspondents after 1942), but regardless of their employment status, they were (and are) usually called *jugun-kisha*.

Moreover, Yoshimi and others have pointed out the obvious fact that terms used in historical research (and education) are not necessarily the precise terms that were used during the period under study. (For example, people in the medieval period never called their time medieval.) In their view, the real problem with the use of the term *jugun-ianfu* in school textbooks is not that it

was not officially used in wartime since the term became commonplace in recent years. Rather it that it is euphemistic. “Comfort” (ian) hardly convey a situation of the women that was, in fact, enslavement. The point is well taken. Although many scholars at present prefer using the term gun-ianfu (military comfort women) or Nihongun-ianfu (Japanese military comfort women) for its preciseness, what is critical, whatever term is used, is that explanation be provided.[28]

Another point of dispute has been over the types, agents, and extent of coercion. Neonationalists have made an issue of the term kyosei-renko (taking by force), a compound noun commonly used to refer to the Korean and Chinese men brought to Japan to labor in places such as coalmines and factories during the war. Neonationalists has made an issue of it since attacking the 1997 edition junior high school textbooks for their use of the term kyosei-renko in relation to the comfort women. By defining the term as an act of “something like slave hunting by the military and /or government authorities” (a narrower definition than most historians’ usage signifying the involuntary nature on the part of the workers), they argue that no (documentary) evidence has been found to suggest that kyosei-renko took place in recruiting comfort women. They also argue that official documents indicate that the military and police instructed traffickers to follow the law and regulations in their recruitment of comfort women (procuring women for prostitution was legal, but regulated), and that the testimony of Yoshida Seiji, the only person who publicly acknowledged the violent means he and his co-workers used to recruit comfort women, lacks credibility in several key issues such as dates and places.[29]

The neonationalist arguments were (and are) misleading. First, no 1997 edition junior high history textbooks used the term kyosei-renko in describing the comfort women. The term kyoseiteki (forcibly) appeared in one text and the term renkoshite (took) appeared in another, but not kyosei-renko.[30]

Second, it is illogical to suggest that no state or military force was used because no written official order has been discovered. While admitting that they have found no official documents that ordered the use of military or police force for the recruitment of women--in particular, in colonized regions such as Korea and Taiwan--Yoshimi and others emphasize the fact that many wartime official records were destroyed by the military at Japan’s surrender. Besides, the state and its military had no need to use so explicit a language as “use force to round up women and send them to comfort facilities” to achieve its goals.[31]

In the absence of official document(s) sanctioning the use of force, progressive and feminist historians have presented other evidence to document the fact that the military and government authorities were directly involved in the procurement, shipping, and management of the comfort women, and were aware of traffickers’ use of violence and deceptive tactics. Overwhelming evidence shows that colonial authorities in essence condoned such traffickers’ behavior as well as their trading very young girls in Korea and Taiwan.

In addition, detailed testimonies by former comfort women document cases in occupied territories, such as China and Southeast Asia, where government and military authorities themselves took women by force. Finally, coercion was widespread not only in the recruitment of women, but also in forcing them to stay and work in the comfort facilities.[32] Yoshimi and others suggest that the neonationalist focus on the term kyosei-renko is simply a smokescreen to divert (public) attention from the main issue: the coercive nature of the military comfort women system.

Progressive and feminist historians seem to be winning the empirical and analytical debate. But if the neonationalists have lost many points, they continue to circulate their views not only through that part of the media that they dominate such as the *Sankei Shimbun*, but throughout the mainstream mass media. And if progressive and feminist historians dominate the discussion in historical circles, neonationalists exhibit formidable strength in the popular arena where the controversy has attracted a large audience. For example, Kobayashi Yoshinori, a popular cartoonist who had once fought on behalf of some AIDS victims, has published a series of best-selling comics in magazines and volumes, promoting neonationalist arguments on the war. The ability of neonationalists to keep the issue controversial has led the public to feel that the issues remain unresolved.

Right-wing political pressures led a number of textbook publishers to remove references to comfort women from their 2002 edition junior high history textbooks. Out of eight texts, only one included the phrase comfort women (*ianfu*) and two others included the phrase comfort facility (*ianshisetsu*).[33] This trend continues as none of the 2006 edition textbook drafts refers to comfort women. One text mentions the issue, but only in a footnote touching on the recent development by which the unresolved issues of war have been brought to the Japanese court.[34]

A “Poststructuralist” Feminist Critique of “Positivism” in History

In the battles between neo nationalists and progressive/feminist historians, some critics have looked to “postmodern” approaches to replace empirical approaches to the issue of comfort women. In a provocative essay, noted Japanese feminist Ueno Chizuko criticizes as “positivist” (*jisho-shugi*) the arguments of both neonationalists and progressive/feminist historians.[35] Citing “poststructuralist” theories, Ueno maintains that the issue of comfort women is linked to fundamental questions about the methodology of historical studies. She asks: “[I]s a historical ‘fact’ such a simple thing that it looks the same to whoever looks at it?”[36]

According to Ueno, the positivist approach accepts written documents as the first and only legitimate source for the study of history (*bunshoshiryo shijo-shugi*). This has allowed neonationalists to discredit the testimonies of former comfort women on the grounds that no official documents have been found showing that the state and the military took women by force. In her view, progressive and feminist historians have erred in attempting to refute the nationalists by advancing the positivist study of history. Commenting on a televised debate on the issue, Ueno charges that:

Yoshimi Yoshiaki, a conscientious historian who has contributed most vigorously in discovering the historical materials concerning the issue of comfort women, driven into a corner by the questioning of nationalists such as Kobayashi Yoshinori, finally admitted that no written historical materials exist that prove in due form the involvement of the Japanese military. If one stands on the doctrine of the written historical material as the first and only source, one has no choice but to admit “no.” It became more or less a shared understanding that the documents Yoshimi found and reported in 1992 can be indirect evidence for *kyosei-renko* (taking by force), but not the historical source that substantiates it as a fact.[37]

At the heart of Ueno's interpretation is the suggestion that positivism “denies the ‘evidentiary power’ of the victims’ testimonies,” and, thus, discredits “the ‘reality’ [experienced and told by] the victims.” Ueno holds that to negate the testimonies of the former comfort women is to

trample their dignity underfoot. Instead, she argues for the importance of recognizing “a variety of histories,” or “pluralistic histories,” which would represent history from individuals' differing realities. This means that there is no necessity to choose just one history from the variety.[38]

Progressive Historians' Reply to Ueno

Ueno's argument created a stir among progressive and feminist historians. For example, Yoshimi responded that no serious Japanese historian today holds that written historical material is the first and only source for the study of history, still less that official state documents are the only legitimate historical sources. He also noted that it is common sense among historians that “the picture of history is not unitary even in cases where [historians] address the same object.” Yoshimi cited the difference between two versions of a life history told by the same former comfort woman (a Resident Korean living in Okinawa). That difference, he suggested, is based on the differences between the interviewers' social locations and positions—one a Japanese feminist, and the other a Korean support group.[39]

Yoshimi maintains that historical facts need to be reconstructed utilizing diverse sources such as official and unofficial documents, testimonies, and other kinds of evidence; and that theories and methods of history are tools for historical analysis and reconstruction. In his view, a reconstructed history needs to be evaluated in terms of its persuasiveness and logical coherence—which for him is “verification.”[40] Yoshimi questions whether Ueno's position that there are no “facts” or “truths” in history, only “realities reconstructed from given perspectives” ultimately suggests that one's viewpoint is the only thing that matters in studies of history. This, for Yoshimi, is highly problematic. As he puts it:

If so, . . . which “reality” to choose would be decided by determining which [viewpoint] to choose from the [various] “viewpoints” that construct it [history]. This would result in either agnosticism, or the situation of [choosing based on] beliefs and tastes, i.e., which viewpoint one believes or prefers.[41]

“At least, if it's scholarship,” Yoshimi argues, “it should be questioned which reality, from among various ‘realities’ reconstructed, has persuasive power and which has a basis.”

Yoshimi rejects Ueno's view that pointing out the exaggerations and mistakes in the victims' testimonies is to deny the power of testimonial evidence. It is natural that mistakes or inconsistencies occur in testimony concerning events half a century earlier, just as mistakes and inconsistencies, not to mention deliberate falsehoods and obfuscation sometimes found in official war documents, may be found in documentary evidence. For example, a woman testified that she had been forced to work in a military comfort facility in the late 1930s in Japan, but since no military comfort facilities are known to have existed inside Japan at that time, Yoshimi holds that it is difficult to take this particular testimony at face value.[42] In another example, a former comfort woman gave contradictory accounts—on one occasion, she stated that she had been taken by force, but on another occasion, she stated she had accepted the job to earn money. Yoshimi reminds us that the fact that the woman consented to be sent to the front (in this case Burma) does not absolve the military from responsibility for its brutal treatment of her within the comfort women system, leading her to attempt to commit suicide by drowning. He states, “I would like [Ueno] to consider this kind of effort [required] for the reconstruction of the reality.”[43]

Yoshimi's point highlights the fact that oral history involves careful piecing together and assessment of information given in multiple testimonies. This is all the more true when the evidence pertains to events of half a century earlier. While Yoshimi acknowledges the possibility of a (postmodernist) examination of testimonies as (contemporary) discursive practices, he insists that the current controversy over the comfort women issue is principally over the historical facts. Therefore, his efforts have been geared towards the reconstruction of those facts.

Other historians have joined the debate. I would like to consider the insights of one of them, Yasumaru Yoshio, a specialist on the history of Japanese thought. While finding some value in Ueno's argument, Yasumaru disagrees with her assessment of Yoshimi as a positivist. Yasumaru points out that Yoshimi began his study because he was deeply moved by the testimony of Kim Hak-soon, meaning that at the heart of his study are his sensibility and ethics. Having taken up the subject, Yoshimi has brought to bear his skills and knowledge as an historian.[44]

One important issue to Yasumaru is the activities of traffickers in the colonies who were active agents and mediators between the women and the military, and who played a major part in the everyday violence, including taking women by force or kidnapping them. Without their existence and systematic operations, Yasumaru argues, it would have been impossible for the state to collect such a large number of women. Extending Yasumaru's arguments, it is clear that historians and educators need to examine critically not only the direct role of the imperial state and military but also the dynamics of class, gender, race, and ethnicity that shaped the ideologies and praxis of colonial relations in order to grasp the milieu within which the traffickers committed everyday violence.

The Nationalist Appropriation of Postmodern Vocabulary

While the debate over the appropriate paradigm for historical research has continued within the progressive/feminist camp, some neonationalists have begun to speak a kind of postmodern discourse, with their own particular twist. They are calling for the construction of a Japanese history from "the Japanese perspective," stressing unity and coherence.

For example, Sakamoto Takao, a historian of Japanese political thought, has argued that no education is value-neutral and that the purpose of education, especially history education, is to foster "national consciousness." In his view, "history is a story," and the Japanese history taught in schools should be "a story of the formation of a nation, a people," which aims at the construction of a sense of national unity.[45]

Sakamoto here employs the discourse of a national history that is not necessarily based on verified facts drawn from studies of history, but one in which facts are "fittingly woven into the story" in order to enhance its reality. In Sakamoto's view, concepts such as "state" and "nation" are, in some sense, fictions. "However," he contends, human beings "cannot live without fictions," and "efforts" by human beings "to maintain the fictions" are needed. The vocabulary used here may have been borrowed from recent postmodern literature, but it curiously (and ironically) serves modernist ends, specifically the construction of a national unity by [re]instituting and privileging national history.[46]

Sakamoto's neonationalist postmodern discourse finds echoes among those in mass media and on the lecture circuit, indicating that it has gained some currency in the public arena. In the fall of 1996, for example, Sakurai Yoshiko, a former television news anchor woman and current

freelance journalist, gave a lecture at an in-service teacher training program held by the Yokohama Education Board for the promotion of international understanding.[47] Sakurai spoke on the comfort women issue and textbook questions. She began by stating that “all the textbooks . . . assume ‘taken by force’ as a major premise; however, . . . it is my conviction that [the women] were not ‘taken by force.’”[48]

The problem, in her view, was the “structure of the Japanese psyche,” which was “self-tormenting.” She then proceeded to argue for the concept of history as a story (monogatari) of a nation.

What I’d like to say is that history is a story. . . It is a story of individuals, and at the same time it should be a story of the respective nation. Therefore, . . . it should be natural that Japan has its own way of viewing [history]. It is natural that . . . China has its own view and Korea has its own view, and it is natural and reasonable that all three are separate [and different].[49]

For Sakurai, Japan’s (hi)story needs to be told from the Japanese perspective, that is, a perspective through which the younger generation come to love the nation.

The new postmodern line put forth by the nationalists also seems to blur the line between “fact” and “fiction.” In fact, Fujioka Nobukatsu, an educational scholar and long a central figure in the neonationalist attack on history textbooks, has even argued that the inclusion of “lies” in history books (and, by implication, textbooks) is acceptable for certain purposes, for instance, to make the story “colorful.” Fujioka has disclosed that in the 1990s, when he was involved in authoring Takasugi Shinsaku, a series of history books for children (intended to aid their understanding of history lessons in schools),[50] he included some fictitious stories. As he puts it:

To write [a history] based only on verified historical truths makes . . . [it] insipid and dry. I changed my policy for the lack of an alternative--I had no choice but to write from my own imagination to a great extent.[51]

It seems that neonationalists are in the process of reformulating their discursive strategy to appropriate (selectively) certain postmodern concepts such as “history as story” to serve the purpose of creating an idealized history of a pure Japanese nation. It is a project that resonates with dominant wartime ideologies of empire.

As we have seen, one of the primary nationalist strategies has been to focus on the details of historical findings on comfort women, to point out errors or the impossibility of verifying certain claims, and on that basis suggest the impossibility of verifying any part of the history of comfort women. At the same time, they seek to relativize the epistemological status of any claim concerning historical facts and argue for a choice of stories from any number of “equally valid” stories. The notion of “history as story” serves as a license to construct any kind of story as history, including fictive stories with real names. This is a clever move for neonationalists, one that is worrisome for progressive/feminist historians. For, if neonationalists are unable to win the battle over empirical research and testimony, perhaps they can win with fictional narratives appealing to the national pride and patriotic spirit.

Conclusion

The testimonies of former comfort women that appeared in the early 1990s spurred intense controversy over the representation of wartime Japan’s military comfort women system. The

controversy has been intense and prolonged, not only because it reflects the political and ideological struggle(s) between progressives and neonationalists in Japan and the geopolitics and diplomacy involving Japan and its neighbors,[52] but also because of the intellectual and moral challenges posed to the societies involved in general, and historians and educators specifically.[53]

In the conventional legal context, “testimony is provided, and is called for, when the facts upon which justice must pronounce its verdict are not clear, when historical accuracy is in doubt, and when both the truth and its supporting elements of evidence are called into question.”[54] In other words, it settles the dispute. In contemporary society, testimony given by victims and the oppressed has been used in research and education to provide crucial evidence to document traumatic events, including the Second World War, the Holocaust, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and diverse war atrocities. In so doing, it has acquired another function—unsettling the (dominant, normative) truth.

Indeed, the testimonies of former comfort women have changed the interpretive framework for research on the issue and for what counts as truth. As a result, a much richer, detailed, and more critical understanding of the events and processes that defined the comfort women system becomes possible. At the same time, however, the emphasis placed by some proponents of the comfort women on the truth of their testimonies has backfired. Japanese neonationalists, by focusing on minor details and contradictions, have effectively made (and kept) controversial both the women's testimonies and historians' findings that draw both on testimonies and archival research. Progressive and feminist historians have fought back and won a number of empirical debates on the basis of expert knowledge, but neonationalists have succeeded in confusing public audiences, including many school teachers.

How should historians and educators use the voices and testimonies of comfort women, as well as those of other marginalized groups? It seems to me that we should strive for a sensitive, sensible, and critical approach to them. First, we should understand that oral testimony is an important and unique source of information, one that is particularly important if we are to gain access to the experience of victims, but that it is only one of many types of sources that historians and educators should consult. Like any other source, its value needs to be assessed rigorously, its internal consistency examined closely, and, when used as part of the factual narratives that historians construct, it should be used in conjunction with multiple official and unofficial documents—print or otherwise—to create a wider and deeper understanding of complex phenomena of the past. The testimony of the comfort women, where it can be verified and reinforced, is among the most compelling and important kinds of evidence available for documenting the women's experience and the interplay between official policies and the peoples of colonized and occupied territories under wartime conditions.

Second, gender is a critically important category for understanding what took place more than half a century ago and for grasping how it has been represented since.[55] In my view, the foremost significance of testimony lies in its power to provide a lived perspective, a lens through which historians and educators can (and should) reexamine and reinterpret every historical source available. We should look at history of the war through the eyes of comfort women.[56] It can change the meanings and interpretations of events by shedding a different light on other historical materials, and so it can yield new knowledge. In this case, the research illuminates how gender relations and ideology, embedded in nationalism, militarism, colonialism, and

ethnocentrism, shaped history, and how statist and male perspectives on that history can be challenged. The women's testimonies help visualize a new, counter history of war and colonialism, providing rare insight into a range of issues as experienced and remembered by an important group of women whose voices had been silenced for more than half a century.

Third, we should not conflate the problem of method with that of perspective. The evidence produced by a testimony, while often powerful and compelling, is by its nature partial and limited.[57] It is the historians' task to probe the relationship between "fragmentary evidence" and the lived perspective (or "holistic truth") to comprehend the full experience of comfort women and the role of the state in crafting the comfort women system.[58] To be sure, some testimony is difficult--or virtually impossible--to verify given the fact that the Japanese government and military deliberately destroyed the key documents at Japan's defeat.[59] However, the value of the perspective is not undermined by discrepancies and inconsistencies in individual accounts. Rather, taken as a group, the testimonies of comfort women from many countries constitute a powerful and coherent set of lenses to examine the nature of the comfort women system and the war. Incorporating the perspective(s) of the victims into historical research and education is not only a profoundly important intellectual act, it is also among the most important ethical and political responsibilities of historians and educators.

Finally, it is urgent to educate students and the public about the complex issues involved in the relationship between history and testimony, so that they can meet the intellectual and moral challenges that the history of comfort women and other sensitive historical issues pose for later generations. Postmodern debates can help to sensitize students and the public to become informed listeners and readers of testimonies and to effectively engage the controversies surrounding them. Those who hold classic, commonsensical notions of historical objectivity, and who emphasize teaching only "the facts", may remain vulnerable in contemporary debates over history and testimony, if only because they are less equipped to deal with attacks employing postmodern language as in the case of "history as story." Today's effective citizenship requires understanding of the nature, power, and limits of testimonies in constructing historical knowledge, as such knowledge is a major source of national identity.

*I would like to thank Hiro Inokuchi, Richard Minear, and Mark Selden for comments and suggestions.

Yoshiko Nozaki is an associate professor in the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy, the University at Buffalo (SUNY-Buffalo) and an Asia-Pacific Journal Associate. She is the author of [War Memory, Nationalism, and Education in Postwar Japan, 1945-2007: The Japanese history textbook controversy and Ienaga Saburo's court challenges](#) and numerous works on education and historical memory. She is co-author with Hiromitsu Inokuchi of [What U.S. Middle School Students Bring to Global Education: Discourses on Japan, Formation of American Identities, and the Sociology of Knowledge and Curriculum](#).

Notes

[1] Dori Laub, "Bearing Witness, or the Vicissitudes of Listening," in Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (London: Routledge, 1992), 59-60.

[2] Allen Carey-Webb, "Transformative Voices," in Allen Carey-Webb and Stephen Benz, eds., *Teaching and testimony: Rigoberta Menchu and the North American Classroom* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 7.

[3] See, for example, June Kuzmeskus, "Writing Their Way to Compassionate Citizenship: Rigoberta Menchu and Activating High School Learners," in Carey-Webb and Benz, *Teaching and Testimony*, 123-131.

[4] Shoshana Felman, "Education and Crisis, Or the Vicissitudes of Teaching," in Felman and Laub, *Testimony*, 1-56.

[5] Mary Louise Pratt, "I, Rigoberta Menshu and the 'Culture Wars,'" in Arturo Arias, ed. *The Rigoberta Menchu Controversy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 30.

[6] Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1988), 5.

[7] In this article, I employ the term "comfort women" (hereafter without quotation marks) because it has been the term most widely used, though I am aware that the term was (and is) a euphemism. Scores of volumes and articles on the topic (written in Japanese, Korean, and English) have been published since the early 1990s. This article discusses the most important works comprising that literature.

[8] Historical controversy is not new in Japan. Since 1945, Japan has been the setting of a hard-fought struggle over the official history of World War II. See Yoshiko Nozaki and Hiromitsu Inokuchi, "Japanese Education, Nationalism, and Ienaga Saburo's Textbook Lawsuits," in Laura Hein and Mark Selden, eds., *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2000), 96-126; and Yoshiko Nozaki, "Japanese Politics and the History Textbook Controversy, 1945-2001," in Edward Vickers and Alisa Jones, eds., *History Education and National Identity in East Asia* (London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2005), 275-305.

[9] For testimonies and accounts by former comfort women, see, for example, Maria Rosa Henson, *A Filipina's Story of Prostitution and Slavery under the Japanese Military* (Lanham: Rowan & Littlefield, 1999); and Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan, *True Stories of the Korean Comfort Women*, ed. Keith Howard (London: Cassell Academic, 1996).

[10] For other aspects of the controversy, see Yoshiko Nozaki, "Feminism, Nationalism, and the Japanese Textbook Controversy over 'Comfort Women,'" in France Winddance Twine and Kathleen M. Blee, eds., *Feminism & Antiracism: International Struggles for Justice* (NY: New York University Press, 2001), 170-189. See also Laura Hein, "Savage Irony: The Imaginative Power of the 'Military Comfort Women'" in the 1990s, *Gender & History* (1999), 11(2): 336-372.

[11] See, for example, Hyakusatsu ga Kataru "Ianjyo" Otoko no Honne: Ajia-zeniki ni "Inanjyo" ga Atta [The "comfort facility" and men's confessions told in one hundred books: There were "comfort facilities" all over Asia], ed. Takasaki Ryuji (Tokyo: Nashinokisha, 1994). Takasaki finds approximately one hundred diaries and memoirs that referred to having directly witnessed the comfort facilities and/or comfort women. Those published during the war were censored so that their references were oblique.

[12] Japanese and Korean names in this article follow East Asian name order (except author information for English publications).

[13] The first writer to take up the issue was Senda Kako, who published *Jugun Ianfu* [Military comfort women] (Tokyo: Futabasha, 1973). Senda also wrote several bestsellers on the topic in the 1970s. In Korea, several publications appeared in the 1970s. For further discussion, see Takasaki Soji, Hannichi Kanjyo [Anti-Japanese sentiments] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1993), 128-129; and Kasahara Tokushi et al. eds. *Rekishi no Jijitsu o do Ninteishi do Oshieruka* [How to verify and teach the historical facts] (Tokyo: Kyoiku Shuppankai, 1997), 160-161.

[14] Matsui Yayori, "Kankoku-fujin no Ikita Michi" [The road a Korean woman took to live], *Asahi Shinbun*, evening edition (November 2, 1984), 5. At the time of Matsui's interview, the woman lived in Thailand. The article included a photo of her visiting her family in Korea in 1984, but did not mention her name.

[15] For Yun's activities, see George Hicks, *The Comfort Women: Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War* (NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994), 173-178.

[16] In the next few years, approximately two hundred Korean former comfort women followed in Kim's footsteps.

[17] Kaiho Shuppansha ed., *Kim Hakusun-san no Shogen: "Jugun Ianfu Mondai" o Tou* [The testimony of Kim Hak-soon: An inquiry into the issue of military comfort women] (Osaka: Kaiho Shuppansha, 1993), 3-4.

[18] For further discussion, see Nozaki, "Feminism, Nationalism, and the Japanese Textbook Controversy over 'Comfort Women.'"

[19] Haruo Sasayama et al., *Chugaku Shakai: Rekishi* [Junior High School Social Studies: History] (Tokyo: Kyoikushuppan, 1997), 261.

[20] Two excellent book length historical studies on comfort women have been published in English: Yoshimi Yoshiaki, *Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military during World War II*, S. O'Brien, Translator (NY: Columbia University Press, 2000) (Original work published 1995); and Yuki Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and the US Occupation* (London: Routledge, 2002).

[21] Yoshimi, *Comfort Women*, 29. No documents discovered to date reveal the proportions of nationalities or ethnic groups among comfort women.

[22] See, for example, Louise White, "Prostitution in Nairobi during World War II, 1939-45," in *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 147-184. See also Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women*, 84-132.

[23] Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women*, 180-181.

[24] In several cases, their criticisms of historical research turned out to be flawed due to their own lack of expert knowledge. Right-wing nationalists published numerous volumes and articles on the comfort women issue in the 1990s. For example, Uesugi Chitoshi, Kensho "Jugun Ianfu": *Jugun Ianfu Mondai Nyumon* [The verification of the "military comfort women": Introduction to the issue of military comfort women], revised and enlarged edition (Tokyo: Zenbosha, 1996).

[25] Neonationalists continue to employ this discourse. For example, in June 2005, Minister of Education and Science Nakayama Nariaki stated that the term *jugun-ianfu* did not exist at the time of the war, so it was good to see the school textbooks have eliminated the term.

[26] For the translation of the document, see Yoshimi, *Comfort Women*, 58.

[27] For the issue of the terms, see also Yoshiaki Yoshimi and Hiroshi Hayashi (eds.) *Kyodo Kenkyu Nihongun-Ianfu* [Joint research on Japanese military comfort women] (Tokyo: Otsukishoten, 1995).

[28] Yoshimi Yoshiaki and Kawada Fumiko, eds., "*Jugun ianfu*" o meguru sanju no uso to shinjitsu [Thirty lies and truths surrounding "military comfort women"] (Tokyo: Otsuki Shoten, 1997), 9-10.

[29] For example, Yoshida Seiji, *Chosenjin Ianfu to Nihonjin: Moto Shimonoseki Rohodoin Buchō no Shuki* [Korean comfort women and the Japanese: Former Shimonoseki labor conscription manager's memoir] (Tokyo: Shin Jinbutsu Oraisha, 1977) and *Watashi no Senso Hanzai: Chosenjin Kyōsei Renkō* [My war crimes: Taking Koreans by force] (Tokyo: San'ichi Shobo, 1983). In these volumes, Yoshida described his use of deception and coercion in recruitment of Korean women for the comfort system as an officer at an employment bureau in Shimonoseki, Japan. Employment bureau offices during the war were involved in local labor conscription.

[30] Hiroshi Tanabe, *Shinpen Atarashii Shakai: Rekishi* [New social studies new edition: History] (Tokyo: Tokyoshoseki, 1997), 263; and Ko Atsuta et al., *Chugaku Shakai: Rekishiteki Bunya* [Junior high social studies: Historical area] (Osaka: Osakashosei, 1997), 261. See also Yoshimi and Kawada, "*Jugun ianfu*," 63-65. Some high school textbooks published in previous years used the term in describing the comfort women; it appears that neonationalists targeted the junior high texts without reading them closely. See, for example, Shozo Sakamoto et al., *Koto Gakko Nihonshi: B* [Senior high Japanese history: B] (Tokyo: Daichigakushusha, 1995), 322.

[31] Yoshimi and Kawada, "*Jugun ianfu*," 22-24. Yoshimi notes that some non-Japanese official documents (the U.S. military documents in the case of Korea and the Dutch military documents in the case of Indonesia) refer to the fact that the women were taken forcibly by the Japanese authorities. See Yoshimi Yoshiaki, "'Jyugun Ianfu' Mondai to Rekishizo: Ueno Chizuko-shi ni Kotaeru" [The issue of "comfort women" and the view on history: Responding to Ueno Chizuko], in *Nihon no Senso Sekinin Shiryo Senta, Simposium Nashonarizumu*, 125.

[32] Yoshimi and Kawada, "*Jugun ianfu*," 20-31.

[33] Kota Kodama et al., *Watashitachi no Chugakushakai: Rekishiteki Bunya* [Our social studies: historical area] (Tokyo: Nihonshoseki, 2002), 180; Hideo Kuroda et al., *Shakaika Chugakko no Rekishi: Nihon no Ayumi to Sekai no Ugoki* [Social studies history: Japan's steps and the world currents] (Tokyo: Teikokushoin, 2002), 221; and Yujiro Oguchi et al., *Shin Chugakko Rekishi: Nihon no Rekishi to Sekai* [New junior high history: Japanese history and the world] (Tokyo: Shimizushoin, 2002), 189. The textbooks also eliminated references to other Japanese war atrocities. See Nozaki, "Japanese Politics and History Textbook Controversy," 295.

[34] Controversy has erupted since mid 2004 over the 2006 edition textbooks to be published in the spring of 2006. For a brief report on the drafts, see Ishii Tateo, "Subete no Kyokasho kara 'Ianfu' ga Kieta [Comfort women disappeared from all the textbooks], *Shukan Kinyobi*, (April 22, 2005), 554: 12-13.

[35] Ueno Chizuko, "Kioku no Seijigaku: Kokumin, Kojin, Watashi" [The politics of memory: Nation, individuals, and I], *Impaction*, (1997), 103: 154-174. In Japan, *jissho-shugi* is a historical research paradigm that stresses verification by empirical evidence (historical sources), which may not be exactly the same thing as positivism in Western historical studies. The article is one of Ueno's first on the topic. In my view, while Ueno has a point, her characterization of progressive/feminist historians as *bunshoshiryo shijo-shugi* here is wrong, since they also stress the legitimacy and importance of oral testimony. In subsequent publications on the same topic, Ueno revised her description of the progressive and feminist historians slightly to present them in a more positive light. See also Chizuko Ueno, *Nationalism and Gender*, Beverley Yamamoto, Translator (Sydney: Trans Pacific Press, 2005).

[36] Ueno "Kioku no Seijigaku," 159.

[37] Ueno, "Kioku no Seijigaku," 159. Ueno's commentary lacks the precise knowledge exemplified by Yoshimi's research that proved "military involvement," but not "kyosei-renko" (taking by force). The issue of military involvement cannot be reduced to the question of *kyosei-renko*.

[38] Ueno, "Kioku no Seijigaku," 159-166. Ueno Chizuko, "Jenda-shi to Rekishigaku no Hoho" [Gender history and the methods of history], in *Nihon no Senso Sekinin Shiryo Senta*, ed., *Simposium Nashonarizumu to "Ianfu" Mondai* (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1998), 30.

[39] Yoshimi, "'Jyugun Ianfu' Mondai," 128-130.

[40] *Ibid.*, 130.

[41] *Ibid.*, 131.

[42] The first Japanese military comfort facility was built in Shanghai in 1931. The number increased after 1937 as the Japanese invasion expanded to other areas. Comfort facilities inside Japan developed in places such as Okinawa and Hokkaido in later years. See Yoshimi, *Comfort Women*, 44-57, 88-91.

[43] Yoshimi, "'Jyugun Ianfu' Mondai," 133.

[44] Yasumaru Yoshio, "'Ianfu' mondai to rekishigaku: Yasumaru Yoshio ni kiku" [The issue of "comfort women" and the studies of history: Interview with Yoshio Yasumaru], in *Nihon no Senso Sekinin Shiryo Senta*, *Simposium Nashonarizumu*, 209.

[45] Sakamoto Takao, "Rekishi Kyokasho wa Ikani Kakarerubekika" [How should history textbooks be written?], *Seiron* (1997), 297:50. The nationalist effort to produce and sell their own history textbook to high schools was unsuccessful in the 1980s, but it was intensified in the 1990s. Sakamoto's argument was made in the context of the debates among neonationalists over their history textbook project of the 1990s. Against some prominent nationalists who argued that history teaching in schools should be abolished altogether since it cannot be neutral, Sakamoto rearticulated the need for (nationalist) history with postmodern discourses.

[46] For a good analysis of Sakamoto's argument, see Iwasaki Minoru "Bokyaku no tameno 'kokumin no monogatari': 'Raikiron' no raiki o kangaeru" ["A story for a nation" for the purpose of oblivion: Thoughts on the origin of the "origin" theory], in Komori Yoichi and Takahashi Tetsuya, eds., *Nashonaru Hisutori o Koete* (Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1998), 175-193.

[47] Sakurai, who was previously involved in some progressive causes, has positioned herself in the neonationalist camp in the comfort women .

[48] Sakurai Yoshiko, "Janarisuto Sakurai Yoshiko ga Mita Nihon, Gakko, Kodomo" [Japan, schools and children in the eyes of journalist Yoshiko Sakurai], lecture given at the Heisei 8-nendo Kyoiku Kadai Kenshukai, the Yokohama City School Board (October 3, 1996).

[49] Ibid., 13.

[50] The book title is the name of a Japanese samurai hero in the Meiji Restoration of 1968.

[51] See also Shinji Takashima, "Kingendaishi Kyoiku 'Kaikaku' Undo no Mondaiten 4 [The problems of the 'reform' movement of teaching modern and contemporary history], Senso Sekinin Kenkyu, (1998), 19: 92. Fujioka argues that the "lies" should be within a limit of "common sense." It follows that the real question might be what kinds of "lies" are actually inserted. Interestingly, one lie he included was very phallocentric. The (hi)story states that when the hero was born, his parents and grandparents were extremely happy to see the baby was a boy, a successor of the family, and included the line that "[his father] made really sure that the baby in the bath water...had a penis." See Fujioka Nobukatsu, "Ronso kingendaishi kyoiku no kaikaku, 21: Rekishi jinbutsu shirizu 'Takasugi Shinsaku' o kaite, Meiji-ishin to buhsi 2" [The debate on the reform of modern and contemporary history education, no. 21: On writing about 'Takasugi Shinsaku' for the historical figure series, the Meiji Restoration and samurai, no. 2], Gendai Kyoiku Kagaku (1997), 494: 112-113. For a discussion of masculinist tendency of Fujioka and his followers, see also Hein, "Savage Irony," 360-364.

[52] For analysis of the politics of the controversy, see Nozaki, "Feminism, Nationalism, and the Japanese Textbook Controversy over 'Comfort Women'"; and Nozaki, "Japanese politics and the history textbook controversy, 1945-2001."

[53] See also Daqing Yang, "The Challenges of the Nanjing Massacre: Reflections on Historical Inquiry," in Joshua A. Fogel, ed., *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*, 133-179.

[54] Felman, "Education and Crisis," 6.

[55] See also Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, 28-50.

[56] Long ago, feminist historian Gerda Lerner asserted that "The central question raised by women's history is: what would history be like if it were seen through the eyes of women and ordered by values they define?" Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 162.

[57] See Elizabeth Ellsworth, *Teaching Positions: Difference, Pedagogy, and the Power of Address* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1997). It is also important to understand that the victims themselves may have difficulties making sense of what happened to them. See Lawrence

L. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

[58] Yang, "The Challenges of the Nanjing Massacre," 144.

[59] In addition, the Japanese government has not yet declassified a large volume of wartime documents.

The Japanese Apology on the “Comfort Women” Cannot Be Considered Official: Interview with Congressman Michael Honda

Kinue Tokudome

[Japan Focus introduction: Prime Minister Abe Shinzo recently added another entry to the long, sorry chapter of official Japanese war-crime denials when he said that there was no coercion of the so-called comfort-women by the imperial military “in the narrow sense of the word.” On March 1, an historic day in the history of Korean resistance to Japanese colonial rule, he said: “The fact is, there is no evidence to prove there was coercion.”

Liberal Democratic Party power broker Nakayama Nariaki further insulted the dwindling group of surviving women when he compared government involvement in the brothels that enslaved them to college canteens. “Some say it is useful to compare the brothels to college cafeterias run by private companies,” he said.

In the furor that followed and in the lead-up to a potentially booby-trapped visit to Washington, Abe backpedaled and issued a series of unsatisfying but politically expedient mea culpas, saying he stood by the famous 1993 statement by Kono Yohei, acknowledging state involvement in the brothels and culminating in an expression of sympathy during his stateside trip that sought to lay the matter to rest.

In a one-hour meeting with US politicians arranged by Sen. Daniel Inouye of Hawaii and hosted by Sen. Nancy Pelosi, Abe was reported to have expressed sympathy for the victims: “As an individual, and the prime minister, I sympathize from the bottom of my heart with the former comfort women who experienced this extreme hardship. I’m deeply sorry about the situation in which they were placed.”

Calling such remarks an apology—to the US President not the comfort women—George Bush sought to lay the issue to rest in order to get on to the important issues of redefining the US-Japan military relationship. But the problem is unlikely to end there. On close analysis, the Abe statement is a model of the equivocation that has long characterized many official pronouncements on Japanese war crimes. It managed, for example, to douse the fires in Washington caused by his original denial while still conceding nothing on the key issue of coercion.

The man at the center of this storm in the US is Japanese-American Congressman Mike Honda, who reignited the comfort women debate by tabling [House Resolution 121](#) on January 31, 2007. The nonbinding resolution, which presently has 129 cosponsors, calls on Tokyo to “formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner, refute any claims that the issue of comfort women never occurred, and educate current and future generations about this horrible crime.” See [Honda’s statement](#) at the Hearing on Protecting the Human Rights of Comfort Women.

Honda has since been attacked and smeared in the conservative Japanese press, especially in the Sankei and Yomiuri newspapers, which have accused him of pandering to his Chinese- and Korean-American constituents and undermining the US-Japan alliance. Throughout, Honda has stood firm, denying charges of Japan-bashing and pleading with Japan to finally come clean about this sordid episode from its past.

Here he answers his critics.]

T: Your “Comfort Women” resolution is getting much attention in Japan. Why did you introduce this resolution?

H: The purpose is to bring about public discussion and debate and to challenge Japanese politicians, not Japanese people, to address these issues in a forthright way.



Congressman Honda and Kinue Tokudome

I passed the resolution AJR 27 in California Assembly in 1999 and it caused quite a bit of stir with the Consulate General (of Japan) in San Francisco. They said, “Why California? This is a national and international issue, not a state issue.” But it still passed. Then I went to Congress and said, “I am in Congress now. I will introduce this resolution again and it will be on a national and international level.”

We did that (addressing historical injustice) here in this country as Nikkeis for the 1942 internment. They took our rights away. We challenged our own community first saying, “We have to sue our government to have them apologize properly by reparations.” It took ten years. In 1988, HR 442 (The Civil Liberties Act of 1988) was passed and President signed it. That is a formal, unambiguous and unequivocal government apology.

What Japan has done to now is to offer individual apologies. Individually, they may have been sincere except for maybe Prime Minister Abe. I don’t think Prime Minister Abe is sincere because he changed his mind so often. It was not a formal governmental apology that was an open and transparent apology. I think we have been very polite. They know what we are saying and they know what the women victims are asking for. They understand that.

The primary effort now is to educate the public, the Japanese public and the US public, because I believe that the public is a very open minded, compassionate and educated group. It is just that they have to be moved to action.

It puzzles me why that is not happening in Japan. Here in this country, we have newspaper editorials writing about it. Australia has its editorials. Canada has its editorials. The Canadians just passed a resolution. (On the Comfort women issue.) So it’s catching fire, except in Japan.

T: The first official Japanese reaction to your resolution was Foreign Minister Aso Taro’s statement in the Diet. He said, “It is extremely regrettable that the resolution is definitely not based on facts or the efforts that have been made by the Japanese government on this issue.” How would you respond?

H: I got the facts from historians in Japan. Certainly the Japanese military after the war destroyed a lot of information. But some information was unearthed. We have eyewitnesses and we have victims. If their testimony were untrue, then all the major countries would be hesitant to support this issue.

So I don’t know what they (Japanese officials) are talking about. I wish they would point out on what piece of information I am inaccurate. Am I inaccurate that there was not a formal apology? In this country, a formal apology from the government is from Congress and then the president.

An institution must be judged by its behavior. Individual Prime Ministers have offered their “heartfelt apology.” They were all individual apologies.

T: Prime Minister Abe Shinzo stated that he would stick to the Kono Statement of 1993 while insisting that there has been no evidence to directly establish the involvement of Japan's military authorities or government officials.

H: He can make his case here. I want to respect his opportunity to talk to our president and to lobby any other Congressman if he so desires. So I will do it (pass the resolution) after he leaves. If he talks about it there (in Japan) he should talk about it here.

But I must ask, “How can anyone say that coercion and recruitment did not happen the way these women say it happened?” Instead, some people in Japan are saying that it was like any college campus where you have a cafeteria that was run by private companies, who recruit their own staff, procure food, and set prices. That was how comfort women were recruited and provided their services. That is so offensive. I don’t know how you can make comments like that and still walk down the street without being criticized.

T: What is the US government’s position on the “Comfort Women” resolution?

H: Our State Department has been silent. All they have said after Prime Minister Abe said in the Diet that he was apologizing as Prime Minister is that “We certainly want to see the Japanese continue to address this and to deal with it in a forthright and responsible manner that acknowledges the gravity of the crimes that were committed.”

T: Sankei Shimbun published articles on the political contributions you received from Chinese-American activist groups and accused you of being influenced by groups that have a connection to the Chinese authorities.

H: I get contributions from Chinese Americans, Korean Americans, Mexican Americans, African Americans, Japanese Americans and White Americans. And I raise a lot of money for our party. It’s against the law to receive money from a foreign government. If people who are saying this had any guts, they would ask me straight. They don’t have any guts. They would rather lie or give disinformation to smear my character through the media.

T: Some people in Japan say, “What about the United States? Its bombing of civilian populations in major Japanese cities and dropping of the two Atomic bombs were clearly war crimes also.

H: If you want to debate the dropping of the Atomic bombs, let’s debate. My wife was a survivor of the Hiroshima Atomic bomb. She was 3 years old when the bomb was dropped. I joined the Peace Movement in Hiroshima that was started by the Mayor. If you want to debate the Tokyo fire bombing, let’s talk about it.

T: There are also those in Japan who would say that the United States has engaged in many wars such as the Vietnam War and the Iraq War. So how can such a nation pass a resolution concerning a Japanese historical issue arising out of events that occurred more than 60 years ago?

H: Yes, we have a trigger-happy Texan as our president who got us into the war. I was not a part of it.

T: You voted no for Bush's war in Iraq did you not?

H: Yes. I was disappointed but respected their decision according to the Constitution. So we are not perfect.

But the Japanese people also must know that when Japanese Parliamentarians came to the United States with the parents of the girl who had been kidnapped, I said that I would support them in criticizing North Korea. I also said that I would do so with the same vigor that I was exhibiting for POWs and Comfort Women. That was the right thing to do.

T: Prime Minister Abe said that the abductions and the Comfort Women are totally separate issues. He said, "The abduction issue concerns the ongoing infringement of human rights. The comfort women issue is not a matter which is continuing."

H: But the women are still alive.

T: Prime Minister Abe restored Sino-Japan relations by visiting China immediately after he took his office. Now a joint historical study project has been started. There are people who wonder why you take actions that could become a hindrance to such positive developments.

H: My answer to that for Japan is, "Just come clean, come up with a clean apology that would satisfy the former Comfort Women." I would say that probably the Korean government and the Chinese government would then have to say, "Thank you" and they could not raise this issue again. That would put the issue into rest.

T: Doesn't passing of this resolution have a negative impact on US-Japan relations?

H: I always preface by saying that the purpose of this resolution is not to bash or humiliate Japan.

T: But the Japanese media say that the passage of this resolution may create anti-Japan sentiment within the US.

H: They should do their research into what I say. Also, before we introduced this resolution, we let the Japanese Embassy know. We notified them. So it was not a sneak attack.

Why would I be anti-Japan? My relatives live there. We fight. For example, "Save whales." But don't call Japanese names.

I fight for balanced and accurate dialogue and debate. I am against racial profiling in this country and I am against racial profiling in international politics.

When I appeared on a Japanese TV program, I was asked, "You have a face like ours. Why are you doing this?" My answer is still the same. I can have a black face or a brown face or a white face. This comes from my heart.

Even some Japanese Americans are asking why I am doing this. I tell them, “If you accepted the reparation check, you have nothing to say.”

T: Are you aware that there are people in Japan who have been trying hard for many years to resolve the Comfort Women issue? For example, opposition parties in the Diet have introduced a bill several times since 2000, without success, seeking a government apology and compensation to the victims.

H: I know of those people. I am aware that they have several times introduced a resolution or bill to acknowledge, apologize and compensate Comfort Women. But the fact remains that they are the minority parties and the LDP is the ruling party. Just like the Republican Party was the ruling party in Congress for 12 years. We changed that last year. We went to the people and we made an issue of Iraq, that we were lied to and that it was the wrong thing to do. We made an issue of Katrina. We told the country that the Republicans do not deserve to govern. And people voted the Republicans out and voted us back in. That’s why we are doing this now.

I hope that those politicians who are working for resolution of the “Comfort Women” issue can figure out the way to get it passed. I understand that this is a frustrating struggle for them. But they have to have 51% to succeed. I think that’s why my attention is towards the public, asking them to look at this and tell their politicians to do something. It’s important, so important because these women are going to die and they should not die without being satisfied by an apology. The Japanese people understand honor more than anybody else, don’t they?

T: Would you like to go to Japan after your resolution is passed?

H: I wouldn’t mind going before it passes. I will debate.

T: When I first met you in 2000, you said to me that you were an educator. Do you think your being an educator still affects your work as a politician?

H: Yes, if I were a politician, I would drop this. I have to continue to put it out so that eventually people will get it. A teacher believes every child can learn. A teacher also understands every child learns differently and some take more time than others. It seems that members of the LDP need more time to learn while others who want to do something understand.

Afterword

T: Congressman Honda also serves as Vice Chair of the Democratic National Committee. A senior staff member of a US Senator from California describes Congressman Honda as follows:

“I have known Mike at least 15 years. I have seen how politics changes people and for Mike, he was always in touch with his constituents and more. National leadership has not changed that. He stands tall among his constituents for responsiveness and accountability. He represents his district well and is not beholden to special interest groups. The Comfort Women issue is not a special interest group. The Party recognizes Mike’s ability to raise money because of the loyalty of his supporters and they are not all Asian, most are non-Asian.”

Congressman Honda has also been working for former POWs of the Japanese. In 2001, together with Republican Congressman Dana Rohrabacher, he introduced a bill that would allow former POWs of the Japanese, who sued Japanese companies for WWII forced labor, to have their day

in court. (The bill was not seeking compensation from Japanese companies.) Although it gained many co-sponsors from both parties, because of the political climate of post-9/11 in the US, it did not pass and all of the POW lawsuits against Japanese companies were dismissed.

However, Congressman Honda is not forgetting the POW issue because from the standpoint of “justice” and “honor” it is the same with the “Comfort Women” issue. When I met him this time, the first thing he said to me was, “The POW issue will be next.”

Kinue Tokudome is the founder and executive director of a California non-profit organization “U.S.-Japan Dialogue on POWs” that maintains a bilingual [website](#).

This interview appeared in Japanese in the June issue of Ronza. Posted at Japan Focus on May 31, 2007.

Biohazard: Unit 731 in Postwar Japanese Politics of National “Forgetfulness”

Frederick R. Dickinson

Abstract

Fueled by perennial controversies over official Japanese regulation of textbooks, Western media and academics thrive on claims of a peculiar Japanese “forgetfulness” of wartime atrocities. But the postwar record of Japanese discussions of wartime biological warfare experiments reveals an impressive level of public exposure that, in some ways, surpasses American discussions of its own wartime past. To stress Japanese “forgetfulness” tells only half the story and obscures the tale of postwar political polarization that has greatly facilitated exposure of war crimes in Japan.

Japan and its citizens have an international reputation for historical amnesia. The battle by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to tame references to wartime atrocities in Japanese textbooks has made the headlines in Western, as well as Asian, capitals over the last quarter century. These controversies have been accentuated in recent years by Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro’s highly public annual pilgrimages to the main Japanese war memorial, Yasukuni Shrine, where the spirits of Japanese war criminals remain enshrined. Western fascination with Japanese historical “amnesia” is manifest in a spate of English-language studies highlighting a peculiar Japanese brand of “forgetfulness.”[1]

Among the most dramatic examples of Japanese amnesia is the failure to come to terms with Japan’s history of wartime medical experiments. Between 1932 and 1945, special Japanese units in China subjected thousands of Chinese, Korean, Mongolian, Russian, and American prisoners of war to a range of experimentation aimed at developing new techniques in medical treatment and biological warfare. Word of these experiments was slow to emerge after 1945 and, together with Japan’s record of wartime forced labor and “comfort” women, and with specific events such as the Nanjing Massacre and the Bataan Death March, became the object of Japanese government censorship of textbooks. A dearth of English-language analyses of Japanese wartime experiments relative to investigations of the holocaust and of the activities of Dr. Mengele reinforces the impression that the Japanese record remains under tight wraps. According to one recent English-language title from the popular press, “until the 1990s, almost nothing at all was written or discussed publicly about the Japanese bio-war crimes.”[2]

What is the actual record of postwar Japanese discussions of wartime biological warfare (BW) experiments? How does that record shed light upon the larger pattern of Japanese debate over the wartime past? Although most analyses of this debate highlight the peculiar magnitude of Japanese “forgetfulness,” Japanese discussions of the past might most profitably be viewed less in terms of a singular Japanese “amnesia” than as a reflection of the particular atlas of politics in post-1945 Japan. In fact, the political polarization in post-1945 Japan may be said to have facilitated, rather than hindered, exposure of highly sensitive information.

Exposing the Unthinkable in Japan

Contrary to the impression imparted by much of the discussion over Japanese textbooks, evidence of Japanese wartime atrocities did not emerge in just the last two decades. Rather, the fifty-three-count indictment of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East specifically highlighted such crimes as the “Rape of Nanking,” the “Bataan Death March,” and the massacre

of Chinese civilians at Canton in 1938.[3] Like questions about the role of the Japanese emperor in the prosecution of the war, information about Japanese wartime bacteriological experiments was purposely suppressed by occupation authorities during the tribunal.[4] But the issue was by no means unknown to the Japanese public.

There were hints of wartime medical experimentation on the continent even before the start of the Tokyo trials in May 1946.[5] In January 1946, Tokyo papers quoted Japanese communist leaders' allegations that a "Japanese Medical Corps" had inoculated American and Chinese prisoners-of-war with bubonic plague virus. Less than four years later, formal word from Moscow that twelve Japanese soldiers had been tried and convicted in a six-day war crimes tribunal in Khabarovsk in December 1949 generated greater discussion. All twelve men had been members of Unit 731, the most notorious Japanese BW unit, which had been established in Manchuria in 1939, and were charged with "preparing and applying bacteriological weapons." Both national dailies, the *Asahi shinbun* and the *Mainichi shinbun* reported on the surprising Soviet announcement in late December. And a variety of local and specialty papers picked up the story.[6] The trials became the subject of the first two Japanese publications on Unit 731, Shimamura Kyo's *Sanzennin no seitai jikken* (3,000 Human Experiments; Hara shobo, 1967) and Yamada Seizaburo's *Saikinsen gunji saiban* (Military Tribunal on Biological Warfare; Toho shuppansha, 1974).

One year after the appearance of Yamada's study of the Khabarovsk trials, a television documentary produced the first revelations of Unit 731 from Japanese sources. On the eve of the thirtieth anniversary of V-J Day, the largest Japanese commercial network, Tokyo Broadcasting System (TBS), aired a prime-time half hour segment on Unit 731 based upon three years of research and interviews of twenty former Unit 731 employees by documentary filmmaker Yoshinaga Haruko. Although the first installment of "Akuma no 731 butai" (The Devil's Unit 731) offered mostly tantalizing images of respected doctors clamming up or running from the camera, two one-hour prime-time follow-ups in August and November of 1976 sparked an international sensation. These segments not only recorded the testimony of four former Unit 731 employees but included their allegations that they had escaped indictment by the International Military Tribunal in return for divulging their research to American authorities.[7] The November 1976 piece was highlighted in both the *Washington Post* and on "Sixty Minutes." [8]

The TBS documentary opened the floodgates in Japan for research on Japanese wartime BW experimentation. Five years later, a wave of scholarly books on BW experimentation appeared, marking the 1980s as the heyday of Japanese research on the subject. Mystery writer Morimura Sei-ichi began the surge with a serialized story about Unit 731, titled "Shi no utsuwa" (Death Receptacle; Kadokawa, 1981). Just several months later, Morimura published an analytic work on the subject, replete with photographs and charts obtained from former unit members and prewar medical journals. *Akuma no hoshoku* (The Devil's Insatiability) was produced by a respected mainstream publishing house (Kobunsha) and became a best-seller. It inspired a fourth TBS documentary on Unit 731 in 1982 and was the source of a 90-minute movie about Japanese wartime BW produced in Hong Kong and later reintroduced into Japan.[9] Morimura's impact was accentuated by a second analytical work that appeared in the same year—Tsuneishi Kei-ichi's *Kieta saikinsen butai* (The Biological Warfare Unit That Disappeared; Kaisosha, 1981), which was based upon wartime research reports of the second in command at Unit 731, Kitano Masaji.

Together, Morimura and Tsuneishi seized the leadership of the scholarly treatment of Japanese BW experimentation. In 1982, both men published sequels to their original treatises. Morimura added new material from American archives to produce *Zoku akuma no hoshoku* (The Devil's Insatiability—Supplement; Kobunsha, 1982). And Tsuneishi produced further evidence of postwar medical research based upon wartime human experiments in *Saikinsen butai to jiketsu shita futari no igakusha* (The Biological Warfare Unit and Two Physicians Who Committed Suicide; Shinchosha, 1982). In 1983, Morimura published the third installment of his study, this time including materials from China (*Akuma no hoshoku, dai-sanbu*, Kakugawa, 1983).

The 1980s also witnessed a flood of testimonials by former Unit 731 employees. In 1982, a former female member of the Unit 731 staff offered memories and photographs in “Shogen” 731 Ishii butai (Eyewitness: Unit 731).[10] On the thirty-eighth anniversary of V-J Day in 1983, a former driver for Unit 731, Koshi Sadao, produced *Hi no maru wa akai namida ni* (Red Tears of the Red Sun; Kyoiku shiryo shuppankai, 1983). In 1989, a freelance journalist published a collection of testimonials by four former employees, which he had discovered in the Chinese memorial hall to Unit 731 outside of Harbin (Takitani Jiro, *Satsuriku kojo: 731 butai*, Shinshinshobo, 1989). In the same year, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Nomonhan Incident, the *Asahi shinbun* carried testimonials of three former members identifying the incident as the first Japanese battlefield use of biological agents.[11]

If the 1980s marked the appearance of the first substantive Japanese research on Japanese BW experimentation, the 1990s ushered in a new era of public consciousness of the issue. In 1992, the story emerged from the realm of private programming to the Japanese national network, NHK. In April of that year, NHK aired a two-part documentary on Japanese BW mastermind Ishii Shiro. Based upon newly discovered records of the Khabarovsk Trial from KGB files and materials from the Dugway, Utah, Proving Grounds, the main American testing ground for biological warfare, “731 saikinsen butai” (731 Biological Warfare Unit) revealed how Japanese experiments were actually conducted and highlighted the Soviet–American rivalry over records.[12] In July 1995, a team of researchers released more evidence of the effect of Japanese experimentation in a collection of translated Chinese documents.[13] Several months later, the *Asahi shinbun* reported the first joint Sino-Japanese symposium on wartime Japanese experimentation. Convening over five days in the city of Harbin, Manchuria, the symposium drew together approximately one hundred participants from both countries, including former members of Unit 731.[14]

Three important new discoveries in the Japanese record fueled the growing public consciousness of the 1990s. In 1989, the bones of suspected victims of Japanese wartime experimentation were unearthed from the grounds of the former Army Medical College in Tokyo.[15] Four years later, in January 1993, Tsuneishi Kei-ichi uncovered from military records in the Japanese National Archives the first documentary evidence of Japanese preparations for use of biological weapons on the battlefield.[16] In August of the same year, a team of Japanese researchers affiliated with the *Nihon no senso sekinin shiryo senta* (Center for Japanese War Responsibility) discovered in the administrative journal of the Army General Staff in the National Defense Agency Library documentary evidence of the use of biological weapons throughout China. The finding made front page news on the forty-eighth anniversary of V-J Day.[17]

Both the discovery of bones and Tsuneishi's disclosure of documentary evidence of Japanese preparations for biological warfare inspired the organization of an unprecedented national

exposition of Japanese wartime experimentation between July 1993 and December 1994. The “731 butai ten” (Unit 731 Exhibit) displayed 80-some odd implements and described wartime experiments with models constructed from the testimonies of former Unit 731 employees. Although originally scheduled for one year, the exhibition ultimately ran for 18 months, toured 64 Japanese cities and attracted 240,000 visitors.[18]

Meanwhile, the administrative journal of the Army General Staff that had been unearthed in the library of the National Defense Agency spurred fact-finding missions to China and a new publication. In 1994, following evidence from the journal, a private citizens’ group visited Manchuria and obtained corroborating testimony from Chinese citizens of Japanese use of cholera and plague-carrying fleas.[19] In 1995, two prominent members of the group that had discovered the General Staff evidence published their findings in a booklet produced by one of Japan’s most powerful publishing houses, Iwanami.[20]

Hiding the Unthinkable in the U.S.

Non-Japanese audiences are less likely to be familiar with this history of revelations of Japanese BW than with the record of struggle over inclusion of such material in Japanese primary and secondary textbooks. Japanese textbook screening became a focus of intense international interest particularly after highly public political debates in the Japanese Diet in the early 1980s.[21] The series of long and protracted lawsuits brought against the Japanese government by celebrated textbook author Ienaga Saburo between 1965 and 1997 ensured an almost permanent association of the Japanese state with censorship in the Western press.[22] The very visible recent initiative led by Tokyo University professor Fujioka Nobukatsu to fashion a “New Education,” which purges Japanese textbooks of references to the “dark” past (covered in more detail below), has persuaded many Western observers of the intractable nature of intellectual debate generally in Japan.[23]

Central review of textbook content certainly distinguishes Japan from most Western industrialized states. But in the context of the above record of postwar revelations of wartime BW experimentation, the notion of Japanese historical “amnesia” seems overblown. In light of America’s postwar record of revelation concerning wartime BW experimentation, it appears irrelevant.

The scale of Japanese wartime BW experimentation was certainly striking. At the peak of his power, Ishii Shiro directed over 5,000 soldiers and scientists. Ping Fan (Unit 731) alone comprised over 150 buildings, including a 1,000-seat auditorium, athletic field and other amenities for the three thousand employees stationed there.[24] But American wartime facilities were, at their height, just as impressive. The principal American BW facility, Camp Detrick, an old army base in rural Maryland, expanded between April and December 1943 from a rural outpost to a metropolis of 250 buildings and living quarters for 5,000 people.[25]



Pingfan

The known record of American experimentation on human subjects pales, of course, by comparison with the estimates of those killed in north China through willful Japanese extermination between 1932 and 1945.[26] Yet the virtual absence of academic discussion on American wartime efforts is remarkable. Investigative reporter Seymour Hersh weighed in with the first important glimpse of the American program in a 1968 volume titled *Chemical and Biological Warfare: America's Hidden Arsenal* (Doubleday, 1969). But unlike the Japanese case, this initial revelation did not mark the beginning of a wave of scholarship on American wartime experimentation.[27] Rather, we know more today from Japanese and American scholars about postwar American efforts to extract information about Japanese wartime experimentation than we do about American wartime programs themselves. There is, of course, plenty of critical literature on indiscriminate American violence in World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam and Iraq. And increasing interest has been generated in recent years in the tale of possible American use of biological agents in the Korean War.[28] But the American appetite for such investigations is so low that the publishers of a celebrated British study of Unit 731 saw fit to excise the Korean War chapter highlighting U.S. collaboration with Japanese BW experts in Korea in the American edition of their work.[29]

Politics of Exposure in Japan

Observers are correct to pinpoint a clear record of official Japanese textbook censorship after 1945. But the notion that “the late 1950s and 1960s saw the textbook production and adoption system becoming more and more like the state-authored textbook system that was in place during World War II”[30] is overstated. In post-1945 Japan, final selection of school texts remains in the hands of local school boards, not the state. Thus, even the most notorious recent “revisionist” text by Atarashii rekishi kyokasho o tsukuru kai (The Society for History Textbook Reform), which won government approval in 2001, was blocked from local adoption in that year by a coalition of grassroots organizations.[31] Unable to obtain even a one percent adoption rate after publisher Fusosha had aimed for ten, Tsukurukai in September 2007 announced a new contract with publisher Jiyusha.[32]

Far from evidence of a collective national “amnesia” regarding Japanese wartime atrocities, the record of struggles over school texts seems more indicative of what may be considered the most

salient context of the post–1945 debate over wartime BW experimentation: turbulent Japanese politics. Postwar battles over historical memory have been part and parcel of the tumultuous political conflicts spurred by the wrenching debate over national identity after 1945.

Although celebrated as the first Asian power to industrialize and shed the trappings of Western imperialism, modern Japan has confronted the monumental challenge of fashioning a new national trajectory four times in the span of one hundred years. The founders of modern Japan shaped from the remains of a feudal realm a modern nation–state upon a German model. Following the destruction of Imperial Germany in 1918, party politicians led Japan upon a new trajectory of democracy and internationalism.[33] Enemies of 1920s liberalism steered the nation toward a “Greater East Asian” world order in the 1930s. And when the “Asian” order collapsed in 1945, Japanese citizens confronted once more the question of what it meant to be Japanese.

Unlike the first three attempts, the post–1945 effort to redefine the nation proceeded under the artificial auspices of military occupation. As students of postwar Japan have observed, the overwhelming military, political, and economic presence of the United States in Japan after 1945 guaranteed an unprecedented polarization of Japanese politics.[34] On one side stood the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and its political and bureaucratic allies. With the direct political and financial backing of the United States, these forces seized a monopoly of power and pursued rapid economic development at home and pledged allegiance to an international coalition of states led by the United States abroad. On the other side stood a diverse assortment of forces on the left (the Socialist and Communist Parties, militant unions, student, teacher, and intellectual associations), who rejected both the LDP monopoly of power and unbridled pursuit of economic growth at home and Japan’s military alliance with the United States.

Revelations about Japanese wartime BW experimentation, like many intellectual debates in postwar Japan, were a direct consequence of early political battles between Left and Right. Japanese socialists, communists, union organizers, students and liberal intellectuals had originally viewed the United States as a liberating force for destroying Japanese militarism and releasing Japanese political prisoners. But as American occupation policy took a conservative turn after 1947–48 (the so-called reverse course), the Japanese Left staked a position that would define the intellectual mainstream for over two decades. In a series of statements on the “Peace Problem,” over fifty of Japan’s most respected academics in 1950 challenged the conservative Japanese administration, rejected the prospect of a “separate peace” with the United States, and championed, instead, a policy of equal distribution of wealth at home and “neutrality” abroad. Printed in the left-leaning monthly journal *Sekai*, the policy statements were widely popular among the public.[35]

If the Japanese Left after 1947 became concerned with the conservative turn of Japanese politics and the overwhelming American political, economic and military power behind it, that concern increasingly defined their intellectual pursuits. As already noted, initial word of wartime Japanese experimentation on Chinese and American POWs was circulated by members of the Japanese Communist Party in January 1946. That was the month that Japanese communist leader Nozaka Sanzo returned to Japan after having spent nine years in the Soviet Union and five years in the Chinese Communist stronghold, Yanan, in northern China. At the Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of China in the spring of 1945, Nozaka had declared that it was he and the “progressive forces” of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) in Japan, not the “pro–Anglo–

American faction” dominated by financial magnates, members of the Imperial Household, bureaucrats, generals, and leaders of the Seiyukai and Minseito parties, that constituted the most reliable basis for democracy in Japan.[36] Revelations of Japanese wartime BW experimentation in January 1946 were, in other words, one step in the larger attempt by the Japanese Communist Party to reconstruct its base of support in postwar Japan.

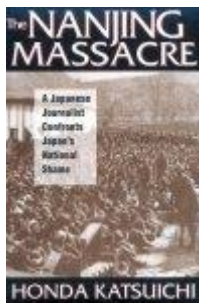
Having recognized the political potential of the BW issue in 1946, the JCP would become the most energetic early champion of “historical truth” about Japanese wartime experimentation. The Khabarovsk trials of late 1949 caused a minor sensation in Japan, but nowhere more so than in the principal organ of the Japanese Communist Party, *Akahata*. Among the mainstream national dailies, the Khabarovsk affair ran on the front page of the *Mainichi shinbun* morning edition next to a United Press dispatch on MacArthur’s request for an investigation of Japanese internees under Soviet control, but did not run at all in the *Yomiuri shinbun*. [37] The story gained increasing momentum in the left-leaning *Asahi shinbun*, which ran it the entire week, first on the third page, then with four consecutive days of front-page billing. [38] But *Akahata* provided the most detailed coverage of all, spending a week, first to print the indictment of the twelve prisoners in full, then to feature interviews with men with purported connections to Unit 731. [39]

Among those interviewed by *Akahata* was Takeyama Hideo, who had been a staff writer for the *Nippon shinbun*. The Soviet Army had founded this newspaper in Khabarovsk thirteen days after the Japanese surrender to distribute to Japanese prisoners of war. Among its editorial staff was Aikawa Haruki who, upon returning to Japan, joined the editorial board of *Akahata*. [40] Given that Soviet exposure of Japanese BW experimentation ran directly counter to American policy to maintain silence upon the matter, contemporaries and historians have stressed the political nature of the trials. [41] Likewise, the high-profile *Akahata* coverage of the tribunal may be interpreted in the largest sense as a JCP challenge to the American-dominated occupation and the conservative turn of politics in Japan. Indeed, American authorities aggressively countered the news emerging from Khabarovsk as Soviet propaganda. [42] Mirroring the effort to shield the emperor from criminal prosecution after the war, General MacArthur himself publicly denied any evidence of Japanese experimentation on human beings in December 1950. [43]

The late 1960s and early 1970s were characterized by increasing volatility in Japanese national discourse, principally spurred by growing U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Journalists such as Honda Katsuichi became national heroes through trenchant criticism of American “imperialism” and its devastating effects upon Vietnam. [44] But even more problematic from the perspective of the Japanese Left became the complicity of the Japanese government in American atrocities. According to one participant in the student movement of the era, in contrast to the Korean War era, Japan seemed to possess “independent political and economic power and seemed to take the initiative to commit itself to the Vietnam War.” Increasingly, the anti-Vietnam War movement considered the greatest problem facing Japan to be “the structure of Japanese society itself.” [45]

It was no coincidence that Honda Katsuichi turned his attention in the early 1970s from the tale of Vietnamese suffering to the story of Japanese wartime atrocities. Disturbed by American actions in Vietnam, but also increasingly by official Japanese support, he envisioned the as-yet-hidden record of Japanese wartime behavior as another critical front in the intensifying battle for political balance in post-1945 Japan. In 1971, Honda traveled to China to begin a series of articles in Japan’s most widely read national daily, *Asahi shinbun*, on the Nanjing Massacre. The series was based upon interviews with survivors and other data collected in the mainland and

was ultimately reissued in volume form in *Chugoku no tabi* (Journey to China; Asahi shinbunsha, 1972) and *Tenno no guntai* (The Emperor's Military; Asahi shinbunsha, 1975).



Honda Katsuichi. The Nanjing Massacre

At the same time that Honda began reporting on American atrocities in Vietnam in Japan's largest-circulation daily, historian Ienaga Saburo published a highly critical account of Japanese involvement in the Second World War with Japan's most influential popular publishing house, Iwanami shoten. *Taiheiyo senso* (The Pacific War; 1968), like Ienaga's high school history textbook, *Shin Nihonshi* (A New Japanese History; 1952), focused upon the "dark side" of Japan's wartime experience, and even included references to Japanese wartime BW experimentation. Given Ienaga's battles with the Japanese Ministry of Education since 1952 over approval for his history textbook, *The Pacific War* may be viewed, like Honda's exposé of the Nanjing Massacre, as a direct challenge to the conservative politics of post-1945 Japan. Indeed, Ienaga filed his first lawsuit over his history text against the national government in 1965, just three years before the appearance of *The Pacific War*. And the text of *The Pacific War* left no doubt about Ienaga's political aims: "The Japan-U.S. military alliance revives prewar roles, albeit with different stars. America has assumed the Japanese mantle of anti-Communist crusader in Asia and helpmate Japan functions as a strategic base. This arrangement again projects internal security laws outward across Asia and employs lethal force against radical ideas." [46]

The conservative establishment clearly viewed the wide dissemination of sordid tales of Japan's wartime past and direct criticism of postwar U.S.-Japan relations in such popular venues as the *Asahi shinbun* and in books by Iwanami shoten with alarm. Honda Katsuichi's revelations on Nanjing were roundly criticized in the conservative monthly *Bungei shunju*. [47] And the national government would continue to resist Ienaga's challenges until 1997, when the Japanese Supreme Court passed final judgment on Ienaga's third lawsuit. [48]

The heyday of Japanese research on wartime BW experimentation corresponded with the growing volatility of the national discourse in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Private broadcasting network TBS aired the first three Unit 731 documentaries at the height of public discussion over Honda's exposé of the Nanjing Massacre. And the wave of published research on Japanese BW experimentation that marked the early 1980s came in the wake of a new LDP initiative to crack down on "progressive" historians following impressive victories at the polls. The 1980 general election had given the LDP a large majority in both houses of the Diet and spurred a vigorous new challenge of textbook writers considered to have ties with the Japan Teachers Union, the Communist Party, or various democratic education movements. [49] The pivotal work by Morimura Sei-ichi and Tsuneishi Kei-ichi emerged within the context of this heightened conflict between Left and Right in Japan.

The JCP continued to play a critical role in the intensifying battle between liberal intellectuals and conservative politicians in the early 1980s. Both of Morimura's first two books, the fictional treatment of Unit 731, *Death Receptacle*, and the analytical work *The Devil's Insatiability*, were originally serialized in the Communist Party journal *Akahata*. "Death Receptacle" ran through the May 1981 Sunday issues of the magazine and "The Devil's Insatiability" trickled out in seventy-four installments between July and October 1981.[50] Through Morimura's introduction, one of the more dramatic American investigations of the Japanese BW issue, a seminal article by former editor of the *China Monthly Review* John W. Powell, in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, was also published in *Akahata* in October 1981.[51] In the wave of discussion that followed the initial publication of *The Devil's Insatiability*, Morimura noted that much of the cooperation that he had received from former staff members of Unit 731 had come from those who, following Japan's defeat, had become members of the Japanese Communist Party.[52]

By the 1980s, however, the JCP no longer played the central role in disseminating information about wartime Japanese BW experimentation. The work of both Morimura and Tsuneishi was ultimately distributed in the Japanese popular press.[53] Morimura's *The Devil's Insatiability* eventually sold more than 1.5 million copies.[54] And new revelations appeared in a variety of sources. After first running in Japanese in *Akahata*, the seminal Powell article of 1981 reemerged in the June 1982 issue of *Bunka hyoron*. [55] In the same month, TBS aired a fourth documentary on Unit 731. A flood of testimonials by former Unit 731 employees appeared in new publications and the national print media. And by 1992, the story of Ishii and Unit 731 came to the national network, NHK.

The 1990s witnessed a new level of participation by ordinary citizens in the effort to expose the history of Japanese wartime BW experimentation. In 1993, a private group in Shizuoka City released a 90-minute film based upon the testimonials of victims of Japanese experimentation. Organized in 1980 and dedicated to exposing the history of Japanese aggression in film, the one thousand-member Eiga "shinryaku" joei zenkoku renrakukai (National Liaison Association for Showing "Aggression" in Film) sent fifty of its members on nine fact-finding tours of China and Korea over a five-year span to produce "Saikinsen butai, 731" (Biological Warfare Unit 731).[56]

As recently noted by Tsuneishi Kei-ichi, the 1989 unearthing of bones on the grounds of the Army Medical College spurred the formation of the Gun'i gakko de hakken sareta jinkotsu mondai o kyumei suru kai (Association to Investigate the Problem of Human Remains Discovered at the Army Medical College).[57] In August 1991, this group, too, sent a delegation of high school teachers and citizens to China on an investigative tour. Inspired by a suggestion from their Chinese hosts, the same group began planning for the Unit 731 exhibit that toured Japan's major cities between July 1993 and December 1994. Organizing committees were established in each prospective exhibit spot, largely in the hands of enterprising twenty-somethings. Parallel exhibits were planned by nonaffiliated youth. Students from Tokyo Women's College, Sophia University, and Toritsu High School created their own exhibits at their schools' culture festivals (*bunka matsuri*) in the spring of 1994. And by setting up a Unit 731 emergency number (110-ban), the organizers of the national exhibit solicited the participation of an unprecedented number of former Unit 731 members.

The national exhibit spawned a series of smaller expositions throughout the nation. Tokyo's Nakano Ward sponsored a "Rikugun Nakano gakko to 731 butai ten" (Nakano Army Academy and Unit 731 Exhibit) at Nakano train station in September 1994. Among the attractions was a picture-story show of Japanese wartime experimentation created and performed by second-year students from Ishikawa Middle School in Hachioji.[58] In 1995, students of Showa High School in Saitama Prefecture attended the first joint Sino-Japanese symposium on wartime Japanese experimentation at Harbin. There they delivered the preliminary conclusions of their independent research on the mouse-breeding industry of their native Saitama. The mice, it was discovered, were sent to Manchuria during the war as agents in spreading the plague. After two years of interviews of over one thousand Saitama households, the students displayed their final results in a three-day exhibit at Kasukabu City Culture Hall.[59] Their research was also published as *Kokosei ga ou nezumi mura to 731 butai* (High Schoolers in Search of the Mouse Village and Unit 731; Kyoiku shiryo shuppankai, 1996).

In June of the same year, an assembly of 220 professors, lawyers, doctors and private citizens gathered in Tokyo to found the *Nihongun ni yoru saikinsen no rekishi jijitsu o akiraka ni suru kai* (Association to Expose the Historical Facts about the Japanese Military's Biological Warfare).[60] Among the members was thirty-year old Mizutani Naoko, whose great uncle had, on his deathbed three years earlier, presented 300 pages of material documenting his involvement with the Japanese biological warfare unit in Nanjing, China—Unit 1644.[61] In July 1996, Mizutani accompanied other members of the group to Manchuria in a preliminary step toward aiding Chinese victims of Japanese biological warfare to bring suit against the Japanese government.[62]

Shifting Framework of Japanese Academic Debate

The erosion of the LDP monopoly of power and reconstitution of the Japanese Socialist Party after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 has shifted the reference of academic debate in Japan in recent years. But it has not, by any means, mitigated the polarization of that debate. If the battle lines following the end of the Cold War are no longer drawn as starkly between intellectual Left and political Right, they have intensified within the intellectual establishment itself. If postwar history reveals the steady diffusion of Japanese wartime BW experimentation into mainstream discourse, it also discloses a growing conservative backlash within academe to the "mainstreaming" of Japanese wartime atrocities. Although novelist Hayashi Fusao had, as early as 1961, attracted notable attention by describing the "Greater East Asia War" as a war of "liberation" in the pages of the popular monthly *Chuo koron*,[63] it has only been more recently that respected members of Japanese academe have been able to marshal forces for a concerted challenge of the intellectual Left.

Japanese military historian Hata Ikuhiko jumped into the high-profile debate between Ienaga Saburo and the Japanese government in 1987 and 1991, when he testified in the Tokyo High Court on behalf of the Japanese Ministry of Education. Hata, in fact, appeared expressly to refute Ienaga's references to Japanese wartime BW experimentation.[64] Hata would ultimately join Tokyo University professor Fujioka Nobukatsu and Electro-Communications University professor Nishio Kanji in the new national organization, The Society for History Textbook Reform, formed in 1996 to counter the "masochistic" (*jigyakuteki*) view of history purportedly promoted by the intellectual Left. The organization represents an impressive coalition of literary, media, academic, and business figures that has already achieved a level of mass exposure and

support. The revisionist cartoons validating the “Greater East Asia War” produced by one of the most celebrated figures of the coalition, Kobayashi Yoshinori, were run-away bestsellers between 1998 and 2003.[65] And, although they were blocked for adoption by local school boards in 2001, the revisionist history and civics texts produced by The Society for History Textbook Reform have, since that time, slowly made inroads into the classroom. Added to regular over-the-counter figures, they have sold nearly one million copies.[66]

Conclusion

To the Japanese scholars who have labored to unearth the facts of Japanese wartime BW experimentation and to American observers of contemporary Japanese society, the “New Education” movement represented by Fujioka is understandably cause for concern. But, contrary to the impression imparted by many Western analyses of this initiative, it is less a reflection of a unilateral “Japanese movement to ‘correct’ history”[67] than a glimpse of one side of a turbulent debate over Japan’s wartime past that has raged since the imperial declaration of surrender in August 1945. That debate is a direct product of the deep political polarization that has characterized Japan since military defeat and foreign occupation. Although the polarization has, on the one hand, spurred efforts to obscure the “darkest” aspects of the Japanese wartime record, it has served just as readily as a powerful catalyst for greater disclosure. The Japanese Left, particularly the Communist Party, looked to revelations of Japanese wartime BW experimentation, in part, to help reinvigorate its political base after 1945. And the great wave of Japanese scholarship on Japanese wartime experimentation in the 1980s sprang from the increasingly volatile intellectual debates surrounding the Vietnam War. By contrast, revelations of American BW experimentation have been slow in coming, in part due to the absence of an equally polarized debate over national identity in the United States.

The increasing prominence of conservative intellectuals in the Japanese national discourse is an unmistakable reflection of the post-Cold War decline of the Left in Japan. But it is also, in part, a product of the continuing vitality of the “critical” vision that marked mainstream Japanese scholarship on modern Japanese history through the 1970s. Professor Fujioka was inspired to mobilize in 1996 not from a position of strength. He was appalled to learn that all seven history textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education at that point for use in junior high schools contained references to wartime “comfort women.” Fujioka and his cohorts were, in other words, reacting against the clear advance of the plight of Japan’s “comfort women” in Japanese national consciousness.

Although national debates continue to rage around both the story of Japanese wartime BW experimentation and of Japan’s “comfort women,” contrary to the experience of the United States, one can plot a clear record of progress in postwar Japanese revelation and consciousness of wartime BW experimentation, on a par with the advance symbolized by the tale of comfort women. Western laments about Japanese “historical amnesia” invariably focus upon official Japanese government policies and the actions and pronouncements of conservative politicians and intellectuals. The cluster of history textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in the spring of 2005 was clearly more conservative than those given the green light in the previous round of evaluations in 2001. And the continuing official refusal to countenance appeals for legal restitution for wartime acts, whether it be to Chinese victims of biological warfare, to former “comfort women” or to ex-POW’s impressed into slave labor, are obvious setbacks for history, as well as for the plaintiffs.

But a spotlight on official policy reveals only part of the story of public memory. As the American expert on Unit 731, John W. Powell, has observed, the Japanese government is not alone in its attempt to conceal dark aspects of the wartime past. To do so is the hallmark of almost any government.[68] And when it comes to legal restitution, the question of official recognition of wartime sins is vastly complicated by formal treaties and international law. Pressures on national governments to maintain a lid on a Pandora's box of legal demands against the state are, understandably, substantial.[69]

Despite official Japanese resistance to restitution, the widespread Japanese public exposure to an increasingly tangible record of wartime BW experimentation in the 1990s marks a genie that cannot be returned to its bottle. The latest laments over Japanese "historical amnesia" ironically confirm the advances in Japanese public awareness. Japanese courts continue to resist compensation to Chinese victims. But lawsuits raised against the Japanese government since 1993 have been possible only because of new documentation unearthed in Japan and the assistance of Japanese private citizens. Problems in the evaluation of history textbooks in 2005, moreover, were of a fundamentally different character than those in the 1980s. Whereas twenty years ago the Ministry of Education actively excised references to Japanese "aggression," biological warfare and "comfort women," by 2005, critics lamented not government action, but inaction—namely, failure to vigorously insert references to wartime atrocities into texts.

This change of emphasis symbolizes the most substantial advance in official policy vis-à-vis wartime atrocities over the last twenty years. In the contentious debate over textbook content, Tokyo now officially recognizes the historical reality of most Japanese war crimes: the Nanjing massacre, comfort women, mass suicide in the Battle of Okinawa, etc.[70] On the issue of biological warfare, the Ministry of Health and Welfare confirmed the existence of Unit 731 in the cabinet committee of the National Diet in April 1982.[71] And the Japanese Supreme Court recognized the legality of references to Unit 731 in textbooks in the final ruling of Ienaga Saburo's third lawsuit in 1997.[72]



Ienaga Saburo's *The pacific War*.

A study of the postwar politics of revelation of Japanese wartime medical experiments does not engage the issues of the causes of those initiatives and cannot predict the degree to which we might see questionable medical practices surfacing again in Japan's future. But by shifting the

focus from the purported “culture” to the politics of Japanese “forgetfulness” after 1945, it does suggest that an important indicator of future developments may be found less in certain Japanese cultural practices (as is often stressed in the literature on Japanese bioethics),[73] than in the political lay of the land. The politics of exposure of wartime Japanese BW experimentation remains as vital as ever and continues to enrich Japanese public consciousness regarding this dark chapter of national history. Likewise, critical issues of bioethics (brain death, stem cell research, etc.) have become the focus of heated political debate.

One might even argue that the substantial exposure of Japanese citizens by the 1990s to the history of wartime BW experimentation has facilitated Japanese sensitivity to contemporary issues of bioethics. It is clearly difficult in today’s Japan to ponder weighty issues of medical ethics without being reminded of the disturbing history of wartime experimentation. Thus, the Aug. 3, 1991 Asahi shinbun carried, side-by-side, an article questioning the all-too-convenient new standard of “brain death” for purposes of organ donation[74] with one describing efforts by the national legislature and private citizens to obtain information about the Army War College bones belonging to suspected victims of Japanese wartime experimentation.[75] An eighteen-year-old preparatory student who attended the national Unit 731 exhibit observed in 1994: “That war is bad goes without saying. But as someone intending to go to medical school, [this exhibit] made me think hard about what we consider today medical ethics.”[76]

In 1998, Japanese moviegoers flocked to a charming and delightfully humorous film about a rural family doctor that also pointedly asked, in the context of the history of wartime BW experimentation, how far physicians should go to preserve public health. Beautifully crafted by the award-winning veteran director Imamura Shohei, “Kanzo sensei” (Dr. Liver) follows the frenetic efforts of Dr. Akagi (known to neighbors as Dr. Liver) to contain the spread of hepatitis in wartime Kyushu, Japan. Obsessed with finding a cure, Dr. Akagi at one point contemplates extracting the liver of a live Dutch POW for experimentation. But he suspects that his son, a medical doctor in Manchuria, has access to the most advanced knowledge on liver disease because of tests on live subjects. Unable to countenance the horrors of an ambitious research agenda, the trusted doctor ultimately abandons his search for a general cure to return to the simple, if frenzied, life of catching each new flare-up of hepatitis through house calls.

The candid reference in a major Japanese feature film to wartime BW experimentation and a serious ethical dilemma that continues to plague medical practitioners is enough to belie the notion of a “forgetful” Japan. It is, moreover, a tantalizing hint of the rich philosophical terrain from which the active Japanese debates on medical ethics emerged in the 1990s. As William LaFleur notes in his introduction to *Dark Medicine: Rationalizing Unethical Medical Research* (Indiana University Press, 2007), the origins of the pioneering volume lie in this widespread discussion of Unit 731 and contemporary medical ethics in 1990s Japan. We would all do well to heed Gernot Bohme’s compelling point in *Dark Medicine* that we do not yet have the proper philosophical safeguards in place to avoid a repetition of history.[77] But one might argue that the horrible reality of Japanese wartime experimentation in “dark medicine” and the clear postwar record of exposure of those crimes, at the very least, make Japanese professionals currently debating weighty issues of bioethics all the wiser.

Frederick R. Dickinson is Associate Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of War and National Reinvention: Japan in the Great War, 1914-1919 (Cambridge: Harvard East Asia Monograph Series, 1999) and, most recently, of “Dai-ichiji sekai taisengo no

Nihon no koso: Nihon ni okeru Uirusonshugi no juyo.” In Ito Yukio, Kawada Minoru, eds. *Niju seiki Nihon to Higashi Ajia no keisei*. Tokyo: Minerva, 2007. pp. 133-149.

This is a revised version of an essay of the same title that originally appeared in William R. LaFleur, Gernot Böhme, and Susumu Shimazono, eds. [Dark Medicine: Rationalizing Unethical Medical Research](#). Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2007. pp. 85-104. Posted at Japan Focus on October 12, 2007.

Notes

[1] Ian Buruma, *The Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan*. NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1994; George L. Hicks, *Japan’s War Memories: Amnesia or Concealment?* UK: Ashgate, 1997; Laura Hein and Mark Selden, *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States*. NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000. Norma Field asks, “Why did these impulses for a self-critical renewal fail to flourish?” Norma Field. “War and Apology: Japan, Asia, the Fiftieth, and After.” *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 5, no. 1 (1997). p. 13. This view is not confined to Western commentators. See Wakamiya Yoshibumi, *Postwar Conservative View of Asia: How the Political Right Has Delayed Japan’s Coming to Terms with Its History of Aggression in Asia*. NY: Free Press, 1999.

[2] Daniel Barenblatt. *A Plague on Humanity: The Hidden History of Japan’s Biological Warfare Program*. NY: HarperCollins, 2004. p. xx.

[3] For a quick overview of the fifty-three counts, see Higurashi Yoshinobu. *Tokyo saiban no kokusai kankei*. Tokyo: Bokutakusha, 2002. pp. 286-87.

[4] Peter Williams and David Wallace, *Unit 731: Japan’s Secret Biological Warfare in World War II*. NY: Free Press, 1989. pp. 176-79.

[5] Information in this paragraph is based upon *ibid.*, pp. 141, 220-3.

[6] For example, the Gifu Times, the Chugoku shinbun and the Japanese Communist Party daily, Akahata. See *ibid.* pp. 226-27.

[7] “Shishashitsu: akuma no 731 butai.” *Asahi shinbun*. Aug. 10, 1975. p. 20; “Shishashitsu: zoku akuma no 731 butai.” *Asahi shinbun*. Aug. 15, 1976. p. 20; “Akuma no 731 butai: futatabi rupo hoei.” *Asahi shinbun*. June 21, 1982. Evening edition. p. 9. Yoshinaga had already made a name for herself and TBS with other documentaries on such controversial issues as the story of right-wing sponsorship of the leftist student group, Zengakuren (titled “Yuganda seishun” [Twisted Youth]). Kawatani Tadao. Review of Yoshinaga Haruko, *Nazo no dokuyaku*. *Asahi shinbun*. Apr. 28, 1996. p. 12.

[8] John Saar. “Japan Accused of WW II Germ Deaths.” *Washington Post*. Nov. 19, 1976. pp. 1, 19. Reference to “Sixty Minutes” in “Akuma no 731 butai: futatabi rupo hoei.” p. 9.

[9] The new TBS documentary was titled “Soko ga shiritai: Akuma no 731 butai” (This is What I’d Like to Know: The Devil’s Unit 731) and introduced an American survivor of the camp. “Akuma no 731 butai: futatabi rupo hoei.” p. 9; “Shishashitsu: Soko ga shiritai, akuma no 731 butai.” *Asahi shinbun*. June 29, 1982. p. 24. The Hong Kong film, titled “Kuroi taiyo 731 butai” (Black sun, Unit 731), was translated into Japanese and given four public showings a day at

Nitchu gakuin in Tokyo on Oct. 7 and 8, 1992. "Kantogun saikinsen butai no jittai egaita eiga kokai." Asahi shinbun. Oct. 7, 1992. p. 26).

[10] Gunji Yoko. "Shogen." 731 Ishii butai. Tokyo: Tokuma shoten, 1982.

[11] "Nomonhan jiken ni 'saikinsen' no shogen." Asahi shinbun. Aug. 24, 1989. p. 3.

[12] Sheldon H. Harris. *Factories of Death: Japanese Biological Warfare 1932-45 and the American Cover-up*. NY: Routledge, 1994. p. 224. The two-part series was produced by Inoue Takashi and aired on two consecutive nights, Apr. 13 and 14, at 10 p.m. "NHK dokyumento '731 saikinsen butai.'" Asahi shinbun. Apr. 13, 1992. Evening edition. p. 19. Similar to the BBC in Britain, NHK is a publicly owned radio and television broadcasting agency, which means that it is both independent and linked to the government in a way commercial broadcasters are not.

[13] Mori Masataka and Kasukawa Yoshiya. *Chugoku shinryaku to 731 butai no saikinsen*. Tokyo: Asahi shobo, 1995.

[14] "731 butai kyumei e Nitchu kyodo shinpo." Asahi shinbun. Sept. 16, 1995. Evening edition. p. 9.

[15] The discovery was even highlighted in the New York Times. David Sanger, "Skulls Found: Japan Doesn't Want to Know Whose." New York Times. Aug. 13, 1990. pp. 1, 5; "Gun'i gakko ato no jinkotsu Chugoku mo chushi." Asahi shinbun. Aug. 3, 1991. Evening edition. p. 19. Although it was originally reported that the bones came from 35 bodies, that number was eventually revised to over 100. See Tsuneishi Kei-ichi. "Unit 731 and the Human Skulls Discovered in 1989: Physicians Carrying Out Organized Crimes." In William R. LaFleur, Gernot Böhme, and Susumu Shimazono, eds. *Dark Medicine: Rationalizing Unethical Medical Research*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007. pp. 73-84.

[16] Significantly, Japanese historian Hata Ikuhiko, who had earlier aided the Japanese Ministry of Education's legal case against Ienaga Saburo's inclusion of references to Japanese BW experimentation in high school history textbooks, confirmed the authenticity of these documents in 1994. See "731 butai kyokumitsu bunsho: zenkoku 40 kasho de junkaiten." Asahi shinbun. July 2, 1993. Evening edition. p. 10.

[17] "731 butai no saikinsen: Nihongawa shiryo de urazuke." Asahi shinbun. Aug. 14, 1993. p. 1; "Pesuto moi" to hokoku." Asahi shinbun. Aug. 14, 1993. p. 27.

[18] Kasahara Tokushi, et al., eds. *Rekishi no jijitsu o do kakutei shi do oshieru ka*. Tokyo: Kyoiku shiryo shuppankai, 1997. p. 16; "Jibun ni muen no hora ja nai." Asahi shinbun. June 13, 1994. p. 15; "Seitai jikken o mokei de saigen." Asahi shinbun. July 11, 1993. p. 24.

[19] "Mochi o tabe, zenshin ga aokuroku nari, shinda." Asahi shinbun. Sept. 6, 1994. p. 30.

[20] Yoshimi Yoshiaki and Iko Toshiya. *731 butai to tenno, rikugun chuo*. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1995; "731 butai no saikinsen kensho." Asahi shinbun. Dec. 18, 1995. p. 14.

[21] Nozaki Yoshiko and Inokuchi Hiromitsu. "Japanese Education, Nationalism, and Ienaga's Textbook Lawsuits." In Hein and Selden. *Censoring History*. p. 113. Nozaki and Inokuchi note that, from July through September 1980, more than two thousand reports on Japanese textbook screening appeared in the press in nineteen Asian countries.

[22] For sustained analysis of the Ienaga textbook controversy, see Hicks. *Japan's War Memories*. chp. 7.

[23] Gavan McCormack sees Fujioka as epitomizing a “troubling” current situation in Japan in which “liberalism and rationalism are used to conceal a mode of reasoning that is both antiliberal and antirational.” Gavan McCormack. “The Japanese Movement to ‘Correct’ History.” In Hein and Selden. *Censoring History*. pp. 70-71.

[24] Harris. *Factories of Death*. pp. 47, 52.

[25] Judith Miller, Stephen Engelberg, and William Broad. *Germs: Biological Weapons and America's Secret War*. NY: Simon and Schuster, 2001. p. 39. It should be noted that the official history of Fort Detrick places the wartime high of employees at the facility at only 2,300. Richard M. Clendenin. *Science and Technology at Fort Detrick, 1943-1968*. Fort Detrick, Md.: Fort Detrick, Historian, Technical Information Division, 1968. p. 26.

[26] For a summary of those estimates, see Harris. *Factories of Death*. pp. 66-67. The two most celebrated cases of American experimentation on human subjects during the war are the Tuskegee Syphilis Study (1932-72) and the Chicago Malaria Study. Neither of these projects, however, was related to the principal U.S. experimentation in BW agents conducted by the United States Army Chemical Warfare Service.

[27] The one notable follow-up to Hersch was the 1988 piece by Stanford University historian Barton Bernstein. Barton J. Bernstein. “America's Biological Warfare Program in the Second World War.” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 2, no. 3 (1988). pp. 292-317.

[28] See Stephen Endicott and Edward Hagermann. *The United States and Biological Warfare: Secrets from the Early Cold War and Korea*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998. Also, G. Cameron Hurst III, “Biological Weapons: The United States and the Korean War.” In LaFleur, et al., eds. *Dark Medicine*. pp. 105-20.

[29] Namely, chp 17 of the British edition of Williams and Wallace, *Unit 731*, titled, “Korean War,” pp. 235-85, is missing in the American edition published by the Free Press. Williams and Wallace. *Unit 731*; Harris. *Factories of Death*. p. 283, n. 36.

[30] Nozaki and Inokuchi. “Japanese Education, Nationalism, and Ienaga's Textbook Lawsuits.” p. 105.

[31] David McNeill and Mark Selden. “Asia Battles over War History: The Legacy of the Pacific War Looms over Tokyo's Plans for the Future.” *Japan Focus*. Apr. 13, 2005. Japanfocus.org/257.html.

[32] “Jiki no kyokasho, jiyusha kara shuppan: Tsukurukai ga happyo.” *Asahi shinbun*. Sept. 18, 2007; “Tsukurukai, Fusosha to kankei danzetsu, betsu no shuppansha o kobo.” *Asahi shinbun*. June 1, 2007.

[33] For a description of this era as more than a feeble gesture toward liberalism, see Fred Dickinson. “Dai-ichiji sekai taisengo no Nihon no koso.” In Ito Yukio, Kawada Minoru, eds. *Niju seiki Nihon to higashi Ajia no keisei*. Tokyo: Minerva, 2007. pp. 133-49.

[34] John W. Dower. "Peace and Democracy in Two Systems: External Policy and Internal Conflict." Andrew Gordon. ed. *Postwar Japan as History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993. pp. 3-33.

[35] Following soon after the outbreak of the Korea War, the December 1950 issue of *Sekai*, in which the third Peace Problems Symposium statement was printed, doubled its circulation. *Ibid.* p. 9.

[36] Roger Swearingen and Paul Langer. *Red Flag in Japan: International Communism in Action 1919-1951*. NY: Greenwood Press, 1968. pp. 81-82.

[37] Williams and Wallace. *Unit 731*. pp. 226-27.

[38] See *Asahi shinbun*. Dec. 25, 27-30, 1949.

[39] By contrast, the full eighteen volumes of raw data used by Soviet prosecutors to make their case have yet to be made available to researchers. Harris, *Factories of Death*. p. 229.

[40] Swearingen and Langer. *Red Flag in Japan*. p. 233.

[41] According to the most authoritative account, the U.S.S.R. conducted the tribunal in an effort to justify the large numbers of Japanese POWs yet to be repatriated to Japan from Siberia. Harris, *Factories of Death*. pp. 226-28.

[42] The December 27, 1949, *United Press* quoted the American representative to the Allied Council for Japan and Acting U.S. Political Advisor to Douglas MacArthur, William Sebald, describing the Khabarovsk trials as a likely "fiction" designed as a "smoke screen" to deflect attention from the thousands of Japanese POWs in Soviet custody still unaccounted for. See Kasahara, et al., eds. *Rekisho no jijitsu o do kakutei shi do oshieru ka*. p. 23, n. 14; John W. Powell. *Japan's Germ Warfare: The U.S. Cover-up of a War Crime.* *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*. vol. 12, no. 4 (1980). p. 15, n. 1.

[43] *New York Times*. Dec. 27, 1949. Cited in Williams and Wallace. *Unit 731*. p. 231. For the effort to shield the emperor, see Herbert P. Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*. NY: HarperCollins, 2000. Chp. 15.

[44] Honda wrote a series of articles on Vietnam, "Senso to hito" (War and People), that ran for five months in the *Asahi shinbun* in the mid-1960s. Published in one volume in 1968, *Senba no mura* (The Villages of War) became a best seller in Japan, and over 50,000 English-language copies were shipped overseas. See John Lie, ed. *The Impoverished Spirit in Contemporary Japan: Selected Essays of Honda Katsuichi*. NY: Monthly Review Press, 1993. p. 16.

[45] Field. "War and Apology." p. 15.

[46] Saburo Ienaga. *The Pacific War, 1931-1945: A Critical Perspective on Japan's Role in World War II*. NY: Random House, 1978. p. 244.

[47] Lie, ed. *The Impoverished Spirit in Contemporary Japan*. p. 22.

[48] Although the final ruling rejected Ienaga's most fundamental contention that government textbook screening was unconstitutional, it did accept the legality of his references to *Unit 731*.

Nozaki and Inokuchi. "Japanese Education, Nationalism, and Ienaga's Textbook Lawsuits." p. 119; "Dai-sanji Ienaga sosho: 4 kasho no iho kakutei." Asahi shinbun. Aug. 30, 1997. p. 1.

[49] For a discussion of this initiative, see Nozaki and Inokuchi. "Japanese Education, Nationalism, and Ienaga's Textbook Lawsuits." p. 113.

[50] Morimura Seiichi. "Akuma no hoshoku" noto. Tokyo: Banseisha, 1982. pp. 54, 188.

[51] John W. Powell. "Japan's Biological Weapons, 1930-45." Bulletin of Atomic Scientists. vol. 37, no. 8; for a discussion of the publication in Japanese of the article, see Morimura. "Akuma no hoshoku" noto. pp. 188-97.

[52] Morimura. "Akuma no hoshoku" noto. p. 95.

[53] Morimura published with Kobunsha and Kakugawa. Tsuneishi's research appeared with Shinchosha.

[54] Arnold Brackman. The Other Nuremberg: The Untold Story of the Tokyo War Crimes Trials. NY: Quill, 1987. p. 198.

[55] Morimura. "Akuma no hoshoku" noto. p. 235.

[56] The film became the fifth in a series, titled, "Katararenakatta senso—shinryaku" (The War that Could Not be Told—Aggression). "Kyu Nihongun saikinsen butai, eiga ni." Asahi shinbun. June 28, 1996. p. 3.

[57] Tsuneishi. "Unit 731 and the Human Skulls Discovered in 1989."

[58] "731 butai no jittai, kami shibai ni." Asahi shinbun. Sept. 16, 1994. p. 29.

[59] The display was titled "731 butai ten in Kasukabu" (Unit 731 Exhibit in Kasukabu). Yonezawa Nobuyoshi. "Saitama no kokosei, 731 butai shirabeta. Asahi shinbun. Aug. 1, 1996. p. 31.

[60] "Kyu Nihongun no saikinsen, asu jittai kyumei suru kai." Asahi shinbun. June 28, 1996. p. 26.

[61] "Tekishutsu shita zoki, suketchi shita." Asahi shinbun. Nov. 20, 1995. p. 14.

[62] "Saikinsen butai o tsuikyu suru Mizutani Naoko san." Asahi shinbun. July 12, 1996. p. 3.

[63] Later published as Daitoa senso kotei ron (In Affirmation of the Greater East Asia War, Bancho shobo, 1964).

[64] Kasahara, et al., eds. Rekishi no jijitsu o do kakutei shi do oshieru ka. pp. 17-19.

[65] Kobayashi Yoshinori. Sensoron I, II, III. Tokyo: Gentosha, 1998, 2001, 2003.

[66] McNeill and Selden. "Asia Battles over War History."

[67] This is the title of Gavan McCormack's article on the movement; McCormack. "The Japanese Movement to 'Correct' History."

[68] Morimura. "Akuma no hoshoku" noto. p. 128.

[69] For a detailed study of legal demands surrounding wartime forced Korean labor, see William Underwood. "Names, Bones and Unpaid Wages, 1, 2." Japan Focus. Sept. 10, 17, 2006. japanfocus.org/products/details/2219, japanfocus.org/products/details/2225.

[70] Hicks. Japan's War Memories. p. 106.

[71] "731 butai kyokumitsu bunsho" p. 10.

[72] "Dai-sanji Ienaga sosho: 4 kasho no iho kakutei." p. 1.

[73] See, most recently, H. Tristram Engelhardt and Lisa M. Rasmussen, eds. Bioethics and Moral Content: National Traditions of Health Care Morality: Papers Dedicated in Tribute to Kazumasa Hoshino. Boston: Kluwer, 2002.

[74] For an echo of this argument, see Yamaori Tetsuo. "Strategies for Survival versus Accepting Impermanence: Rationalizing Brain Death and Organ Transplantation Today." In LaFleur, et al., eds. Dark Medicine. pp. 165-79.

[75] "Gun'i gakko ato no jinkotsu Chugoku mo chushi." p. 19; "Jinken mushi no noshi ishoku." Asahi shinbun. Aug. 3, 1991. Evening edition. p. 19.

[76] "Jibun ni muen no hora ja nai." p. 15.

[77] Gernot Bohme. "Rationalizing Unethical Medical Research: Taking Seriously the Case of Victor von Weizsacker." In LaFleur, et al., eds. Dark Medicine. pp. 15-29.

The Hundred Head Contest: Reassessing the Nanjing Massacre

Suzuki Chieko

Translated by James Orr

Japan Focus introduction: In late 1937, a Tokyo newspaper reported on a "hundred head contest" in which two Japanese imperial army officers competed to see who could lop off one hundred Chinese heads first during the campaign to take the Chinese capital city of Nanjing. The contest is symbolic of the perversion and loss of military discipline during the Japanese capture and occupation of the city that has come to be known variously as the Nanjing Massacre, the Rape of Nanjing, or simply the Nanjing Incident. The event belongs to a long list of 20th century atrocities, and is emblematic of Chinese suffering at the hands of a barbarous Japanese military as well as of Japanese predations across wartime Asia and the Pacific.

As part of what one might call a "canon" of horror, various groups have interests in how the event is remembered not only in China and Japan, but also internationally. Estimates of the numbers killed at Nanjing vary from several thousand to over 300,000, depending on national and political persuasion and the parameters one puts in terms of time, place, and ethnicity of victim. (See David Askew, "New Research on the Nanjing Incident," available at <http://www.japanfocus.org/109.html>).

The essay by Suzuki Chieko is a self-conscious part of Japanese discourse over how remembrance of Japan's wartime past will structure current and future Japanese state policy. In this polarized discourse, wartime predations abroad are linked to a potential return of an oppressive domestic order in the present, so those who seek to defend postwar Japanese democratic as well as pacifist ideals, as Suzuki does, fear denial of Japanese atrocities in the past.

Although Japan's postwar Constitution was drafted by Gen. Douglas MacArthur's Occupation staff, most Japanese welcomed its guarantees of civil liberties and its renunciation of war as an instrument of foreign policy. As Suzuki notes, however, the ban on the dispatch of troops overseas has weakened since the first Gulf war in the early 1990s, when many Japanese felt unfairly criticized for failing to contribute more than money to that international effort. With attitudes toward the postwar pacifist settlement shifting, conservative political forces led by Prime Minister Koizumi have succeeded in gradually legitimizing the dispatch of Self Defense Forces abroad. As in the post 9/11 United States, under the rubric of special counter-terrorism measures the government has steadily expanded the range of activity in the name of national security. And, for only the second time in the postwar era there are concrete measures being taken to revise the constitution. The first effort at constitutional revision in the late 1950s and early 1960s failed. Conditions now make revision seem more likely.]

Shukan Kinyobi editor's introduction: When the Japanese army occupied Nanjing in December 1937, the Tokyo Nichinichi Shinbun newspaper (the present-day Mainichi Shinbun) carried four reports -- printed November 30 and December 4, 6, and 13 -- on a "hundred head contest" between two army lieutenants to see who could first kill one hundred Chinese with their swords.

After Honda Katsuichi mentioned this "hundred head contest" in his 1971 Chugoku no tabi (Travels in China), a debate arose in the journals between Honda and Hora Tomio (then a professor at Waseda University) on one side, and Yamamoto Shichihei (aka Isaiah Ben Dasan)

*and Suzuki Akira, who challenged the account. This debate more or less came to an end with the 1977 publication of Honda's edited volume, *Pen no inbo* (Conspiracy of the Pen), but recently *Sankei shinbun*, *Seiron* and like newspapers and journals have once again taken up the issue charging that the "hundred head contest" was a fabrication.*

*This is the background against which the two lieutenants' surviving families have lodged an appeal in court. Specifically, theirs is a libel suit calling for an injunction on publication, lodged against the Mainichi Newspapers Company (successor to the Tokyo Nichinichi Shinbun) that reported on the competition, the Asahi Shinbun Publishing Company that published Honda's *Chugoku no tabi* and *Nankin e no michi* (Road to Nanjing), Kashiwa Shobo, publisher of "*Suemono kiri ya horyo gyakusatsu wa nichijo sahanji datta*" (Using corpses for sword practice and prisoner atrocities were an everyday event) and the essay collection *Nankin daigyakusatsu hiteiron 13 no uso* (13 Lies in Denials of the Nanjing Massacre), and against author Honda.*

On April 10, 2003 the Tokyo Supreme Court issued a verdict in favor of Nanjing Massacre survivor Li Xiuying in her defamation suit against claims that she was a fraud. But immediately afterward, on April 28, the "hundred head" suit was brought.

Why was a suit like this, one that challenges the existence of the hundred head contest, brought immediately after the court ruling in Li Xiuying's favor? It was not brought simply out of spite for the lost litigation, nor due to a stubborn refusal to admit defeat. To begin with, 11 of the 17 lawyers who jointly filed for plaintiffs had given support to those who had accused Li of being a fraud. Next, during the first two days of the trial, supporters for the plaintiffs jammed into the confined courtroom in numbers double those normally allowed. And, although other news organs carried only short reports on details of the suit, the *Sankei shinbun*, known for its narrowly nationalistic editorial policy, allotted extensive coverage amenable to the plaintiff's point of view. Accordingly, we can consider the "hundred head" litigation to have been systematically planned.

So why are reports from 66 years ago being litigated now? The attack on reporting about the "hundred head contest" isn't new; it has been going on for 30 years.

30 Years of Rhetoric

Attack began with Honda Katsuichi's 1971 *Asahi shinbun* series "Travels in China." "Travels in China" was a revolutionary series, revealing to wide numbers of Japanese the reality of wartime predations that he learned about during his travels, heard from survivors of atrocities committed by Japanese military in China. Although before then history texts might have described wartime sufferings of the Japanese people, they hadn't touched on Japanese predations in Asia. These reports had a great impact on Japanese who learned the truth about the past from them.

In reaction, a sense of crisis arose among those seeking to glorify the war of aggression and revise the postwar constitution. The attacks on Honda began with the immediate target being the "hundred head contest," what one might call the "overture" of the incident most representative of Japan's war of aggression, the Nanjing Massacre.

The first to act was Yamamoto Shichihei (Isaiah Ben Dasan), who persisted in attacking Honda for over three years in the journal *Shokun!*, beginning in 1972. Considering the influence such attacks might have, Honda engaged in a public debate with Yamamoto in *Shokun!*'s pages. But

this so-called "hundred head debate" ended with Yamamoto's complete defeat as so many of his assertions were slipshod and ripped apart by Honda.

Next was Yamamoto's pinch hitter, Suzuki Akira. Suzuki also reported on the "hundred head" problem in the pages of *Shokun!*, later bringing his findings out in a book titled "Nankin daigyakusatsu" no maboroshi (Illusion of the "Nanjing Massacre"). As it turned out, this book was awarded Bungei Shunjusha's Oya Soichi prize in nonfiction. Based on a visit to the presiding judge of the Nanjing military tribunal, and on their prison writings and defense memoranda, Suzuki argued that the two officers had been unjustly executed on the basis of false reports. The prize selection committee swallowed his argument that the "hundred head contest" was a ruse. However, this book was part of a scheme to cast doubt on the truth of the whole of the Nanjing Massacre.

In reaction to such attacks, Honda dug up and thoroughly refuted their claims with testimonials that: showed the "hundred head" contest to have been an atrocity committed against prisoners of war (not battle killings) ("Shishime testimony") [1]; undercut the blunt Japanese sword theory that held that swords would not hold their edge through so many decapitations (Uno testimony) [2]; and made clear that the contest was not just a war correspondent's fabrication (Sato testimony). [3] Then Hora Tomio wrote *Nankin daigyakusatsu: "maboroshi" ka kosaku hihan* (The Nanjing Massacre: Criticism of the Making of an Illusion) [4], which refuted Suzuki point by point. In particular, Hora used the testimonies to thoroughly lay bare a false "alibi" report that the two officers had met war correspondents at the foot of Nanjing's Zhongshan mountain.

Activities of the Study Group on the Nanjing Incident

Afterwards, unsubstantiated denials of the Nanjing Massacre continued unabated, in places like the *Sankei shinbun* and *Seiron* in addition to the *Bungei shunju* and *Shokun!*. The Study Group on the Nanjing Incident (Nankin Jiken Chosakai), founded in 1984 in response to these activities denying the Massacre, has contributed greatly to illuminating the Nanjing Massacre.

The denial thesis became increasingly bankrupt in the late 1980s. First, it came to light that Tanaka Masaaki had altered the text in as many as 300 places when he published the field diary of General Matsui Iwane, [the officer in charge of Japanese troops in Nanjing]. [5] Second, the editors of *Kaiko*, the publication of Kaikosha, the fraternal organization of former Imperial Army cadets, recognized in print that "the Japanese army committed illegal murders in Nanjing." And third, a decision in the Ienaga Saburo textbook suit recognized the existence of the "Nanjing Massacre."

In this way the theories denying the Nanjing Massacre were totally discredited, but they were prominently touted again in the late 1990s. That is, by repeatedly emphasizing the denial theories, proponents hoped to persuade people that no massacre had occurred, or if it had, it wasn't so bad. Treating surviving witness Li Xiuying as a fake and filing the current "hundred heads" libel suit can be seen as part of this effort. These developments are deeply connected to the intensification of reactionary attacks since the beginning of the 1990s.

Japan has become increasingly reactionary since the passage of the PKO International Peace Cooperation Law [1992] and the dispatch of troops abroad at the time of the first Iraq War (Gulf War) in 1991. As if in parallel with these currents, there has arisen a camp aiming to remake Japan into a country capable of waging war, with the formation of Fujioka Nobukatsu's Liberal

View of History Association [sic] (Jiyushugishikan Kenkyukai) and the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (Atarashii Rekishikyokasho wo Tsukuru Kai). Also, 1999 saw preparation of the infrastructure for war in earnest with the passage of laws making Kimigayo and the hinomaru the official national anthem and flag, and laws related to establishing new guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation.

Reverse Course in Popular Opinion

Nowadays not just the Liberal-Democratic Party (LDP) but also the major opposition Democratic Party is advocating constitutional revision in its party manifesto, under the rubric of "constitution creation". And, if the dispatch of the SDF to Iraq becomes a reality, it will be the first time since defeat in World War Two that Japan has sent troops into a battle zone. [Trans. note: SDF units were dispatched to Iraq to provide "reconstruction assistance" in January 2004.]

The current "hundred heads" libel suit is one prong of an attack that ought to worry the democratic forces that have resisted the militarization of the Japanese state. By rehashing the "hundred head" issue that ought to have been settled, they are trying to plant among the people a view of history that glorifies and affirms aggression in Asia.

We ought to lay bare the truth that most of the victims who lost their heads in this "hundred head contest" were unresisting prisoners in an atrocity that was a murderous game to see who could kill the most. But rather than condemn the two officers who wielded swords in this atrocity, we should reveal and broadcast the truth that the core problem was in the Japanese militarist education that fashioned this kind of soldier. Doing so will also serve to foster trust and friendly relations for Japan in Asia and the world.

Suzuki Chieko is a member of the Nanjing Research Association (Nankin chosa kenkyukai). This article appeared in Shukan Kinyobi 488, 12 December 2003): 50-51.

Translated for Japan Focus by James Orr, Associate Professor and Chair of the East Asian Studies Department at Bucknell University. His research interests center on communal memory and political identity. He is the author of The Victim as Hero: Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan.

Notes

1. Shishime Akira, "Nitchu senso no tsuioku -- 'hyakunin giri kyoso'" (Remembering the Sino-Japanese War -- the "Hundred Head Contest"). Chugoku (Tokuma Shoten: December 1971).
2. Uno Shintaro, "Nihonken enkonbu" (Japanese Sword Record on Hate). In Pen no inbo, (Conspiracy of the Pen), edited by Honda Katsuichi. Ushio Shuppan, 1977.
3. Suzuki Jiro, "Watashi wa ano 'Nankin no higeiki' wo mokuageki shita" (I Witnessed that Nanjing Tragedy). Maru (November 1977).
4. Gendaishi Shuppankai, 1975.
5. Tanaka Masaaki, ed., Matsui Iwane taisho no jinchu nisshi (Field Diary of General Matsui Iwane). Fuyo Shobo, 1985.

Topics of Historical Memory in Japan*War Apologies***“Memory, Apology and International Reconciliation”**

Jennifer Lind

November 21, 2008

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Jennifer-Lind/2957>**“Memories and Aporias in the Japan-Korea Relationship”**

Alexis Dudden

April 5, 2010

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Alexis-Dudden/3337>**“The Comfort Women, the Asian Women’s Fund and the Digital Museum”**

Wada Haruki

February 1, 2008

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Wada-Haruki/2653>**“Neo-Nationalist Interpretations of Japan’s Annexation of Korea: The Colonization Debate in Japan and South Korea”**

Mark Caprio

November 1, 2010

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Mark-Caprio/3438>

In demanding apologies for specific war crimes, many are often seeking a larger admission: an apology for starting and conducting a misguided war of aggression. Nevertheless, in media all over the world, we often encounter the claim that Japan “has not apologized” for its war and war crimes. Although this is not entirely correct, there are sound reasons why Japanese apologies have been dismissed as “insincere.” The articles in this section look at the rising significance of apologies in international relations in general and, in the words of Jennifer Lind, the “relationship between historical memory and international reconciliation.” Alexis Dudden focuses directly on the issue of apology in recent Japanese-Korean relations while Wada Haruki examines debate over an apology specifically to the comfort women. He also introduces the Asian Women’s Fund (AWF), which was founded by the Japanese government as a way to manage the disagreement over the politics of reconciliation in Japan. Through the AWF, the Japanese government indirectly apologized to the former comfort women and offered reparation, although the actual funds came from the private sector rather than the government. Many comfort women considered the Japanese government’s decision to work through a semi-public organization an insincere scheme to evade direct apology and compensation. In the end, most comfort women refused to accept any money from the AWF. Mark Caprio addresses later debates in Japan concerning an apology for colonizing Korea, an issue that received renewed attention in 2010, the 100th anniversary of the annexation of Korea to Japan. At this time, many neonationalists rejected the need to apologize and instead emphasized the achievements of Japanese colonial rule. The colonization of Korea, they also stress, was accepted by other nations at the time.

Memory, Apology and International Reconciliation

Jennifer Lind

What is the role of apologies in international reconciliation? Jennifer Lind finds that while denying or glorifying past violence is indeed inimical to reconciliation, apologies that prove to be domestically polarizing may be diplomatically counterproductive. Moreover, apologies were not necessary in many cases of successful reconciliation. What then is the relationship between historical memory and international reconciliation?



Japan, many people argue, has a “history problem.” Observers lament Japan’s half-hearted or contradicted apologies for its World War II atrocities, arguing that Tokyo’s failure to atone is a major cause of lingering tensions in East Asia. [1] In Western Europe, by contrast, Germany’s willingness to atone for its World War II aggression and war crimes is said to have promoted European rapprochement. But is this interpretation correct, and more broadly, what is the relationship between apologies and international reconciliation? A close examination of Japan’s and Germany’s postwar international relations suggests that observers are correct that denying or glorifying past violence inhibits international reconciliation. But it turns out that apologies are a risky tool for peacemaking: they can do more harm than good.

Why might apologies matter in international politics—that is, why are they not merely dismissed as “cheap talk”? Apologies—or more broadly, national remembrance—matter because the way countries represent their pasts conveys information about foreign policy intentions. As countries remember, they define their heroes and villains, delineate the lines of acceptable foreign policy, and send signals about their future behavior.



How will their countries remember them? How will their adversaries remember them? Left, American GIs celebrating Japan’s surrender, 1945; Right, Japanese POWs in Guam (U.S. National Archives)

National remembrance can be observed in both official policies and in debates within wider society. Official remembrance would include leaders' statements about the past (e.g. apologies). Governments might offer reparations to former victims, and may hold perpetrators of past violence accountable in legal trials. Governments educate their societies about the past through their education systems (i.e., textbooks) and through commemoration: monuments, museums, ceremonies, and holidays. [2] Through these policies, national governments can strongly influence—but cannot fully control—the way the wider society remembers the past. Thus other important indicators of national remembrance are societal ones: such as the statements and activities of mainstream opinion leaders (e.g. members of the political opposition, the press, and public intellectuals).

National remembrance might be more or less apologetic. Social psychologists have identified core components of apologies that transcend cultural differences: at a minimum, an apology requires admitting past misdeeds, and expressing regret for them. [3] Thus, “apologetic remembrance” is that which conveys both admission and remorse. At the other extreme, “unapologetic remembrance” either fails to admit past violence, or fails to express remorse for it. Unapologetic remembrance comes in many varieties; a country may justify, deny, glorify—or simply forget—past violence.

A country's remembrance should send the strongest positive signal about its intentions when it engages in a broad range of official apologetic policies—statements, reparations, trials, commemoration, and education—and when wider society endorses these policies. Remembrance should be less reassuring if government policy is apologetic, but wider society exhibits denials and glorifications. At the negative extreme, a country's intentions should appear hostile if it pursues a broad range of policies that deny or glorify past violence—and if society endorses such policies.

I test this theory about the link between remembrance and intentions in the cases of Japanese and German foreign relations after World War II. Below I summarize three major findings.

Pernicious Denials

The Japanese and German cases provide strong support for the view that unapologetic remembrance (denials, glorifications, or justifications of past violence) fuels distrust and elevates fear among former adversaries. In Japan, frequent denials by influential leaders and omissions from Japan's history textbooks have repeatedly poisoned relations with South Korea, China, and Australia. Throughout the postwar era, South Koreans expressed cautious optimism when a Japanese Prime Minister apologized for Japan's colonial record in Korea. But as Japanese contrition triggered backlash—in which prominent politicians and intellectuals justified or denied Japan's past atrocities—South Koreans concluded that Japanese contrition was insincere and that Tokyo continued to harbor hostile intentions. As expressed by South Korean president Kim Dae-jung in 2001: “How can we make good friends with people who try to forget and ignore the many pains they inflicted on us? How can we deal with them in the future with any degree of trust?” [4] Chinese and Australian observers also monitored Japanese remembrance in the postwar years, expressed anger and dismay at Japanese denials, and linked their distrust of Japan to its failure to admit its past atrocities.

In Europe, West German acknowledgment of the nation's wartime aggression and atrocities facilitated reconciliation between West Germany and the Allies. During the occupation, the

Allies encouraged German admission of its atrocities (particularly within education policy). This was seen as critical to preventing the return of German hyper-nationalism, and to the creation of a peace-loving West German state. Later, France and Britain continued to monitor West Germany's remembrance: they praised its willingness to explore its past, and they expressed anxiety about any perceived signs of revisionism. Both the Japanese and German cases thus suggest that avoidance of denials and glorification of past violence is a key step in international reconciliation.

Necessary Apologies?

Although denials and glorifications appear very harmful to international reconciliation, it is clear that many bitter enemies—including Germany and France—have reconciled with very little atonement. Early after the war, Bonn expressed modest contrition. Although it offered a lukewarm apology and paid reparations to Israel, West German commemoration, education, and public discourse ignored the atrocities Germany had committed, and instead emphasized German suffering during and after the war. Nevertheless, during this era of minimal contrition West Germany and France transformed their relations. By the early 1960s, both French elites and the general public saw West Germany as their closest friend and security partner. Bonn's remarkable expressions of atonement—wrenching apologies, candid history textbooks, memorials to Germany's victims and the largest reparations to victims—had not yet occurred.

Other World War II enemies reconciled with even less remorse. Both the British and Americans established close and even friendly relations with West Germany without apologizing for fire bombing German cities, a campaign that killed hundreds of thousands of civilians. Japan and the United States built a warm relationship and solid security alliance in spite of the fact that neither government has apologized for its wartime atrocities. Furthermore, the European partners of Italy and Austria ignored the blatant dodging of culpability in these former Axis countries. Although denying or celebrating past atrocities will inhibit the reestablishment of good relations, countries frequently reconcile with very little contrition in the form of apologies and reparations.

Beware the Backlash

In 1970 West German Chancellor Willy Brandt fell to his knees at the Warsaw Ghetto, and recently South Korean President Lee Myung-bak has urged the Japanese emperor to follow suit by apologizing to the Korean 'comfort women'. Although many analysts argue that Japan and other countries should adopt the German model of atonement, such recommendations neglect to consider the risks of such policies. As evident in Japan and elsewhere, official expressions of contrition often prompt a backlash. Conservatives in particular are likely to offer a competing narrative that celebrates—rather than condemns—the country's past and justifies or even denies its atrocities. Thus contrition can be counterproductive: foreign observers will be angered and alarmed by what the backlash suggests about the country's intentions. The great irony is that well-meaning efforts to soothe relations between former enemies can actually inflame them.



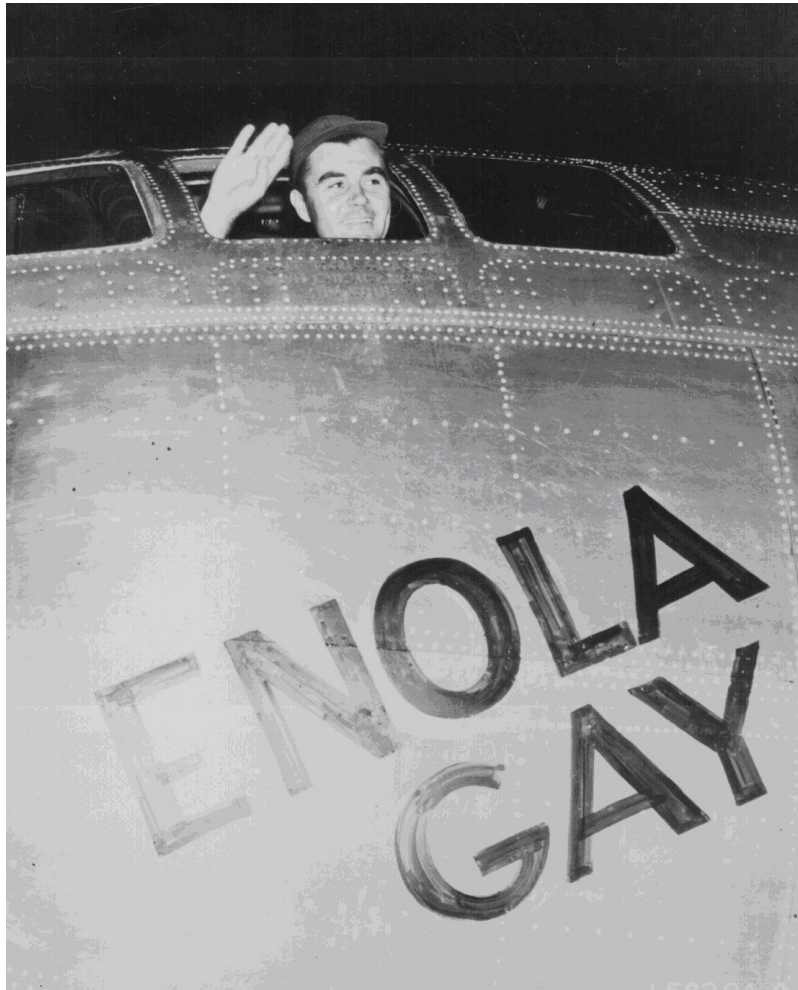
Willy Brandt at Warsaw, 1970

Comparison of the Japanese and German cases thus raises a puzzle. Japan's modest efforts to offer contrition repeatedly triggered sharp outcry among conservatives, who justified and even denied past atrocities. Because of backlash, Japanese contrition ended up alarming Japan's neighbors. In Germany, by contrast, far more ambitious efforts at contrition did not provoke a similar backlash. Though some West German conservatives preferred to emphasize a more positive national history, they did not deny or glorify Nazi crimes. The French thus viewed West German debates about the past as healthy, cathartic experiences for the country's democratic development—and as a reassuring signal about its intentions.

Whether or not contrition is likely to heal or hurt thus seems to depend on the occurrence of backlash. Though more research is needed about the conditions under which backlash will occur, there are powerful reasons to believe that contrition will be very controversial. First, the absence of backlash in the West German case can be explained by its unusual strategic circumstances after the war. During the Cold War, West German conservatives—those most likely to oppose contrition—had powerful reasons to keep quiet. Their key foreign policy goals—German reunification and protection from the Soviet Union—all required reassuring NATO, which required a clear denunciation of the Nazi past. West Germany thus faced constraints that are unlikely to be so severe elsewhere.

Indeed, evidence from around the world shows that backlash to contrition is a common occurrence. In Austria, Jörg Haider's vocal criticism of apologies and stalwart defense of the

wartime generation resonated with voters, who catapulted him and his party from the fringe into national leadership. Conservatives in France, Switzerland, Italy, and Belgium mobilized against attempts to confront their World War II collaboration. In Britain, proposed apologies for British policies in Ireland, and for complicity in the slave trade, both sparked outcry. In the United States, a proposed Smithsonian exhibit that discussed the horrors of Hiroshima and questioned the necessity of the bombing triggered immense protest, including statements of justification from Congress, veterans' groups, and the media.



The Enola Gay: No Apologies (U.S. National Archives)

The frequency of backlash is predictable from the standpoint of domestic politics. Many conservatives are ideologically opposed to contrition, seeing it as anti-patriotic. Opportunistic politicians will also notice that many of their constituents strenuously object to contrition: it impugns wartime leaders, veterans, and the war dead. To be sure, the German case shows that backlash to contrition is not inevitable, and scholars should investigate the conditions under which it is more or less likely. However, all of these reasons suggest that backlash will be common.

Resolving the Dilemma

If denying and glorifying the past fuels distrust and fear, yet apologies risk triggering counterproductive backlash, how should peacemakers deal with the legacy of the past? One strategy, used successfully by West Germany and France, is to construct a shared and non-accusatory narrative between nations. Rather than frame the past as one actor's brutalization of another, leaders can structure commemoration to cast events—as much as possible—as shared catastrophes. Countries can remember past suffering as specific examples of the tragic phenomena that afflict all countries, such as war, militarism, or aggression. For example, rather than lament German brutality, the settings and tone of Franco-German commemoration at Reims cathedral (1962) and Verdun cemetery (1984) highlighted the suffering that militarism and European anarchy had brought to both peoples, thus underscoring the need for European unity.

Another strategy is multilateral. East Asian leaders and activists who want to raise awareness about the World War II “comfort women,” for example, might organize a multinational inquiry about violence against women in wartime: widening the focus beyond Japan's crimes to consider similar atrocities committed by many countries in many wars. Multilateral textbook commissions—used extensively in Europe and also recently in East Asia—are another promising approach. Because such multilateral settings do not wag a finger at one country uniquely, conservatives are less likely to mobilize against them.

These approaches do have significant drawbacks. If justice is the policy goal, such approaches may be flawed. They downplay the heinous acts that occurred and divert attention from the people and governments who committed them. But, as John Kenneth Galbraith famously commented, “Politics is the art of choosing between the disastrous and the unpalatable.” These strategies are unpalatable in many ways—yet are wise from the standpoint of international reconciliation.

Jennifer Lind is Assistant Professor of Government at Dartmouth College. This essay is based on her book [Sorry States: Apologies in International Politics](#) (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008). An abbreviated version of this essay was previously published by the Foreign Policy Research Institute, www.fpri.org.

Notes

[1] *Economist*, May 13, 2006; Thomas J. Christensen, “China, the U.S.-Japan Alliance, and the Security Dilemma in East Asia,” *International Security* Vol. 23, No. 4 (Spring 1999), 49-80; Nicholas D. Kristof, “The Problem of Memory,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, no. 6 (November/December 1998); Thomas U. Berger, “The Construction of Antagonism: the History Problem in Japan's Foreign Relations,” in G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, eds., *Reinventing the Alliance: US-Japan Security Partnership in an Era of Change* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 63-90.

[2] On education see Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 26-35; Boyd Shafer, *Faces of Nationalism: New Realities and Old Myths* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1972), 198. On commemoration see John Bodnar, “Public Memory in an American City,” in John R. Gillis, ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1994), 74-89.

[3] Aaron Lazare, "Go Ahead, Say You're Sorry," *Psychology Today* Vol. 28, No. 1 (1995), 40; Michael E. McCullough, Everett Worthington, and Kenneth C. Rachal, "Interpersonal Forgiving in Close Relationships," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* Vol. 73 (1997); Nicholas Tavuchis, *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991).

[4] "ROK President Addresses Liberation Day Ceremony," SeoulKorea.net, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, South Korea, August 15, 2001.

Memories and Aporias in the Japan-Korea Relationship

Alexis Dudden

2010 is the centennial year of Japan's takeover of Korea. The history of this event is of enormous significance to the 20th century, and not simply because it garnered Japan a foothold on mainland Asia. Although Koreans see it very differently, for Japan, the 1910 annexation of Korea established Japan's entry as a power on the world stage.

This condition collapsed, of course, in total defeat in 1945. With the end of American occupation in 1952, however, Japan was supposed to have regained its independence, or so the national story goes, as do rather significant supporting international frameworks such as the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund. Yet despite the phoenix of Japan's postwar rise from the ashes, the renewed 1960 security pact with the United States — and its substantial 1990s readjustments — blatantly compromised Japan's sovereignty and extended Japan's occupation-era dependence on the United States in open and hidden ways. Many have long contended this, especially in Okinawa. Today, however, the voices questioning the nature of Japanese sovereignty come from wildly divergent corners and point in radically competing ways. The mounting crisis surrounding the relocation of American bases and marines in Okinawa as well as the revelations about the security pact's so-called secret deals between Washington and Tokyo allowing the US to bring nuclear weapons into Japan, have made all of this more salient. The problem becomes more complicated still when the question of Japan's role in Asia gets factored in, largely because of the ways in which Japan's place in Asia's twentieth century has come to be nationally remembered, rather than historically learned.

The question of how history fits in to current conditions and what to do with it is primary, despite efforts by those who manage the region's affairs to make it secondary to immediate concerns of security and economics. The success today of the US-Japan-South Korea vilification of North Korea campaign reveals this most clearly: even to suggest historical context or reason for any of North Korea's behavior makes one out as an apologist for the brutal regime. To be sure, in 2010 North Korea the leadership sustains horrendous living conditions for many of its people. Individual rights and freedoms are absent for almost all, its generals fire missiles right and left, and the country's nuclear program steals funds that should be spent feeding hungry people and fostering development. That Washington continues, however, to demand that Pyongyang do what it wants before it will even discuss a peace treaty to end the war in lieu of



Map showing events of Russo-Japanese War of 1905

the 1953 armistice means that American officials are dogmatically refusing to see the United States' place in the problem. Washington's willfully ahistorical approach to complicated issues comes at the cost of unnecessarily high security risks for the region as well as the immediate need to get food to starving people. Moreover, South Korean President Lee Myung-bak's alignment with Washington vis-à-vis relations with North Korea requires by default that Seoul at least appear to pretend to support Tokyo's refusal to engage with North Korea until the matter of the Japanese citizens kidnapped in the 1970s and 1980s by North Korean agents is cleared to Japan's satisfaction. This is the issue that has "kidnapped" Japanese politics since its 2002 public disclosure. [1] The question remains: how has a country with the immense problems that confront North Korea checkmated the nation with the most powerful military in world history and makes the descendants of Imperial Japan run to Washington to ensure that the United States bolster its myopic mantra that before all else North Korea come clean about a handful of Japanese missing to the 20th century?

Although Japanese Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio's administration has signaled shifts from the "abductees above all" approach that Japan's Liberal Democratic Party pursued from 2002-2009, to the continued bewilderment of many in Washington, Beijing, and Seoul, Japan's regional policy still champions the abductee issue in the same breath as nuclear weapons, indicative of the fact that the LDP's stance succeeded in abducting Japanese society and blinding it to the nation's past actions in the Korean peninsula. In the wake of Japan's collapsed empire, the founders of North Korea held purge trials against those among them most complicit with Japanese control. [2] "Bad Japan" stories wove North Korea together from the nation's inception in markedly different ways from the South, where, as is well known, many of those most complicit with Japanese rule glided into American-approved positions of power, the physical and phenomenological tendrils of which exist very much to this day. The centrality then, and in many respects truth of North Korea's "bad Japan" thesis rests on the stark fact that Japan kidnapped and enslaved millions of Koreans during the colonial era.

This, of course, is the deep divide between Japan and its Asian neighbors that Japan's political and business leaders have long chosen to ignore in charting the nation's place in the region. In simplest terms, the abduction story failed to impress Asians because of the still oozing human wounds of empire, war, and decades of official denial. Japan found itself isolated because of its deep and deeply-layered history with stolen bodies, giving it no choice but to take the abduction story to Washington — imploring the United States to take up its cause in the name of human rights and international security, all made easy through soft channels paid for by Japanese taxpayers via their Foreign Ministry such as the international distribution and screening of the animated "Megumi" movie. [3] Championing Japan's stance on the abduction matter against North Korea continues of course to necessitate Washington's ignoring the region's disinterest in the story, which of course only makes sense to a United States complicit in sustaining Japan's official silence on pre-1945 history as the deep structure of America's post-1945 use of Japan, its soil, its people, its wealth.

Memories of Abduction

On February 3, 2010, a United Nations' special rapporteur on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances visited Niigata, Japan to investigate the site where the most internationally known of Japan's abductees, 13 year-old Yokota Megumi, tragically disappeared on November 5, 1977 on her way home from badminton practice. At a time when the United Nations has

authorized economic sanctions against North Korea for its nuclear and conventional weapons testing, it is unsurprising that the abductee issue — especially through the lens of Megumi's story — has found such a place of prominence. At the same time, however, the Japanese government's urging resolution of this history stands in such stark contrast to its official obduracy at the UN regarding discussion of its record of involvement in the comfort women's history — Japan's state-sponsored sexual enslavement of up to 200,000 women and girls from throughout Asia between 1938 and 1945 — that it makes troubled meaning for all of this and in particular for Japan's international leadership regarding human rights among other things. What the UN abductee report will determine remains open-ended, and the introduction of an international monitoring committee may, in fact, not end up entirely to Japan's liking. This is what happened with the debacle surrounding Megumi's purported DNA evidence, the controversy which produced an extremely rare publication: a scathing editorial in the respected international science journal, *Nature* (which almost never has editorials), condemning the Japanese government for interfering in scientific investigation for crass political ends. [4]

International monitoring committees becoming involved in the abductee history — especially in Niigata — introduce echoes, however, of a separate yet overlapping history from the late 1950s. The reverberations stem from when members of the International Committee of the Red Cross visited Japan to help organize and legitimate the planned removal of Koreans in Japan to North Korea. At that time, as a result of efforts between ICRC officials and a small number of Japanese and North Korean politicians, over 93,000 people left Japan from Niigata and travelled to Wonsan, North Korea to take part in the "Great Patriation of the Fatherland" scheme that lasted from 1959 to 1984. [5]

They were never able to leave North Korea, and only today have the inner workings of this history begun to come to light, raising questions from "who knew what when?" to "did ethnic cleansing really take place in postwar Japan?" And, most pressingly, with stories from recent North Korean refugees in Japan "can anything be done to help those still alive and wanting to get out?" In short, everything about this history makes even the word "Niigata" resonate strangely in the Korean community in Japan.

When the "Patriation" program ceased in 1984, the Niigata ferry service continued as a passenger and light cargo ship. Today, however, the berth where the ship moored in Niigata sits empty. There is no tangible evidence that the ferry and the abducted Japanese are of a piece, yet when the abductee story broke in 2002 in Japan, the surrounding maelstrom swept the boat and its history into its midst. Many of the kidnap victims disappeared along the Japan Sea coast, and, moreover, Megumi disappeared within the city itself where a banner flies at all times on city hall promising never to forget her. In 2002, overnight the Niigata ferry became one with the kidnapping of Japanese, its separately sad history moot, and in this context, the city's name resonates hard now everywhere in Japan.

On December 14, 2009 in a relentless rain, about seventy people gathered at the end of a non-descript pier at the city's major downtown port to mark 50 years since the departure of the first ferryboat leaving Japan for North Korea. In 1959, 975 people boarded a Soviet-flagged ship that day and sailed from Niigata to great fanfare and publicity. 92,365 others would follow, with most leaving Japan during the program's first few years. After the program ended, the service continued regularly, and throughout — first with the Soviet "Kurilion" and then the North Korean "Mangyonbong" — the ships coursed a well-known route.



The ferry Mangyongbon lying idle in the North Korean port of Wonsan, May 2009

Niigata was, after all, the main exit port for Japanese settlers and soldiers to Manchuria, the "Gateway to Asia" as it became known. Many followed the Joetsu trunk line from Tokyo in their travels, a new route which opened for business on September 1, 1931 two weeks before the Mukden incident. Hundreds of thousands would follow its path from Tokyo to Niigata and on to Wonsan, Ch'ongjin, or Najin on the northeastern Korean coast and then move inland. Niigata's ferry routes thus became the vital connection between the empire's center (Tokyo) and "Shinkyo" (New Capital) of Manchukuo, as Changchun was expectantly renamed, and, in 1938 when a Japanese joint commercial venture launched the "Gassan" liner from Niigata harbor,

it was the largest ship on the Sea of Japan, moving thousands upon thousands back and forth.

After August 1945, some Japanese fleeing the continent arrived in Japan via Niigata, but most Koreans leaving Japan travelled from Shimonoseki in the south to Busan. The Americans ran the show, after all, and Busan was under their command, while Wonsan was not. The first regular service to resume between Japan and northern Korea was the 1959 repatriation ferry, meaning that it began a month before the revised US-Japan Security Treaty was signed, the terms of which gripped Japan in America's anti-communist embrace even more tightly than the earlier version. As a result, the Niigata boat to North Korea was a perpetual question mark coursing back and forth atop water effectively owned by the United States Navy with American and Soviet submarines chasing each other underneath. Throughout most of this time, the ship to North Korea itself drew little reaction in Japan — negative or otherwise — although the Niigata-Japanese North Korean Return Assistance Association tried hard to give it a place of pride, regularly touring the city's schoolchildren and ladies' associations aboard the ship, holding festive and well-documented parties for those leaving Japan (recording the restaurant, the menu, who attended, whether they wore traditional Korean dress or Western fashions), and marking the ship's commemorative moments (10,000th passenger, 50,000th, 15th year) with banners and posters hung throughout the city's downtown area. In short, no one in Niigata appeared to feel that there was anything to hide or fear about any of it.

Noticeably, conditions changed as superpower tensions escalated regional alarms during the 1980s which helped terminate the exodus scheme, meaning also that the ferry then became the sole means by which people of Korean ethnicity in Japan could visit North Korea or send word or money to relatives there. Gradually, the ship itself drew more notice, often unwelcome, and at the end of the 1990s when Kim Jong-il launched a series of missile tests in the Sea of Japan, the



Sailing to Manchukuo (poster)

ferry, its passengers, and its supporters became targets of open attack, including the face-slashing assault of Niigata Governor Hirayama Ikuo in December 1998. [6] The abduction revelations upped the ante even further, and extremist-backed or led protests frequently interrupted the ferry's service, which finally shut down after North Korea's July 2006 missile test. Today, a bold-faced sign at the immigration bureau at Niigata's airport states that ballistic missiles are responsible for discontinued passage between the countries, although popular perception throughout Japan would add a large dose of the abductee story, making any remembrance of the ferry's history difficult to carry off.

We Won't Forget the Day

At December 2009's "We Won't Forget the Day" ferry commemoration, almost all of this history was absent. In contrast to the citywide celebrations that launched the first ship in 1959, a somber resolve prevailed at its 50th anniversary with the ceremony's registered participants filing through the dock's security gate for an ID check. Only a handful of locals were there, most of the participants having traveled together from Tokyo that morning by train (on the Joetsu line). They would return there immediately afterwards. Things began with a small woman in her 60s speaking eloquently through angry tears in the slanting rain about her lost family and her lost existence. The event's organizer read from a letter he had delivered to the cabinet minister responsible for abduction matters, Nakai Hiroshi (born, incidentally, in Changchun), who would hand it to Prime Minister Hatoyama. Three large and powerfully voiced monks intoned the dead and missing, standing at the edge of the pier to get closer to North Korea to do so, and a famous dancer from South Korea exorcised the space, accompanied by plaintive drums and flutes. Everyone threw white carnations into the sea, and I prayed alongside a friend for his father's brother who might still be alive but no one really knew.

The simplicity of the hour-long event notwithstanding, the group's letter to Prime Minister Hatoyama tells a history that departs so radically from the only narrative in play today — the abductees as the sum total of Japan's relations with North Korea — that it will be difficult if not impossible for it to gain the social traction its contents require. The letter nonetheless demonstrates sharp political acumen, honed by profound worry and daily ostracism. It reveals, too, how official Japan has long failed its people:

To: Prime Minister Hatoyama Yukio

Subject: Japanese-North Korean Diplomacy for the Return of "Japanese Wives"

On December 14, 1959, the first repatriation ship departed Niigata harbor for Wonsan, North Korea carrying 975 Korean residents of Japan and their Japanese wives. From that day until 1984, a total of 93,340 people crossed the Sea of Japan as part of the North Korean Repatriation Plan. 50 years have passed, and those who have returned are involved in helping others come to Japan. At present, about 200 have fled North Korea and have entered Japan, including 6 Japanese wives...For the most part, the 1831 Japanese wives, who were never allowed back to Japan and were forced to become North Korean comrades despite having Japanese citizenship, have died meaningless deaths without having their wish fulfilled to return to their ancestral land.

...We seek the release of all those trapped in North Korea as a result of the repatriation program. At present, over 100 "Japanese wives" are thought to be alive in North Korea.

They are in their 70s and 80s and believe that, "While we are alive, the Japanese government will surely help us." ...For Japan to proceed successfully in steps to normalize with North Korea it must first guarantee the safe departure of all Japanese there. Once North Korea has guaranteed the departure of all Japanese, then we will resolve the Japanese abductee problem together with the "Japanese wives" problem.

The world is outraged by the North Korean abduction of Japanese. The international community's concern would only heighten if it were made aware of the "Japanese wives" whom North Korea has refused to let leave for 50 years. There is but a little time left for those who are still alive...This is an urgent matter of protecting Japanese people.

Sakanaka Hidenori, Chair

Japan Immigration Policy Institute

Sakanaka and those who gathered with him in Niigata could have sent a very different letter to Hatoyama. They could have demanded, for example, full disclosure from the Japanese government about its role in the repatriation scheme which worked to shed Japan of roughly one hundred thousand people of Korean origin that officials saw as socially undesirable. Or, they could have demanded a full accounting of how those who went to North Korea from Japan got to Japan in the first place. They could have alluded to promises that returnees would be allowed to travel freely to Japan after three years. They could also have asked the government to investigate the ongoing attacks against their members.

All these demands would have fallen flat, however, and would have further marked those determined to remember the ferry's history as not Japanese. Tellingly, the group can bring its history into the open by focusing on the unquestionably Japanese victims — and elderly female ones at that — of what any United Nations investigating committee would surely determine to be numerous and repeated violations of individual rights involving the governments of North Korea and Japan (and perhaps the International Committee of the Red Cross which supported the repatriation), mentioning also a desire to "seek the release of all those trapped." The problem, of course, is that should the government of Japan address this fact of its 20th century experience as history, it would simultaneously have to address the very demands that the group did not mention, those pertaining to the rights of Koreans repatriated from Japan. On top of that, it would find itself doing what history does: leading from one story to another until a radically different 20th century came into being as the nation's modern past in which, among other things, Japan's post-1945 economic prowess cannot be severed from its pre-1945 history of slave labor.

The only language spoken at the ferry's memorial event was Japanese, several "aigos" from the Korean shaman dancer notwithstanding. The people, however, were remarkably diverse by Japanese standards bringing much of the problem of being Japanese to the fore, made all the more poignant by the group's pleading for their collective past through the bodies of the Japanese wives caught in its midst, women who were mothers to several participants. Gathered on Niigata's cold pier were resident Koreans of Japan naturalized as Japanese, resident Koreans of Japan with well-known ties to South Korea, and resident Koreans of Japan with well-known ties to North Korea, as well as resident Koreans of Japan with ties to both who could be described only, however, as apolitical, making it clear why many Koreans in Japan prefer now to be called "Corean" rather than "resident" this or that. There were some very prominent Japanese activists, and professors, and the very big monks as well. I was there, and there were also some shy young

women who stood out because they were much more conservatively dressed than others their age in the mix. Finally I understood. These women had escaped North Korea; some were the children of returnees, and others were their friends.

Likely this all is part of the genius of the memorial event's organizer, Sakanaka Hidenori. Long a renegade within the Ministry of Justice, Sakanaka retired in 2005 after 35 years of distinguished government service during which he worked extensively with Japan's Korean community. This, he maintained in the letter to Hatoyama, gave him the authority to speak for the group, especially when combined with his current efforts on behalf of North Korean refugees in Japan. His preference for inclusive action and for keeping things focused on the present is one with his 2005 book: *Immigration Battle Diary*. [7] In that, his answer to today's "whither Japan?" question is simple: it is either a "small" or "big" country, depending entirely on what its leaders decide immediately for the meaning of being Japanese which they must decide solely through immigration policy. Labeled "Doomsday" by some, Sakanaka's explanation is clear: a "small" Japan is a pleasant if inward-looking country 50 years hence that leaders have allowed to decline along current reproduction rates from its present 127 million to 80 million people: read something sort of Scandinavian with miso soup and yakizakana for supper, helping out with victims of the occasional earthquake. "Big" Japan is equally unambiguous: 50 years from now it is a growing and vibrant nation of 180 million with a solid and forward-looking global posture. To achieve the latter (which is, of course, how many who advocate a "strong" Japan already describe it) Japan must radically change the country's immigration and naturalization policies and accept no fewer than 20 million people from outside and make it socially possible for them to be Japanese (which is, of course, not at all how anyone already describes Japan). In short, Sakanaka argues that Japan's leaders must make social integration possible for those who differ from pre-conceived and widely fostered ideas of Japanese-ness and reorganize what Japanese society has come to believe about being a national body. This, in no small part, rests on knowing and coming to grips with Japan's recent past.

The Japanese Emperor and Korea

In September 2009, South Korean President Lee Myung-bak marked the Japanese Democratic Party's history-making win by inviting Emperor Akihito to Korea during the 2010 centennial as well as extending his congratulations to Hatoyama Yukio. Lee was reiterating many earlier invitations to Akihito — begun first in 1986 when he was crown prince reciprocating his hosting then-President Chun Doo-hwan — as well as trying to plumb the meaning of recently elected Prime Minister Hatoyama's much vaunted East Asian Community.

Two things are pretty clear as far as Korea and the emperor of Japan go: first, Korean officials see no reason why Korea should be second string to China in terms of hosting an imperial visit, which has remained the case since 1992. Second, it has been pretty clear to all Koreans since the joint World Cup soccer games where the emperor stands vis-à-vis the prime minister regardless of the constitution, making the emperor's place in the reconciliation problem clear. I'm not a rabid soccer fan, but the late spring day in 1996 when the success of Japan and Korea's joint bid for the World Cup hit the newsstands remains a strong memory. Walking through the Ikebukuro train station in Tokyo after six or seven hours in the Rikkyo University archives, I was besieged by a swirl of characters crossing the evening papers:

"Japan/Korea/Emperor/Ceremony/Assassination." I had to stop walking to decide whether I was in 1910 or the then present and then read to understand that local elation over "winning" the

soccer bid for Japan was tempered by the "what to do with the emperor?" problem in its mix. How could the emperor attend the head of state functions in Korea given the countries' open animosities? In 2002, Japan's Foreign Ministry finally said no to the emperor attending the opening ceremonies in Seoul — what with then Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro's love of Yasukuni derailing Japan and South Korea's expensively planned "Year of Friendship." Nevertheless, during the closing ceremonies outside Tokyo the emperor and empress joined South Korean President and Mrs. Kim Dae-jung in the head of state box while Prime Minister Koizumi sat several rows back with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroder (whom Koizumi asked at the last minute to join him lest he appear so hopelessly second fiddle and dateless to the global viewing audience).

The 100th anniversary of Japan's failed colonization of Korea brings to the fore numerous problems of Japanese national definition wrapped into histories of wasted lives and uncertainty over whom to describe as Japanese. It is important to recall that an argument over the Japanese emperor launched the modern history of involvement between Japan and Korea, and, arguably, Japan's imperialist expansion writ large. The 1873 political turmoil in Japan — splendidly known as the "Conquer Korea Debates" — revolved around competing Japanese views over how to respond to Korea's refusal to accept Japan's claim that the newly installed Emperor Meiji was now on a par with China's Son of Heaven and was, therefore, above the lesser Korean king (who had been the Tokugawa shogun's equal until Meiji's emissaries arrived with all this information). The 1910 annexation of Korea came about as a result of how this debate played out over the next few decades, bringing us to the centennial today.

In January 2010, a low-budget theater production in Tokyo gave new life to the late 19th and early 20th century decades. Before heading into the terrain occupied today by people wanting to take Japan backwards, it is important to notice how a very different small minority in Japan began this anniversary year thinking about rulers and ruled and the history of Japan and Korea. From January 20-24, the long-established Korean troupe, Shinjuku Ryozanpaku, staged a performance of Korean playwright O T'aesok's 1994, "Toraji" (Bellflower) in a basement black box in Shinjuku called the Tiny Iris. The play tracks Japan's takeover of Korea between an incident in 1882 which brought Japanese and Chinese troops into the Korean court right up through the 1910 annexation, centering its action on the court and especially the assassination of Queen Min and the forced abdication of Korean Emperor Kojong, and, ultimately the surrender of the royal seals to the victorious Japanese colonizers. In short, for Koreans it is a play-by-play of schoolchildren's required history. The sheer ingenuity of the Ryozanpaku performance lay in doing it in Japan, in Japanese. The troupe's customary pyrotechnics and more-naked-than-Hair scenes were great, but in many ways, the real marvel was telling the story at all. The audience hung on every turn.

Shinjuku Ryozanpaku's Director Kim Sujin has long produced avant-garde stories of the interwoven realities of Japanese and Korean modern lives. The spectacle's final thrust made real the two parts of today's whole with simple brilliance. The increasingly feckless and increasingly paranoid Kojong despairing of his disappearing powers in Japanese in a cramped, Shinjuku basement blended the history that brought down Korea in 1910 into Japan in 1945 when Hirohito grasped at his own throne even as advisers urged him to abdicate. [8]

The Neonationalist response to Koreans in Japan: The Zaitokukai

Cartoonist/pundit/self-aggrandizer Kobayashi Yoshinori is not news, nor is he the intellectual lynchpin of those who want a "strong" emperor in Japan today. Yet he has mass appeal, and he has now raised a generation in his wake who have either learned history from him, or, worse, have learned to tell history the way he does because it works and it sells. Kobayashi in January 2010 joined today's "Strong" emperor/"No emperor to Korea!" moment with a vengeance in a special series for the self-described "International Intelligence" magazine, *Sapio*, whose circulation of roughly 200,000 copies for the January 2010 issue was, it is safe to say, many times greater than the 200-300 people who saw "Toraji" that same week. [9] Only several frames in to a 25-page spread, Kobayashi makes his Tea Party for a King pitch, sliding his self-portraited image into the middle of a tirade over the unprecedented (in Kobayashi's eyes) political use of the emperor in December 2009 with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, demanding, "Are we going to put up with this?" No, of course "we" aren't! "Someone who doesn't know his history and feels no shame would make the emperor his private possession out of pure lust for power. And this deranged person, (DPJ party leader) Ozawa Ichiro, is now trying to get the emperor to go to Korea! We must put a stop to this!"

More worrisome than Kobayashi, however, is a young man named Sakurai Makoto (nom de guerre, Doronpa). Sakurai grew up under Kobayashi's cloud, and emerged on his own by capitalizing on Yamamoto Sharin's "Hating Korea" manga series (2005-present), publishing a separate "Hating Korea" comic. [10] Its drawings and text aim for an even lower common denominator than Kobayashi and Sharin combined, yet Sakurai/Doronpa aspires higher off the page. [11] On June 9, 2007, he established the Citizens League to Deny Resident Foreigners Special Rights (the Zaitokukai). Among other things, the Zaitokukai urges open violence against Koreans in Japan (and to a lesser degree Chinese and others) in an extensive set of YouTube postings and regular demonstrations in front of government buildings, newspaper offices, the Korean embassy and consulates, as well as through neighborhoods and in front of schools. The group and its leader's significance must not be measured by the several thousand who count themselves as contributing members throughout Japan but rather in their publicly issued orders for violent insurrection and/or military action (depending on whether the enemy is within or without), which together define the "Zaitokukai" as Japan's fiercest and most dangerous hate group today.

As the group's self-posted videos on YouTube demonstrate to anyone with access to the internet (the police, for example), Zaitokukai members openly threaten those they view as impediments to their vision of Japan. Unsurprisingly, they target individuals and groups who are weak within the Japanese legal system by stalking and harassing them, and trying customary bullying tactics of getting the victim to throw the first punch. Today, they most viciously zero in on a small group of elderly ethnic Koreans living in an enclave north of Kyoto, called Utoro. The 200 or so remaining residents of Utoro descend from more than 1300 Koreans brought there in 1940 by the Japanese government to build a military air strip that was abandoned in 1945. The forsaken Koreans turned to the land first to sustain themselves, which the auto giant Nissan technically owned, first as a wartime airplane manufacturer then refashioned for car manufacture, where many of Utoro's residents also worked. The company sold the land in 1987, and the new owner demanded the residents' eviction from the 5 acre plot where they had long lived, filing a series of lawsuits that wound up in 2000 in Japan's supreme court which declared Utoro's inhabitants

illegal squatters without rights or papers. The aging Koreans stayed on, vowing to honor their parents' hardship and to "die under their houses" if need be. [12]

For Zaitokukai members, many of whom were not born when the lawsuits began in 1987, Utoro's residents are obvious prey, and in a December 2009 video clip, they show others what to do: to the tune of "Clap for the Killers," local Zaitokukai leaders block out the area on a map and distribute threatening leaflets into residents' mailboxes in ways shockingly evocative of the Hitler Youth brigades or the American Ku Klux Klan. This apparently proud display of what to do with the internet only builds, however, on a series of videos posted in December 2008 in which Doronpa leads his followers as well as some of their very young children through the residents' neighborhood armed with their constitutionally guaranteed rights to wave the now national flag and speak freely, even hate speech yelled through megaphones. [13]



Kim Kyo-il, leader of the Utoro protesters, reads a petition to South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun in Seoul in 2007



Doronpa

Consistent with the group's general belief that Koreans are to blame for all things wrong in Japan, the Zaitokukai stands ardently opposed today to any talk of the Japanese emperor visiting Korea. Their "No emperor to Korea!" rallying cry is, moreover, tightly wound into the most provocative area of relations with Korea, at least for Koreans: the territorial dispute between the countries about islands known in Japanese as Takeshima and in Korean as Dokdo. The Zaitokukai's call was loudly proclaimed at its February 2010 demonstrations throughout Japan: "No emperor to Korea! Take back Takeshima from Korea by force! Protest now! The Japanese government must take back Takeshima by force and even military power! The emperor will go to Korea only when Takeshima is returned!" One immediately noticeable feature of the Zaitokukai cry is tying the emperor of Japan to the mundane world of territory. Across time in the place now called Japan, the term "tenno" noticeably differed from other rulers (especially,

eventually from European counterparts) in never having specific lands attached to the title. Conditioning an imperial visit to Korea today on Japan's assured control of the disputed islands blends together the broader passion in current Japanese nationalism to expand its borders and to have Japan take proactive military action. Combined, this would bring the emperor and Japan back to the Prussian model so helpful in the 1870s.

Defining the National Space

The most potent feature across a wide spectrum of Japanese discussions about the nation today is, however, neither the emperor nor who or what is Japanese. The strongest binding force is a focus on space, on the shape of Japan. A century ago, Japanese leaders engaged Japan with

imperialism's "Great Game" and conquered overseas territories to expand the island nation into a continental empire. Now, however, Japan's definers seek instead to emphasize the nation's reach in terms of the oceans that surround it. In 1952, the American-drawn San Francisco Treaty at once redefined Japan as a sovereign nation (contingent, of course, on the presence of American troops and bases) and redrew the country's limits to roughly the same dimensions that had appeared on maps when Admiral Perry set sail in 1852, save for the sure addition of Hokkaido. During the following decades of economic rebirth, for many the country's island nature became useful for explaining Japan's catastrophic defeat in 1945, the nation's inherent weakness. Recently, however, the idea of island Japan as a source of strength has re-emerged, the trick now being to secure solid and maximized definitions for the oceans around it, odd as it is that international law defines water as territory. A preoccupation with national space thus has surfaced, with some taking pride that Japan's territorial oceans make it the world's 6th or 7th largest country, and others pleased that a stretched out measurement of the coastline would make Japan one and a half times bigger than America and twice as large as China. [14]

Interesting as all of this is conceptually, at once it produces two immediate and difficult side effects during this centennial year of Korea's annexation: first, time, that other all-important component in defining a nation, has fallen to a distant second place, compounding problems in exploring Japan's past productively for the present. Second, the volatile territorial dispute over the islands contested with Korea lands right in the middle of this condition, meaning that those who champion the islands' cause for Japan make their arguments through the lens of the nation's currently perceived boundaries, regardless of the history involved. Simply put, the islands are a speck of territory that the American architects of the San Francisco Treaty intentionally left undesignated — being useful to America's then-present interests in the middle of the Korean War — and although the methods of South Korea's 1952 occupation of them was of a piece with its dictatorial practices, Japan's claim now that they became Japan's in 1905 and therefore are Japan's today is bizarre, given to the disposition of the rest of the empire. [15]

On December 25, 2009, Japan's Ministry of Education presented its high school curricular guidelines for history and geography. It was easy for reporters to know where to look for a hook because Tokyo's middle school guidelines had generated substantial fracas with Seoul when they were released in 2008, firmly declaring for the first time that the islands are "under Japanese sovereignty." For all the widely touted era of new politics that Hatoyama's victory ushered in, how would his government handle this matter? Surely it would have to differ from the LDP's position which had hardened perceptibly beginning in 2005 with then-education minister Narayama Nariaki's provocations and the leadership's open approval of a holiday commemorating the islets' incorporation into the long-vanished Japanese empire. What would the DJP do?

In an act of brazen avoidance, Japan's new high school curricular outline was blank on this hottest of all topics between Japan and Korea. On December 25, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirano Hirofumi worked to dispel notions that Japan's new leadership based its decision to write nothing on fears of Korean reaction: "These are textbooks for Japan," he said, "Diplomatic considerations are irrelevant." [16] Education Minister Kawabata Tatsuo denied that there was anything to notice, adding, however, that, "Takeshima is our territory," while his Vice Minister Suzuki Kan gave the eyebrow raising explanation that the word "Takeshima" (a two character Chinese compound) was not included in the published guidelines to make it shorter and more open to teachers' discretion. Kan's assertion is transparently disingenuous as the "Hoppo Ryodo," the

islands disputed with Russia that are four characters long are included, and, moreover, the guidelines instruct teachers to "continue teaching the same content that students learn in middle school" whose curriculum describes the islands as Japan's. Editorials flowed in the following days, with the Yomiuri dropping the gauntlet, "Do it, call it Takeshima," and the Asahi demurring, "Let's hope for good teachers". [17] Meanwhile, Mizoguchi Zembe, the fiery governor of Shimane Prefecture which claims the islands, repeatedly shook his head to reporters, growling into television cameras that it was "extremely regrettable" to fail to mention Takeshima's name, and South Korea's Foreign Ministry summoned the Japanese ambassador for a reprimand over the islands' lack of mention as Korean territory. [18]

On February 22, 2010, the city of Matsue on the Japan Sea coast in southwestern Japan celebrated the 5th anniversary of "Takeshima Day." Matsue is the capital of Shimane Prefecture, one of Japan's poorest and traditionally most parochial regions. Regardless of national or international maps or realities, Shimane has continued to claim the islands in Japan's name throughout the post-1945 era based on their 1905 incorporation into Japan's then-growing empire. Never mind how the war turned out. During the past decade or so, Shimane's calls that Tokyo assert itself more proactively over the question of these islands have continued to intensify, and to celebrate the 1905 centennial, the regional assembly launched a holiday in its name. Like various Dokdo counterparts in South Korea, it also set up an archive in a government office building and established a research group to gather materials to prove the islands Japanese. On "Takeshima Day" 2010, in revealing parallels to December's din over the high school guidelines, Governor Mizoguchi gave a thumping speech urging Japanese all over the country to pay as much attention to the islands as Koreans: "We cannot let our consciousness of the islands fail us!!" while the Tokyo headquarters of the LDP, out for blood in the July 2010 elections, dispatched a record ten of its parliamentarians to promise that the islands were "Japan's." The pointed-tongued politicians stood on top of a little white LDP van covered with the party's losing 2009 slogan, "First things first: the economy!" and complained about Hatoyama's handling of Korean affairs and Okinawa in the same breath. For its part, the ruling DJP steered clear of town that day, even though party leader Ozawa Ichiro had been there the day before, and the Foreign Ministry declined invitations to various ceremonies. The same South Korean parliamentarian who several years ago tried to cut off his finger in protest of the Shimane holiday arrived with several friends and his finger intact and a banner to proclaim that "Dokdo has always been Korean territory and always will be!" while a resident Korean group organized a teach-in at a nearby school, and a joint group of Japanese and Korean pacifists prayed for peace at nearby Izumo Shrine.

Japan's national, regional, and local newspapers and television reported all of this while making little or no mention of the most obvious feature of "Takeshima Day" on the ground: the appearance of 6 or 7 far-right political parties and splinter groups circling town in their hate trucks for two days, snarling traffic and making lots of unpleasant, noisy demands. White-helmeted policemen had not been prepared to greet their arrival on February 21st but were positioned early in the morning of the 22nd at each corner of the historic castle town's outer moat traffic loop. When the little red tourist trolley bus that my son and I rode to sightsee that day rounded the corner in front of the prefectural assembly building, the 20 or so other passengers let out a collective, "Ahhhh." Seeing the large white and blue police bus with flashing red lights surrounded by riot police, I thought, "Good. People do care about this," only immediately to understand that the group's "Ahhhh" came from seeing the beautiful 1611 castle in the distance.

Meanwhile, my 4 year-old was clearly and loudly exclaiming, "Mom, look at all the cops! Look at the bus! Mom! MAMA! Look at the cops! Why are they here?" Why indeed and how was it possible for everyone else on the bus to look silently through the present and acknowledge only a perfectly manicured past?

Later that day, the Tokugawa-era costumed tour boat driver gave me some hope. Our boat went under the town's main bridge just as one of the hate group's trucks cruised overhead in full shriek. Their noise drowned him out, and good former school teacher that he was, he paused to let them finish. When our boat and their truck were free of each other, he said simply, "Well, it is Shimane Prefecture's Takeshima Day. The right wing guys show up because they can," and he went back to his stories and songs. Later on, however, a deeper meaning of this problem revealed itself. My son and I were looking at exhibits and buying books at the Takeshima Archive Office when an unusually loud hate truck slowed to a menacing crawl in front of the building and bellowed, "YOU IDIOTS! YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED! YOU SELL AWAY JAPAN WITH YOUR INCOMPETENCE! YOU IDIOTS!" The archive staff was visibly shaken, with some jumping up from their desks and rushing to the room's back windows. Two young employees walked around the counter to stand next to my son, who excitedly watched the unmarked, all-black bus through the office window. They told me they had children the same age and just wanted to hold his hand.



Rightists march

On March 29, 2010, Japan's Ministry of Education issued the nation's elementary school guidelines which named the islands Japanese. [19] South Korea's Foreign Minister protested again, while Prime Minister Hatoyama remained silent. It is doubtful that Hatoyama is planning a surprise 100th anniversary present come August's centennial day as polls indicate that his popularity has fallen sharply. His transparent anxiety over naming the nation's territorial boundaries with regard to Korea, however, does nothing but lay bare the problem that a leader of Asia's most powerful democracy cannot utter a word about these empty rocks because they are now such perilous markers in the contest to tell

the region's 20th century, on which the stability and potential of the 21st century would appear to rest. Any mention in Korea's favor would call Hatoyama's Japanese-ness into question and likely cost his party the summer's upper house elections needed to make many of his plans bear fruit — especially the social-economic and environmental ones — while any definitive claim of them for Japan would derail the nervous calm in place this centennial year which is vital to make his hoped-for East Asian Community take form. Problems with Washington moreover make many openly question whether he is even running the country. At the same time, from the other side of Japan, Shimane prefecture has discovered value for itself by trying to give national meaning to a prideful fight with Korea in conjunction with a small number of extremists seeking to secure Japan's boundaries through an imaginary past in which they stand together with the emperor into the future. Again, the extremists' numbers are small, yet when helmeted police spend public money to protect democratically elected officials who agree with them over a common cause —

"Takeshima is Japan's!" — things are openly out of sorts in Japan today and, arguably, dangerously so.

The author wishes to thank Mark Selden, Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Kimie Hara, Mark Caprio, and Robert Palm for their careful readings and thoughtful suggestions.

Alexis Dudden is Associate Professor of History and Director, Foundations of Humanitarianism Program, University of Connecticut and a Japan Focus Associate. She is the author of [Troubled Apologies Among Japan, Korea, and the United States](#) and [Japan's Colonization of Korea: Discourse and Power](#).

Notes

- [1] Richard Samuels, "Kidnapping Politics in East Asia," Working Paper, Center for International Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Spring 2010; also essential, Gavan McCormack, ["History Too Long Denied: Japan's Unresolved Past and Today's North Korea Problem"](#).
- [2] Charles Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945-1950*, New York: Columbia University, 2004.
- [3] "Megumi" on [YouTube](#).
- [4] Nature, March 17, 2005.
- [5] Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Exodus to North Korea: Shadow's From Japan's Cold War*, 2008; also, [The Forgotten Japanese in North Korea: Beyond the Politics of Abduction](#).
- [6] Hirayama Ikuo, *Watashi wa Konna Shiji ni Naritakatta*, Tokyo: Asahi, 2009
- [7] For a partial translation, see [this link](#).
- [8] Herbert Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*, New York: Harper Collins, 2000.
- [9] Sapio, January 27, 2010.
- [10] Rumi Sakamoto and Matthew Allen, ["Hating 'The Korean Wave'" Comic Books: A sign of New Nationalism in Japan?](#)
- [11] See Itagaki Ryuta's articles in Asahi Shimbun, March 15-17, 2010; also, Nikkan Aratana Hajimari no 20sho, Tokyo: Iwanami, 2007.
- [12] See, Japan Times, July 12, 2005. ; ["Koreans in Utoro Call for Home Country's Help"](#) Korea Times, July 27, 2007.
- [13] [Link 1](#); [Link 2](#).
- [14] Funabashi Yoichi, Asahi Shimbun, July 2006; Matsumoto Kenichi, *Kaigansen no Rekishi*, Tokyo: Mishimasha, 2009.
- [15] See Kimie Hara, *Northern Territories, Asia-Pacific Regional Conflicts and the Aland Experience: Untying the Kurillian Knot*, New York: Routledge, 2009.

[16] Asahi Shimbun, December 25, 2009, evening edition; also Asahi Shimbun, December 26, 2009.

[17] Yomiuri Shimbun, December 28, 2009; Asahi Shimbun, December 27, 2009.

[18] Asahi Shimbun, December 26 and 27, 2009; Hankyoreh, December 26 and 27, 2009.

[19] Asahi Shimbun, March 30, 2010.

The Comfort Women, the Asian Women's Fund and the Digital Museum

Wada Haruki

Translated and introduced by Gavan McCormack

Introduction

Six decades have passed since the end of the Pacific and East Asian War and the collapse of the Japanese colonial empire, but responsibility for colonialism, war, and their accompanying atrocities, continues to agitate Japan and East Asia. It is widely believed that Japan refuses to apologize or face the truth of history, much less compensate victims. Such a belief is, however mistaken, although it is true that it took five decades before any such steps were taken and the adequacy of the steps taken has been debated and continues to be debated.

In 1995, the Murayama government expressed its "deep remorse" over colonialism and aggression, apologized in particular to the victims of the imperial Japanese forces so-called "Comfort Women" system of sexual slavery, and set up a fund, the Asian Women's Fund, through which between then and 2007 it offered apologies, monetary compensation, and health and welfare support by way of atonement to the surviving victims, now elderly women in their 70s and 80s. The Asian Women's Fund formula did involve apology and compensation, but it did not satisfy those who insisted that the Japanese state had to admit its criminality, apologize unequivocally, and provide compensation direct from the Japanese state. The Fund was a joint project of the "people of Japan" and the Government, and it assumed moral, but not legal responsibility. Many therefore denounced it as a devious attempt to evade full and proper legal responsibility, and rejected the solatium or "sympathy" payments as an inadequate substitute for full compensation by way of legal right.

Proponents of the Fund, prominent among them the author of the following introduction to the digital archives, Wada Haruki, did not disagree with the principle of the criticism, but made a two-pronged response. First, they argued that an imperfect resolution was all that was possible under the political circumstances. Far better to provide compensation and apology while the surviving comfort women were still alive, than to fail to act. Second, they insisted that responsibility should anyway, in principle, be shared between government and people, since the imperial Japanese Army soldiers could not escape or shift their personal responsibility for the crime onto the state. Wada stresses the unique character of the Fund as a joint act by state and people. In response to a national appeal, substantial funds were contributed by ordinary people, former soldiers undoubtedly among them, and the payments to individual victims were made from those funds, while administrative costs and the costs of the welfare and health support fund were paid from government coffers.

Within Japan, Wada and his associates were the butt of anger on the part of many of their hitherto allies among progressives in general, feminists in particular, for the inadequacy of their efforts, and simultaneously on the part of many right-wingers for whom it was outrageous that any responsibility at all was conceded, many of them continuing to insist that there never was any state-run "Comfort Women" system. In the region, especially South Korea, criticism on the former of these grounds forced the Comfort Women support groups to reject the Fund and the government to establish its own support fund instead.

In 2007, with the winding-up of the Fund, its resources were preserved in the form of the Digital Museum introduced in the following note by Wada Haruki, its original proponent and executive managing-director. By gathering, translating, and publishing the key documents, Fund organizers have opened their work to scrutiny while making available a valuable resource for the study of the comfort women and Japan's wartime military. (GMcC)

The term "Comfort Women" refers to the women who, during the last war, were rounded up into Japanese military Comfort Stations by the Japanese army and forced to provide sexual services for soldiers. The problem of these women, ignored or forgotten for long after the war, was taken up in South Korea in the 1990s after the democratic revolution had been carried out. Under pressure from the victims themselves who "came out" in public, the Japanese government investigated Japanese and other materials, and by the "Kono Statement" issued by Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono in 1993 expressed regret and apology, recognizing that the Japanese army had been directly involved in inflicting deep wounds on the dignity of the women, leaving them with physical and mental scars that were hard to heal. When the Murayama government was formed in 1994, the question of redress began to be considered, based on this understanding, and in July 1995 the Asian Women's Fund was established. A "letter of apology" signed by the Prime Minister and a letter from the Chief Director of the Fund was handed to each and every one of the victims who would accept it and they were given a solatium payment of two million yen contributed by the public together with between 1.2 and 3 million yen in medical and welfare support paid from government funds. This was done until 2002 for victims in the Philippines, South Korea, and Holland. In Indonesia, the project took the form of construction of welfare facilities for the aged [rather than individual apology and compensation], and with the winding up of those activities the Asian Women's Fund was dissolved on 31 March 2007.¹

The Asian Women's Fund was a Foundation set up in accord with a decision of the government of Japan but managed by volunteers who were private citizens. Because all its operating expenses were paid out of public funds, it was a quasi-public organization, whose activities were under the direct supervision of the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and were conducted in accord with government policy. The Board of Directors and Management Council, made up of private citizens, tried at all times to conduct the operation out of a concern to accomplish apology, solatium, and reconciliation.

However, from the time it was launched the Fund was severely criticized by the victims themselves and by victims' support groups in the victim countries who insisted on state redress, and also by domestic groups in Japan that took the same position. Support groups and victims in the Philippines and Holland agreed to deal with the Asian Women's Fund, though maintaining their critical stance, but South Korean and Taiwanese movement groups maintained to the end their opposition to the activities of the Fund, and involved their governments too in that opposition. The Asian Women's Fund was eventually dissolved without having been able to engage in any activities whatever on behalf of victims in China, with whose government it was unable to reach any agreement, or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with which Japan has no diplomatic relations.

¹ Statement by then Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, launching the Fund. You can view the texts in Japanese by clicking [here](#), and in English translation, [here](#).

On the other hand, from 1996 when the Asian Women's Fund began, within Japanese society there was a counter-current of opposition to the Kono statement and denial of the existence of the Comfort Women problem, and a movement grew to ignore the activities of the Asian Women's Fund and to neutralize its influence. Some ruling party politicians participated actively in it, and at times that led to serious situations. It is well known that even in 2006 a movement to reconsider the Kono statement flared up in real earnest.

Looking back over these events, the Asian Women's Fund decided to set up a digital museum, "The Comfort Women Issue and the Asian Women's Fund." The first purpose was to have the understanding arrived at by the government of Japan and the Asian Women's Fund on the Comfort Women question preserved permanently and become the basis for the way the Japanese people understand the matter. The government has released the materials it had collected on the Comfort Women problem. The second purpose was to clarify the way in which the Asian Women's Fund was initiated, how it conducted its business, and what it accomplished. To that end, by providing detailed explanation of the Fund, and preserving and publishing as much as possible of related materials, we have made it possible for them to be subjected to critical study.

This digital museum was set up fully funded by the government of Japan, and its contents have been settled on the responsibility of the Asian Women's Fund in consultation with relevant government agencies. In that sense, this digital museum can be said to have been set up in 2007 by the cooperation of government and people, just as all the activities of the Asian Women's Fund were carried out "in cooperation between the government and the people."

As well as having its Asian Women's Fund address, www.awf.or.jp, with its own server, it is also incorporated in the National Diet Library's WARP project (click [here](#) to access.)

How to Visit

Upon entering www.awf.or.jp in the internet address column, the main page of the digital museum opens. Clicking on "continue" brings up the welcome from Asian Women's Fund's Chief Director, Murayama Tomiichi. The opening is a quote from the Murayama Statement. Then, clicking "proceed" opens the Entrance Hall. You can then access any section by clicking on the appropriate catalogue entry, and by clicking at the right hand entry where it says "English" the entry will appear in English.

In the Guide at the top of Room 1 are to be found "[reference materials](#)." Clicking on this, a list of reference materials for the entries in Room 1 appears. Representative materials are displayed in Room 1 but those wishing to see the whole can refer to the number of volumes or pages of each source in the library's "Historical Materials on the Comfort Women" section. If you click on the word "English" attached to the item in question, the material on display can be read in English.

In the Guide that heads Room 2 appears the cover of a pamphlet issued by the Fund in 1997. If you click on [this](#), you can refer to representative pamphlets introducing the Fund's activities. You might want to move from browsing through the pamphlets to reading the exhibits in Room 2. Following Room 2, there is an entry "Full Text here" and if you click on that, documents held in the library's "Documents of the Government of Japan and the Asian Women's Fund" appear.

Here and there in Room 3 appears the sign "Images here." Clicking on this, you can see short video clips. (Click The section "[Voices of the Victims](#)" contains the tragic words of some of the victims, which you can hear while seeing the images. In the explanation to the section on

[“Recollections of those Connected to the Running of the Fund”](#) there is a list of Fund office-bearers. In this section you can read the recollections of those connected with the recording of the “Oral History – Asian Women’s Fund.” You can also read here in English the memoirs of women victims from Holland and the Philippines.

Room 4 displays [documents of the United Nations’ Human Rights Committee, its sub-committee for the promotion and protection of human rights, the ILO, the government of Holland, and the US Congressional Research Service, either in the English original or with English translation attached](#). Then are displayed materials concerning the suits launched by Korean, Filipino, and Taiwanese victims in the various “Comfort Women” claims. Finally, materials concerning the “Draft Law for promotion of a solution to the problem of wartime sexual forced victims problem” presented to the Diet are contained in full and the proceedings of the debates conducted in July and December 2002 are introduced.

Room 5 introduces the Fund’s [“Women’s Dignity Promotion Project.”](#) If you follow directions and click on any of the four posters in the directory, an enlarged version appears which can be downloaded.

In the “library stacks” under [“Historical Materials related to the Comfort Women,”](#) are contained first the full five volumes of “Government Investigation – Compilation of Materials related to the ‘Comfort Women’ that were published jointly by the Fund and Ryukei Shobo publishing company. In the section of government and Fund documents, there are 38 documents. The Korean text of the Prime Minister’s letter of apology is also included. The Memorandum of Understanding with the Philippines, Indonesia, and Holland, and the final report, are also included. In the section of the proceedings and materials of the Asian Women’s Fund, related materials and newspaper cuttings collected over the period of the 98 meetings of the Board of Directors are included. Some have not before been published. We believe the materials will be useful for any investigation into the activities of the Fund, and in order to understand the debate over the Comfort Women issue in Japan and elsewhere during the period of existence of the Fund.

Finally, there [is the section on the publications and videos of the Fund](#), where you can consult and download issues from No 1 to No 28 of the “Fund News,” and all periodical publications of the Fund. You can watch part 1 of the [2000 video “Our Problem Now – Women, War, and Violence, from the Asian Women’s Fund”](#) which introduces for about 30 minutes the Comfort Women problem and the activities of the Asian Women’s Fund.

It might help to better understand the whole if you were to look at this video as the last thing, after seeing the museum.

Wada Haruki is professor emeritus, Institute of Social Science, Tokyo University and a specialist on Russia, Korea, and the Korean War. He served as chief director of the Comfort Women Fund.

Neo-Nationalist Interpretations of Japan's Annexation of Korea: The Colonization Debate in Japan and South Korea

Mark Caprio¹

Did in Meiji 43 [1910] Japan annex Korea, the Empire of Korea (J. Daikan teikoku, K. Taehan cheguk)? Do you call this Japan's colonizing the Empire of Korea? If so, [Mr. Education Minister], I would like to ask, is Scotland an English colony? Please, could you answer this question for me? Are Northern Ireland and Wales English colonies? Please let me know. Before World War I, was Hungary an Austrian colony?

....

Japan did not want to annex Korea. Koreans came to Japan and asked to be annexed. This was expressed in the Korean Emperor [Sunjong]'s last Imperial Rescript, where it is written, "From now we have no choice but to request the Emperor of Imperial Japan's protection." Also, in 1910 a demonstration took place in Seoul, the capital. Those leading this demonstration were from the Advance in Unity Society (J. Isshinkai, K. Ilchinhoe). Do you know what kind of demonstration this was? It was one that requested Japan to merge with (J. gappei), or annex (J. heigō) Korea.

Why Murata Haruki, a salaryman active in a number of conservative causes,² chose August 7, 2009 and the offices of Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (*Monbukagakushō*) as the time and place to deliver his speech is not clear. His posting of a recording of his monologue on [YouTube](#), however, has drawn him an audience—as of October 28, 2010, close to 17,300 viewers—that far exceeds that of his live presentation.³ The Internet, and particularly YouTube, is one of a number of popular venues that neo-conservative groups have used to more efficiently disseminate their messages, which frequently address such Japan-Korea issues as the Dokto/Takeshima controversy, North Korea-Japan relations, and Japan-based Koreans.⁴ Their agenda is consistent: to “correct” interpretations of recent Japanese history that they deem to be unpatriotic. These presentations thus supplement other efforts by Japanese determined to write a “new history” that instills national pride to replace the shame-ridden interpretations of Japan's colonial and wartime history.⁵



Murata discussing his views opposing foreigner voting rights.

Murata's presentation, which on this occasion targeted Japan's annexation of the Korean peninsula, is simple, low cost, and easily accessed. Unlike his other YouTube uploads that capture him lecturing before an audience, neither he nor anyone else appears in this presentation. Instead, viewers are offered only the audio portion of Murata's speech, with his key points summarized in white Japanese text against a black background. Choruses of gruff jeers from his cohort enliven his rather bland diatribe. His message on this particular day, centering on the nature of Japan's occupation of Korea, was first that it represented a case of annexation (as opposed to colonization), and that it was the Koreans who requested a reluctant Japanese to

annex their country.

Close geographic proximity, a history of checkered diplomatic relations, and an active Korean voice that protests attempts by Japanese to revise this history have encouraged neo-conservatives. Japan's incorporation of the Korean peninsula in 1910 occupies a central part of its agenda. Arguments such as those put forth by Murata demonstrate that differences of opinion stubbornly persist even after six decades of Korean liberation from Japanese rule. These differences exist primarily, but not exclusively, between Japanese and Koreans. Murata's choice of venue—a Japanese rather than a Korean government building—suggests such differences also exist among Japanese groups. His views on Japan's occupation closely resemble those frequently expressed in Japan's conservative circles: 1) the equal status of Koreans and Japanese within the empire; 2) Japanese benevolent contributions to Korea and the Korean people; and 3) Korean support for Japan's annexation of their country. Additionally, Murata joins others in rejecting charges that Japan committed crimes against the Korean people, such as its campaign to encourage Koreans to adopt Japanese names, its labor mobilization policies (including comfort women and forced laborers), and its ambition to “erase” Korean identity.⁶

The existence of a strong conservative voice is hardly unique to Japan, as witnessed at the gathering of European and Japanese extremist groups held in Tokyo this past August. The existence of groups jealously seeking to guard and guide the national narrative, particularly to repulse external or internal criticism of it, can be found in all modern nations. The United States, Germany and China, for example, illustrate some of the different ways in which this is manifest. Japan's case is interesting in that outside forces have joined internal pressures to criticize its attempts to “revise” its colonial and wartime history. This criticism has encouraged conservative groups to address areas of its imperial past that the histories of other former colonial powers have either omitted or glossed over. If, for example, Filipinos actively protest United States interpretations of its pre-World War II colonial occupation of their country, their demands hardly receive the attention that Koreans and Chinese gain by attacking Japan's attempts to “normalize” its historical interpretations of the less attractive areas of their past relations.⁷ Criticism of Japan's perceptions of this past, in turn, has reawakened a conservative voice in Japan that believes sovereign states reserve the right to script a national narrative that elicits pride rather than shame among its people.⁸ The resulting conflict creates a divide at a time when China, South Korea, and Japan grope for ways to promote closer ties. Questions that Murata raises in his diatribe strike at the heart of Japan's thirty-six year occupation of the Korean peninsula, and thus are too important to leave unattended. They leave us wondering why Japan finds more problematic than other former colonial powers the shedding of this history, a question which this paper will examine in its conclusion.

Was Korea Annexed or Colonized Territory?

Murata Haruki's primary goal is clear. By challenging the idea that Japan greedily colonized Korea, he aims to narrate Japan's occupation of Korea as an act of benevolent annexation, one similar to England's unions with Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland rather than its aggressive incorporation of colonies such as India and Burma (Myanmar). Drawing this distinction thus distances Japan from Europe's late-nineteenth century land grabbing activities in Africa and Asia, and defends its stated mission of freeing these enslaved peoples from oppressive Western colonial rule. Japan annexed Korea to unite Japanese and Koreans as fellow national subjects. Indeed, this “union” was welcomed by the Korean people themselves, as called for in

demonstrations organized by the Advance in Unity Society (Ilchinhoe), and indicated in the Korean Emperor Sunjong's final Imperial Rescript. One additional justification, that this marriage delivered peace to an East Asia region that had recently endured a series of wars centered on the Korean peninsula, was heard both at the time of annexation and in more recent arguments put forth by the Association to Create New History Textbooks (*J. Atarashi rekishi kyōkasho o tsukurukai*).⁹

Murata's arguments simplify rather complex issues in an extreme way and thus offer a skewed narrative of Japan's colonial history. Japanese debates on the wording of this expansionist activity, as Hilary Conroy's groundbreaking study in 1960 revealed, resulted in the creation of a new word, "*heigō*," one that Japanese saw as a softer derivation of *heidon*—to "annex, devour, [or] swallow up."¹⁰ Most Japanese writing in 1895 and 1910 would have agreed with Murata's characterization of Japan's absorption of Korea as an act of annexation. To them, the close cultural and geographic proximity that Koreans shared with Japanese required the two peoples forming a much more intimate relationship than that advanced by colonizers in distant colonies, such as between the British and Indians or Burmese.¹¹ This discourse further advised the Japanese administration to follow what Japanese perceived to be a fraternal English-Scot/Welsh example, but avoid the estranged English-Irish one. The University of Tokyo's inaugural holder of the chair in colonial studies, Nitobe Inazō, for example, wrote in December 1919, months after the Japanese battled a major challenge to their rule, that "to an English student of colonization it will be highly interesting to watch the development of Korea to a Wales or – to an Ireland."¹²

Nitobe's use of "colonization" to represent both English and Japanese incorporation of peripheral territories reflects the scholar's views on the term "*shokuminchishugi*" (colonialism). This term, he argued, could be rendered as either "to plant people" or "to increase people," depending on the initial Chinese character. In Nitobe's mind, the former more closely reflected Japan's assimilation policy, to develop the Korean people as imperial subjects.¹³ His explanation suggests that one century ago colonization and annexation shared a more synonymous meaning than Murata may be willing to accept.



Nitobe Inazō, Educator, appeared on Japan's 5000 yen bill

植民 (plant) vs. 殖民 (increase)

Others, such as the future prime minister, Hara Takashi, contrasted the English example that permitted self-rule ("colonization"), against the French (Algeria) and German (Alsace and Lorraine) examples that adopted assimilation (annexation). He advised Japan to adopt the latter policy in Taiwan.¹⁴ One of Japan's most passionate supporters of assimilation, Hara repeated this argument after Japan incorporated Korea into its empire, advising that its success hinged on the degree to which it successfully incorporated the peninsula into the archipelago's existing political, cultural, and economic institutions.¹⁵ Hara's argument followed those frequently heard at this time that divided colonial policies into the English (association) and French (assimilation) approaches, a division Murata correctly suggests to be simplistic.



Hara Takeshi, Japanese Prime Minister (1918-1921)

As suggested in Murata's monologue, the English pursued two distinct policies: an inclusive policy that it introduced in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, and segregative policies that it practiced in overseas colonies such as India and Burma. While the English government granted peoples in both cases self-rule, only its United Kingdom possessions sent representatives to the British Parliament. Hara apparently considered the United Kingdom examples to be limited in the English offering their subjects only political rights. Japan's possessions required a more comprehensive assimilation policy that integrated people politically, but also culturally and economically.

Though seen as "annexed" (J. *heigō sareta*) territory in 1910, Korea is today regarded as "colonized" (J. *shokuminchika*) territory, with some adding the qualifier that Japan's action was "unique" when compared to other colonizing powers. Only Japan incorporated territories at its periphery that were inhabited by peoples who were racially similar to the colonizers.¹⁶ Similar to Murata's reasoning, this expansionist

activity held little in common with Western colonial activities on the African continent or in present-day Southeast Asia. Rather, it better resembled a more intense form of occupation where states absorbed territories on their periphery to strengthen national security. This expansion may have been unique in its time, but not within the broader history of territorial expansion. A primary concern in such cases, which included the examples of French Algeria, German Alsace and Lorraine, and England's formation of the United Kingdom, was fear over an enemy, or potential enemy, getting there first. Conroy, for one, argues that Japan's ambitions to annex Korea were driven by this realist thinking.¹⁷ The same argument could be made for its incorporation of Ezo (present-day Hokkaido) and the Kingdom of Ryukyu (present-day Okinawa Prefecture), which acted to buffer Japan's two extremes, and later Taiwan, incorporated in part to protect Okinawa.¹⁸

Contemporary historiography on expansion appears to have drawn a rather consistent line to separate "colonized" states from "annexed" territories based on their present status, rather than their historical development. Annexed territories tend to be those that remain under the jurisdiction of the expanding entity, colonized territories being those that have for the most part successfully gained their independence. Murata's omission of Ireland, which gained its independence from England in July 1920, and his inclusion of Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, which have retained their United Kingdom membership, suggests his understanding of this distinction. His attempt to depict the Korean peninsula as an annexed territory reflects an attempt to break from it.

Perceptions on Korea's status appear to have shifted just prior to its liberation. Visitors to Korea under Japanese rule recognized the peninsula as annexed territory. California Representative Henry Z. Osborne, who led a Congressional tour in 1920 through Northeast Asia, characterized Korea in his report as "now as fixedly a part [of the Japanese Empire] as California, Arizona, and New Mexico are a part of the United States."¹⁹ Stanley K. Hornbeck, then a professor but during World War II a key advisor to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, suggested as much in 1924 when

he wrote that with Korea's incorporation into the Japanese empire it "passed" or "disappeared as a state."²⁰

Attitudes change with circumstances. Following the outbreak of the Pacific War the United States altered its thinking toward Japan's possessions. We see this revised attitude in the December 1943 Cairo Communiqué drafted by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Chiang Kai-shek, which suggested Korea was now being seen as territory that had been colonized by force. Here the Allies vowed to expel Japan "from all...territories which [it] had taken by violence and greed" while seeking to protect their own, or add new, colonial territories. This, of course, included the Korean peninsula, which was to be granted its independence "in due course," after an undetermined period of Allied occupation. May we conclude that from this time Korea's status, as viewed by outsiders, changed from being "annexed" to "colonized" territory?

"Korean People became Japanese National subjects"

I have another question. Are you familiar with what is written in the Imperial Rescript of Showa (sic) 43 [1910]? It said, "From today all Korean people of the Empire of Korea have become national subjects of Imperial Japan." From this day the 13 million poor and starving people in Korea became Japanese Imperial subjects (shinmin). From the next day they received Japanese passports. Did Indians and Burmese receive British passports? Please let me know.

[Background calls] Answer! Answer now!

....

In other words, they were the same national subjects (as Japanese).

Murata continued his diatribe by addressing an important point, that the expanding entity's image of the people it incorporated is critical to determining the territory's status as either colonized or annexed. But is his interpretation of Japanese images of Koreans correct? Did the colonizers truly view the "13 million poor and starving people of Korea" as the "same national subjects" (J. *kokumin*, K. *kungmin*) from August 1910? Murata cites the Meiji Emperor's Imperial Rescript on Annexation that, he informs, identified the Korean people as such, as evidence that Japanese viewed Koreans as such. This view reflects the idea that Koreans were permitted Japanese nationality with annexation, and had it taken from them in 1946, when they were excluded from participating in Japan's first postwar election. Both views, however, require further investigation. Murata's claim does not coincide with the published version of this document, or any other document drafted for this occasion. Nor does it reflect any of the active discussions that took place in the Japanese media around this time.

Most problematic is his claim that the colonizers regarded Koreans as "*kokumin*," in other words, as Japanese. The closest the Meiji Emperor's Rescript comes to using this word is in paragraph four, where it declared that the "people of Korea will enjoy enhanced blessings under Our immediate guardianship..." However, here the Japanese text renders "people" as *minshū*, and the Korean text *minchung* (both translatable as "people" or "masses," but—unless qualified as such—distinct from "[Japanese] national"). Resident General Terauchi Masataka's statement comes closer. He declared, "As for the people of Korea, in general, all of them shall become subjects of the Empire of Japan..." "Subjects" is rendered here as *shinmin* in the Japanese text and *sinmin* in the Korean. Indeed, the word *kokumin* in reference to Koreans does not appear in the official government texts carried by the media on this day.²¹

国民 (kokumin) vs. 臣民 (shinmin)

Murata later refers to Koreans as *shinmin*. Only he can reveal whether this shift was intentional or accidental. Unlike Murata, during Japan's tenure in Korea most Japanese writers maintained a strict distinction that separated the Japanese as *kokumin* from the Korean as *shinmin*. They included Koreans as *kokumin* only when both peoples acted as the subject of their thought, and then in the context of both peoples "becoming national subjects" (*kokuminka*). The Japanese-language media on at least one occasion explained the necessity of maintaining a distinction between the two peoples. Within a month after annexation the *Keijō shinpō*, a private Japanese newspaper in the Korean capital, argued the following:

Korea, in fact, has become Japanese territory. Koreans have become subjects of imperial Japan (*teikoku no shinmin*). But we cannot accept that the Korean, in becoming an imperial subject, has also directly become a Japanese (*Nihonjin*). Today, those who are entitled to claim the [status of] Japanese are the 50 million or so people of the homeland (*naichijin*). This does not include Koreans, who have yet to fulfill the conditions required of this status. Their ethnicity, language, and customs history (*fūzoku rekishi*) may share the same lineage, but there still remain huge gaps [between the two people]. Even if both are subjects of imperial Japan, a distinction must be maintained between Japanese and Korean.

The editorial next cited the British example. England, it claimed, did not incorporate the Irish, the Scots, or the Welsh into the United Kingdom as "English." It coined the term "British" to maintain distinction between Anglo and Celt. Japanese must also follow this example by integrating Koreans as *shinmin*, but not as *Nihonjin*.²² Other discussions carried by the Japanese media appeared to justify this distinction by arguing that while the Korean and Japanese peoples shared similar roots of origin, the separation of the two peoples over the past several centuries required that Koreans catch up to their Japanese cousins to prepare for their assimilation. Before 1938, when Korean cooperation in the war effort became critical, many writers added that the "catching up" process should not be hurried. For the foreseeable future, gradual assimilation would suffice.²³

Japan's administrative practices reflected the division of Japanese and Korean identities rather than both being considered as Japanese nationals. From the 1930s Japan-based Koreans were given voting rights in accordance with Japanese suffrage laws (males over 25 years of age), and were allowed to volunteer for military service from 1938. Military conscription began from 1944. However, those residing in Japan were not permitted to transfer their residency papers to Japan, and had to return to Korea whenever they needed to amend this document or obtain a copy of it, such as when Korean boys applied for voluntary military service. Socially, there are many examples that demonstrate the fact that Japanese considered Koreans as foreign rather than fellow countrymen and women.

Indicative of this lower status is the segregated education system in Korea. A state's education system provides a useful gauge to measure colonizer intentions due to the institution's importance in nation building, as well as in creating the level playing field needed to provide its recipients with equal opportunity in employment and social status. The structure of Japan's education policy offers a telltale sign as to the extent to which Japanese believed their own assimilation rhetoric. Required of the Government-General was a bold statement indicating its intention to provide for Koreans an education system of equal quality to the Japanese system,

followed by an education policy that developed this intention. The Government-General's statement would necessarily have included Japan's ambition to enforce compulsory education. To draw links with Meiji Restoration education policy, the administration might also have quoted the ambitious vow that Japan included in its 1872 Fundamental Code of Education, that "there shall, in the future, be no community with an illiterate family, or a family with an illiterate person."²⁴ Laying the infrastructure to accomplish this goal would, as the pledge suggested, take time. Even by the turn of the century, Japanese elementary schools enrolled by world standards a high percentage of its people (91 percent of males and 72 percent of females) but still less than its total population.²⁵ However, compulsory education remained its goal. Another institution—universal military conscription initiated in 1873—further encouraged education development as the Japanese government realized the need to fill its military's ranks with literate and patriotic men from all prefectures across the archipelago. Educating females provided children with capable instructors to direct their home education (*J. katei kyōiku*) that eased their transition into elementary school education.

Japanese articulation of Korean education policy fell far short of this intention. Like Japan's education institutions in Hokkaido, Okinawa, and Taiwan, in Korea the administration initially established a dual education system that instructed Japanese and indigenous children in separate school facilities under unequal conditions. The first Education Act, which the Government-General introduced in 1911, made no mention of this education as compulsory. Indeed, we find no such mention until 1938, the same year that the Japanese military began to accept Korean volunteer soldiers (*J. shiganhei*, *K. chiwōnbyōng*). At this time, the Government-General announced that it would advance compulsory education in Korea, but only after another decade. The administration later expedited this plan by two years, to commence in 1946, after it began drafting Korean boys into its military from 1944. Even then it estimated that the schools would be able to accommodate but 90 percent of Korean males and 50 percent of Korean females.²⁶ Different from Japan, where compulsory education was instituted prior to universal military conscription legislation, Japan promised Koreans compulsory education after it began drafting Korean youth into its military.

We see differences between Japan's peninsula and archipelago education policies in the Government-General's dual education policy that segregated the peninsula's Japanese and Korean residents,²⁷ with schools for the latter being decidedly inferior. The first Education Act limited Korean elementary school education to four years, two less than their Japanese counterparts. Korean children wishing to advance to higher education had to complete a two-year preparatory course to make up for this deficiency. Also, the Korean school curriculum, with its high concentration on Japanese language classes, offered Korean students less training in science, math, and history. The fact that most of their instruction was conducted in Japanese, a foreign language, and in classrooms holding far more students than Japanese classrooms, further inhibited Korean scholastic development.²⁸ The administration could correctly claim that time and resources prevented its providing space for all Korean children to study. The operative word here is *intention*. Unlike Japan's 1872 education legislation, prior to the outbreak of war in 1938 the Government-General spoke of, but did little to implement, a system equal to that enjoyed by Japanese *kokumin*, both those residing in Japan and on the peninsula. Without equality in education, the thought that Japanese regarded Koreans as their equals, regardless of whether they indeed issued them Japanese passports, remains remote.

Systemic inequalities between Japanese and Koreans, which appeared throughout their daily lives, did not go unnoticed. The most important critique of these inequalities appeared in an opinion paper (*J. ikensho*) submitted by Hara Takashi (Japan's Prime Minister from 1918 to 1921) in 1920. Here the statesman attacked the generally negative attitude that Japanese held toward "inferior" Koreans, as reflected in the Government-General policies that nurtured segregation. Administering a people as fools, he warned, would hardly encourage them to change their attitudes toward Japanese. Hara advised the Government-General to seek a comprehensive Japanese-Korean unity that integrated the classrooms, but also the home (through intermarriage), the neighborhood, and the work place.²⁹ His influence is reflected in the reforms that ushered in the period of "cultural rule" (*J. bunka seiji*) that characterized the 1920s, particularly those reforms that allowed Koreans to study in schools for Japanese and eased the regulations for miscegenation.

The Government-General regularly increased the number of schools on the peninsula. But, as one Korean complained, it placed higher priority on control than education. How else, Chu Yosŭp challenged, could Japan justify employing over three times as many spies as teachers (30,000 to 8,111)?³⁰ Japanese assimilation rhetoric often demonstrated its limitations, as seen in the discussion surrounding the failed efforts in 1929 to increase Korean political participation.³¹ Even as Japan prepared to initiate its most ambitious effort to unify the two peoples, the *Naisen ittai* (Japan-Korea, one body) strengthening plan of 1938, Japan's most passionate Korean supporters found room to criticize Japanese failure to follow their assimilation slogans with policies that encouraged integration.³² As Yi Sŭngu, a Korean attendee of meetings convened to evaluate the *Naisen ittai* plan, complained Japanese repeatedly advertise *Naisen ittai* but then respond to Korean efforts to identify themselves as Japanese by refusing to accept them as such then people.³³

"Korea Squeezed Japan"

One more thing, Mr. Education Minister. I need for you to tell me one more thing. After annexation, Imperial Korea's royal family remained. Japan gave to that royal family Prince Nashimoto's oldest daughter as a bride. What does this mean? Can you tell me? What does it mean for a country to give a princess to another country?

How about the Burmese? Did they ever offer a princess to the English royal family? Did the British Empire ever provide Burma with a princess?

.....

The taxes that Japan charged Koreans or this Regional Financial Grant system (chihō kōfukinsei), which amounted to more? Japan contributed much more through the Regional Financial Grant system than it took from Koreans in taxes. How can you call this a colony? It was Korea that squeezed (sakushu) Japan.

(Background calls) Return it! Give it back!

Japanese conservatives often cite the benefits that Japanese rule contributed to Korea and wonder why Koreans to this day refuse to acknowledge the more benevolent side of Japanese rule. Murata's statements reflect the disappointment that many Japanese feel when Koreans characterize this period as harsh and cruel. His attempts to counter Korean criticisms, however, either neglect entirely or offer a positive spin to the more oppressive elements of Japanese rule. What, Murata might consider, did the Korean people gain by their last crown prince being

provided with a Japanese bride? To what extent did Japan's financial assistance directly assist the Korean people under Japanese rule? To what extent did it contribute to Japanese control of land and industry in Korea?

Messages appearing on another [YouTube](#), titled in English as "The Korean File of Korea Under Japanese Rule" and in Japanese as "Nikkan heigō no shinjutsu" (The Truth Behind the Japan-Korea Annexation),³⁴ advertise this benevolent side of Japanese rule more directly. Its anonymous authors borrow a technique often employed by the Government-General that compared pictures purported to have been taken before and after Japan's arrival to document Korea's progress under Japanese rule. One example placed pictures of a one-room Korean schoolroom alongside a grand school building erected by the Japanese. This example displayed student seating arrangements, the apparently random seating arrangement of Korean students against the orderly seating patterns in Japanese schools, to illustrate progress.³⁵

Its contemporary YouTube counterpart used street scenes in a similar way. It featured a pre-colonial Korean dirt road lined with quaint traditional one-story "mushroom-roofed" houses³⁶ against the modern paved road lined with multi-storied shops of the Japanese era. Rather than oral commentary, this presentation offers bilingual (Japanese and English) text explanations to augment the pictorial essay's intended message. Scenes from pre-annexation Seoul are followed by a passage from Isabella Bird's 1897 travelogue, *Korea and Its Neighbors*, in which she describes Korea's capital as "the dirtiest city in the world." Similarly, the post-annexation pictorial essay is interlaced with captions advertising Japan's successes: Japanese policy lengthened the average Korean lifespan, and doubled its population; Japan's education system greatly improved Korean literacy rates; Koreans in China requested permission to use Japanese names to escape discrimination; there were no so-called "sex slaves" but "mere prostitutes" who answered help-wanted advertisements.

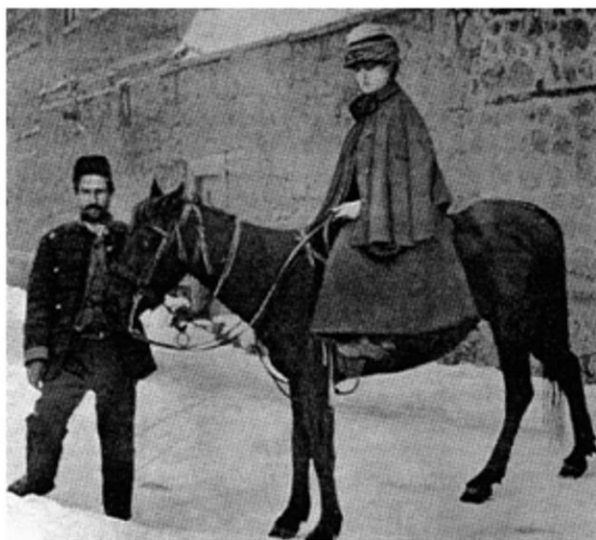
As with Murata's presentation, arguments presented in "Korean File" are misleading. Its only presenting Japanese rule as positive encourages viewers to accept their messages as the complete truth, which of course they are not. We have little reason to doubt the authenticity of the photographs themselves, for they do not appear to have been doctored. Likewise, the data that supports the presentation's messages regarding literacy, name changes, and the comfort women can also be substantiated. Verification of authenticity, however, does not necessarily eliminate questions of accuracy.

The before-and-after pictorial sequences raise several suspicions. First, the undated pictures prevent us from verifying the temporal and spatial accuracy of the comparison being made. While it is clear that the pictures depicted traditional Korean scenes, we cannot determine, for example, whether they were taken before or after Japan's arrival. Nor do they tell us whether the Korean situation improved under Japanese rule. These photos also reveal little about representation. Did they properly represent the entire system of pre- and post-annexation schools and streets, or were they simply exceptional examples of the two? Finally, displaying in simplistic terms the sequence of traditional Korean and modern Japanese aims encourages—but falls short of earning—the viewer's conclusion that Japanese annexation was essential for Korean modernization.

A more careful reading (and a more accurate citation) of Bird's travelogue, from which "Korean File" quotes to demonstrate Korean backwardness, suggests a contrary argument—that Koreans were capable of modernizing without direct Japanese rule. Her actual impressions of Seoul in

1895 read as follows: “I shrink from describing intra-mural Seoul. I thought it the foulest city on earth till I saw Peking, and its smell the most odious, until I encountered those of Shao-shing! For a great city and a capital its meanness is indescribable.”³⁷ Compliments did not easily flow from Bird’s pen, but impressions of Seoul that she registered during her visit to the Korean capital in 1897 suggest the city’s remarkable advance.

Seoul in many parts, specially in the direction of the south and west gates, was literally unrecognizable. Streets, with a minimum width of 55 feet, with deep stone-lined channels on both sides, bridged by stone slabs, had replaced the foul alleys, which were breeding-grounds of cholera. Narrow lanes had been widened, slimy runlets had been paved, roadways were no longer “free coups” for refuse, bicyclists “scorched” along broad, level streets, “express wagons” were looming in the future, preparations were being made for the building of a fine French hotel in a fine situation.... Seoul, from having been the foulest is now on its way to being the cleanest city in the Far East.³⁸



Isabella Bird, World Traveler

Angus Hamilton offered similar observations in 1905, thus suggesting that progress continued up through the time when Japan forced a protectorate relationship upon Korea.³⁹ South Korean scholars such as Yi T’aejin argue that it was Japanese interference that squelched Korean efforts to modernize.⁴⁰

The argument could be made that these improvements were only possible with foreign, including Japanese, assistance. Much of Seoul’s communication and transportation infrastructure developed from the concessions that the Korean government sold to foreigners. Yet, the same argument applies to other cases of modern development, including that of Japan. Tokyo, which bloomed from the late 1880s, received healthy assistance from foreign experts recruited

by the Japanese government.⁴¹ Assistance in this case did not presuppose occupation as a condition.

The pictorial essay also tells us little about accessibility. Who benefitted from the modern facilities that the Japanese administration introduced to Korea? “Korean File” trusts that its viewers will accept the photo and text display as evidence of Japan’s direct contribution to the Korean people. Reports on this progress, however, suggest that the Government-General favored Japanese neighborhoods over Korean neighborhoods. As discussed above, Koreans eventually did gain access to Japanese schools after 1920. Likewise, the shops situated along the modern street did solicit (and were probably dependent upon) Korean patronage. Travel literature and fiction, however, described the uncomfortable psychological effect that the two peoples experienced when crossing into the other’s zone.⁴² Koreans who crossed into modern zones did so as a minority entering a foreign culture within the borders of their own land. The Korean people may have inherited an advanced infrastructure after its August 1945 liberation from Japanese rule. But the reality of the colonial period more closely resembled a two-tier society

that segregated the majority of Koreans and Japanese both physically and psychologically, as Hara Takashi criticized in 1920. Save for the small percentage of affluent Koreans, it was Japan's sudden defeat in 1945 rather than its benevolent rule that allowed the majority of Koreans access to the advancements introduced by Japan's colonial administration during this period.

Many Koreans recognized Japanese strengths and the potential value they held for assisting Korea's modern development. The scholar Yun Ch'ihō, for example, frequently noted these strengths in his criticism of Korean shortcomings. His diary entry for May 14, 1920, is illustrative: "One of the material benefits of the Japanese rule in Korea is the good roads. They show they have brains. Yet most Koreans haven't brains enough to appreciate good roads when they see them." Yun, however, also criticized Japanese duplicity in that their policy of segregation often contradicted their rhetoric of unity. Public works projects provided one illustrative example, as Yun noted in his July 21, 1923, diary entry:

So far as Korean residents...are concerned, there is neither more nor less reasons today to have the electric car lines between Chongno and the Angukdong square, than there were say, 3 years ago. But no sooner [than] the Industrial Bank...built its official residences in Angukdong than the line is laid. Thus in every sort of improvement, the first and last question with the Japanese authorities is "Will it benefit the Japanese" and not "Will it benefit the Koreans."The Japanese and foreign apologists point to the introduction of modern facilities of transportation and of communication as the great blessings Japan have conferred on the Koreans. The neglect or absence of these improvements will hurt the Japanese infinitely more than the Koreans.⁴³

The "Korean File" also includes a picture of an electric car as an example of Japan's contribution to Korean modernity. Yet, Yun's observations remind us of the limitations in relying solely on photographs to depict advancements in Korea under Japanese rule.

Another important aspect emphasized in the neo-conservative agenda is the correction of negative charges levied against Japan's rule in Korea, particularly the policy decisions that sought to assimilate Koreans as Japanese.⁴⁴ This agenda could justifiably cite the failure of Japan's critics to contextualize their more negative claims against the Government-General. Its harsher measures, rather than being characteristic of the entire period, reflect the total war atmosphere that Japan sought to create from the late 1930s. They might also argue that these policies were hardly as total as they are often depicted. The Government-General downgraded Korean language instruction to an elective class in 1938, and banned it from the school curriculum in 1943. However, it continued to permit publication of periodicals in Korean up through Japan's defeat.⁴⁵ The campaign to pressure Koreans to Japanize their names, begun in 1940, encompassed the majority, but not the entire Korean population.⁴⁶

Attempts by Japanese to argue that these administrative measures were benevolent, that they were policies advanced by Koreans, misrepresent aspirations of the minority as the will of the majority. Among Koreans there were some who, for various reasons, considered it advantageous to adopt a Japanese name. Ken C. Kawashima, for example, discovered Japan-based Koreans using Japanese pseudonyms in order to hide their Korean identity when dealing with landlords who refused to rent to foreigners.⁴⁷ The example presented in "Korean File" reveals a similar need: Korean peasants hoping to assume a Japanese identity to escape discrimination, here at the hands of the Chinese. It is also conceivable that pro-Japanese Koreans requested that the Japanese adopt such a policy to expedite assimilation. Korean literacy rates no doubt improved

as Japanese increased the number of schools on the peninsula. Likewise, among the “comfort women,” while the vast majority were kidnapped or deceived into service, there apparently were “prostitutes” recruited through advertisements.⁴⁸

While acknowledging that Japanese policy benefited pockets of Korean society,⁴⁹ a responsible argument must also acknowledge that Japan’s colonial policies systematically excluded the majority of Koreans from these institutions of modernity. Reliance on a minority sample to explain the entirety of Japan’s colonial rule grossly neglects the fact that Japan’s administrative decisions forced a large number of participants to act against their volition.⁵⁰ It turns a blind eye to the many people who were harshly punished for opposing Japan’s occupation of their country. As Michael Robinson has shown, Japanese media policy that allowed the Korean people access to indigenous newspapers and radio broadcasting ultimately strengthened Korean national identity, suggesting a will by many Koreans to resist the colonizers’ assimilation overtures.⁵¹ Finally, neo-conservatives neglect to consider that Japan’s history of expansion in East Asia did not end with the emperor’s declaration on August 15, 1945, nor did it end with treaties of normalization. This history lives within the people it affected. Denial and beautification of this history disturbs the efforts of its surviving victims to distance themselves from this past, and serves as a painful reminder of Japan’s unwillingness to accept responsibility for the injustices that Japanese rule inflicted upon them.

“Normalcy” and the Neo-Conservative Agenda

I learned a completely different history [from Murata’s presentation] than that which I studied in school. Young people definitely need to watch this.

As a Japanese who didn’t know this history, I was shocked.

I hope that young Koreans definitely understand this reality.

The above comments, all written in Japanese, demonstrate the impact that such YouTube presentations have had on their Japanese viewers, thus suggesting the need to examine conservative messages more closely.⁵² This analysis has concluded that this conservative agenda, rather than disseminating false information, produces a misleading narrative that exploits examples supporting its claim that Japan crafted expansionist policies beneficial to the Korean people. Indeed, it contends, Koreans encouraged Japan’s actions. The Korean-Japanese relationship thus resembled that enjoyed by territories annexed by England that remain a part of the United Kingdom, rather than those colonized by force into the British Empire. If there was a colonizer in this relationship, Murata further argues, it was the Koreans who from after 1930 migrated to Japan in greater numbers than Japanese migrating to Korea. As with many points made in his presentation, Murata here neglects the power dimension of the colonizer-colonized relationship that influenced their migration to Japan, but also to Manchuria, and which controlled their movements upon arrival.⁵³

Understanding the passion behind Japanese conservative efforts, and the influence it has on Japanese people, requires an understanding of Japan’s postwar conflicts over how to write its modern history. These conflicts date back to the early years following its defeat, when the United States occupation administration instructed Japanese to black out textbook information that it deemed militaristic. The primary question facing Japanese at this time, as put forth by Ienaga Saburō, remains the essential question facing Japanese at the core of their present conflict with

Koreans and Chinese over textbook content: “How do we search for the correct knowledge of Japanese history that should be the content of correct teaching of the national history?”⁵⁴

Post-World War II geopolitics have left Japan between a rock and a hard place in terms of the goal of becoming a “normal state” (*futsū no kuni*). The term is generally used by Japanese of conservative persuasion to argue the need for Japan to abolish Article 9 and expand its global military responsibilities. Here I extend it to mean a state also capable of defending its national narrative. The victors in the war, and particularly the United States and Great Britain but also France and Russia, quickly established as “normal” the omission or beautification of national narratives by either changing or omitting the less attractive aspects of their colonial and wartime histories. On the other hand, the economic and military influence wielded by these states over the postwar period has prevented the vanquished from challenging the victors’ colonial and wartime historical narratives. This influence requires, for example, Japan to not only compensate atomic bomb victims, but also to remain silent with respect to the bomb in the dominant US World War II narrative: that they were ‘necessary’ for ending the war and saving (American) lives.

The 1980s saw Japan reach a pinnacle in economic strength and national self-confidence, which encouraged it to seek to revise its colonial and wartime histories at the very time when the national sentiments and economies of its victims, notably China and South Korea, blossomed. Japanese attempts to develop a heroic national narrative centered on colonialism and war faced criticism that the victors have escaped. These are the very examples of “normalcy” that Japan sought to emulate. The frustration provoked by this predicament has encouraged neo-conservatives like Murata Haruki and the authors of “Korean File” to address, and attempt to justify—albeit in a rather skewed way—historical events that “normal countries” have succeeded in ignoring.

This article has sought to understand and critique messages promoted by Japanese conservatives by examining their treatment of Japan’s annexation of the Korean peninsula and the history of Korea under Japanese authority. Their dilution of truth in the name of national pride and honor scars Japan’s relations with its neighbors at a time when more productive voices call for regional unity, calls that will only grow louder as the influence of China grows. Should the two Koreas resolve the issues separating them, Japan could find itself the odd state out, a hostage to a “normal” historical perspective that denies its historical responsibilities, amid a tighter East Asian community.

Mark E. Caprio is a professor of history at Rikkyo University in Tokyo and a Japan Focus associate. He is the author of [Japanese Assimilation Policy in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945](#).

Notes

¹ This is a revised version of my presentation, “Reexamining Japan’s Annexation of Korea: Extending the Parameters of Colonial Histories” delivered on March 27, 2010, at the Association for Asian Studies conference held in Philadelphia, PA. An earlier version appeared as “New Interpretations of Japan’s Annexation of Korea: A Conservative Agenda Groping for ‘Normalcy,’” *Acta Koreana* 13 (1) (June 2010), 113-34. It benefited from comments by Jay Lewis, Kenneth Robinson, and Mark Selden.

² Murata Haruki is an executive committee member of the Deliberation Committee for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Koreans (Kita Chōsen ni rachi sareta Nihonjin o

kyūshutsu suru tame no zenkoku kyōgikai) and the Conference against Foreigner Voting Rights (Gaikokujin sanseiken ni hantai suru kai), among other organizations. Many of his lectures appear on YouTube. See, for example, his lecture expressing concerns over foreigner voting rights in local elections [here](#). (Accessed October 9, 2010).

³ [Murata Haruki](#), “The Annexation of Korea was Decidedly not a Case of Colonial Rule,” (accessed October 9, 2010).

⁴ See also Kaya University professor Ch’oe Kiho’s three-part lecture on why he supported Japan’s decision to annex Korea in his book *Nikkan heigō: Kanminzoku o sukutta “Nittei 36 nen” no shinjutsu* (Japan-Korea Annexation: The Truth Behind the 36 Years of Imperial Japanese Rule), (Tokyo: Shodensha, 2004). The [video version](#) of Ch’oe’s lectures has proven to be very popular, drawing close to 120,000 viewers. (last accessed March 17, 2010).

⁵ In addition to textbooks such as *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho* (The New History Textbook), (Tokyo: Fusōsha, 2001), conservative groups have published a large number of monographs, as well as a comic book series *Kenkanryū* (Hate Korea Wave), dedicated to “correcting” liberal Japanese and Korean views on issues involving Japanese and Korean history. For a critique of this series see [Rumi Sakamoto and Matthew Allen](#), “Hating ‘The Korean Wave’ Comic Books: A Sign of New Nationalism in Japan?” *Japan Focus* (October 4, 2007). On the Korean side, see the bilingual (Korean and English) *Hanguk ūi yōksa munhwa* (Korean History and Culture) series, particularly volume 3 titled *Hanguk chōnjaeng kwa kūndaesa* (The Korean War and Modern History), which covers the period from late Chosŏn to the present. Nakano Toshio labels such debates “Wars of Memory” (*kioku no sensō*) in his “Tōhoku Ajia de ‘sensō’ o tou koto” (Questioning “War” in Northeast Asia), in *Keizoku suru shokuminchishugi: Jendā, minzoku, jinshu, kaikyū* (Colonialism without End: Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Class), ed. Iwasaki Minoru, Ōkawa Masahiko, Nakano Toshio, and Yi Hyodōk, (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2005), 13.

⁶ As we shall see below, this last point is addressed more comprehensibly in another YouTube video, [“The Korean File of Korea Under Japanese Rule.”](#) (last accessed October 9, 2010).

⁷ The coverage of the American “annexation” of the Philippines in one American textbook resembles that offered in Japan’s *Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*. This textbook details the debate over the decision to annex, but provides little information on the bloody battles that the U.S. fought to crush Philippines insurgents and secure control over the colony. Its coverage ends with discussion of the U.S. development of Filipino schools, the literacy rates it improved, and U.S. guidance to lead the islanders to independence. Winthrop D. Jordan, Miriam Green Watt, and John S. Bowes, *The Americas: A History*, (Evanston, IL: McDougal, Littell and Co., 1994), 518-519, 523.

⁸ One example is the U.S. handling of the atomic bombings during World War II, which it justifies as being necessary to end the war and save lives. Conservative elements in the U.S. had little reason to be active on this issue until it was challenged by the Smithsonian Museum’s plans to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the *Enola Gay*’s mission by displaying the aircraft along with scenes from below the mushroom cloud, in other words, pictures and artifacts of the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Edward T. Linenthal describes the conflicts that arose over this plan in his “Anatomy of a Controversy,” in *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*, ed. Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, (New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, 1996), 9-62.

⁹ See Nishio Kanji and the Atarashi rekishi kyōkasho o tsukurukai, eds., *Kokumin no rekishi* (The People's History), (Tokyo: Sankei Shinbunsha, 2000). This group has also authored the history books that have caused anger among Koreans and Chinese. Many Japanese writers in 1910 cited the peace dividend as justification for Korea's annexation. See, for example, Prime Minister Katsura Tarō's announcement of Korea's annexation as carried in the August 30, 1910, edition of the *Japan Times*.

¹⁰ Another word, *gappō* (merger), as popularized by the Kokuryūkai (Black Dragon Society)'s *Nikkan gappō hisshi* (The Secret History of the Merger of Japan and Korea), was deemed too intimate to represent the Japan-Korea relationship imagined by the Japanese government at this time. See Hilary Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea, 1868-1910: A Study of Realism and Idealism in International Relations*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1960), 415-417.

¹¹ Much conservative Japanese writing on the Korea-Japan colonial relationship in 1910 filled their essays with examples of what I call peripheral colonization—territories having close geographical and cultural proximity to the colonizers, but avoided examples of the more distant external colonization. Their images of the Koreans as lazy and dirty, and the Korean (Chosŏn) government as inept, mirrored those that the British, and others, held toward colonized peoples. See Mark E. Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea, 1910-1945*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 82-92.

¹² Nitobe Inazō, "Japanese Colonization," in *Nitobe Inazō zenshū* (The complete works of Nitobe Inazō), vol. 23, edited by Yanaihara Tetsuō, (Tokyo: Kyōbunkan, 1983-1987), 120. Ukita Kazutani made a similar comparison earlier using Scotland and Ireland as examples in his "Kankoku heigō no kōka ikan" (What Are the Effects of Korean Annexation?), *Taiyō* (October 1, 1910), 2.

¹³ Alexis Dudden, *Japan's Colonization of Korea: Discourse and Power*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 136-137. Nitobe Inazō's article, published in 1911, was titled "On the Term 'Colony'" (Shokumin naru meiji ni tsuite).

¹⁴ Hara Takashi, "Taiwan mondai futa an" (Two Proposals for the Taiwan Problem), in *Hisho ruisan, Taiwan shiryō* (Classified Collection of Private Documents, Taiwan Materials), ed. Itō Hirobumi, in *Meiji hyakunenshi sōshi* (Meiji Centennial History Collection), vol. 127, (Tokyo: Hara Shobō, 1970), 32-34.

¹⁵ Hara Takashi, *Hara Takashi nikki* (Hara Takashi Diaries), edited by Hara Keiichirō, vol. 4, May 31, 1911, (Tokyo: Kengensha, 1950), 276.

¹⁶ See Gregory Henderson, *Korea: The Politics of the Vortex*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 72; Bruce Cumings, *The Origins of the Korean War: Liberation and the Emergence of Separate Regimes, 1945-1947*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 7; and Carter J. Eckert, Ki-baik Lee, Young Ick Lew, Michael Robinson, and Edward W. Wagner, *Korea Old and New: A History*, (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1990), 256. Among Japanese historians, see Eguchi Keiichi, *Nihon teikokushugishi kenkyū* (Research in the History of Japanese Imperialism), (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1998), 31, 122. Bruce Cumings later suggested similarity with the England-Ireland relationship in his *Korea's Place in the Sun: A History*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), 140.

¹⁷ Conroy, *The Japanese Seizure of Korea*.

¹⁸ Frederick R. Dickinson suggests that Japan also sought to control China's Fujian province soon after it annexed Taiwan to protect its new colonial acquisition. See his *War and National Reinvention: Japan in the Great War, 1914-1919*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 89.

¹⁹ Congress (House), 66th Congress, third session, *Congressional Record* 60 (December 23, 1920), 707-728.

²⁰ Stanley K. Hornbeck, *Contemporary Politics in the Far East*, (New York: D. Appleton, 1924), 214, 215. Hornbeck also contributed to one of the first reports assessing Korea's capacity for self-rule after Japan's defeat. The Joint U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee, "Recognition of a 'Free Korea' Organization," in *Haebang chŏnhusa charyojip I: Mi kukchŏng chunbi charyo* (Collection of Historical Documents before and after Liberation I: Materials of United States Administration Preparation), ed. Yi Kilsang, (Seoul: Wŏnju Munhwasa, 1992), 7-13.

²¹ Translations taken from the August 30, 1910, editions of the *Tokyo Asahi shinbun* (Japanese), the Seoul Press (English) and the *Maeil sinbo* (Korean).

²² "Nihonjin to Nihon shinmin to no kubetsu" (Differentiating between Japanese Nationals and Japanese Subjects), *Keijō shinpō* (September 13, 1910). We see a similar distinction maintained by the French in their West African colonies, where they referred to the assimilated indigenes as "native" rather than "French," citizens. See Raymond L. Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa*, vol. 1, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1928), 946.

²³ See Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea*, 86-92, for discussion by Japanese, and 100-105 for discussion by Koreans.

²⁴ Quoted in Kenneth B. Pyle, *The Making of Modern Japan*, second edition, (Washington, D.C.: D. C. Heath and Co., 1996), 91.

²⁵ Byron K. Marshall, *Learning to be Modern: Japanese Political Discourse on Education*, (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1994), 62.

²⁶ Takahashi Hamakichi, "Gimu kyōiku jisshi no igi" (The Significance of the Implementation of Compulsory Education in Korea), *Chōsen* (June 1944), 2-8.

²⁷ Schools on the peninsula were strictly segregated through 1920. The post-March First Movement reforms altered policy to allow Koreans capable in Japanese to attend Japanese schools. However, individual classes tended to limit the number of Koreans to approximately 10 percent, or three to four students per class. Japanese enrollees in Korean schools averaged about three to four percent.

²⁸ Dong Wonmo, "Japanese Colonial Policy and Practice in Korea, 1905-1945: A Study in Assimilation," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Georgetown University, 1969.

²⁹ Hara Takashi, "Chōsen tōchi shaken" (A Personal Opinion on Korean Administration), in *Saitō Makoto kankei monjo*, reel 104 (1919), Tokyo: Japanese Diet Library, 1998.

³⁰ Chu Yosŏp, *Chosŏn kyoyuk ŭi kyŏrham* (Deficiencies in Korean Education), (Keijō: Segye Sŏwŏn, 1930), 1-7.

³¹ This involved a proposal to the Diet to allow Koreans suffrage and representative rights. See “Chōsen ni tai suru sanseiken jisshi ni kansuru seigansho” (A Petition Regarding the Effectuation of Political Participation Rights in Korea), *Saitō Makoto kankei monjo*, reel 76 (February 1929). Koreans in Japan gained suffrage rights from 1931 and elected the first Japan-based Korean to the Japanese Diet the following year.

³² This was evident in the meetings convened to gather Korean and Japanese views on ways to strengthen Japanese-Korean unity. See Caprio, *Japanese Assimilation Policies in Colonial Korea*, 188-193. Transcripts of these meetings can be found in “Daiichi bunka kaigi jiroku” (Transcripts of the First Subcommittee), in *Ilcheha chibae chōngch’aek charyojip* (Compilation of Materials on Control Policy under Imperial Japan), vol. 16, ed. Sin Chubaek, (Seoul: Koryō Sōrim, 1993), 341-483.

³³ Sin Chubaek, ed., *Ilcheha chibae chōngch’aek charyojip*, vol. 17 (Seoul: Koryō sōim, 1993), 365-7. See also Carter J. Eckert, *Offspring of Empire: The Koch’ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876-1945* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991), 240.

³⁴ “The Korean File of Korea Under Japanese Rule—Nikkan heigō no shinjutsu” (The Truth Behind the Japan-Korea Annexation) [link](#) (last accessed March 10, 2010). This presentation, which has drawn over 19,300 viewers, has also received five-star ratings from 162 people. A [longer version](#) of this presentation has attracted over 40,000 viewers. (last accessed March 17, 2010).

³⁵ These photo-comparisons appeared often in the Government-General’s monthly magazine *Chōsen* and in the annual reports it issued in Japanese and English.

³⁶ L. H. Underwood described the streets as follows: Upon entering the gates, “we saw narrow, filthy streets, flanked by low mud houses, either thatched with straw, or tiled. It has been aptly said that the city looks like a vast bed of mushrooms since none of the Korean houses are built more than one story high.” L. H. Underwood, *Fifteen Years Among the Top-knots or Life in Korea*, (New York: American Tract Society, 1904), 39.

³⁷ Isabella Bird, *Korea and Her Neighbors*, (London: KPI, 1985 [1897]), 40.

³⁸ Bird, *Korea and Her Neighbors*, 435. This tends to be a general impression of other Westerner travelers who witnessed the city’s progress.

³⁹ Angus Hamilton, *Korea*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1904), 25.

⁴⁰ For Seoul’s development see Yi T’aejin, *The Dynamics and Modernization in Korean History*, (Ithaca, NY: East Asian Program, Cornell University, 2007), chapter 10.

⁴¹ Even buildings on the grounds of one of Japan’s most sacred shrines, Yasukuni Shrine, including the original war museum (Yūshūkan), were designed by non-Japanese. T. Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 37.

⁴² We see one example in Kajiya Toshiyuki’s novel *Gei no naka* (Inside the Rainbow), in which his main character, Kaji, “refused to walk in [Koreatown],” a part of Seoul that “strangled him in depression.” Quoted in Kawamura Minato, *Sōru toshi monogatari: Rekishi, bungaku to fūkei*, (The Story of Seoul: History, Literature, and Landscape), (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2000), 106.

Kajiyama, who grew up in Seoul, often wrote about conflict in Korean-Japanese relations. For the psychological reaction of a Korean crossing into Japantown see Peter Hyun, *Man Sei! The Making of a Korean American*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986), 62-66.

⁴³ Yun Ch'ihō, *Yun Ch'ihō ilgi* (Yun Ch'ihō diaries), July 21, 1923, (Seoul: Kuksa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, 1973-1986).

⁴⁴ For example, see Kim Sam'ung, *Ch'inil chŏngch'i 100 nyŏnsa* (The One Hundred Year History of Pro-Japanese Politics), (Seoul: Tosŏ Chulp'an, 1995), 164, 176-177.

⁴⁵ One example is the Government-General's newspaper, the *Maeil sinbo*, which continued to publish in Korean to August 15, 1945. A number of Korean-language magazines also managed to continue operations throughout the duration of Japanese rule.

⁴⁶ It is estimated that 80 percent of Koreans officially Japanized their names, many to allow their children to enter schools. Even after this campaign had begun, Koreans who had changed their names used their Korean names on certain occasions, particularly when participating as instruments of Japanese wartime propaganda, such as in the media and cinema. For discussion on Japanization of Korean names see Miyata Setsuko, Kim Yŏngjŭl, and Yang Taeho, *Sōshi kaimei* (Name Changes), (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1994), and Mizuno Naoki, *Sōshi kaimei: Nihon no Chōsen shihai no naka de* (Name Changes in the Context of Japan's Rule Over Korea), (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 2008).

⁴⁷ Ken C. Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble; Korean Workers in Interwar Japan*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 106.

⁴⁸ See C. Sarah Soh's *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

⁴⁹ Carter J. Eckert documents the rise of Korea's conglomerates (K. *chaebŏl*) under Japanese rule in *Offspring of Empire: The Koch'ang Kims and the Colonial Origins of Korean Capitalism, 1876-1945*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991).

⁵⁰ Soh, *The Comfort Women*. Tessa Morris-Suzuki, describing "coercion and the comfort women," depicts the enormous variety of approaches to recruiting women for this job as follows:

Some were Japanese women who had worked as prostitutes previously, some were "volunteers" in a sense, although often driven to "volunteer" through pressures of poverty, debt and desperation. A very large number were women from Korea and China. Many had been lured away from their homes with promises of work in factories or restaurants, only to find themselves incarcerated in "comfort stations" in foreign lands. Other women...were rounded up at gunpoint....

[Tessa Morris-Suzuki](#), "Japan's 'Comfort Women': It's Time for the Truth (In the Ordinary, Everyday Sense of the Word)," *Japan Focus* (March 8, 2007).

⁵¹ Michael E. Robinson argues this on two occasions. See his "Colonial Publication Policy and the Korean Nationalist Movement," in *The Japanese Colonial Empire, 1895-1945*, ed. Ramon H. Myers and Mark R. Peattie, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 312-343; and "Broadcasting in Korea, 1924-1937: Colonial Modernity and Cultural Hegemony," in *Japan's Competing Modernities: Issues in Culture and Democracy, 1900-1930*, ed. Sharon A.

Minichiello, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 358-378. The following two Government-General reports, issued in the late 1920s, warned that Korean national sentiment would continue to develop as long as the Japanese administration permitted Koreans exposure to their culture. Chōsen Government-General, Keimu kyoku toshoka, "Ri denka no shikyo ni saishi 'shinbunshi o tōshite mitaru' Chōsenjin no shisō keikō" (Tendencies in Korean Thought 'as Seen through Newspapers' at the Time of the Death of the Yi Monarch), (Keijō: Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1926), and Chōsen Government-General, "Dokuritsu undō ni okeru minzoku undo no kōgai" (A Summary of the People's Movement from the Cessation of the Independence Movement) (January 1927), *Saitō Makoto kankei monjo* (Official Papers Regarding Saitō Makoto), reel 97, (Tokyo: Japanese National Diet Library).

⁵² I should add that comments written in English were rather critical of Murata's message.

⁵³ Ken Kawashima's *The Proletarian Gamble* provides one lucid example of Korean migration to, and living conditions in, Japan.

⁵⁴ Ienaga Saburō's essay, titled "Sengo no rekishi kyōiku (The Future of National History Education)", was published in October 1946. See Yoshiko Nozaki, "Education Reform and History Textbooks in Occupied Japan," in *Democracy in Occupied Japan: The U.S. Occupation and Japanese Politics and Society*, ed. Mark E. Caprio and Yoneyuki Sugita, (London: Routledge, 2007), 127. Nozaki's chapter provides a good review of textbook editing from the days following the Emperor of Japan's August 15, 1945 announcement that ended the Pacific War.

Topics of Historical Memory in Japan*The History Textbook Controversy***“Japanese Textbook Controversies, Nationalism, and Historical Memory: Intra- and Inter-national Conflicts”**

Yoshiko NOZAKI and Mark Selden

June 15, 2009

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Yoshiko-Nozaki/3173>**“The Tokyo Tribunal, Justice Pal and the Revisionist Distortion of History”**

Nakajima Takeshi

October 31, 2011

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Nakajima-Takeshi/3627>**“Myth and Fact in Northeast Asia’s History Textbook Controversies”**

Mikyong Kim

August 15, 2008

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Mikyong-Kim/2855>**“The Nanjing Massacre. Changing Contours of History and Memory in Japan, China, and the U.S.”**

Takashi YOSHIDA

December 19, 2006

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Takashi-YOSHIDA/2297>

Another widely discussed facet of historical memory and, in a broader sense, national identity in postwar Japan, has been the controversies over Japanese history textbooks. Since the 1980s, Japanese neonationalists’ attempts to erase accounts of Japanese war atrocities from history textbooks has sparked intense criticism from Asian neighbors. On the flip-side, such attempts to whitewash the war also have faced strong opposition from within Japanese society, including intellectuals who consider it of utmost importance that history education preserves the memory of Japan’s wartime past and acknowledges war responsibility and war crimes.

Yoshiko Nozaki and Mark Selden begin this section by describing a series of neonationalist attacks launched on school textbooks in postwar Japan. Prewar imperialistic and militaristic narratives were removed from Japanese history textbooks during the U.S. occupation (1945-52) and, since then, neonationalists have aimed at reintroducing a more affirmative interpretation of the war. Textbooks from the 1950s and 1960s that were more outspoken about war and war crimes, such as the ones co-authored by Ienaga Saburō, were later denied authorization by the Ministry of Education. The greater involvement of foreign critics in the 1980s textbook debate has kept Japan’s history textbook controversies in the spotlight.

As Nakajima Takeshi explains, Japanese neonationalists have developed a distorted version of the role of Radhabinod Pal, a judge in the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (Tokyo Trials), to champion their views that the Tokyo Trials were nothing more than “victor’s justice.” Using this and other arguments, neonationalists have tried to

minimize Japanese war responsibility and beautify Japan's war as one of "Asian liberation." This neonationalist narrative is on full display in several controversial textbooks that have been approved by the Ministry of Education but are only used in a few schools.

Mikyoung Kim takes her investigation of history textbooks one step further by comparatively analyzing Japanese, Chinese, and Korean textbooks. History education in all three places, she concludes, still stands in the way of reconciliation and the creation of a transnational East Asian regional community. On a similar topic, Takashi Yoshida puts the historiography of the Nanjing massacre in the wider perspective of debates between progressive historians and conservative historical revisionists in Japan. Then, he introduces a number of museums that directly and indirectly deal with Nanjing, and traces the importance of the Nanjing Massacre in the history textbook debates.

Japanese Textbook Controversies, Nationalism, and Historical Memory: Intra- and International Conflicts

Yoshiko Nozaki and Mark Selden

Japan's neonationalists have launched three major attacks on school textbooks over the past half century.¹ Centered on the treatment of colonialism and war, the attacks surfaced in 1955, the late 1970s, and the mid-1990s. The present study examines three moments in light of Japanese domestic as well as regional and global political contexts to gain insight into the persistent contention over colonialism and the Pacific War in historical memory and its refraction in textbook treatments.

If school textbooks are important "weapons of mass instruction" as Charles Ingrao tells us,² they may speak not only to the youth and citizens of a nation but also, through the mass media and the pronouncements of state leaders, to other nations and people. Indeed, although educational policies are often judged in terms of their pedagogical value for classroom teaching and learning, the symbolic functions and actual effects of textbook policies on domestic and international politics are extremely important.³

Textbook controversies invite us to look beyond the nation to educational processes that might contribute to regional and global dynamics and conceptions that could help overcome some of the problems inherent in national, and often nationalistic, education. In this we seek to raise problems that apply no less to China and Korea, and to the United States, Britain, France, and Germany, than to Japan. We raise these global and comparative issues through an examination of Japan's textbook controversies, particularly as these apply to historical memories of colonialism and war, that is, issues that directly impinge on China, Korea, Southeast Asia, and the United States, as well as Japan.

Before examining the three epochs, we briefly note distinctive features of the postwar Japanese system of textbook writing, approval, and adoption.⁴ The state publishes instruction guidelines (*shido-yoryo*) for grades one through twelve, according to which commercial publishers develop texts. Texts need to be authorized as "school textbooks" (*kyokasho*) by the state to be used by public and even private schools. Publishers submit draft texts to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Monbusho; hereafter MOE) for approval, that is, to the textbook screening system that was introduced in 1948.⁵ Textbook Screening Examiners examine the texts and the Textbook Screening Council makes decisions.⁶

A screening process often takes several months, because the texts are usually conditionally approved, meaning that the state almost always calls for revisions.⁷ Over the past half century, the state repeatedly required history textbook authors to make changes on sensitive issues concerning the Asia Pacific War (taking place from 1931 to 1945). Each high school (grades ten through twelve) adopts texts from among the authorized texts. For elementary and junior high schools (grades one through nine), local districts adopt texts. Teachers are required to use the authorized texts for instruction, although they may supplement the text with other books and their own handouts.

In contrast to some countries (e.g. China, Taiwan, and South Korea), Japanese textbooks are not written under direct government supervision or published by the state. Moreover, multiple texts (with variations in terms of content) are available for a given subject in the Japanese system.

However, in contrast to the American system, in which larger states, notably Texas and California, vet texts produced by commercial publishers, affecting the content of textbooks available nationwide, the Japanese system has operated through a national government screening system which constricts publisher options, notably in periods of sharp nationalist attack on textbooks. In other words, the American system controls textbook content through state level controls together with adoption processes and market forces; the Japanese system exercises control primarily through state screening.⁸

Japanese Politics and the First Textbook Attack of 1955

Japan surrendered to the Allied Powers on 15 August 1945. Beginning in September, the US-led occupation authorities (Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, SCAP) set in motion changes that would profoundly transform core elements of Japanese politics, society, and education within the framework of US power. They did so, however, on foundations of significant continuities that included working through the Japanese government (and its bureaucratic systems) rather than exercising direct rule.

In particular, while new educational laws passed the Diet, the administrative structure of the Japanese education system remained essentially intact. The postwar school curriculum was a critical area of democratization reform. Though some reformers called for abolition of state control over school textbooks, the MOE succeeded in retaining direct control over textbook authorization by introducing a textbook screening system.⁹

The most significant curriculum document, however, was Japan's new constitution, promulgated in 1946, proclaiming its pacifist principles. The MOE had schools begin to teach about the new constitution almost immediately. However, the new constitution and its peace provision would soon become the most fundamental site of political and ideological battles in postwar Japan. The first textbook attack was, indeed, derived from these battles.

Political Instability and Shifting Battlegrounds: From Constitution to Textbooks

During the occupation period, politics and ideological divisions were in the process of formation, fluid and unstable. Among more than 350 newly formed political parties, the Liberal Party (Jiyuto, LP) triumphed in the first postwar election in 1946, winning 141 seats. However, LP leader Hatoyama Ichiro was purged immediately after the election by SCAP for wartime collaboration. His deputy, Yoshida Shigeru became prime minister.¹⁰ In the 1947 elections, the Socialist Party (Shakaito, SP) led in both the upper and lower houses of parliament (though far from winning a majority in either). The SP, with two conservative parties, formed two shortlived coalition governments. Yoshida returned as Prime Minister in 1948, recapturing the levers of state authority, and in 1949 his party LP won 264 seats, the majority of the Lower House.¹¹ Yoshida wielded power for the next six years, playing a key role in crafting both the San Francisco Peace Treaty and the US-Japan Security Pact.

In June 1951, many politicians, including Hatoyama, were depurged and returned to the political arena. The conflict between Hatoyama and Yoshida ruptured the ruling party LP. In the same year, the major opposition party, SP, also split over the San Francisco Peace Treaty. Its right faction supported ratification while the left rejected the treaty that excluded the Soviet Union and China. Each group claimed the name Socialist Party, so they were called the Left SP and the Right SP. In the Lower House election of 1953, the major issue was amending the 1946

Constitution to allow the nation to remilitarize. Hatoyama, forming his own party (so called Hatoyama's LP), championed the constitutional amendment and remilitarization, Yoshida, while allowing the remilitarization in practice, remained vague on the amendment, and the left and right-wing SPs were against it. Yoshida's LP still led in the election result, and so he remained in power.



Yoshida Shigeru

The Yoshida administration collapsed in a 1954 corruption scandal, allowing Hatoyama of the Democratic Party (Minshuto, DP; formed in the fall of 1954) to form a temporary government (with the support of the Left and Right SPs).¹² In the Lower House election of February 1955 Hatoyama again campaigned on a platform calling for the revision of the 1946 constitution, and especially for revision of its pacifist provision, found in Article 9. National policy on textbooks surfaced for the first time as a campaign issue, with Nakasone Yasuhiro, a young hawk of the DP calling for a system of publishing and adopting textbooks that were tightly supervised by the state.

The electorate was divided. Out of 467 seats, the DP won 185, the LP 112, and the SPs 156 (the left-wing SP winning eighty-nine and the right-wing SP sixty-seven; in October 1955 the two SPs would reunite). With one third of the lower house seats, the SPs had the votes to block constitutional amendments – behind this victory was the unions, including Japan Teachers' Union (JTU), emerging as a major force in electoral politics. With the revision of Article 9 foreclosed (provisionally), the battle over textbooks and education would take center stage in the

upcoming Diet sessions. In other words, textbook struggles would substitute for the battles over the 1946 constitution and its renunciation of war.

The Attack on Textbooks and the 1955 Regime

The first major attack on textbooks took place in June 1955, following testimony before the Diet by Ishii Kazutomo, a former official of the JTU, who alleged that textbook publishers had bribed local school officials in charge of textbook adoption.¹³ Ishii's main target, however, was "textbook bias," particularly in social studies and history textbooks.¹⁴ Ishii attacked these texts, which had been approved by the government in the occupation period, for promoting a leftwing, anti-capitalist agenda.

Ishii was soon working secretly with the DP on a series of brochures that criticized textbook descriptions written by authors close to the JTU. The DP brochures made extreme charges. For example, one elementary school social studies textbook was criticized for stating that between the seventh and the ninth century "[i]n order to learn the advanced culture of China, envoys were sent," on grounds that the line was "extremely biased" and for "praising China and subordinating Japan."¹⁵ Even some high-powered conservative politicians saw such charges as troublesome; however, they remained silent because behind the scenes of the textbook attack was the negotiation to consolidate two conservative parties, DP and LP, to establish a post-occupation political and social order that came to be known as the 1955 regime.

The textbook attack provided ideological "glue" for the DP-LP merger, which eventually took place in November 1955 with formation of the Liberal Democratic Party (*Jiyuminshuto*, LDP). It was also a symbolic action in the realm of politics, "a way of shaping public consciousness and give meaning and direction to an entire sphere of social relations and . . . institutions."¹⁶ Indeed, the 1955 regime shaped Japanese politics and education to the present. In the one and a half party system (the SP held approximately half the Diet seats of the LDP) that continued for four decades, the LDP, with strong overt and covert US support, dominated the Lower House, while the SP remained the leading opposition party until its steep decline in the 1990s.¹⁷

The 1955 attack lent support to MOE attempts to revise history textbooks through the screening processes. Although screening is conducted behind closed doors, some authors have disclosed specific demands for excision or revision made by MOE.

The MOE's History Textbook Screening in the Late 1950s and 1960s

Although, in the early 1950s, the MOE began to reverse the course of postwar curriculum reform, views on history among its textbook examiners were far from uniform. For example, when Ienaga Saburo submitted his first high school history textbook manuscript in 1952, it was rejected. One examiner, saying that "too much space" was devoted to the Pacific War, suggested that Ienaga drop the entire discussion on the grounds that students had no need to study the war since they had experienced it. However, Ienaga resubmitted the manuscript without revision, a procedure that was then permitted, and this time it was approved.



Ienaga Saburo

Following the 1955 textbook attack, the MOE increased the number of screening council members to add conservatives to the board and created full-time textbook examiner positions, filling the social studies positions with nationalists holding the emperor-centered view of history and eager to defend the empire and Japan's Asia Pacific Wars. MOE also revised the screening process regulations,¹⁸ and, in 1958, it issued a ministerial ordinance in which it declared that new *Instructional Guidelines* would have legal force.

Behind closed doors, MOE examiners openly questioned the premises of “scientific” (*kagakuteki*) history, historical research based on empirical data and critical scrutiny of mythology, which was the mainstay of postwar history education. During the war, such studies were routinely suppressed when their findings contradicted official narratives written from an emperor-centered perspective. Wartime history education was also almost totally divorced from historical research, and school textbooks served as the most important vehicles for disseminating emperor-centered historical narratives.¹⁹ Postwar history textbook authors, having learned negative lessons from the wartime experience, were committed to empirically-based textbooks.

In the mid 1950s, some of the MOE comments on history texts challenged empirical research and called for the cultivation of nationalism. For example:²⁰

[This book] is as a whole too scientific. In particular, its description of history from the Meiji period [1868] to date is extremely lacking in [the spirit] of [Japan's] autonomy [*jishusei*], to the extent that [I] sometimes took it to be the textbook of a foreign country, and wondered whether it was a social studies textbook for Japanese junior high school students or for certain [foreign] countries.²¹

Apparently, “too scientific” was a reference to critical treatments of events in Japan’s modern history, including aggressive wars. The MOE held to the nationalist and ethnocentric perspective that a textbook for Japanese students must steadfastly support the actions of the Japanese state and its leaders, regardless of their consequences. Toward this end, history textbooks were criticized for being empirical, or “too scientific.”

While MOE comments touched on all historical periods, the twentieth century received by far the most intense scrutiny, especially the Asia Pacific War. In attacking “scientific history,” the MOE targeted for revision texts that spelled out the costs of war and empire to Asian and Japanese people. The goal was praise for the goals and accomplishments of the empire.

For example, MOE’s comments in these years included: “Do not write bad things about Japan in [describing] the Pacific War. Even though they are facts, represent them in a romantic [*romantikku*] manner” —implication here was that the text should be more like a historical novel. “‘The Pacific War’ (Taiheiyo senso) is not a historical term. Call it the ‘Great East Asian War’ (Dai toa senso),” an allusion to the official name of the war used in wartime Japan.

The MOE often suggested that textbooks avoid singling out Japanese war crimes and atrocities by looking at Japanese conduct in “world history” perspective. Such comments included:²²

It is not good only to see Japan’s past war(s) as imperialist war(s). It is inadequate to say that Japan ruled China and made it miserable.

[The textbook] says, “Our country inflicted immeasurable suffering and damage on various Asian nations, especially during the Pacific War.” . . . Eliminate this description, since a view even exists that [Japan] provided various Asian nations the chance for independence [from their Western colonizers] through the Pacific War.

[The textbook], in its treatment of the war, describes it as if Japan were unilaterally bad; it is not grounded in understanding of world history such as the international situation of the time.

In articulating this principle, the MOE censors scored important points. Japan was, of course, hardly alone in committing war crimes and atrocities associated with colonialism and invasion. Nor were these limited to the Axis powers. War crimes and atrocities had been and were committed historically by, for example, the United States in colonizing of the Philippines from 1898 to 1903 and after, and by various allied powers such as the British in seeking to maintain their colonial stake in Asia. In this respect, the United States and Britain as well as Japan need to be examined critically. Likewise, the US firebombing of sixty-four Japanese cities and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki should be examined in light of the guarantees of civilian immunity stipulated in international law. The point of such comparison is not, however,

as the MOE attempted, to excuse Japan's war crimes and atrocities. Rather, it is to historically explain, or understand, the roots of war atrocities and colonial violence in order to seek ways to overcome such acts. The MOE comments were in essence arguments to show that colonialism and war were inevitable and to excuse Japanese behavior on the grounds that it merely followed the examples of other colonial powers.

Since the MOE could not require total abandonment of "history as science," there was – theoretically, at least – room for publishers and author(s) to fight back. Indeed, textbook writers and publishers frequently rebutted the most extreme criticisms and at times won minor, tactical victories.²³ However, in the late 1950s and 1960s, their ability to overcome MOE revisionism, backed by conservative forces encouraged and sustained by the 1955 regime, was at best limited. Some critics call these years "the winter for textbooks," which continued until 1970, when historian Ienaga Saburo won a ground-breaking victory in Tokyo District Court in his second lawsuit against the MOE's censorship on his history textbook.²⁴

The Second Attack on Textbooks and the Internationalization of the History Controversy

LDP Political Strife and the Second Attack on Textbooks

Japan felt the effects of the so-called Nixon China shock in the years between 1970 and 1972, followed almost immediately by the worldwide oil shock of 1973. In geopolitical terms, with relative peace in the region in the wake of the US-China opening and US defeat in the Vietnam War, Japan and its Asian neighbors entered a new era. Although Japan's economic growth slowed from the ten percent level of the 1960s to an average of 3.6 percent during the period from 1974 to 1979 and 4.4 percent in the 1980s,²⁵ calculated in US dollars, it continued to grow until the early 1990s, thus making Japan an economic superpower.²⁶ This involved rapid internationalization of Japanese businesses and industries and trade frictions with other countries, notably the United States.

Following the Sato Eisaku administration (from 1964 to 1972), Tanaka Kakuei became Prime Minister, but, in 1974 he was forced to resign for raising enormous political funds through paper real estate companies, and, in 1976, he was arrested for accepting a bribe from Lockheed Aircraft. Throughout the 1970s, while the ruling LDP remained in disarray, its major opponent, SP, was unable to unseat it, in part because its left and right fractions continued to battle one another.

At the end of 1970s, in part because of Prime Minister Ohira Masayoshi's death, which was seen as a casualty of the factional strife, LDP leaders became somewhat weary of the strife, and, in this context, the textbook issue came to the fore in politics when LDP young hawks vociferously criticized the social studies and Japanese language textbooks published in the 1970s as biased and/or communist-inspired. Like Nakasone built his leadership reputation through his hardline stance on school textbooks in the late 1950s and 1960s, the young hawks of 1970s choose to do the same. The LDP weekly newspaper attacked the texts, charging that many authors supported the JTU, the Communist Party, or various non-governmental democratic education movements.

This time, even language textbooks faced attack. One LDP critic targeted a Russian folktale, Okina Kabu, The Enormous Turnip, a popular content in the textbooks. Originally transcribed by folklorist Aleksandr N. Afanase'v (1826-1871), the story tells of a grandfather, grandmother, granddaughter, a dog, a cat, and a rat joining forces to pull a giant turnip out of the ground. One

LDP internal document read the story as preaching that “if all [workers, peasants, students, and intellectuals] unite, [they] can topple the capitalists.”²⁷ Other popular textbook stories targeted included: Kasako Jizo (by Iwasaku Kyoko), Okori Jizo (by Yamaguchi Yuko), and the enormously popular Yuzuru, Twilight Crane (by Kinoshita Junji).²⁸



Okina Kabu

The second wave attack on textbooks was propelled by a wider range of proponents, including nationalist intellectuals, business interests, and politicians associated with the ruling LDP and Minshato (an opposition party formed by SP's moderate/center-right politicians in 1960). A group of intellectuals, centered on Tsukuba University, along with business organizations, such as Keidanren (the Federation of Economic Organizations), joined the attack, lobbying for textbook revision. The Science and Technology Agency under the Prime Minister's Office called on the new junior high school civic textbooks to remove critical references to atomic power plants. Although the texts had already been approved, the MOE successfully pressured the publishers to revise.

MOE Textbook Screening and National and International Censure in 1982

While keeping a certain distance from the highly charged political attacks, the MOE steadily tightened control over school curriculum and textbooks. In the 1980-1981 screening, it famously ordered historian Ienaga Saburo to change various passages.²⁹ The MOE examiner commented of Ienaga's description of the Nanjing Massacre: “[I] cannot believe that [the Japanese Force] systematically carried out the massacre as a military force. . . . [Some] phrases such as ‘in the chaos during the Japanese Force’s occupation of Nanjing, numerous Chinese soldiers and civilians became victims’ can be stated.”³⁰ While not denying that atrocities had been committed, the examiner insisted that the author highlight extenuating circumstances and eliminate reference to the responsibility of the chain of command for the massacre.

The censorship of history texts attracted little attention at this time from the Japanese media, in part due to preoccupation with textbooks for a new high school subject “Contemporary Society” (*Gendai Shakai*). The MOE rigorously censored their descriptions of the 1946 Constitution, the Self-Defense Forces (*Jieitai*, SDF), the Northern Territories conflict with the USSR, and discussions of human rights and industrial pollution. For example, textbook examiners

commented: “Give an objective description without bias. Do not lean toward the theory of unconstitutionality [of maintaining SDF]. Provide balance by including the government’s view and other views” (on Article 9 and renunciation of war); “Pay attention to the size [of pictures] and better keep too tragic pictures small” (referring to pictures of Hiroshima and Nagasaki).³¹



Okinawan sculptor Kinjo Minoru’s relief depicting the Battle of Okinawa, during which many Okinawans were killed or forced to commit suicide after seeking refuge in the island’s caves.

In the 1981-82 screening, the MOE ordered Eguchi Keiichi and co-authors to eliminate descriptions of Okinawan citizens’ compulsory mass suicides (*shudan jiketsu*) in the Battle of Okinawa.³² The MOE particularly objected to reference to the role of the Japanese military in forcing citizens to commit suicide. One description that drew examiner ire was this: “In the battle [of Okinawa] . . . approximately 100,000 combatants and 200,000 civilians were killed . . . Also, approximately 800 Okinawan residents were murdered at the hand of Japanese forces for reasons such as hindering combat.” Eguchi revised the description several times; however, insisting that Eguchi’s sources be “scholarly research texts,” the examiner rejected every revision. The *Okinawa Prefectural History*, compiled by the Okinawa Prefecture government, which Eguchi drew on, was dismissed as “a collection of personal accounts,” hence not reliable. In other words, the MOE used the “objectivist/empiricist” argument to uphold nationalist perspectives. Eventually Eguchi had no choice but drop the entire discussion.³³

The MOE announced the results of its 1981-1982 textbook screening in June of 1982.³⁴ When major Japanese newspapers reported that descriptions of Japanese wartime atrocities in Asian countries and Okinawa had been watered down, the story was quickly picked up elsewhere.³⁵ Widespread international censure of Japanese revisionism centered on nations that had borne the brunt of Japanese colonialism and invasion. In July 1982 both the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the People’s Republic of China lodged official protests with the Japanese government, and labor unions and social action groups in Hong Kong sent a letter of complaint to the Japanese Consulate. The official party newspaper of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea) criticized the Japanese government and the Vietnamese government asked the Japanese ambassador for corrections concerning that country.³⁶

In July, the two major Okinawan newspapers ran series criticizing MOE censorship of accounts of the Battle of Okinawa, particularly of Japanese forces killing of Okinawan civilians.

Okinawan citizen movements demanded restoration of the original passages.³⁷ In September, an extraordinary session of the Okinawan Assembly unanimously adopted “A Letter of Opinion Concerning Textbook Screening,” which it sent to the MOE. Stating that the murder of Okinawans by Japanese military forces was “an undeniable fact as clear as day,” the letter demanded “restoration of the description in short order.”³⁸ The MOE, along with rightwing nationalists, had underestimated the changing political climate in the Asia Pacific at the very time when the Japanese economy was becoming more deeply intertwined with Chinese, South Korean, and other Asian economies.

The Japanese government sought to limit the diplomatic damage. In August 1982, Chief Cabinet Secretary Miyazawa Kiichi stated that Japan would consider fully the criticisms of its Asian neighbors in order to promote friendship and referred to “making a correction on government responsibility.”³⁹ The Miyazawa statement did not specify what measures the government would take, but the South Korean government nevertheless accepted it. The Chinese government initially insisted that it was insufficient guarantee against future revisionism in textbook screening, but eventually it too accepted Japanese pledges to make appropriate corrections.

In October, the MOE added a clause (the so-called *Kinrin shokoku joko*, Neighboring Countries Clause) to the screening criteria, requiring that textbooks give “necessary consideration, in the interest of international friendship and cooperation,” to the modern and contemporary history of relations between Japan and its Asian neighbors. The MOE also noted that it would no longer require authors to replace the term “aggression” with “advance” in referring to Japan’s China war, or to add phrasing suggesting that the Nanjing Massacre occurred as a result of momentary chaos – issues that had aroused particular outrage in China. With respect to references to the number of victims of the Nanjing Massacre, the MOE announced it would only ask authors to provide citations indicating the source of estimates. At this juncture, the Education Minister held a press conference to “[officially] close the textbook controversy.”⁴⁰ The settlement left the administrative structure of the MOE and its nationalist orientation untouched.

The Nakasone Reforms and the First Postwar Nationalist Textbook

In November 1982, Nakasone Yasuhiro rose to become Prime Minister as a vigorous anti-communist politician and proponent of nationalist reform of education and the “reconstruction of Japanese identity.” Projecting himself as the Japanese counterpart of U.S. President Ronald Reagan and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Britain, he promoted a neoconservative agenda.

Nakasone’s approach to educational reform was radical. For example, he created the *Rinji kyoiku shingikai* (Special Education Council) and hand picked its members. The council was tasked with recommending policies, shaping public opinion, and transforming the schools in line with Nakasone’s nationalist ideas. The response was a storm of progressive opposition, indeed, even some officials in the MOE bridled at this top-down approach to reforms.

Interestingly, although Nakasone and many MOE officials were committed to history textbook revisionism, Nakasone as a seasoned politician understood the importance of building harmonious relations with Japan’s Asian neighbors in order to assure economic growth. His choice was Japan’s economic growth over its nationalist identity. Thus, while the MOE continued censoring history textbooks during the 1980s, bound by the Miyazawa statement and MOE’s own regulation changes that followed the 1982 furor, it did so with a lighter hand. This

resulted in an increasing number of history textbooks allocating more space for critical views on the war and colonialism.⁴¹

This angered nationalist forces on the right, who insisted that each nation is entitled to decide the content of its history education without regard to the sentiments of its neighbors or others. In the fall of 1982, one of the major nationalist organizations, the National Conference to Defend Japan (*Nihon o mamoru kokumin kaigi*, established in 1981), announced that it would develop its own Japanese history textbook. Its chair Kase Toshikazu was a former ambassador to the United Nations and a member of Nakasone's informal "brain trust." (The group's membership to date has included religious organizations, business leaders such as the former CEOs of Sony and the conservative daily newspaper company Sankei Shinbunsha, and several prominent scholars.) The nationalist text, for high school students *Shinpen Nihonshi* (New Edition Japanese History), was approved by the MOE and published in 1987, despite serious scholarly and political criticisms from inside and outside Japan. Although the Nakasone administration publicly kept its neutral position, it was known that Nakasone privately backed MOE's approving the text.⁴²

The Third Attack and the Textbook Controversies From the Mid-1990s to Present

The "Comfort Women" Issue and the End of LDP Single-Party Rule

While Japanese authors had written about the "comfort women" for decades, the issue attained political salience for the first time in the 1990s.⁴³ When the comfort women controversy surfaced in the Japanese Diet in 1990, Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki rejected calls for an investigation, maintaining that the wartime state and its military had played no role in the matter. However, in 1991 the first former Korean comfort woman came out in public, telling of her experience at the hands of the military. Women in Korea, China, the Philippines and other Asian countries followed. The combination of the end of the Cold War and democratization in South Korea and Taiwan opened new space for airing long-suppressed issues in those countries and throughout Asia and beyond. Pioneering research by Japanese historian Yoshimi Yoshiaki unearthed the first official documents proving beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Japanese military had been intimately involved in organizing the comfort women system. Subsequent studies showed the Japanese imperial state and military's involvement in running the comfort stations, procuring young women, and shipping them to bases throughout Asia and the Pacific.⁴⁴ Equally important, the international feminist movement, with South Korean and Japanese activists playing leading roles, rallied to the cause of the comfort women. The Japanese government could not continue to stonewall on the issue.

In 1993, the Japanese government under Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi heard testimony from fifteen former comfort women in Seoul, and on 4 August, Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono Yohei acknowledged that the Japanese forces were directly and indirectly involved in the establishment and administration of comfort facilities. Although the Kono statement remained ambiguous on several key points such as legal responsibility and compensation, it expressed "firm determination" to remember the facts "through historical research and education."⁴⁵ Kono's statement legitimated inclusion of the topic in textbooks, and within a few years most history textbooks (and many in related areas) included a brief reference to the issue. This provoked rightwing nationalists (hereafter, neonationalists) to launch the third attack on textbooks in 1995.

1993 also marked the end of LDP single-party rule. In July, the LDP lost its majority in lower house elections as some influential politicians and their factions broke away to establish new

parties. The same election, however, marked the demise of the SP whose seats fell from 137 to seventy in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union. After nearly four decades of unbroken LDP rule, Japanese politics entered an uncertain, tumultuous period just as the world entered the post-Cold War era.⁴⁶

Coalition Government and the Diet Resolution to Apologize for Wartime Aggression

On 6 August 1993, a few days after Kono's statement, a seven-party coalition government formed under an anti-LDP banner. Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro of Nihonshinto (Japan New Party) commented of the Asia-Pacific War: "I personally recognize it as a *shinryaku senso* (war of aggression), an *ayamatta senso* (wrong or mistaken war)."⁴⁷ Hosokawa subsequently spoke of "colonial rule" (*shokuminchi shihai*) in Korea instead of using the conventional euphemism "annexation" (*heigo*).⁴⁸ These were the first such clear-cut admissions by a postwar Japanese prime minister.

Hosokawa's statements prompted a powerful reaction from the right. In the autumn, a group of LDP politicians established the Committee for the Examination of History. Approximately one hundred LDP Diet members joined, including future prime ministers Hashimoto Ryutaro and Mori Yoshiro. They agreed that they would launch new textbook attacks and provide scholars with funds in order to disseminate the view of history that affirms the "Great East Asian War."⁴⁹

Hosokawa resigned in April 1994, succeeded by Hata Tsutomu of the Shinseito, a new party comprised of politicians having parted from the LDP. In the climate of political uncertainty, neonationalist politicians became more vocal. For example, in May, Justice Minister Nagano Shigeto denied the Nanjing Massacre and rejected charges that Japan had committed aggression. Nagano was sacked for his remarks, but the Hata administration collapsed soon afterwards when the SP left the coalition.—

In June, the LDP returned to power in a three-party coalition government with the SP and the Sakigake (another small new party). The coalition was a compromise for both the SP and the LDP, with both moving toward the center. Murayama Tomiichi of the SP became Prime Minister. Murayama announced the SP's abandonment of many long-held oppositional positions on postwar political issues, including opposition to the US-Japan Security Treaty, to the Self Defense Force, and to the Hinomaru flag and the Kimigayo anthem,⁵⁰ both of the latter associated with war and the emperor. For its part, the LDP agreed to co-sponsor a Diet resolution apologizing to Asian victims of Japan's past aggression to be issued on the fiftieth anniversary of Japan's surrender.⁵¹

The LDP's right factions sharply criticized this Diet resolution and several cabinet members and influential politicians publicly denied wartime aggression. Neonationalist politicians, either belonging to LDP or opposition parties, worked to block the resolution of apology, objecting to inclusion of such key terms as "Japan's war of aggression" and "Japan's colonial rule of Korea." The terms were eventually included in indirect ways. The Lower House passed the resolution in June 1995, to the anger of the LDP right. The LDP leadership decided not to submit it to the Upper House—so now both the left and the right were left unhappy.⁵² On 15 August 1995, Prime Minister Murayama issued a statement—with Cabinet backing—which is widely regarded as the fullest Japanese apology for crimes of colonialism and war.⁵³

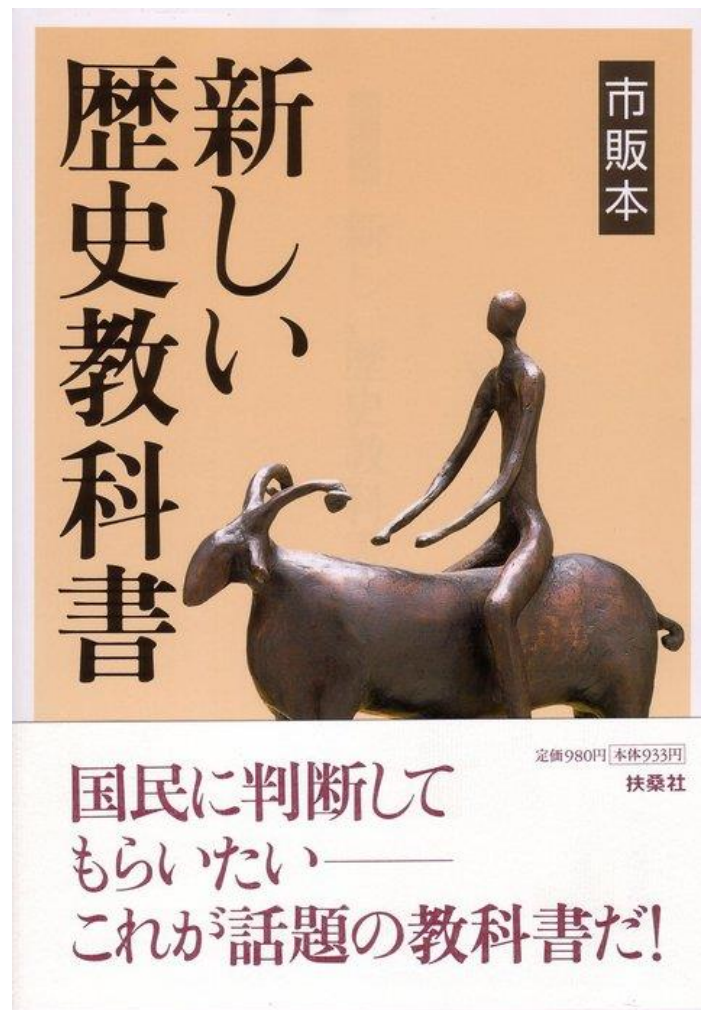
In the midst of these struggles, however, the SP lost a significant number of seats in the Upper House election in July. In January 1996, Murayama resigned, succeeded by Hashimoto Ryutaro of the LDP (a weakened SP remained in the coalition).⁵⁴ Neonationalist politicians and organizations began the offensive on history textbooks which continues today. In particular, in 1996, LDP hawks attacked textbook references to comfort women as one-sided and historically inaccurate, and demanded reform of the textbook screening system. Hawks in Shinshinto, another new party formed in 1994, joined the attack.

Once again, the onslaught on textbooks provided young LDP hawks visibility. In 1997, one hundred and seven Diet members born in the postwar period formed the Group of Young Diet Members Concerned with Japan's Future and History Education (Nihon no Zento to Rekishi Kyoiku o Kangaeru Wakategiin no Kai), with Nakagawa Shoichi as Representative and Abe Shinzo as Secretary General, to study the issue of comfort women and history education.⁵⁵ Pressures mounted to remove textbook references to comfort women.⁵⁶

The Attack on Comfort Women in Textbooks, Self-Censorship of Publishers, and Tsukurukai's New History Textbook

In the mid-1990s, the neonationalist crusade attracted public and media interest. Fujioka Nobukatsu, professor of education at the University of Tokyo, in 1995 inaugurated the "Liberal-View-of-History Study Group" (*Jiyushugi shikan kenkyukai*). In journals for teachers as well as in the conservative media, notably *Sankei Shinbun*, Fujioka and his colleagues excoriated postwar history education and history textbooks as "masochistic" (*jigyakuteki*) and lacking "pride in the history of our nation."

In late 1996, Fujioka and others established *Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho o Tsukurukai* (The Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform, hereafter Tsukurukai), announcing plans to publish "a new history textbook" for junior high schools in 2002. Indeed, they entitled the text *Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho (New History Textbook)*.⁵⁷ At the same time, Tsukurukai attacked the existing junior high-school history textbooks, with the fiercest criticisms directed toward references to the Nanjing Massacre and comfort women.⁵⁸



Tsukurukai's New History Textbook

The 2000-2001 textbook screening (and subsequent adoption) processes involved the most openly contentious textbook struggles in recent times—and perhaps in the entire postwar period. Neonationalists, while divided over a range of social, political, and educational issues, joined in support of two closely related goals: attacking existing texts to force revisions, and developing a nationalist history textbook for junior high schools that would be authorized by the state and adopted by local school districts.

The first goal was achieved quickly. In the spring of 2000, when publishers submitted final drafts of the 2002 textbooks for approval to the MOE, many descriptions concerning Japanese wartime atrocities had been cut back or removed altogether. Given the climate of neonationalist fervor, and having been attacked publicly by politicians and civic groups such as Tsukurukai and informally pressured by the administration, publishers exercised “self-censorship.”⁵⁹

The most striking change was the near total erasure from textbooks of the comfort women issue that had been introduced in the early 1990s. In the previous 1997 editions, all seven junior high history textbooks on the market mentioned the issue; in the 2002 editions, three of these texts dropped all references and three others made very brief reference without using the controversial term “comfort women.” Just one text retained the language and expanded discussion from the

previous edition. While the treatment of the comfort women issue best illustrates the shift, the 2002 editions also altered or eliminated descriptions of other Japanese wartime atrocities.⁶⁰ These changes remain more or less intact in the 2006 editions.

The second goal of securing production and adoption of the *New History Textbook* gave rise to national and international controversy. First, the text was not only chauvinistic but contained basic inaccuracies, to the chagrin of historians, educators, and the public. South Korea, China, and other Asian nations vociferously protested. Even a member of the Textbook Screening Council raised serious questions. However, the MOE approved the text on condition that the authors make more than one hundred and thirty corrections. While declaring its neutrality, the MOE stated that it would be the responsibility of local school boards to decide which textbook to adopt. For the first time in postwar Japanese textbook controversies, the adoption process (i.e. textbook market) became the site of fierce struggle.

In the end, the market share of the text was 0.039 percent (a total of 543 copies used in schools as textbooks) in the spring of 2002. As Tsukurukai's goal was 10 percent of market share, this was regarded as a failure. The group revised the text and resubmitted it to the 2004-2005 textbook screening, and the MOE approved it; still, its market share remained small, 0.39 percent (4,912 copies adopted in the spring of 2006).

Recent Developments

In recent years, with its membership in decline in the early 2000s, Tsukurukai strengthened its ties with rightwing political and religious organizations and with LDP hawks. Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichiro promoted the young nationalist Abe Shinzo to positions with increasing responsibility. In September 2006, when Koizumi retired from office following a huge electoral victory for the LDP, Abe succeeded him and was able to pass a number of laws that had been the agenda of the right for years, including the revision of the Fundamental Law of Education.⁶¹

The comfort women controversy continued to flare both domestically and internationally. In the spring of 2007 Abe was at the center of an international controversy following statements negating the 1993 Kono statement on the comfort women, and specifically denying direct use of force by Japanese military in procuring women. The international furor forced Abe to retreat, but not before his remarks spurred passage of the resolution submitted by US Congressman Michael Honda calling on the Japanese government to genuinely apologize to the comfort women.⁶² Indeed, the issue of comfort women was at the center of the Abe-Bush dialogue during his April 2007 visit to Washington. Abe apologized to the US president—but not to the comfort women themselves—for the wartime system. The comfort women issue thus had the effect not only of poisoning Japan's relations with China, South Korea and other Asian nations, but extended to the US-Japan relationship. In the summer of 2007, MOE censorship of the Japanese military's compulsion of Okinawan suicides in the Battle of Okinawa in history textbooks provoked fierce protests from Okinawans across the political spectrum leading to the largest demonstration in Okinawa since the 1972 reversion.⁶³

In these months, Abe's popularity rapidly declined, primarily over missing pension funds in the state social security system and corruption scandals in his cabinet. In August, the LDP lost control of the Upper House to the Minshuto (Democratic Party) and in September Abe resigned and was succeeded by Fukuda Yasuo. Fukuda's tenure again proved to be short. He was succeeded by Aso Taro in September 2008, and the LDP now faces a general (Lower House)

election by autumn 2009. The changes in LDP Prime Ministers resulted in no shift in official position on textbook issues.⁶⁴ It remains to be seen whether Minshuto will succeed in ousting the LDP from power and bringing a new attitude toward intra- and inter-national politics on issues of war memories.

Textbook Controversies in Comparative Perspective: Concluding Thoughts

In a 1997 statement, a leader of the LDP young hawks aptly noted, “school textbooks affect Japan’s identity.”⁶⁵ Citizens of a modern nation, including students, construct identities in part by reading school textbooks—though surely in more complex and convoluted ways than the young LDP leader seems to assume. Rightwing nationalist attacks on history textbooks in postwar Japan have repeatedly attempted to strengthen the social, political, and moral superiority of those holding nationalist beliefs and to shape, or limit, the perspectives available in the texts and in society. Struggles fought over textbooks, and more generally education, have been central to the political conflicts of the postwar era.

At each moment of the three epochs examined here, the nation faced political struggles for power and shifting international geopolitics, which were reflective of sea changes in the world order: the early Cold War (the first attack), regional detente and peace in Asia (the second wave), and the post-Cold War and the beginning of a new world order (the last and continuing controversy). Japan was in the early stage of rapid economic growth in 1955, at the point of achieving economic maturity and external expansion in the late 1970s and 1980s, and facing recession and slow recovery in the 1990s to the present.

In each epoch, nationalists launched attacks on textbooks, following political setbacks of the dominant power bloc or the ruling party. In 1955, when conservatives failed to gain enough Diet seats to amend the 1946 Constitution, the battleground shifted to school textbooks. Beginning in 1979 and continuing in the early 1980s, the LDP, experiencing disarray and factional strife, launched the second round of textbook attacks. In the mid-1990s, after neonationalists failed to stop the Diet resolution of apology and the fullest apology for the Asia Pacific War by a Prime Minister, they shifted the target to school textbooks by ferociously attacking references to comfort women.

Because the issues of war memories speak directly to Japanese nationalism and to Japan’s international relations, the consequences of textbook controversies reach beyond local schools and Japanese national politics to regional and global politics.⁶⁶ While there are recent signs of the global impact of some of these controversies, as indicated by the passage of the US House resolution on the comfort women in 2007,⁶⁷ the most explosive consequences of the controversies discussed here are regional: at a time when Japan with both China and South Korea has embarked on dynamic economic relationships, and when talk of ASEAN +3 is in the air, textbook nationalism and the controversies it sparks directly threaten the possibilities for regional harmony, and add fuel to other conflicts such as the territorial disputes over the Senkaku/Diaoyutai islands and Dokdo/Takeshima.



Map showing contested areas including Senkakus and Takeshima (Liancourt Rocks)

The comfort women is merely the most politically explosive of the textbook controversies that have long articulated with, and inflamed, historical memory issues in ways that exacerbate contemporary international conflicts involving Japan, Korea, China, and the United States. Although it may well be the case that the forces most effectively countering Japan's nationalist historical revisionism have been the nationalisms of other nations,⁶⁸ we would like to stress that Japanese textbook authors and civic groups working from peace and justice perspectives have constantly fought against the nationalist tide for over more than half a century. There is a need, and a possibility, for people in Japan and other nations to transcend nation-state boundaries and chauvinistic perspectives to humanely address the issues of historical memory and education.⁶⁹

This article is slightly revised from the authors' "Historical Memory, International Conflict, and Japanese Textbook Controversies in Three Epochs, Contexts: The Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society, 1, no. 1 (2009): 117-144. We thank Hanna Schissler, Michael Geyer, Prasenjit Duara, David Williams, and an anonymous reviewer for their comments on earlier versions.

Yoshiko Nozaki is an associate professor in the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy, the University at Buffalo (SUNY-Buffalo) and an Asia-Pacific Journal Associate. She is the author of [War Memory, Nationalism, and Education in Postwar Japan, 1945-2007: The Japanese history textbook controversy and Ienaga Saburo's court challenges](#) and numerous works on education and historical memory. She is co-author with Hiromitsu Inokuchi of [What U.S. Middle School Students Bring to Global Education: Discourses on Japan, Formation of American Identities, and the Sociology of Knowledge and Curriculum](#).

Mark Selden is a Senior Research Associate at Cornell University and an Asia-Pacific Journal coordinator. He is the coeditor, with Laura Hein, of [Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany and the United States](#).

Notes

¹ In this study, we examine Japanese rightwing nationalism and nationalists with particular reference to historical memory and textbook controversies. We also use the term “neonationalism” to refer to nationalism of the political right from the mid-1990s to the present-day. The positions taken by political parties, groups, and figures in that power bloc vary from moderate conservatism to something akin to fascism. We note that nationalism of the left has also existed; however, it is beyond the scope of the present study. On Japanese leftwing nationalism see, for example, Oguma Eiji, “*Minshu*” to “*aikoku*”: *Sengo nihon no nashonarizumu to kokyosei* [“Democracy” and “patriotism”: Nationalism and the sense of public in postwar Japan] (Tokyo: Shinyosha, 2002).

² Charles Ingrao, “Weapons of Mass Instruction: How Schoolbooks and Democratization Destroyed Multiethnic Central Europe,” (Paper presented at the Department of History Symposium at the University of Chicago “History Textbooks and the Profession: Comparing National Controversies in a Globalizing Age,” 2007).

³ An educational/curriculum policy has at least two important facets: instrumental rationality and value (e.g. its impact upon the way schools operate, including teaching and learning) and symbolic function in the realm of politics (e.g. its political effects). Although these two facets interact in actual events, we should not conflate them. In other words, regardless of the impact of curriculum policy on raising students’ level of knowledge, its political function should be examined. See Herbert Kliebard, “Vocational Education as Symbolic Action: Connecting Schooling with the Workplace,” in *Forging the American Curriculum: Essays in Curriculum History and Theory*, (New York: Routledge, 1992).

⁴ Note that, although its main structure has remained more or less intact, details and procedures of the postwar textbook system have constantly evolved through ministerial announcements and regulations.

⁵ In 2000, the MOE became the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology. We use the abbreviation MOE throughout this article.

⁶ Who actually makes decisions is not entirely clear. In the past, more often than not, the Council acted as a rubber-stamp. MOE technically has the final say, though such cases have rarely been reported.

⁷ The examiners are ministerial employees, and the members of the council are appointees.

⁸ For further discussion of the textbook screening system, see Yoshiko Nozaki and Hiromitsu Inokuchi, “Japanese Education, Nationalism, and Ienaga Saburo’s Textbook Lawsuits,” in Laura Hein and Mark Selden, eds, *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States* (Armonk: M. E. Sharp, 2000), 96-126; and Yoshiko Nozaki, *War Memory, Nationalism, and Education in Postwar Japan, 1945-2007: The Japanese History Textbook Controversy and Ienaga Saburo’s Court Challenges* (London: Routledge, 2008).

⁹ See also Yoshiko Nozaki, "The Defeat, Educational Reforms, and History Textbooks in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952," in Mark E. Caprio and Yoneyuki Sugita, eds, *Democracy in Occupied Japan: The U.S. Occupation and Japanese Politics and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 120-146.

¹⁰ Hatoyama was a former parliamentarian and Education Minister in the years 1931-34. Yoshida was Ambassador to Rome and London in the 1930s, and, with Hatoyama, a member of a group that pressed for an end to the war in early 1945.

¹¹ Under the 1946 constitution, the power of the lower house surpasses that of the upper house in several important ways.

¹² Hara Yoshihisa, *Sengoshi no nakano shakaito* [The Japan socialist party in postwar history] (Tokyo: Chuokoron shinsha, 2000), 106-107.

¹³ Ishii, a former music teacher and JTU official, was dismissed by the JTU in 1954 when he publicly charged JTU leaders with corruption. The JTU counterattacked that he was paid by the MOE and LP. See Mainichi Shinbunsha Kyoiku Shuzaihan, *Kyokasho senso: Seiji to bijinesu no hazama* [Textbook war: Between politics and business] (Tokyo: Sanichi Shobo, 1981), 21-25.

¹⁴ "Social Studies" was a new subject created during the occupation by integrating three subject matters of history, geography, and civics. See Nozaki, *War Memory*.

¹⁵ Tokutake Toshio, *Kyokasho no sengoshi* [History of postwar textbooks] (Tokyo: Shinihon shuppansha. Tokutake, 1995), 90.

¹⁶ Kliebard, "Vocational Education," 184.

¹⁷ The 1955 regime provided societal stability (and people's consciousness) for Japan's economic growth in 1960. It is, however, beyond the scope of this article to examine the Japanese textbook struggles in relation to its economy. For Japan's postwar economic history, see Hashimoto Juro, *Sengo no nihon keizai* [Japan's postwar economy] (Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 1995).

¹⁸ For example, Koyama Iwao became a member of the Textbook Screening Council in 1955 and Murao Jiro became a textbook examiner in 1956. Koyama, a philosopher of the Kyoto school, played a key part in rejecting many history textbooks in the late 1950s. He held the position until 1967. He continued to serve on the MOE's Course of Study Committee. Murao was a graduate from the University of Tokyo and a student of Hiraizumi Kiyoshi (the most well known historian of emperor-centered view of history). Murao became the main figure rejecting Ienaga Saburo's history textbook. After his retirement in 1975, he served as general editor for a high school history textbook, which, in 1987, became the first postwar rightwing text approved by the MOE.

¹⁹ Only at a limited number of institutions, such as Tokyo Imperial University (the predecessor of the University of Tokyo), were researchers able to continue to conduct empirical research, and they had to be extremely cautious about publishing their findings. See, for example, Ienaga Saburo, *Ichii rekishigakusha no ayumi* [The way of one historian] (Tokyo: Sanshodo, 1977), 94-121. Available in Richard H. Minear's translation as *Japan's Past, Japan's Future: One Historian's Odyssey* (Lanham MD: Rowman Littlefield, 2001).

²⁰ Their comments on history textbooks were compiled and recorded by the publishing industry workers association, which later became a union Japan Federation of Publishing Workers' Union

(*Nihon shuppan rodokumiai rengokai*). The union publishes an annual report *Kyokasho Repoto* featuring textbook screening results and the names of MOE's Textbook Screening Council members and the textbook examiners.

²¹ This and subsequent quotes are from Tawara Yoshifumi, "Nankin daigyakusatsu jiken to rekishikyokasho mondai" [The Nanjing massacre and history textbook issues], in Akira Fujiwara (Ed.), *Nankin jiken o do miruka* (Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1998), 116-131.

²² Tawara, "Nankin daigyakusatsu," 120.

²³ Nozaki, *War Memory*.

²⁴ For further discussion on Ienaga's court challenges, see Nozaki, *War Memory*.

²⁵ [Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), "Japan Fact Sheet, Economy: Japan's Economy in An Era of Globalization," *Web Japan*, (accessed 5 February 2008), 2.

²⁶ When measured in US dollars, the Japanese economy was less than one seventh the size of the US economy in 1965, approximately one fifth in 1970, two fifths in 1980, more than half in 1990, and approximately two thirds in 1993. Hashimoto, *Sengo no nihonkeizai*, 36 & 213.

²⁷ Tokutake, *Kyokasho no sengoshi*, 195.

²⁸ On the Yuzuru controversy see [Takashima Nobuyushi](#), "Literature, Ideology and Japan's Revised Education Law: Kinoshita Junji's Yuzuru," *Japan Focus*.

²⁹ Eventually Ienaga brought the case to court in 1984, in his third textbook lawsuit.

³⁰ Ienaga Saburo, "*Misshitsu*" *kentei no kiroku* [The record of textbook screening behind "closed doors"] (Tokyo: Kyokasho Kentei Sosho o Shiensuru Zenkokurenrakukai, 1983), 61-65. Daqing Yang offers a thoughtful assessment of the reasons for the massacre in "Atrocities in Nanjing: Searching for Explanations," in Diana Lary and Stephen MacKinnon, eds, *Scars of Warfare on Modern China* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001), 76-97. See also Fujiwara Akira, "The Nanking Atrocity: An Interpretive Overview," in Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, ed., *The Nanking Atrocity 1937-38: Complicating the Picture* (London: Berghahn Books, 2007).

³¹ Mainichi Shinbunsha Kyoiku Shuzaihan, *Kyokasho senso*, 11-13.

³² For a detailed discussion of forced suicide in an Okinawan island, see Matthew Allen, "Wolves and Tigers: Remembering the Kumejima Massacres," in *Identity and Resistance in Okinawa* (London: Routledge, 2002), 27-52.

³³ Eguchi Keiichi, "Kyokasho mondai to okinawasen: Nihongun niyoru kenmin satsugai o chushin ni" [The textbook controversy and the battle of Okinawa: On the description of the murder of Okinawans by Japanese forces], in Fujiwara Akira, ed., *Okinawasen to tennosei* (Tokyo: Rippu Shobo, 1987), 223-254. See also, [Aniya Masaaki](#), "Compulsory Mass Suicide, the Battle of Okinawa, and Japan's Textbook Controversy," *Japan Focus*.

³⁴ Nozaki and Inokuchi, "Japanese Education," 96-126.

³⁵ Although the media reported that the term "aggression" was replaced with "advance" in the section of the textbooks treating Japanese invasion of northern China, in fact the replacement had taken place previously in the 1960s and 1970s.

³⁶ Tokutake, *Kyokasho no sengoshi*, 201-203.

³⁷ Allen, "Wolves and Tigers," 27-55.

³⁸ Eguchi, "Kyokasho mondai," 232-233

³⁹ "Seifu Kenkai: Kanbochokan danwa" [The government position: The chief cabinet secretary's unwritten statement], 27 August 1982, *Asahi Shinbun*, 1. Miyazawa's statement appeared in the form of a *danwa*, an official but unwritten statement of the government position.

⁴⁰ "Rekishu kyokasho nitsuiteno bunso danwa" [The education minister's unwritten statement on history textbooks], 24 November 1982, *Asahi Shinbun*, 14.

⁴¹ It is somewhat ironic that history textbooks became more progressive under Nakasone's watch. However, he implemented other educational reforms that directly impacted schools, and scholars are divided in their appraisals of the reform results. For further discussion, see, for example, Leonard James Schoppa, *Education Reform in Japan: A Case of Immobilist Politics* (London: Routledge, 1991); Christopher Hood, *Japanese Education Reform: Nakasone's Legacy* (London: Routledge, 2001); and Roger Goodman and David Phillips, eds, *Can the Japanese Change Their Education System* (Oxford: Symposium Books).

⁴² See Nagano Tsuneo, "'Shinpen nihonshi' jiken nitsuite" [On the event of the *New Edition History*], in Kakinuma Masayoshi and Nagano Tsuneo eds, *Kyokasho ronso o koete* (Tokyo: Hihyosha, 1998), 133-146. See also a number of articles published in *Kyokasho Repoto*, 31 (1987).

⁴³ In this study, we employ the term "comfort women" (hereafter without quotation marks) because it is the term that has been most often used, though we are fully aware of inadequacy of it (i.e., speaking of these women's experiences as "comfort"). The nationalists made it extremely controversial what terms should be used to name these women. See [Yoshiko Nozaki](#), "The 'Comfort Women' Controversy: History and Testimony," *Japan Focus*.

⁴⁴ Yoshimi Yoshiaki, *Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military During World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000). See also Yuki Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women. Sexual Slavery and Prostitution During World War II and the US Occupation* (London: Routledge, 2002).

⁴⁵ "Jugun ianfu chosakekka nikansuru kanbochokan danwa" [Chief cabinet secretary's unwritten statement on the results of the investigation into war comfort women], 5 August 1993, *Asahi Shinbun*, 2.

⁴⁶ The breakdown of the 1955 regime took place against the background of the collapse of Japan's "bubble economy" in the late 1980s leading to a prolonged recession from which signs of recovery only became clear in the mid 2000s. During these years, the Japanese economy experienced intensified globalization, including the shift of manufacturing production overseas, resulting in uneven distribution of benefits and damage across the nation. Although we can assume that the economic stagnation has had some connection to the rise of neonationalism, we would like to leave the analysis for the future study.

⁴⁷ "Hosokawa shusho kishakaiken no yoshi" [An outline of a press conference of Prime Minister Hosokawa], 11 August 1993, *Asahi Shinbun*, 3.

⁴⁸ “Shusho no shoshin hyomei enzetsu” [The prime minister’s address on his positions], *Asahi Shinbun*, 23 August 1993, *Asahi Shinbun*, 3.

⁴⁹ The committee reached its conclusion and disbanded in February 1995.

⁵⁰ The treatment of the Hinomaru and the Kimigayo in schools has been one of the major fronts of postwar struggles between the left and the right, or progressives and nationalists. Not until 1999 did they become the national flag and anthem respectively. Since 1999, the MOE in practice made hoisting the flag and singing the anthem mandatory at school ceremonies. In Spring 2004, the Tokyo Prefectural Education Board, whose members are appointed by Governor Ishihara Shintaro, punished more than 200 teachers who acted against the policy at the graduation ceremony. See N. Ikezoe, “Tokyoi no sessoku tairyo shobun ni hirogaru hamon” [A growing stir at the large scale, quick punishment by the Tokyo education board], *Shukan Kinyobi* 504 (16 April 2004), 22. For further discussion, [Adam Lebowitz and David McNeill](#), “Hammering Down the Educational Nail: Abe Revises the Fundamental Law of Education,” *Japan Focus*.

⁵¹ Wada Haruki, Ishizaki Koichi, and the Sengo Gojunen Kokkai Ketsugi o Motomerukai, eds, *Nihon wa shokuminchi shihai o do kangaete kitaka* [How Japan has reflected on colonial domination], (Tokyo: Nashinokisha, 1996).

⁵² Wada et al., *Nihon wa*.

⁵³ An English translation of the Murayama statement “On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the war’s end” (15 August 1995) is available, at the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan](#), (accessed 5 February 2008).

⁵⁴ At its convention in January 1996 immediately after Murayama’s resignation, the SP changed its name to Shakai-minshuto (abbreviated as Shaminto; Social Democratic Party, SDP). In September, approximately half of its lower house members left the party to join a new party Minshuto (Democratic Party). In the lower house election in the same month, SDP gained only 15 seats, losing its position as the major opposition party to Minshuto.

⁵⁵ *Nihon no Zento to Rekishi Kyoiku o Kangaeru Wakategiin no Kai*, ed., *Rekishi kyokasho heno gimon* [Questions for history textbooks] (Tokyo: Tentensha, 1997).

⁵⁶ The LDP appealed successfully to parents concerned about teaching about the sex and prostitution in schools.

⁵⁷ Tsukurukai succeeded in developing a textbook entitled *New History Textbook* and obtaining MOE authorization for it. For a discussion of flaws in the draft text, see [“Fact Sheet Concerning New History Textbook.”](#) *Critical Asian Studies*, (accessed 5 February 2008). Interestingly, the draft submitted to the MOE contained a line “History is not a science” (a language similar to one used by the MOE in the 1950s and 1960s to order a history revision); however, during the screening process, the line was dropped, apparently at MOE request.

⁵⁸ For discussion of attack on textbooks in light of the comfort women controversy, see Nozaki, “The ‘Comfort Women.’”

⁵⁹ Tawara Yoshifumi, "Kenpo ihan shinryaku senso kotei no 'abunai kyokasho' no jittai" [The reality of ideologically 'dangerous textbooks' that affirm aggressive war and that violate the constitution], *Senso Sekinin Kenkyu* 30, 37.

⁶⁰ For further discussion, see Yoshiko Nozaki, "Japanese Politics and the History Textbook Controversy, 1945-2001," in Edward Vickers and Alisa Jones, ed.s, *History Education and National Identity in East Asia* (London: Routledge, 2005), 295.

⁶¹ See Lebowitz and McNeill, "Hammering Down." For an update on Tsukurukai, see Nozaki, *War Memory*, 148-149.

⁶² Extensive reports on the comfort women controversy at *Japan Focus* include the following: [Congressional Research Service](#), "Japan's Military 'Comfort Women,'" [Violence Against Women in War-NET Japan](#), "Responsibility Denied: Japan's Debate Over the Comfort Women;"

[Tessa Morris-Suzuki](#), "Japan's 'Comfort Women': It's time for the truth (in the ordinary, everyday sense of the word;"

[Alexis Dudden and Kozo Mizoguchi](#), "Abe's Violent Denial: Japan's Prime Minister and the 'Comfort Women,'"

[Norma Field](#), "The Courts, Japan's 'Military Comfort Women,' and the Conscience of Humanity: The Ruling in VAWW-Net Japan v. NHK;" and

[Hayashi Hirofumi](#), "Government, the Military and Business in Japan's Wartime Comfort Woman System."

⁶³ [Kawabata Shun'ichi and Kitazawa Yuki](#), "A Story That Won't Fade Away: Compulsory Mass Suicide in the Battle of Okinawa," *Japan Focus*.

⁶⁴ For example, as of December 2007, MOE's position on the description of Okinawan suicides in the Battle of Okinawa was to allow textbook authors to refer to "the involvement of Japanese forces" but not "coercion by Japanese forces." See Ishiyama Hisao, "Futatabi Okinawa o uragitta monbukagakusho: Kyokasho kentei 'shudan jiketsu'" [MOE betray Okinawans again: Textbook screening of "mass suicides"], *Shukan Kinyobi* 686, January 18, 2008, 17-19.

⁶⁵ Statement by Nakagawa Shoichi at the young neonationalist Diet members' meeting on 27 February 1997, quoted in Tawara Yoshifumi, "*Ianfu*" *mondai to kyokasho kogeiki: dokyumento* [The issues of "comfort women" and the attacks on textbooks: A document] (Tokyo: Kobunken, 1997), 38.

⁶⁶ Perhaps surprisingly, the Japanese textbook controversy does not appear to have tapped directly into the related sensitive issues of minorities and migration, despite the fact that Koreans and Chinese comprise the largest group of migrants and other controversies swirl over their presence in Japan.

⁶⁷ Another global dimension is the continuing discussion of comfort women issues at the United Nation's human rights committee.

⁶⁸ Comments by Prasenjit Duara at the Department of History Symposium at the University of Chicago "History Textbooks and the Profession: Comparing National Controversies in a Globalizing Age," 2007.

⁶⁹ A major gap in the literature, and an important area for future research, derives from the nearly exclusive focus on textbook content and lack of discussion of whether and how the issues of war and empire are taken up in the classroom. To be sure, whether or not the textbook policies and struggles have had impact upon actual classroom teaching and learning cannot be conflated with their effects in the realm of politics. Equally important for grasping popular understanding of the issue is its treatment in manga, anime, film, literature and other expressions of popular culture (e.g. the most influential neonationalist manga such as Kobayashi Yoshinori, *Sensoron* [On War] (Tokyo: Gentosha, 1998). See Rumi Sakamoto, “‘Will you go to war? Or will you stop being Japanese?’ Nationalism and History in Kobayashi Yoshinori’s *Sensoron*,” in Michael Heazle and Nick Knight, eds, *China-Japan Relations in the Twenty-first Century. Creating a Future Past?* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2007); [Matthew Penney](#), “Nationalism and Anti-Americanism in Japan – Manga Wars, Aso, Tamogami, and Progressive Alternatives,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal*.

Bibliography

Allen, Matthew, “Wolves and Tigers: Remembering the Kumejima Massacres,” in *Identity and Resistance in Okinawa*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002, 27-52.

[Aniya, Masaaki](#), “Compulsory Mass Suicide, the Battle of Okinawa, and Japan’s Textbook Controversy,” *Japan Focus*.

[Congressional Research Service](#), “Japan’s Military ‘Comfort Women,’” *Japan Focus*.

[Dudden, Alexis, and Kozo Mizoguchi](#), “Abe’s Violent Denial: Japan’s Prime Minister and the ‘Comfort Women,’” *Japan Focus*.

Eguchi, Keiichi, “Kyokasho mondai to okinawasen: Nihongun niyoru kenmin satsugai o chushin ni” [The textbook controversy and the battle of Okinawa: On the description of the murder of Okinawans by Japanese forces], in Fujiwara Akira, ed., *Okinawasen to tennosei*, Tokyo: Rippu Shobo, 1987, 223-254.

“Fact Sheet Concerning *New History Textbook*,” *Critical Asian Studies*, http://www.bcasnet.org/campaigns/campaign1_b2.htm.

[Field, Norma](#), “The Courts, Japan’s ‘Military Comfort Women,’ and the Conscience of Humanity: The Ruling in VAWW-Net Japan v. NHK,” *Japan Focus*.

Fujiwara, Akira, “The Nanking Atrocity: An Interpretive Overview,” in Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, ed., *The Nanking Atrocity 1937-38: Complicating the Picture*, London: Berghahn, 2007, 29-54.

Hara, Yoshihisa, *Sengoshi no nakano shakaito* [The Japan socialist party in postwar history], Tokyo: Chuokoron shinsha, 2000.

Hashimoto, Juro, *Sengo no nihon keizai* [Japan’s postwar economy], Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 1995.

[Hayashi, Hirofumi](#), “Government, the Military and Business in Japan’s Wartime Comfort Woman System,” *Japan Focus*.

Hood, Christopher, *Japanese Education Reform: Nakasone’s Legacy*, London: Routledge, 2001.

“Hosokawa shusho kishakaiken no yoshi” [An outline of a press conference of Prime Minister Hosokawa], 11 August 1993, *Asahi Shinbun*.

Goodman, Roger, and David Phillips, eds, *Can the Japanese Change Their Education System*, Oxford: Symposium Books, 2003.

Ienaga, Saburo, *Ichi rekishigakusha no ayumi* [The way of one historian], Tokyo: Sanshodo, 1977.

Ienaga, Saburo, *Japan's Past, Japan's Future: One Historian's Odyssey*, trans. Richard H. Minear, Lanham MD: Rowman Littlefield, 2001.

Ienaga, Saburo, “*Misshitsu*” *kentei no kiroku* [The record of textbook screening behind “closed doors”], Tokyo: Kyokasho Kentei Sosho o Shiensuru Zenkokurenrakukai, 1983.

Ikezoe, Noriaki, “Tokyoi no sessoku tairyo shobun ni hirogaru hamon” [A growing stir at the large scale, quick punishment by the Tokyo education board], *Shukan Kinyobi* 504, 16 April 2004.

Ingrao, Charles, “Weapons of Mass Instruction: How Schoolbooks and Democratization Destroyed Multiethnic Central Europe,” Paper presented at the Department of History Symposium at the University of Chicago “History Textbooks and the Profession: Comparing National Controversies in a Globalizing Age,” 2007.

Ishiyama, Hisao, “Futatabi Okinawa o uragitta monbukagakusho: Kyokasho kentei ‘shudan jiketsu’” [The ministry of education and science betrays Okinawans again: Textbook screening of “mass suicides”], *Shukan Kinyobi* 686, 18 January 2008.

“Jugun ianfu chosakekka nikansuru kanbochokan danwa” [Chief cabinet secretary’s unwritten statement on the results of the investigation into war comfort women], *Asahi Shinbun*, 5 August 1993.

[Kawabata, Shun’ichi and Kitazawa Yuki](#), “A Story That Won’t Fade Away: Compulsory Mass Suicide in the Battle of Okinawa,” *Japan Focus*.

Kliebard, Herbert M., “Vocational Education as Symbolic Action: Connecting Schooling with the Workplace,” in *Forging the American Curriculum: Essays in Curriculum History and Theory*, New York: Routledge, 1992, 183-201.

Kobayashi, Yoshinori, *Sensoron* [On War], Tokyo: Gentosha, 1998.

[Lebowitz, Adam, and David McNeill](#), “Hammering Down the Educational Nail: Abe Revises the Fundamental Law of Education,” *Japan Focus*.

Mainichi Shinbunsha Kyoiku Shuzaihan, *Kyokasho senso: Seiji to bijinesu no hazama* [Textbook war: Between politics and business], Tokyo: Sanichi Shobo, 1981.

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), “Japan Fact Sheet, Economy: Japan’s Economy in An Era of Globalization,” Web Japan.

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan](#), “On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the war’s end,” 15 August 1995, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[Morris-Suzuki, Tessa](#), “Japan’s ‘Comfort Women’: It’s time for the truth (in the ordinary, everyday sense of the word),” *Japan Focus*.

Nagano, Tsuneo, “‘Shinpen nihonshi’ jiken nitsuite” [On the event of the *New Edition History*], in Kakinuma Masayoshi and Nagano Tsuneo, eds, *Kyokasho ronso o koete*, Tokyo: Hihyosha, 1998, 133-146.

Nihon no Zento to Rekishi Kyoiku o Kangaeru Wakategiin no Kai, ed., *Rekishi kyokasho heno gimon* [Questions for history textbooks], Tokyo: Tentensha, 1997.

[Nozaki, Yoshiko](#), “The ‘Comfort Women’ Controversy: History and Testimony,” *Japan Focus*.

Nozaki, Yoshiko, “Japanese Politics and the History Textbook Controversy, 1945-2001,” in Edward Vickers and Alisa Jones, eds, *History Education and National Identity in East Asia*, London: Routledge, 2005, 275-305.

Nozaki, Yoshiko, “The Defeat, Educational Reforms, and History Textbooks in Occupied Japan, 1945-1952,” in Mark Caprio and Yoneyuki Sugita, eds, *Democracy in Occupied Japan: The U.S. Occupation and Japanese Politics and Society*, New York: Routledge, 2007, 120-146.

Nozaki, Yoshiko, *War Memory, Nationalism, and Education in Postwar Japan, 1945-2007: The Japanese History Textbook Controversy and Ienaga Saburo’s Court Challenges*, London: Routledge, 2008.

Nozaki, Yoshiko and Hiromitsu Inokuchi, “Japanese Education, Nationalism, and Ienaga Saburo’s Textbook Lawsuits,” in Laura Hein and Mark Selden, eds, *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States*, Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2000, 96-126.

Oguma, Eiji, “*Minshu*” to “*aikoku*”: *Sengo nihon no nashonarizumu to kokyosei* [“Democracy” and “patriotism”: Nationalism and the sense of public in postwar Japan], Tokyo: Shinyosha, 2002.

[Penney, Matthew](#), “Nationalism and Anti-Americanism in Japan – Manga Wars, Aso, Tamogami, and Progressive Alternatives,” *Japan Focus*.

“Rekishi kyokasho nitsuiteno bunso danwa” [The education minister’s unwritten statement on history textbooks], *Asahi Shinbun*, 24 November 1982.

Sakamoto, Rumi, “‘Will you go to war? Or will you stop being Japanese?’ Nationalism and History in Kobayashi Yoshinori’s *Sensoron*,” in Michael Heazle and Nick Knight, eds, *China-Japan Relations in the Twenty-first Century. Creating a Future Past?* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2007, 75-92.

Schoppa, Leonard J., *Education Reform in Japan: A Case of Immobilist Politics* London: Routledge, 1991.

“Seifu Kenkai: Kanbochokan danwa” [The government position: The chief cabinet secretary’s unwritten statement], *Asahi Shinbun*, 27 August 1982.

“Shusho no shoshin hyomei enzetsu” [The prime minister’s address on his positions], *Asahi Shinbun*, 23 August 1993.

[Takashima, Nobuyushi](#), “Literature, Ideology and Japan’s Revised Education Law: Kinoshita Junji’s Yuzuru,” *Japan Focus*.

Tanaka, Yuki, *Japan’s Comfort Women. Sexual Slavery and Prostitution during World War II and the US Occupation*, London: Routledge, 2002.

Tawara, Yoshifumi, “Nankin daigyakusatsu jiken to rekishikyokasho mondai” [The Nanjing massacre and history textbook issues], in Akira Fujiwara, ed., *Nankin jiken o do miruka*, Tokyo: Aoki shoten, 1998, 116-131.

Tawara, Yoshifumi, “Kenpo ihan shinryaku senso kotei no ‘abunai kyokasho’ no jittai” [The reality of ideologically ‘dangerous textbooks’ that affirm aggressive war and that violate the constitution], *Senso Sekinin Kenkyu* 30, 2000, 28-49.

Tawara, Yoshifumi, “*Ianfu*” mondai to kyokasho kogeiki: dokyumento [The issues of “comfort women” and the attacks on textbooks: A document], Tokyo: Kobunken, 1997.

Tokutake, Toshio, *Kyokasho no sengoshi* [History of postwar textbooks], Tokyo: Shinihon shuppansha.Tokutake, 1995.

[Violence Against Women in War-NET Japan](#), “Responsibility Denied: Japan’s Debate Over the Comfort Women,” *Japan Focus*.

Wada, Haruki, Ishizaki Koichi, and the Sengo Gojunen Kokkai Ketsugi o Motomerukai, eds, *Nihon wa shokuminchi shihai o do kangaete kitaka* [How Japan has reflected on colonial domination], Tokyo: Nashinokisha, 1996.

Yoshimi, Yoshiaki, *Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military During World War II*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.

Yang, Daqing, “Atrocities in Nanjing: Searching for Explanations,” in Diana Lary and Stephen MacKinnon, eds, *Scars of Warfare on Modern China*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2001, 76-97.

The Tokyo Tribunal, Justice Pal and the Revisionist Distortion of History

Nakajima Takeshi¹

I. The Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal and Historical Revisionism in Post-War Japan

Since the mid 1990s, Japan's neonationalist forces have made important gains: in education, culture and politics, as manifested notably in the activation of the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform and the popularity of the best-selling comic book *Sensōron (On War)* by cartoonist Kobayashi Yoshinori.

Japanese historical revisionists have contrasted their approach with what they term the 'Tokyo Trial view of history' and the 'masochistic view of history'. These revisionists regard as 'masochistic' any characterisation of Japan's military advances in Asia during the pre-World War II period as an 'invasion'. And they claim a 'spell' lingering from the International Military Tribunal for the Far East ('Tokyo Tribunal') underlies this 'masochistic view of history'. Arguing that the Tokyo Tribunal created and disseminated a false perception of the Greater East Asia War as 'the war in which the liberal Allies defeated a fascist Japan', the revisionists hold that denouncing and rejecting the Tribunal is the key to shaking off this 'masochistic view of history'.

In their discourse on the denial of the Tribunal, revisionists frequently invoke the so-called 'Pal Judgment'. An Indian judge participating in the Tokyo Tribunal, Radhabinod Pal issued a Dissenting Opinion entitled *Dissentient Judgment of Justice Pal*, which asserted that all Japanese Class A defendants at the Trial were innocent of crimes. Since the Tribunal's language department omitted the category 'dissentient', the Opinion became widely known in Japan as the 'Pal Judgment'.

However, the Opinion is often presented without a thorough examination of its content. Instead, only the decontextualised conclusion — that the Japanese suspects were not guilty — is singled out. In 2007, I published *Pāru Hanji: Tōkyō Saiban hihan to zettai heiwa-shugi (Justice Pal: Criticism of the Tokyo Trial and Absolute Pacifism)* in order to draw attention to misreadings of the 'Pal Judgment'. While the book was well received, it also became a target of historical revisionists, such as Kobayashi Yoshinori, and was subjected to their severe bashing.

Based on this book, this article analyses Justice Pal's theory in his Dissenting Opinion and examines the philosophy behind it. I also introduce an overview of how Justice Pal's Opinion first became misinterpreted by Japanese historical revisionists, in order to explain how current revisionist discourse on the Opinion has been shaped.

II. Theory of Justice Pal's Dissenting Opinion

Based on the principle of non-retroactivity of law, Justice Pal, first of all, explicated his criticism of the Tribunal's ex post facto judgment in his Dissenting Opinion. He affirmed that the alleged 'conventional war crimes' by the Japanese defendants came within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal because they were already classified as crimes in pre-existing international law. However, Justice Pal opposed prosecution for 'crimes against peace', and 'crimes against humanity', as defined in the Tribunal's Charter,² because these crimes had no previous grounds in international law. If the defendants were to be found guilty of crimes which did not exist in international law when the alleged acts were actually executed, Pal said, then 'the Tribunal will not be a "judicial tribunal" but a mere tool for the manifestation of power'.³ He highlighted the distinction between justice and politics, and severely criticised the subjection of the Trial to the political goals of state leaders.



Justice Pal

Justice Pal objected to the introduction of an ex post facto law at the Tribunal because he believed that by ruling on ex post facto law, international society would not be bound by a common understanding against war. Instead, it would subscribe to an understanding that the victors of wars were entitled to judge the defeated while disregarding the rules of international law. Thus, he argued that if the Tokyo Tribunal invoked an ex post facto law it would eventually foment the expansion of wars of aggression and a breakdown of the foundation of international order, rather than lead toward the eradication of war. He stressed the importance of genuine legal processes and the establishment of the rule of law as follows:

Such a trial [a tribunal with ex post facto powers?] may justly create the feeling that the setting up of a tribunal like the present is much more a political than a legal affair, an essentially political objective having thus been cloaked by a juridical appearance. Formalized vengeance can bring only an ephemeral satisfaction, with every probability of ultimate regret; but vindication of law through *genuine legal process* alone may contribute substantially to the re-establishment of order and decency in international relations.⁴

He questioned the legitimacy of the Tokyo Charter, which was promulgated on 19 January 1946 and established the Tribunal. In addition to 'conventional war crimes', the Charter upheld new crimes that did not have a foundation in pre-existing international law: 'crimes against peace' and 'crimes against humanity'. Justice Pal denounced this charter as a transgression of the fundamental rules of international law. He said a charter establishing an international court, regardless of who sets it up or staffs it, 'does not define the crime but only specifies the acts the authors whereof are placed under the jurisdiction of the Tribunal'.⁵ He explained that the Tokyo Charter ought to decide merely what matters would come up for trial before the Tribunal.

Whether or not these acts constituted any crime should be left open for determination by the Tribunal with reference to the appropriate laws. From this point of view, he strongly condemned the Tokyo Charter as widely departing from the fundamental rule of jurisdiction.



The Justices (Pal on the left)

According to Justice Pal, the victors had the right to set up a special court, and therefore the establishment of a charter itself was not problematic; however, the victors had no right to legislate the creation of new crimes in international law.

He also said that the judges of the Tribunal were ‘competent to investigate the question whether any provision of the Charter is or is not *ultra vires*’⁶ in the reflection of international law, because the Charter of the Tribunal itself derives its authority from international law.

As a judge of the Tribunal, Justice Pal concluded that the provisions regarding ‘crimes against peace’ and ‘crimes against humanity’ were ex post facto laws and violated the prohibition on non-retroactivity in international law. Further, Pal examined the historical process on the ‘overall conspiracy’ which the prosecution defined as a premise of the alleged ‘crimes against peace’, and criticised the prosecutors’ arguments. He intended to prove that so-called ‘crimes against peace’ were invalid both from jurisprudential and historical perspectives.

Justice Pal, however, did not deny the legitimacy of the whole Tribunal. He affirmed the value of examining the alleged acts for ‘conventional war crimes’ that would come to the court. ‘A war’, he said, ‘whether legal or illegal, whether aggressive or defensive, is still a war to be regulated by the accepted rules of warfare. No pact, no convention has in any way abrogated *jus-in-bello*.’⁷

Justice Pal’s viewpoint on the Tokyo Tribunal was reflected in how he structured his Dissenting Opinion. ‘Pal’s Judgment’ consists of seven chapters: Part I, Preliminary Question of Law; Part II, What Is ‘Aggressive War’; Part III, Rules of Evidence and Procedure; Part IV, Over-all Conspiracy; Part V, Scope of Tribunal’s Jurisdiction; Part VI, War Crimes Stricto Sensu; and Part VII, Recommendation. An important point to note here is that he placed ‘Scope of Tribunal’s Jurisdiction’ after the chapter about the alleged ‘overall conspiracy’. In Part IV, which occupies the largest volume in the Opinion, he explained that the ‘overall conspiracy’, which was presented as a premise of ‘crimes against peace’ by the prosecution, was not established as a crime in international law. Therefore, the Indictment itself was invalid before the judgment on the question of innocence or guilt.

The only alleged acts by the Japanese defendants he saw as triable by the Tribunal from a genuine judicial point of view were ‘conventional war crimes’, because these crimes were defined in pre-existing international law at the time the alleged acts were carried out. Whether the accused were guilty or not would be open to the Tribunal, so he found no conflict in hearing the alleged acts at the Tribunal. This was the reason Pal clarified the scope of the Tribunal’s

jurisdiction before the section on 'conventional war crimes' and defined the scope of jurisdiction as extending back to the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95.

In Part VI, 'War Crimes *Stricto Sensu*', he examined the establishment of criminality in what he called the 'atrocities' conducted by the Japanese Imperial Army. Regarding the Nanjing Massacre, although he premised that wartime propaganda from hostile sources was blended in with the evidence submitted to the Tribunal, and therefore, it may not have been safe to accept the entire story, he concluded that the fact that atrocities were executed by the Imperial Army was unshakable. He said as follows:

Keeping in view everything that can be said against the evidence adduced in this case in this respect and making every possible allowance for propaganda and exaggeration, the evidence is still overwhelming that atrocities were perpetrated by the members of the Japanese armed forces against the civilian population of some of the territories occupied by them as also against the prisoners of war.⁸

And further:

Whatever that be, as I have already observed, even making allowance for everything that can be said against the evidence, there is no doubt that the conduct of the Japanese soldiers at Nanking [Nanjing] was atrocious and that such atrocities were intense for nearly three weeks and continued to be serious for a total of six weeks as was testified to by Dr. Bates.⁹

Justice Pal then continued to investigate whether the facts supporting the accusation that the Class A defendants ordered, authorised and permitted others to commit those acts, and such persons actually committed them; and if the facts supported the conclusion that the Class A defendants deliberately and recklessly disregarded their legal duty to take adequate steps to prevent the commission of such criminal acts.

On the first point, while characterising the alleged atrocities as 'devilish and fiendish', he concluded that no evidence of any alleged order, authorisation or permission had been found. He judged that the atrocities including the Nanjing Massacre were determined and executed by the Army soldiers on the ground, and that by the time he wrote his book, the people who were responsible for the acts had already been executed as Class B and Class C war criminals.

It should be remembered that in the majority of cases 'stern justice' has already been meted out by the several victor nations to the persons charged with having actually perpetrated these atrocious acts along with their immediate superiors. We have been given by the prosecution long lists of such convicts.¹⁰

And further:

But those who might have committed these terrible brutalities are not before us now. Those of them who could be got hold of alive have been made to answer for their misdeeds mostly with their lives.¹¹

On the issue of foul acts, for which the defendants would be found guilty if it were proven that the atrocities by Japan became intense and were carried out on a larger scale due to the defendants' 'intention' or 'negligence', Justice Pal said, 'these commanders [the Japanese

defendants] were legally bound to maintain discipline in the army and to restrain the soldiers under their command from perpetrating these atrocities'. He continued as follows:

It is true that a commanding officer is not liable for the acts of those in his command merely because he is their superior officer; but, because of his great control over them, he should be responsible for such acts of theirs which he could reasonably have prevented. He had the duty to take such appropriate measures as were in his power to control the troops under his command.¹²

However, Justice Pal concluded that the evidence submitted to the Tribunal was not sufficient to prove that the accused Class A suspects were criminally responsible for the acts of these troops.

It is a fact that Justice Pal strongly condemned the atrocities by the Japanese Imperial Army, including the Nanjing Massacre, as determined by facts. However, he concluded that the criminal responsibility of Japanese Class A suspects for the atrocities could not be proven due to a lack of evidence.

Justice Pal next took up Japan's 'maltreatment of prisoners of war'. In examining the alleged offences, he spent many pages on the cases of the Bataan Death March in the Philippines and the construction of the Burma–Thai Railway. He strongly denounced acts committed by the Army in both cases.

Regarding the Bataan Death March, he said it was 'really an atrocious brutality' and 'I do not think that the occurrence was at all justifiable'.¹³ Regarding the treatment of prisoners of war employed for the Burma–Thai Railway construction, which directly related to Japanese war operations, he said that the accused Tōjō Hideki, Japan's Prime Minister from October 1941 to July 1944, was 'fully responsible'.¹⁴ He also stated that their treatment of prisoners was 'inhuman'.¹⁵

He continued, though, by saying that the March was 'an isolated instance of cruelty'¹⁶ and that the employment of prisoners of war for the railway construction was a 'mere act of state',¹⁷ and eventually concluded that the evidence did not satisfy him that the alleged acts were conducted under the 'order, authorization or permission' of the accused.¹⁸ In other words, he concluded that the accused could not be found criminally liable due to the lack of evidence.

A point that should be noted is the difference in his argumentations for 'crimes against peace' and 'conventional war crimes'. Regarding 'crimes against peace', he presented his view that the charges were based on an *ex post facto* law. Additionally, the 'overall conspiracy' which the prosecution tried to establish as a premise for 'crimes against peace' was not found. Therefore, the Indictment for 'crimes against peace' itself was fundamentally not established. On the other hand, in the matter of the alleged offences of 'conventional war crimes', wherein Justice Pal approved the grounds in international law and approved of them being heard by the Tribunal, Pal investigated the alleged crimes in accordance with international law and eventually concluded that the evidence presented to the Tribunal was not sufficient to establish the criminal responsibility of the defendants for the accused acts.

III. Justice Pal's View on History and his Opinion on Legislation

In Part IV of his Dissenting Opinion, Justice Pal examined the alleged 'overall conspiracy'. The prosecution claimed that the defendants had conspired, and that the accused crimes were part of

Japan's overall plot to occupy Manchuria, the whole of China and eventually the entire world. While he criticised Japan's acts allegedly executed under the 'overall conspiracy' — including the Zhang Zuolin (Chang Tso-lin) Assassination Incident and Manchurian Incident in Japan's steps toward the Sino-Japanese War — Pal pointed out that Japan was an imitator of Western Imperialism and argued that both Japan and the Allied countries were morally responsible for their actions.

First, he took up the Zhang Zuolin Assassination Incident by the Japanese Kwantung Army, on 4 June 1928. The Incident was plotted by Kwantung Army officer Colonel Kawamoto Daisaku, and the leader of the Fengtian Army, warlord Zhang, was killed. Kawamoto had planned to conquer Manchuria by taking advantage of the confusion that would have occurred after the Incident. However, this failed as the chiefs of staff of the Kwantung Army were not informed of his plan. Moreover, the Fengtian Army did not respond to this provocation. In the Tokyo Tribunal, the prosecution claimed that the Incident was the first act in the defendants' 'overall conspiracy' in which they consistently and carefully planned and prepared acts or wars of aggression such as the Manchurian Incident, the Sino-Japanese War, up to and including the Greater East Asia War.¹⁹

Justice Pal disagreed with their claim. He said, 'Chang Tso-lin's murder was planned and executed by a certain group of Kwantung army officers. There is absolutely nothing to connect this plan or plot with the alleged conspiracy.'²⁰ He continued, '[p]lanning any murder and executing the same are certainly reprehensible by themselves. But we are not now trying any of the accused for that dastardly act of murder. We are to see what connection this story has with any relevant issue before us.'²¹

Having described the Zhang Zuolin Assassination Incident as a 'dastardly act of murder', he said that Kawamoto and others who were involved in it were 'reprehensible'.²² However, from a legal point of view, he stressed the necessity of proof to show the 'dastardly act' by the Army officers was a part of the 'overall conspiracy' by the accused Japanese leaders in Tokyo. After examining the evidence, he came to the conclusion that although it was true that many officers in the Kwantung Army intended to 'occupy Manchuria' at that time, the Incident was planned and executed by a limited group of people and the evidence given in the Tribunal failed to establish that there was an 'overall conspiracy' behind the Incident. He said the alleged 'crimes against peace' could not be established simply by connecting irrelevant cases to 'the whole story'.²³

What should be confirmed here is that although he argued the Incident was not a part of a 'conspiracy', he sharply criticised the Incident itself.

He next addressed the Manchurian Incident. He first discussed the Mukden Incident (or the Liutiaogou Incident), which occurred at the outset of the Manchurian Incident, and argued that it was difficult to determine from the evidence that the Mukden Incident was a conspiracy among the Japanese defendants in the Tokyo Tribunal. He said:

Even accepting the evidence of TANAKA and OKADA that the Mukden Incident of 18 September, 1931 was planned by some young officers of the Kwantung Army, I do not find any substantial evidence to connect any of the accused with that group or clique. The position in my opinion still remains as was found by the Lytton Commission. The incident might have been the result of a design on the part of some unknown army

officers, yet those who acted on the strength of the incident might have acted quite *bona fide*.²⁴

The gist of his logic here is the same as with the Zhang Zuolin Assassination Incident: although the Mukden Incident might have been a plot by particular officers of the Kwantung Army, the connection between them and the accused leaders was not established. As a consequence, it was difficult to view the Incident as part of an alleged 'overall conspiracy'.

Again this does not mean Justice Pal was uncritical regarding the Incident or the Kwantung Army: 'The military developments in Manchuria after September 18, 1931, were certainly reprehensible. Despite the unanimous opinion of the Cabinet that the operation must cease immediately, the expansion continued.'²⁵

He determined the Manchurian Incident was 'reprehensible' and saw the actions of the Army in ignoring the Japanese Cabinet order and initiating the Incident as a problem. Still, he insisted that the circumstances did not prove a conspiracy among those accused: 'No one would applaud such a policy. No one would perhaps justify such a policy. Yet this need not drive us to a theory of conspiracy'.²⁶

In this Chapter, he further discussed the Western Powers' political and military acts in the international community at that time. While presenting the view that the Kwantung Army and the Western countries were companions in crime, he condemned the Western Powers for launching accusations against Japan while ignoring their own responsibility for committing acts that were similar to those of the Japanese Army.

First, he criticised Japan's establishment of Manchukuo, calling it an 'elaborate political farce',²⁷ forced upon the Chinese people by Japan's military occupation of Manchuria:

[T]he power to play the farce of 'Manchukuo' on the Manchurian stage, as well as the power to seize control over Manchuria had been acquired by the Japanese *manu militari*. As has been observed in the review of International Affairs, the military conquest and occupation of Manchuria by the Japanese Army was the real foundation of the Japanese position in Manchuria in 1932; and the whole world was aware that this was the fact. The Japanese were apparently prepared to defy the world's opinion and to risk the consequences of the world's disapproval in order to keep their ill-gotten gains.²⁸

Why then, he asked, did Japan not simply proclaim the annexation of Manchuria instead of persisting in a farce. Justice Pal saw the answer in the process of Japan's modernisation itself, which was a continuous imitation of the West: 'It is considered probable that it might be attributed in part to an anxiety to imitate Western behaviour — an anxiety had become an *idée fixe* in Japanese minds since the beginning of the Meiji era'.²⁹

Justice Pal then critically examined Western Imperialism, which, he asserted, Japan had imitated. Quoting the *Survey of International Affairs 1932*, he turned the target of the criticism toward the colonial policies of Western Powers:

Was it not Western Imperialism that had coined the word 'protectorate' as a euphemism for 'annexation'? And had not this constitutional fiction served its Western inventors in good stead? Was not this the method by which the Government of the French Republic had stepped into the shoes of the Sultan of Morocco, and by which the British Crown had

transferred the possession of vast tracts of land in East Africa from native African to adventitious European hands?³⁰

For Justice Pal, Japan's 'farce' was nothing but the result of imitating Western fashions of imperialism. From this point of view, he questioned why only Japan's establishment of Manchukuo could be assessed as 'aggression'. Weren't Western countries morally guilty as well in practicing colonialism? If the acts of aggression by Western countries were not charged as crimes, why was the establishment of Manchukuo by Japan?

Justice Pal further quoted the *Survey of International Affairs 1932*:

Though the Japanese failed to make the most of these Western precedents in stating their case for performing the farce of 'Manchukuo', it may legitimately be conjectured that Western as well as Japanese precedents had in fact suggested, and commended, this line of policy to Japanese minds.³¹

By saying, '[i]t may not be a justifiable policy, justifying one nation's expansion in another's territory',³² he emphasised that both Japan and the Western countries were morally responsible for the colonisation of other nations. Justice Pal explained that Japan was at that time possessed with a 'delusion' and believed that the country would face death and destruction if it failed in acquiring Manchuria.³³ Pal regarded this as the reason for Japan's attempts to establish interests which it saw as necessary for its very existence. Justice Pal said that carrying out a military operation driven by 'delusion' was not unique to Japan as it had been repeatedly practised on a large scale by Western countries for many years. Saying, '[a]lmost every great power acquired similar interests within the territories of the Eastern Hemisphere and, it seems, every such power considered that interest to be very vital', Pal argued that Japan had the 'right' to argue that the Manchurian Incident was necessary for the sake of 'self-defense'.³⁴ Japan claiming national 'self-defense' in regard to its territorial expansion in China was in step with international society at the time, Pal said, and thus Japan's actions stemmed from the 'imitation' of an evil practice of Western imperialism. Based on this premise, he concluded: 'The action of Japan in Manchuria would *not*, it is certain, *be applauded by the world*. At the same time it would be difficult to condemn the same *ascriminal*.'³⁵

The important thing to notice here is that Justice Pal did not conclude that Japan's actions were justifiable. As mentioned above, he criticised the Manchurian Incident as 'reprehensible', and the establishment of Manchukuo as an 'elaborate political farce' based on 'delusion'. But, at the Tribunal Justice Pal strove to show his disapproval of the prosecution's intention to treat Japan's actions as if they were carried out under an alleged 'overall conspiracy', by presenting the complexity in the reasons why Japan pushed herself forward to the occupation of Manchuria.

From his historical point of view, Justice Pal saw the fundamental cause for Japan's acts of aggression as rooted in colonialism by Western countries. He questioned whether the visits by the US Navy's Commodore Matthew Perry in the 1850s and the conclusion of unequal treaties with Western Powers such as the US, Russia, Great Britain, France and Holland in the late Edo Era was a fundamental cause for Japan's imperialism, and he argued that Japan's steps toward imperialism were not 'blameworthy'.

Justice Pal said:

Then follows Japan's struggle for getting revision of these treaties. This struggle continued till the year 1894. During this period, Japan made every effort to master the great contributions of western thought and science. Perhaps Japan also realized that in the world in which she had been thus forced to appear, *right* and *justice* were measured in terms of battleships and army corps.

The Japanese effort to get these treaties revised were certainly not blameworthy.³⁶

He argued that Japan endeavoured to achieve rapid modernisation and employed Western methods in order to assure the revision of unequal treaties with the Western Powers. Japan also built up its military power during the process by 'imitating' the Western Powers' imperialism. While Justice Pal did regard the manner in which Japan proceeded with its modernisation as problematic, he also questioned whether the Western Powers could really condemn Japan's imitating them if the purpose in doing so was to revise the unequal treaties imposed by the Western Powers: 'We cannot afford to ignore the possible effects upon Japan of this long struggle for the revision of such treaties'.³⁷

This observation can be seen in Justice Pal's argument on the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars. He saw these as part of a power struggle among the major powers rather than unilateral 'aggressions' by Japan. For Pal, it was hypocritical for the Western countries to criticise as criminal Japanese actions, which were merely an 'imitation' of their own. 'After the Russo-Japanese war, Japan seemed to follow closely the precedents set by Europe in its dealings with China',³⁸ said Pal in reference to Japan's steps toward expansion of colonial territories after the Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese Wars. He said that if Japan's colonialism was deemed problematic, then all colonialism by the Western Powers ought to be similarly regarded. However, he pointed out, Western Powers did not criticise Japan's actions as 'aggression' while the acts were ongoing. He said, 'Great Britain renewed and strengthened the Anglo-Japanese Alliance at that time and the contemporary powers did not condemn Japan's action as aggressive'.³⁹

During World War I, 'Japan, as a faithful ally, rendered valuable assistance in an hour of serious and very critical need to the Allied Powers'.⁴⁰ The Allied Powers were helped by support from Japan. His question was how these Western countries could blame the steps taken by Japan.

Pal presented the following view of history:

Japan was a country without any material resources of her own. She started on her career when 'Western Society had come to embrace all the habitable lands and navigable seas on the face of the planet and the entire living generation of mankind'.

The Japanese emulated the western powers in this respect but unfortunately they began at a time when neither of the two essential assets, 'a free-hand' for their ability and a world-wide field, was any longer available to them. The responsibility for what Japan was thinking and doing during the period under our consideration really lies with those earlier elder statesmen of Japan who had launched her upon the stream of westernization and, had done so, at a moment when the stream was sweeping towards a goal which was a mystery even to the people of the west themselves.⁴¹

Looking back at the path of Japanese modernisation, Justice Pal cast sharp criticism and a caustic view on the Western countries. By presenting this sort of irony, he intended to criticise Western colonialism and to assert that the Western countries and Japan were in cahoots.

Regarding the start of the war between Japan and the US, Justice Pal blamed the direction of diplomatic policy on the US more than the Japanese. In his view, US diplomacy, as represented especially in the Hull Note,⁴² eventually cornered Japan. He said, '[t]he evidence [submitted to the Tribunal] convinces me that Japan tried her utmost to avoid any clash with America, but was driven by the circumstances that gradually developed into the fatal steps taken by her.'⁴³

In his Dissenting Opinion, Justice Pal repeatedly quoted *International Affairs* by the British Royal Institute of International Affairs, the British historian Arnold J Toynbee, and Professor of International Law at the University of London Georg Schwarzenberger. He challenged the one-sided accusations by the prosecution against Japan by highlighting that even some in the Western world had accused the Western superpowers.

Regarding the Hull Note in his Dissenting Opinion, Justice Pal quoted *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man* by Albert Jay Nock, published in 1943, as follows:

Even the contemporary historians could think that 'As for the present war, the Principality of Monaco, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, would have taken up arms against the United States on receipt of such a note as the State Department sent the Japanese Government on the eve of Pearl Harbor.'⁴⁴

While condemning the US move, Justice Pal also criticised Japan's problematic diplomacy:

There I pointed out why I could not accept the prosecution charge of treacherous conduct of the Japanese statesmen concerned. No doubt preparation for war was going on while the diplomatic negotiations were being held. But such preparations were being made by both sides. If the Japanese side 'had little confidence that the Kurusu-Nomura negotiations would achieve their purposes', I do not feel that the American side entertained any greater confidence in the diplomatic achievement.'⁴⁵

Japan prepared for war against the US while diplomatic talks between the two countries were ongoing. Justice Pal claimed this 'treacherous design' on the part of Japan was a serious matter. But, he pointed out that a similar 'treacherous design' was also seen on the US side, and therefore, both Japan and the US were equally responsible for the war. Regarding the prosecution's accusations of a conspiracy, he argued that neither plan nor conspiracy existed behind the start of the war. He regarded Japan's decision to make war against the US as not made in advance as a part of the alleged 'overall conspiracy', but rather made only during Japan's diplomatic negotiations with the US, after which it merely executed the decision.

In summarising Part IV of his Dissenting Opinion, Justice Pal said: 'The statesmen, diplomats and politicians of Japan were perhaps wrong, and perhaps they misled themselves. But they were not conspirators. They did not conspire.'⁴⁶

Justice Pal described Japan's actions following the Zhang Zuolin Assassination Incident as not justifiable. He also applied this assessment to Western colonialism. However, on the matter of an alleged 'overall conspiracy', he argued that each 'isolated' act by Japan had been purposefully

framed by the prosecution to assert an ‘overall conspiracy’, as if Japan had managed the acts as part of a policy of aggression.⁴⁷

Also, Justice Pal stressed that Japan should not be seen in the same way as Nazi Germany. According to his view, Tōjō and his group ‘might have done many wrong things; but, so far as the public of Japan is concerned, certainly by their behaviour towards them they did not succeed in reducing them to the position of terror-stricken tools without any free thinking or free expression. The population of Japan was not enslaved as in Hitler’s Germany.’⁴⁸ He claimed that Japan did not have a dictator such as Hitler.⁴⁹ The wars in the modern era were ‘not the result of any design by any particular individual or group of individuals’,⁵⁰ said Pal. He explained that the ‘evil of warfare’ was transformed by a combination of factors.⁵¹

As mentioned earlier, Justice Pal criticised Japanese statesmen, diplomats and politicians with judgmental terms such as ‘misconception’ and ‘wrong’.⁵² Still he argued that as long as the claimed ‘overall conspiracy’ was not established from the evidence before the Tribunal, the alleged acts in the Indictment could not be found criminal. His argument was never ‘Japan was innocent’ or ‘affirming the Great East Asia War’. Moreover, what should be noted here is that if he absolved the suspects’ criminal responsibility he did not dismiss the moral responsibility of Japan. He strongly criticised Japan’s war crimes and analysed Japan’s historical process after the Manchurian Incident as critically as he did the colonisation of Western countries. Therefore it is obvious that the logic of neonationalists to infer ‘Japan’s innocence’ or ‘an affirmation of the Greater East Asia War’ from Justice Pal’s Dissenting Opinion is an obvious misreading as well as an unwarranted jump in logic.

IV. Justice Pal’s Thoughts

In his Dissenting Opinion, Justice Pal repeatedly expressed the importance of and hope for the establishment of ‘a system of international cooperation’.⁵³

He said:

I doubt not that the need of the world is the formation of an international community under the reign of law, or correctly, the formation of a world community under the reign of law, in which nationality or race should find no place.⁵⁴

For the strict practice of international law, the establishment of international society under a rule of law was necessary. Justice Pal strongly advocated the emergence of what he termed the ‘Super State’, which he believed would eradicate wars and overcome racial discrimination.⁵⁵

Obviously, he did not believe the idea of the world commonwealth would be realised in the immediate future. He rather thought that the international social system ought to be transformed toward the ideal of a world commonwealth. He regarded the first step towards the world commonwealth as the establishment of an international agency with national sovereignty as its premise. He said that because such an international agency was not yet fully established, the practice of international law faced serious difficulties. In other words, without a Super State, there could exist no concrete executive power, and whether international law would be executed or not would after all be determined by the international affairs and power relations of the time. This was the reason why he stressed the importance of the early introduction and establishment of an international agency for the observance and execution of international law. And, he

believed that a widening sense of humanity to develop the international agency into the ideal world commonwealth would stabilise the order of international society.

Justice Pal was a believer in humanism based on the philosophy of 'dharma' from ancient India. He advocated Gandhism, and dreamt of the day that human beings would establish ideals based ultimately on pacifism.

On his visit to Japan in 1952, Pal, asked to make speeches at different places in order to introduce the idea of unarmed neutrality in the world. Strongly opposed to Japan's remilitarisation as then advocated by the US, he passionately advocated the teachings of Gandhi. Pal showed his resentment and disappointment toward a Japan whose dependence on the US was deepening, and he strongly criticised Japan as uncritically following the will of the US.

Visiting the Atomic Bomb Memorial in Hiroshima, he clearly expressed his bitterness toward Japan. On seeing the memorial's inscription, 'Let all the souls here rest in peace. For we shall not repeat the evil,' Pal said:

Obviously, the subject of 'we' is Japanese. I do not see clearly what 'the evil' means here. The souls being wished to rest here are the victims' of the Atomic Bomb. It is clear to me that the bomb was not dropped by Japanese and the hands of bombers remain bloodstained. ... If not repeating the mistakes means not possessing weapons in the future, I think that is a very exemplary decision. If Japan wishes to possess military power again, that would be a defilement against the souls of the victims we have here in Hiroshima.⁵⁶



The Cenotaph

His anger toward the mentality of Japanese people in the post-war era was expressed in his remark. He condemned Japan's remilitarisation corresponding to the will of the US, in light of US responsibility for the atomic bombing of Japan.

V. Misappropriation of Justice Pal's Dissenting Opinion by Historical Revisionists

As explained above, Japanese post-war historical revisionists have ignored the kernel of Justice Pal's argument and his thoughts outlined above, and instead repeatedly invoked his Opinion to support their positions. They have distorted parts of Justice Pal's Dissenting Opinion for their own purposes, specifically to insist on 'Japan's innocence' and support 'the affirmative argument on the Greater East Asia War' as well as their 'criticism of the Tokyo Tribunal' and their 'criticisms of the masochistic view of history'. The serial arguments for example of Tanaka Masaaki, who advocates a reading of Justice Pal's arguments as one that proves 'Japan is not guilty', were especially influential and became a

foundation for further misreadings of Pal which continue to the present.

A writer and social activist, Tanaka was born in 1911, and developed his activities under the influence of ultra-nationalists such as Shimonaka Yasaburo and Nakatani Takeyo in the pre-war period. In 1933, Tanaka joined the newly established Greater East Asia Association that had General Matsui Iwane (who was later executed as a Class A war criminal held responsible for the Nanjing Massacre) as chairman. Tanaka was involved in editing the organisation's paper, *Greater East Asianism*. Tanaka also served as Matsui's secretary and was active as Matsui's 'right arm' until Matsui was appointed Commander of the Japanese Expeditionary Forces and sent to China in 1937.

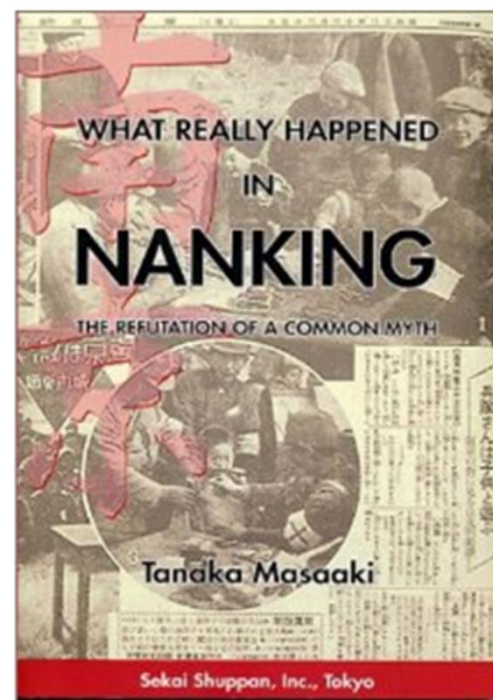
In April 1952, soon after the lifting of media censorship by the US occupation authorities, Tanaka published *On Japan's Innocence: The Truth on Trial*, in which he offered his interpretation of Justice Pal's Dissenting Opinion.⁵⁷ In his book, Tanaka quoted Pal's arguments in a generally accurate way then added his commentary. For example, on the Nanjing Massacre, he faithfully quoted Pal's Opinion and his conclusion, 'it is a plain fact that the Japanese military committed the atrocity'.⁵⁸

However, Tanaka's book title fundamentally distorts Justice Pal's argument. First, since Pal's Opinion criticised only 'the criminal responsibility of Class A accused', the object in the book title ought to be 'On Class A Innocence'. It is important to note that Justice Pal found criminal responsibility in the cases of Class B and Class C war criminals. He did not discount all of Japan's criminal actions.

Second, the term 'innocence' should be clarified. The central point is that Justice Pal found the Japanese Tokyo Tribunal defendants 'innocent' only in terms of international law. As quoted above, Justice Pal said, 'Tojo and his group ... might have done many wrong things',⁵⁹ and '[t]he statesmen, diplomats and politicians of Japan were perhaps wrong, and perhaps they misled themselves'.⁶⁰ Pal held the Japanese leaders morally responsible for their actions even as he challenged the Tribunal's jurisdiction. Therefore, it is not accurate to say that Pal found no responsibility among the Japanese leaders for the acts committed by the Japanese Army, or that they had no moral responsibility. From these points, at most the title should have been 'On Class A War Criminals' Innocence'.

Apart from the misleading title, I believe that Tanaka was generally accurate in presenting the essence of Justice Pal's argument. Although some problems are recognised, neither arbitrary deletions nor distortions of Pal's fundamental views were presented in his first book.

However, Tanaka's next book, *Justice Pal's Discussion of Japan as Not Guilty*, published in 1963 (and the best selling book of the year),⁶¹ contains obvious misreadings, falsifications, phrases that induce readers' misunderstanding, and intentional omissions of, or obvious deviations from, Pal's arguments.



For example, although in his Dissenting Opinion Justice Pal said ‘the hostility which commenced between China and Japan on July 7, 1937 cannot be denied the name “war”’,⁶² and that Japan’s acts after the Sino–Japanese War should be examined at the Tribunal, Tanaka claimed in his book that Justice Pal’s Opinion was that the scope of the Tribunal ought to be limited to the period between 7 December 1941 and Japan’s surrender.⁶³

This is an obvious misreading or falsification that seriously distorts Justice Pal’s argument. Furthermore, Tanaka completely ignored Pal’s condemnation of the Zhang Zuolin Assassination Incident, the Manchurian Incident, and the establishment of Manchukuo. He also ignored the fact that Pal had confirmed the Nanjing Massacre as well as Japan’s atrocities in the Philippines and strongly criticised them. The sections in which Pal criticised these actions were among the most important in the development of his argument. Therefore, omitting these severe criticisms of Japan’s actions, which Pal termed ‘devilish and fiendish’,⁶⁴ is a serious distortion.

It was at this time that Tanaka began to present his argument denying the Nanjing Massacre. Tanaka later, in 1980, became a main polemicist of the massacre deniers. *Justice Pal’s Discussion of Japan as Not Guilty* contained arbitrary interpretations, omissions and misreadings of Justice Pal’s Opinion in favour of Tanaka’s political views, which influenced similar arguments concerning Justice Pal’s Dissenting Opinion.

In 1964, a year after the publication of *Justice Pal’s Discussion on Japan as Not Guilty*, literature scholar Hayashi Fusao published his book *Affirming the Greater East Asia War*, which was subjected to much criticism. Hayashi presented his view of the hundred year’ war of East Asia in the book. Hayashi re-defined the period from the end of the Edo Era (1868) to the end of the Greater East Asia War (1945) as a ‘history of resistance’ of Japan and Asian countries against Western Imperialism. Hayashi used a chapter of his book to introduce Justice Pal’s Dissenting Opinion with quotations from Tanaka’s *Justice Pal’s Discussion of Japan as Not Guilty*. Hayashi ended the chapter as follows:

It is unnecessary to talk about the Greater East Asia War again. Japan lost beautifully. Future historians would write of Japan’s gallant fight, its brave spirit and its fate as a heroic chapter of the 20th century.⁶⁵

Quoting Tanaka’s commentary in *Justice Pal’s Discussion of Japan as Not Guilty* — ‘[a]s long as Japanese people are indoctrinated in the sense of guilt that “Japan was the country which carried out embarrassing aggressive wars to face the world,” Japan will never have its true glory’⁶⁶ — Hayashi drew on Justice Pal’s Opinion to support his thesis of the war as just. He especially highlighted Pal’s alleged view of the outbreak of war between Japan and the US to assert that the Greater East Asia War was legitimate.

In the face of an onslaught of revisionist interpretations of Justice Pal’s argument which sought to justify the Greater East Asia War, historian Ienaga Saburo responded in his 1967 paper, ‘The Fifteen Years’ War and Pal’s Dissentient Judgment’.⁶⁷ Pointing out the inaccuracy of the term ‘Japan’s innocence’ and criticising the superficial and arbitrary use of Pal’s Opinion, Ienaga wrote that Pal’s Opinion was being distorted to strengthen a social atmosphere supporting the Greater East Asia War which had become increasingly dominant through the coordinated push of political power and civil forces.

He also said that the Opinion was grounded on anti-communist ideology and its argument was full of extremely distorted views. Richard Minear responded and Ienaga and Minear debated the issue. However, arguments that distorted Justice Pal's Opinion in support of the neonationalist discourse continued to appear, and this trend has increased, especially since the late 1990s when Japan's rightward drift became pronounced.

In 1997, a memorial monument to Justice Pal was erected at Kyoto Gokoku Shrine. It was established by the Committee for the Establishment of Justice Pal's Memorial Monument, whose chairman was Sejima Ryuzo (a former Kwantung Army Staff Officer and former Supreme Adviser of Itochu Corporation). Its members included Kyoto Governor Aranamaki Teiichi and Kyoto City Mayor Masumoto Yorikane.

The establishment of the monument was followed by a similar statue of Pal at Yasukuni Shrine in 2005. Nambu Toshiaki, the shrine's Chief Priest, said at the unveiling ceremony: 'It is my earnest wish that the drift of masochism will end, and the day when the spirits of war dead may rest in peace comes as early as possible.' This followed the homage to Pal beginning in 2002, at the Yushukan, the Japanese military and war museum within Yasukuni Shrine. Pal's photographs and his remarks on his visit to Japan in 1952 were displayed in the context of criticising the 'Tokyo Trial view of history' and the 'masochistic view of history'. A 1998 movie titled *Puraido: Unmei no Shunkan (Pride: The Moment of Destiny)*, directed by Ito Shunya, pushed criticism of the 'unjust' Tokyo Tribunal to the fore. By arbitrarily invoking Justice Pal's words and his Dissenting Opinion, the director presented a vision wherein Tōjō Hideki kept his pride. Fantasies and interpretations that distorted historical truth were featured in the movie, and it became influential in right-wing discourse in contemporary Japanese society along with the movement of the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform. Pal also appeared in the comic book *Sensō Ron (On War)* by Kobayashi Yoshinori in the same year. In the cartoon, Pal's argument was quoted as justifying Japan's Greater East Asia War. For example, Kobayashi drew a balloon from Pal's face, which said, 'All defendants are not guilty!' and included this commentary:

In the war / the United States / had absolutely no justice /

Japan / had justice / of self-defence / furthermore of protecting the whole of Asia from the Western powers!

Kobayashi in his 2008 manga *Pāru Shinron (The True Arguments of Pal)*. In this manga, again distorted Justice Pal's argument and criticised my book *Justice Pal: Criticism of the Tokyo Trial and Absolute Pacifism* as a prelude to falsely claiming that Justice Pal's Opinion was that 'Japan was not guilty'.

As explained, Justice Pal's Opinion has been invoked in Japanese revisionist discourse to justify the Greater East Asia War and to discredit the Tokyo Tribunal. Pal's position has been employed in attempts to lend legitimacy to Japanese historical revisionists in ways that distort Pal's thinking, writing and intention.

The revisionists ignore the fact that Justice Pal criticized Japan's invasions of Asia following the Manchurian Incident. They deliberately close their eyes to Pal's severe condemnation of Japan's war crimes. Furthermore, they do not mention Pal's passionate call for the establishment of an

international agency, unarmed neutrality, and his opposition to Japan's remilitarisation, while distorting selected elements of Justice Pal's Opinion to strengthen their claims.

It is important to free Justice Pal's Dissenting Opinion from the false framework constructed by the right wing, and reexamine it in light of historical evidence. This effort will strengthen the analysis of the opponents of historical revisionism and the pervasive neonationalist tilt in contemporary Japan.

This is a revised version of a chapter from the book, [Beyond Victor's Justice; The Tokyo War Crimes Trial Revisited](#) edited by Yuki Tanaka, Tim McCormack and Gerry Simpson and published with permission from Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

Nakajima Takeshi is Associate Professor, Public Policy, Hokkaido University. He is the author of Pāru Hanji: Tōkyō Saiban hihan to zettai heiwa-shugi (Justice Pal: Criticism of the Tokyo Trial and Absolute Pacifism) and [Bose of Nakamura: an Indian revolutionary in Japan](#).

Notes

¹ Translated by Kasahara Hikaru. Edited by Mark Selden.

² Charter of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, signed in Tokyo on 19 January 1946, amended 26 April 1946, TIAS 1589, 4 Bevans 20 ('Tokyo Charter').

³ United States et al v Araki Sadao et al in *The Tokyo Major War Crimes Trial: The Records of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, with an Authoritative Commentary and Comprehensive Guide* (2002) Vol 105, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 36–7 ('Tokyo Major War Crimes Trial').

⁴ Ibid Vol 105, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 37 (emphasis in original).

⁵ Ibid Vol 105, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 45.

⁶ Ibid Vol 105, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 67.

⁷ Ibid Vol 105, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 15.

⁸ Ibid Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 1069.

⁹ Ibid Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 1099.

¹⁰ Ibid Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 1069–70.

¹¹ Ibid Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 1089.

¹² Ibid Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 1111.

¹³ Ibid Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 1171–2.

¹⁴ Ibid Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 1180.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 1172.

¹⁷ Ibid Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 1180.

- ¹⁸ Ibid Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 1090.
- ¹⁹ Ibid Vol 106, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 376.
- ²⁰ Ibid Vol 106, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 428.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Ibid Vol 106, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 429–46, 460–2.
- ²⁴ Ibid Vol 106, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 473.
- ²⁵ Ibid Vol 106, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 513.
- ²⁶ Ibid Vol 106, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 524.
- ²⁷ Ibid Vol 106, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 525.
- ²⁸ Ibid Vol 106, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 526.
- ²⁹ Ibid Vol 106, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 527.
- ³⁰ Arnold J Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs 1932* (1933) 465 quoted in Ibid Vol 106, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 527.
- ³¹ Ibid 467 quoted in *Tokyo Major War Crimes Trial*, above n 3, Vol 106, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 528.
- ³² Ibid Vol 106, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 524.
- ³³ Ibid Vol 106, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 547(34)–(35).
- ³⁴ Ibid Vol 106, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 548.
- ³⁵ Ibid Vol 106, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 483 (emphases in original).
- ³⁶ Ibid Vol 107, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 785(2)–(3) (emphases in original).
- ³⁷ Ibid Vol 107, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 785(3).
- ³⁸ Ibid Vol 107, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 785(20).
- ³⁹ Ibid Vol 107, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 787.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid Vol 107, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 785(29).
- ⁴¹ Ibid Vol 107, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 874–5.
- ⁴² ‘United States Note to Japan 26 November’ (1941) 5 *Department of State Bulletin* 461 (‘Hull Note’).
- ⁴³ *Tokyo Major War Crimes Trial*, above n 3, Vol 107, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 978.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid Vol 107, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 963.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 1038–9.

- ⁴⁶ Ibid Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 983.
- ⁴⁷ See, e.g., ibid Vol 106, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 446 .
- ⁴⁸ Ibid Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 988.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid Vol 107, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 692.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid Vol 107, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 736.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² See, eg, ibid Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 983, 988, 1234.
- ⁵³ Ibid Vol 105, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 135 (emphasis omitted).
- ⁵⁴ Ibid Vol 105, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 146.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid Vol 105, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 55.
- ⁵⁶ *Chūgoku Shimbun* (Hiroshima, Japan), 4 November 1952.
- ⁵⁷ Tanaka Masaaki, *Nihon muzairon: shinri no sabaki* [On Japan's Innocence: The Truth on Trial] (1952).
- ⁵⁸ Ibid 28.
- ⁵⁹ *Tokyo Major War Crimes Trial*, above n 3, Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 988.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 983.
- ⁶¹ Tanaka Masaaki, *Pāru Hanji no Nippon Muzai-ron* [Justice Pal's Discussion of Japan as Not Guilty] (1963).
- ⁶² *Tokyo Major War Crimes Trial*, above n 3, Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 1025.
- ⁶³ Tanaka, *Pāru Hanji*, above n 61, 165.
- ⁶⁴ *Tokyo Major War Crimes Trial*, above n 3, Vol 108, Dissenting Opinion of Justice Pal, 1089.
- ⁶⁵ Hayashi Fusao, *Dai Tōa sensō kōteiron* [Affirming the Greater East Asia War] (2nd ed, 2006) 341.
- ⁶⁶ Tanaka, *Pāru Hanji*, above n 61, 342.
- ⁶⁷ Ienaga Saburo, '15-nen Sensō to Pāru Hanketsu-sho' [The Fifteen Years' War and Pal's Dissident Judgment] in Ienaga Saburo, *Sensō to Kyōiku o Megutte* [On War and Education] (1973) 23–43.

Myth and Fact in Northeast Asia's History Textbook Controversies

Mikyoung Kim

The past is haunting Northeast Asia. The China-Japan-Korea triad has been on a repeated collision course over how each perceives the shared past. Bound by dense memory webs, cultural affinity and geographical proximity, each of the three nations has made conflicting historical claims against the other, giving rise to conflict throughout the region and beyond.

China, Japan, and Korea constitute the core of the Northeast Asian "community." According to Robert Nisbet, "community" encompasses "religion, work, family, and culture; it refers to social bonds characterized by emotional cohesion, depth, continuity, and fullness." [1] No community, however, can be totally unified; indeed, national communities can contain antagonistic elements, and the members of a community are not necessarily content with one another. The community of China, Japan, and Korea, like many a marriage, is charged with intense but coexisting feelings of interdependence and conflict, of love and hate.

The triad bound by felt history engages in intense discourse for which history textbooks serve as an important medium for mnemonic contention. This article examines the history textbook controversies plaguing the three nations in Northeast Asia.

History Textbooks as Memory Sites

History textbooks are an important site of "memory wars." [2] In the aftermath of 1982 history textbook controversies involving Chinese and Korean protests over Japanese texts, the Japanese government enacted the "Neighboring Country Clause," proclaiming that in the interest "of building friendship and goodwill with neighboring countries, Japan will pay attention to these criticisms and make corrections at the Government's responsibility." In 2001, two decade after the conciliatory gesture, Chinese youths took to the streets protesting against Japan's New History Textbook (Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho). In 2005, the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade called on Tokyo to instruct publishers of Japanese history textbooks to review and change 51 items. Harking back to events four centuries earlier, South Korea's commercial market quickly cashed in on public anger by introducing a popular computer game called, "Hideyoshi's Aggression and Chosun's Counterattacks." With history issues surfacing, the Chinese and Korean media published a spate of stories on history textbooks and visits to Yasukuni Shrine by Japanese leaders.



South Korean computer game[3]

History education in Northeast Asia needs to be contextualized within the context of regional and global expansion of mass education. With the spread of mass and compulsory education throughout the twentieth century, governments sought to control pedagogical content with education ministries frequently taking the lead.[4] Education is a “system of legitimization” wherein “schools process individuals” by instilling commonly shared values among the citizenry.[5] Whereas school and family long functioned as important socialization units, schools are now assuming a greater role in educating future generations.[6] Youth establishes self-identity in relation to group membership in classes and schools, where knowledge about national history is transmitted. Emile Durkheim led us to believe that “a man is surer of his faith when he sees to how distant a past it goes back and what great things it has inspired.”[7] Remembering noble deeds, he said, elevates the community’s dignity and moral values. In that regard, national history education is both a “model of” and “model for” society. The common past is the story of a nation, and history textbooks tell the story of a nation to its citizens. Overlapping histories make textbooks one important site where nations engage in “memory wars.”

Japan: The Price of Ambivalence

Post-Cold War Japanese history education emphasizes two main goals: 1) understanding national history in the context of the global historical trajectory; and 2) educating citizens as members of the international community.[8] The empirical realities have not been in sync with the

educational goals: history education, instead, has been the target of domestic ideological contention and international criticisms.

Political bifurcation over history textbooks is nothing new in Japan. The ideological pendulum has been in constant flux between right and left throughout the postwar era. Textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education after the beginning of the screening system in 1947, for instance, were liberal enough to contain narratives on the Manchurian Incident of 1931 and the Nanjing Massacre of 1937. Such critical self-historicism under SCAP (Supreme Command for the Allied Powers) provoked the conservatives who deemed Japan's aggressive wars Japan's only viable option to secure its own survival in the face of Western colonialism. With the pendulum swinging to the right, the Liberal Democratic Party's 1955 proposal to augment the screening authority of the Ministry of Education ignited the first history textbook controversies. Textbooks up for approval that year were criticized for such subversive actions as describing the bleak living conditions of the working class and presenting rosy depictions of the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union.[9] With the "Red Purge" underway, the Ministry rejected more than 80 percent of the textbooks, citing "factual distortions." [10] Tightening of the screening process continued for the following quarter century.[11]

The pendulum swung back toward the progressive camp during the second major round of history textbook controversies in 1982. It started with a Chinese newspaper's allegation that the Ministry of Education pressured textbook publishers to replace "aggression [towards China]" with "advancement [into China]," and to replace "independence movement [in Korea]" with "riots [by the Koreans]." This allegation, which turned out to be false, was picked up by the Korean and Japanese news media, fueling the "history" debates. With more and more media outlets copying and embellishing each other's accounts, history emerged as an important diplomatic issue. The Suzuki cabinet proceeded to make accommodative gestures by enacting the "Neighboring Country Clause," as noted above.

Why did Japan move to placate its neighbors in spite of the factual inaccuracies and exaggerations of the media claims? I argue that it was a reflection of changing perceptual milieu: Japan was rediscovering Asia. Japan had made a conscious decision to distance itself from Asia at the turn of the nineteenth century. Very influential opinion leaders such as Fukuzawa Yukichi were at the forefront of advocating Japan's de-Asianization policy.[12] In order for Japan to catch up with the advanced West, they argued, it had to shed its backward and feudalistic Asian identity. Asia lapsed into perceptual oblivion, as it were, until the 1982 textbook controversies, coming at a time when both Korean and Chinese economies were rapidly developing, drove the situation home. With Asia re-emerging on the Japanese mind map in the 1980s, more complex and conflictual perceptions of the war emerged.

The international criticisms of Japanese history textbooks were a wake-up call for the Tokyo government. Japan began paying attention to its former "victims" as a legitimate concern for diplomatic relations. From the 1982 controversies through the 1990s, the Japanese government extended an unprecedented number of apologies to China and Korea.[13] Prime Minister Suzuki (August 24, 1982) and Chief Cabinet Secretary Miyazawa (August 26, 1982) made specific reference to the textbook issues in their apologies.[14, 15] As the "comfort women" issues emerged as a source of political and diplomatic contention in the early 1990s, more apologies were extended to China and Korea. Prime Minister Miyazawa (January 17, 1992), Chief Cabinet Secretary Kato (July 6, 1992), Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono (August 4, 1993), Prime Minister

Murayama (August 31, 1994; July 1995), and Prime Minister Hashimoto (June 23, 1996; July 15, 1998) apologized for the pain and suffering endured by women.[16, 17, 18, 19] Many other apologies on the war in general were made by a range of political leaders and even the Emperor.

Repeated apologies failed to convince the Chinese and Korean governments and people of their sincerity. Regret and apology are two different things. Regret is a sentiment accompanying the realization of wrongdoing; apology, the communicative format through which regret is conveyed. Even today, China and Korea, remain keenly aware of the separate realms occupied by sentiment and ritual, and of the telltale signs of inauthentic performance. Theories of Japanese dual consciousness (*tatemae-honne*) fuel suspicion of performance-only insincerity in the apology rituals.[20] Repeated insults and denials by Japanese politicians confirm suspicions of Japanese indifference and intensify demands for authentic remorse.[21] A deep perceptual dilemma between Japan and its former victims fuels the “memory problem.”

With the pendulum swinging to the left, the 1994 textbooks contained mention of Japanese wartime atrocities including the comfort women, Unit 731 and the Nanjing Massacre.[22] The conciliatory stance provoked hostile reactions from Japanese rightists for being “masochistic” and “biased.” This round of clashes led to the 1996 formation of “Tsukurukai,” which consists of conservative diet members and academics critical of the new textbooks.[23] Tsukurukai authored and published many books which reached the general public. The Research Association of Liberal Historical Perspectives (*Jiyushugi Shikan Kenkyukai*) was another advocate of conservative views which engaged in active public outreach programs such as publishing the three-volume *Manga History of Japan: What the School Textbooks Do Not Teach* (*Manga: Kyokasho ga Oshienai Rekishi*).[24]

The saga continues in the twenty-first century. Following Education Ministry’s approval of the *New Japanese History* (*Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho*) authored by Tsukurukai in April 2001, China and Korea demanded revisions of the text, but to no avail. China Radio International, as an example, reported on the Beijing government and the Chinese people’s strong dissatisfaction with the new Japanese history textbook.[25] The controversies continued the following year when a Chinese newspaper report linked Japanese corporations to Tsukurukai. Chinese consumers launched boycotts of the companies linked to Tsukurukai. Amid the mass protests led primarily by the youth, Asahi Breweries became the first target of boycott. The 2005 clashes were, again, the result of Chinese and Korean protests against the *New Japanese History* (*Atarashii Rekishi Kyokasho*), which was accused of downplaying the nature of Japan’s militarism including its past aggression and the circumstances of World War II.



Atarashii Rekishi Kyoukasho (upper left) and other texts in a bookstore

The Japan Teachers Union denounced the book published by Fusosha, and only 18 out of 11,102 junior high schools adopted the book, taking up only about 0.04 percent of the total market share. Despite Beijing and Seoul's persistent protests, the market share of "problematic" texts has been consistently dismal.[26]



South Korean protesters burn banners during 2005 demonstration over Japanese textbook distortions

The Japanese history textbook controversies reveal two persistent patterns. First, Japan's domestic political divide has fueled the memory debates. A sequence of attacks and counterattacks has led to no meaningful synthesis. The latest episode comes from Okinawa. Hundreds of thousands of Okinawans, with the support of the prefectural government, protested Ministry of Education instructions in June 2007 to retract descriptions of the Battle of Okinawa. The Japanese military was known to have forced residents to commit mass suicides during the battle. The Tomigusuku Municipal Assembly in Okinawa stated that the 2007 instructions were to "deny the historical facts, accumulated through studies of the Battle of Okinawa that are based on the numerous testimonies of those who experienced it." [27] Japan as a country is still grappling over what really happened during the war, in particular the nature of and responsibility for war atrocities.

A second pattern is many of the international controversies began with erroneous or misleading allegations and misunderstandings. Contrary to the widespread belief in the region, the Japanese Ministry of Education does not directly intervene in textbook writing although it does conduct textbook screening. Moreover, with the availability of commercialized textbooks, the process of textbook selection is decentralized with local boards of education enjoying substantial autonomy in the selection of textbooks from among those approved by the Ministry of Education. In 47 prefectures, some 500 Textbook Screening Committees are formed every four years under the auspices of local boards of education. A committee usually consists of about 20 school principals, teachers, experts and ordinary citizens who provide advice and consultations to the board of education. After holding public textbook exhibitions and internal discussions, the committee selects the textbook to be adopted for the school district. [28] An analysis of thirty-three junior high school history textbooks (1950-2000) shows very little narrative change over time. [29]



Shanghai 2005 protest over Japanese textbooks

Compared to Japan, the Chinese and Korean systems of textbook writing, screening and marketing are far less decentralized. The Ministry of Education in Korea exercises almost sole supervisory authority. [30] Since the 1980s the Chinese system has allowed private companies and individuals to author texts, which are then subject to stringent screening process. [31]

China: Narrative of Humiliation

The Chinese Communist Party censures a wide spectrum of social discourse. Dissemination of information is closely monitored, and education is no exception. Debates on the tumultuous internal strife (e.g., Great Leap Forward, Cultural Revolution, Tiananmen Square Incident, etc.) have been banned in the public forum, and few people have open access to factual information.[32] History textbook narratives are also selective.

From the 1950s until the 1990s, noticeable changes took place in three areas: greater emphasis on economy, science and culture; more descriptions on the Japanese invasion; and strengthening of nationalistic and patriotic messages. The “Opium Wars” section of the junior high school history textbook (1994 edition) refers to “[foreign] invasion,” “[Chinese] people,” and “[Chinese] bravery [on the battlefield]” more than five times each in a passage 600 words long. The descriptions of humiliation suffered at the hands of foreign powers (e.g., the Opium Wars [1839-1842 and 1856-1860], Taiping Rebellion [1850-1864] and the Boxer Rebellion [1899-1901]) increased accordingly.[33] On the other hand, some narratives cast Japan in a positive light as a country of cherry blossoms, home to Mount Fuji, and of advanced science and technology.

Japanese scholars have noted inaccuracies in the analysis of modern History in Chinese textbooks. For instance, historian Kawashima Shin contests this description of post-Meiji Restoration Japan, found in a section on the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95, as follows:

"Japan remained home to forces of feudalism with considerable power, and as domestic markets were not large enough to bring economic benefits to everyone, there were numerous popular uprisings. Japan's rulers quickly decided that Japan's path to continued growth lay in taking over foreign lands, and they put together a 'continental strategy' aimed mainly at invading China." [34]

The text notes that Japan became a modern nation through the Meiji Restoration (1868), but, Shin contends, it exaggerates social instability amidst the rapid changes. With the major exception of the Saga uprising staged by the remaining samurai class in 1874, popular rebellions such as the Shimabara Uprising (1637-38) and urban riots (around 1767) took place well before the Restoration. A conspicuous remnant of the feudal social order, the samurai class, faced a fatal blow with the suppression of the Keian Incident (1651) and the Forty-Seven Ronin incident (1703) long before the Restoration. As for the “continental strategy,” it was the outcome of Japan's strategic choice to pursue its identity as a “continental country” as opposed to an “oceanic country.” Its subsequent invasion of China was a result of the doctrine rather than a cause of the doctrine.[35]

Regarding the Twenty-One Demands of 1915, Kawashima holds that the Chinese text narratives exaggerate Chinese humiliations suffered due to Japan:

The European powers no longer had the energy to spend on Asian matters, and Japan took advantage of this opportunity to accelerate its encroachment into China, plotting to take over the entire nation for itself.... Finally, offering support for Yuan Shi-kai's bid to become emperor of China, Japan set as its condition the Twenty-One Demands, which were tantamount to the very destruction of China as a nation. On May 9, 1915,...Yuan's

government accepted these conditions. This is known as the ‘national shame of May 9’.[36]

While the narratives are not inaccurate, Kawashima finds overstated the implication that Japan manipulated domestic Chinese politics for its own opportunistic advantage .

Kawashima’s list continues on the narratives of the 1931 Manchurian Incident: “Japan had a desperate craving for Chinese territory”; on the more open conflicts with Japanese forces in China: “There was nothing surprising about the fact that the Japanese imperialists conducted their war of aggression against China. This conflict was the natural outgrowth of a long-standing policy in Japan, built up over many years, that pursued the annexation of China, the control of all Asia, and finally world supremacy as its goals”; and on the defeat of the Japanese armed forces in China: “China’s victory in the war against Japan was the first total victory in a war that the Chinese people had fought against imperialism for more than a hundred years. This gave great courage to and boosted the self-respect of all the peoples of the nation. It also formed a solid foundation of the triumph that the people’s revolution would soon see. China’s war against Japan was an integral part of the global war against fascism, and the Chinese people, by playing their part in this war made great contributions to this worldwide struggle and helped to boost China’s position on the global stage.”[37]

With “humiliation” as the underlying theme of the modern and contemporary periods, the overall narrative emphasizes Chinese victimization at the hands of imperial powers. Japan emerges as the “ungrateful beneficiary” of Chinese culture.[38] Kawashima thus concludes that Chinese construction of the history of China-Japan conflict contributes to distancing the two nations today.

Korea: Far From Fault-Free

In portraying Korea’s relations with Japan, two main themes run throughout Korean textbooks: victimhood and resistance. The sense of victimization comes from deeply internalized wounds. Korean history can be literally defined by foreign threat. According to Yoon Tae Rim (1984), the number of raids, incursions, and other offenses against Korea from the seas and by neighboring peoples were no less than 1 to 1.5 times a year during the Koryo (918-1392) and Chosun (1392-1910) dynasties. The figures come exclusively from the official record, implying that the actual number of aggression could be much higher.[39] The Korean sense of victimization is neither a contemporary phenomenon nor one exclusively related to Japan. The middle school textbook states:

We have suffered from many invasions by neighboring countries throughout our long history. However, we have never provoked, exploited, or caused any pain to any of our neighbors. In other words, we have always tried to maintain peaceful international relations and preserve a peace-loving tradition.[40]

The sense of victimization becomes stronger around the turn of the twentieth century when Japan was the primary aggressor. The text accentuates the Chosun dynasty’s efforts to preserve its sovereignty dignity in the whirlwind of imperialism spear-headed by the island country:

The Chosun government refused Japan’s demands for trade because of the inappropriate terms used in the diplomatic documents. The expressions alluded to the superiority of the

Japanese Emperor over the Emperor of Chosun. Furthermore, the documents included contents that were beyond conventional diplomatic norms at that time.[41]

Japan demanded talks [to open up Korea] while dispatching battleships to Kanghwa Island. The act imposed threats on Korea. Thereupon, the Chosun government refused to meet the Japanese, criticizing their tactics as barbaric and aggressive.[42]

The above narratives juxtapose Korea and Japan: the former as a victim and the latter as an aggressor. Korea's honorable behavior in confronting Japan's naked belligerence is highlighted. The moral superiority of the weak is juxtaposed against unprovoked violence unleashed by the assailant. The text emphasizes how Korea handled the threatening situation in spite of its eventual fall into the hands of imperial Japan. The implicit pedagogical message, therefore, is that Korea, however weak militarily, was morally superior. Korea was an honorable victim.

The theme of resistance is a relatively new one in Korean texts. In the aftermath of democratization movements since the 1980s,[43] South Korean textbooks began placing greater emphasis on people's power. The middle school textbook openly acknowledges the need to rewrite history from today's standpoint. It further emphasizes the imperatives of shedding new light on the dark past, as it declares in the following:

Our history is the record of our people's footsteps. Past events can be re-evaluated from the historian's perspectives [today], and the new meaning of the past is narrated in the history books. . . History is today's lamp, and window to the future. Therefore, historical narratives should neither hide the dark past nor exaggerate the non-existent as if it did exist.[44]

One notable change in recent texts is the negative assessments of the Park Chung Hee regime. The text states the regime had a "weak will for democratization," citing "international criticism of the dictatorship." [45] In similar vein, the text highlights democratization movements in the 1980s and the positive changes taking place in North Korea.



Korean history textbooks

Mnemonic democratization in South Korea meant giving a bigger voice to the previously silenced.[46] This change is evident in the richer narratives on the mass resistance against Japanese colonialism.[47] But this trend has also been criticized. A conservative Korean academic stated: “Popularization of Korean history led to demoralization of our achievements. All the modernizing forces like national leaders and capitalists were denigrated as the corrupt power ... The section on economic growth, for instance, goes into detail about the negative consequences of rapid growth ... The history textbooks are not really about our past. They record resistance movements against any status quo.”[48]

University textbooks, which lack a screening process, also are known to be nationalistic in tone. Even a popular university textbook, *Our History* (Uri Yoksa) by the centrist historian, Han Yongu, discusses the colonial period with chapter headings such as “The Plunder of Our Land, Economic Resources, and Industry” and “The Japanese Imperialists’ Plan to Eliminate the Korean Race.”[49] The legacy of Japanese colonialism is open to debate, and ideology is often interjected. As in the case of China, Korea can hardly claim impartiality in textbook narratives.

The Korean case stands out in two ways. Korean texts devote more space than their Chinese and Japanese counterparts to the threats of western imperialism and Japanese colonialism. Their focus on Northeast Asian history is also the most substantial of the three, with themes of victimization at the hands of bigger powers and popular resistance emphasized.

Conclusion: Toward Reconciliation in the East Asian Community

World War II was and is a pivotal moment in Asian memory. Japanese wartime atrocities are remembered throughout Northeast Asia. What we see through the so-called “history textbook controversies” are deep historical grievances waiting to explode.

Japanese often argue that the ongoing memory wars are a mere reflection of a rising tide of nationalism in China and Korea. Some assert that the Beijing and Seoul governments cynically manipulate anti-Japan sentiments as a means of diverting internal tensions to international targets. During the second half of the twentieth century, Japan quickly restored its influence on foundations of rapid economic growth under the auspices of a pacifist Constitution and American protection. Japan’s neighbors, however, remember the dark years, and reject expressions of regret for war atrocities that could mitigate Asian resentment directed against Japan’s record of colonialism and war. [50] Here lies a deep perceptual chasm fueling the memory wars between the former aggressor and its victims. History textbooks, in the eyes of China and Korea, are tangible evidence of the Japanese lack of sincere remorse.

Why has there been an explosion of accusations against Japan since the 1980s? How can we explain the cycle of protests? Four explanatory threads can be considered: rising nationalism, increasing self-confidence, domestic situations and rising pluralism. Those who stress rising nationalism often contribute to intensifying rivalry in the region. Nakanishi Terumasa, a Japanese realist with a conspiratorial bent, for instance, asserts that the 2005 textbook controversies were nothing but Beijing’s brainchild launched in an effort to block Japan’s bid to enter the United Nations Security Council.[51] Similar charges have been made against the previous Roh Moo Hyun government in Seoul for its nationalistic policy stances on US-ROK and ROK-DPRK relations.[52] More generally, with China and Korea emerging as rivals in global markets, their voices as national actors became accordingly bigger.

An alternative analysis is more optimistic. Seemingly anti-Japanese sentiments are not necessarily a reflection of nationalism, but rather an expression of growing self-confidence.[53] While nationalism typically claims superiority by demeaning others, self-confidence comes from within, entailing healthy pride grounded in objective achievements. Given the positive association between economic growth and self-confidence, the ability to voice concerns over history is a result of decreased transaction costs. In the changed power equation, angering the powerful (i.e., Japan) no longer entails the high costs it once did on the part of the recently powerless (i.e., China and Korea).[54] Disagreements over the “history problem” are the natural course of events in order to achieve mutual acceptance in an era of evolving power relationships.

Some Japanese and Western analysts claim that Beijing is exploiting popular anti-Japanese feelings at a time of rising discontent in Chinese society. Beijing faces a wide range of problems (e.g., the widening gap between rich and poor and between coastal and interior regions, ethnic conflict, Falun Gong, and rural migrants in search of work, environmental degradation) and mass discontent is reaching dangerous levels. The Chinese Ministry of Public Security, acknowledged 74,000 mass incidents---demonstrations, riots and other acts of protest---in 2004, an average of 200 incidents per day.[55] Given current domestic tensions, Japan becomes a convenient target.

Finally, some theorists link rising political pluralism to historical issues. It has been suggested, for example, that the real reasons behind the Chinese anti-Japanese sentiments lie with political democratization within the country.[56] As China and South Korea continue (at very different paces) on their trajectories towards democracy, it is only natural that they seek to correct past wrongs as a means to advance human rights. This line of thought frames historical wrongs as a contemporary issue of human rights, where the Japanese military violated the rights of Chinese and Koreans during the war.

Substantial efforts have been made to alleviate the discord over the Japanese history textbooks. Joint colloquia among historians of the three countries resulted in textbooks with common pedagogical content.[57] As Japan and Korea are currently locked in a dispute over the Japanese Ministry of Education's 2008 history education guidelines that claim Takeshima (Dokdo) as Japanese territory, the textbook collaboration project's vision of striking a balance between nationalism and reconciliation is clearly needed.



**Chinese edition of a common East Asian history textbook
prepared by Chinese, Japanese and Korean researchers**

Such endeavors, however, carry only limited significance given the differences in educational systems. Unless and until collaborative textbooks can be widely used in classrooms (a goal still far from fruition), the works will not significantly impact on Chinese, Korean and Japanese students. Moreover, recent actions taken by Japanese government have alarmed many in the region. The 2007 passage of the revised Fundamental Law of Education with an inserted “Patriotism Clause” undermines the cooperative spirit.[58] Nevertheless, despite mixed signals,

traditional hostilities are being weakened by the growing diversity and openness of Northeast Asian societies in a rapidly changing world.

*Mikyoung Kim is Assistant Professor at the Hiroshima Peace Institute – Hiroshima City University. Before assuming her current position in 2005, she taught at Portland State University as a Fulbright Visiting Professor. She previously served with the U.S. State Department from 2000 to 2004, specializing in U.S.-ROK-DPRK relations. Her forthcoming book, *Securitization of Human Rights: North Korean Refugees in East Asia*, will be published by Praeger in 2009.*

This is a revised version of a chapter that appeared in Tsuyoshi Hasegawa and Kazuhiko Togo, eds., [East Asia's Haunted Present](#) (Westport and London: Praeger Security International, 2008). Posted at Japan Focus on August 15, 2008.

Notes

[1] Robert A. Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2005, 7th edition), p. 6.

[2] Yoshida Takashi, "The Making of the Rape of Nanking: History and Memory" in Japan, China, and the United States (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 129-133.

[3] [Source \(http://www.gamania.co.kr/\)](http://www.gamania.co.kr/).

[4] Japanese compulsory education started during the Meiji period, while the Korean system began under US military rule after the country's liberation from Japan in 1945. In the case of the People's Republic of China, public education expanded dramatically after 1949 and compulsory education took effect with the passage of "People's Republic of China Compulsory Education Law" in 1986. For more information on the global trend, see Francisco O. Ramirez and John W. Meyer, "Comparative Education: The Social Construction of the Modern World System," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 1980, Vol. 6, pp. 369-99; Francisco O. Ramirez and John Boli, "Global Patterns of Educational Institutionalization," in George M. Thomas, John W. Meyer, Francisco O. Ramirez and John Boli (eds.) *Institutional Structure: Constituting State, Society, and the Individual* (Newbury Park and London: Sage Publications, 1986), pp. 150-172; John W. Meyer, Francisco O. Ramirez and Yasemin Nuhoglu Soyal, "World Expansion of Mass Education, 1870-1980," *Sociology of Education*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (1992), pp. 128-149.

[5] John W. Meyer, "The Effects of Education as an Institution," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 83, No. 1(1983), p. 56.

[6] Steven Brint, *Schools and Societies* (Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 1998), pp. 136-170.

[7] Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1965 [1915]), p. 311.

[8] Shimanuki Manabu, "Nihon[Japan]," Tetsu Nakamura (ed.), *Higashi Ajia no Rekishi Kyoukasho wa Do Kakarete Iruka* [What Have School History Textbooks Been Writing on East Asia?: A Comparison of School History Textbooks of Japan, China, Korea and Taiwan] (Tokyo: Nihon Hyoron-sha, 2004), pp. 13-38.

[9] The party later published three volumes of pamphlets entitled Pathetic Textbooks [Ureubeki Kyokasho].

[10] The “Red Purge” was carried out under the auspices of SCAP. With left-wing activism was on the rise, the government began monitoring radical union activism including the Japan Teachers Union. The purge led to the discharge of 22,000 “undesirable” citizens, and 1,200 teachers were dismissed from their schools. See, Leonard Schoppa, *Education Reform in Japan* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 39.

[11] The Ministry of Education made a clear statement emphasizing the “political neutrality” of school teachers. See Christopher Hood, *Japanese Education Reform: Nakasone's Legacy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 20. In this continuum, the Hatoyama cabinet passed a law abolishing the electoral system for municipal boards of education. Masamura Kimimasa, *Zusetsu Sengoshi [Post-War History: An Illustration]* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1990). pp. 164-165.

[12] Okakura Kakuzo, *The Awakening of Japan* (New York: Century, 1904).

[13] Prior to the flurry of apologies in the 1980s and the 1990s, Prime Minister Tanaka extended an apology which was included in the 1972 Joint Communique of the Government of Japan and the People's Republic of China: “The Japanese side is keenly conscious of the responsibility for the serious damage that Japan caused in the past to the Chinese people through war, and deeply reproaches itself.” For more details, see this.

[14] Tahara Soichiro, *Nihon no Senso [Japan's War]* (Tokyo: Shogakkan, 2000), p. 161.

[15] [Source](#).

[16] [Source](#).

[17] [Source](#).

[18] [Source](#).

[19] [Source](#); [source](#).

[20] Yoshio Sugimoto, *An Introduction to Japanese Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 28-30.

[21] “‘Hoeru Daijin’ Ooinihoeru [‘The Loose-Lip Minister’ Barks Loudly],” *Sekai*, October, 1986. pp. 122-133.

[22] Adachi Yoshihiko, “Kodomo seinentachi ga toikakerumono: otonatachi wa ano sensokara nani o manandanoka? [The Question that Children and Youth Ask Us---‘What Have Adults Learned from the War?],” in *Rekishu Kyoikusha Kyougikai [History Educator's Conference]* (ed.), *Ajia Taiheiyo Senso kara nani o manabu ka? [What We Learn from the Asia-Pacific War?]* (Tokyo: Aoki Shoten, 1994), pp. 4-24.

[23] Tawara Yoshifumi, “Document: Tsukurukai undo to wa nandattaka? [A Document: What Was the ‘Tsukuru-Kai’ Movement?],” *Sekai*, December, 2001, pp. 105-120.

[24] Fujioka Nobukatsu/Jiyusyugi Shikan Kenkyukai, *Manga: Kyokasho ga oshienai rekishi* [Manga History of Japan: What the School Textbooks Do No Teach, 3 vols] (Tokyo: Fushosha, 1998).

[25] Text is [here](#).

[26] Cable News Network. April 14, 2005.

[27] The Japan Times, May 15, 2007.

[28] For more details see Japan Echo, Vol. 34, No. 2, (2007), p. 11.

[29] Julian Dierkes, "The Stability of Postwar Japanese History Education amid Global Changes," in Edward Vickers and Alisa Jones (eds.), *History Education and National Identity in East Asia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 255-274; Yoshida Takashi, pp. 81-101.

[30] Tae-Yol Seo, "Urinara Sahoegwa Gyoyukgwajung Gaebaleui Munjaejungwa Gaesunbanghyang: Jae 7 cha mit 8 cha Gyoyuk Gwajungeul Jungshimeuiro [The Problems of Korean Social Studies Education and Suggested Solutions: With a Focus on the 7th and 8th Curricular Reform]," a paper presented at the 5th Gyogwaseo Forum (April 6, 2006): Seoul, Korea.

[31] Supplementary learning materials in Korea are privatized, comprising a large market share of total books sales. Chinese textbooks after liberalization are subject to stringent screening processes. Oshiba Ryo, "National History-kara Transnational History-e [From National History To Trans-national History]: Nihon-ni okeru rekishi kyokasho mondai o jirei-toshite [Towards Japan's Exemplary Acts]," in Hosoya Chihiro, Irie Akira, Oshiba Ryo (eds.), *Pearl Harbor as Memory [Kiokuto Shite no Pearl Harbor]* (Tokyo: Mineruva Shobo, 2007), pp. 400-420.

[32] Anne F. Thurston, "Community and Isolation: Memory and Forgetting: China in Search of Itself," in Gerrit W. Gong (ed.), *Memory and History in East and Southeast Asia: Issues of Identity in International Relations* (Washington, D.C.: The Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2001), pp. 149-172.

[33] Cho Satoshi, Ko Kenshuku and Ou Koshun, "Chugoku [China]," in Nakamura (ed.), pp. 39-78.

[34] Kawashima Shin, "The History Factor in Sino-Japanese Ties," Japan Echo, Vol. 32, No. 5 (2005), p. 20.

[35] Shoji Junichiro, "Ilboneui Daeasia Jungchaekuei Yoksajuk Baegyung [The Historical Background of Japan's Policy Towards Asia]" Gukjaehak Nonchong (Daegu, Korea: Kemyung University, Vol. 8 (February, 2004), pp. 344-355.

[36] Kawashima Shin, p. 20.

[37] Ibid., p. 20.

[38] Wu Xinbo, "Memory and Perception: The Chinese Thinking of Japan," in Gong (ed.), *Memory and History in East and Southeast Asia: Issues of Identity in International Relations* (Washington, D.C.: The CSIS Press, 2001), pp. 65-85; En Iji, "Kindaika to Chugoku no rekishi kyokasho mondai [Modernization and Chinese School History Book Issues]," in Chugoku no

rekishi kyokasho mondai [Chinese History Book Issues –A Record and Introspection of the ‘Hyo-Ten’ Incident] (Tokyo: Nihon Kyoho-sha, 2006), pp. 51-79.

[39] Choi Su Byon, “Hakmunjok Sadaewa Jajon [Intellectual Dependence and Self-Reliance],” *Hangukin Hangukbyong* [Koreans and Korean Disease] (Seoul, Korea: Ilnyum, 1987), p. 180.

[40] Korean Ministry of Education, *Junghakgyo Guksa* [Middle School National History] (sophomore) (Seoul: Korean Ministry of Education, 1998), pp.10-11.

[41] *Guksa Pyonchan Wiwonhoe/ Gukjung Doseo Pyonchan Wiwonhoe* [National History Editorial Committee and National Publication Editorial Committee], *Junghakgyo Guksa* [Middle School National History] (Seoul: Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources, 2007), p. 194.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

[43] For more information on the implications and commemorations of the Kwangju uprising for nationwide democratization, see Henry Scott-Stokes and Lee Jae Eui (eds.), *The Kwangju Uprising: Eyewitness Press Accounts of Korea's Tiananmen* (Armonk, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2000); Linda A. Lewis, *Laying Claim to the Memory of May: A Look Back at the 1980 Kwangju Uprising* (Hawaii: University of Hawai'i Press and Center for Korean Studies, University of Hawai'i, 2002).

[44] *Guksa Pyonchan Wiwonhoe/ Gukjung Doseo Pyonchan Wiwonhoe* [National History Editorial Committee and National Publication Editorial Committee], p. 2.

[45] *Ibid.*, p. 311; for critical assessment of the official textbook narratives, see Gyogwaseo Forum (ed.), *Gyungjae Gyogwaseo, Mueutsi Munjaeinga?: [What Are the Problems of Economics Textbooks?]* (Seoul: Duraesidae, 2006).

[46] See Anna M. Alonso, “The Effects of Truth: Re-presentations of the Past and the Imagining of Community,” *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 1988, Vol. 1, Issue 3, pp. 33-57.

[47] Park Sopyu, “Korea,” in Nakamura (ed.), pp. 79-92.

[48] Interview conducted with a leading conservative academic in Korea on February 16, 2005; also see Gyogwaseo Forum, *Hanguk Hyundaesaewui Huguwa Jinsil* [Fiction and Truth about Contemporary Korean History: Criticisms of High School Modern and Contemporary History Textbooks] (Seoul: Duraesidae, 2004); Park Hyo Jong, Choi Mun Hyung, Kim Jae Ho and Lee Ju Young, *Paeatkin Uri Yoksa Doechatki: Gyogwaseo Forumyi Haebuhan ‘Waegok’eui Jinsang* [Getting Our History Back: Truths about Historical Distortion: The Reality of ‘Distortion’ Dissected by the Gyogwaseo Forum] (Seoul: Giparang, 2006).

[49] Donald Baker, “Exacerbated Politics: The Legacy of Political Trauma in South Korea,” paper in progress, 2007; see Han Yongu, *Uri Yoksa [Our History]* (Seoul: Kyongsewon, 2001).

[50] Okabe Tatsumi, “Historical Remembering and Forgetting in Sino-Japanese Relations,” in Gong (ed.), *Memory and History in East and Southeast Asia*, pp. 47-63.

[51] Nakanishi Terumasa, “China Plays Its History Cards,” *Japan Echo*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (2005), pp. 18-23.

[52] See Kimura Kan, "A Dangerous Current in Roh's South Korea," *Japan Echo*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (2004), pp. 44-48.

[53] Kokubun Ryosei and Liu Jie, "The Danger of China's Disaffected Masses," *Japan Echo*, Vol. 31, No. 6 (2004), pp. 51-55.

[54] See Douglas North, "A Transaction Cost Theory of Politics," *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, Vol. 2, No.4 (2004), pp. 335-367.

[55] Melinda Liu, "Line of Defense," *Newsweek*, October 24, 2005, pp. 26-30.

[56] See Zhu Jianrong, "The Real Reasons for the Anti-Japanese Outburst," *Japan Echo*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (2005), pp. 14-17.

[57] As an example, see Ni-Chu-Kan Sangoku Kyoutsu Rekishi Kyozaï Inkaï (ed.), *Mirai o hiraku rekishi: Higashi Ajia sangoku no kingendaishi* [Future-Oriented History: China-Japan-Korea, Three East Asian Countries' Modern and Contemporary History] (Tokyo: Koubunken, 2005/2006).

[58] "Kawaru rekishi kyoiku: Ni-Chu-Kan-Tai saishin jijyo [Changing History Education: The Latest Situations of Japan-China-Korea-Taiwan]," *Asahi Shinbun*. May 28, 2007, p.13.

The Nanjing Massacre. Changing Contours of History and Memory in Japan, China, and the U.S.

Takashi Yoshida

In Japan, China, the United States and beyond, arguably no Japanese wartime atrocity against China is more widely known than the Nanjing Massacre. [1] Whatever the significance of mere name recognition, however, the history and memory of the Nanjing Massacre are profoundly complex. Indeed, even the phrase “Nanjing Massacre” (hereafter NM) remains contested, and to this day there are circles within which the words cannot be spoken without stirring deep feeling and disagreement.

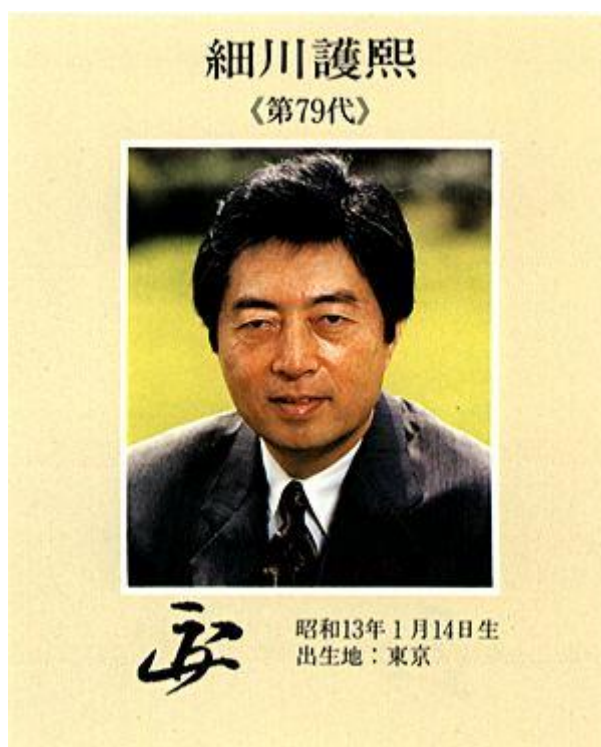
To make matters still more complicated, the definition and the meaning of the NM have continually changed over time. When the NM occurred in 1937, the duration of the atrocities considered was a week or less, and the scope of the atrocities was limited to the area inside and around the walled city. [2] In addition, the line between acts of war against combatants and unlawful acts of violence against civilians was not very clear.

Since 1937, however, commentators in Japan, China, and the United States have wrestled with the NM, and, in each country, every passing generation has offered new interpretations. Not altogether surprisingly, the accepted meanings of the NM have changed in accordance with the shifting international and domestic political climates of the times. From 1937 to 1945 the Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War shaped the history and memory of Nanjing in the three nations. From 1945 to 1971 Japan’s defeat, the civil war in China, and the cold war triggered successive revisions of the understanding of the NM in Japan, China (both the People’s Republic and the Republic of China), and the United States. During the period between 1971 and 1989, the Vietnam War, U.S. and Japanese recognition of the People’s Republic of China, and the dispute over Japanese history textbooks provoked further revisions. From 1989 to the present, the end of the cold war, the death of Hirohito, and the rise of ethnocentrism not only in Japan, but also in China and the United States prompted yet more altering in international understandings of the NM. The present article focuses primarily on the changing perspectives and contentious debates over the NM in Japan.

In presenting this fourfold periodization of the history and memory of the NM, I do not wish to foster the impression that the changes have been linear or progressive. Nor do I wish to suggest that the changes in the interpretations of Nanjing within the three nations have always been consciously orchestrated. For example, the dispute over the NM was rather contained, the issues little discussed, in Japan prior to the early 1980s. Since the death of Emperor Hirohito in 1989, however, the dispute over Nanjing has become vituperative across national boundaries as well as among Japanese intellectuals. In all three nations, numerous authors and commentators on the subject have emerged, ranging well beyond academe to include journalists, former soldiers and politicians. Frequently, the chief objective in the intensifying debate seems not to have been reaching consensus as to truth, but the assertion and preservation of national pride and a positive sense of ethnic identity. Given the insistence of Japanese revisionists that the NM is essentially a lie concocted to disparage Japan, it is impossible for Chinese or American participants in the debate to find significant common ground. Since the 1990s, accounts of NM that grossly simplify the history of the atrocities and tend to provoke animosity toward the perceived Other have flourished in all three nations.

Tracing the history and memory of the NM in Japan, China, and the United States not only reveals the impact of social and political contexts of the time on the accounts of Nanjing, but also reveals how these narratives have placed differing values on human lives according to nationality and perceived ethnicity. The contested history and memory of the NM in Japan from 1989 to the present illustrates how and why the dispute has become so passionate and poignant.

By the mid-1990s, awareness of wartime Japanese atrocities, including the NM, may have reached its peak. The sharp rise in interest was reflected in public discussions, politics, museums, textbook treatments, and court cases. Two historical events particularly amplified public consciousness regarding Japan's wartime past: the illness and death of Emperor Showa (Hirohito) and the emergence of non-Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro. These events contributed to an unprecedented rift between those who hoped to include the sufferings of non-Japanese in Japan's national history and those who believed that Imperial Japan fought for good and there was no basis for highlighting atrocities.



Hosokawa Morihiro

The end of Hirohito's reign offered an opportunity for many to reconsider Japan's role during the Fifteen-Year War (1931-45) and the emperor's responsibility for the war. As the emperor lay ill, citizen groups and academic institutions organized public meetings and lectures to examine Japanese wartime atrocities in Asia. In municipal assemblies in such cities as Tokyo and Nagasaki, critics raised questions concerning not only Japanese atrocities but also Hirohito's war responsibility. When Hirohito died in January 1989, the public gatherings and debates over Japan's responsibility for the war were far from over.

For example, in August 1993, when Hosokawa Morihiro became the first non-Liberal Democratic Party prime minister since 1955, he was asked about his view of the war. He responded by calling the conflict an aggressive war (*shinryaku senso*). In August 1995,

Murayama Tomiichi, a Socialist prime minister, expressed his “deep remorse” (*tsusetsu na hansei*) and “heartfelt apology” (*kokoro kara no owabi*) for Japan’s colonial rule and wartime aggression. Lawmakers who believe that Imperial Japan liberated Asia and that postwar education unfairly demonized Imperial Japan fiercely attacked Hosokawa and Murayama, and the members of the Diet found themselves divided by their understandings of the past war. Yet Hosokawa’s and Murayama’s remarks probably expressed a large share of popular opinion, emblematic of the progressive tenor of the time.

Many public local museums as well as private museums, both large and small, were opened or renovated from the late 1980s on. They commemorate not only the sufferings of Japanese war victims, but also the losses and hardships of non-Japanese. These museums include the Okunoshima Poison Gas Museum in Hiroshima prefecture (1988), the Osaka International Peace Center (1991), the Kyoto Museum for World Peace at Ritsumeikan University (1992), the Kawasaki Peace Museum (1992), the Peace Museum of Saitama (1993), the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum (1994), Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum (1995), and the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum (1996). In addition, a number of “mobile peace museums” — that is, special exhibitions that underscore Japanese wartime atrocities—traveled across Japan and attracted tens of thousands of visitors.



Okunoshima Poison Gas Museum, site of poison gas production during the Pacific War

These museum exhibits reflected the trend of the historical academy of the time. [3] Local historians and teachers examined the effects of the war on ordinary people in the region. They not only discussed the experience of American fire bombings and atomic bombings that took so heavy a toll on Japanese civilians, but also explored how ordinary Japanese cooperated with the state and military to victimize other Asians during the war. They published numerous studies which challenged through documentation the notion that ordinary Japanese were merely victims of the war. Studies of local sites relating to the war, such as abandoned underground tunnels and military factories and mines where Chinese and Korean laborers were enslaved, became common during this period. [4]

Meanwhile, lawyers filed actions on behalf of victims of Japan’s wartime atrocities. Between 1991 and 1995, more than twenty-seven such cases were brought in Japanese courts. Since the mid-1990s, more than 200 lawyers nationwide have participated in war-related lawsuits against the government and private companies, nearly all working without fees. Although these lawyers obviously hope to recover damages for their clients, they also wish the Japanese government to formally acknowledge the nation’s responsibility for the alleged crimes. Onodera Toshitaka, one of the leading members of the plaintiffs’ legal team, is one of many who believe that publicizing the suffering of the survivors of Japanese atrocities and securing long overdue payment of wages and reparations is a key to promoting reconciliation between Japan and its neighboring countries, bringing to an end the poisonous legacy of war and colonialism that continues to roil the waters of the diplomacy of East Asia. [5]

In the 1990s, history textbooks became more inclusive of sufferings of non-Japanese victims of the war and discussed Japan's wartime atrocities in greater detail than previously. This is also true of the NM. Six out of seven junior history textbooks available in 1997 stated that the Japanese military killed between 100,000 and 200,000 Chinese during and after the Battle of Nanjing. Four of them also gave the Chinese official estimate of 300,000. Estimates of the victims of Nanjing, as well as the treatment of the event, in junior high and high school textbooks have fluctuated throughout the postwar era, but compared to the previous and later editions, the 1997 editions tended to provide the most detailed discussion of the event and present the highest death totals.

Some Japanese appreciated the openness of the social and political environment that produced such textbook descriptions in the 1990s. But others were far from welcoming it, indeed, they fiercely challenged the notion that Imperial Japan was an aggressor, still less that it perpetrated war crimes. In their eyes, Japan fought a just war and liberated Asia from Western imperialism. The proponents of this view have powerful allies in Japan, and even some abroad. Many of the representatives of the other Asian governments, who participated in "Celebration of Pan-Asian Unity" (*Ajia kyosei no saiten*), held in Tokyo in 1995 by the National Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the End of World War II (*Shusen gojussunen kokumin iinkai*) openly expressed gratitude for Japan's contribution to Asian independence. They include the former Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Thailand, Vice Chancellor of the National University of Malaya, and Ambassador at Large to Africa from Indonesia. These were social and political elites who did not remember Japanese wartime occupation as being particularly cruel. Between 1993 and 1995, the committee waged a nationwide campaign to protest Premier Hosokawa's characterization of the war and prevent the Diet from issuing apologies for Japan's aggression and colonialism.

This revisionist movement, whose evident goal was to challenge the negative characterization of Imperial Japan and to tone down, if not whitewash, Japan's wartime atrocities and colonialism, was not new in the 1990s. It has existed throughout postwar Japanese society, but the magnitude and collaborations among different leading professionals was a new phenomenon in the 1990s. In 1995, Fujioka Nobukatsu, a professor at the University of Tokyo, and his supporters established the Association for the Advancement of the Liberal View of History. They soon founded the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (*Atarashii rekishi kyokasho o tsukuru kai*) in order to combat the junior and senior high school history textbooks that detailed Japan's wartime colonialism and atrocities such as the NM. Fujioka staunchly resisted a view of the era that detailed such war crimes, considering it damaging to the self-esteem and patriotism of Japanese youth and producing a mindset that was masochistic and self-derogatory.

Fujioka and some of his colleagues in the Society claimed that no ordinary citizen in Nanjing was killed illegally. They argued that the chaotic situation that occurred in Nanjing was not the fault of the Japanese army, but resulted from the fact that Chinese leaders deserted the city leaving chaos in their wake. He claimed that the NM—that is, the event defined as the killing of 200,000–300,000 civilians—was a fabrication and lashed out at school textbooks that provided such baseless casualty estimates. To him, Japan was engaging in a battle, in which killings of the enemy were justified, and slaughtering prisoners of war was also acceptable as keeping them alive could have endangered lives of the Japanese troops. Therefore, in contrast to the conclusions drawn by many historians, including Japanese historians, Fujioka concluded Japanese troops had committed no "massacre." In response to what Fujioka deemed the

masochistic message of the educational mainstream, the Japanese Society for Textbook Reform proceeded to author their own alternative text, titled New History Textbook (Atarashii rekishi kyokasho). While the authors were required to include a brief statement regarding the Japanese killing of civilians in Nanjing in order to secure government approval of their textbook, they tried to offset this compromise by stressing that the dispute over the Nanjing incident is ongoing and that various views exist on the subject. [6]



The New History Textbook

Both sides of the argument rightly regard the stakes in the debate as enormous for Japan's future. The on-going battle over Nanjing can be seen not only in history textbooks, but also in films, courts, in the academy and in political debate. Don't Cry, Nanjing (1995), made by Chinese and Hong Kong filmmakers, that depicted atrocities in Nanjing, traveled across Japan in 1997 and 1998. A Japanese response to Don't Cry Nanjing was Pride: The Moment of Destiny (Puraido: unmei no toki; 1998), a film that suggested that the chief prosecutor of the Tokyo Trial fabricated the atrocities in Nanjing. Legal battles have also been waged by both sides. On the one hand, the Li Xiuying case was brought to recover the honor of a Chinese woman who was stabbed nearly forty times by three Japanese soldiers during the atrocities. Simultaneously, another action was filed to restore the reputations of two Japanese officers who, in 1937, were reported to have engaged in a contest to see who could kill more Chinese in what came to be known as the 100-man beheading contest. The divisions are not only those between nations. They are also played out within Japan. Since its foundation in 1984, the Research Committee on the Nanjing Incident (Nankin jiken chosa kenkyukai) has published in-depth studies documenting the atrocities in Nanjing. In contrast, the Japan Association for "Nanjing" Studies (Nihon "Nankin" gakkai) has zealously published revisionist accounts denying the NM since its founding in 2000.



Yushukan war history exhibits at Yasukuni Shrine

While most revisionist accounts are available only in Japanese, some have also appeared in English since the 1990s. As the history and memory of the NM became internationalized, the Japanese revisionists have attempted to convince the world that what is known as the NM has been falsified. The spirit of these revisionist versions has much in common with some equally emotional, nationalistic, and ethnocentric statements about Nanjing that have emanated from China and the United States. Indeed, each has fed off the others. In China, many accounts and museum exhibits dealing with Nanjing have fostered a self-congratulatory nationalism, calculated to strengthen loyalty to the government while paying scant attention to the facts, as opposed to reiterating an iconic position such as the 300,000 deaths. The same may be said, from across the ideological barricades, of the Yasukuni Shrine's museum presentation of the Pacific War with its complete lack of reference to Japanese atrocities. Moreover, some American works on Nanjing have ascribed the atrocities to an alleged Japanese racial character or unique cultural behavior, ignoring the widely shared racist thought that lay behind the war's savagery. [7]

In my view, such approaches in their failure to engage the evidence, whether through denial or exaggeration, are every bit as harmful as the Japanese revisionist accounts. Grounded in xenophobic hatred and enduring suspicion, they are no less tendentious than the wartime propaganda that preceded them. It seems doubtful that any useful assessment of the NM will ever emerge from assumptions that begin and end with reifications of national stereotypes, an approach which makes it impossible to clarify why the NM occurred and how it fits into the larger pattern of Japanese military behavior in China. To the contrary, such responses serve only to marginalize carefully researched and more complex historical analyses of the NM. Because their definitions of "massacre," "victim," and "perpetrator" differ in fundamentals, it is unlikely that Japanese revisionists and their counterparts abroad can ever reach a consensus on what happened at Nanjing. In such an environment, the dispute over the NM will never achieve

closure, and nationalistic and ethnocentric narratives will continue to attract a popular audience. The consequences of such an outcome can only be to further poison relations between China and Japan.

In my book, I portray the NM as an event that has been severely politicized and distorted from several directions. I show how the subsequent treatments of an historical event across national boundaries can reveal more about the anxieties, prejudices, and political agendas of its commentators than about the event itself. In exploring this ongoing instance of uses and abuses of history and memory, I hope to provide an antidote to the poisonous tendency of the NM literature to provoke hatred rather than reasoned analysis, understanding rather than mutual recrimination, and make it possible to approach a truer understanding of one of the great tragedies of the twentieth century.

Takashi Yoshida is assistant professor of history at Western Michigan University and author of The Making of the "Rape of Nanking": History and Memory in Japan, China, and the United States.

Notes

[1] This essay summarizes Chapter 10 ("War Over History and Memory") of my *The Making of the "Rape of Nanking": History and Memory in Japan, China, and the United States* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 129-153.

[2] Tilman Durdin, for example, reported that at least 33,000 Chinese were killed during the Battle of Nanjing. See "Japanese Atrocities Marked Fall of Nanking After Chinese Command Fled," *New York Times*, 9 January 1938, p. 38. In contrast, in *The Nanjing Incident* (Nankin jiken), published in 1997, Kasahara Tokushi defined the NM as the atrocities which occurred during both the Battle of Nanjing and the ensuing occupation, namely from December 4, 1937, until March 28, 1938. He estimated that the Japanese Army and Navy killed between 100,000 and 200,000 Chinese soldiers and civilians in Nanjing and its six counties. See Kasahara Tokushi, *The Nanjing Incident* (Nankin jiken), (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1997), pp. 214-28.

[3] These numerous "masochistic" museums provoked the neonationalist backlash in many spheres including the call for textbook revision and the decision by the Yasukuni Shrine to renovate its war museum, the Yushukan. Until the first national war museum, the Showakan was built, these museums highlighting Japanese atrocities had few competitors.

[4] Kasahara, *The Nanjing Incident*, p. 224, n46 and n47.

[5] Onodera Toshitaka, *Sengo hoshō saiban toso no kadai to tenbo* (Problems and Prospects in Postwar Legal Struggles over Compensation), pp. 13-15.

[6] Nishio Kanji, et al., eds., *New History Textbook* (Atarashii rekishi kyokasho), (Tokyo: Fusosha, 2001), pp. 270, 296.

[7] See, particularly, Iris Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997). For a more detailed analysis of Chang's volume, see Takashi Yoshida "Refighting the Nanjing Massacre: The Continuing Struggle over Memory," in *Nanking 1937: Memory and Healing*, eds. Fei Fei Li, Robert Sabella, and David Liu (M.E. Sharpe, 2002), pp. 166-71. On the role of racism in wartime Japan and the United States, see John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

Sites of Japanese Memory: Museums, Memorials, Commemoration

Yasukuni Shrine, its War Museum, and other World War II Museums

“The National Politics of the Yasukuni Shrine”

Takahashi Tetsuya

N.D.

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Takahashi-Tetsuya/2272>

“Yasukuni Shrine: Ritual and Memory”

John Breen

June 3, 2005

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-John-Breen/2060>

“Japan, the United States and Yasukuni Nationalism: War, Historical Memory and the Future of the Asia Pacific”

Mark Selden

September 10, 2008

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Mark-Selden/2892>

“Yomiuri and Asahi Editors Call for a National Memorial to Replace Yasukuni”

Wakamiya Yoshibumi and Watanabe Tsuneo

February 14, 2006

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Watanabe-Tsuneo/2124>

“Revising the Past, Complicating the Future: The Yushukan War Museum in Modern Japanese History”

Takashi YOSHIDA

December 2, 2007

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Takashi-YOSHIDA/2594>

“Heroic Resistance and Victims of Atrocity: Negotiating the Memory of Japanese Imperialism in Chinese Museums”

Kirk A. Denton

October 17, 2007

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Kirk A -Denton/2547>

“Nanjing’s Massacre Memorial: Renovating War Memory in Nanjing and Tokyo”

Jeff Kingston

August 22, 2008

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Jeff-Kingston/2859>

In the absence of a “national war memorial” designated by the Japanese state, the Yasukuni Shrine, an institution founded to commemorate the fallen of Japan’s civil wars from 1853 to 1877 and Japan’s wars abroad in later years, is receiving growing attention as a site of memory and commemoration. Since it was once a pillar of prewar militarism, the shrine was legally detached from the state and re-established as an “independent religious

body” immediately after World War II. Nevertheless, politicians continue to blur the line between religion and state and convey support for the idea that the war had divine qualities by paying official visits to the shrine. The essays in this section detail further just how controversial the Yasukuni Shrine remains.

Takahashi Tetsuya, author of a best-selling book on the role of the shrine, for example, notes that active politicians “worshipping” the “Gods of Yasukuni” at the shrine violates articles 20 and 89 of the Constitution, which stipulate a separation of state and religion. Moreover, he argues that worship at the shrine, where not only soldiers, but also Class-A war criminals are venerated as Gods, contradicts the government’s official acknowledgement of the war as one of aggression. The shrine’s wartime role, Takahashi stresses, stands in stark contrast to postwar Japan’s ideology of pacifism. The basic problem with the Shrine, Takahashi argues, is that it is not a place of mourning, but a place to honor the military war dead—an act that contradicts a critical and reflective approach to Japan’s wartime past.

John Breen disagrees with Takahashi. He introduces the various sites within the Shrine and interprets it as a place of “intimate personal memory.” Breen also emphasizes that “praying for peace” by remembering the war dead is an integral part of the activities of this institution.

Mark Selden’s article adds another dimension to the arguments by putting the “Yasukuni Problem” in an international perspective, including Japan’s relations with the United States and “competing nationalisms” in the Asia-Pacific. Urging readers to set aside images of a monolithic Japan when talking about war-related issues, Selden emphasizes deep fissures in “Japanese” attitudes towards the Yasukuni Shrine. In order to underline this claim, he introduces memorials with different approaches, such as the “Cornerstone of Peace” in Okinawa. The next text features the chief editors and the publishers of Japan’s two largest newspapers, who strongly criticized Prime Minister Koizumi Junichirō’s controversial visits to the Shrine, and is an example of how discussions around the shrine escalated in the early 2000s. The fact that they both did so was striking: the *Yomiuri*, which is usually considered rather conservative, had supported politicians’ visits to the Shrine in the past, while the *Asahi* had considered them a violation of the constitutional provision of separation of state and religion. But, in the early twenty-first century, a consensus emerged that visits to the controversial Shrine harmed Japan’s reputation abroad, especially its relations with China and Korea, and so should stop.

Takashi Yoshida’s article then takes us inside the grounds of Yasukuni by analyzing the Yûshûkan war museum. Yoshida concludes that the museum clearly advocates conservative, revisionist ideas that beautify the war. In contrast to the Yûshûkan, the next two essays show that the war is portrayed very differently in memorials and museums in two of the countries that were victims of Japanese military aggression: Korea (South) and China. Kirk Denton explores representations of Japanese imperialism and war in museums of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), including the Northeast Martyrs Memorial Hall (celebrating the sacrifices of those who lost their lives in the northeastern region of China, also known as Manchuria), the Memorial Hall of the People’s War of Resistance Against the Japanese in Beijing (commemorating the 1937 incident that formally began full-scale war between China and Japan), the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall, the Unit 731 Museum, and the September 18 History Museum (commemorating the outbreak of the Manchurian

Incident 1931). Last, Jeff Kingston provides a more detailed look at the Nanjing Massacre Memorial in Nanjing, China, including the reactions of visitors to the memorial.

The National Politics of the Yasukuni Shrine

Takahashi Tetsuya

Translated by Philip Seaton

Takahashi Tetsuya's "The National Politics of the Yasukuni Shrine," is among the most important statements to emerge from the debate over Yasukuni Shrine, historical memory and war nationalism.

Japan Focus is pleased to present chapter seven of Naoko Shimazu, ed., Nationalisms in Japan. Philip Seaton is the translator.

Takahashi Tetsuya is Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tokyo. A philosopher and the author of the best-selling [Yasukuni Mondai](#) (The Yasukuni Problem). His current research interests center on problems of deconstruction, history and memory, and the Showa era.

Philip Seaton is Associate Professor, Institute of Language and Culture Studies, Hokkaido University. He is currently researching war-related commemorative programmes on Japanese television and undertaking an oral history project focusing on how members of the postwar generations have reacted to knowledge of relatives' war experiences.

We thank Takahashi, Shimazu, Seaton and Routledge for their cooperation in publishing this article.

Find a podcast of Takahashi Tetsuya's lecture of March 6, 2007 on [Postwar Japan on the Brink: Militarism, Colonialism, Yasukuni Shrine](#). This was the inaugural lecture of The Tetsuo Najita Distinguished Lecture Series in Japanese Studies at the University of Chicago.

Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichirō and Tokyo Mayor Ishihara Shintarō have repeatedly worshipped at Yasukuni Shrine since 13 August 2001 and 15 August 2000 respectively, and have expressed their intentions to continue worshipping in the future. In the face of this worship, there has been bitter criticism from inside and outside Japan. There are doubts over whether worship by public figures at Yasukuni Shrine, which is an autonomous religious institution (*shūkyō hōjin*), contravenes Articles 20 and 89 of the Constitution, the provisions concerning the separation of religion and the state. Furthermore, worship at the shrine where Class A war criminals, those found guilty as the leading war criminals by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, are enshrined, is seen as Japanese political leaders' neglect of Japan's war responsibility and causes distrust among the people of Asia, including China and South Korea.

Elsewhere I have criticized the prime minister's and others' Yasukuni Shrine worship both from the perspective of the constitutional issue of the separation of religion and the state, and from the perspective of war responsibility.¹ The aim of this chapter is to argue that the essential meaning of Yasukuni Shrine worship is to oppose the constitutional separation of religion and the state, by clarifying, from a philosophical and historical perspective, the political objectives held by the prime minister and others who repeatedly worship at the Shrine.

The political nature of Prime Minister Koizumi and Mayor Ishihara's Yasukuni worship

In terms of the political objectives of Yasukuni Shrine worship, one aspect that has been widely examined is the influence of the *Izokukai* (War Bereaved Association), which has been politically active in demanding the official worship of the prime minister and emperor. If the prime minister worships at Yasukuni Shrine, the ruling party can obtain the votes of the *Izokukai*, which amounts to hundreds of thousands. During the Liberal Democratic Party (hereafter LDP) leadership contest in 2001, Koizumi used the promise to worship at the Shrine against Hashimoto Ryūtarō, a former prime minister and former chairman of the *Izokukai*. This study, however, is concerned with political objectives which exist above domestic politics, namely national objectives. 'National politics' (*nashonaru poritikkusu*), that is, an attempt to lead the country or the entire nation in a specific direction, merits a philosophical and intellectual analysis and is the focus of this chapter.

Prime Minister Koizumi attempts to give the impression that his Yasukuni Shrine worship is not political in nature, but that it stems from natural feelings of commemoration or mourning for the war dead. For example, in a statement made by Koizumi on the occasion of his first visit to Yasukuni since becoming prime minister, he commented as follows:

When I stand before the souls of the people who, believing in the future of their country, fell in battle during that difficult period, I think again how the peace and prosperity of today's Japan is built upon their precious sacrifice, and I have come here to renew my yearly pledge for peace.²

Furthermore, at a press conference following his fourth visit on 1 January 2004, he said:

I worshipped with many thoughts in mind: the thought that the Japan of today is built upon the precious sacrifice of the people who lived in a time of war and unwillingly had to give up their lives, with gratitude for peace, and the hope that from now on Japan will prosper in peace.³

From these comments, it seems at a glance as if Koizumi is simply expressing apolitical sentiments of commemoration or mourning and desire for peace. But the problem is that this act of 'commemoration' or 'mourning' is nothing more than the political act of state recognition of the souls enshrined at Yasukuni, hence, a political act with a national objective.

In the prime minister's statements above, he repeatedly used the phrase 'precious sacrifice' (*tōtoi gisei*). Saying that the 'the peace and prosperity of today's Japan' or 'the Japan of today' is built upon the 'precious sacrifice' of the Japanese soldiers and civilian employees of the military (*gunzoku*) enshrined at Yasukuni, is to praise, beautify and honour the soldiers and civilian employees who built 'the peace and prosperity of today's Japan' or 'the Japan of today'. Whether the 'Japan of today' is 'prospering' in 'peace' is not necessarily self-evident as witnessed, for example, in the Okinawan situation. There is a logical inconsistency with the proposition that the 'Japan of today' is only possible thanks to the war dead enshrined at Yasukuni.

Even without making this clear leap of logic, the prime minister's attitude of honouring the 'precious sacrifice' of those enshrined at Yasukuni further indicates the political nature of the act of his worship. Why cannot Koizumi Jun'ichirō and Ishihara Shintarō leave the commemoration

and mourning of the souls enshrined at Yasukuni up to the priests at the shrine? And if the prime minister and mayor of Tokyo want to commemorate and mourn for the enshrined, why do they not choose to worship quietly on their own as 'private individuals'? When Japan's political leaders worship at Yasukuni as prime minister and mayor of Tokyo and praise the 'precious sacrifice' of the enshrined, they send the strongest message to the Japanese people that 'dying for one's country' is a 'precious' act and an act worthy of national honour.

In contemporary Japan, a political movement to make the Japanese state once again into an agent capable of prosecuting war (*sensō suikō shutai*) is gaining strength. While for the first time since the end of World War II, heavy armour from the Self-Defense Forces (hereafter SDF) is being sent to Iraq, a state of emergency is gradually being put in place. There is talk of the enactment of a permanent law to allow the overseas deployment of maritime SDF, and debates about revision of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution.

In democratic states, even if the constitution makes military action possible, that on its own is not enough for the prosecution of a full-scale war. For the state to undertake a full-scale war, the strong support, cooperation and participation of the people are necessary. On top of the inevitability of casualties, including soldiers and civilian employees in the military, it is necessary for the people to accept the sacrifice necessary 'for one's country' (*okuni no tame*) in order to protect the 'national interest' (*kokueki*). The people must support war as a national policy, and in time, the 'heart' (*kokoro*) and 'national spirit' (*kokumin seishin*) of the people will come to accept sacrifices 'for their country'.

In order for the people to accept the above sacrifice and support war, their sacrifice must be praised by political leaders as 'precious sacrifice'. 'Sacrifice' must be praised, beautified (*bika*) and made the object of 'respect and gratitude' (*kansha to keii*). Even if the people remain unmoved by the suffering of the enemy, if they come to feel their own suffering and the suffering of family, friends and fellow countrymen as painful, empty and something that should not have happened, they will no longer be able to accept the sacrifice that accompanies war. The people will then lose their desire to support, cooperate and participate in wars that bring new sacrifice. While accepting the inevitability of death in war, if political leaders do not acknowledge death as 'precious' or express 'thanks and respect' in public, the state will ultimately be unable to mobilize the people for war.

Prime Minister Nakasone articulated this idea in 1985, arguing that

In America they have the Arlington Cemetery. If you go to the Soviet Union and other foreign countries they have Tombs of the Unknown Warriors. They have places where the people can *express their thanks* to those who have fallen in battle. This is perfectly natural. *Otherwise, who is going to give their life for the country?*⁴

Prime Minister Koizumi has repeatedly expressed his 'respect and thanks' to those enshrined at Yasukuni: 'With feelings of *respect and gratitude* to the war dead, I expressed my feelings of mourning'.⁵ If political leaders repeatedly express their 'gratitude and respect' to the fallen, the deaths of those who fell in war will be praised, beautified and honoured at the level of national politics as 'deaths worthy of respect' and 'model deaths that should be learned from'. Therefore, 'gratitude and respect' became the most politically effective words for achieving the state's political objective of being a war-prosecuting agent, stirring the 'heart' of the people and creating a 'national spirit'.

At a press conference following the December 2003 cabinet decision to send the SDF to Iraq, Prime Minister Koizumi commented, '[t]he spirit of the Japanese people [*Nippon kokumin no seishin*] is being tested'.⁶ This use of 'the spirit of the people' is connected with the meaning of the 'heart' of the people and the 'spirit of the people' mentioned above. It is possible that there will be casualties in action among the SDF personnel sent to Iraq. While this kind of sacrifice by the people is foreseen, what 'being tested' means is whether or not that kind of sacrifice can be accepted, whether the people can continue to support the dispatch of troops to Iraq, and whether 'the Japanese people' have that kind of 'spirit' regardless of the nature of the sacrifice. Therefore, if there is a situation in which there are casualties among the SDF personnel sent to Iraq, the prime minister can simply substitute the words 'war on terrorism' for 'war', and using exactly the same trick he has used on each occasion of his Yasukuni worship, he can honour the sacrifice of the SDF personnel. In other words, Koizumi would commemorate fallen SDF personnel with words like '[w]e live in the era of war on terrorism, and the Japan of today is built on the precious sacrifice of those who unwillingly gave their lives . . . '.

The role of education is important in creating the 'heart' and the 'national spirit' of a people that supports war. The Koizumi administration's proposal to revise the Basic Law on Education is related to the prime minister's repeated worship at the Yasukuni Shrine. Former Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro, who worshipped at Yasukuni Shrine arguing that 'if we do not extend our gratitude to the fallen, who is going to give their life for the nation?', stated in 2003 that '[n]ow, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the topics of Japan's national image and the *spirit of the people* are once again on the agenda', and 'it is necessary to start reform from a complete change to the Basic Law on Education as the mental backbone of the nation'.⁷

In 1999, Kawamura Tateo, then head of the LDP's Basic Law on Education Research Group, explained that 'we want to debate the issues with a Heisei Imperial Rescript on Education in mind'.⁸ The Imperial Rescript on Education, proclaimed in Emperor Meiji's name in 1890, underpinned education during the era of the Japanese empire. It inculcated the following: 'in times of emergency, be of public service and help to support the imperial fortune in heaven and on earth', in other words, in times of war, resolve to lay down your life for the Emperor and the nation. The Imperial Rescript converged with the doctrines of the Yasukuni Shrine to mobilize the people for war. Since becoming Education Minister in October 2004, Kawamura Tateo has wanted to reform the Basic Law on Education by turning it into a 'Heisei Rescript on Education' with the aim of submitting it to the Diet in 2005.

At the February 2004 launch of the Committee for the Promotion of Reform of the Basic Law on Education, an LDP–Democratic Party of Japan (hereafter DPJ) cross-party group, DPJ member Nishimura announced that:

*We will create Japanese people who do not mind laying down their lives for their country. We will teach children that where there are people who lay down their lives for their country there is a fatherland. This I promise.*⁹

This sentiment precisely reflects the Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890, while at the same time, it also reflects the nature of the political objectives of worship at the Yasukuni Shrine.

Yasukuni Shrine as a device for the 'spiritual mobilization of the people'

What effect does the worship of Yasukuni Shrine by the emperor, prime minister and mayor of

Tokyo have on creating a 'national spirit' which supports potential future wars? In order to understand this, we must look into the general mobilization of the 'national spirit' in the era of the Japanese empire.

At first, the Yasukuni Shrine was a device for creating a psychology whereby soldiers fought and sacrificed their lives in war for the emperor and the state. According to Yokoyama Natsuki's *Shining Yasukuni Tales*, published in April 1943:

Death in war is undoubtedly a tragic thing. But, for ordinary Japanese, more than going to war and being sent to war, death in war is giving one's life to the nation, so it is not just any death. It is the peak of shining honour. It is a boy's ultimate dream. In Japan, boys are born to protect their country. They are born to create the brilliant history of Japan. Our ancestors were all like that. *And of course, our descendants must also be like that.* So, the eternal light of shining Japan is here in this shrine of Yasukuni. The passionate will of the people is a consistent and unfailing light, and the pure act of giving one's life for one's country is a light that shines in the world.¹¹

Thus, 'boys born in Japan' must pursue death in battle for their country, and make being worshipped at 'the shrine of Yasukuni' their 'ultimate dream'. But the Yasukuni Shrine not only has the function of mobilizing Japanese 'boys' to be Imperial soldiers. Elements of the 'Yasukuni Doctrine' (Yasukuni *shinkō*) and 'Yasukuni Spirit' (Yasukuni *seishin*) not only encompassed Japanese soldiers, they encompassed all the Japanese people, including women and children, and gave them equal value within the Japanese 'national spirit'.

This was presented in an easy-to-understand form in references to the Yasukuni Shrine in the ethics textbook, *Shūshin*. The fifth edition of *Shūshin* (Elementary Second Grade) used from 1941 states:

On Kudan Hill (Kudanzaka) in Tokyo, a large bronze *torii* (shrine gate) stands tall. Inside one can see a marvellous shrine. This is Yasukuni Shrine.

At Yasukuni Shrine there are many loyal people enshrined who resolved to die for the emperor and the nation.

Every spring on 30 April and every autumn on 23 October there are Commemoration Ceremonies attended by distinguished people.

There are also special ceremonies when people who died loyally are enshrined. At these times, their majesties the emperor and empress attend.

On days with commemorative events, there is a continual stream of worshippers and, of course, military personnel, and the spacious courtyard becomes packed.

It is the desire of his majesty the emperor that the people who resolved to die for the emperor and for the nation are enshrined and worshipped in this way.

And in our home regions too, there are *Gokoku Jinja* [Nation Protecting Shrines] where the war dead are worshipped.

While being grateful for the many blessings bestowed on us by His Majesty the Emperor, *we must learn from the loyalty of the enshrined and pledge ourselves to the emperor and the nation.* (author's italics)

The overwhelming majority of those who died in war and were enshrined at Yasukuni were soldiers who were meant to have internalized the ‘spirit of Yasukuni’ through education. However, since it was also targeted at all pupils regardless of gender, the ‘spirit of Yasukuni’ was not necessarily demanded only of male soldiers. Women, such as nurses, who were employed by the military and who had died and were enshrined, were also presented as calling out to young girls to ‘follow us and devote yourself to the emperor and nation’.

In *Women of Yasukuni*, published in August 1941 by the Society to Honour the Women of Yasukuni, the stories of the lives and deaths of forty-one women who had died while serving with the military (and seven who died in the Meiji Restoration) were told; their deaths were honoured and women were urged to ‘follow their example’. Ikuta Tatsuo wrote in his Introduction:

The over 200,000 gods enshrined at Yasukuni are the ancestors, fathers, brothers, leaders and children of our people, and their achievements are truly the incarnation of the Japanese spirit (*yamato damashii*). Among these many gods there are a little over 50,000 female gods. These gods are in no way inferior to the male gods and are strong women like guardian angels (*oni*) protecting the country. We have established the Yasukuni Society to Honour Japan’s Guardian Angels, and have investigated the achievements of these loyal and brave women. Now we have completed the investigation, we have published *Yasukuni Retsujofu* (‘Yasukuni’s Female Gods’). We give great *honour* to their virtue. This autumn, with many incidents occurring, *the rise or fall of the nation depends particularly on the readiness of women*. We want them to be aware of the situation and to be loyal servants to the cause of domestic order and security.¹²

In the ‘spirit of Yasukuni’, it did not matter whether people were men or women, as long as they were Japanese, they were required to embody that spirit.

However, even more important was how to start manipulating the emotions of the bereaved families for whom the Yasukuni Doctrine had taken away family members. Accordingly, the Yasukuni Doctrine were particularly connected with the families of the war dead and had to make the families accept the war death of their relatives and even make them welcome bereavement. Here one can mention the way that the bereaved families, the ‘Yasukuni wives, mothers and children’, should behave. These were the essential structural elements of the Yasukuni Doctrine.

At this point, let us turn to *Yasukuni no Seishin* (The Spirit of Yasukuni) published in 1942 by Takagami Kakushō (1894–1948). Takagami was a Buddhist scholar of the Chisan sect of Shingon Buddhism, who published many works on Buddhism and Buddhist philosophy before and during the war.¹² After the war, he continued to attract a wide readership with works such as *Hannya shingyō kōgi*. Takagami’s writings on the Yasukuni Doctrine provide an interesting insight, because they were written from the perspective of a Buddhist scholar aimed at a general audience. The spirit of Yasukuni formulated in this work, as the subtitle ‘To the Families of the War Dead’ demonstrates, was addressed to bereaved families and aimed to convince them that:

The spirit of Yasukuni is not only a spirit that soldiers have in wartime. *It is a Japanese spirit that all Japanese people should adhere to identically in both war and times of peace*. But, how can we instil this spirit of Yasukuni? Ultimately I think we should use the following words.

Spill your blood with joy for the nation.
 Shed tears of joy for the people.
 Gladly make yourself sweat.

For truly, it is only through that blood, those tears and that sweat that we can bring about a spring of bright peace to heaven and earth in East Asia, and throughout the world.¹³

Here we can see the very same function of Yasukuni Shrine being expressed: it is a device for the general mobilization of the 'national spirit'. In other words, the Yasukuni spirit is nothing more than the Japanese spirit that all Japanese people should adhere to identically in both war and times of peace.

However, it was particularly important that mothers who had lost sons, and wives who had lost husbands, internalized the Yasukuni spirit and became Yasukuni mothers and Yasukuni wives. According to Takagami, this was only possible if the sadness of the bereaved families could be turned into joy:

It seems there are many people who think 'why only my child?' or 'why only my husband?' There are also a considerable number of people who are distraught with grief as if their own children or husbands had sacrificed their lives; this can also be thought of as a somewhat mistaken way of looking at things. . . .

I think that there is a great difference between feeling joy at the wonderful service performed by children and husbands, and feeling grief at the unfortunate death for the country of children who were brought up with so much care. Whether one feels joy or grief, these are feelings for one's own heart. However much one thinks of property as one's own, in reality it is not one's own thing. Everything belongs to the state. And it is not only property. Our bodies and lives too are all gifts from he who reigns over us. So in times of need, we must all ceaselessly and earnestly strive to be of great service. The bereaved families are the people who gracefully gave us the children they lovingly brought up and husbands they looked after as shields against harm. They have returned to the emperor what he has bestowed unto us. But, those sons and husbands are now enshrined at Yasukuni, and for all eternity they will be worshipped by the emperor and looked up to by the people as loyal defenders of the nation. I think there are no higher aspirations that a boy can have.

. . . When someone dies an ordinary death, we may feel sympathy, but not necessarily respect and gratitude.

. . . The bereaved families can receive considerable gratitude and respect from people they have never met thanks to their sons and husbands who gave their lives for the nation.¹⁴

Prime Minister Koizumi's repeated use of the same rhetoric of 'respect and gratitude' every time he worships at Yasukuni Shrine is notable in the context of Takagami's words. People who have died an ordinary death might attract sympathy, but just because they have died, it does not mean that they will be thanked or respected. However, the people who became gods at Yasukuni by giving their lives for the nation will for all eternity receive 'gratitude and respect' as 'loyal spirits defending the nation' (*gokoku no chūrei*). During the Pacific War, the emperor and empress, and successive prime ministers—Tōjō Hideki, Koiso Kuniaki, and Suzuki Kantarō—worshipped at

Yasukuni Shrine, thereby expressing ‘gratitude and respect’ for the ‘loyal spirits defending the nation’. Thanks to their husbands and sons, the mothers and wives whose sons and husbands became the objects of gratitude and respect as loyal spirits defending the nation, they themselves became the objects of gratitude and respect from people they had never met. Accordingly, their misfortune did not become grief. On the contrary, they should have felt joy at the glorious service of their sons and husbands.

The most archetypal verbal expression of the joy felt by ‘Yasukuni mothers’ at their husbands’ and sons’ glorious service, as opposed to grief over their unfortunate deaths, can be found in the June 1936 edition of the magazine *Shufu no Tomo* (Housewife’s Friend) in an article entitled ‘Tearful Meeting with Proud Mothers who Gave their Only Sons for the Nation’. The article contained a transcript of a conversation with several old ladies from bereaved families who had travelled to Tokyo from the Hokuriku region to participate in a special ceremony held at the Yasukuni Shrine to enshrine the soldiers who had died in the early stages of the fighting. There is a transcript of a conversation with several old ladies from bereaved families who had come to Tokyo all the way from the Hokuriku region to participate:

MORIKAWA: You raised him on your own from the age of seven, didn’t you?

MURAI: Yes, in between agricultural jobs, I worked hard making straw hats and mats. I had a boy so I tried hard to at least put him through school to the second year. It was not a very caring upbringing, but I did not want people talking about him behind his back because he only had a mother. I did all I could.

SAITŌ: When my brother was drafted, he was saying he wanted to give his life for the emperor as soon as possible.

MORIKAWA: On the evening when that white box [containing her brother’s remains] was placed in Yasukuni Shrine, I couldn’t stop saying, thank you, thank you. I was just so grateful this lowly boy was given the chance to be of use to the world.

MURAI: It is by the grace of the emperor, it is almost too much to bear.

NAKAMURA: Everyone cried, didn’t they?

TAKAI: They were tears of joy. We were just crying because we were so happy.

NAKAMURA: We are just truly grateful that people like us could have children who were of use to the emperor. A bugle call sounded, I think it was soldiers playing. And when the hearse arrived and the bugle sounded, I just can’t express it, I was thinking, thank you, thank you.

MORIKAWA: It was such a beautiful sound. My son was truly happy in that beautiful white box. Usually you cannot receive that kind of honour.

SAITŌ: And the emperor came and worshipped, didn’t he? We bowed in appreciation.

NAKAMURA: We truly appreciated it, it was too much to bear.

SAITŌ: It is just what we have been hoping for in our hearts since the beginning of the war. We have heard that because he cares for us, the emperor has been working so hard and eating humble food. We just thought we somehow had to pay back his

kindness, and when we bowed down to the emperor, we could not hold back the tears. Having worshipped at Yasukuni and bowed down to the emperor, I can have no more regrets. When the sun goes down today I will be satisfied; I can die happy. As a result of what happened today you know.

NAKAMURA: I have had the chance to see Shinjuku Gyoen [park] you know. I am so grateful. My son will be commemorated here, I have seen some wonderful places . . .

SAITÔ: There are so many flowers in bloom. Wherever you go it is a vast garden, it is like paradise.

TAKAI: My son is going to be happy in nirvana. He died a good death. If I show tears, I will feel bad for the emperor you know. Everything we do is for the country, so, if you think that, you always feel cheerful.

NAKAMURA: That's it. There's nothing I can do about feeling sad that my son won't come back, but he died for his country and if we think how he has been honoured by the emperor, I cannot think of any greater happiness and feel cheerful again.

MORIKAWA: I give thanks that my lowly boy could be of use.

This section was cited by Hashikawa Bunzō (1922–83), well known for *Nippon Romanha no Kenkyū* ('Research on Japanese Novelists'), at the beginning of his article 'The Establishment and Development of Yasukuni Thought' (*Chūō Kōron*, October 1974) with the comment 'I have not read such a fine expression of the Yasukuni Doctrine as this'.¹⁵ When Hashikawa saw in these 'a somewhat primitive, eerie atmosphere', he said 'when you read the tragically sad words of the old women who had lost their sons in war at the prime of their lives, I feel a strange shudder saying, don't let me be thought of as part of that world'. And, what he loves in the 'words that showed absolutely no *protest* or [feminine] *weakness* (*memeshisa*)' is reminder of the type of woman he knew as a small child and who was brought up in the doctrines of attaining nirvana in the Hokuriku region. In other words, these were women who 'whatever the hardships, made no complaint and always lived modestly' and 'whose strength of belief astounded the full-blooded male'.

In the period 1937–45, many special ceremonies were held when tens of thousands of war dead were enshrined at a time. On each occasion, many bereaved families were chosen and invited to Tokyo—from Sakhalin in the north to Manchuria in the west to Taiwan in the south—at the government's expense to participate in these special ceremonies to enshrine the war dead as 'gods'. The bereaved families filled both flanks of the approach to Yasukuni Shrine, the list of the war dead (*eireibo*) was carried on a special carriage by the shrine priests to the main hall of the shrine, and the emperor, acting as principal mourner, passed up the same path and paid his respects. The bereaved families not only participated in this *shōkonshiki* ceremony, they also visited famous spots in Tokyo—such as Shinjuku Gyoen, the Imperial Palace and Ueno zoo—had commemorative photographs taken, and returned home as 'honourable war bereaved families' (*meiyo no izoku*).

These people were from the lower levels of society and if there had been no war, there would probably have been no chance of them ever leaving their home regions. But because these people had lost sons or family in the war, they were invited to Tokyo at the government's expense, praised as 'honoured bereaved families' and even got to see the emperor, the 'son of heaven'

(*tenshisama*), at close quarters. The emotions expressed by all the old ladies of ‘gratitude’ and ‘being too much to bear’ are not something to be dismissed as *tatema*: they reflect reality.

Saitō said, ‘Having worshipped at Yasukuni and bowed down to the emperor, I can have no more regrets. When the sun goes down today I will be satisfied; I can die happy as a result of what happened today.’ Similarly, Nakamura said, ‘[my son] died for his country and if we think how he has been honoured by the emperor, I cannot think of any greater happiness and feel cheerful again.’ These words reflect the psychological function of the ‘emperor’s shrine’ Yasukuni, namely that Yasukuni not only functioned to motivate men to go to war and become ‘heroic spirits defending the nation’ (*gokoku no eirei*), but also had the function of mobilizing women for the country’s wars as ‘Yasukuni mothers’ and ‘Yasukuni wives’.

The mother who lost the son she had struggled to bring up on her own did not feel grief-stricken; on the contrary, she felt joy at his ‘honourable war death’, shed ‘tears of joy’, and gave thanks, saying ‘I couldn’t stop saying thank you, thank you.’ Why was this kind of response possible? It is wholly because ‘*the emperor came and worshipped [her son who had died for his country]*’ and ‘*[the son] has been honoured by the emperor*’ (author’s italics). In sum, as a result of worship at the Yasukuni Shrine where their sons were enshrined by the emperor, their sons were revered, glorified and honoured. This made the old ladies ‘feel a sense of serene happiness’ which was ‘out of this world’.

In the 7 April 1943 edition of *Shashin shūhō* [Photography Weekly], there was a special report about the ‘Yasukuni orphans’, who came to the Yasukuni Shrine from Sakhalin in the north, Okinawa in the south and Manchuria in the west, to worship their fathers who had become gods. In an article following a large photograph whose caption read ‘Fathers’ Love for the Children of Yasukuni, Prime Minister Tōjō Encourages the Proud Orphans’, we discover that:

The Manchurian Orphan’s Brigade, which had come to Tokyo from all the way over the Kizankō, arrived in Tokyo on the 26th and on the same day visited the official residence of Prime Minister Tōjō and offered their greetings. Prime Minister Tōjō made time in his many important affairs of state specially for the orphans. The prime minister patted their heads, placed his hand upon their shoulders and said ‘Never be ashamed of what your fathers have done’. *The orphans were deeply moved at the prime minister’s kindness and tears ran down their cheeks at Prime Minister Tōjō’s consideration and at their fathers’ deaths.*

(author’s italics)

The back cover of the magazine contained a tribute to the orphans with the message ‘be like the Yasukuni orphans’. It read:

Bow your head in the direction of Yasukuni,
The endearing sight of heeding a father’s dying wish,
Resolve to meet your fathers again by giving your lives to the nation.

We pray that they will grow up healthy
With one soul and with our joint strength
We all hope to be like those fathers.

(author’s italics)

In this way, the Yasukuni orphans were destined to follow in the footsteps of the fathers who had

been honoured for dying for their country; and similarly, those that followed the orphans were also destined to follow the fathers' lead.

In this way, all the Japanese people—'the glorious dead of Yasukuni' (*Yasukuni no eirei*), the 'strong women of Yasukuni', 'the mothers of Yasukuni', 'the wives of Yasukuni', and 'the orphans of Yasukuni'—were encompassed by the Yasukuni Doctrine. The spirit of Yasukuni was synonymous with the spirit of the Japanese people, a vital aspect of the general mobilization of the 'national spirit'. Importantly, the emperor had to worship and honour the war dead, and the prime minister, army and navy ministers and others had to worship and express their gratitude and respect to the fallen.

Today, Prime Minister Koizumi repeatedly worships at Yasukuni Shrine because he knows that Yasukuni Shrine is where he can continue to express his 'gratitude and respect' to the 'precious sacrifice' of the enshrined. This is clearly a political act at the level of national politics with a view to making Japan once again a 'state capable of prosecuting wars'. It is to show the people that when new war deaths among the SDF (or a reconstituted Japanese army) occur, these deaths will be praised as 'precious sacrifice for the nation' and the country's top political leaders will express their 'gratitude and respect'. Worship by the emperor at Yasukuni Shrine has been suspended since the enshrinement of the Class A war criminals came to light. Consequently, in order to recreate a 'Japanese national spirit' which can tolerate war and the sacrifice it brings, the prime minister's worship is seen as particularly important.

At this point, let us look at an important historical document to make more explicit the meaning of Yasukuni worship by political leaders and the function of Yasukuni Shrine. Why does the state honour the war dead as the 'glorious dead' and make the bereaved families 'proud bereaved families'? On 14 November 1895, just after the Sino-Japanese War, an article entitled 'We Should Hold a Grand Ceremony for the War Dead' was published in *Jiji shinpō*. Whether or not Fukuzawa really penned these articles published in *Jiji shinpō*, as has been debated, is not the problem which need concern us here.¹⁶ Rather, the content of the *Jiji shinpō* article is of importance to the central theme of this study. The article lists the number of war casualties:

According to the reports up to 29 September, the number of our soldiers who have fallen in the Sino-Japanese and Taiwanese wars is: battle deaths, 851; death from wounds, 233; death from disease, 5,385; this is a total of 6,469 and there will probably have to be quite a few more deaths from here on.¹⁷

The Sino-Japanese war of 1894–5 was the first major international conflict fought by the modern Japanese state. Following its victory in the Sino-Japanese war, Japan and China concluded the Treaty of Shimonoseki and Japan succeeded in acquiring Taiwan as a colony. But Taiwanese resistance was fierce, and the Japanese army was dispatched to quell resistance, resulting in many casualties on both sides. The 'Subjugation of Taiwan' is given a distinct identity from the Sino-Japanese War in the Yasukuni Shrine. According to the current (17 October 2001) list of enshrined souls, there are 13,619 souls enshrined from the Sino-Japanese War and 1,130 souls enshrined from the Subjugation of Taiwan, a total of 14,749; so, at the time that the *Jiji shinpō* article was written, less than half of the people eventually enshrined had died. So, why was Fukuzawa taking issue with the fact that 'there will probably have to be quite a few more deaths'?

According to Fukuzawa, the surviving soldiers were given the highest honours and received not

only the thanks of the people, but medals and rewards, too. But the war dead were unable to receive medals or rewards, to be welcomed home by the people, or to be showered in glory as the triumphant returning soldiers were. The bereaved families received meagre benefits and support, struggled to make ends meet and had already lost their fathers and brothers, whose safe return after meritorious exploits in the war they had prayed for. When the bereaved families looked across at the glory showered on their fallen families' 'comrades in arms', all they could do was cry. In contrast to the supreme honours and glory given to the triumphal returning soldiers, the war dead and their bereaved families had no honour and glory, and were forgotten by society. The article argued that the war dead and their families should be given as much honour and glory as possible.

Why so? To begin with, those who had fought and died did not make a lesser contribution to the country than those who had survived and returned in triumph. But it was not only this; the major reason why the war dead and their families should be offered the highest honour and glory was as follows:

The situation, especially in East Asia, is becoming more precarious by the day and we cannot predict when and in what way incidents will happen. In the unfortunate event that war breaks out, who should we rely on to defend our country? Since we have no other choice than to rely on the courageous, fearless souls that dare to confront death, to cultivate this spirit is the most urgent task for the defence of our country. To foster such a spirit, as much honour as possible should be given to the war dead and bereaved families so that people would never fail to feel a sense of happiness about falling on the battlefield.

In the case of another war, who could be relied upon to defend the country? The only solution was to foster a martial spirit among soldiers so that they did not fear death, and fight and give their lives. The cultivation of this spirit became vital for the defence of the country, and as a result, the highest honour needed to be given to the war dead so that 'people would never fail to feel a sense of happiness about falling on the battlefield'. In other words, it was necessary to make people feel happy to die in battle.

The state was neglecting the grief of the relatives of the war dead and, therefore, was unable to foster a martial spirit in soldiers who would fight and sacrifice their lives for their country in the next war. But by giving the highest state honour to the war dead and their families, mobilizing soldiers who wanted to have an 'honourable death' for their country became possible.

How were the war dead and their families to be given the highest honour? The article explained:

Although commemorative ceremonies for the souls of the war dead have been held at various locations to the present date, one should not think these are sufficient. I fervently hope that we will go a step further by building a national altar in Tokyo, at the heart of the empire, where relatives of the war dead are to be invited from around the nation to attend the ceremonies and feel the highest honour. His Imperial Majesty the Emperor would be graciously asked to lead the ceremony for those bereaved relatives, with hundreds of military and civilian officers in attendance, and to offer an imperial proclamation to commend the meritorious deed of the fallen soldiers and console their souls.

After the Sino-Japanese War and the Subjugation of Taiwan, commemorative ceremonies (*shōkonsai*) were held in every region, but this was not enough. Bereaved families were to be invited from all over the country to the imperial capital Tokyo, the emperor would lead the worship, the exploits of the dead would be revered, an imperial proclamation would commend the souls of the dead, the dead and their families would be given the highest honour, and the people would be ‘made to feel happy to fall in battle’:

When a commemorative ceremony was held in Sakura, there was an old man among the war bereaved. Saying that his dead son was his only child and as he was the only surviving parent, the father could not stop crying when he first heard of the unfortunate death of his son in the war. After attending the ceremony, however, he felt honoured and went back home content in the feeling that even the loss of his child was nothing to regret. *If his Imperial Majesty himself leads a special ceremony, the dead will appreciate the grace of heaven from their graves, and the bereaved relatives will cry in honour, find joy in the deaths of their fathers and brothers, and the people will be willing to die for their nation when demanded.* No expense should be spared. We sincerely hope for this kind of commemoration.

(author’s italics)

There is no simpler explanation of the logic of the state in honouring the war dead. The old man invited to the commemorative ceremony at the barracks in Sakura was deeply moved by his son’s death being praised as an ‘honourable death’ at the ceremony, and when he went home, he was very satisfied and cherished the death of his only son.

If the emotions of the bereaved relatives were felt as simply human beings, it could only result in grief. However, the grief became converted into joy as a result of the state ceremony. From grief to joy, from unhappiness to happiness, in what was akin to an alchemist’s trick, the bereaved relatives’ emotions had been turned around 180 degrees.

The author is saying that if the supreme commander of the imperial Japanese forces (the Emperor Meiji) and other leaders were the principal worshippers, and if a large commemorative ceremony was held, the war dead from heaven (*kōsen no kuni*), would feel grateful to the emperor for his grace. The important point is that if there was another war, people who were moved to tears and felt joy at the war death of a family member, and ordinary people who felt the same way, would give their lives for the emperor. The state that had mobilized the people for war had to prevent itself from bearing the brunt of the people’s dissatisfaction. Above all, it was necessary to make ‘ordinary people’ come forward of their own accord to give their lives for the state by honouring the war dead. ‘No expense should be spared’ – in other words, the war bereaved should be invited to Tokyo from all parts of the country, told how grateful the ‘nation’ and the ‘son of heaven’ were and go back home feeling deeply moved.

This is nothing more than ‘emotional alchemy’ based on the Yasukuni Doctrine. Fukuzawa (or his ghost writer) does not use the words ‘Yasukuni Shrine’ once throughout the entire article. The author only says the ceremony should be held in ‘the imperial capital Tokyo’. The Yasukuni Shrine had been built in 1869 as the Tokyo Shōkonsha (Shrine to Invoke the Spirit of the Dead) and, ten years later in 1879, it was renamed Yasukuni Shrine. After becoming a special government shrine (*kansha*), it began the enshrinement of soldiers killed overseas with the 1874 Taiwan Expedition and continued into the Sino-Japanese war. However, at this stage, it is not possible to say that the system of Yasukuni Doctrine had been established.

About one month after the article was published in *Jiji shinpō*, an enshrining ceremony (*shōkonshiki*) was held at Yasukuni Shrine on 15 December 1895, in the presence of Major General Ōtera Yasuzumi and 1500 people. As if in response to the arguments in the article, a special grand ceremony (*rinji taisai*) for the dead of the Sino-Japanese war was held from 16 December that lasted for three days. On the first day, an imperial messenger attended, and on the second day, the Supreme Commander Emperor Meiji and others worshipped at Yasukuni Shrine. In response to this, *Jiji shinpō* published a further article entitled ‘The Dead are Honoured’, which commented:

The recent special commemorative ceremony held at Yasukuni Shrine for the war dead was a glorious occasion held in the gracious presence of His Majesty the Emperor. People were moved to tears at the thought of becoming enshrined, and I suppose the feelings of the families and ordinary people will continue to be so. We desire that people recognize and reward the great service performed by the war dead and their families.¹⁸

In this way, Yasukuni Shrine gradually gained authority, and after the Russo-Japanese war, it had attained a definitive status as the central institution for the commemoration of the war dead. Imperial Japan gave special status to Yasukuni Shrine, and through its ceremonies, soldiers and civilian employees who had died in battle were continually honoured as *eirei* (glorious spirits). This was to soothe the grief of the bereaved families and prevent the state from bearing the brunt of any dissatisfaction, but more than anything else, by giving the highest honours to the war dead, it was intended to draft soldiers who would ‘follow in their footsteps’ and willingly ‘die for their country’. Fukuzawa Yukichi, as a leading intellectual at the time the Yasukuni doctrine was being established, wrote about the mechanisms of Yasukuni in *Jiji shinpō* from the perspective of those who were using the doctrine. As we have already seen from the extract from the ‘Tearful Meeting’, about forty years later, the mechanism had already become largely invisible and the ‘feeling of joy at falling in battle’ had mostly replaced grief at the loss.

Yasukuni Shrine as a place to honour the war dead, not to ‘mourn’ them

At the 1936 ‘Tearful Meeting with Proud Mothers who Gave their Only Sons to the Nation’, grief at a family member’s war death had become joy, and sadness had been converted into happiness. The ‘emotional alchemy’ of the Yasukuni Doctrine was almost complete. But if one looks closely, one can see that it was not always necessarily the case.

Hashikawa Bunzō said that he loved the ‘words that showed absolutely no protest or [feminine] weakness (*memeshisa*)’. But were they really ‘words that showed absolutely no protest or weakness’? For example, in the last part cited above, Nakamura says, ‘[t]hat’s it. There’s nothing I can do about feeling sad that my son won’t come back but he died for his country and if we think how he has been honoured by the emperor, I cannot think of any greater happiness and feel cheerful again.’ Here we see that the sorrow for her son’s death briefly raises its head, but is then immediately shut out by the feelings of happiness that her son died ‘for the country’ and ‘for the emperor’.

Part of the meeting that Hashikawa did not cite reveals the conflict even more clearly:

MORIKAWA: I think about how my child is dead, but then when I see fit and healthy soldiers I think how he could still be alive. I’m all alone, so recently I have done nothing but complain. I’m a little embarrassed to say this but in the evening, in a

mother's heart there's this feeling of affection (*kawaii na, kawaii na*) for her children. Soon after I think that, I think of the honour, and I don't know how, but I manage a smile.

It is, therefore, not that case that the women's words 'showed absolutely no protest or weakness'. Hashikawa simply did not cite the section that revealed these emotions. Similarly:

TAKAI: Overall, parents don't want that sort of thing to happen to their child. . . .

MORIKAWA: When their boys go to the front, even if people say 'I don't want to know you if you come back', in their hearts of course they feel pity and really don't want them to die. But you know, we have given our son to the emperor. How could we have held him back? I just feel glad that our son could be of use to the son of heaven.

These comments by Morikawa are effused with the feelings of pity in their hearts for an only son lost in war. The unresolved grief for a lost son is very evident. What we see here is that as soon as the grief is expressed, it is psychologically repressed and shut out; and although it is replaced by feelings of honour ('giving a son to the emperor' and 'being of use to the emperor'), at the very least we can detect the conflict in the bereaved families between grief and honour.

For families that have lost members in war, the most natural emotion is sadness. When the death is not from old age but a violent death, and when it is a death in war where people must kill and be killed, it is normal to have strong feelings of sadness, emptiness and detachment. In psychological analysis, when something for which one feels a certain extent of love is suddenly lost, it is called *ushinai* – *hiai* (loss – sorrow). When a family member dies, the family experiences loss and sorrow; but as could be seen above when Morikawa said 'I think about how my child is dead, but then when I see fit and healthy soldiers I think how he could still be alive', it is very difficult to accept the reality of the loss of a family member who has been the object of love. When bereaved relatives repeatedly have to face the reality of their loss, they gradually learn how to bear and deal with the loss, and through the work of mourning (*trauer arbeit*) they can recover from the loss and sorrow. Through feeling adequate grief at the death of a family member, it is possible to evade excessive grief and distracted melancholy.

However, at the time when the bereaved relatives needed to be learning how to accept and face up to the reality of the loss of an object of their love, they were forced to avoid directly facing up to their loss. Instead of grief, they were provided with the emotion of 'honour', which can be thought of as an unnatural but speedy compensation for their grief. When state ceremonies honouring the war dead were held and the national leaders expressed their 'gratitude and respect', it is not surprising that through the strong authority of the state, the meanings given to the deaths by the state suppressed and shut out the natural feelings of grief.

In pre-war and wartime Japan, the meanings given to the authority figures (*zettaisha*) of the 'nation' and 'son of heaven' were not as strong as suggested. What Kawakami Hajime calls the 'national religion' (*kokkakyō*),¹⁹ is nothing more than a system whereby 'the state as a god = authority figure' holds and aims to monopolize the highest authority, the meaning of Japanese people's death in war, or more generally the meaning of Japanese people's lives and deaths. But it was not so much an act of 'alchemy' but an act of violence by which people had to treat the deaths of family members with joy, honour and gratitude while natural grief was suppressed and they were forced to shut out pain. The creation of a 'national spirit' to support war, and to require

people to adhere to the spirit of Yasukuni, which makes war death a precious sacrifice and the object of gratitude and respect, are forms of psychological violence.

Mourning (*tsuitō*) is to follow the dead (*otte*) and feel pain (*itamu*); in other words, it is to feel sadness, and as the Chinese characters for the word ‘mourning’ (*tsuitō*) suggest, to feel pain at the death of the departed. Mourning and giving condolences (*aitō*) are ‘the work of grieving’ (*hiai no sagyō*). Honouring the dead is quite the opposite. The worship of the emperor, prime minister or political leaders at Yasukuni Shrine is to honour the consecrated war dead as gods (*kami*), and give gratitude and respect. As long as this is a political act which aims to create a ‘national spirit’ to support war, it is completely different to the normal forms of mourning for the war dead.

The way in which the Yasukuni Shrine completely ignores the feelings of mourning among the bereaved families demonstrates that the shrine is an institution where the state honours rather than mourns the war dead. This is clearly evident in the case of the demands made by bereaved families from the former colonies of Taiwan and Korea that their relatives be removed from enshrinement. According to figures published by Yasukuni Shrine, in October 2001 there were 28,863 Taiwanese and 21,181 Koreans enshrined at Yasukuni. The majority of these people died after being drafted from Taiwan and Korea into the Japanese military when the Asia–Pacific War was at its height.

This means that the Yasukuni Shrine has enshrined Taiwanese and Koreans who were victims of colonial rule by Japan in precisely the same way as Japanese people who died perpetrating the colonial rule and suppression of Taiwan and Korea as ‘gods who defended the nation’ (*gokoku no kami*). For the bereaved families from Taiwan and Korea who suffered colonial rule, this is an insult.

In the summer of 1977, the Yasukuni Shrine handed over a list of 27,000 Taiwanese soldiers and auxiliary staff enshrined at Yasukuni to a group of Taiwanese visiting Japan. This had the opposite effect to what was intended, and became the seed for the current controversy over the enshrinement of people from former colonies. The following year in February 1978, a group of Taiwanese residents in Japan who had learned about the list held a meeting and stated: ‘Our compatriots, who with a red slip of paper [*akagami*, draft papers] were rounded up and sent to their deaths, have not received compensation; it’s unacceptable that all we got was this white slip of paper [the Shrine’s list of enshrined souls].’ The Taiwanese group then started legal proceedings to get the Taiwanese removed from Yasukuni. In the same year, a grocer from Kaohsiung (Takao-shi) in Taiwan came to Japan and said angrily:

My father was drafted into the auxiliary corps and never returned. They say he died in the Philippines but I never even received official notification of his death. I have received a certificate saying he was enshrined at Yasukuni in 1970. My father held a grudge for being semi-forcibly taken away and he is probably bitter about being arbitrarily worshipped at Yasukuni Shrine which is part of a foreign religion. I want them to stop this kind of insult to Taiwanese people.

In the following year in February 1979, a group of seven indigenous Taiwanese (*Takasago zoku*, the name given to them under colonial rule) bereaved relatives came to Japan and, for the first time, demanded that their relatives be removed from enshrinement. The shrine, however, refused.

At the time, Priest Ikeda explained the reasons for Yasukuni Shrine's refusal to remove the souls from enshrinement in the following way:

At the time when they died they were Japanese, so it is not possible for them to stop being Japanese after they died. As Japanese soldiers, they fought and died with the feeling that they were going to be worshipped at Yasukuni, so they will not be removed from enshrinement as the relatives have asked. It is natural that they are worshipped at Yasukuni because they cooperated in the war in the same way as people from Japan proper (*naichijin*) and participated in the war as Japanese. In Taiwan, the vast majority of bereaved families are grateful for their relatives' enshrinement.²⁰

Since then, the Yasukuni Shrine has consistently refused to consider the demands of people from former colonies for the removal from enshrinement of their relatives, including from Korean bereaved relatives.

As can be seen, Yasukuni Shrine's imperialist nature has not changed at all in the post-war era. The excuse that 'they were Japanese when they died' means that the war dead from former colonies will always remain Japanese people under colonial rule and prisoners of their former colonial masters. There is no more self-righteous or arrogant comment than '*they cooperated in the war* in the same way as people from Japan proper and participated in the war as Japanese' (author's italics). This is nothing less than the sort of self-righteousness and arrogance that colonial rulers held towards their subjects.

In June 2001, fifty-five members of bereaved families from South Korea filed a suit at the Tokyo District Court demanding the removal from enshrinement of their relatives. In their petition to the court, the plaintiffs said it was an unbearable insult that their relatives were worshipped as 'heroes who defended the nation' (*gokoku no eirei*) alongside those who 'plotted and actively participated in' the invasion and colonial rule of their own country. Yasukuni Shrine continues to enshrine the victims of colonial rule alongside the perpetrators and treat them as Japanese gods despite the fact that the people were semi-forcibly (*han-kyōseitekini*) drafted into the war. For a long time the bereaved relatives did not receive official notifications of death or have the remains returned to them. Moreover, the Yasukuni Shrine refuses to remove the dead from enshrinement despite the fact that they were arbitrarily enshrined without their relatives' knowledge.

In Priest Ikeda's comments cited above, the following section is particularly important: 'As Japanese soldiers, they fought and died with the feeling that they were going to be worshipped at Yasukuni, so *they will not be removed from enshrinement as the relatives have asked*' (author's italics). This comment reveals the true nature of the Yasukuni Shrine as an institution for the commemoration of the war dead. Pro-Yasukuni groups say that Yasukuni Shrine is the central institution for the mourning of the war dead. But, the people who feel the most pain at war deaths and have the most right to mourn are the bereaved relatives. Normally, nobody can refuse the rights of bereaved families to mourn their dead. There is an ongoing debate about the public mourning of the Class A War Criminals; but even with the Class A War Criminals, nobody can deny the right of the bereaved relatives to mourn the deaths privately. In Germany, the public mourning of Hitler is impossible; but even Hitler had relatives and nobody can stop them from privately mourning his death.

What should be done when the bereaved families, who have a privileged position concerning the mourning of their relatives, object to their relatives becoming the subject of special public

mourning? What happens when the bereaved relatives want to prevent their relatives becoming the object of worship by particular groups because it hurts the families? The Yasukuni Shrine bluntly ignores these kinds of thoughts and feelings and takes the position that ‘they will not be removed from enshrinement as the relatives have asked’.

This is not only the case with people from former colonies. Requests for the removal from enshrinement at Yasukuni were made by Japanese people even before people from former colonies. In 1968, a Protestant priest, Tsunoda Saburō, became the first bereaved relative to ask for his two brothers to be removed from enshrinement at Yasukuni, but his request was turned down. Following that, as part of the ‘Christian War Bereaved Association’ he requested removal from enshrinement again, but was again rejected.

The Yasukuni Shrine responded saying: ‘[r]eflecting the founding principles and traditions of this Shrine, we are physically unable to respond to the requests’. When discussing the issue with Father Tsunoda, Priest Ikeda said, ‘[t]he war dead are worshipped in accordance with the wishes of the emperor; enshrinement was carried out without concern for the wishes of the bereaved families and therefore it cannot be undone’. In other words, according to Yasukuni Shrine’s logic, enshrinement was carried out exclusively in accordance with the emperor’s wishes, so once somebody has been enshrined, even if they are Class A War Criminals, former colonial subjects or anyone else, and even if the bereaved families desire it, removal from enshrinement is impossible. The bereaved families’ feelings are irrelevant and completely ignored.

What are the emperor’s wishes? An excerpt from a shrine memorial (*saibun*) written when the Tokyo Shōkonsha was renamed Yasukuni Shrine and became a special rank governmental shrine on 25 June 1879 reads as follows:

from the time of the Meiji Restoration to today, whenever the emperor punishes tyrannical enemies inside and outside of Japan or subjugates rebels, you have no individual will but only loyalty; forget your family and lay down your life, and through the highest distinction of pursuing death in battle we can rule over a great imperial nation, and we invite you to think accordingly . . . from now on, let us ensure you will be tirelessly worshipped.

As one can see, there is not a single hint of mourning for the war dead or sympathy and empathy for the bereaved families. One can only see the thinking of how the great exploits of individual soldiers in the Imperial Army who died in battle against the enemy were to be revered and praised for eternity.

Earlier in the ‘Tearful Meeting with Proud Mothers who Gave their Only Sons for the Nation’, some mothers had said ‘I gave my son to the son of heaven’ or ‘I am just so grateful to have had a son who could be of use to the emperor’. In *The Spirit of Yasukuni*, Takagami Kakushō addresses the ‘bereaved relatives of the loyal dead’ and states that they should not be sad but happy because the bodies and lives of the Japanese people are ‘gifts from the emperor’, and the families whose sons and husbands died in battle have ‘returned to the emperor what he originally gave to them’. At the heart of this way of thinking is that if the emperor grieves and mourns for Imperial army soldiers, it is because they are his ‘children’, so the grief or feelings of the bereaved relatives are irrelevant. If soldiers in the future really belong to the emperor (that is, the state) and not to families, the emperor’s (the state’s) will takes priority over bereaved relatives. Worshipping the fallen at Yasukuni Shrine becomes only natural (*tōzen*) and granting the

bereaved families' requests for removal from enshrinement become unthinkable.

We must be extremely careful of Priest Ikeda's comments that 'it is the emperor's wish that the war dead are worshipped, and they are worshipped without consideration of the bereaved relatives'. If this is the case, it is not only the feelings and views of the bereaved relatives demanding removal from enshrinement that are being ignored. It so happens that their views and emotions are simply equated with the will of the emperor. Fundamentally, this is no different to their views being ignored completely.

Conclusion

To conclude, the Yasukuni Shrine is an institution that ignores the feelings and views of the bereaved relatives. It simply regards the people's will as being the same as the emperor's will. What seems to be regard for the feelings of the people who are honoured by enshrinement in Yasukuni Shrine actually occurs because the will of those people happens to be effectively the same as the will of the emperor. At any rate, Yasukuni Shrine forces on people the emotions that dying for the emperor and the country are honourable and dying in battle is a joy.

In this way, the essence of Yasukuni Shrine, which was founded as the 'emperor's shrine' through an imperial proclamation of the Meiji emperor, has not changed over the sixty years of the post-war period and continues to adhere to its founding principles. As a result, the views and feelings of the bereaved families are fundamentally ignored, and the bereaved families who feel insulted and pained by the enshrinement of their relatives continue to have their feelings hurt. Worship by political leaders such as the prime minister and mayor of Tokyo, with the sort of political objectives that I have outlined at length in this chapter, is causing increasing pain and insult not only to the bereaved relatives, but also to people who hope to develop friendly relations with Asia by reflecting on Japan's past wars, and those who, for intellectual reasons or for reasons of conscience and belief, do not want to have the Yasukuni Doctrine forced upon them.

Notes

¹ Takahashi Tetsuya, *Kokoro to sensō*, Tokyo: Shōbunsha, 2003, Chapter 4.

² 'Koizumi shushō danwa of 13 August 2001', 13 August 2003 (yūkan), *Asahi shinbun*.

³ 'Koizumi shushō kasha kaiken of 1 January 2004', 1 January 2004 (chyōkan), *Asahi shinbun*.

⁴ Author's italics. 'Nakasone Yasuhiro shushō kōen', *Jimintō Karuizawa seminā*, 27 July 1985.

⁵ Author's italics. 'Koizumi shushō danwa of 14 January 2003', 2 January 2004 (chyōkan), *Asahi shinbun*.

⁶ 'Koizumi shushō kasha kaiken of 9 December 2003', 10 December 2003 (chyōkan), *Asahi shinbun*.

⁷ Author's italics. 'Nakasone moto shushō intabyū', 30 March 2003 (chyōkan), *Asahi shinbun*.

⁸ Kawamura Tateo, http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/16/01/04010502.htm.

⁹ Author's italics. 26 February 2004, *Asahi shinbun*.

¹⁰ Author's italics. Yokoyama was an elementary school teacher, army personnel officer, an

employee of *Hōchi shinbun*, and ultimately, a successful children's author. Yokoyama Natsuki, *Kagayaku Yasukuni monogatari*, Tokyo: Taihei shobō, 1944, p. 226.

¹¹ Author's italics. Yasukuni restsujo itoku kenshōkai, ed., *Yasukuni retsujo den*, Tokyo: Shuppan bunka kenkyūkai, 1941.

¹² Takagami Kakushō, *Takagami Kakushō zenshū*, 10 vols, Tokyo: Rekishi toshosha, 1978.

¹³ Author's italics. Takagami Kakushō, *Yasukuni no seishin*, Tokyo: Dai ichi shobō, 1942, p. 94.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Hirayama Hiroshi, *Fukuzawa Yukichi no shinjitsu*, Tokyo: Bunshun shinsho, 2004.

¹⁷ Fukuzawa Yukichi, *Fukuzawa Yukichi zenshū*, vol. 15, Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1970, pp. 321–2.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 341.

¹⁹ Kawakami Hajime, 'Nihon dokuji no kakka shugi,' in Sugihara Shirō (ed.), *Kawakami Hajime hyōron shū*, Tokyo: Iwanami, 1999.

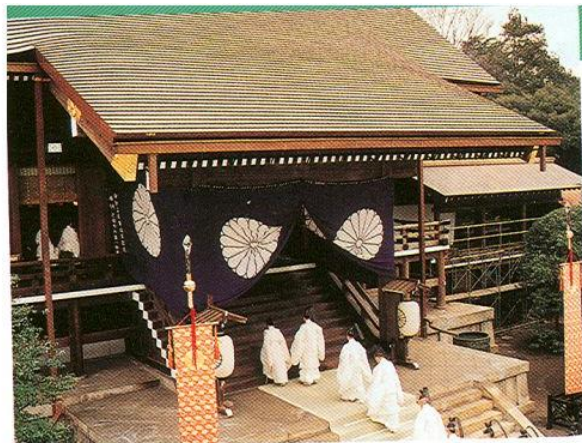
²⁰ 16 April 1987, *Asahi shinbun*.

Yasukuni Shrine: Ritual and Memory

John Breen

Yasukuni is first and foremost a site for the performance of ritual before the kami (gods), those men, women and some children who sacrificed their lives for the imperial cause. This article examines the organizing of space and ritual at Tokyo's shrine to the war dead and the implications for memory.

The most important of several ritual spaces is that within the Honden or Main sanctuary. This is the central, elevated building located along the east-west axis that runs up from the bottom of Kudan hill. It is within the deepest darkest recesses of the Honden that the kami reside; there that priests make them offerings every morning and evening every day of the year. The other buildings along the main axis are the Haiden or Worship hall and the Reijibo hoanden or Shrine archive. The pilgrim to Yasukuni passes under the first torii at the bottom of Kudan hill, through the wooden gate and under the second and third torii to confront the Worship hall. It is here that pilgrims bow their heads, clap their hands before the Yasukuni kami. On more formal occasions, the pilgrim enters the Worship hall and observes the ritual activity in the Main sanctuary across the garden that separates the two buildings. The Honden was built in 1872 and the Haiden in 1901. The Repository, constructed of earthquake proof reinforced concrete directly above the Yasukuni air raid shelter, is more recent. It was built in 1972 with a private donation from the Showa emperor, Hirohito.



The Main Sanctuary (Courtesy of Yasukuni Shrine)

On the north south axis are two other sites of significance: to the north of the Worship hall is the Yushukan war museum, an integral part of the shrine precinct, and to the south the Chinreisha or spirit pacifying shrine, a site of considerable controversy. In this and any discussion of Yasukuni, it is important to acknowledge that the shrine is first and foremost a ritual site and that it is also, for this very reason, a keeper of complex and conflicting memories. All of the sites are keepers of memory and in what follows, I explore the meaning of each in turn: the Main sanctuary, the Yushukan war museum and the Chinreisha. [1]

The Main Sanctuary

Of the many rites that Yasukuni priests perform during the course of the year, the most important are the great Spring and Autumn rites. What distinguishes them above all is the presence of an

emissary (*chokushi*) dispatched from the imperial court. The emissary, clad in Heian court garb, brings from the imperial palace the emperor's offerings of silk in five colours to add to those which the shrine priests place before the *kami* at the start of the rites: beer, cigarettes, water and rice wine. The dynamic in this and all Yasukuni rites involves an exchange: here it is the propitiation of the *kami* by the emperor (in the person of his emissary) and by priests with offerings; in return, the *kami* bestow their blessings upon the emperor, Japan and all Japanese of the realm. The *kami* demand constant propitiation lest they be distracted for a moment from bestowing their blessings; lest also their benevolence might transform itself into a malevolent power. Rites at Yasukuni, therefore, share much in common with the genre of *chinkon*, or spirit pacifying, rites. Ancestral rites are the best-known examples of the genre; the cult of angry spirits that began in Heian Japan is another example. Shrine priests insist though that their *kami* are to be thought of as ancestors of the living and not as angry spirits.

The imperial connection is absolutely fundamental to an understanding of Yasukuni and the meaning of its rites. The imperial emissary is the most striking symbol of that connection, but it is everywhere apparent. Imperial princes regularly attend shrine rites to this day, though the present emperor has not visited since his enthronement and his father, emperor Showa, visited for the last time back in 1975. He intended to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the war, but 1985 was the year in which Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro's visit caused a major diplomatic incident with China. It was deemed undiplomatic for the emperor to visit, and he never returned.

The shrine is marked with imperial symbols: the 16-leaf chrysanthemum embossed on the wooden gate, the chrysanthemum patterned curtains that adorn the Worship hall and the Main sanctuary; the mirror that dominates the interior of the Sanctuary, a personal gift from the Meiji emperor. Yasukuni is, moreover, designated *chokusaisha* or 'shrine for imperial offerings'. Indeed, the Yasukuni ritual cycle incorporates rites of the imperial court: so the shrine performs the *Niname* and *Kanname* rites; it celebrates the anniversaries of Jinmu, Meiji, Taisho and Showa. Finally, the Shrine archive was built by the Showa emperor, and symbolizes the fact that the war dead are the emperor's war dead. The imperial connection constitutes a most significant thread of continuity with pre-1945 when Yasukuni shrine rites, attended by the emperor in person, became the vibrant centre of the imperial cult.

The imperial presence, in the person of the emissary, gives to the Great spring and autumn rites an intriguing ambiguity. This was always the case from the moment when, in the 5th month of 1869, the Meiji emperor marked the shrine's foundation with the dispatch of an emissary to honour the 3,588 dead in the civil war. Now, as then, the emperor propitiates the war dead bringing them solace with his presence and his offerings of silk. He is doing more than this of course: he is honouring the values of patriotism, bravery and self-sacrifice which all of the dead are assumed to have embodied in their deaths. These were values which were sustained and given meaning by the imperial institution: it was for the emperor that the dead made the ultimate sacrifice, and by the emperor they are now being recompensed. The ambiguity concerns the question of who venerates whom at Yasukuni. For there is a real sense in which even as the emperor makes his offerings to the war dead, so the war dead and the living gather at Yasukuni to venerate the imperial presence.

As a dynamic site of memory, then, Yasukuni recalls through its Great spring and autumn rites in the Main sanctuary—and it idealises—a time when the imperial institution and imperial values defined society; when all men were motivated by a sense of patriotism, of courage and

selflessness. Yasukuni rites preserve the memory of a war in which all deaths were selfless acts of bravery on behalf of the imperial institution; of a war which was only ever noble and glorious.

The Absent Enemy

All participants to the Great spring and autumn rites are actively encouraged to visit the Yushukan war museum, which sits to the north side of the Main sanctuary. Free tickets ensure that crowds gather in the museum after the performance of rites. Ever since the museum was first re-opened in post war Japan in 1985, it has always been regarded as inseparable from the shrine; its exhibits constitute a sort of illustrated commentary on the shrine's ritual activity. This remains the case today with the greatly expanded and refurbished Yushukan that opened its doors to the public in 2003.

The Yushukan shares much in common with war museums of former imperialist powers everywhere: its exhibits tend towards the glorification of sacrifice and acts of astonishing bravery on the part of soldiers who fought for the empire; they deploy technology, too, to sanitise the horrors of war. The C56 steam engine that confronts the visitor in the reception hall is a case in point. The plaque attached says 'This engine was built in 1936; it was used on the Burma railway, and for a decade after the war too it continued to ply the same route.' 'The building of the railway [it adds] was difficult in the extreme'. That this 'difficulty' entailed the deaths of some 90,000 prisoners of war and local laborers, as well as many Japanese, is not referred to.

The life size models of the Oka and the Kaiten that decorate the entrance hall make the same point. The Oka were flying contraptions packed with explosives. They were released from their 'mother' plane when the enemy fleet hove into view and the pilot, with only the most primitive steering gear, would endeavour to crash it into enemy warships. The Kaiten was a manned torpedo equipped with a small engine and steering device designed to be steered by its pilot into the hulls of enemy vessels. The plaques attached to these machines are full of fascinating technological detail, but there is no encouragement to recall the destruction they caused. But this is not unique to the Yushukan.

What is perhaps unique to the Yushukan war museum—it certainly offers a striking contrast to, say, the Imperial war museum in London—is the curious absence of the enemy. The visitor to the galleries on the Sino-Japanese war, the Russo-Japanese war, the Manchurian 'incident' and the Pacific war looks in vain for a sighting of the enemy. There are no representations of Chinese, Russian, Korean, American or British soldiers; no weaponry, uniforms, flags or other trophies of war. A Yasukuni priest explained this was because the Yushukan was not really a museum at all, but an 'archive of relics'. The Yushukan does refer to itself in its own publications, however, as 'the oldest war museum in Japan' and, the point is that, like museums everywhere, the Yushukan exhibits construct a narrative about Japan's modern wars; the absence of the enemy distorts the narrative. It disguises two deeply hurtful facts about the Pacific war: the first is the fact of perpetration; the second the fact of defeat. Relics of Chinese, Russian, Korean, American or British soldiers would recall the defeats suffered by the Japanese army, and might also bring to mind the wrongs that Japan perpetrated. By eliminating the enemy, the Yushukan remembers a war that was only ever glorious; it obliterates the possibility that not all the Japanese war dead died glorious deaths, that lives lost (Japanese or others) were lives wasted, and that war was brutal and squalid. The exhibits prompt reflection only on heroism, loyalty and self-sacrifice.

The visitor reaches the end of the Yushukan gallery on the Pacific war to discover that, though the enemy is entirely absent, there is a striking foreign presence. The gallery concludes with a photograph, magnified perhaps ten times, of Justice Radhabinod Pal. Justice Pal was the one Asian judge at the war crimes tribunal in Tokyo, and it was his considered view that the Japanese were innocent of all war crimes, and that the real aggressors in Asia were British and American imperialists. Justice Pal's views are reproduced by the side of his portrait. They make for a striking and a dramatic end to the gallery.

The curious absence not only of the enemy but also of the peoples conquered by Japan's armies enables the Yushukan to recall a glorious war of liberation: Japanese soldiers fighting heroically and successfully to liberate Asia.

Pacifying the Myriad Spirits

Visitors to the Great spring and autumn rites are not encouraged to visit the Chinreisha or Spirit pacifying shrine. In fact, the vast majority of them are entirely ignorant of its presence. This is because the Chinreisha sits to the southern side of the Main sanctuary enclosed by a steel fence. The shrine was built in 1965 and the steel fence was erected a decade later. The reason for the construction of the fence, as explained to this author, was that the chief priest at Yasukuni had received intelligence that unknown persons were planning to blow the Chinreisha up. It is clear, however, that the very existence of the Chinreisha is a matter of great controversy within the Yasukuni priesthood. Why would anyone want to blow it up; what makes it controversial?



The Spirit Pacifying Shrine (Courtesy of Yasukuni Shrine)

The Chinreisha is a simple, inconspicuous wooden structure that contains two za or seats for the kami. One is dedicated to all of those Japanese who died in domestic wars or incidents since 1853 and who are not enshrined in the Main sanctuary. So the men who fought against the

imperial army in the civil wars of 1868-9 are venerated there since the Main sanctuary only venerates the imperial dead. Enshrined in the Chinreisha too are men like Eto Shinpei and Saigo Takamori, erstwhile government leaders who subsequently rebelled against the imperial government and took their own lives before capture.

A second za is still more controversial since it is dedicated to all the war dead regardless of nationality: British, US, Chinese, Korean, South East Asian. In the Main sanctuary there are also foreign war dead enshrined: Koreans, Chinese and Taiwanese. But these men died fighting for the imperial army. The Chinreisha dead by contrast were the enemies of imperial Japan. Although the Chinreisha is now secluded from view, and its existence unknown even to most of the war veterans who patronize Yasukuni, it is a key ritual site. It has an annual festival held on July 13th. It is accommodated within the Great Spring and Autumn rites to the extent that offerings are placed before the Chinreisha kami on these occasions—though not by the imperial emissary. Indeed, the native and foreign kami enshrined in the Chinreisha are propitiated with rice offerings in the morning and evening every day of the year.

What is interesting about the Chinreisha in the present context is that it has the capacity to recall a more nuanced past, a past of perpetrators and of victims, of winners and losers, of horror as well as heroism. It is precisely this past that the shrine authorities seem anxious to bury. The last Chief priest, Yuzawa Tadashi, was known to be vigorously opposed to removing the fence and exposing the Chinreisha to the public. He was replaced at the end of 2004 by a man called Nanbu Toshiaki. Like most Yasukuni chief priests, Nanbu never trained as a Shinto priest; like most, he is an aristocrat. Nanbu's pedigree is particularly interesting though. He is descended from the Nanbu family who ruled Morioka domain in the Tokugawa period. Morioka, of course, was one of the domains in the great northern coalition that fought against the Meiji government in 1868. His ancestors are enshrined in the Chinreisha. It is early yet to know whether Nanbu will adopt a more open attitude toward the Chinreisha, which might make it possible for Yasukuni to generate a more complex memory of Japan's imperial past.

Conclusion

I have here addressed the question of memory through a cursory exploration of the multiple sites within the Yasukuni precinct. It is perhaps worth finally making reference to two other categories of memory which Yasukuni entertains. The first relates to the shrine repository (*reiji bo hoanden*). It is not widely acknowledged, but the repository contains unquestionably the most accurate records of those who died in Japanese uniform during the Pacific war.

For every one of the kami venerated in the main sanctuary at Yasukuni, there are files, presently being digitalized, containing personal details. The latest shrine figures for the dead are as follows: the Manchurian 'incident' 17,176, the China war 191,250, and the Pacific war 2,133,915. I say 'the latest figures' because those for the Pacific war change. Last year, the shrine enshrined 12 new kami. Families of the war dead inquired of the shrine whether their fathers, brothers or uncles were venerated at Yasukuni; the shrine carried out checks and discovered that these names were not in the archive. The dead were duly transformed into kami through a rite of apotheosis. [2]



The Repository (courtesy of Yasukuni Shrine)

A second point to make is that Yasukuni is a place of intimate personal memory. Many of the war veterans interviewed by this author related that they went to Yasukuni every year on the anniversary of a comrade—again perhaps at the spring or autumn festival—to keep alive personal memories, to keep the promise they made to meet again at Yasukuni—and to pray for peace. [3]

Notes

[1] The best discussion of the political dimension to the Yasukuni problem, with which this article does not engage, is to be found in John Nelson (2003), "Social Memory as Ritual Practice: Commemorating Spirits of the Military Dead at Yasukuni Shinto Shrine," *Journal of Asian Studies* 62, 2.

[2] For a fuller discussion of the rites of apotheosis, and of propitiation, see John Breen (2004), 'The dead and the living in the land of peace: a sociology of Yasukuni shrine' in John Breen ed., *Death in Japan* (Mortality [special issue]) 9, 1, pp. 77-82.

[3] For veterans and their views on Yasukuni, see Breen (2004), 'The dead and the living', pp. 88-90.

John Breen is Head, Japanese and Korean Department, School of Oriental and African Studies, in London. With Mark Teeuwen, he is the author of [A New History of Shinto](#), Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Japan, the United States and Yasukuni Nationalism: War, Historical Memory and the Future of the Asia Pacific

Mark Selden

Japan's Yasukuni problem is inseparable from the fact that nationalism is the dominant ideology of our era. This is abundantly clear in media representations, memorials, museums and popular consciousness during and after wars and other international conflicts. [*] This is true not only of Japan but also of South Korea, China and the US, among many others. And it is surely nationalism—stimulated and emboldened throughout Asia following the end of the era of US-Soviet confrontation, the rise of China as a regional and world power, and aggressive US actions associated with the “war on terror”—that constitutes the most powerful obstacle to resolution of the issues that divide nations and inflame passions in the Asia Pacific and beyond. Throughout the twentieth century, nationalism has everywhere been the handmaiden of war: war has provided a powerful stimulus to nationalism; nationalism has repeatedly led nations to war; and war memory is central to framing and fueling nationalist historical legacies. This article considers Yasukuni Shrine and Japanese war memory and representation in relationship to contemporary nationalism and its implications for the future of East Asia.

The contentious issues that continue to swirl around war, memory, and representation are central to shaping nationalist thought, the future of Japan, the Asia-Pacific region, and the US-Japan relationship. Why do issues such as the role of Yasukuni Shrine repeatedly surface six decades after Japan's defeat even as the generation that experienced the war is passing from the scene? This seems all the more counterintuitive at a time when the economies and even the cultures of China, Japan and Korea are deeply intertwined.

The “Yasukuni problem” is at the epicenter of the complex set of issues surrounding Japanese wars in the Asia Pacific, the emperor, religion, and identity. Yasukuni issues are deeply intertwined with China-Japan, Korea-Japan and the US-Japan relationship. Attention to Yasukuni reveals distinctive characteristics of Japanese nationalism while allowing us to explore a number of themes of comparative nationalism.

It is important to state clearly at the outset the reason for undertaking this analysis: it is to search for ways that might contribute to mutual understanding among the nations and peoples of the Asia Pacific, including Japan, China, Korea and the United States.

I will emphasize three points about the “Yasukuni Problem” and contemporary nationalisms that seem absent in much of the discussion in Japan, Asia and internationally. The first is the need to transcend an exclusively Japanese perspective by locating the issues within the framework of the Japan-US relationship that has dominated Japanese politics for more than six decades. The second locates war nationalism in general and “Yasukuni nationalism” in particular within the broader purview of competing nationalisms in the Asia Pacific, including Chinese, Korean and US nationalisms. The third deconstructs “the Japanese,” to recognize deep fissures among the Japanese people with respect to Yasukuni, nationalism, the emperor in whose name Japan fought, and memories of colonialism and war. Each of these requires breaking with a monolithic understanding of the issues. Each has implications for moving beyond the present political impasse and reflecting on approaches that could contribute toward tension reduction in the Asia Pacific.

Yasukuni Jinja both is and is not a “Japanese” problem. As a Shinto shrine with enduring historical links to the emperor—established in 1869 “to commemorate and honor the achievement of those who dedicated their precious life for their country”—and with a deep association with every Japanese war from the Meiji era through the Asia Pacific War, it evokes Japanese tradition linking Shinto, emperor and war. [1] Yet to see it simply as Japanese is to neglect a range of features characteristic of contemporary nationalisms. This view ignores important regional and global forces, particularly the role of the United States, in shaping politics and ideology from the Japanese occupation to today.



Yasukuni Shrine in a Meiji woodblock



Yasukuni shrine layout today

Japanese neonationalists insist on the quintessential Japanese character of Yasukuni, thereby attempting to place it beyond discussion by people in neighboring and other countries, as well as seeking to crush debate within Japan. But they are not alone in their stress on Japaneseness. In calling for a politics of pride, their scorn for the Tokyo Trial and other international assessments of Japanese war crimes, and their insistence that the era of apologies to victims of Japanese war atrocities should end, contemporary Japanese nationalists share something with certain Japanese progressives and pacifists. Whether praising former Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro's high profile visits to Yasukuni and defending the legitimacy of the Yushukan museum exhibits, which glorify the exploits of the Japanese military in the Asia Pacific War and praise Japan for liberating Asia from *European* colonialism, or criticizing them as an illegitimate attempt to reverse historical verdicts and a slap in the face to Japan's neighbors, both nationalists and progressives routinely present Yasukuni as a uniquely Japanese phenomenon.

Yasukuni, Commemoration and the US-Japan Relationship

Yasukuni is, of course, quintessentially Japanese in its mix of Shinto and emperor lore, its architecture and rituals that apotheosize the military war dead as *kami* (deities), and its nationalist perspective on colonialism and war, emperor, and the souls enshrined there.



Yasukuni Shrine festival 1895. Woodblock print by Shinohara Kiyooki.
Reproduced from M.I.T. Visualizing Cultures.

As Yomiuri Shimbun's editor Watanabe Tsuneo commented tartly of the exhibits at the Yushukan museum on the shrine grounds, "That facility praises militarism and children who go through that memorial come out saying, 'Japan actually won the last war.'" [2] More precisely, the exhibits, centered on the devotion of the military to emperor and nation, elevate Japan's war making to aesthetic and spiritual heights, embracing the imperial mission and lionizing the kamikaze pilots sent to sacrifice themselves for emperor and nation.

Throughout the war years (1931-45), indeed from the Meiji era forward, Yasukuni Shrine was the centerpiece of what Takahashi Tetsuya has termed the "emotional alchemy" of turning the grief of bereaved families into the patriotic exhilaration of enshrinement of the war dead as deities with the stamp of official recognition of personal sacrifice and honor by the emperor.



Hirohito at Yasukuni Shrine in 1935

It is an alchemy sealed in Japanese government payments to deceased soldiers' families that for six decades has forged a bond between the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and a powerful constituency, while implicitly legitimating the aims of colonialism and war for which so many Japanese soldiers and civilians died. [3]



A festive crowd throngs the shrine in 1940

Another kind of alchemy goes hand in hand with the alchemy of exaltation. This is the alchemy of amnesia . . . forgetting atrocities and war crimes, forgetting the treatment of the military comfort women, of forced laborers, of those whose lands were invaded, homes destroyed and families slaughtered in the name of emperor and empire. While the *military* dead were enshrined as *kami* at Yasukuni shrine and their families received state pensions, the hundreds of thousands of civilian dead and many more injured were forgotten: neither shrine nor state commemorated their sacrifice or attended to the needs of their families. If nationalism has everything to do with invented tradition, as Benedict Anderson has compellingly argued, it is equally about *suppressed* or *forgotten* traditions.



Shrine on 50 sen bill, 1943.

All nations symbolically elevate the sacrifice of the military war dead—their own dead—a compact to secure the compliance of soldiers and civilians to fight and die for goals proclaimed by the state. [4] If the symbolism of Yasukuni is distinctive in its particulars, it is but one such manifestation of a global phenomenon of state-sponsored war nationalism pivoting on the military war dead. With the enshrinement of Japan's 2.46 million military dead, the *senbotsusha*, that is, all who died in uniform from Meiji through the Pacific War (2.1 million in the Pacific War), Yasukuni reinforced its position as the central symbol linking emperor, war, the military and empire. John Breen's sensitive analysis of the shrine's rites of apotheosis and propitiation well documents the nexus of power and ideology that gives the shrine its special place in contemporary Japan. [5]



Chinrei-sha, Spirit-pacifying shrine

Okinawa, Japan, the United States and the War Dead

Okinawa provides another vantage point from which to assess the Yasukuni phenomenon, and not only because the Battle of Okinawa, the only major campaign fought on Japanese soil, was the costliest of the Asia-Pacific War in terms of Japanese, Okinawan and American lives. The

Battle has also played a crucial role in framing the postwar US-Japan-Okinawa relationship and the historical memory battles that continue to this day.

The different positions of Okinawans and Japanese became patently clear in the course of the Battle, when Japanese forces compelled many Okinawans seeking shelter from the American attack to commit collective mass suicide (*shudan jiketsu*) rather than surrender. [6] Japanese-Okinawan differences in perspective would also shape subsequent commemoration and memory practices in the form of controversies over monuments, museums, films, manga, and textbook interpretations.

With an estimated 250,000 deaths the Japanese state, including 150,000 Okinawans (more than one-fourth of the civilian population) and 100,000 Japanese forces, as well as 12,000 US troops, the battle turned central and southern areas of the main island into a wasteland. Even while the fighting raged, US forces sequestered large areas of central Okinawa and began constructing airfields, roads and bases. Indeed, as early as 1947, as Takemae Eiji observes, “more than one third of Okinawa’s arable surface lay under roads and runways or behind barbed wire.” [7] When US authorities resettled residents of these areas to the south, the settlers encountered the bones of the war dead lying scattered on the ground. [8]

Immediately following resettlement, community-organized bone collection campaigns (*ikotsu shushu*) were waged to make the former battlefield livable and to conciliate the spirits of the dead. Bones were washed and then cremated or placed in newly built ossuaries scattered throughout Southern Okinawa. The remains of 135,000 people were collected between 1946 and 1955. In the most celebrated case, the 4,300 residents of Mawashi Village who were resettled in Miwa Village, painstakingly collected the remains of 35,000 people and deposited them in an ossuary at Konpaku-no-to, which became, and remains today, the major site for local commemoration of the Battle, and above all for the losses of the Okinawan people civilians as well as soldiers.



Konpaku-no-to

Konpaku is not, however, Okinawa's only major commemorative site. In July 1957, the Relief Section of the Government of the Ryukyu Islands established a central ossuary at Shikina, transferring war remains from small ossuaries and shipping identifiable Japanese remains to the mainland. The inaugural memorial service for Shikina was held on January 25, 1958. The US authorities, with deep misgivings, permitted three representatives from Yasukuni Shrine, two Diet members, and a representative from the Prime Minister's Office to attend. There were also representatives of the Okinawa Bereaved Families Federation, which, like the national organization, lobbied for closer relations between the Okinawan war dead and Yasukuni Shrine, as well as Japanese government subsidies for, and official visits to, Yasukuni. [9] In short, US efforts to sever the Ryukyus from Japan were thwarted by means of linkages between Okinawan and mainland Japanese commemorative practices that linked the Okinawan dead to Japan, and specifically to Yasukuni Shrine.



Monuments at Shikina

If Konpaku was the creation of Okinawan villagers, Shikina was primarily the product of GRI (that is, the US administration of the Ryukyu Islands) under pressure from Tokyo. Yet we cannot simply conclude that Konpaku embodied Okinawan sentiment while Shikina was the expression of Tokyo and/or the US. Both sites honored the military and the civilian dead, Japanese and Okinawan, although as we will note, with quite different emphases.

In the wake of the establishment of the Shikina commemorative site, the Japanese government moved vigorously to consolidate its territorial claims to Okinawa, still a US military colony, through establishing prefectural memorials to the military dead. Six prefectural monuments were built between 1954 and 1963, then thirty-nine more between 1963 and 1971, nearly all in the vicinity of Shikina on Mabuni Hill.

With the prefectural monuments close to those honoring Generals Ushijima Mitsuru and Cho Isamu, commanders of the Japanese 32nd Army who committed suicide at Mabuni Hill, the Japanese military and the state placed its imprint on Okinawan soil and bid to create a unified military-centered war memory for both Japanese and Okinawans. That memory highlighted

loyalty to the emperor and reification of the war mission as exemplified by the choice of suicide over surrender.

The Japanese government, displaced from Okinawa by US forces, worked to lay claim not only to the souls of mainland Japanese soldiers who died, but also to those of Okinawan soldiers and even civilians. USCAR documents record the fact that in January 1964 “the Japanese cabinet decided to confer court ranks and decorations posthumously to World War II war dead, including approximately 52,700 Ryukyuan (Okinawans).” [10]

Who were the Ryukyans chosen to receive court ranks and decorations, and did they in fact receive them? Were Okinawan civilians among those enshrined at Yasukuni . . . hitherto reserved for the military dead? Figal does not provide definitive answers and further research has yet to resolve the issue. It seems likely, however, that Ryukyuan civilians, notably the 580 members of the Himeyuri (Maiden Lily) student nurse corps and the 2,000 strong Blood and Iron Corps, comprised of junior high and high school students, called up during the Battle of Okinawa and mythologized by the Japanese government for their loyalty, were among those who were slated for honors. [11]

In short, even while Okinawa remained a US military colony, albeit with recognition that Japan possessed residual sovereignty, Japanese authorities moved to lay claim to the souls of the Okinawan war dead (military and civilian), while memorializing and apotheosizing fallen Japanese soldiers.

Following Okinawa’s reversion to Japanese administration, on May 15, 1972, the Okinawa Battle Site Governmental Park established by GRI was renamed the Okinawa Battle Site National Park and the entire area around Mabuni Hill became the Peace National Park.

It is widely believed that Japan has no national cemetery, or that Yasukuni Shrine functions in effect as a national war cemetery that preserves no remains of deceased soldiers. But in 1979 the Shikina Central Ossuary that housed the remains of the unknown war dead was replaced by the National Okinawa War Dead Cemetery (NOWC) at Mabuni Hill. With the war remains transferred from both Konpaku-no-to, the local ossuary, and from Shikina, NOWC became Japan’s first and only national cemetery. Figal shows how the cemetery expanded beyond its Okinawan roots to become a national sacred site that commemorates all of Japan’s Asia Pacific War dead:

Prefectures enshrined the spirits of the war dead from all south seas campaigns and in some cases from continental Asia as well, transforming the form and function of memorial space in Okinawa from its local roots around Komesu to a national shrine centered at the site where the Japanese commanders committed ritual suicide on 23 June 1945.

The cemetery is a mecca for Japanese tour groups, including military groups organized by unit and by prefecture, paying homage not only to the war dead from the Battle of Okinawa, but also to the Asia Pacific War, one celebrating the emperor-military bond.

Following the election of Ota Masahide as Governor in 1990, Okinawa moved to create the Cornerstone of Peace (Ishiji) at Mabuni Hill, inscribing in stone the names and nationality of the 239,000 combatant and noncombatant dead of all nations: Japanese, American, Korean, Taiwanese, British, and Okinawan among others. This cosmopolitan and inclusive approach, with its distinctive Okinawan roots and close attention to the civilian victims of the Battle, stands

out among the world's memorials. The Cornerstone contains this inscription looking beyond the nationalist passions of war: "The Cornerstone of Peace" is a place to remember and honor the 200,000 people who lost their lives in the Battle of Okinawa and other battles, to appreciate the peace in which we live today and to pray for everlasting world peace."



Cornerstone of Peace. More than 237,000 names of deceased civilians and soldiers are inscribed.

Yet for all its universalism, we note the continued stamp of the nation state in two important ways in the memorial spaces at Mabuni. First, the dead are arrayed in separate areas by nationality, and with Okinawans distinguished from mainland Japanese. Second, Mabuni Hill includes not only the Okinawan representations encapsulated in the Cornerstone of Peace and Konpaku-no-to, but the NOWC and the prefectural military memorials with their intimate ties to the Japanese military and Yasukuni Shrine. The *mélange* of memorials illustrates the conflicting approaches to commemoration between the Japanese state and Okinawan prefectural authorities. We may say that NOWC is a monument to war while the Cornerstone is a monument to peace. The Cornerstone of Peace is notable for its inclusiveness in commemorating the dead of all nations, its honoring of civilians and military victims of the Battle, and its partially successful attempt to transcend nationalist categories in search of universal peace. It is an achievement that has been realized in no mainland Japanese, American, British or German national commemorative site with which I am familiar. [12]

Yasukuni, Nationalism and Historical Memory in Postwar Japan

The postwar period brought subtle yet crucial changes in the construction of Japanese war memories. During the occupation, Yasukuni, like so much else, became a Japan-US construction with implications for the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. The Yasukuni problem is most fruitfully viewed in relation to US decisions that include the permanent positioning of US forces in Japan, the preservation of Emperor Hirohito on the throne at the symbolic center of postwar Japanese politics yet subordinate to American power, and the dismantling of state Shinto while allowing the shrine to continue as an independent religious legal entity. Yasukuni's formal position was redefined by constitutional provisions separating church and state, yet important ritual bonds linking emperor and shrine remained intact. Because the post-war Constitution does

not specify a head of state, the emperor and the imperial representative was able to patronize and visit Yasukuni, the chief priest of the shrine held regular audiences with the emperor, and the emperor's representative played a central role in shrine rituals without raising legal issues. [13] Yasukuni Shrine was intimately associated with, and provided legitimation for, Japan's Pacific War, enshrining those who sacrificed their lives for Japan. In the 1930s and early 1940s, visits by the emperor and by families of deceased soldiers enshrined as *kami* provided ideological and spiritual foundations for war and empire.

In the postwar, with Japan at peace and occupied by US forces, the shrine has played a role in structuring how the war is remembered and presented to the Japanese people. It did so within a framework crafted by the occupation authorities who exonerated the emperor of all responsibility for initiating or waging war. Indeed, Hirohito was credited by both the occupation authorities and the Japanese government with bringing peace by personally intervening to end the war. Not only would the emperor not be deposed or tried as a war criminal, he would be shielded even from testifying at the Tokyo Trial. [14] The verdict at Tokyo, sentencing Tojo and a small number of prominent military and government officials to death, as well as the convictions of thousands of soldiers and police officials tried in B and C class tribunals, in leaving untouched Japan's supreme wartime leader, essentially absolved the Japanese people of the responsibility to examine their own behavior in the era of colonialism and war. For these reasons, the US as well as Japan ultimately shares responsibility for resolving issues of war responsibility that it helped to create, including those associated with the emperor and with Yasukuni Shrine.



Tojo at the Tokyo Trial

During the occupation, while shorn of official ties to the state and given a 'private' religious status, Yasukuni Shrine remained the central national-religious symbol for those who would defend the memory of war and would deny calls from Chinese, Koreans and other victims, including GI prisoners of war, for apologies and compensation for Japanese war crimes and atrocities. [15]

Whatever its official status, the link between Yasukuni and the emperor, and between Yasukuni and the Japanese government has remained strong. Hirohito made eight postwar visits to Yasukuni, the last in 1975, firmly nurturing the bond between emperor and shrine on the one hand, and the souls of the military dead enshrined there on the other. Hirohito never paid a personal visit to Yasukuni after the October 17, 1978 enshrinement of 14 Class-A war criminals defined by the Tokyo Trial and styled “Showa martyrs” by the Shrine authorities. [16] Nor has his successor, Akihito, who has reigned since 1989, paid a public visit to the shrine. Yasukuni Shrine continues to highlight its imperial bond, as in this passage from its website: “twice every year—in the spring and autumn—major rituals are conducted, on which occasion offerings from His Majesty the Emperor are dedicated to them, and also attended by members of the imperial family.’ [17]

The symbolism linking emperor-Yasukuni-war-empire remains in place, a compelling example of what Herbert Bix calls Hirohito’s apparition. That is, regardless of whether the emperor personally visited Yasukuni, there could be no public questioning of the role and responsibility of the emperor in war and empire, or of the nexus of power linking emperor and shrine. But if the emperor ceases to pay homage publicly at Yasukuni, what sustains the shrine’s importance in the public arena?

Viewing Japan as a Monolith

International critics of Japanese neonationalism frequently present Japan as a monolithic entity, a nation that is thoroughly unrepentant about, even celebratory of its record in the era of colonialism and war. Throughout the postwar era, however, the Japanese polity has been, and remains, deeply divided over how to remember the era of colonialism and war in general, and the Yasukuni problem in particular. This explains the furor among Japanese provoked by Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro’s Yasukuni visits and by state approval of textbooks that reiterate neonationalist themes.

For more than half a century public sentiment in favor of the no-war clause in Japan’s Constitution, has helped prevent the ruling party, with US support, from eliminating Article 9 in order to legitimate overseas military activities. Most important, sustained popular support for Article 9 is widely recognized as one important factor that has enabled Japan, which was more or less continuously at war from 1895 to 1945, to enjoy six decades of peace and prosperity. Popular support has not, however, been sufficient to prevent the ruling coalition from steadily eroding the meaning of Article 9 by extending the regional and even global reach of Japanese military power within the US-Japan framework and to set in motion a process of Constitutional revision. Popular support for Article 9 goes hand in hand with substantial popular sentiment critical of Japan’s conduct of the Asia Pacific War and Yasukuni nationalism, a finding repeatedly confirmed in public opinion polls.

Japanese critiques of the Pacific War have not been limited to pacifists and progressives. Kaya Okinori (1889-1977), who led the War Bereaved Families Association (Nihon Izokukai), for fifteen years beginning in 1962, was finance minister in the wartime Tojo cabinet. The Association is a powerful political bulwark and lobby for Yasukuni Shrine, and, indeed for the Liberal Democratic Party, which in turn continues to support family members of deceased soldiers financially six decades after the war. Kaya served ten years of a life sentence imposed by the Tokyo Tribunal before being released and eventually taking up a post as Justice Minister. In his memoirs, Kaya condemned Japan’s war against the US and criticized his own role in the

war. His most important point, no less pertinent today than when he wrote, is this: “as a Japanese, it is extremely regrettable that the people themselves could not judge the responsibility of their leaders.” [18]



Finance Minister Kaya Okinori addresses Diet Budget Committee, 1944

Despite US and Japanese policies encouraging remilitarization, significant numbers of Japanese, particularly many of the wartime generation, have long sought to make amends to Japan's victims, most importantly by rejecting the wartime ideology of emperor-centered nationalism, colonialism and *kokutai*. For example, many Japanese scholars have displayed dedication, resourcefulness and courage in researching and analyzing Japanese war crimes and atrocities. Their research has made it possible to mount effective critiques of atrocities including the Nanjing Massacre and the comfort women, and to question fundamental premises of Yasukuni nationalism. Indeed, many Japanese citizens, deeply influenced by the lessons of the Pacific War and Japan's crushing defeat, resisted militarizing trends from a pacifist perspective throughout their lives. In contrast for example to the US anti-Iraq War movement, which fizzled once the war began despite widespread continued popular disapproval of the conduct of the war, Japanese pacifism and activism have been sustained in large and small ways over decades, notably in the anti-nuclear movements. The number of privately founded peace museums, perhaps more than in the rest of the world combined, provides one measure of this. The fifty year effort by Chukiren veterans (China Returnees) who were captured and re-educated in China, and have publicly criticized *their own* atrocities and those committed by other members of the Japanese military ever since, is another. [19]

Critics of the revival of Japanese neonationalism have good reason to be concerned about trends of recent years, notably Japan's dispatch of troops and ships to the Persian Gulf in support of US-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. [20] At the same time, it is important to recognize, however, that in contrast to the US, for sixty years Japan has NOT gone to war, Japanese have not killed or been killed on battlefields in Asia and beyond, proponents of Constitutional revision have not succeeded in eliminating Article 9 of the Constitution, and Yasukuni nationalism appears to be far weaker than it was in wartime.

Nevertheless, in the wake of the demise of the Soviet Union, the collapse of the Socialist Party as the major opposition party, and the decline of social democracy in the face of a US-spearheaded neoliberalism, a neonationalist revival has accompanied the redefinition of the US-Japan security relationship. [21] We have suggested that Japan's failure to adequately come to terms with its wartime aggression and the nature of its atrocities remains an obstacle to the achievement of a viable Pacific community.

The issues are not, of course, limited to Japanese intransigence, as our discussion of US war conduct has made plain. Progress on this front will also require recognition on the part of both Korea and China of the need to curb their own volatile nationalisms in the interest of a common vision for the future of the region.

Hong Kal has examined the construction of Japanese and Korean nationalisms through Yasukuni Shrine and the Korean War Memorial in Seoul. In both instances, the governments seek to cloak their legitimacy in the conduct of these wars, the Asia-Pacific War for Tokyo and the Korean War for Seoul. And in both, the presence and influence of the United States, first in its wartime role and subsequently in its postwar construction of Japanese and Korean polities, is palpable and invisible. [22] While Yasukuni nationalism reverberates throughout the Asia Pacific, the manifestations of South Korean nationalism projected in the War Memorial center on North-South rivalry.

The Political Logic of Yasukuni Nationalism and the US-Japan Alliance

For three decades, the symbolism binding the state and Yasukuni—and the heart of the Yasukuni controversy internationally—has been intimately linked with official Prime Ministerial visits that began with Nakasone Yasuhiro in 1987 and continued with Koizumi Junichiro's annual visits in the years 2001-2006. Also important, albeit off stage, is the continuing ritual bond solidified by the central presence of the imperial representative in all important shrine ceremonies.

Since 1970, on a number of occasions historical issues centered on the China-Japan War, atrocities, and the Yasukuni shrine have fueled conflict. The China factor has grown in importance and complexity for Japan in recent decades as China emerged as a major power and competitor in Asia and as economic relations among China, Japan, South Korea and the US rapidly expanded. Indicative of the stakes are the fact that in spring 2008 China replaced the United States as Japan's leading trade partner while Japan was China's number three partner, with bilateral trade totals of \$237 billion. [23]

Prime Minister Koizumi's annual Yasukuni pilgrimages were among the three central symbolic and practical international actions of his five-year tenure, together with his visits to North Korea and the dispatch of Japanese ground troops [GSDF] to Iraq, as well as naval forces [MSDF] and air forces [ASDF] to the Persian Gulf. The Yasukuni visits affronted not only China and Korea, but also the people of other Asian nations and the United States. [24] They may also have firmed Koizumi's political base in Japan even while sparking controversy. Paradoxically, it is precisely because Koizumi moved so determinedly to lash Japan to US regional and global strategic designs that Yasukuni loomed so large for him. While Koizumi's successors have wisely refrained from visiting Yasukuni so as to avoid provoking China and Korea, they have continued to embrace growing Japanese subordination to US power, sought to expand Japan's military reach within the US-Japan framework, and supported neonationalist calls for textbooks that elide reference to Japan's war atrocities. This is evident in former Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's

passage of a new education law and measures setting in motion the process to amend the constitution.

One result of Prime Minister Koizumi's annual Yasukuni visits, and, to a lesser extent, the battles over Japanese textbook nationalism, was that relations soured and five years passed without a meeting at the highest levels of the Chinese and Japanese leadership between 2001 and 2006. [25] This was also a period in which other Japan-China conflicts, notably the Diaoyutai/Senkaku islands territorial and oil and gas dispute flared. Japan-South Korea relations were similarly poisoned by the combination of Yasukuni nationalism and territorial disputes centered on the Dokdo/Takeshima Islets, offsetting the potentially salutary influence of the shared hosting of the 2002 World Cup and a cultural boom touched off by the unprecedented success in Japan of the Korean TV drama *Winter Sonata*.

The clashes in the region have gone hand in hand with challenges from a resurgent Japanese nationalism that has frequently played out around Yasukuni and related historical memory issues. Abe regularly visited the shrine on August 15, the date of Japan's surrender, prior to assuming office. In June 2006, he firmly rejected Beijing's call for an end to Yasukuni visits as a precondition for talks, saying "We cannot and will not allow Japan's freedom of religion, freedom of conscience and our feeling in memory of the war dead to be violated in such a manner." Abe nevertheless refrained from publicly visiting the Shrine during his tenure as Prime Minister, as has his successor Fukuda Yasuo.

The transition from Koizumi to Abe and Fukuda, and the growing recognition in influential sectors of Japanese business and intellectual life of the importance of China and Korea for Japan's future, have made it possible to put aside, at least temporarily, the passionate encounters over Yasukuni and to reopen diplomatic negotiations at the highest levels. While Japanese neonationalist book and manga authors as well as filmmakers continue to reenact the Pacific War and defend the benevolence of Japanese colonial rule and vilify China and Korea, as Matthew Penney has shown, in recent years the most important Japanese books published on China have underlined Chinese achievements and paved the way toward China-Japan rapprochement. [26] As the preceding analysis suggests, however, neonationalism remains a latent and dangerous force in Japanese and regional politics.

Prime Minister Fukuda's determination to extend the MSDF role in refueling US and coalition ships in the Persian Gulf is indicative of an expansive Japanese military within the framework of US power. The Japanese military actions in the Gulf, of course, have strategic implications both for guarding Japan's oil lifeline from the Middle East, as well as for extending the reach of the US-Japan strategic alliance.

Gavan McCormack has observed that Japan's deepening structural dependence and subordination *requires* the theatre of nationalism to make it palatable to the Japanese people. The independence that is denied in substance must be affirmed and celebrated in ritual and rhetoric. Indeed, for Japan to become the Great Britain of East Asia, as in its dispatch of GSDF, MSDF and ASDF to the war zone of the Persian Gulf, Yasukuni and other rituals of bravado, and educational efforts such as those conducted by the YÅ«shÅ«kan, are conducted to satisfy pride. [27] Nationalist bravado may conceal an overweening reality of dependence. Precisely the Koizumi, Abe and Fukuda administrations' support for US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and for the Bush administration's global "war on terror" buys tacit US acceptance of Yasukuni

nationalism and an expansive Japanese military role while inflaming Japan's relations with her neighbors.

At a time when many nations bridle at the Bush administration's scorn for international norms of law and justice, as in its invasion of Iraq and the torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo, and in its unilateral claims to the right to intervene anywhere and everywhere, Japan's support for US military ambitions globally increases the importance of Yasukuni as a statement to strengthen the LDP's nationalist credentials at home. Japan places ever more of its cards on an expansive military alliance with the US, as illustrated by its extraordinary agreement to pay \$6 billion (and perhaps much more) to fund the cost of transferring 8,000 US Marines from Okinawa to Guam. [28] As Japan commits to an enlarged regional military subordinate to US regional and global power projections throughout the Asia Pacific, all the more it requires more dramatic claims to nationalist credentials domestically.

The evolving character of the US-Japan alliance is well illustrated by the establishment of a forward base or regional headquarters for I Corps, the US Army's Asia Pacific and Middle East headquarters at Camp Zama in Kanagawa, Japan. [29] In this way, the integration of US and Japanese military planning for the entire Asia Pacific is being facilitated in flagrant violation of Article 9. The US military's five-day "Valiant Shield" exercise off Guam in June 2006 brought together US and allied Navy, Air Force, Marine and Coast guard forces involving an armada of three aircraft carriers and 25 other ships, including the Yokosuka-based Kitty Hawk group and other Japan-based ships. [30] The 22,000 troops and 280 warplanes, including the III Marine Expeditionary Force and 5th Air Force based in Okinawa, joined in the largest military exercise in the Pacific since the Vietnam War, sending powerful warning signals toward both North Korea and China. Most important, from the perspective of understanding the Yasukuni phenomenon, is that Japan's military subordination to US power enables it to expand its military reach and ignore or flout the strong feelings of Asian neighbors, even those that are important economic partners.

Since the 1980s, China-Japan and Korea-Japan economic relationships have grown exponentially at the same time that their political relations have remained volatile. Notable are Japanese territorial conflicts with South Korea over Dokdo/Takeshima and with China over the Diaoyutai/Senkaku Islands and Okinotorishima Island. Tensions with both China and Korea are further inflamed by the intertwined issues of natural gas and fishing rights, as well as by war memory issues of which Yasukuni Shrine and the comfort women have been the most contentious. In June, 2008, following the visit to Japan of China's President Hu Jintao, a China-Japan agreement was signed to jointly develop natural gas deposits in disputed areas in the vicinity of the Diaoyutai/Senkaku Islands. [31] In the long run, however, resolution of historical controversies is important to long-term stability and regional coordination.

Nationalism and War in the 21st Century

Many nations including Britain, France and Germany, maintain a sacred site that is the apotheosis of war nationalism. The American Shrine to war nationalism is Arlington National Cemetery, the repository of official celebration of American wars. [32] Boasting no less than 260,000 individual grave markers, the site is administered by the US Army. By contrast, Yasukuni Shrine is not a cemetery. But the names of each of the dead soldiers-turned-dieties (*kami*) are recorded by name in the Reijibo Hoanden (Repository for the Register of Deities).



Reijibo Hoanden

The *kami* include not only Japanese soldiers, but also 50,000 Chinese, Taiwanese and Korean soldiers of the Japanese imperial armed forces, as well as tens of thousands of Okinawan civilians called to service in the final conflict on Okinawa. These are preserved as the shrine's cultural capital and its claim to centrality in the nation's historical and religious imagination. [33] Indeed, whereas American war nationalism requires tracking down and recovery of the remains of the dead from US combat zones, a process that continues in Korea and Vietnam decades after the end of the war, as Utsumi Aiko points out, more than one million Japanese bodies remain unrecovered and the Japanese state has done little to recover them from the battlefields of Southeast Asia and the Pacific. [34] Whereas the US has gone to extraordinary lengths and at great cost to bring back the remains of its war dead from far-flung battlefields, Japanese authorities have emphasized the enshrinement of the spirit at Yasukuni and the creation of war memorials at Mabuni Hill in Okinawa. [35]

The two sites of Arlington and Yasukuni, as well as the Okinawa Battlesite National Park, share celebratory war narratives emphasizing each nation's just and heroic combat in all of its wars, and prioritizing of World War II/the Asia-Pacific War as the signature war in national memory. As Benedict Anderson puts it following a review of a number of sacred war memorial sites, "Each in a different but related way shows why, no matter what crimes a nation's government commits and its passing citizenry endorses, My Country is ultimately good." [36] Arlington, Yasukuni, and the Okinawa Battlesite Park are the sacred sites that link war and the state in nations with distinctive religious and commemorative traditions but with shared needs to recognize the sacrifice that the dead have made for the nation. One can search in vain at Arlington and at Yasukuni, for example, for any self-critical reflection on wars commemorated, above all any understanding of the plight of the victims of those wars. One finds no explanation, or even hint, of American or Japanese economic or geostrategic interests in the locales where wars were fought and whose victims the nation enshrines. Still less is there recognition of, or reflection on, atrocities or war crimes committed by Japanese or American forces in pursuit of national goals. [37] We have reviewed Japanese crimes of war above. Notable American war crimes and atrocities include the firebombing of more than sixty Japanese cities, and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the use of Agent Orange and napalm to bomb Vietnamese civilians, and the systematic torture of captives in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. All were

actions approved at the highest levels of government and formed integral parts of American war making. In construction a new world order following its victory in World War II, the US pioneered principles of universality of international law in the Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals. But it also wielded its hegemonic power to restrict prosecution to the defeated and to deflect criticism of American war making and atrocities. In this way, it insists on US impunity to international law and international norms, including those that it helped establish and enforce. [38]

War memorials and war rhetoric celebrate the war-making prowess of the state and link the military, the nation and people in a perfect union against a common profoundly evil foe: for the US, the demonization of Al Qaeda, Saddam Hussein and the Axis of Evil are but the latest in a chain of American representational acts whose long pedigree runs from the Indian wars through the Philippines-American war of 1900 to Japan in the Pacific War years 1941-45, on to the present. The problem of nationalism becomes acute when the failure to come to terms with the dark side of aggressive and expansionist wars either paves the way for new military adventures, as in the US since World War II, or when symbolic state acts antagonize the victims of former wars, impede reconciliation, or create conditions that could prove conducive to a new cycle of conflicts, as in contemporary Japan.

We have shown a number of ways in which American and Japanese war nationalisms are intertwined as a result of US occupation policies that preserved Hirohito as emperor and permitted continuity of the Japanese government under a US-led occupation authority, paving the way for the subsequent forging of the US-Japan military alliance. Yet international criticisms of neonationalism have centered almost exclusively on Japan, the more vulnerable of the two nations, despite the fact that the US replaced Japan as the nation involved in a nearly unbroken succession of wars beyond its borders in the wake of World War II. It is surely time to recognize and analyze the character of US neonationalism rooted in structures of permanent warfare, a global network of military bases protecting both territorial and economic interests, and a claim that American wars serve to liberate oppressed people according to the formula of democracy and development. [39] In this respect, American claims resonate with long-discredited claims during the Asia-Pacific War that Japan was liberating Asia from European colonialism. Indeed they are simply the latest incarnation of the moral and developmentalist claims of colonialisms across the ages and across the globe. Today, these ideological claims rest on the institutional foundations of a global network of more than 1,000 US overseas military bases, a financial base in a military budget that is comparable to that of the rest of the world's military budgets combined, and a strategic conception that defines a permanent "war on terror" as the US global mission. [40]

In noting the close relationship between nationalism and war, I do not wish to equate all nationalisms. In particular, I distinguish anticolonial nationalisms, that is nationalisms of resistance to invasion and colonization, such as those that took shape in China, Vietnam, and Korea in the first half of the twentieth century, from aggressive and expansionist forms of nationalism associated with colonial and post-colonial regimes and including both Japan and the United States. Nevertheless, even the nationalisms of victims that gave rise to national liberation and independence movements risk degenerating into malignant chauvinisms that can pave the way for subsequent rounds of war and block the way to regional accord. Examples include Chinese and Vietnamese nationalisms fueling the China-Vietnam border war of 1979, and contemporary Chinese and Korean nationalisms in the form of historical memory debates over

the ancient Koguryo/Gaogouli kingdom on the China/Korean border that have inflamed tensions between the two nations.

From Yasukuni Politics to Tension Reduction and Regional Integration in the Asia Pacific

I conclude by looking beyond Yasukuni politics, the politics of emperor-centered Shinto nationalism and historical memories that generate confrontation politics, to reflect briefly on more hopeful regional alternatives that could promote more equitable forms of economic integration and cultural interplay.

The Asia-Pacific region is presently in the early stages of what could emerge as the third great epoch of region formation of the last half millennium. This follows on the China-centric tributary-trade order which reached its peak in the eighteenth century, an epoch of prolonged peace and prosperity in core areas of the region (but also an era in which the reach of Chinese power extended far into Inner Asia), and a Japan-centric Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere of the 1930s and 1940s, a brief and violent era of permanent war, instability and massive bloodshed. The postwar US-dominated order in Asia, like the nineteenth century European-centered colonial order, was predicated on regional fragmentation/division and the privileging of bilateral security, political and economic relationships within the US zone rather than on regional integration. It was likewise characterized by fierce military conflict, indicative of the failure of the US, like Japan earlier, to turn military supremacy into a stable hegemonic order. [41]

The US-China opening of 1970 and the resurgence of Asian economies in the final decades of the twentieth century paved the way for the re-knitting of regional bonds, the emergence of East Asia as one of the world's three dynamic centers, and China's reemergence as a regional and global power. This has not given rise to a regionalism of the European Union type characterized by political, security, juridical and diplomatic integration as manifest in the European parliament, a common currency, a NATO security regime, and a common judicial structure. [42] East Asian regionalism, like its postwar European variant, began to take shape within the framework of American geopolitical dominance. However, in the course of the last quarter century, regional economic integration, pivoting on China, Japan and Korea. and measured by trade, investment, and technology transfers, has proceeded rapidly, while signs abound of US decline. The US retains regional and global strategic primacy and a major economic position. But its soaring balance of payments and budget deficits, the sub-prime bubble, and the collapse of the value of the dollar against Asian and other currencies, and a costly permanent and unwinnable war on terror all point to its relative, decline.

In recent years, regional integration in East Asia has been reinforced by new levels of cultural interaction (albeit not without xenophobic reaction) involving film, TV, anime, music, sports, and manga, with cultural exchanges among China-Japan-South Korea interchanges among the most dynamic and intense. At the same time, wider efforts at regional integration have centered on ASEAN. ASEAN + 3 (China, Japan and Korea) and other variations have emerged, with China playing a vigorous regional role and Japan a far more reticent one. This pattern has been replicated in the Six-Party talks centered on the North Korea bomb and the US-North Korea relationship in which China has played a leading role while Japan remains at best a reluctant partner. Other regional formations have simultaneously appeared, notably including the Shanghai Group linking Russia, China and Central Asian nations, and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). China has led in each of these regional endeavors, while a much more prosperous and technologically advanced Japan has been content to reaffirm its

subordinate ties to the US and has been slow to respond to emerging regional formations in which a resurgent China could play a major or even leading role.

Major obstacles continue to confront the realization of the cooperative possibilities inherent in the economic and cultural realms of regional cooperation in East Asia. None seem more important than the potential clash with the political and strategic dimensions of Japanese nationalism and/or the US-Japan order, both of which appear to center on curbing an ascendant China.

A dilemma confronting East Asia in the new millennium is how to mediate nationalisms that inflame historical antagonisms. To the extent that the critique of the chauvinism of others serves to privilege one's own nationalism, the result can only be a deepening spiral of conflict. It is essential that critiques of nationalism begin, therefore, with close examination of one's own nation: the roots and consequences of its nationalism, its record as a colonial power, an invader, and an oppressor of other peoples including ethnic minorities. This applies to Japan, the US and China, among others. This can provide a foundation for exploring the possibilities of alternative cooperative perspectives. The postwar predominance of US power has long granted Japan impunity from confronting its own atrocities and its aggressive and interventionist posture. Assessment of the Yasukuni problem, in particular one by an American, must locate the issues within the parameters of the US-Japan relationship. This requires reflection on both Japanese and American war crimes and atrocities that have yet to be recognized and effectively addressed by the Japanese or American governments in the form of apologies and compensation of victims, and ultimately in each nation's textbooks, museums and historical monuments.

History matters. The starting point for reconciliation in the wake of wars, as the German experience amply demonstrates, lies with overcoming historical amnesia to recognize one's own war crimes and atrocities and redress victim grievances. In the absence of steps by all parties toward overcoming the poisonous legacy of earlier wars, the Asia-Pacific region could be destined to continue to fight anew many of the still unresolved battles of a war that ended more than six decades ago but continues to reverberate powerfully in historical memory.

Mark Selden is a Japan Focus coordinator and a Senior Research Associate in the East Asia Program at Cornell University. Posted at Japan Focus on September 10, 2008.

Notes

[*] Thanks to John Breen and Gerald Figal for advice and information, and especially to Laura Hein for relentless critique of an earlier draft of this article.

[1] The quotation is from the [Yasukuni Shrine website](#).

[2] See the editorials by the Yomiuri and the Asahi about the Yasukuni Shrine on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the Asia-Pacific War, which framed an important debate on the shrine. While the "conservative" Yomiuri and the "liberal" Asahi have frequently taken different positions on such war and peace issues as the dispatch of Japan's Self-Defense Forces in support of the US war in Iraq, they shared a critical perspective on the question of Prime Minister visits to the shrine. The sources cited below illustrate the depth of the Yasukuni debate *within* Japanese society. [Yasukuni Shrine, Nationalism and Japan's International Relations](#). See the joint editorial by the Yomiuri and Asahi calling for a national memorial to replace Yasukuni Shrine: "[Yomiuri and Asahi Editors Call for a National Memorial to Replace Yasukuni](#)" by

Wakamiya Yoshibumi and Watanabe Tsuneo. The Yomiuri also published a [twenty-two part series on “War Responsibility”](#) that remains available at their website.

It was subsequently published as a book under the title [Who Was Responsible? From Marco Polo Bridge to Pearl Harbor](#), available in Japanese, English and Chinese editions. For an astute assessment of the Yomiuri project see Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “[Who is Responsible? The Yomiuri Project and the Enduring Legacy of the Asia-Pacific War](#),”

[3] Korean soldiers who were conscripted into the Japanese army were and remain enshrined in Yasukuni, as are indigenous people of Taiwan. However, with the loss of Japanese citizenship in 1952, surviving Korean and Taiwanese veterans were deprived of pensions. On US treatment and classification of Koreans in occupied Japan see Mark Caprio, “Resident aliens: forging the political status of Koreans in occupied Japan,” in Mark E. Caprio and Yoneyuki Sugita, eds., *Democracy in Occupied Japan. The U.S. occupation and Japanese politics and society* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 178-199; see also Yoshiko Nozaki, [Hiromitsu Inokuchi and Kim Tae-young, Legal Categories, Demographic Change and Japan’s Korean Residents in the Long Twentieth Century](#).

[4] The same is true of groups that challenge state power through armed struggle in the name of democracy, national independence, revolution, eternal salvation, or other goals, often en route to the creation of new nations. The state then possesses and invokes goals and the memory of the martyred, as its own. The People’s Republic of China is a particularly interesting case. The state has long highlighted Chinese Communist-led resistance to Japan, both that of the army and of local guerrillas, as the central national myth, enshrined in museums and monuments. Yet there is no Chinese national cemetery which honors the war dead. See Kirk Denton’s analysis of the shift in Chinese museum representation of the Anti-Japanese resistance from the narrative of heroic resistance to one highlighting atrocities and victimization in the post-Mao years. [Heroic Resistance and Victims of Atrocity: Negotiating the Memory of Japanese Imperialism in Chinese Museums](#).

[5] John Breen, “The dead and the living in the land of peace: a sociology of the Yasukuni shrine,” *Mortality* Vol. 9, No. 1, February 2004, pp. 76-93; John Breen, ed., *Yasukuni, the War Dead, and the Struggle for Japan’s Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

[6] Steve Rabson, [Okinawan Perspectives on Japan’s Imperial Institution](#); Kamata Satoshi, [Shattering Jewels: 110,000 Okinawans Protest Japanese State Censorship of Compulsory Group Suicides](#). Rabson’s analysis of Okinawan perspectives on the Battle and the emperor illuminates Okinawan understanding of Yasukuni enshrinement.

[7] *Inside GHQ: The Allied Occupation of Japan and Its Legacy* (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 441; casualty figures, p. 35. Wikipedia offers a useful introduction to sources on the [Battle and casualties](#).

[8] Unless otherwise noted, this section draws on the research of Gerald Figal. “Waging Peace on Okinawa,” in Laura Hein and Mark Selden, eds., *Islands of Discontent. Okinawan Responses to Japanese and American Power* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), pp. 65-98 and especially his “Bones of Contention: The Geopolitics of ‘Sacred Ground’ in Postwar Okinawa,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol 31, No. 1, January, 2007, pp. 81-109.

[9] Okinawa Izoku Rengo Kai, *Ni ju go nen no ayumi* (Naha, 1977), pp. 19-20, cited in Figal, "Bones of Contention," p. 96.

[10] Figal cites USCAR, "JGLO no. II. Letter from Hisajiro Fujita, Chief Officer JGLO to Colonel William Wensboro, Acting Civil Administrator, USCAR," 7 February 1964. OPA reference code U81100983B. See also USCAR, "Court Ranks and Decorations Will Be Posthumously Conferred on WWII War Dead," 18 February 1964 and USCAR "Program for Conferment of Rank and Decorations to Ryukyuan War Dead," 24 February 1965.

[11] Takemae, *Inside GHQ*, pp. 31-37; the photograph of two members of the Blood and Iron Corps, p. 34, shows boys in uniforms and boots who look barely twelve years old.

[12] John Breen observes (personal correspondence August 3, 2008) that the cenotaph, by its empty nature (emblematic of those whose remains are not there), suggests the possibility that the November 11 ceremony, celebrated since 1946 offers prayers for all the war dead of the two World Wars, and not just the British. The ceremony, however, featuring the Queen and other members of the royal family, together with representatives of the British government and military, suggests to me a strong national orientation.

[13] Breen, "The dead and the living," pp. 83-84.

[14] See Herbert P. Bix, [War Responsibility and Historical Memory: Hirohito's Apparition](#), Japan Focus. For an historical discussion of shrine politics and the war dead see Akiko Takenaka, [Enshrinement Politics: War Dead and War Criminals at Yasukuni Shrine](#). The case in favor of Prime Ministerial visits to Yasukuni is forcefully argued by Nitta Hitoshi, "And Why Shouldn't the Prime Minister Worship at Yasukuni? A Personal View," in John Breen, ed., *Yasukuni, the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan's Past*, pp. 125-42. Cf. Breen's chapter in the same volume, "Yasukuni and the Loss of Historical Memory," pp. 143-62.

[15] Kinue Tokudome, ["The Bataan Death March and the 66-Year Struggle for Justice."](#)

[16] Herbert Bix, in a personal note of August 21, 2008, points out that in his 1975 visit, at a moment of fierce debate over state support for Yasukuni, Hirohito was greeted by protest banners. Following the collective enshrinement of war criminals, Hirohito feared being drawn into both domestic and international conflicts involving China and Korea, and perhaps the United States.

[17] [Website](#)

[18] Wakamiya Yoshiyumi, ["War-bereaved Families' Dilemma: thoughts on Japan's war."](#) Asahi Shimbun, July 8, 2005.

[19] On Chukiren's activities see David McNeill, [A Foot Soldier in the War Against Forgetting Japanese Wartime Atrocities](#), and Linda Hoaglund, ["Japanese Devils. The Perpetrators of Wartime Atrocities in China Tell Their Story in a New Film,"](#) Persimmon, Winter 2003. On Japanese museums see Akiko Takenaka and Laura Hein, [Exhibiting World War II in Japan and the United States](#).

[20] Laura Hein and Mark Selden, eds., *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany and the United States* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2000).

[21] Gavan McCormack, *Client State. Japan in the American Embrace*, espec. Chapters 5 and 6 offer useful discussion of neonationalist currents and their embrace by the Liberal Democratic Party.

[22] “The aesthetic construction of ethnic nationalism. War memorial museums in Korea and Japan,” in Gi-Wook Shin, Soon-Won Park, and Daqing Yang, eds., *Rethinking Historical Injustice and Reconciliation in Northeast Asia. The Korean Experience* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 133-53.

[23] Reuters, May 4, 2008.

[24] BBC, [“Protests Mount Over Koizumi’s Shrine Visit,”](#) August 14, 2001. The BBC report notes demonstrations in Hong Kong and the Philippines as well as in China and Korea.

[25] Yoshiko Nozaki and Mark Selden, “Historical Memory, International Conflict and Japanese Textbook Controversies,” in press, *Contexts* Vol 1 No. 1.

[26] [Foundations of Cooperation: Imagining the Future of Sino-Japanese Relations](#), Japan Focus

[27] *Client State. Japan in American Embrace* (London: Verso, 2007). Laura Hein analyzes both wartime and postwar Japanese nationalism as cultural nationalism predicated on the uniqueness of the Japanese spirit—a course that led the nation to disaster in the Asia-Pacific War. “The Cultural Career of the Japanese Economy: developmental and cultural nationalisms in historical perspective,” *Third World Quarterly*, 29, 3 (2008), pp. 447-65.

[28] That transfer is contingent, however, on the expansion of the US Air Station at Henoko, which has been stalled by Okinawan resistance for a decade. See Koji Taira, [Okinawan Environmentalists Put Robert Gates and DOD on Trial. The Dugong and the Fate of the Henoko Air Station.](#)

[29] Vince Little, [“As new equipment arrives in Tokyo, I Corps begins setting up shop at Camp Zama,”](#) Northwest Guardian, July 3, 2008. I Corps headquarters remains at Fort Lewis, Washington.

[30] See the official [US Pacific Command website for Valiant Shield.](#)

[31] Eric Watkins, [China, Japan agree on East China Sea E&P projects](#), *Oil and Gas Journal*, June 20, 2008; Andre Fesyun, [“China, Japan agree on East China Sea gas deposits.”](#)

[32] John Breen emphasizes important differences between Yasukuni Shrine and Britain’s Cenotaph, France’s Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and Arlington Cemetery: “Yasukuni alone is a religious institution, a sacred site with its own priesthood who perform rites for the dead, propitiating them as kami. . . The Western sites are relatively ‘unencumbered’ as sites of tribute, mourning and memory. . . Yasukuni venerates the dead as kami and in the ritual process of so doing it tends to the glorification of self-sacrifice and the idealization of Japan’s imperial past.” “The dead and the living,” pp. 90-91. There are indeed distinctive differences in the ritual practice of Yasukuni, in the spiritual weight of the bonds linking shrine, emperor, the military and the nation. In the discussion that follows, I nevertheless emphasize common features in sites that link war, the sacrifice of dead soldiers, the state, and the national purpose, as well as the role of the priesthood in paying tribute to the fallen heroes of each nation. In 1959 the Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery was established to commemorate the unknown war dead. Despite various

proposals, attempts to shift some or all official memorialization of the military dead—including in some instances the military dead of all countries—from Yasukuni to Chidorigafuchi have failed.

[33] Andrew M. McGreevy, [Arlington National Cemetery and Yasukuni Jinja: History, Memory, and the Sacred](#), Japan Focus. The shrine authorities have brushed aside demands by Korean, Taiwanese and Okinawan families to disenshrine their family members, insisting that Yasukuni alone decides who is to be enshrined. Taiwanese and Koreans were drafted in the final years of the war; Okinawan youth were mobilized for “volunteer corps” as nurses or fighters to support Japanese forces during the battle.

[34] “Japanese Racism, War, and the POW Experience,” in Mark Selden and Alvin So eds., *War and State Terrorism. The United States, Japan, and the Asia-Pacific in the Long Twentieth Century* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004) pp. 119-42. David McNeill, [Magnificent Obsession: Japan’s Bone Man and the World War II Dead in the Pacific](#), Japan Focus. The British and the Americans chose different routes to honoring the dead in World War I, the British maintaining cemeteries in France which consecrated more than one million Britons who died in the war (approximately half of whom were unidentified or whose bodies had vanished). As a result, the Cenotaph in London became the primary British memorial. The American government, too, made efforts to keep the dead in cemeteries in France, Belgium and England. In the end, however, more than 70 percent were repatriated, with Congress financing round-trip tickets to Europe to visit the cemeteries for mothers of the deceased. Thomas W. Laqueur, “Memory and Naming in the Great War,” and G. Kurt Piehler, “The War Dead and the Gold Star: American Commemoration of the First World War,” in John R. Gillis, ed., *The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 150-67, 168-85.

[35] Japanese progressive scholars, who have written extensively and insightfully about the Yasukuni problem, rarely write comparatively about Japan’s war nationalism, atrocities, or other aspects of US and Japanese wars. An important exception is Tanaka Toshiyuki, *Sora no sensoshi* (History of Air War) (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2008); see also his *Hidden Horrors. Japanese War Crimes in World War II* (Boulder: Westview, 1996).

[36] “The Goodness of Nations,” in the *Spectre of Comparisons. Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World* (Verso: London, 1998), p. 368.

[37] We have noted one important difference in Okinawa’s Cornerstone of Peace from other memorials: its commemoration of victims of all nations. There is another important difference. Exhibits in the Okinawan Prefectural Museum at Mabumi contain extensive information which reveals Japanese treatment of Okinawan civilians such as the military’s imposition of compulsory mass suicide (*shudan jiketsu*). The contrast to both the Yushukan and the Smithsonian Museum’s Enola Gay exhibit on the fiftieth Anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki could not be starker. See Gerald Figal, “Waging Peace on Okinawa,” in Laura Hein and Mark Selden, eds., *Islands of Discontent. Okinawan Responses to Japanese and American Power* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), pp. 65-98; Laura Hein and Mark Selden, “Commemoration and Silence: Fifty Years of Remembering the Bomb in America and Japan,” in Hein and Selden, eds., *Living With the bomb: American and Japanese Cultural Conflicts in the Nuclear Age* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1997), pp.3-36.

[38] The US does prosecute a small fraction of its own war crimes, in each case singling out a soldier or soldiers who committed specific atrocities without examining the pattern of warfare of which it was a part, or pursuing the issue up the chain of command as required by the Nuremberg principles.

[39] Mark Selden, [Japanese and American War Atrocities, Historical Memory and Reconciliation: World War II to Today](#).

[40] Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire. Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004) is the classic study of the US empire of bases. See especially pp. 151-86.

[41] On the historical periodization of East Asian region formation, see Giovanni Arrighi, Takeshi Hamashita and Mark Selden, eds., *The Resurgence of East Asia: 500, 150 and 50 Year Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2003) and Takeshi Hamashita, *China, East Asia and the Global Economy: Regional and Historical Perspectives* (Linda Grove and Mark Selden, eds.) (Routledge: London, 2008).

[42] Peter J. Katzenstein, *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

Yomiuri and Asahi Editors Call for a National Memorial to Replace Yasukuni

Wakamiya Yoshibumi and Watanabe Tsuneo

Introduced by Laura Hein and Yuki Tanaka

Many older Japanese conservatives are deeply committed to pacifism as a result of their personal experiences in World War II, despite recent Japanese government efforts to assert the right to belligerence in the present and the legitimacy of Japan's wars in the 1930s and 1940s. Nonaka Hiromu, the former Secretary-General of the Liberal Democratic Party, retired from politics last year. But he still openly criticizes Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine, his foreign policy, and the LDP's planned revision of Japan's Constitution. He lost his cousin and uncle in the Asia-Pacific War. Gotoda Masaharu, who served as Chief Cabinet Secretary for the Nakasone Cabinet in the 1980s and was also highly critical of both Koizumi's foreign and domestic policies, died last year. He was also as a staunch supporter of Article 9, the "no-war clause," of Japan's Constitution. Watanabe Tsuneo, the Editorial Chief of the Yomiuri Newspaper, belongs to this same circle of conservatives whose wartime experiences prompted strong anti-war sentiments, although he is less supportive of Article 9.

From mid-2005, Watanabe suddenly began expressing highly critical views of Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine, where the spirits of Japanese soldiers are enshrined. At the same time, he initiated a series of articles on Japan's war responsibility in the Yomiuri, the world's largest-circulation newspaper. Yomiuri was, and is, regarded as a conservative paper, articulating views indistinguishable from those of the Japanese government on many important issues. Its traditional liberal rival has long been the Asahi News. It thus came as a surprise to readers to find this series of "progressive" articles, which clearly reflect Watanabe's critical attitude toward the national amnesia on the part of other conservatives and the Japanese government regarding war responsibility. He argued that the Japanese Government should build a new secular war memorial like those in other countries and cease official visits to Yasukuni, the preminent symbol of Japan's wartime claim that it had a divine right to dominance in Asia. The precise center of controversy is often the fact that the individuals convicted of war crimes after the war were later enshrined at Yasukuni. Apparently he feels that time is running out and that he is one of the very few remaining persons in the old guard who still has power to influence Japanese politics and popular opinion on this issue.



Watanabe Tsuneo

Watanabe may have been responding in part to the fact that recently both Yomiuri and Asahi have lost considerable numbers of subscribers, while the readership of the Sankei News - the most conservative paper of all - has increased dramatically. Given that many younger people, including university students, no longer read any newspaper, it is difficult to gauge the extent of Yomiuri's effort to raise public awareness about Japan's war responsibility. The fundamental issue confronting the Japanese press, as well as peace activists and educators, is how to motivate young people to become interested in reflecting on history and establishing peaceful

and productive relationships with other nations, particularly the Asian nations that suffered from Japanese colonialism and war.

Currently Yasukuni shrine is a major flashpoint as a result of Koizumi's visits and Foreign Minister Aso's provocative suggestion that the emperor should visit the shrine, both of which have strained diplomatic relations with China and Korea. This was the context for a discussion between the editors of the Yomiuri and Asahi papers on Yasukuni, the war, and historical responsibility, published in the February 2006 issue of Ronza magazine, and presented in translated and abridged form here. -LH and YT

As rivals, The Asahi Shimbun and The Yomiuri Shimbun often adopt different editorial viewpoints. Yet, a recent discussion between Wakamiya Yoshiyumi, chairman of The Asahi Shimbun's editorial board, and Watanabe Tsuneo, chairman of The Yomiuri Shimbun group found some common ground regarding Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro's controversial visits to Yasukuni Shrine.

Wakamiya: I was surprised by an editorial that appeared in The Yomiuri (on June 4, 2005) with the headline, "A national memorial for the war dead should be built immediately." Although the Yomiuri has long argued for the construction of such a secular war memorial, I believe it was the first time a Yomiuri editorial had clearly stated "(the prime minister) should not visit Yasukuni Shrine, where 'Class-A war criminals' are memorialized."



Wakamiya Yoshiyumi center

I had come to believe the Yomiuri was in favor of the Yasukuni visits, and, based on the editorials of the past several years, I felt the Yomiuri had moved excessively to the right, and that now there is very little difference between the Yomiuri and the Sankei Shimbun. So I was very surprised by that editorial.

Around the time it appeared, you were quoted as saying that you opposed Koizumi's Yasukuni visits. You also began arguing that the very existence of Yasukuni was the source of the diplomatic rift in Japan's relations with China and South Korea. Since I have the opportunity to talk with you directly, I would first like to ask about this change.

Watanabe: Ever since I was in university, I have argued against war. In the last war, several million people died in the name of the emperor. I was drafted and made to work like a slave as a buck private.

Fortunately, I survived, but what was especially cruel was the system that gave birth to kamikaze pilots. As the war situation worsened, the pilots were made to fly in planes without sufficient fuel to return to base, forcing them into suicide missions.

It escalated further when they began using gliders. Pilots were made to sit in gliders that were attached to planes and released to fly toward their targets. The only strategy left was suicide bombings. During the war, I truly felt that no nation should be allowed to do such things, especially in the name of the emperor. I still cannot erase the hatred I felt toward the military leaders who gave such orders and to the politicians who overlooked such actions.

In 2001, when Prime Minister Koizumi said he would visit Yasukuni Shrine on Aug. 15, the anniversary of Japan's surrender, I called him and said "I'm opposed." I told him, "You should not go on Aug. 15. If you have to go, go on Aug. 13. Politically, it would be a bad decision to go on Aug. 15."

After that, I moved to a residence near Yasukuni Shrine. While I began taking walks to the shrine, I still have not prayed there.

The Yushukan war memorial that stands next to the main hall at Yasukuni is wrong. That facility praises militarism and children who go through that memorial come out saying, "Japan actually won the last war."

This means that Yasukuni Shrine operates a war museum that incites militarism and displays exhibits in praise of militarism. It is wrong for the prime minister to visit such a place.

I subsequently looked into what the head priest at Yasukuni said about why Class-A war criminals were memorialized there and the difficulty of removing their spirits. I came to the conclusion that it was totally wrong.

Wakamiya: The Yushukan was rebuilt in 2002. It is quite a fine-looking facility. But the contents can in no way be considered as having a contemporary feel about them.

It is true that the letters left behind by kamikaze pilots exhibited there do move readers to tears. But the tone of the exhibits, which cover the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-4 and the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, as well as the events from the Manchurian Incident of 1931 to the Pacific War, consistently describes the fighting as honorable, designed to liberate Asia, and for the defense and survival of Japan. There is no sense of shame at all.

For example, there is a Zero fighter plane on display on the first floor. The explanation says the Zero made its debut over Chongqing in China, and that during dogfights over Chongqing, it shot down a large number of the Soviet-made fighters used by the Chinese, thus giving the Zero world renown. However, the museum does not reveal that after the Zero fighters established Japan's air superiority over Chongqing, bombers flew over the city, killing countless civilian residents.

Those bombings became notorious internationally as the forerunner to indiscriminate bombings. While displaying such items boastfully at Yasukuni Shrine, it is very inappropriate for Japan's leaders to insist that China has no right to criticize the prime minister's visits.

Watanabe: This is why we started a campaign in our pages from Aug. 13, 2005, to clarify where the responsibility lies for the last war. We will continue the series for a year. After the year is up,

we plan to run a story on or around Aug. 15, 2006, summarizing the degree of responsibility by various military and government leaders of that time.

Of course, since we are not a judicial organization, we will not hand down death sentences or life imprisonment. But we plan to set specific standards to assess the severity of moral responsibility for the results of the war and in that way say who was the most responsible, who can be forgiven, and who should never be forgiven.

Wakamiya: There has been considerable debate about the legitimacy of the Tokyo war crimes trial. By contrast, you are planning to have the Japanese themselves clarify the responsibility for the war. Although I believe there will be considerable overlap with those who went on trial as Class-A war criminals at the Tokyo war crimes trial, do you have any idea of how much overlap there will be and are you also planning to focus on the responsibility of individuals who may not have been put on trial but had a greater responsibility than determined by the Tokyo war crimes trial?

Watanabe: Looked at from the perspective of international law, since Japan accepted the verdict of the Tokyo war crimes trial in Article 11 of the San Francisco peace treaty, the verdict can be said to be legally binding. However, when thinking about moral responsibility for the war, Shigenori Togo, who was foreign minister at the start of the conflict, took action from an early stage to end it. Perhaps people like that should not be considered in the same vein as Class-A war criminals.

Also, while it was wrong for the Japanese to have killed people in other countries, millions of Japanese also died. A large number of the people memorialized at Yasukuni were themselves victims. I think a distinction has to be made between those who did the killing and those who were killed. Once that is done, the level of responsibility of the perpetrators should be examined. Only then can we address the issue of the kind of trouble that we caused China and South Korea.

A soul-searching on our part that will satisfy them is absolutely necessary. While the Yomiuri will do what it can, I believe this is something that the nation-state should do at its own initiative, for example, by setting up a historical examination committee in the Diet.

On the other hand, as a representative of the journalism sector, I feel that we have an obligation at our newspaper to think through the issue. We may, of course, have been a little late in starting this.

When then-Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro visited Yasukuni on Aug. 15, 1985, I told him I was opposed. I told him, "I will never forgive him or his faction," He said, "I did not go to pray for Tojo. My younger brother died during the war and his spirit lies there. I went to meet my brother."

At that time, I accepted his explanation. However, after thinking about the issues, I focused on the fact that the war victims' relief bureau of the Ministry of Health and Welfare had enshrined the Class-A war criminals at Yasukuni.

The Tokyo Shimbun recently reported that many former military officers worked in the war victims' relief bureau, and they handed over a list of Class-A war criminals for memorialization at Yasukuni Shrine in 1966.

Wakamiya: Yes. The head priest at the time was Tsukuba Fujimaro, a former member of the Yamashina branch of the imperial family. During the twelve years Tsukuba was head priest, the Class-A war criminals were not included at Yasukuni.

It was said that Yasukuni Shrine backed off because the shrine officials wanted to pass a bill in the Diet for its maintenance by the state. They wanted to avoid measures that could stimulate negative public opinion, such as memorializing Class-A war criminals. It was also said that consideration was given to the feelings of the imperial family as well as the Imperial Household Agency.

However, after Tsukuba died suddenly, he was succeeded as head priest by Matsudaira Nagayoshi. Matsudaira was a former Imperial Japanese Navy lieutenant commander who totally rejected the verdict of the Tokyo war crimes trial. Soon after he became head priest, Matsudaira worked to have the Class-A war criminals memorialized and achieved that goal in 1978. But the Showa Emperor wouldn't visit Yasukuni after that. I have argued for the construction of a new war memorial that the emperor, who is the symbol of national unity, can visit. If it is built, foreign leaders could also visit.

Watanabe: On that issue, I am in total agreement. I believe that in thinking about war responsibility we have to look at everything from about the time of the Manchurian Incident in 1931. Initially, the Manchurian Incident was considered a move to build a paradise on Earth as a form of idealism on the part of Ishihara Kanji, who was a high-ranking officer in the Kwantung Army. However, Ishihara was also involved in illegal acts, such as the bombing of a railway line at Liutiaohu. Therefore, Ishihara cannot be forgiven, even though he subsequently argued against expanding the war.

Wakamiya: Ishihara Kanji was not included among the Class-A war criminals, strange as that may be.

Watanabe: That's right. He was not considered a war criminal. But we have to think about his responsibility. An even worse case is an even higher-ranking officer in the Kwantung Army, Itagaki Seishiro, who engineered the invasion of northern China. After that, as the nation proceeded toward the Pacific War, I believe that Konoe Fumimaro, who was prime minister, was up to no good.

At first, young radical army and navy officers attempted a coup on May 15, 1932, and later a group of army officers staged the Feb. 26 coup in 1936. Terrorism seriously affected politics. As a result, political parties became weak.

Konoe became prime minister after those developments. He should have tried to normalize the political situation, but he ended up creating the Imperial Rule Assistance Association. It can be said that there is no way to question his crimes because he committed suicide. Furthermore, it was Kido Koichi, lord keeper of the privy seal, who recommended that Tojo become prime minister. He must have known what would happen to the country if Tojo was made prime minister. For that reason, I believe Kido bears a very grave responsibility.

Wakamiya: You said that establishing war responsibility should occur in Japan rather than on the say-so of another nation. I agree that rather than wait until other nations speak up, we have to

think for ourselves. However, I slightly disagree with your editorial in the Yomiuri that other nations have no right to criticize.

Watanabe: Unless the Japanese themselves admit that crimes were committed, East Asian nations that were victims of invasion during the war will never be convinced of Japanese sincerity.

Ronza: Moves that glorify and justify the war are becoming quite noticeable, although in limited quarters. That leads some Japanese to question why it is wrong for the prime minister to visit Yasukuni Shrine. What are your thoughts on these recent developments?

Watanabe: I am 79 years old. When we are gone, there will be nobody who remembers the realities of that war and I worry that there will only be debate on ideas about it rather than on experiences. Chinese and South Koreans are building museums and taking other means to preserve extreme aspects of the war for the next generation and thereby fanning anti-Japan movements.

I believe I should talk about what I actually experienced in the war and keep records. I should talk and write that the Japanese military did terrible things.

Wakamiya: I don't think Prime Minister Koizumi is a rightist. And since he said in the Diet that Class-A war criminals are indeed war criminals, I don't think he visits Yasukuni Shrine to pay tribute to the Class-A war criminals enshrined there per se. I don't really doubt that he goes to the shrine to honor the spirits of the 3 million Japanese soldiers and to pray for peace in future. His thoughts in this matter are probably along the same line as his shedding tears for the youths who died as kamikaze suicide pilots.

The problem is the fact that the prime minister's visits to the shrine give joy and strength to people who think Class-A war criminals are not bad and that they were wrongly accused, a thought that is promoted in the shrine's war memorial museum Yushukan.

As a politician, Koizumi should use his imagination a little more. The more active rightists become, the more China and South Korea will come to see Japan as a "dangerous nation" and inflame anti-Japan sentiments. Politicians with firm convictions will shift positions a little if they think the course is headed for a diplomatic disaster, not only in Japan but also in China and South Korea.

This article appeared in the February 9 issue of Ronza. This abbreviated version is published in Japan Focus on February 14, 2006.

Revising the Past, Complicating the Future: The Yushukan War Museum in Modern Japanese History

Takashi Yoshida

I. Introduction

In this three part series, we introduce historical museums in Japan and their role in public education. Following this introduction to peace museums, Ms. Nishino Rumiko, a founder of the [Women's Active Museum on War and Peace \(WAM\)](#), introduces WAM's activities and the 2000 Citizens Tribunal on the 'comfort women'. The final article is by Mr. Kim Yeonghwan, the former associate director of [Grassroots House Peace Museum](#) who describes the peace and reconciliation programs that the Museum sponsors.

Both museums are privately funded and modest in size. One may perhaps call them micro museums, as their exhibition spaces are limited. What is noteworthy, however, is that both museums display artifacts that preserve memories of the victims of Japan's colonialism and devastating atrocities during the Asia-Pacific War; that is, the war that began in 1931 when Imperial Japan invaded Manchuria, and ended with Japan's defeat in 1945. The Women's Active Museum is dedicated to the women forced into sexual slavery. The displays of the Grassroots House Peace Museum relate not only to the so-called comfort women, but also to Japanese atrocities in China, such as the Nanjing Massacre. Both museums often organize public forums to educate the public about the atrocities committed by the Japanese state during the war.



Women's Active Museum on War and Peace



Grassroots House Peace Museum

The fact that these museums candidly address Japanese colonialism and wartime atrocities makes them by no means unique in Japan. From the late 1980s until the late 1990s, Japan witnessed the establishment of many such museums, both public and private, that more or less characterized Imperial Japan as a perpetrator of criminal wrongs. But the opinions expressed by these museums are not shared by all. Certainly, Japan has a number of war museums that either avoid questioning Japan's war responsibility or actually glorify the sacrifices of the soldiers who fought for the Japanese empire.

According to one study, more than 220 museums in Japan deal, in whole or in part, with the wars that Japan fought between 1868 and 1945.[1] The majority of these museums concern the Asia-Pacific War. The impressive number of diverse museums devoted to the Asia-Pacific War suggests that Japanese society has yet to achieve a consensus on the history and memory of the war. To put that matter more precisely, in recent years it has become more difficult and more controversial than in the immediate postwar years to build a consensus on the war among Japan's residents.

In the past, the extremely strong anti-war sentiment that prevailed in Japanese society left little room for pro-Imperial revisionists to popularize their accounts among the public. Although strong anti-war sentiment still appears to be dominant, revisionist accounts that tend to whitewash wartime atrocities and colonialism have lately found a significant audience, particularly among Japanese youth. With revisionist claims gaining popularity, the ideological clash between museums that lament or condemn the war and those that exalt and glorify militarism arguably merits more attention than ever before. The struggle concerns not only the best way to expose the museum-going public to historical events; it is also, in a significant sense, a contest to refashion the conscience of a nation.

I would like to examine the changing role of the [Yushukan War Museum](#), a symbol of Japan's wartime militarism, in public education both during the war and the postwar, as well as its position within the broader context of Japanese museum culture.



Yushukan War Museum

II. Yushukan During the Asia-Pacific War

During the Asia-Pacific War, a culture of militarism prevailed in Japanese society. Many Japanese supported the war effort in Asia and the Pacific, and the popularity of the Yasukuni Shrine's Yushukan War Museum reflected the social and political context of the time. The Yushukan War Museum originally opened to the public in 1882. After a devastating earthquake in Tokyo destroyed much of the museum 1923, a newly constructed Yushukan opened in 1932. Two years later, an additional building, the National Defense Hall, was added to the museum complex. Whereas Yushukan proper was essentially an ordinary war museum that displayed artifacts such as swords, military uniforms, and weapons captured from the empire's military adversaries, the National Defense Hall was a hands-on amusement facility that enabled visitors to experience what modern warfare was like. The visitors were invited to sit in the cockpit of a bomber, operate a miniature tank with radio controls, and fire an air rifle at a target. The highlight of the Defense Hall was a "gas experience room" where visitors wore gas masks and were exposed to tear gas. *Boy's Club*, a popular monthly magazine for children, described the Defense Hall as follows:

Inside the Defense Hall, new modern weapons, such as a tank, search light, machine gun and bomber, are exhibited. The display includes a huge panoramic diorama that depicts a future war and an impressive mechanical device that appears to drop bombs from the sky. Among all the exhibits, a particularly unique feature is the gas experience room. The room will be filled with a gas that irritates your eyes, causing a cascade of tears. When you enter the room wearing a gas mask, you will clearly learn the power of gas and the

effect of a gas mask. Everyone enjoys the experiments in the Defense Hall, and it has become extremely popular [among children].[2]

Indeed, the Yushukan complex was popular. Following Japan's 1931 invasion of Manchuria, it received more than a half million visitors annually. Its popularity further increased after the war against China commenced in 1937. In 1938, more than 1.4 million people, including some 225,000 students, visited the museum complex, whereas in 1940 the museum welcomed nearly 1.9 million visitors, including 161,000 students.[3]

III. Yushukan in the Postwar Years

After Japan's defeat in 1945, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers ordered the closing of the Yushukan War Museum, including the National Defense Hall. Only in 1961 did a limited number of exhibits begin to be displayed once more at the museum. In 1986, after a thorough restoration, the whole of the Yushukan War Museum was reopened to the public, though visitors were no longer able to don gas masks, fire air rifles, sit in the cockpit of a bomber, or drop simulated bombs on imagined foes. In 2002, the museum was again renovated and further expanded.



Zero fighter displayed in the Yushukan

The changes seem intended to make the museum more visually appealing to young visitors. Nevertheless, from its opening in July 2002 through May 2003, only 226,000 people visited the museum.[4] The Yushukan War Museum has not regained its wartime popularity even to this day.

In the immediate postwar years, anti-war sentiment was particularly strong. Even sixty years after the end of war, anti-war feeling is still relatively strong in Japan. Throughout the postwar years, anti-war museums such as the [Hiroshima Peace Museum](#) and [the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum](#) achieved enormous popularity. In recent years, for example, more than 1.5 million

people have visited the Hiroshima Peace Museum annually, while the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum welcomes approximately 1 million people every year.[5]

The Hiroshima and Nagasaki museums were among the earliest anti-war museums in postwar Japan. In 1949 a modest exhibition of the effects of the atomic bomb opened in Hiroshima. In 1955, another atomic bomb museum opened in Nagasaki. In 1967, Maruki Iri and Toshi, artists who lost family members in the attack on Hiroshima, opened their [anti-war art gallery in Saitama](#), exhibiting their murals commemorating the atomic bombings.



Maruki Gallery houses Hiroshima murals

Until the 1980s most anti-war museums focused on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Taken out of context, this emphasis may not seem to illustrate clearly a broad anti-war feeling on the part of the Japanese public. The full story is more complex, since other anti-war expressions in Japan have long displayed a national consciousness of Imperial Japan as an aggressor. In the 1950s, for example, the Japan-China Friendship Association (Nit-Chu Yuko Kyokai) excavated remains of the forced laborers who died in Hanaoka, sent them to the People's Republic of China, and built a monument to remember the victims and atone for the atrocity.[6]



Monument in Hanaoka to eternal peace between Japan and China, erected 1966

In 1965, Park Kyong Sik, a Korean-born historian who moved to Japan in 1929 at the age of seven, published a monograph that examined the forced mobilization of Koreans--the first major study of Korean forced labor to become available in postwar Japan.[7] Nevertheless, since the death of fishermen exposed to nuclear fallout at Bikini atoll in 1954, anti-nuclear activism largely prevailed in the nation. It was not until the 1970s that those who called attention to Japan's wartime role as a perpetrator began to receive considerable notice from the public.

America's war in Vietnam and Japan's normalization with the People's Republic of China in 1972 signaled what are arguably the two major turning points in the historiography and memory of the Asia-Pacific War. From the early 1970s, many more accounts by and about survivors of Japanese atrocities in China and Korea became available in Japan. This trend was echoed in museum presentations. It was in 1970 that the Marukis, the painters of the atomic-bomb murals, came to see themselves not only as victims of Hiroshima, but also as parties to Japan's wartime aggression and colonialism. Although they had not enthusiastically supported the war effort in the 1930s and the 40s, the Marukis felt that they shared responsibility with Japan's wartime leaders for the crimes committed by the Japanese state. In 1975, they completed ["The Rape of Nanking," a 13 by 26 foot mural that illustrates atrocities committed by the Japanese military in Nanjing in 1937-38.](#) In the painting, the artists portrayed soldiers beheading a Chinese prisoner and raping women. Dead bodies and various body parts are strewn all over the painting. Students visit the Marukis' gallery to learn the importance of peace, and the painting has a particularly strong impact on many young visitors.[8]

Between the late 1980s and the mid-1990s, in the run up to the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Asia-Pacific War, museums that displayed the sufferings inflicted by Japanese militarism on

peoples in Asia and the Pacific flourished. In 1988, a public museum that remembers both Japanese and non-Japanese victims of Japan's chemical warfare was opened on Okuno Island in Hiroshima, where chemical weapons were produced during the war. In 1989, high school biology teacher Nishimori Shigeo opened Grass Roots House Peace Museum in Kochi. In 1992, Ritsumeikan University, a private university in Kyoto, erected [the International Peace Museum](#), whose artifacts point to the responsibility of ordinary people for the Asia Pacific War; its featured displays include images of civilians on the home front reveling in the fall of Nanjing in December 1937.



Kyoto Museum for World Peace, Ritsumeikan University

In 1993, Saitama Prefecture opened [the Saitama Prefecture Peace Museum](#). For many years in Nagasaki, a Protestant minister and city assembly man named Oka Masaharu advocated the importance of remembering the victims of Japanese colonialism and atrocities. After his death in 1994, city residents who shared his views succeeded in opening the Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum. The displayed photographs and other materials are meant to remind visitors of the lives of forced laborers and sex slaves from China and Korea, as well as Japanese atrocities in China and other parts of Asia.



Oka Masaharu Memorial Nagasaki Peace Museum

In the mid and late 1990s, pro-Imperialist revisionists became more visible in Japanese society. The establishment of numerous peace museums was one stimulus that prompted revisionists to speak out aggressively and to combat the trend toward national self-criticism that they branded as masochistic and inimical to the cultivation of national pride among the youth. By the late 1990s, Japanese bookstores were stocked with revisionist accounts that glorified sacrifices made by Japanese soldiers, denied the wholesale atrocities in Nanjing, exaggerated the beneficial influence of Japan on its former colonies, and argued that “comfort women” were willing prostitutes rather than sex slaves.[9]

By the late 1990s, the construction of public museums that critically evaluated Japan’s colonialism and aggression noticeably slowed, and most of the new museums that were established avoided controversies. A symbolic case was a dispute over the first national peace memorial, which was eventually named the Showa Hall (<http://www.showakan.go.jp/>).



Showa Hall

The Ministry of Health and Welfare initially intended the memorial to commemorate only the 3.5 million Japanese war dead. However, the Communist and the Socialist parties urged that the memorial should acknowledge the devastations and destructions inflicted on other Asian countries by the Japanese empire.[10] The resulting compromise is a facility that commemorates the suffering of all Japanese both during and immediately after the war and exhibits artifacts with

as few explanations as possible to avoid any controversy. The museum library carefully balances its collection to present different perspectives of the Asia Pacific War, varying from arguments that the war contributed to liberating Asia to studies that detail and decry Japan's wartime atrocities.

IV. Conclusion

Although revisionist accounts of the war have gained popularity among youth in recent years, the Yushukan has yet to regain its wartime popularity. Indeed, the museum itself is aware that its perspective currently represents a challenge to, rather than an expression of, mainstream public opinion. The newly renovated Yushukan that opened in 2002 has two major goals: the first is to honor the war dead who sacrificed themselves for the state, and the second is to communicate an allegedly "true" history to counter the fact that Japanese education in the postwar era emphasized Japan's wartime wrongdoings.[11] The museum articulates the position that the "Greater East Asian War" contributed to liberating Asia and that the war was not an act of imperialist aggression.

To understand the politics of Yushukan, one needs to recognize a shared feeling among many veterans in postwar Japan. In 1988, for example, Kawano Kiichi established [a small private museum](#) to honor the memory of the 2,500 students at the Naval Preparatory Flying School who died while committing suicide attacks during the war. In the eyes of Kawano, who also attended the school, Japan's postwar education has unfairly demonized all those who took up arms for Japan.

He has argued that many of the youth he called friends earnestly desired to serve and protect their homeland, but Japanese society in the postwar period has largely disregarded these noble sacrifices because Japan waged an aggressive war.[12]

Perhaps the revisionist campaigns of the late 1990s were so successful because they appealed to those frustrated with the self-critical tone of postwar history education in Japan. Yushukan will no doubt continue to publicize its message of the revisionist perceptions through its exhibits. It would not be surprising if museums similar to Yushukan open in Japan in the near future. But museums that highlight Japanese colonialism and aggression could also be built in the future. Will the myriad museums, with their profoundly different messages, contribute to reconciliation in East Asia?

I would argue that they will. In order to accomplish reconciliation, it is urgent for Japanese society to continue candid discussion of the meaning of the Asia-Pacific War. These museums will continue to provide opportunities for visitors to realize that the need for building consensus is an urgent matter for Japan. Visitors would be wise to consider that the issues concerning the history and memory of the Asia-Pacific War have ramifications beyond Japan. To the extent that Japan fails to settle its history problems, it will continue to cause needless friction in its relations with neighboring countries and the United States.

Notes:

[1] Terabayashi Nobuaki, "'Nihon no hakubutsukan ni okeru Meiji-ki iko no senso kankei shi tenji no genkyo to kokusai kankei ninshiki no kadai ni tsuite' ni kansuru hakubutsukan ankêto chosa ichiran" (A Survey of Museum Exhibitions Regarding "Contemporary Exhibits of the

History of Wars Since the Meiji Period in Japanese Museums and Their Perceptions of International Relations”). This report, funded by the Japanese government, was printed in 2004.

[2] “The National Defense Hall: A Newly Opened Museum in Kudan Where You Can Learn Everything about Weapons,” *Boy’s Club* 21:6 (June 1934), p. 37.

[3] Yasukuni jinja Yushukan, *Yushukanshi* (The History of the Yushukan), 1938, p. 477. Yasukuni jinja Yushukan, *Yushukan* (The Yushukan War Musuem), 1941, p. 23.

[4] Ohara Yasuo, *Yasukuni jinja Yushukan no sekai* (The World of Yasukuni Shrine’s Yushukan War Museum), p. 96.

[5] Toshifumi Murakami, “The Role which Peace Museums Should Play,” in *Exhibiting Peace: The Proceedings of the Third International Conference of Peace Museums*, ed. Ritsumeikan University, 1999, p. 50.

[6] Hanaoka no chi Nit-Chu fusaisen yukohi o mamorukai (Association to Preserve the Hanaoka Monument in the Name of Friendship and Peace with China), *Hanaoka jiken goju shunen kikanshi* (A Booklet Commemorating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Hanaoka Incident, pp. 191-209).

[7] Park Kyong Sik, *Chosenjin kyosei renko no kiroku* (Record of Forced Mobilizations of Koreans), (Tokyo: Miraisha, 1965).

[8] See, for example, Jon Junkerman, *Hellfire: A Journey from Hiroshima* (First Run Features, 1986), a 58 minutes DVD.

[9] See, for example, Fujioka, Nobukatsu and Nishio Kanji, *Kokumin no yudan* (Negligence of the Nation), (Tokyo: PHP kenkyujo, 1996). Kobayashi Yoshinori, *Sensoron* (On War), (Tokyo: Gentosha, 1998).

[10] Tanaka Nobumasa, *Senso no kioku* (Memory of the War), (Tokyo: Rokufu shuppan), pp. 246-95.

[11] A leaflet titled “Invitation to the Society of the Friends of the Yushukan” (Yushukan tomo no kai no shiori), available at the Yushukan in 2003.

[12] See a statement on the museum website [here](#).

Takashi Yoshida is assistant professor of history at Western Michigan University and author of The Making of the “Rape of Nanking”: History and Memory in Japan, China, and the United States.

Heroic Resistance and Victims of Atrocity: Negotiating the Memory of Japanese Imperialism in Chinese Museums

Kirk A. Denton

Abstract

This essay explores representations of Japanese imperialism and war in museums of the People's Republic of China. With the post-Mao reforms, there has been a general trend in such representations toward an emphasis on atrocity and victimization and away from the narratives of heroic resistance that dominated in the Mao era. Yet, the museum curators in these museums must negotiate between these two representations in trying to make the war relevant to a young audience generally more attracted to the pleasures of popular culture than history museums.

Any historical narrative is founded as much on forgetting as it is on remembering, and the narrative of resistance and liberation that is central to the mythology of the Chinese communist revolution in the People's Republic of China (PRC) has forgotten much—most obviously the role of the Nationalists in resistance and, especially in light of new forms of memory that have emerged in the post-Mao liberalization, Japanese atrocities. Even before 1949, the leftist political world was uncomfortable with representations of Japanese atrocities. Ken Sekine has argued that Ah Long's *Nanjing* (completed 1939), perhaps the first novel to deal in some detail with the Nanjing Massacre, was suppressed because its narrative did not fit neatly the heroic mode of literature being promoted in Chongqing during the war.[1] After 1949, in an effort to build an image of a strong and unified nation, propaganda and party historiography emphasized the heroic victory of the war and the subsequent revolution. War and revolutionary martyrs were worshipped for their noble sacrifice to the nation, but victims of atrocities—the “rape of Nanjing” or the medical experiments led by the infamous Unit 731 of the Japanese Imperial Army—did not fit well this prevailing heroic narrative.

Historiography of the Nanjing Massacre was consciously suppressed during the Maoist period.[2] Mark Eykholt explains that in the postrevolutionary period there was an official silence about the Nanjing Massacre and other forms of Japanese atrocities because of a desire to promote national pride and, in the later years of the Cultural Revolution, of a fear of losing much needed Japanese economic assistance.[3] References to the Nanjing Massacre that appeared during the Maoist era were motivated by a desire to make the Nationalists in Taiwan look bad. Ian Buruma suggests two reasons for this Maoist silence about Japanese atrocities.[4] First, there were no Communists in the Nationalist capital when the massacre occurred; almost all the soldiers who died in Nanjing were Nationalists. Second, Buruma argues that the eventual emergence of narratives of atrocities and victimization in the post-Mao period has something to do with generations: Those who suffer real historical trauma tend to want to forget it; it is the next generation, removed from the actual suffering, that does the remembering and develops what he calls a “pseudoreligion of victimhood.”[5] Finally, the United States government, which supported the Japanese postwar regime and allowed the emperor to maintain his position, is also implicated in the silence surrounding Japanese atrocities during the war.[6]

In the PRC, Deng Xiaoping's economic reform program and the liberalization in arts and culture undermined the very ideology with which Chinese on the mainland had identified for three decades, space was opened for new forms of remembering the past and new forms of social identification.[7] In the immediate aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, the Wounds (*shanghen*)

trend in literature, film, and art initiated a general culture of victimhood in China. In the 1980s, historians and journalists such as Dai Qing critiqued elements of the revolutionary past once considered sacred and untouchable.[8]

In more recent years, the fast-paced market economy has forged a world that is radically at odds with the ideals embodied in standard revolutionary history. In a world in which entrepreneurship is glorified and trendy products define one's identity—in the urban world of “bobos” and “neo-tribes”[9]—the revolutionary values of self-sacrifice and national collective spirit ring hollow and false. And yet, in a market economy in which migrant workers are treated as second-class citizens, peasants live in abject poverty, and the division between rich and poor is gaping, the class struggle message of revolutionary history is potentially threatening to the new state ideology. Forms of memory that downplay class struggle and emphasize national unity through shared suffering serve the state well in a new consumer economy founded on class distinction. Depictions of Japanese atrocities are morally unambiguous and serve to direct divisive class resentments toward an external other; national unity and shared national sentiment grow out of this “othering” of Japan. When China's economy and culture increasingly merged with the global and its “identity” became murkier, a nationalist reaction was almost inevitable. As the state's function shifts to facilitating transnational capital, the nation-building function falls into other hands. Arif Dirlik puts it this way: “Where World War II is concerned, memories of the past serve to promote nationalism that, weakened in organization by developments in capitalism, finds in the realm of culture and past existence a means both to perpetuate and to preserve a contemporary status quo that is very much in jeopardy.”[10]

Since the 1990s, the discourse surrounding the War of Resistance has shifted away from the place of Japanese imperialism in the temporal narrative of liberation and nation-state building toward an obsessive attention to China's victimization at the hands of the Japanese; tragic tales of horror are displacing, though by no means replacing, the heroic narrative of resistance. Peter Gries has detected, in popular historiography and other forms of intellectual discourse in the PRC, a shift from a “victor narrative” to a “victim narrative” that took place from the 1980s to the 1990s, though he is careful to show that the two can sometimes coexist uneasily.[11] This attention to victimization serves more than just nationalist purposes; it has ethical and economic implications. China seeks a kind of moral upper hand in Asia in its economic and political competition with Japan; it wants to offer a model for a third kind of economic development in Asia, and its history of Japanese imperialism, which it shares with many other Asian nations, helps legitimize its leadership. The Chinese government's desire to assert an economic and political leadership position in Asia emerged clearly in the spring 2005 conflict over Japan's ascension to the UN Security Council. As one commentator put it, the tensions between China and Japan over history may have “to do more with the future than the past.”[12]

Museums and memorials have played an important role in this move toward a discourse of victimization. In this essay, I look at four important museums / memorial sites devoted to Japanese imperialism and to atrocities committed by the imperial army: Memorial Hall of the People's War of Resistance Against Japan (*Zhongguo renmin kangRi zhanzheng jinianguan*), Memorial to Victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders (*QinHua Rijun Nanjing datusha yunan tongbao jinianguan*), Crime Evidence Exhibition Hall of Japanese Imperial Army Unit 731 (*QinHua Rijun di qisanyao budui zuizheng chenlieguan*), and September 18 History Museum (*Jiuyiba lishi bowuguan*).[13] All four museums were established in the 1980s and 1990s. In their emphasis on atrocity and horror, they present something that is new in the

exhibitionary representation of Japanese imperialism in China and constitute an important dimension in the larger new remembering of World War II and the gradual shift away from narratives in which class struggle plays a key role. With their emphasis on atrocity, these museums fit loosely into Gries's victim narrative, and they are at least partly the product of the rise of neonationalism in the PRC and particularly of the anti-Japanese strain of nationalism.[14]

"Not forgetting" (*wu wang*) history, in particular that aspect of history that is a source of "national humiliation" (*guo chi*), is a theme found throughout these museums. The historical overview section of the War of Resistance Museum, for example, ends with Zhou Enlai's famous phrase "to not forget the past is to be master of the future" (*qian shi bu wang, hou shi zhi shi*).[15] The phrase appears again at the very beginning of the Unit 731 Museum. Admonitions to "not forget" history frame the September 18 History Museum. "Not forgetting national humiliation" is a common theme in modern Chinese culture dating back at least to the Republican era, when intellectuals urged others to recall the memories of humiliation, particularly that inflicted by Japanese imperialism.[16] In the 1990s, intellectuals and the state conspired in a similar fashion to urge average Chinese not to forget national humiliation because people were indeed forgetting.[17]

National humiliation is a powerful emotional hook with which to bring citizens back into the nationalist fold from which the experiences of their daily lives in a harsh economic climate may be leading them away. Paul Cohen writes:

In the final decade of the twentieth century, the problem with respect to the remembering of national humiliation assumed yet another guise. For the great majority of Chinese at the century's end the humiliations of the past were no longer a matter of immediate, personal experience. Since an important source of legitimation for China's ruling Communist Party was its part in the vanquishing of imperialism in the 1940s—and the closure this brought to the country's "century of humiliation"—the challenge facing patriotic educators, in the climate of revived nationalistic feeling and weakened faith in Communism that characterized the 1990s, was to fill the minds of the young with narratives of the suffering and humiliation of the imperialist interval in China's history and entreat them to "not forget." Indeed, "do not forget"—*wu wang*—became the mantra of the *guochi* writing of this decade.[18]

In short, the obsessive attention to "not forgetting" suggests the past's fall into oblivion. The heroic revolutionary past is increasingly at odds with the lives of urban residents caught up in the struggles of the market economy. The emotionality of atrocities is one way the state can forge national cohesion without stressing the potentially subversive message of revolutionary class struggle that was until very recently so central to its legitimizing myths.[19]

With the decline of the narrative of revolution, which dominated many museums in Maoist and early post-Mao times, new modes of identification are taking its place. James Edward Young writes that memorials and monuments—museums could be easily added to this list—are used by the state to "create a common memory, as a foundation for a unified polis." [20] State memory and individual memory converge, and the individual is made to feel at a deeply personal level a unity with the national community. The museums I analyze here clearly participate in this emotionally charged state-sponsored nationalism. The emotional dimension is not entirely missing from other kinds of museums in earlier modes of exhibitions, but it seems clear that in their emphasis on the suffering of the Chinese body there is a shift with these museums toward

affective response. These museums fuel nationalist sentiment, and the trauma of the past gets channeled toward an enemy and expressed in patriotic rage. The museums link together lost territory and the physical suffering of the Chinese body politic. This specular attention to the suffering of one's fellow Chinese is a hook the state can use to "create a common memory, as a foundation for a unified polis." As such, these museums are part of a larger move in museums of modern history in the PRC away from messages of class struggle (or the unity of class struggle and national resistance), which can potentially be turned against the state in the context of market reforms and the reemergence of class divisions, toward more nationalistic themes.[21] In recent years, the idea of a common memory of resistance to Japan has been used to forge historical links between Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the mainland and thereby draw attention to their shared identity and political destiny. In the fall of 2005, the National Museum of China put on the much-publicized Exhibition on the Anti-Japanese Resistance Struggle of Our Taiwan Compatriots (*Taiwan tongbao kangri douzheng zhanlan*) (fig. 1), and the place of Taiwan resistance is much more prominent in the 2005 renovated exhibit at the War of Resistance Memorial Hall than it was in the museum's previous exhibit.



Sign at the entranceway of the Anti-Japanese Resistance Struggle of Our Taiwan Compatriots exhibit, held at the National Museum of China in 2005

But victimization, emphasis on "not forgetting," and national cohesion through sentiment are perhaps inadequate as framing devices through which to fully account for the emergence of these museums and this exhibitionary mode of visualizing horror and atrocities. The memory of Japanese imperialism and atrocities presented in these museums is more complex and the influences on it more multiple. Caught as they are between official (state), popular, and global museum forces, it is not surprising that these museums sometimes present conflicted views. To emphasize atrocity and victimization is a way to gain more legitimacy for the nation in its continued struggle with Japan over the past, as Gries argues, as well as over present economic might in Asia. Yet the discourse of victimization suggests a view of the Chinese people as passive and powerless, a view that does not sit well with present Chinese pretensions to national greatness. Moreover, overemphasizing victimization can serve to undermine CCP narratives of national resistance, which continue to be important parts of mainstream representations of the

revolutionary past. The heroic resistance model, conversely, ties in with a view of Chinese national character as strong, but it also suggests an outmoded ideology irrelevant to China's globalizing present and future. Museums devoted to Japanese imperialism must find ways to negotiate between these discourses.

Museum curators also struggle to balance the integrity of their exhibitions with new technologies that are also vehicles for the vibrant popular culture in the world outside the museum walls and that bring with them new modes of spectatorship and relationships with history. From the perspective of museum curators, the emphasis on atrocities and horror in these museums is perhaps motivated as much by a need to accommodate popular culture as by victim narratives and anti-Japanese nationalism. Atrocities make for good visual copy, allowing museums to compete with popular culture for the minds—and yuan—of the people. Atrocities offer a kind of voyeuristic pleasure to visitors that may not be unlike that of watching horror films. In these museums, the archival and documentary impulse, exhibited through “authentic artifacts” and photographs, competes with newer technologies designed to popularize the message. Drawing from Susan Sontag, we might suggest that museums of Japanese atrocities serve ultimately to numb the senses to horror, creating a need for even greater visual stimulation.[22] The modern Chinese writer Lu Xun (1881–1936) would no doubt concur; like the morally indifferent spectators of the execution in the slide that changed his career, visitors to museums of horror might derive pleasure from the viewing of suffering. Popular and visual culture would seem to have led museums inevitably toward emphasizing visual depictions of horror and its pleasures.

The remembering and re-remembering of World War II are, of course, not something peculiar to the PRC; it is a vast international enterprise. Ken Burns's recently broadcast film documentary, *The War*, is but the tip of the iceberg of a mammoth industry of recollecting the war in the West. Museums and memorial sites are an important part of this remembering. There are, for instances, hundreds of museums worldwide devoted to the Holocaust.[23] Many more offer overviews of the war (e.g., the National World War II Museum, New Orleans), commemorate specific battles (e.g., Museum of the Battle of the Bulge, La Roche, Belgium), or offer alternative memories of the war (e.g., Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles). The new memories of the war in the PRC must be seen also in the larger context of the “new remembering” of the war throughout Asia, where political changes have opened up space for new forms of representing the war.[24] In Hong Kong, for example, perhaps both influenced by trends on the mainland and motivated by a new-found sense of local pride, museums and memorial sites, such as the Museum of Coastal Defence, have recently emphasized in their exhibits Hong Kong's heroic resistance against the Japanese, particularly that of the Hong Kong-Kowloon Independent Company (aka Dongjiang Guerilla Force) and the Hong Kong Volunteers. In Taiwan, the question of resistance during the war is closely intertwined with identity politics. Exhibitions that take a KMT Sino-centric approach (e.g., National Military Museum in Taipei) tend to emphasize resistance activities; those that lean toward the DPP and its notions of Taiwanese identity (e.g., February 28 Museum in Taipei) tend to have a much more favorable view of Japanese occupation and therefore place less stress on resistance.

Chinese atrocity museums and their exhibitions are influenced by global trends in memorializing the past,[25] and in particular by Holocaust museums and the global rise of victimization narratives, as well as by changes in how World War II is being remembered globally. Buruma points out that at least some of the impetus behind recent PRC remembering of Japanese atrocities has been spurred by efforts in the Chinese diaspora community, especially in the

United States.[26] There is certainly evidence to suggest that Chinese museum and memorial designers and curators were highly conscious of the precedent of Holocaust museums and thought of their projects in terms of global remembering of human tragedies. Qi Kang, for instance, compares his design of the Nanjing Massacre Museum to Holocaust museums in the West.[27] The editor of a book about the Unit 731 Crimes Evidence Exhibition Hall links the Nanjing Massacre, Auschwitz, and the activities of Unit 731.[28] This linking of atrocities on Chinese soil with those committed in Nazi Germany suggests a way out of the bind that has characterized Chinese views of Japanese atrocities.[29] That horror has occurred elsewhere and that this horror is memorialized in museums around the world somehow makes it all right for Chinese to make public this shameful chapter in their past. It also gives legitimacy to their historical claims vis-à-vis Japanese denials: If it is not acceptable to deny the Holocaust, it is also not acceptable for people to deny the Nanjing Massacre or the experiments at Unit 731.

Victimization narratives are thus not unique to China. “In a curious way,” writes Ian Buruma, “the Jewish Holocaust has been an inspiration for others. For almost every community, be it a nation or a religious or ethnic or sexual minority, has a bone to pick with history. All have suffered wrongs, and to an increasing and in my view alarming extent, all want these wrongs to be recognized, publicly, ritually, and sometimes financially.”[30] In short, the emergence of atrocity museums and the memory of suffering must be looked at not solely in terms of the emergence of neonationalism and victim narratives; equally significant in shaping the memory of this past are global trends in museology and the changing technology of museum display and its relation to popular culture.

Mao Era Museums and Their Treatment of the War of Resistance Against Japan

To set the context for appreciating the post-Mao changes in how the War of Resistance Against Japan is represented, it might be helpful to first see how the war was depicted in the Mao-era in general and Mao-era museums in particular. The war played a key role in the narrative of the communist revolution propagated in the PRC. The war years have been portrayed as the pivotal period in the revolutionary movement that allowed the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to emerge from the shadows and become a legitimate claimant to political hegemony in China. And because Mao Zedong wrote most of his theoretical works during the war, the period (as well as the place where the party spent most of it—Yan’an) has also been presented as the sacred origins of Mao Zedong Thought, which dominated the ideological realm of the PRC from its founding in 1949 to Mao’s death in 1976. During the war itself, rhetoric of resistance to Japan gave the CCP legitimacy in its struggle for political control with the Nationalist Party. In the postrevolutionary period, the war occupied a critical place in CCP narratives of modern Chinese history—as the denouement, if you like, in the transformation from feudal darkness and imperialist humiliation to enlightenment and national sovereignty, the war was central to shaping the party’s role in the liberational tale that was key to its legitimizing mythology.[31]

The centrality of the war period is apparent in a variety of cultural forms, perhaps most obviously films.[32] But one need go no further than the Chinese national anthem to find the importance of the war to CCP legitimizing narratives.[33] Although written in 1935 before the outbreak of the war, the song was something of a rallying cry for national resistance during the war. As the national anthem in the postrevolutionary period, it expresses both “liberation” rhetoric (“you who refuse to be slaves”) and the theme of “unity” in the struggle for national

sovereignty (“millions of hearts with one mind”). The war becomes, in these and other examples, the pivotal period in the narrative of liberation and the establishment of a national polity.[34]

In the Military Museum and the Museum of the Chinese Revolution (both developed in the late 1950s and opened to the public in 1961), the war constitutes an important stage in the larger story of the victory of the revolution. In these representations, the war is a pivotal period in the history of the revolutionary movement because it led to the emergence of the CCP as the legitimate political force on the national scene. Atrocities are displayed, but they occupy a very minor part in the larger narrative, which is centered on the role of the CCP, battles in which its armies engaged, and the CCP-led popular resistance.

Typical of Maoist museum and memorial representations of the war is the Northeast Martyrs Memorial Hall.



Front façade of the Northeast Martyrs Memorial Hall

Founded in 1948, it is perhaps the oldest such memorial hall in the PRC. It celebrates the sacrifices of those who lost their lives in the Northeast theater of the struggle against the Japanese. Until its recent closing for renovation, the museum comprised two main sections, one devoted to the War of Resistance and the other to the War of Liberation (i.e., civil war with the Nationalists). To my knowledge, it did not touch on atrocities such as the medical experiments committed by Unit 731 or biological warfare. Rather, it emphasized the struggle of heroic martyrs such as Yang Jingyu, Zhao Yiman, and Li Zhaolin. When I visited in the summer of 2004, the museum’s basic exhibit (*jiben chenlie*) was closed because of a planned renovation.[35] In its

place was a temporary exhibit that gives a brief overview of the Northeast theater during the War of Resistance. This temporary exhibit offers a sense of what the former basic exhibit must have looked like. It strongly emphasizes the resistance narrative and the heroic sacrifices of revolutionary and patriotic martyrs. It ends on a celebratory note, with paintings and bronze reliefs devoted to liberation and “turning over” (*fanshen*).

In the basement of the museum, however, was a new temporary exhibit called Crimes in the Light of Day: The Chemical Warfare Crimes of the Invading Japanese Army. The special exhibit was filled with gruesome photographs of piles of dead children, severed heads, and bodies disfigured by gas attacks.

The language of the placards is emotional. For example, the title of the second part of the exhibit is Diabolical Evil, Madness Enacted (*qiongxiong ji'e, fengkuang shishi*). The exhibit ends with the exhortation: "Don't forget national humiliation, revitalize China" (*wuwang guochi, zhenxing Zhonghua*), set on a collage of images of a strong industrial and military China.[36] The example of the Northeast Martyrs Memorial Hall shows us two modes of narrating Japanese imperialism: an older narrative that stresses the glorious memory of resistance and heroic sacrifice; and a new narrative of horror, atrocity, and victimization that is explicitly connected to China's future as a strong nation.



One of many photographs depicting the horrific consequences of Japanese chemical weapons in a special exhibit in the Northeast Martyrs Memorial Hall, Harbin

Memorial Hall of the People's War of Resistance Against the Japanese

The Memorial Hall of the Chinese People's Resistance Against Japan (hence, War of Resistance Museum) shows perhaps most prominently this same tension between the heroic resistance and horror and victimization narratives. The museum is situated in Wanping near the famous Lugou Bridge (referred to in English as the Marco Polo Bridge).[37] The museum was constructed in three stages (first stage completed in 1987, second stage in 1997). A third transformation, in honor of the sixtieth anniversary of the victory of the war, took place over the summer of 2005. Contrary to what I expected, the new exhibit, entitled Great Victory, downplays atrocity and places a new emphasis on the war as a key part of the larger global anti-fascist struggle; the war thus becomes a pivotal period in China's emergence as a global power.[38] I focus here are on the exhibitions during the museum's second stage. Because it is directly under the auspices of the Central Committee and the City of Beijing, the museum has solid financial backing and has become something of a national center for remembering the War of Resistance as well as for the promotion, somewhat ironically, of Sino-Japanese friendship.

In its second phase, the museum consisted of five principal exhibits. First are comprehensive exhibits, which present a chronological history of Japanese imperialism in China and Chinese resistance to it; these exhibits constitute the largest part of the museum and are displayed in several halls divided into multiple exhibition spaces. The style of display here is conventional, with photographs, texts, and artifacts used to tell a chronological narrative of imperialism and resistance. Second is the Japanese Army Atrocities exhibit, which includes displays on the Nanjing Massacre, use of poisonous gas, and medical experiments. Here the mode of exhibition emphasizes dioramas and recreated scenes. Third are the People's War exhibits, showing the heroic resistance of the Chinese people, with an actual tunnel simulating "tunnel warfare." Fourth is the Battle for Lugou Bridge diorama hall. And fifth is the Anti-Japanese Martyrs exhibit. The spectator is generally expected to view the exhibits in this prescribed order.

The museum shows elements of both the victor and victim narratives, but they are generally treated separately, suggesting the difficulty the curators faced in integrating them into a coherent whole. The Japanese Army Atrocities exhibit is primarily in the victim mode, whereas the victor

narrative dominates the comprehensive exhibits and the People's War exhibit. The museum is thus fundamentally divided between a conventional emphasis on the CCP's heroic resistance to Japanese imperialism and an attention to atrocities and to suffering of the physical body. The comprehensive exhibits present a rather conventional view of the history of Japanese imperialism and Chinese resistance. To be sure, as Mitter discusses in detail, these exhibits differ from previous representations of the war in drawing attention to the Nationalist role and the role of overseas Chinese, emphasizing in the process patriotism above political ideology; but the CCP's role still dominates this representation.[39] The exhibit opens with a prefatory text set between ceiling-to-floor size photographs, one of the raging Yellow River, the other of a misty mountain scene—signifiers, clearly, of Chinese national territory. In the exhibits proper, the main narrative thread is that of CCP resistance, with large photos of Mao in his cave in Yan'an, oil paintings glorifying the CCP-led Hundred Regiments Campaign, and exhibits on the “people's resistance.”

The People's War exhibit resonates strongly with the Maoist narrative, exemplified in Lin Biao's tract referred to at the beginning of this chapter. It emphasizes the primary role of the CCP in establishing bases of resistance, as well as the unity of the party with the people. There is a large, nearly life-size diorama of a northern village, presented as a typical setting for the “tunnel warfare” played up so much in Mao-era films and fiction. There are life-size figures digging tunnels as well as a model of a peasant home that leads to a secret tunnel spectators can walk through. Another exhibit glorifies the resistance of the CCP troops in the Baiyangdian area of Hebei. As a whole, the exhibit symbolizes the cooperation between the party and the people in resistance to the Japanese—a standard CCP representation of the war period. What is different from earlier Maoist representations, of course, is that the museum lacks an emphasis on the foundational influence of Mao Zedong Thought, the third of the characteristics of the war outlined by Lin Biao in 1965. The exhibit ends, predictably, with a collage of photos showing celebrations of “the great victory of the people's war.”

By contrast, the Japanese Army Atrocities Exhibit is dominated by several life-size dioramas of atrocities. One presents a three-dimensional scene of the bloodied bodies of women and children set before a large mural depicting a battlefield strewn with bodies extending far into the distance.



Exhibition space in the Japanese Army Atrocities Hall

In the foreground, the diorama highlights a live child sitting up on the body of his dead mother. A commonplace in Chinese museum representations of horror, the severing of the most basic human bond between mother and child becomes the emotional hook to draw the spectator in. The exhibit also has a gruesome life-size diorama of white-coated Japanese doctors performing medical experiments on Chinese bodies that twitch mechanically. Apart from these eye-catching and dramatic scenes, the exhibit is composed primarily of huge, blown-up photographs giving testimony to Japanese atrocities. The displays draw attention to physical suffering and are meant to provoke emotional responses, including pity and a sense of outrage.

The Battle for Lugou Bridge diorama hall is a small theater with stadium seating. On the curved “screen” in the background is a huge painting of the Lugou Bridge area. In the foreground is a three-dimensional battlefield scene. This is the setting for a twenty-minute show that makes use of recorded narration, lights, and sound effects to bring the battle to life. These sorts of multimedia scenes are increasingly popular in Chinese museums, but this was, to my knowledge, the first. The museum curators developed it quite self-consciously as a response to the popularity, liveliness, and emotive power of other media, particularly television and film. It should be said that this incursion of popular cultural modes into the exhibitionary practice of this museum is rather limited in comparison with other museums, such as the Shanghai Municipal History Museum or even the September 18 History Museum. Moreover, the curators have limited this mode of exhibition to the diorama hall, the Japanese Army Atrocities Exhibit, and the People’s War Exhibit; the comprehensive exhibits, which one could argue are the museum’s basic exhibits, are far more conventional and academic, and the Martyrs Exhibit is vastly more solemn.

The Martyrs Exhibit, which is visually distinct from the rest of the museum, has a religious aura about it. It consists of one large circular room, which one enters through an open vestibule. The vestibule presents four carved reliefs of battle scenes, two on the left and two on the right. As Mitter notes, among the reliefs are a depiction of the five heroes of Langya Mountain, a standard object of worship in CCP historiography, and the heroic Nationalist defense of Haibaoshan. This acknowledgement of Nationalist patriotism in resistance to Japan marks, argues Mitter, a “radical departure from pre-1985 PRC interpretations of the war” and reflects an official state policy of reconciliation toward Taiwan.[40] Yet the ideological use of martyrs for nationalism and national unity is consistent with Maoist myth making. The circular memorial hall has at its center a bronze statue of an unknown soldier, whose fallen body is at once pulled to the great earth and struggling to prop itself up with a gun.[41]



**Unknown soldier in the center of the Martyrs Memorial Hall
in the War of Resistance Museum outside Beijing**

This centerpiece conveys something of the ambiguity of the martyr image in Chinese revolutionary iconography: at once a victim of oppression and a heroic resister who struggles against that oppression, drawn toward death, the past, and the earth, but lifting himself toward life, the sublime, and the future. Martyrs are tied to the past, a memory of that past, but they are also guiding spirits for the future. The statue of the unknown soldier thus embodies the larger tension in the museum's exhibitions between the victory and victim narratives.

Surrounding this statue are fourteen red marble memorial steles (representing the fourteen years, from 1931 to 1945, of resistance to Japan). Below a wreath in relief at the top of the stele are written the names of martyrs—mostly soldiers who died during the war, including such CCP-canonized figures as Zhao Yiman, but also including Nationalist soldiers—along with a brief biography. At the base of each stele is a carving in white marble of an open book containing more names of martyrs. Its circular structure and polished marble floor, and the earthy tones of the steles and the central statue, give the hall a warm yet dignified feel. The carving of the names of martyrs on the polished marble steles recalls the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington, but the circular windowless room creates an enclosed aesthetic that is very different from the open-ended, open-air aesthetic of Maya Lin's memorial. As spectators enter the hall they are enveloped by the names of the martyrs and the memory of their heroic sacrifice. Despite the earthy color of the marble, the overall effect of the hall is colder than the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, lacking the personal dimension that has given that memorial its power. But the memorial hall creates a very serious and somber mood that reflects the kinds of memories the curators no doubt seek to instill in spectators. Whereas the exhibits proper present "documentation" of the past, the Martyrs Memorial Hall asks for a kind of religious reverence and remembrance of those who have sacrificed their lives.

Significantly, the memorial hall commemorates not the victims of the Nanjing Massacre or other atrocities but the heroic fighters against Japanese imperialism. The museum concludes not with the victims of atrocities but with a conventional reverence for the heroes of national resistance. It opens with a similarly heroic and threatening image: a massive bronze relief of soldiers and others who resisted Japanese aggression tellingly titled *Build Our New Great Wall with Our*

Flesh and Blood (*Ba women de xue rou zhucheng women xinde changcheng*), a line from the Chinese national anthem.



Bas relief in the entrance hall of the War of Resistance Museum

Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall: Remembering Horror

The appearance of the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall should be understood in the larger context of post-Mao liberalization and the emergence of new narratives of national identity and nationalism. The idea for a museum dedicated to the Nanjing Massacre dates back to 1983 and was clearly the result of interest in the topic at the highest levels of state government.[42] Qi Kang, a Nanjing-based architect who has made a name for himself designing museums and memorials, was the principal designer of the memorial site. The first part of the museum was completed in 1985 and included the main exhibition hall and the “graveyard grounds.” In 1997, the site was expanded to include a new L-shaped entranceway that created a southern-facing gate and added several impressive sculptures to the memorial site. The site will soon undergo a \$59 million expansion, to be completed in 2007.

Qi Kang sought to create what he calls a “holistic environmental design” (*zhengti huanjing sheji*) rather than a conventional museum building filled with historical artifacts. His goal was to use a “solemn language” (*shenchen de yuyan*) to elicit emotion, and he states that the design was meant to create an “emotional space” (*you ganjue de kongjian*).[43] At the same time as he was working on the Nanjing Massacre Memorial, Qi Kang was designing the Yuhuatai Memorial, also in Nanjing. Whereas the latter memorializes heroic fighters for a noble cause, the former remembers helpless victims of atrocity and therefore required, says Qi, a very different aesthetic.[44] The symmetry and grand design of the Yuhuatai site convey a strong tenor of the heroic and sublime, and in that sense is similar in kind, though not in design, to conventional

Maoist memorial sites for martyrs, for which the national model is the Monument to the People's Heroes in Beijing.



Main hall at Yuhuatai Martyrs Park in Nanjing

By contrast, the Nanjing Massacre site is asymmetrical and earthbound: There are no towering steles that soar heroically to the sky; it has a more minimalist design that self-consciously seeks to avoid grand architectural gestures of the sublime.

The memorial's aesthetic is somber and purposefully bleak and lifeless.[45] Nearly the entire memorial—walls, ground, steps, and the like—is done in cinderblock, presenting a uniformly drab color. Qi says he sought to give the feeling of “entering a tomb.” Tragedy and horror are not represented directly but suggested subtly through the stark aesthetic. The memorial is radically different from anything done before it in the PRC. This may of course have something to do with the topic; heroic resistance or grand sacrifice, so commonly heralded in revolutionary history museums and memorials to martyrs, are just not appropriate for a memorial devoted to atrocity, and Qi Kang's strove to find an appropriate aesthetic to capture the horror.[46] There is little that is grand or heroic in the design of the outdoor memorial space; instead, perhaps influenced by Holocaust museums in the West, it conveys a bleak and desolate look that is powerful and moving.

The memorial is constructed on the site of a mass grave of victims that was unearthed in the early 1980s. It consists of three main sections: the L-shaped entranceway, the graveyard grounds, and the history exhibit. As you enter the square, a long courtyard leads to the site's most impressive work of art, “Disaster in the Ancient City” (*Gucheng de zainan*). In the background is an ancient city wall riddled with holes (as if from bullets and bombs). In the foreground is the half-buried body of a victim, his head severed from the rest of his body, of which only an arm and hand are visible.



**“Disaster in the Ancient City,” a sculpture at the end of the entrance courtyard
in the Nanjing Massacre memorial**

Above his head looms a Japanese knife, red with the blood of the victim below. Though the figure recalls similar sculptures at other memorial sites—for instance, the unknown soldier at the Longhua Martyrs Park—it is a more despairing aesthetic. Cutting across the buried body of the statue is the “bridge of history,” suggesting the horrors inflicted on China by history, but also passage out from beneath the burden of history. The bridge suggests that remembering the past will lead to a better future, a constant theme in PRC history museums and memorial sites. The bridge leads to a courtyard with a sculpture titled “The Footprints of Witnesses to History” (*Lishi zhengren de jiaoyin*), which consists of bronze footprints of survivors of the massacre. To the right is a wall on which is inscribed in bronze a long narrative poem about the massacre titled “Crazy Snow” (*Kuang xue*), written by Wang Jiuxing. The sculpture and poem were added to the memorial site in 2002 and 2003, respectively.



Unknown soldier statue, Longhua Martyrs Park, Shanghai

The most powerful part of the site is the graveyard grounds. Although the entire site has a gray and bleak look, the graveyard ground is especially so. There is no color and little in the way of greenery, except along the edges of the grounds (which Qi says was intended to offer hope within despair). There is something of a Zen garden aesthetic to the graveyard. One cannot see the graveyard from the entrance square; it must be entered by first mounting some stairs, above which is a sign that reads “300,000 Victims,” and walking through an elbow-shaped passageway formed by cinderblock walls to each side. At the end of the enclosed passageway, a vista slowly opens up to reveal a landscape of scorched pebbles interrupted only by a few leafless trees and the statue of a mother who appears to be searching for her child.[47] Along the edge of the field of stones, the visitor follows a long stone relief, which forms a barrier between the graveyard and the outside world, depicting moments of horror suffered by Nanjing residents during the massacre. After passing by a memorial wall (labeled “The Crying Wall”) inscribed with the names of victims, the path then leads through two separate “bones” rooms—exhibits of actual bones of massacred victims found at the site.



Graveyard grounds at the Nanjing Massacre memorial

The third and final section of the memorial site is the historical exhibition, which is housed in a half-underground building and gives an overview of Japanese imperialism in China and of the massacre itself. The exhibit opens with a statue titled “Mother and Child” (*Mu yu zi*), which shows a mother holding the limp body of her dead child, a sacrificial victim of the slaughter, and harkens back to the Mother figure in the graveyard grounds. The mother-child union is a powerful one, commonly used in socialist iconography. Behind the figure is a large photographic mural of dead bodies, above which looms the number “300,000.” Clearly, the use of mother and child as the opening image of the exhibits is meant to suggest the innocence of the victims as a whole and to reinforce the barbarity of the Japanese for severing the most fundamental of all human relations.

The exhibition proper is presented, as are the vast majority of museum exhibitions in the PRC, in chronological order. It is framed quite clearly with the nationalist message of Chinese struggles against imperialism, which creates an interesting tension with the aesthetic of the more humanist graveyard outside. The historical exhibition sets the massacre in the larger context of Japanese imperialism and Chinese resistance to it, whereas the graveyard focuses on human suffering and on instilling remembrance of that suffering. This schizophrenic quality of the memorial as a whole is expressed in the site’s name. The term *yu’nanzhe* (victim) gives a humanist sense of universal victimization and suffering, but the use of *tongbao* suggests at the same time that the memorial is still firmly within a nationalist paradigm. And although Buruma criticizes it for demanding “piety of the Japanese and patriotism from the Chinese” and for not offering an “atmosphere in which dispassionate historical inquiry can thrive,” the memorial marks a step away from the kind of heroic glorification of martyrs that dominated the Maoist period and continues to be an important form of memorialization in the PRC.[48] Clearly, the state in China is not willing to give up its control over memory of the past; the kind of postmodern memorial Buruma seems to want—one that questions the very notion of representation—would threaten that control and is unthinkable in the present political context.

Museums in China are often used as active sites for memorialization. This is especially true of the Nanjing Massacre memorial. The day of my visit to the museum was July 7, 2004; needless to say, special ceremonies were held, including personal oral narrations by living witnesses. Museums freeze time and suggest ultimately the irretrievability of the past or that the past is an

inert artifact; clearly, the active use to which museums are put in China attempts to overcome these perhaps inherent weaknesses of the museum project. Although this active use of memorial sites might suggest, like the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington, a kind of popular appropriation of a state-sponsored memorial, the state maintains control over how and when the site is used for public commemorations.[49]

The Unit 731 Museum: Authenticity

The Crime Evidence Exhibition Hall of the Japanese Imperial Army Unit 731 in Pingfang, Heilongjiang, was established in the early 1980s in a building that is part of a much larger site used by the infamous Japanese Army Unit 731 to commit medical experiments on thousands of Chinese (as well as some Russians, Koreans, and others) from 1939 to the end of the War of Resistance Against Japan.[50] In 1995, a new building to house the exhibits was constructed down the road from this site. In 2001, however, the exhibit was brought back to the original site, now renovated.



Entranceway, courtyard, and exhibition hall of the Unit 731 Museum

Why did museum officials, after expending financial capital and great effort in the construction of a new museum, decide to return the exhibit to the original site? The new museum, I contend, lacked the power and authenticity of a site where the atrocities described in the exhibits actually took place. As a “site museum” (*yizhi bowuguan*), the present museum gives the past an “aura” it never could gain in a less charged setting.[51]

Much of the power of the museum comes even before you enter the exhibition building. From the main gate, you walk through a large expanse of greenless, empty space. The emptiness seems to offer mental space for the imagination of the horrors to be displayed in the museum exhibits. Its emptiness and sterility recall the memorial site at Auschwitz and are an example of James Young’s “memorialized ruins”: “As houses come to be ‘haunted’ by the ghosts (memory, really)

of their former occupants, the sites of destruction are haunted by the phantoms of past events, no longer visible, only remembered.”[52] Before even entering the building, the site creates a “mood of memory,” a somber mood that prepares one for the horror exhibited in the museum proper.[53]

Inside the exhibition building, which housed the administrative offices of Unit 731, this mood is maintained by dark hallways and exposed-bricked rooms. As you enter the building, there is a prefatory hallway that sets the theme for the entire museum and memorial site. On either side of the hallway are bronze reliefs, in which are carved large characters: to the left, *qian shi bu wang*; and to the right, *hou shi zhi shi* (to not forget the past is to be master of the future). As discussed previously, the recurring emphasis on recalling the past in Chinese museum is all about moving beyond the past so as to make China a “master” in the future; recalling the horrors of the past is a step toward leaving behind the “century of humiliation” and marching toward a more glorious future when that remembering will longer be necessary. Implicitly, then, remembering humiliation is connected to the emergence of China as a global economic and political power.

The “Preface” to the exhibits proper says that the experiments carried out by members of Unit 731 make them “the cruelest fascist war criminals in the history of humankind.” It gives the figure of 3,000 killed by Unit 731 experiments, and another 300,000 killed as a result of germ warfare technology developed at the site. “Our purpose,” says the preface, “in exposing the evil history of Unit 731 is to use facts to warn later people, to allow history to call for human peace, civilization, and progress, and not let historical tragedies repeat themselves.”

The exhibits themselves are presented with a dark aesthetic that creates a somber and serious mood. The thrust of the exhibits is to present authentic artifacts so as to “let history give testimony.” The museum generally makes less use of dioramas and multimedia than, say, the Museum of the War of Resistance or the September 18 History Museum. Instead, it favors photographs and material objects—things that authenticate what happened at the site—such as hangers for human viscera, laboratory test tubes, saws, scalpels, and clamps, as well as prisoner identity cards. Much attention is paid to the testimony of former members of Unit 731. One room is devoted to “Confessions” (*qianhui*) of various Japanese military figures, who in the 1980s began to reveal the truth of Unit 731’s activities in China.

There are graphic photographs in the museum to be sure, but for the most part the horror has to be imagined from the artifacts. This may be a conscious choice on the part of the curators, but it may also be because photographs and film footage do not exist. As the exhibits recount repeatedly, the Japanese destroyed much of the Pingfang site at the end of the war in order to eliminate evidence of their crimes. The ruins, we are told in one museum catalogue, are “evidence of the Japanese army’s germ warfare crimes, and evidence of the Japanese army’s destruction of evidence.” Graphic dioramas are few in the museum. One shows Japanese doctors performing medical experiments; another, called the Erdaogou Plague Scene, depicts a bubonic plague attack on the village of Erdaogou. The nearly life-size diorama is in two parts, with the spectator walkway running between them: To the left is a dead figure with two mourners by its side, an older woman mourns from the door of their hovel of a home; to the right a corpse is being carried away on a stretcher. The horror is rather muted. The diorama ends with a list of the names of those known to have died in the attack.

In comparison with many other new museums in China, multimedia is also used sparingly. There is, however, a small film auditorium, which continuously projects a documentary about Unit 731.

On the wall of the auditorium is written “Do not forget national humiliation.” The film uses fictionalized scenes as well as documentary photos and is not easy viewing. When I visited the museum in the summer of 2004, a young woman, a Korean I believe, suddenly ran out of the viewing room and vomited in the hallway.

Like some of the other museums discussed here, the Unit 731 Museum has several exhibits devoted to memorialization. One room is called “Remember Us,” a kind of memorial hall consisting of a plaster structure made to look like stone with a flame cutting through it; below is a wreath and a plaque, which tells us that the victims are mostly nameless. To the left and right of the room are the names of four known victims. The final exhibit is a long hallway, on the left side of which is the “List of the Victims.” There are plaques (in stone, with black characters) for those nameable victims, extending down the length of the hall, some one hundred in total. The exhibit ends with text that echoes the preface, saying that some 3,000 died as a result of Unit 731 experiments and another 300,000 were injured in germ warfare produced from these experiments. The museum not only serves to help the spectator remember the past but also emphasizes the need to remember and the remembering itself.

Behind the exhibition building are “ruins”—the foundations of buildings that were part of the larger Unit 731 complex.



Ruins of one of the structures on the Unit 731 complex

There are, for example, the ruins of the building used for germ research. The museum has plans to develop these ruins into a more integral part of the site. At present, some of the ruins surrounding the exhibition hall have plaques informing the spectator about the site, but many still do not. As suggested above, this museum derives its power from the site and its ruins. Because of the power of the site, the museum does not have to recreate an atmosphere, like the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, which seeks to recreate the feel of experiencing life in the concentration camps.[54] This museum seems to self-consciously avoid a Disneyfication of horror and play up the authentic aura of its site. The exhibits are simple, the lighting is dim, and

the display is mundane, and all lack the technological sophistication now often found in Chinese museums. Although these aspects may also be partly due to a lack of funds or of curatorial training, I think the curators are self-consciously avoiding the aestheticization of objects that were used to inflict unimaginable suffering.

The September 18 History Museum: Specularity and Memory

The September 18 History Museum in Shenyang was established in 1991 on the sixtieth anniversary of September 18, 1931, when the Japanese Kwantung Army blew up a railway bridge, accused the Chinese of doing it, and then used the incident as pretext for occupying Shenyang and southern Manchuria. The date is conventionally seen in the PRC as the beginning of the Japanese occupation of China and of resistance to it. In its early phase, the museum consisted of a single monument: the broken calendar monument, which I discuss below. In 1997, the city of Shenyang approved funding for an expanded museum, and the present museum was completed two years later and opened on September 18, 1999. As the catalogue puts it, the museum seeks to be a place for “patriotic and national defense education” and to teach people “not to forget national humiliation and to invigorate China” (*wu wang guochi, zhenxing Zhonghua*). Like other museums in China, this museum is active in educational outreach, organizing, for instance, a mobile exhibition that travels around to schools.[55]

The museum building is among the more interesting architectural designs of new museums in the PRC.



Main exhibition hall of the September 18 History Museum

It is situated outside the central core of the city on the site of the explosion that was used by the Japanese as a pretext for attacking Shenyang and eventually occupying all of Manchuria. Unlike the Unit 731 Museum, however, the museum’s symbolic power does not derive particularly from the historical site. Instead, the building’s design and the use of external space immediately around the museum give it power. What first catches one’s eye as one enters the main gate is the giant stone calendar, riddled with bullet and bomb holes and opened to the date September 18, 1931.



Stone calendar statue in the courtyard of the September 18 History Museum

The text on the calendar reads: “Around ten o’clock at night, the Japanese army blew up the Liutiao Lake section of the Southern Manchurian Railway. Under the pretext of blaming the Chinese army for committing this act, they attacked and occupied the army’s north headquarters. Under orders not to resist, our northeast army retreated in pain, disaster befell the nation, and the people rose up angrily in resistance.” Although it is intended to stress the historical importance of this date in Chinese history, the calendar also suggests that time has stopped and that China is somehow stuck in the memory of this national insult. However, by commemorating this tragic event, the museum will help China to flip the pages of history forward and leave the humiliation of that event behind.

Various pieces of sculpture appear around the plaza in front of the museum building. As at the Nanjing Massacre memorial, there is large bell called the Awaken the World Bell (*Jingshi zhong*); on one side of the bell are the words “do not forget national humiliation,” and a description of the September 18 Incident appears on the other.[56] A bomb stele (*zhadan bei*) shows what looks like a cement support, an original piece of the Liaotiao Lake Bridge. On the facade of the museum building itself is a huge relief in bronze called “National Disaster” (*Guo nan*), created by the sculpture Department of the Shenyang Lu Xun Fine Arts Academy. The placard informs one that the relief, which stretches along the white facade of the wall of the museum, is inspired by traditional Chinese calligraphy.

Indeed, from a distance, the movement of the relief along the wall does suggest sweeping dark brush strokes on white paper. Only close to the relief can one notice figures of suffering victims of the Japanese attack embedded in the bronze.



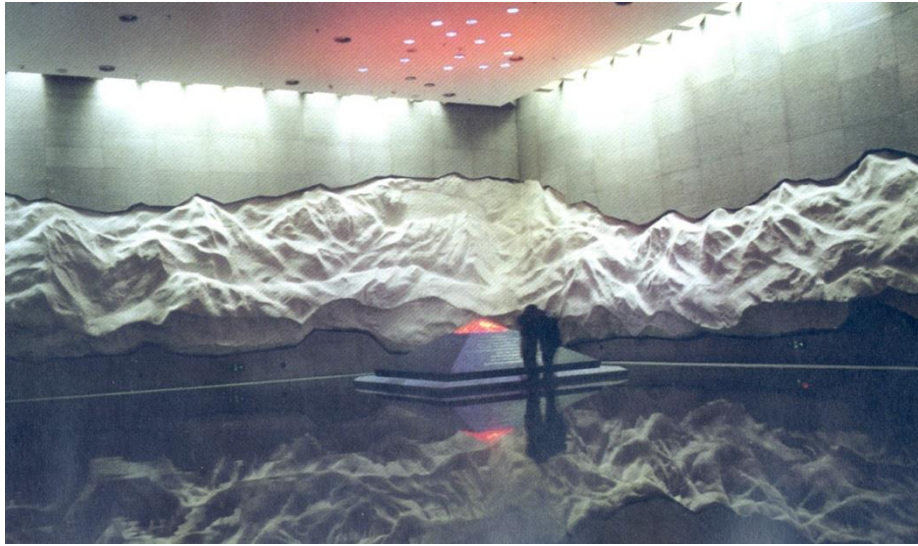
Close-up of relief on the front exterior walls of the September 18 History Museum

The relief thus suggests, perhaps recalling Mao's phrase about the people being a blank slate, that the "people" emerge from writing itself; the people are the object/subject of history/historiography. As in many such representations in history museums in China, bronze represents the earth and the people are shown to be part of the earth, tied to the motherland; territory and the body politic are inextricably joined. On the facade of the street side of the building is another similar bronze relief called "Anger Rising" (*Fen qi*), meant to represent the spirit of resistance. It depicts soldiers heroically fighting the enemy.

Taken together, the two reliefs that cover the museum's outer walls represent the victim and victory narratives discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The last important artwork outside the museum is the "Memorial Stele of the Victory of the War of Resistance," which in its shape hearkens back to the "bomb stele" near the entrance to the site; it restores to an upright position

the bridge support blown down by Japanese bombs on September 18, 1931. Like the two reliefs, these two steles (*bei*) convey the intertwined narratives of victimization and victory.

The major tropes of the external design of the museum and its outdoor memorials and sculptures are presented in more narrative form in the museum exhibitions. First, the Prefatory Hall (*Xu Ting*) echoes the two modes of representing the war and sets the context for appreciating the chronological exhibits that follow.



Prefatory Hall of the September 18 History Museum

The not-quite-rectangular hall is subtly lit with ceiling floodlights; it has a polished black marble floor and white plaster reliefs cover the four walls. There is a strong contrast between the dark floor and lighted white reliefs. The reliefs, we are told in a museum catalogue, represent the mountains of China, while the black marble floor represents its rivers, visually referring to the phrase *baishan heishui* (white mountains, black rivers), a surrogate term for Dongbei (i.e., the Changbai Mountains and Heilong River). Although the room thus has a local flavor, mountains and rivers are commonly used to stand for China as a whole.[57] On the floor near the middle of the hall is a four-foot-high black marble pyramid capped by a red “eternal flame” (not real fire, but some sort of electric light), representing the martyrs of the Northeast, “with their spirit of unyielding resistance and their eternal national heroic spirit.” On the four sides of the pyramid is text in Chinese, Japanese, English, and Russian. We are told in the text that September 18 is “etched” in the hearts of the Chinese people and that it marks the beginning of fourteen years of Japanese occupation during which many people sacrificed their lives. Above the pyramid are fourteen blue lights (one for each year of occupation), which cast a blue pall on the red “flame” below. The visual contrast between the somber blue of occupation and the heroic red of resistance embodies the tension between victimization and heroic resistance narratives.

After the memorial hall, the spectator proceeds down a long walkway to the beginning of the exhibition proper. The exhibition opens with an overtly internationalist perspective: Japanese imperialism is portrayed as part of a larger global fascism and China’s resistance as part of global resistance to it.[58] This internationalizing of the struggle can perhaps be seen as part of China’s present efforts to “join with the world,” but it also serves to link Japan’s evil with the globally recognized evil of the Nazis. However, it strikes me that this is a rather token

internationalism and that both the thrust and the details of the exhibition are solidly within the nationalist paradigm.

The exhibition is structured in six display halls: (1) Historical Background; (2) Outbreak of the Incident and the Loss of the Northeast; (3) Japan's Bloody Rule in the Northeast; (4) The Resistance Struggle of the Northeast Army and People; (5) The Whole Nation Resists, the Northeast is Restored, and the Final Chapter of Japanese Imperialism; and (6) Let History Be a Mirror, Hope for Peace, and Be on Guard Against the Return of Japanese Militarism. As is almost universal in Chinese history museums, the material is presented chronologically. The exhibits make conventional use of photographs, texts, and maps; but more than the other museums discussed in this chapter, they employ innovative exhibitionary techniques that reveal the influences of popular and visual culture. What stand out in the museum are its numerous models, dioramas, and multimedia displays. History and atrocity are offered as visual and dramatic spectacles for the visitor. For example, through cracks in a wall, the spectator can peer, rather voyeuristically, into a life-size scene recreating a gruesome, though somewhat campy, Unit 731 operating room. By hiding the display behind a partial wall, the curators may be shielding it from younger visitors, but it also draws attention to the very notion of spectatorship. A "demonstration scene" (*yanshi changing*), a framed scene with lights and recorded narration that consists of the bones of corpses murdered by the Japanese in the infamous Pingdingshan Massacre of 1932, is also typical of the specular and visual quality of exhibits in this museum.

Music often combines with three-dimensional visuality to give many displays a highly theatrical quality. For instance, in the second exhibit hall there is a display of bronze statues of refugees titled "Sorrow of Exile" (*Liuwang hen*), which shows an array of citizens fleeing the Japanese occupation of the Northeast. The "citizens" include peasants, but also students, who appear to be doing anti-Japanese propaganda work.



"Sorrow of Exile" sculpture depicting refugees

The sculpture is clearly drawing on conventional historical memories of the Japanese occupation in which the image of refugees from the Northeast figured prominently. On the wall behind the bronze sculptures are the music and lyrics to "On the Songhua River" (*Songhua jiang shang*), a

morose song about September 18 and the loss of homeland. References to songs—generally standard revolutionary songs—appear throughout the museum’s exhibits.

In the section on national resistance to Japanese occupation, there is an impressive large-scale diorama called “Camp Song” (*Luying ge*).



“Camp Song,” a large-scale diorama at the September 18 History Museum

The song referred to in the title of the diorama was written by Li Zhaolin, a general who wrote it during a particularly difficult period in his troop’s struggle against the enemy. The song played an important role in Maoist narratives and earlier museum representations of the war (e.g., Northeast Martyrs Memorial Hall). The diorama, designed by Wang Jihou of the Shenyang HuaXia Exhibition Arts Engineering Company, recreates the scene described in the lyrics of the song.[59] The three-dimensional scene brings a highly theatrical element into the exhibitionary space. Musical and theatrical spectacle combine to form an impressive display, one that serves little to propel the chronological narrative of the exhibition but that seeks to evoke emotional resonances of the lost homeland and the heroic struggle to recover it. As a museum brochure puts it: “With the ‘Camp Song’ . . . as its theme and the vast expanse of white snow and dense white birch forest as its background, the scene describes the unyielding struggling spirit and high revolutionary optimism of soldiers of the United Army.”

Among the more powerful dioramas in the museum is one of life-size wax figures of Japanese war criminals being tried in a Shenyang court in 1956. The twenty-eight wax figures are dressed in black, and their heads are bowed in recognition of their guilt; behind them is a collage of photographic images of Chinese victims of the war with soaring planes, exploding bombs, and huge plumes of smoke in the background. The diorama captures guilt and contrition in a highly emotional visual language. Coming near the end of the exhibition, it offers powerful testimony to the Chinese nationalist take on the fair judgment of history. The exhibition ends with the bronze

sculpture “The Monument to the Chinese Foster Parents,” a memorial donated by Japanese to the Chinese parents who raised Japanese children orphaned by the war.



“The Monument to the Chinese Foster Parents,” a sculpture near the end of the basic exhibition in the September 18 History Museum

It shows a Chinese peasant couple with a Japanese child standing between them and looking up lovingly at his “mother.” Obviously, the sculpture echoes the many images of Chinese mothers torn from their own children that are to be found in the museums discussed above. The sculpture portrays the Chinese in an unmistakably positive moral light; even after being horribly victimized by brutal occupiers, the sculpture suggests, the Chinese still had compassion for the children of their oppressors and raised them, with presumably superior Chinese moral standards.

The Concluding Remarks to the exhibition are rather revealing. The text reads:

As we are about to leave the exhibition room, everyone’s heart is dripping blood, and every drop of blood seems to congeal into a question mark: How could Japanese imperialism dare to lift a butcher’s knife against our great and vast China? Every photo here forms a chain of ironclad facts, but how can there be people who still refuse to confront them, or who even distort those facts, or rewrite them? [It is said that] “if you’re backward, you will be beaten,” but why are we backward? The faces of the deceased

presented here are all crying out [*nahan*]. What do their cries tell us? Do they tell us: “A people/nation that forgets its heroes is a degenerate one”? Do they also tell us: “If you forget suffering, suffering may once again knock on the nation’s doors”? Do they tell us: “It begins with me, with the present”? Or do they tell us: “To revive China, everyone bears responsibility”?

The interrogative mode here seems a rather empty nod to a more postmodern sensibility, and the museum concludes with a bald assertion of the facts of Japanese aggression in China. Of all the museums discussed here, the September 18 History Museum bends the most to the demands of popular nationalism, popular culture, and the spectacle.

Conclusion

Threatened as they are by popular culture and caught between official rhetoric and the demands of the cultural marketplace, museums try desperately to be relevant in contemporary Chinese society. One way they can do this is through the nationalist representation of horror and atrocity. In their attention to victimization, atrocity, and suffering, these museums are primarily motivated by a desire to evoke nationalist sentiments; they both appeal to a latent nationalism and help to shape it. In this chapter, I have looked at four museums devoted to Japanese imperialism and atrocities committed during Japan’s fourteen-year occupation of China. They differ in their modes of representation: the conventionality of the War of Resistance Memorial Hall, the minimalist humanism of the Nanjing Massacre Memorial, the “authenticity” of the Unit 731 Museum, and the spectacle of the September 18 History Museum. Despite their differences, they share a tension between emphasis on suffering and victimization, on the one hand, and heroic resistance and victory, on the other.

Together, these two principal modes of representing the War of Resistance Against Japan are at odds, but they also work hand in hand and need each other. Although there is plenty of attention in these museums to the role of the CCP in leading resistance to Japan, this is not their primary message. Rather, they seek to involve the visitor in a shared history of national suffering and, perhaps most important, of overcoming that suffering. It goes without saying that museums are not the only forms of remembering this national suffering (the popular histories discussed by Gries and historical Web sites are two other important modes), but they are, with their imposing architecture, “authentic” physical artifacts, and close association with the state, a particularly important and powerful one.

Kirk A. Denton is associate professor of Chinese literature and culture at The Ohio State University. He is author of [The Problematic of Self in Modern Chinese Literature: Hu Feng and Lu Ling](#) (Stanford, 1998) and editor of [Modern Chinese Literature Thought: Writings on Literature, 1893-1945](#) (Stanford, 1996) and of the journal [Modern Chinese Literature and Culture](#). He is working on a book on the politics and ideology of museums’ representation of modern history in Greater China.

This essay was first published, in a slightly different form, as “Horror and Atrocity: Memory of Japanese Imperialism in Chinese Museums,” in Ching Kwan Lee and Guobin Yang, eds., *Re-envisioning the Chinese Revolution: The Politics and Poetics of Collective Memories in Reform China* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2007), 245–86.

[1] See Ken Sekine, [“Verbose Silence in 1939 Chongqing: Why Ah Long's *Nanjing* Could Not Be Published.”](#) MCLC Resource Center, 2004. The novel was first published as *Nanjing xueji* (The bloody sacrifice of Nanjing) (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1987).

[2] The online China News Digest Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall has published an English translation of a 1962 work called [Japanese Imperialism and the Massacre in Nanjing](#). The translator, Robert Gray, writes in the introduction that “In 1962, scholars at Nanjing University’s Department of History (Japanese history section) wrote the book *Japanese Imperialism and the Massacre in Nanjing* (*Riben diguozhuyi zai Nanjing de datusha*) based on extensive materials they uncovered during a two-year investigation into the Nanjing Massacre. After it was written, the book was labeled a classified document (*neibu ziliao*) and could not be published openly.”

[3] Mark Eykholt, “Aggression, Victimization, and Chinese Historiography of the Nanjing Massacre,” in *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*, ed. Joshua Fogel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 11–69.

[4] Ian Buruma, “The Joys and Perils of Victimhood,” *New York Review of Books* (April 8, 1999), 4–9.

[5] The fact that the *hibakusha*, the victims of the atomic bombing, are at the forefront of remembering the war and of the peace movement in Japan, would suggest that Buruma’s remarks are not universally true.

[6] E.g., see Sheldon H. Harris, *Factories of Death: Japanese Biological Warfare, 1932–1945, and the American Cover-Up* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

[7] Mitter suggests that as the Maoist ideology and its pivotal historical moments lost resonance for the Chinese people in the post-Mao era: “In looking for a theme to inspire unity, the leadership was forced to turn to the cataclysmic event of the century, War of Resistance to Japan.” See Mitter, “Behind the Scenes at the Museum,” 280. To highlight the point, Mitter compares the War of Resistance museum representation with that of the older Chinese Military Museum (*Zhongguo Junshi Bowuguan*), which stresses in its treatment of the war the struggle between “Communist virtue and Nationalist evil” (p. 282). Mitter implies that prior to the Deng era, the War of Resistance did not play an important role in myth making and political legitimization, which is not the case. However, there certainly was a renewed attention to the war and new forms of remembering it in the post-Mao era, which I take to be Mitter’s principal point.

[8] I have in mind Dai Qing’s work on the Wang Shiwei and Chu Anping incidents in Yan’an. See Dai Qing, *Wang Shiwei and “Wild Lilies”: Rectification and Purges in the Chinese Communist Party, 1942–1944* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1994).

[9] For a discussion of the culture of “bobos” (bourgeois bohemians) and “neo-tribes” in China, see Jing Wang, “Bourgeois Bohemians in China? Neo-Tribes and the Urban Imaginary,” *China Quarterly* 183 (September 2005): 532–48.

[10] Arif Dirlik, “‘Trapped in History’ on the Way to Utopia: East Asia’s Great War Fifty Years Later,” in *Perilous Memories*, in *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*, ed. T. Fujitana, Geoffrey White, and Lisa Yoneyama (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), 311.

[11] Peter Gries, *China’s New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 43–52.

[12] Eric Johnston, "Political, Economic Rivalries Blamed: History Not Key Issue," *Japan Times*, April 19, 2005.

[13] There are other museums in China that deal with Japanese atrocities, e.g., the Pingdingshan Massacre Museum (in Fushun, Liaoning), the Northeast Occupation Hall at the Manchukuo Palace (Changchun, Jilin), and the Northeast Martyrs Memorial Hall (Harbin). The former, established in 1972, promotes itself as the museum that represents the history of Japan's "first" massacre on Chinese soil. In September 1932, Japanese soldiers slaughtered 3,000 villagers at the foot of Pingding Mountain. More recently, a private War of Resistance Museum opened outside Chengdu. Initiated and financed by a local entrepreneur, Fan Jianchuan, the museum, which is part of a complex of museums that includes exhibition halls devote to the Cultural Revolution, is billed as the largest private museum in China. Interestingly, this private museum does not construct clear historical narratives in the same explicit way that most state museums do.

[14] A slew of scholarly books published in recent years focuses on the topic of neonationalism in the PRC. In addition to Gries, *China's New Nationalism*, see Lowell Dittmer and Samuel S. Kim, eds., *China's Quest for National Identity* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, 1993); Yingjie Guo, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary China: The Search for National Identity under Reform* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004); and Jonathan Unger, ed., *Chinese Nationalism* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1996).

[15] From "Zhongri liangguo renmin yinggai shishi daidai youhao xiaqu" (The people of China and Japan should be friends generation after generation), a speech given on September 15, 1972, during the visit of the Japanese prime minister to China. The phrase originates from the *Zhanguo ce* (Chronicle of the Warring States).

[16] See Paul A. Cohen, "Remembering and Forgetting: National Humiliation in Twentieth-Century China," *Twentieth-Century China* 27, no. 2 (April 2002): 1–39. Karl Gerth's study of the relative failure of the "national products" movement in Republican China would suggest that average urban Chinese were indeed forgetting about national humiliation and were more concerned with daily survival or with enjoying foreign consumer products. See Karl Gerth, *China Made: Consumer Culture and the Creation of the Nation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003).

[17] Citing a 1990s survey of a group of fourth graders, Waldron points out that only 30 percent could identify Mao Zedong and only one could sing the entire national anthem, but all knew the Hong Kong pop singer Liu Dehua (Andy Lau). See Waldron, "China's New Remembering," 976. I should add that the state in the PRC has aggressively developed Web sites promoting patriotic education, many with a recurring theme of not forgetting. One such site is called Wuwangguochi.

[18] Cohen, "Remembering and Forgetting," 2.

[19] Haiyan Lee has suggested that "sentiment" is a key element in forging a sense of shared history and national community. See Haiyan Lee, "Sympathy, Hypocrisy, and the Trauma of Chineseness," *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 16, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 76–122.

[20] James Edward Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1993), 6. For a discussion of memory sites, see also Pierre

Nora, ed., *The Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

[21] For a discussion of this downplaying of class in Chinese museums, see Kirk A. Denton, "Museums, Memorial Sites and Exhibitionary Culture in the People's Republic of China," *China Quarterly* 183 (2005): 565–86.

[22] Susan Sontag makes this argument in *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1977). In her more recent *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003), she questions her original argument and asks skeptically: "What is the evidence that photographs have a diminishing impact, that our culture of spectatorship neutralizes the moral force of photographs of atrocities?" p. 105).

[23] In the United States alone, there are at least four major Holocaust museums (in New York City, Washington, Los Angeles, and Houston). For a general discussion of memorialization with regard to Holocaust museums, see Young, *Texture of Memory*, the opening sentence of which reads: "The further events of World War II recede in time, the more prominent its memorials become" (p. 1).

[24] For discussions of the new remembering of the World War II in Asia, see Arthur Waldron, "China's New Remembering of World War II: The Case of Zhang Zizhong," *Modern Asian Studies* 30, no. 4 (1996): 869–99; Sheila M. Jager, *Narratives of Nation-Building in Korea: A Genealogy of Patriotism* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2003); the special "Asia-Pacific War: History and Memory" issue of the *IIAS Newsletter* (September 2005); and Jui-te Chang, 2001. "The Politics of Commemoration: A Comparative Analysis of the Fiftieth-Anniversary Commemoration in Mainland China and Taiwan of the Victory in the Anti-Japanese War," in *The Scars of War: The Impact of Warfare on Modern China*, ed., Diana Lary and Stephen MacKinnon (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2001), pp. 136–61. In terms of museum representations, see Laura Hein and Akiko Takenaka, "[Exhibiting World War II in Japan and the United States](#)," in *Japan Focus*.

[25] For a discussion of globalization and its effects on Chinese museums, see Li Wenru, ed., *Quanqiuhua xia de Zhongguo bowuguan* (Chinese museums under the condition of globalization) (Beijing: Wenbo, 2002).

[26] Iris Chang's *Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), translated into Chinese in 1998, is but one example. The real impetus for remembering the Nanjing Massacre occurred in 1982, with the Chinese response to the textbook controversy in Japan. See Daqing Yang, "The Malleable and the Contested: The Nanjing Massacre in Postwar China and Japan," in *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*, ed. T. Fujitana, Geoffrey White, and Lisa Yoneyama (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), 50–86. For an overview of new research on the Nanjing Massacre, see David Askew, "[New Research on the Nanjing Incident](#)," *Japan Focus* (2004). General studies of the Nanjing Massacre include: Joshua Fogel, ed, *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); and Feifei Li, Robert Sabella, and David Liu, eds., *Nanjing 1937: Memory and Healing* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2002).

[27] Qi Kang, *Qin Hua Ri jun Nanjing datusha yunan tongbao jinianguan* (Memorial to the victims of the massacre by Japanese invaders of China) (Shenyang: Liaoning Kexue Jishu, 1999).

[28] Wang Yiting, *Baiyi e'mo* (Evil in white coats) (Pingfang: Hua Ri Jun Di Qisanyi Budui Zuizheng Chenlieguan, n.d.), 2.

[29] Iris Chang famously made this link in the subtitle to her book (*The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*) on the Nanjing Massacre, but Buruma suggests that this linking goes all the way back to the 1946 Tokyo Trials. See Ian Buruma, "The Nanjing Massacre as a Historical Symbol," in *Nanking 1937: Memory and Healing*, ed. Feifei Li, Robert Sabella, and David Liu (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2002), 1–9; the citation here is on 7. In the United States, a group of Chinese Americans has formed a museum devoted to Japanese imperialism in China and is calling it the Chinese Holocaust Museum. See Buruma, "Joys and Perils of Victimhood" .

[31] Lin Biao's 1965 tract on the War of Resistance is typical of Maoist representations of the war period. Lin tells the story of the heroic victory of a weaker nation against a much more powerful foe. Lin explains this "miraculous" victory with three main points: (1) The war was a "genuinely people's war" and had the support of the people, (2) Mao's military strategy of "guerrilla warfare" was effective, and (3) the war effort was guided by Mao Zedong Thought. See Lin Biao, *Long Live the Victory of the People's War* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1965).

[32] War films were numerous in the Maoist era. Two obvious examples are *Didao zhan* (Tunnel warfare; directed by Ren Xudong, 1965;) and *Xiao Bing Zhang Ga* (Little soldier, Zhang Ga; directed by Cui Wei and Ouyang Hongying, 1963), the latter of which is currently being remade.

[33] "The March of the Volunteers" (*Yiyongjun jinxingqu*), with lyrics by the playwright Tian Han and music by Nie Er, became the "official" national anthem only in 1982, before which it was used unofficially in that capacity. During the Cultural Revolution, of course, because Tian Han was denounced, "The March of the Volunteers" was replaced by "The East Is Red" (*Dong fang hong*). For a discussion of "The March" and other songs from the war period, see Robert Chi, "'The March of the Volunteers': From Movie Theme Song to National Anthem," in Ching Kwan Le and Guobin Yang, eds., *Re-envisioning the Chinese Revolution: The Politics and Poetics of Collective Memories in Reform China* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Press, 2007), 217–44; and Chang-Tai Hung, "The Politics of Songs: Myths and Symbols in the Chinese Communist War Music, 1937–1949," *Modern Asian Studies* 30, no. 4 (October 1996): 901–29.

[34] Although my concern here is the discursive use of the war in postrevolutionary political rhetoric, I should point out that some Western scholars also see the war period as critical. As David Apter and Tony Saich argue, the war period made possible Mao's "Republic" and the "revolutionary discourse" upon which it was founded. See David E. Apter and Tony Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994). Of course, the war was always only a chapter in the larger narrative of liberation. However, I take issue with Rana Mitter and Arthur Waldron, who argue that the war was not an important part of Maoist constructions of the past. Waldron cites as evidence the absence of a central war memorial in the Beijing cityscape, and Mitter suggests that before the 1980s the war occupied only a minor place in historical narratives, such as that found in the Military Museum.

Although their intention is to shed light on the new significance of memory of the war in the post-Mao era, Mitter and Waldron give the false impression that memory of the war was a blank in the Maoist era. See Rana Mitter, “Behind the Scenes at the Museum: Nationalism, History and Memory in the Beijing War of Resistance Museum, 1987–1997,” *China Quarterly* 161 (2000): 278–93; and Andrew Waldron, “China’s New Remembering.”

[35] Museums officials told me that funding was scarce, and they did not know when the renovation would begin, let alone be completed.

[36] More recently, in the summer of 2005, the museum put on an exhibit in commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the victory of the Anti-Japanese War called “The Ruins and Crimes of the Harbin Police Headquarters of the Manchukuo Puppet Regime.”

[37] For a discussion of this museum, see Mitter, “Behind the Scenes at the Museum.” For an excellent discussion of the historical resonances of the site of the Lugou Bridge, see James A. Flath, “Setting Moon and Rising Nationalism: Lugou Bridge as Monument and Memory,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 10, no. 2 (2004): 175–92. I also used the following museum publication: *Zhongguo renmin kangri zhanzheng jinianguan* (Memorial of the Chinese People’s War of Resistance Against the Japanese) (Beijing: Zhongguo Heping, 1998).

[38] The 2005 renovation substantially transformed the museum’s exhibitions. Three special exhibits—the Japanese Army Atrocities exhibit, People’s War exhibit, and Martyrs Hall—have been eliminated, though elements of each have been integrated into a single comprehensive exhibit, now titled Great Victory (*Weida shengli*). Great Victory is characterized by a new emphasis on the war as a key part of the larger global anti-fascist struggle. The war is still represented as a critical period in Chinese history, but rather than a chapter in the larger narrative of revolution and liberation, it is now a pivotal period in China’s emergence as a global power. As exhibition placards put it, the war marks “the great renaissance of the Chinese people,” in its transition from “weakness” (*shuaibai*) to “flourishing” (*zhenxing*). Clearly, the ideological impetus behind the exhibition’s representation of the war is connected to China’s new status in the global economy and its pretensions to global greatness. That the emotionality of the second stage exhibition has been muted marks perhaps a more rational approach to the war that is consistent with China’s maturation as a member of the community of nations.

[39] See Mitter, “Behind the Scenes in the Museum.” In a September 2005 speech commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the victory of the war, Hu Jintao made this recognition of Nationalist war efforts part of official party rhetoric. Moreover, the war is now commonly framed as a dimension of the larger antifascist struggle in World War II, which I believe is connected to the larger discursive project in the contemporary PRC of connecting China with the world (*zou xiang shijie* or *yu shijie tong gui*).

[40] Mitter, “Behind the Scenes at the Museum,” 286.

[41] Mitter, *ibid.*, also notes the innovative use, perhaps influenced by Western memorials, of an “unknown” soldier for the central statue in the hall. Although it may be true that “unknown” soldiers are not generally used in Chinese war memorials, they do appear frequently in revolutionary oil painting. For a discussion of images of martyrs in Chinese revolutionary mythology, see Kirk A. Denton, “Visual Memory and the Construction of a Revolutionary Past:

Paintings from the Museum of the Chinese Revolution,” *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture* 12, no. 2 (Fall): 203–235.

[42] Buruma suggests that the idea for the memorial was Deng Xiaoping’s. See Buruma, “Nanjing Massacre as Historical Symbol,” 8. Daqing Yang asserts that the memorial was a direct response to the textbook debates of 1982 in Japan. See his “Mirror for the Future or the History Card? Understanding the ‘History Problem.’” In *Chinese-Japanese Relations in the Twentieth-First Century: Complementarity and Conflict*, ed. Marie Soderberg (London: Routledge, 2002), 15–16.

[43] Qi Kang, *Qin Hua Ri jun Nanjing datusha*, 7.

[44] *Ibid.*, 7–8.

[45] *Ibid.*, 8. The memorial won the Liang Sicheng prize for design in 2000. This was the first year of the prize, and it was presented to several architects for work done as far back as 1960.

[46] Qi Kang shows awareness of the difference of doing a memorial for Yuhuatai and the Nanjing Massacre memorial. See *ibid.*

[47] The sculpture is apparently based on a shot in the American missionary John Magee’s documentary film footage of the atrocities.

[48] Buruma, “Nanjing Massacre as Historical Symbol,” 9.

[49] I do not mean to suggest here that this and other memorial sites are not sometimes used by people for the expression of local and personal concerns that are sometimes at odds with official state policy, only that these uses are ultimately circumscribed by the state.

[50] Although not exclusively responsible by any means, Ishii Shiro is considered the father of Japanese medical and germ warfare experiments in Manchuria. In 1932, shortly after arriving in Manchuria, Major Ishii established a factory for immune experiments in the warehouse district of Harbin, but for human experimentation he needed a more remote spot that could not be seen by the foreign community. He soon came upon the town of Beiyinhe, about 100 kilometers south of Harbin, where he established the Zhong Ma Camp (*Zhongma cheng*). This was used as a base for experimentation until 1937, when the camp was disbanded and destroyed after a prisoner insurrection. In 1936, Ishii was appointed head of the Water Purification Bureau, in reality a front for his experiments. In 1936, Pingfang was selected as the new location for Unit 731. It was completed in 1939, having some seventy-two structures. Until the end of the war, experiments in germ warfare were conducted on thousands of Chinese. For general information of Unit 731, see Hal Gold, ed. *Unit 731 Testimony* (Tokyo: Yen Books, 1996).

[51] Although Benjamin’s notion of “aura” concerns works of art, I think it can apply to a memorial site as well. See Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 222–23. Holding an exhibition about horror at the site where the horror took place gives it an “authenticity” it would lose in a different setting. And although museums would generally be considered a form through which aura is lost, the “site museum” is an exception. “Site museums” are one classification of museums in China, and there are even volumes devoted to their study. See, e.g., *Yizhi bowuguan xue gailun* (General discussions of the study of site museums) (Xian: Shanxi Renmin, 1999).

[52] Young, *Texture of Memory*, 119.

[53] The term “mood of memory” comes from Edward T. Linenthal, *Preserving Memory: The Struggle to Create America's Holocaust Museum* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 168.

[54] Upon entering the museum, the spectator is given an identification card upon which is the name and life story of a real Holocaust victim. The exhibits, especially those on the second level of the building, give a sensation of the Holocaust. Philip Gourevitch has written that “violence and the grotesque are central to the American aesthetic, and the Holocaust Museum provides both amply. It is impossible to take in the exhibition without becoming somewhat inured to the sheer graphic horror on display; indeed, it would be unbearable to be defenseless in such a place. A flat response, however, is less unsettling than is the potential for excitement, for titillation, and even seduction by the overwhelmingly powerful imagery. The museum courts the viewer’s fascination, encouraging familiarity with the incomprehensible and the unacceptable; one is repeatedly forced into the role of a voyeur of the prurient.” See Philip Gourevitch, “Behold Now Behemoth: The Holocaust Memorial Museum—One More American Theme Park,” *Harper’s Magazine* (July 1993).

[55] See the [website](http://www.918museum.org.cn/news/ReadNews.asp?NewsID=793) (<http://www.918museum.org.cn/news/ReadNews.asp?NewsID=793>).

[56] Bells in Chinese culture represent atonement of sins and enlightenment. Both significances are at play here.

[57] E.g., two large photographs, one of mountains, one of a river, begin the Comprehensive Exhibit of the War of Resistance Museum discussed above.

[58] This position on the international nature of the War of Resistance was made “official” in September 2005 in statements by Hu Jintao commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the victory of the war.

[59] Wang’s work has been primarily in stage design, but his company has also been involved in wax displays for Beijing’s China Wax Figures Museum and Dalian’s Gold Wax Figures Museum. The former is a temporary exhibit in the National Museum of China.

Nanjing's Massacre Memorial: Renovating War Memory in Nanjing and Tokyo

Jeff Kingston

On a scorching July 7, 2008, officers of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces visited Nanjing for an artillery demonstration, a visit barely mentioned in the Chinese media even though it was the first time Japanese soldiers had returned to the scene of the crime since Japan surrendered in 1945. Unlike in recent years, there were no special commemoration rites on this anniversary of the 1937 Marco Polo Bridge incident. This reflected the Chinese leadership's decision to turn down the heat on history in the wake of President Hu Jintao's spring 2008 visit to Japan and the subsequent inking of an agreement on gas field development in disputed maritime territory near the contested Senkaku/Diaoyutai Islands. [1]

Indeed, since Prime Minister Koizumi left office in 2005, the Chinese government has made improvement of bilateral ties a priority. Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited Japan in April 2007 and made a conciliatory speech lavishing praise on Japan's post-WWII peaceful development, expressing gratitude for Japan's generous assistance to China and acknowledging Japan's apologies for wartime aggression. Televising this speech in China indicates that the state is trying to calm widespread anti-Japanese animosity among the people. Leaders in both nations reckon that too much is at stake to hold the bilateral state relationship hostage to the past, but the political context in which war memory is contested remains fluid. Whether the Chinese leadership can insulate contemporary relations from popular anger over the shared past remains uncertain and depends on factors beyond its control.

In the recent past, survivors gathered at Nanjing's Massacre Memorial (NMM) to bear witness to the suffering of victims, tapping into and elaborating on the narrative of national humiliation that is central to national identity in modern China, a nation that keenly recalls its *bainian guochi*, "one hundred years of humiliation" at the hands of foreign powers. [2] Now, as China celebrates its debut as a major power with the staging of the Olympics and as it works to repair relations with Japan, the state seeks to shift the national humiliation narrative to the backburner. Many people, however, remain vigilant supporters of this narrative, constraining the leadership's diplomatic and reconciliation initiatives. Outbursts in 2004 at the Asia Cup soccer tournament hosted by China and on the streets of Shanghai in 2005 suggest that anti-Japanese sentiments are a potent factor keeping the state's reconciliation initiatives on a short leash and subject to public scrutiny and criticism. Patriotic education in China focusing on Japan's wartime misdeeds and the CCP's crucial role in defeating the Japanese ensures that younger Chinese are aroused over this history. The combination of this patriotic education and the actions and words of Japan's conservative elite convince many Chinese that Japan remains unrepentant and evasive about its war responsibility, thus limiting the ability of the state to maneuver and compromise over history.

In light of these contemporary concerns, noncommemoration of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident in 2008 is striking given that the exchange of shots in 1937 served as a pretext for Tokyo to launch the large-scale invasion that ignited the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-45. Later that year, on December 13, 1937, Japanese troops entered Nanjing and unleashed a reign of terror, executing POWs and civilians, raping women by the thousands while burning and looting the city. The rampage extended over the next six weeks, leaving the once grand capital of China a shattered and smoldering husk. [3]



Facade of the new NMM



Bronzes in front of NMM depicting victims caught up in the Japanese maelstrom.



Mother and dead child in bronze nearly as tall as the NMM.

Competing Narratives

Nationalist narratives of war memory in Japan and China have recently been refurbished. Renovation of the Yûshûkan Museum, on the grounds of Yasukuni Shrine where Japan's war dead are venerated, was completed at the end of 2006 and renovation of the NMM was completed at the end of 2007. The NMM draws attention to the horrors inflicted in ways that are bound to make Japanese visitors uncomfortable. The rapt crowds gathering around some of the more gruesome displays attest to the allure of gore, and may well tap into and inflame anti-Japanese sentiments. But whether this translates into a nationalism the state can mobilize in support of its agenda is hardly certain. While emphasizing the barbarous actions of the Japanese invaders, the central message the NMM seeks to convey—a plaque near the beginning of the exhibit spells this out—is that China must modernize and grow powerful and rich because it is backward countries that endure such indignities and horrors. To get rich is not only glorious, it is also the basis for security.



Never forget national humiliation. Group photos are a common sight at the NMM.

Based on my conversations with Chinese visitors, it would be mistaken to assume that everyone embraces this message uncritically in its entirety. The presence of the sign signifies the concern that visitors might ‘miss’ this message. Whether visitors take their cue from the state is hardly certain and overlooks ways in which the narrative of war memory is contested in China within the leadership and between the state and the people. The more than 10 million visitors to the NMM since it opened in 1985 attest to its popularity, but it would be a mistake to assume that all visitors come to learn about and reflect on history; there are groups who pass through the facility as casual tourists seeing the famous sights of Nanjing, stopping to pause for group photo sessions outdoors—photos inside are prohibited—sometimes longer than they spend absorbing the displays. It is also possible that many diaspora Chinese, attracted to the “forgotten holocaust” theme in Iris Chang’s book, *The Rape of Nanking* (1997), share the outrage she felt when she visited the NMM in ways that may overlap, but also differ from those of Chinese residents in China where the politics of identity resonate differently. A Taiwanese professor I met by chance confided that even though he bears no grudges, the NMM is a welcome recognition of the atrocities committed against ‘his’ people by a regime that had long overlooked this dark chapter in favor of trumpeting its own heroic victories against the Japanese.

Central to my argument is that monolithic views of war memory in China and Japan miss the ways that these narratives are contested not only among nations, but also among the citizens of each nation. As Phil Deans points out for China, “...an important distinction must be made between the state-sanctioned discourse on patriotism and the popular mass discourse on nationalism. ‘Patriotism’ (*aiguozhuyi*) here is an official position, approved of and supported by the CCP, whereas nationalism (*minzuzhuyi*) may go beyond the state’s approved and preferred boundaries of discourse.” [4]

Tokyo and Nanjing are only three hours distant by plane, but in terms of public history and war memory they are poles apart. Yet there are also forces working toward reconciliation over the

shared history of China and Japan. The 2006 establishment of a bilateral Sino-Japanese history panel to develop a mutually acceptable narrative, sixteen years after a similar Korea-Japan panel was launched, is a state-led gambit to shape public discourse over history. However, this panel seems unlikely to resolve fundamental disputes over what happened and why, or to muzzle discordant voices in either country.

Although the political leadership in both nations has decided that contemporary relations should not be held hostage to history, and are in fence-mending overdrive, several Chinese told me that there is little popular support in their country for such efforts. The emergence of history activists in China from the mid-1980s means that the state is no longer able to turn down the volume on history as effectively as it could in the past. Indeed, popular outbursts about historical controversies undermine and circumscribe state initiatives. As one Nanjing-based scholar explains, reconciliation must be based on recognition of what happened and there are too many troubling signs that such recognition is absent among too many Japanese. Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo is ground zero for this selective amnesia and a compelling symbol of Japan's incomplete repentance and inadequate contrition.

The narrative of Nanjing in 1937-38 on display at the renovated *Yûshûkan* Museum on the grounds of Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo is a lesson in the politics of war memory. [5] There one can view a video of Japanese troops raising their arms while bellowing a collective "banzai" from atop Nanjing's city wall that abruptly cuts to a scene of a soldier ladling out soup for the elderly and young while the narrator explains that the Japanese troops entered the city and restored peace and harmony. Throughout the exhibit, Japan's invasion of China is portrayed as a campaign to quell Chinese terrorism, a post-9/11 narrative that demonstrates just how much the present impinges on the past. At the *Yûshûkan*, there is no mention of invasion, aggression, massacres or atrocities committed by Japanese troops in China, or, for that matter, of Japan's defeat in the war. Indeed, Japanese suffering is the only suffering on display.



Entrance of the NMM



A family fleeing in hope of reaching safety.



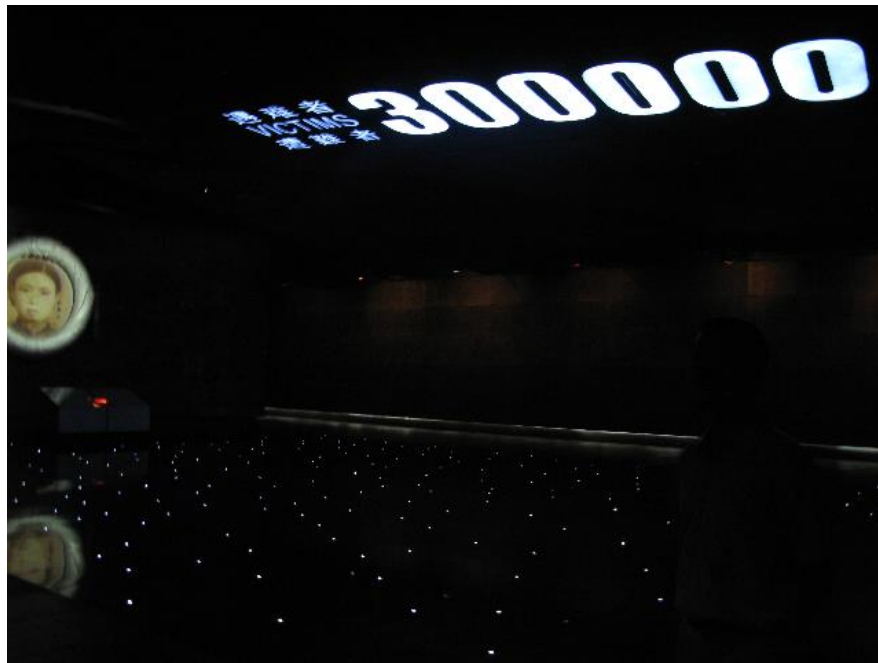
Visitors confront the iconic 300,000—the number of massacre victims claimed by the Chinese government throughout the exhibits.

Back to the Inferno

Nanjing's new Massacre Memorial unveiled at the end of 2007 is a sleek but somber tomb-like structure fronted by a moat and several bronze statues depicting the suffering endured by those caught up in the Japanese maelstrom. As one passes the turnstile—admission became free after local protesters complained the museum was profiting from others' trauma—eyes are drawn

across an expanse of gravel to a long black marble wall flanked on the left by a towering cement cross decorated with the dates of the massacre and a large bell on the right. On the wall the iconic number 300,000 is emblazoned and incised in several languages. This is a recurrent image throughout the exhibit, one that insists on the number of victims. Inside there is a chamber where visitors can hear the amplified sound of a drop of water every twelve-seconds, said to be the frequency of death during Nanjing's six-week ordeal. My Chinese companions thought that a bit hokey, but to me it provided a refreshingly subtle contrast to the screams of torture one hears visiting the old Seodaemun jail in Seoul once run by Korea's colonial masters.

Visitors descend into the museum, a mood-transforming experience as the past is exhumed and the inferno relived. Down the walkway visitors first confront a replica of the city walls with the sounds of bombardment, air raid sirens wailing, anti-aircraft guns blazing and a video of Japan's attacking bombers. From this sensory assault, one proceeds to a tranquil darkened room with a reflecting pond shimmering with electric "candles" over which projected images of victims' faces float towards the visitor, beneath a ceiling glowing with the talismanic 300,000, as a bell solemnly tolls.



Projected faces of victims float across a pond shimmering with candles beneath a glowing reminder of the death tally.

A sign explains: "A human holocaust: An Exhibit of the Nanking Massacre Perpetrated by the Japanese Invaders." Here, Iris Chang's legacy resonates loudly as the NMM appropriates her central and controversial metaphor; the subtitle of her book is: "The Forgotten Holocaust". The NMM ensures it is no longer forgotten. Interestingly, the holocaust theme was absent from the original NMM. The displays of photographs, newspaper articles, diary excerpts and artifacts trace the three hundred kilometer trail of sorrow and pillage from Shanghai to Nanjing, with a video of the aerial bombing projected overhead. What happened to the citizens of Nanjing, and to captured and surrendered Chinese soldiers, are richly featured, leaving visitors in no doubt about the scale of the destruction as the Imperial Armed Forces raped, looted and burned their

way from the Shanghai littoral all the way to Nanjing. What happened there then is understood here as a culmination and concentration of the malevolence witnessed all along the invasion route. Perhaps responding to the Yûshûkan's post-9/11 narrative, and with far greater justification, the NMM portrays Japanese troops as terrorists.



The massacre remembered at the NMM



Bronze attesting to a common crime committed by the Japanese troops in Nanjing and elsewhere.



Chinese father and son look at bronze depicting familiar sight in December 1937 of relative carrying dead and maimed relatives away.

One unexpected display shows the Kuomintang (KMT) forces that defended and then abruptly abandoned the capital, leaving its remaining denizens to their fate. This display was not in the original NMM, only appearing from the mid-1990s. Nanjing was the Nationalist capital and the massacre was, therefore, a story in which the CCP has no role. War memory during the Mao era featured examples of heroic resistance by the CCP, so Nanjing was pushed to the margins of war memory discourse. Nanjing based scholars recall that a study on the Nanjing Massacre by local researchers was suppressed in the early 1970s. It is only with the emergence of a parallel victim's narrative in the post-Mao era that Nanjing gained greater prominence in the narrative of war. [6]

It is striking that the newly included KMT display avoids recriminations or *schadenfreude* about the KMT's sudden abandonment of the city to the mercy of Japan's Imperial Armed Forces. The Taiwanese professor I met on a river cruise said he was pleasantly surprised by the impartial inclusion, pointing out that Chinese textbooks tended to dwell almost as much on the misdeeds of the KMT as those of the Japanese. [7] Indeed, visitors learn that the leader of the KMT forces defending Nanjing was General Tang Shengzhi, but the NMM glides over his escape to safety while leaving his troops in the lurch. It is an ignominious story, one featured in abridged form at the Yûshûkan, of top echelon officers abandoning their troops with no notice, leaving many trapped by the encircling Japanese troops. Some tried to flee, many surrendered only to be executed, while others shed their uniforms and tried to blend into the civilian population. Subsequently, Tang enjoyed a distinguished career in the PRC, rising to Governor of Hunan Province. Even in the Chinese translation of Iris Chang's book, *The Rape of Nanking* (1997), his reputation is protected as authorities prevailed on the translator to cut a footnote in which she drew attention to his opportunism.

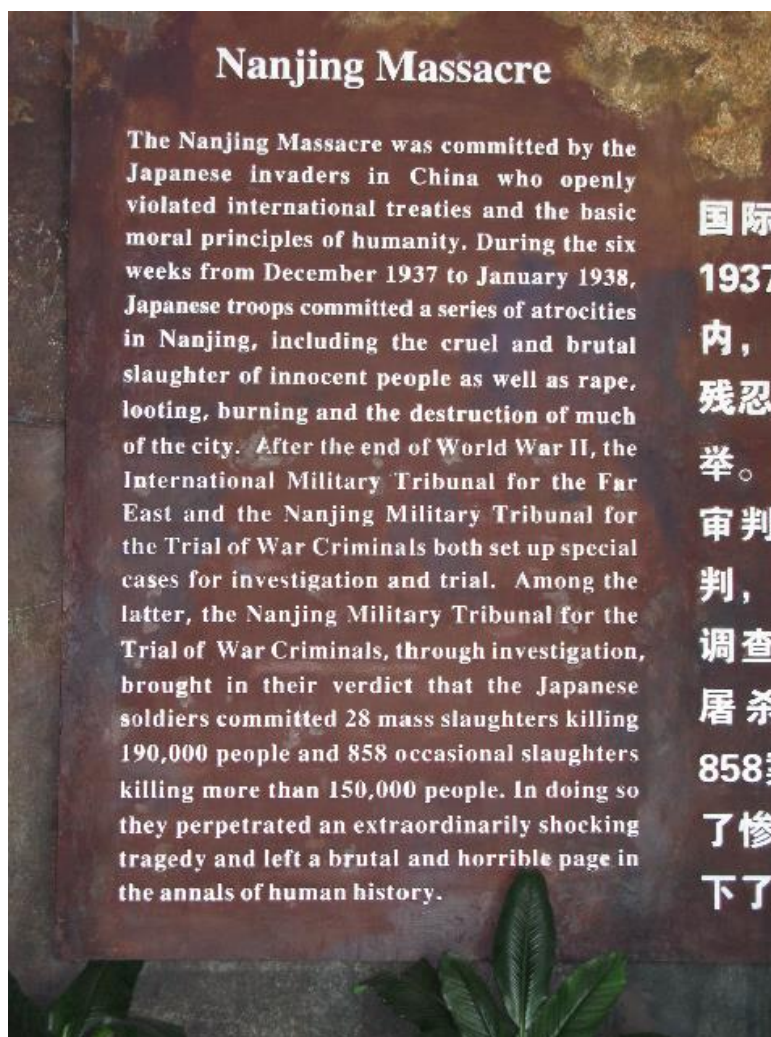


A mass grave site excavated on the site of the NMM.

Among the unremitting gamut of displays, there is also an excavation of a mass burial site with several skeletons piled one upon another, helter-skelter, grisly evidence that was unearthed from beneath the museum. [8] In this gallery of horrors there is a Shooting, Sabering, Burning and Drowning corner that graphically portrays in photographs, confessions, testimony and soldiers' diaries the means of massacre. We also learn that many of the tens of thousands of raped women were murdered as a standard procedure to eliminate witnesses. On display are some of the victims humiliated as they were forced to pose for pornographic photos by their rapists.

Problematically, the NMM displays include some photographs and representations that have been discredited, providing ammunition for Japanese revisionists who will no doubt seek to discredit the entire enterprise over a few mistaken attributions and misleading displays in the same manner they tried to bamboozle much of the Japanese public about Iris Chang's book and divert attention away from the mountains of evidence that corroborate her main claims and those of the NMM.

This brings us to the numbers debate. By insisting on the iconic 300,000, the NMM risks playing into the hands of Japan's revisionists who would like nothing better than a sterile numbers debate diverting attention away from how much is known about the sacking of Nanjing. Moreover, emphasizing the abacus of history diverts scrutiny away from more crucial issues such as why the troops were allowed to run amok for so long and why the cover-up, minimizing and denial persist to this day.



The massacre verdict at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (Tokyo Trial).

The estimates of victims vary widely and depend a great deal on the time-frame and spatial limits. [9] The higher estimates include victims well beyond the city walls and extend before and beyond the six weeks from Japan's initial incursion in Nanjing on December 13, 1937. The International Military Tribunal for the Far East sanctioned an estimate of 200,000 victims. In Japan, estimates of Nanjing victims range from zero by those associated with the illusion school who contend that the massacre is a fabrication, to 10,000-50,000 by those who are associated with what is known as the centrist school, a group of scholars who understand that there is no credibility in denial, but some possibility to cloud the debate by minimizing and mitigating the atrocities, to those who accept higher figures. Most Japanese specialists on the Nanjing Massacre accept figures in the range of 80,000 to 110,000 victims, depending on time and place.

The key point is that the atrocities perpetrated in Nanjing and the city environs were the savage standard operating procedure all along the invasion routes from the Shanghai littoral. The invading Japanese troops were forced to live off the land, in practice meaning the routine plundering of villages, rape and murder of women, and a devastating scorched earth policy that enveloped the entire region stretching three hundred km northwest of Shanghai to Nanjing.



This bronze of a beheaded man lies in the courtyard of the Massacre memorial.

Politicizing History

Yang Xiamen, a professor of International Relations at the Jiangsu College of Public Administration in Nanjing, and the translator of Iris Chang's, *The Rape of Nanking* (1997), says, "Ironically, thanks to the revisionists (in Japan), the government spent lots of money and time to collect all of this evidence and build this museum to display it." In his view, one shared by five other Chinese scholars I met, Japanese efforts to minimize, downplay or obfuscate the extent of wartime atrocities and Japan's responsibility since the early 1980s provoked a Chinese official response and public anger about Japan's lack of contrition. Yang also suggests that the globalization of human rights discourse in the 1990s sharpened bilateral debate over contentious history issues.

The controversy over history was triggered in 1982 by Japanese media reports concerning the role of the Japanese Ministry of Education in instructing high school textbook publishers to alter the word "invasion" to "advance" in describing Japan's escalation of hostilities in China from July 1937. [10] Yang acknowledges that specialists in China now know that this incident was misreported, but at the time the textbook issue was part of what Chinese perceived as a larger trend of whitewashing history in Japan. This example shows the power of the media in generating ill will and distorting public perceptions and the difficulties in undoing the damage. Even if specialists in China do understand now that the textbook row was in some respects 'invented' by the Japanese press, this does not stop them from citing it as the key incident in the deterioration in relations between China and Japan in the early 1980s. [11] This is not to defend Japanese secondary school textbooks as models of accurate and uncompromising war memory any more than their Chinese or US counterparts, but rather to emphasize how public memory is prone to lingering distortions that resist correction or reconsideration. [12] Moreover, as Ienaga Saburo's lawsuits stretching from 1965-1997 reveal, even if this particular instance of government interference was inaccurate, there were systematic attempts by the Japanese

government and powerful interest groups to downplay Japanese atrocities against a larger backdrop of a conservative-dominated discourse seeking to promote a vindicating and valorizing narrative of war memory that remains offensive to the people and government of China (and many Japanese). [13]

Did the Chinese government whip up a unifying anti-Japanese nationalism in the early 1980s to shore up Deng Xiaoping's legitimacy and deflect attention away from his adoption of controversial market-oriented reforms? [14] At a luncheon roundtable on July 7, 2008, Chinese specialists on the massacre all rejected this view, arguing that the government was not so savvy or prescient to instrumentalize history in this manner. In their view, Japanese whitewashing of the nation's shared history forced the Chinese government to abandon its emphasis on building a future oriented relationship as evident in Beijing's agreement, following normalization of relations in 1972, to renounce compensation. They blame attempts by Japanese revisionists to beautify war memory and shirk responsibility for igniting the ongoing bilateral battle over history that is impeding reconciliation.

Although unmentioned in our discussion, the textbook imbroglio did not occur in a vacuum. The ongoing dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyutai islands flared up in 1978 when members of the Japan Youth Association erected a lighthouse on the disputed territory and conservatives eager to assert a heroic and noble narrative were prominently weighing in on public discourse concerning war memory in Japan. This territorial dispute heated up following the reversion of Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty in 1972 involving a denial of China's claims, an assertion that assumed greater importance due to the provisions of the 1968 Law of the Sea. The secret enshrinement of Class "A" war criminals in 1978 at Yasukuni Shrine, first reported in Japan in April 1979 and in China in August 1980, also poisoned the atmosphere and undermined goodwill gestures.

Despite the consensus among the Nanjing-based scholars I met, others argue that Deng realized that the success of his modernization agenda in transforming China from a backward, impoverished nation depended on large-scale infrastructure projects, technology transfer and foreign investment. Given Deng's pragmatic inclinations, invoking history to help China get what it needed from Japan made sense, although this does not mean raising concerns about the shared past is merely instrumental as Japan's revisionists contend. Clearly, China does have legitimate grievances over the killing of at least 10 million Chinese in addition to widespread devastation that Japan has failed to assuage by remaining obdurate over war responsibility. [15] Using the past to serve the present meant abandoning what Reilly terms "China's benevolent amnesia towards Japan" and invoking wartime aggression to help pressure Japan to pay the bills by vastly expanding its bilateral economic assistance programs.

Reilly argues that the victimization narrative that emerged in the 1980s bore a strong resemblance to earlier propaganda campaigns. The Chinese were mobilized by the promotion of patriotic education from the early 1980s, reinforced by government-sponsored films and history museums such as that in Nanjing. However, unlike previous propaganda campaigns, the victimization narrative resonated powerfully among the Chinese people for the very good reason that they had endured tremendous suffering, not only under the Japanese, and suddenly found political space and resources to voice their pain. Reilly describes the state-sanctioned groundswell of popular activism in China in the 1980s on history issues that tapped into deeply ingrained memories of wartime suffering and widespread distrust of Japan. [16] Thus, just as the Chinese were finding a collective identity in their shared wartime experiences, "the Japanese"

(the Japanese image in China tends towards the monolithic with scant recognition of the deep differences that characterize war memory there) appeared to be backtracking on history, minimizing what happened, while failing to accept responsibility and express atonement.

In this increasingly tense atmosphere, even small gestures, omissions or slight changes in expression carried enormous implications. Any signs of downplaying the suffering inflicted and Japan's responsibility therefore only served to reinforce popular images of 'perfidious' Japanese. The textbook and territorial controversies thus came at a critical juncture in China's evolving war memory while Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro's official visit to Yasukuni on August 15, 1985, the first official visit on this politically symbolic date since the 1978 enshrinement of Class "A" war criminals, rubbed salt in the wounds. [17]

The Japanese government may be eager to declare an end to the postwar era and assert an identity free from the baggage of the shared past— indeed this was Prime Minister Koizumi's aspiration in trying to make Yasukuni visits 'normal'— but its neighbors show no signs of letting Japan off the hook of history any time soon.

This is precisely because history issues are far too useful at home, because they box Japan in diplomatically, and also because the Japanese state has waffled about its war responsibility. The enormously popular NMM keeps the past alive and ensures that it is examined and that Japan's responsibility for crimes against humanity is remembered.

Currently, as the Chinese state tries to insulate contemporary relations from popular anger over history, it finds that it is not so easy to get the genie back in the bottle. Patriotic education and state sanctioned history activism since the 1980s politicized history at the grassroots, ensuring that the younger generations with no first hand experience of the invasion are keenly aware and aroused about their nation's shared history with Japan. With the spread of the Internet they have a powerful tool to contest history issues and now have a social basis in China's growing middle-class. [18]

It is important to emphasize that insisting on Japan assuming responsibility for committing atrocities is not merely playing the history card. China, after all, suffered enormously from Japanese depredations and reactions at the elite and mass level are more than an instrumental tactic in support of a wider foreign policy agenda. Japanese revisionists harp on how China's leadership instrumentalizes war atrocities such as the Nanjing massacre, but this glosses over the very real suffering inflicted and serves to reinforce Japan's negative image as a country unable to demonstrate remorse and contrition over horrific acts. The Japanese have handed the Chinese the hammer of history by failing to fully acknowledge and assume responsibility for what happened so it is not surprising that the Chinese use it.



A baby suckling at the breast of a dead mother.

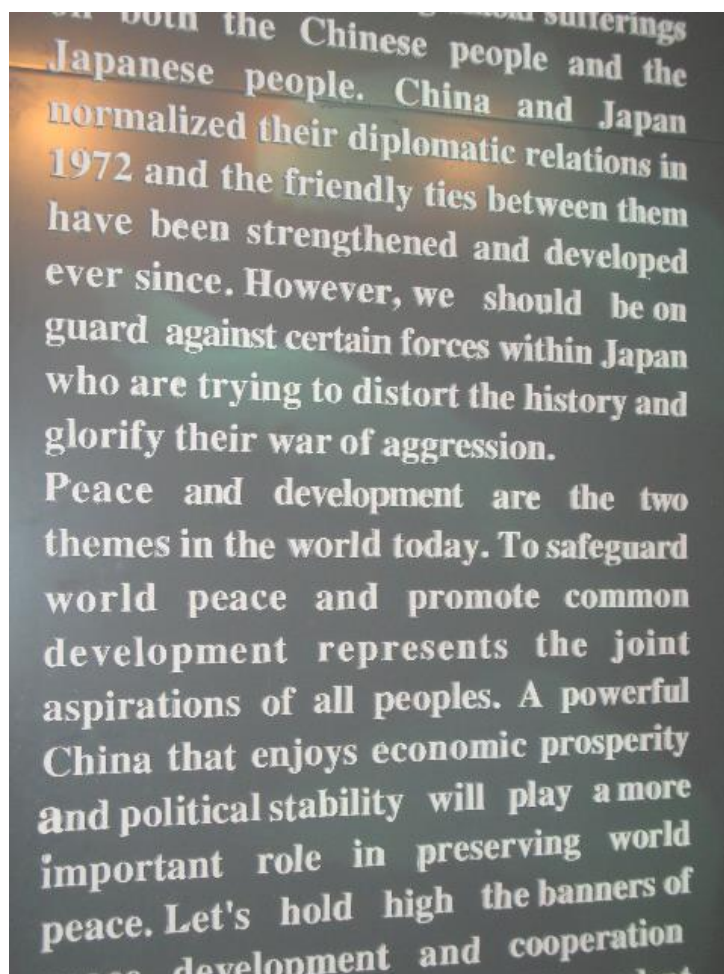
Lessons of History

The NMM is much more than a gallery of horrors and does try to suggest lessons to be learned, but it is not certain that chief among those lessons is patriotic duty. Although Buruma argues that the memorial at the time he visited in 1990 before the recent renovations seemed designed to evoke Chinese patriotism, this seems an inadequate interpretation now, two renovations later, because it fails to distinguish between state patriotism and popular nationalism. [19] The renovated and expanded NMM is a splashy, spacious and well-maintained multi-media affair bearing little resemblance to the ‘sad, ill-maintained’ site he recalls. [20] Similarly, the Yûshûkan Museum, which used to look like a neglected antique warehouse when I first visited in the late 1980s, now is a state of the art museum. None of the Chinese who accompanied me on a tour or others I questioned agreed with Buruma’s assessment. Visitors feel sadness and anger, and seem more likely to emerge from the museum convinced that the Japanese are truly barbaric rather than embrace a patriotism beholden to state directives.

In contrast with the Yasukuni Shrine, which has an ambiguous relationship with the state as a private religious institution that serves as a national memorial for the war dead, the NMM is unambiguously linked with the state and reflects the government’s agenda. It was built in the early 1980s at a time when relations with Japan were frayed over history issues. Then (and now) Chinese believe that Japan is in denial and incompletely contrite about the consequences of its aggression in China. The NMM fits with the state-sanctioned shift in war memory in the 1980s towards emphasizing Chinese victimization, a counter to the noble sacrifice narrative espoused at Yasukuni Shrine.

The most recent NMM renovation took place in 2006-2007, in the wake of Koizumi’s controversial tenure (2001-2005) when bi-lateral relations sank to a postwar nadir due to his six visits to Yasukuni Shrine. The renovation serves as a riposte to the Yûshûkan’s Nanking narrative of denial, official adoption of the hinomaru flag and kimigayo anthem, the 2006

revision of the Fundamental Law on Education emphasizing patriotic education, public discourse about amending Article 9 of the Constitution and the retreat of Japanese textbooks in 2005 from the more forthright representations of the shared past that began to emerge in the 1990s. For example, in 1997 all junior high school textbooks gave high estimates for the number of Nanjing victims while those published in 2005 mostly avoid citing the number of victims and the “massacre” is once again referred to as an ‘incident’. [21]



This sign at the NMM draws attention to the role of revisionists, here referred to as "certain forces", in stirring controversy by distorting history.

The renovated NMM does attempt to challenge monolithic images of Japan by drawing attention to the role of revisionists in provoking contemporary disputes over history, but given the surrounding exhibits and prevailing stereotypes that is expecting a lot from one panel. Perhaps small gestures are as far as the state risks going in modestly toning down the anti-Japanese tenor of the NMM. Chinese government officials, party leaders and intellectuals need to look over their shoulders lest they spark public ire by being seen to be too soft on Japan; the Internet and the socio-political consequences of modernization endow history activists with the means, autonomy and space to pressure the state. Displays about Japanese politicians visiting Yasukuni Shrine and Japanese textbook content update negative images of Japan and ensure that the NMM is not just about the past. Requests in early 2008 by Japanese revisionists for changes in some of the NMM exhibits were studiously ignored. In contrast, the Yûshûkan revised a display blaming

FDR for provoking war with Japan to revive the US economy in response to criticisms by George Will, a conservative columnist in the US. Subsequently, and quietly, revisions were also made sometime in 2007 to a panel describing Nanjing, removing an offensive reference to the Japanese troops restoring order in December, 1937 which used to conclude: "Inside the city, residents were once again able to live their lives in peace." [22] It is intriguing that there was significant media attention to the changes in the FDR panel while the revisions to the Nanjing panel were not publicized and remain overlooked.

As Reilly points out, the state has lost control of popular discourse over history and the emergence of history activists threatens the state monopoly over shaping and expressing war memory. These activists do not determine policy, but they do constrain public debate about war memory and Japan. As Deans argues, "While the Chinese leadership appears to want to pursue a pragmatic policy towards Japan, the mobilization of the historical legacy in the context of popular Chinese nationalism constantly limits the ability of the Chinese leadership to develop and maintain a rational relationship." [23] Thus, in assessing the NMM it is crucial to go beyond the monolithic message the state wants to convey and explore how individuals understand the memory and meaning on display.

Cindy Zhang, a twenty-two year old Chinese undergraduate studying in Nanjing, confided that the NMM had not aroused her patriotism at all. In the following passages excerpted from an email, she shares her reactions following her first visit while accompanying me on July 7, 2008:

"What disappointed me most about the memorial was that I had expected the exhibition to be condensed and focused, but, as it turned out, things were just the opposite. Although much disappointed, I had to give the memorial the right to be huger than necessary – were it not so huge, it would have been "politically incorrect" in some sense."

Here, Cindy challenges the Nanjing taboo, suggesting that the NMM is influenced by political correctness and is a bit more than it needs to be. Although she does not elaborate on whether this is in terms of state preferences or popular sentiments, it is clear that she is aware of the wider context in which history is being depicted, contested and possibly manipulated. She adds,

"After the visit, I often wondered why I was not the least touched or moved by the exhibition. One reason is that I was already familiar with that history so that nothing on display made me feel aghast or strike me as particularly overwhelming. I have watched the movie *Schindler's List* for over a dozen times; every time I watched it, I cried my soul out. But I never shed a tear for books or movies related to the Nanjing Massacre. I have been intentionally keeping myself at an emotional distance from the Massacre not only to prevent myself from being crushed by the cruel history but also to keep my mind cool and unaffected so that I can analyze the history in a rational way rather than let my perception be overwhelmed with and misled by too much emotions.

Here, Cindy refers to the contemporary context of war memory and her desire to remain aloof from the fray, resisting the NMM's grisly but powerful appeal to emotions.

In closing she writes:

"As for the relationship between the Chinese and the Japanese, I would like to share some of my thoughts. To begin with, neither side should take the Massacre too personally. When people take things personally, their emotions gain over their reason, giving rise to

unjustified hatred, which often leads to calamity. In about thirty years, all people who once lived to have any kind of personal experience about the Massacre will be dead. The future relationship between the Chinese and the Japanese in regard to the Massacre solely depends on how people who have no personal experience of this matter view and interpret it. I suggest that both the Chinese and the Japanese accept the Massacre as an established historical fact, try to analyze it in an objective manner and draw up schemes to prevent similar calamities from happening. I believe that the national characteristics of the Chinese and those of the Japanese played crucial roles in the Massacre. In the light of this, a thorough and in-depth analysis seems particularly important.

I would also suggest that China, including its government and its people, stop assuming the role of a once scarred victim and stop [emphasizing] its old tragedy too frequently. If one indulges in the past, no matter good or bad it is, one loses hold of the present; the past is to be learned and remembered, not to be a burden that hinders the march into the future. As for the Japanese, their national characteristics contain some particularly dangerous elements that are likely to result in calamities like the Massacre. Hopefully, they can face those elements with a positive attitude.”

Cindy’s detached perspective on history may not be representative, but suggests that monolithic images of the Chinese state manipulating history and stoking patriotism are misleading, overlooking the reality of individuals assessing history on their own terms. Her point about the need for China to turn away from the wailing wall of the past is reassuringly subversive even if again it may not be representative.

Towards the end of a numbing array of multi-media displays, three hours in a fast-paced tour, there is a room with a battery of eighteen video monitors that show films and documentaries about the massacre, although not the recent Japanese film that denies it happened. Alongside, there is a twenty-by-twenty meter archival wall with folders containing what information is known about the documented deaths in Nanjing 1937-38. It is a wall that insists that there is much to answer for and overwhelming evidence that Japanese forces perpetrated extensive crimes against humanity, much of it drawing on the testimony and eyewitness reports of Japanese soldiers and journalists.

It is an imposing edifice that Japanese revisionists have tried to undermine by pointing to small flaws, mistaken attributions and exaggerations. They try to discredit the victims’ “forest” of evidence by grasping at branches on the “trees”. [24] Sadly, the discourse over Nanking has bogged down in endless debates over exactly how many civilians, combatants and POWs were killed by Japanese soldiers. [25]

What is clear is that an inordinate number of civilians and unarmed POWs were executed in cold blood, not in the heat of battle as apologists assert. Moreover, Japanese officers and officials at the time systematically sought to cover up the very crimes that perpetrators, surviving victims, officials and observers have all acknowledged. The 100-man beheading contest attributed to two Japanese officers heading for Nanjing, and featured at the NMM, was a media invention aimed at stirring enthusiasm for the war and selling more newspapers to a hero-hungry public. [26] However, the inclusion of this concocted tale serves a purpose because it highlights what the media thought the Japanese public craved, implicating them in the horrors that ensued.



A copy of a Japanese newspaper article about the 100-man killing contest is on display

The final image as one emerges from the NMM is a towering obelisk inscribed with PEACE (in English and Chinese) that flickers in a reflecting pool. It is a jarring juxtaposition to the violence and mayhem featured inside, an unconvincing accessory that fails to persuade. None of the Chinese who accompanied me on this tour felt the message either masked or matched the museum's intentions and impact. One young Chinese man bluntly confided that the museum left him angry, reinforcing his already hostile views towards the Japanese. He said, "Yes we like Japanese technology, gadgets and machines, but not the people. At that time they always referred to us Chinese as pigs, but here we see who was really an animal and inhumane."



The Peace tower doesn't seem to fit with the NMM's intent or impact



The lessons of history at the NMM.

Monolithic Myths, Fragile Relations

In China and Japan, public discourse reproduces and reinforces monolithic images of the other that are broadly negative. The central problem for Japanese revisionists is the impossibility of reconciling their narrative of noble sacrifice with the gruesome evidence of cavalier slaughter and rape as presented at the NMM. Their strategy depends on instigating and instrumentalizing Chinese grievances over the shared past. Revisionist emphasis on denying, minimizing, mitigating and otherwise shifting responsibility for the atrocities committed by Japan's Imperial

Armed Forces 1931-45 may not gain much popular support in Japan, but does cast a long shadow over relations with China and ignites anti-Japanese sentiments. Provoking the Chinese over history naturally produces anti-Japanese outbursts in China that amplify anti-Chinese nationalism among Japanese in ways that play into the hands of Japan's revisionists. In short, inflaming the Chinese pays handsome dividends for revisionists, and so they act accordingly.

Thus, while leaders in both countries seek to build mutually beneficial, forward-looking relations, their efforts remain fragile and vulnerable. In Japan, a country with numerous cases of home-grown food-safety problems that affect millions of consumers, tainted frozen gyoza (dumplings) imported from China that affected ten Japanese consumers in the winter of 2008 sparked an anti-Chinese, media-induced hysteria of epic proportions. Positive attitudes toward China imploded in the wake of the gyoza hysteria and the media was still making it an issue during the G8 Summit in July, 2008. The LDP was roundly thrashed in the national press for not immediately disclosing all it knew about 'gyoza-gate' in the run-up to the Olympics, essentially found guilty of placating the Chinese at the expense of Japanese consumers. Hu Jintao and Fukuda Yasuo might have grander visions for bilateral relations, but can not ignore or escape such populist brushfires.

This latent grassroots hostility can easily erupt precisely because the media in both countries sensationalizes the present and the past. In 2003, 300 Japanese businessmen were caught up in a raid involving 400 prostitutes at a hotel in Guangdong for holding an alleged 'orgy' on September 18, the anniversary of the Mukden Incident of 1931. While not condoning the executives' conduct, enforcement of laws against prostitution in Guangdong appear to be quite lax in general while the notion that these inebriated salarymen were trying to make a political statement is ludicrous. The Chinese media, however, whipped up popular anger among an incensed population who were led to believe that the timing of the 'orgy' was a calculated insult.

Where does the NMM fit into this public discourse on history? Of course there was considerable media attention at the unveiling of the renovated NMM in December 2007 commemorating the 70th anniversary of the massacre, but films, television dramas, textbooks and the Internet reach wider audiences. The NMM is more like the repository of "evidence" that buttresses other representations of the Nanjing Massacre. It is ground-zero of Japanese evil, a site that reinforces the perception that Japanese conduct in Nanjing was emblematic of its fifteen-year war in China, a locus of concentrated Japanese malevolence that exists to honor local suffering and counter Japanese denial. [27]

The NMM draws heavily on testimony and diaries of Japanese soldiers, some of whom were shocked by what they experienced. It also includes an exhibit on Azuma Shiro, a veteran of the Nanjing massacre who wrote forthrightly about what he observed and did back in December 1937-January 1938. The court case he lost over whether some points he made in his account were plausible is seen in China to be typical of Japanese attempts to cavil rather than assume an encompassing responsibility with dignity and remorse. Thus, ambivalence in Japan about the gruesome past has burdened Japanese with the appearance of shirking, explaining why Chinese imagine that denial is more widespread than it really is.

Conclusions

Visitors to the NMM, and the Chinese in general, never learn that a majority of Japanese people do not embrace the valorizing and exonerating view of the war cherished and endlessly promoted

by Japan's revisionist conservative elite. [28] As Seraphim elucidates, the memory battles in Japan are hotly contested, exposing fundamental political cleavages that are central to debates over the past and ensuring that Japan's ambivalence towards its shared history with Asia draws considerable criticism based on invidious comparisons with Germany.[29]

She correctly asserts that the notion of collective amnesia in Japan regarding war responsibility is, media representations to the contrary, grossly inaccurate, overlooking the vigorous contestations and wide divergence of opinions concerning war memory that abound in post-WWII Japan. Alas, those who espouse narratives of denial and minimization are prominent in the political mainstream and in some influential media in Japan and can not be dismissed as "unsavory crackpots" to borrow Buruma's felicitous phrase.

Chinese, however, uncritically accept Iris Chang's monochromatic view of war memory in Japan, endlessly reinforced in the Chinese mass media, suggesting that a majority of the Japanese are in denial about the wretched past and eager to embrace a vindicating narrative. In China there is little recognition of the vibrant scholarship on Nanjing by Japanese researchers who have toiled for decades to present an accurate view of what happened and why. [30] There is also little awareness of the interest groups in Japan that have contested narratives of the wartime past up until the present. There is far greater awareness about conservative politicians' public denials of the massacre and their extensive involvement in study groups aimed at rebutting the facts of the massacre. The outpouring of Japanese books, films and manga raising doubts about the massacre leads many Chinese to question the sincerity of the joint declaration of November 1998 in which the Japanese government reiterated that, "Japan is keenly aware of its responsibility for the massive suffering and loss inflicted on the people of China resulting from its invasion of China at one time in the past, and expresses its deep regret."

The revisionists may be a megaphone minority in Japan, but they cast a disproportionately long shadow in China precisely because they are entrenched at the center of state power. The political influence of the revisionists is undeniable even if their views of history are not widely embraced by the Japanese public. Public opinion polls show that a majority of Japanese people reject reactionaries' insistence on denying and minimizing the atrocities perpetrated by the Imperial Armed Forces, and most think the government should do more to acknowledge war responsibility and atone for the excesses. The textbook written by the Dr. Feelgoods of Japanese history that has garnered so much media attention because it downplays the "bad bits" has been adopted by less than 1% of school boards around the country. Former Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's egregious attempts to reinterpret the history of comfort women and the battle for Okinawa are part of the reason he is remembered as one of Japan's most hapless leaders. PM Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni were criticized by a who's who of the conservative elite, including five former prime ministers and the conservative Yomiuri Shimbun. It is understandable why the Chinese government refrained from summit meetings between leaders and limited other high level government exchanges during Koizumi's tenure, but it is also important to recognize that official actions and popular sentiments are often discordant in both countries, especially regarding issues of war memory and responsibility.

Just as Japanese have much to discover about the tensions in China between the state and grassroots history activists over war memory, the Chinese people can learn much from understanding the realities of Japanese public discourse over war memory. Chinese may be surprised to learn that they can find common ground with many Japanese over war

responsibility. The media tends to sensationalize this discourse and generates misperceptions that fan hostility. As a teacher I have noticed how much better informed Japanese students are now than they used to be twenty years ago about this shared past. Thus only one of the more than one hundred research papers on Nanjing submitted in my classes in recent years expressed anything but condemnation and contrition. The only sign of contemporary Japanese contrition at the Massacre Memorial, however, are mute, decorative garlands of origami cranes, looking rather forlorn, piled as they are on a shelf visitors hurry past on their way to the exit. Though it may be scant consolation to Chinese that few Japanese seek a national identity rooted in an airbrushed history, knowing this might be a useful step towards reconciliation.



Over 200 footprints of survivors of the massacre are cast in bronze at the NMM.

The NMM serves as a barometer of the evolving discourse over history. Since opening in 1985 there have been at least three significant renovations, the last in 2006-2007 vastly expanding and modernizing the space. Certainly the curator has an eye to drawing visitors and the new multi-media exhibits and tranquil spaces for contemplation have considerable visual and sensory appeal. The NMM grew into a political space created by the shift towards a victims' narrative in the 1980s and the timing of its construction ties it with the 1982 textbook row. According to some observers, it is also linked with Deng's desire to raise the ante over history as a means of opening the spigots of quasi-reparations from Japan in the form of economic and technological

assistance. In the mid-1990s the NMM brought the KMT into the story line, perhaps reflecting shifting attitudes towards Taiwan and growing confidence. The holocaust theme now on display owes much to Iris Chang's legacy; German holocaust memorials were not part of the original design or inspiration in the early 1980s. The recent renovation also appears to be a riposte to the renovation of the Yûshûkan Museum the previous year in which the revisionist narrative vindicating and valorizing Japan's 'noble quest' prevails. Indeed, the NMM appropriates the post-9/11 theme of the Yûshûkan that justifies Japan's actions in China in terms of quelling terrorist threats, by referring to the Japanese invaders as terrorists. In addition, the NMM renovation took place at a time when bilateral relations were in a deep freeze caused by PM Koizumi's six provocative visits to Yasukuni Shrine between 2001 and 2005. Since Koizumi's departure, leaders in both countries have emphasized thawing relations and nurturing the habits and inclinations of cooperation, consultation and expanded exchanges, but there is no denying a hostile environment. Japan's official adoption of the hinomaru flag and kimigayo anthem, legislation compelling patriotic education and efforts to revise the Peace Constitution are provocations that link the current state with the wartime regime. The impact on Chinese perceptions, both official and popular, should not be underestimated and help explain why the NMM remains relevant and why the renovations are linked to an anticipated bid for World Heritage status. Most of the survivors will be gone by the 80th anniversary in 2017, but the NMM will remain as a poignant reminder of the nation's ordeal and the perils of nationalism, then and now.

Jeff Kingston is Director of Asian Studies, Temple University (Japan Campus) and a Japan Focus associate. He wrote and photographed this article for Japan Focus. He is the author of "Burma's Despair, Critical Asian Studies, 40:1 (March 2008), 3-43, several recent articles on East Timor and Japan's Quiet Transformation: Social Change and Civil Society in the 21st Century (Routledge, 2004). Posted on Japan Focus on August 22, 2008.

Notes

[1] It is striking that on July 7, 2004, Denton writes, "... special ceremonies were held, including personal oral narrations by living witnesses." This of course occurred during Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro's term in office (2001-2005) when he heated up the bilateral history war and froze diplomatic exchanges by repeatedly visiting Yasukuni Shrine, six times in total. Four years and two Japanese prime ministers later, the frenzied Chinese response to Koizumi's provocations has abated, and key dates in the two nations' shared history are no longer natural opportunities to poke the wounds of history and engage in recrimination. See Kirk Denton, "[Heroic Resistance and Victims of Atrocity: Negotiating the Memory of Japanese Imperialism in Chinese Museums](#)", *Japan Focus*, Oct. 17, 2007.

[2] On national humiliation as identity and nationalist contestations see Peter Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics and Diplomacy*. University of California Press, Berkeley, 2004.

[3] The documentary by Bill Guttentag and Dan Sturman, *Nanking*, (Thinkfilm, 2007) evokes the horrors and devastation of the Japanese invasion and ensuing onslaught. This documentary focuses on the role of western residents of Nanjing in establishing an International Safety Zone for noncombatants with readings from their letters and diaries spliced with archival footage and interviews with survivors.

[4] Phil Deans, “Diminishing Returns”: Prime Minister Koizumi’s Visits to the Yasukuni Shrine in the Context of East Asian Nationalisms”, *East Asia* (2007) 24, pp. 269-294 (287)

[5] For a discussion of the politics of war memory in Japan see, Jeff Kingston, “Awkward Talisman: War memory, Reconciliation and Yasukuni”, *East Asia*, 24 (2007), pp. 295-318. For the politics of war memory in China, see Mark Eykholt, “Aggression, Victimization, and Chinese Historiography of the Nanjing Massacre”, in Joshua Fogel, ed., *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000, pp. 11-69.

[6] Denton, op.cit., elucidates the evolution of war memory in China from heroic resistance to victims of atrocity. In Nanjing, for obvious reasons, it could only be about victimization. In interviews with six Chinese scholars specializing in the Nanjing massacres, there was no support for this analysis of evolving war memory. They see no clear dichotomy between narratives of heroic resistance and victimization in public history as described by Denton, arguing instead that both perspectives are inextricably intertwined, along the lines that Gries argues.

[7] Zhu Jianrong confirms this perception, arguing that a content analysis of Chinese textbooks indicates that there has not been any increase of anti-Japanese content in the 1990s contrary to prevailing misperceptions. Zhu Jianrong, “Japan’s Role in the Rise of Chinese Nationalism: History and Prospects”, in Tsuyoshi Hasegawa and Kazuhiko Togo, ed., *East Asia’s Haunted Present: Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism*. NY: Praeger Security International, 2008, pp. 180-189. Zhu draws on an unpublished study of Chinese textbooks cited on p. 183.

[8] The old museum also displayed excavated skeletons, but they had been laid out to make them more easily recognizable. The new excavations left the skeletons undisturbed to better convey the chaos of the mass burials and make the evidence more compelling precisely because it does not appear “constructed”. This “hot” evidence also is aimed at creating a sense of immediacy to convince skeptics that the museum site is indeed a mass graveyard where Japanese hoped to bury their crimes. Interview, Yang Xiamen, July 7, 2008.

[9] For an assessment of the numbers debate see Fujiwara Akira, “[The Nanking Atrocity: An Interpretive Overview](#),” *Japan Focus*, Oct. 23, 2007.

For an intriguing discussion of atrocities and how they are remembered (or not) see Mark Selden, “[Japanese and American War Atrocities, Historical Memory and Reconciliation: WWII to Today](#),” *Japan Focus*, Apr. 15, 2008.

[10] On the idea of the museum arising from the 1982 textbook controversy see Daqing Yang, “Mirror for the Future or the History Card? Understanding the ‘History Problem’ “ in Marie Soderberg (ed.), *Chinese-Japanese Relations in the Twenty-First Century: Complementarity and Conflict*. (London: Routledge, 2002). The misreporting of the revision by Nippon Television and subsequently the Asahi Shimbun is extensively analyzed by Caroline Rose, *Interpreting History in Sino-Japanese Relations*, Routledge Curzon: London, 1998. For an overview of the textbook controversy see Claudia Schneider, “The Japanese History Textbook Controversy in East Asian Perspective”, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (May 2008), 617, pp.107-122. Also Daiki Shibuchi, [Japan’s History Textbook Controversy: Social Movements and Governments in East Asia, 1982-2006](#). Discussion Paper #4 (March 2008), *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies*.

For details and analysis of Ienaga Saburo's pioneering lawsuits challenging state censorship of textbooks, see Yoshiko Nozaki and Hiromitsu Inokuchi, "Japanese Education, Nationalism, and Ienaga Saburo's Textbook Lawsuits", in Laura Hein and Mark Selden, ed., *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany and the United States*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000, pp. 96-126.

[11] The textbook controversy was invoked at a luncheon roundtable with six Chinese scholars July 7, 2008.

[12] There was a trend in the mid-1990s towards a more forthright reckoning in Japanese secondary school textbooks, but this provoked a backlash among the "Dr. Feelgoods" of Japanese history and the establishment of the Society for History Textbook Reform (Atarashi Rekishi Kyokasho o Tsukurukai, hereafter referred to as Tsukurukai). This group favors an exculpatory and valorous historical narrative. As part of Tsukurukai's efforts to shape public history and war memory, it published a textbook in 2001 (revised in 2005) for junior high schools. Extensive media coverage both in Japan and internationally conveys an impression that this textbook reflects the public mood and that Japanese are seeking an identity grounded in a more assertive nationalism based on an unapologetic view of Japan's shared history with Asia. Moreover, as Sven Saaler concludes, the Tsukurukai text has significantly shaped public discourse over this past to the extent that other publishers have revised their textbooks by retreating from the somewhat more critical mid-1990s narratives and have moved closer towards the Tsukurukai narrative. The media hype translated into unusually high sales of the textbook, including large volume sales to conservative organizations, reinforcing and amplifying its influence over public discourse. Bestowing best-seller status on this text then feeds the media frenzy and stimulates more curiosity. Sven Saaler, *Politics Memory and Public Opinion: The History Textbook Controversy and Japanese Society*. Deutsches Institut fur Japanstudien: Munich, 2005. Also see David McNeill and Mark Selden, "[Asia battles over war history: The legacy of the Pacific War looms over Tokyo's plans for the future.](#)" *Japan Focus*, April 12, 2005.

and Yoshiko Nozaki "[The Comfort Women Controversy: History and Testimony.](#)" *Japan Focus*, July 29, 2005.

[13] See Franziska Seraphim, *War Memory and Social Politics, 1945-2005*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2006. [14] For analysis of this perspective and the rise of history activism see James Reilly, "China's History Activism and Sino-Japanese Relations", *China: An International Journal* 4.2(2006), pp. 189-216. On Deng's desire to embarrass the Japanese and protect his back from domestic opponents see Ian Buruma, *The Wages of Guilt : Memories of War in Germany and Japan*, NY: Farrar, Straus Giroux, 1994, p. 126. This interpretation is rejected by Zhu Jianrong, op.cit., who holds that Deng sought good relations with advanced industrialized nations including Japan and avoided making an issue of the past because he knew China needed Japan's assistance to modernize. He argues that Jiang Zemin played a key role in whipping up anti-Japanese nationalism in the 1990s.

[15] Reilly, Seraphim and Deans, op.cit., all argue that China has played the history card to extract quasi-reparations.

[16] According to Reilly, the genie of history activism unleashed by the state morphed into an autonomous grassroots movement the state could no longer control and more recently into what he terms oppositional activism. *op.cit.*

[17] The Treaty of Peace and Friendship with China was ratified in Japan on October 18, 1978, a day after the 14 Class-A war criminals were secretly enshrined at Yasukuni Shrine. Conservatives opposed to normalization of relations with China were also mollified by the passage of the Gengo Law in 1978 that gave legal status to the practice of linking official dates to the year of an Emperor's reign, i.e. 2008 is Heisei 20. Deans, *op.cit.*, 282.

[18] Zhu, argues that successful modernization has created a large middle class that demands, "...respect from other nations. Nationalism thus acquired a social basis." Zhu, *op.cit.*, p.184.

[19] Ian Buruma, "The Nanjing Massacre as a Historical Symbol," in *Nanking 1937: Memory and Healing*, ed. Feifei Li, Robert Sabella and David Liu (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), pp. 1-9.

[20] Ian Buruma (1994), *op.cit.*, p. 185

[21] Schneider, *op.cit.*, p. 116.

[22] I am indebted to Sven Saaler regarding this point. Personal communication, 8/15/2008).

[23] Deans, *op.cit.* p. 288.

[24] See Daqing Yang, "The Challenges of the Nanjing Massacre: Reflections on Historical Inquiry", in Joshua Fogel, ed., *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2000, pp. 133-179.

[25] See Takeshi Yoshida. ["The Nanjing Massacre" Changing Contours of History and Memory in Japan, China and the US](#), *Japan Focus*, December 19, 2006. Also see Yoshida's , *The Making of the "Rape of Nanking": History and Memory in Japan, China, and the United States*. Oxford University Press: New York, 2006.

[26] For analysis of the alleged contest see Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, "The Nanking 100-Man Killing Contest Debate: War Guilt amid Fabricated Illusions, 1971-75", *Journal of Japanese Studies* 26-2, Summer 2000, 307-340.

[27] For related discussion see Selden, *op.cit.*

[28] For a more accurate and nuanced assessment of Japanese attitudes and public opinion regarding history see Philip Seaton, *Japan's Contested War Memories: The 'Memory Rifts' in Historical Consciousness of WWII*. Routledge: London, 2007.

[29] Seraphim, *op.cit.*

[30] For example see Bob Wakabayashi, ed., *The Nanking Atrocity 1937-38: Complicating the Picture*. Bergahn Books, NY, 2007.

Sites of Japanese Memory: Museums, Memorials, Commemoration
Kamikaze and Mass Suicide

“Challenging Kamikaze Stereotypes: ‘Wings of Defeat’ on the Silver Screen”

James L. Huffman
N.D.

http://www.japanfocus.org/-James_L_Huffman/2910

“The Songs of Nippon, the Yamato Museum and the Inculcation of Japanese Nationalism”

Yuki TANAKA
May 8, 2008

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Yuki-TANAKA/2746>

“Compulsory Mass Suicide, the Battle of Okinawa, and Japan's Textbook Controversy”

Aniya Masaaki, The Okinawa Times, and Asahi Shinbun
January 6, 2008

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Aniya-Masaaki/2629>

“The Martyrdom: Children and the Battle of Okinawa”

Mark Ealey
November 6, 2005

<http://www.japanfocus.org/-Mark-Ealey/1689>

Claims against the Japanese government for World War II war crimes extend to crimes committed against the state's own population. The pilots of “kamikaze” suicide missions and civilians caught in regions of fierce fighting such as Okinawa in 1945 are a case in point.

James Huffman's essay is an introduction to the award-winning documentary film *Wings of Defeat*, which addresses the legacy of the kamikaze attacks in the last years of the war and features interviews of both survivors of the kamikaze units and American sailors who survived kamikaze attacks. Yuki Tanaka discusses war songs related to the giant battleship Yamato, which was sunk during a “kamikaze” mission in 1945. He notes a recent surge of war-glorifying rhetoric, seen not only in a revival of military songs among Japan's youth, but also the increasing popularity of rap songs with ultranationalist and war-glorifying messages. He adds to the discussion an analysis of the relatively new museum to preserve the memory of the Yamato in Kure, the Kure City Maritime History and Science Museum. The museum was designed as a technology museum, but it is generally known rather as the “Yamato Museum,” because one of its main attractions is a model, one-tenth the actual size of the Yamato. Even the official tourism pamphlet of Kure City speaks of “the Yamato Museum” and not the official title. The museum proudly explains the sophisticated technology used in the battleship and emphasizes that it paved the way to Japan's postwar resurgence, because much of the same technology was later applied to Japan's postwar automobile and electronics industries. However, Tanaka also notes that some Japanese citizens have protested this historical interpretation.

The next selection (three essays/editorials summarized in one reading) addresses the forced suicide of many Okinawan civilians by Japanese soldiers during the Battle of Okinawa in spring 1945. Okinawans were a stigmatized minority in prewar Japan and the Imperial troops from mainland Japan did not trust the locals, whose dialect they could hardly understand. In April and May 1945, when US troops landed on the island, Imperial troops feared that local islanders would engage in “espionage” and “betray” them. In some situations, they responded by ordering Okinawans—not only military personnel, but also civilians, including women and children—to commit suicide. In 2007 the central government attempted to censor references to mass suicide in history textbooks outraged Okinawans. This anger against the government’s actions culminated in demonstrations with more than 100,000 participants—among the largest that postwar Japan ever had seen.

The readings here, two newspaper editorials and a journal article published during the height of the controversy, illuminate the Ministry of Education’s system of textbook approval (or censorship) and show how the central government pressures publishers to change the contents of history textbooks. The editorials show that although the changes that the central government demanded from publishers were subtle, the issue was highly sensitive for the people of Okinawa, who still feel discriminated against in contemporary Japan. At the same time, as the last reading, a partial translation of “Typhoon of Steel: An Okinawan Schoolboy’s Quest for Martyrdom,” acknowledges, civilians were sometimes willing to die during the Battle of Okinawa for reasons that, in retrospect, seem to many Japanese pitiful rather than noble. Taken together then, these articles shed light on the issues of state violence towards its own people and the idea of sacrificing civilians for the “good of the nation.” They also further underscore the politics of memory in Japan and the ongoing attempts to purge the national “master narrative” of all its dark moments in history.

Challenging Kamikaze Stereotypes: “Wings of Defeat” on the Silver Screen

James L. Huffman

Is there a more enduring World War image than the kamikaze pilots: those super-patriots who, according to the stereotype, willingly, even joyfully, pledged loyalty to their beloved emperor as they flew their doomed planes into Allied ships? The image still produces sympathetic tears and angry sneers: prime minister-to-be Koizumi Jun'ichirō weeping at the Chiran Peace Museum for Kamikaze Pilots in 2001; an American college history textbook referring to Japan's late-war air force as “a band of fanatical suicide pilots called kamikazes.” [1] Indeed, Risa Morimoto began working on her provocative new movie, “Wings of Defeat,” out of a desire to understand how her own uncle, “a funny, kind, and gentle man,” could have been such a “crazy lunatic,” one of those “jumping at the chance to die for their emperor.” [2]

Stereotypes such as this are problematic not just because of their inaccuracy—though that is serious enough—but also because they block our ability to think clearly about war, or about any of what Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney calls those “human tragedies on a colossal scale.” [3] The great strength of “Wings of Defeat,” conversely, is the way it counters the emperor-loving, death-inviting kamikaze stereotype, humanizing both the Japanese pilots and the American GIs they attacked. Watching the 89-minute documentary, which ran for three months in Tokyo and is scheduled for a PBS screening in the United States next spring, one is struck by the humanity of youthful pilot trainees as they confronted imminent death. In the film, they cry, as all people do, for lost loves and sing about spring flowers; they loved their country but hated the hypocrisy of their leaders and the cruelty of their officers; they loathed the idea of dying; and they responded to “duty” as most other soldiers do, with a fatalistic sense that they had no other option.

Co-produced by Morimoto and Linda Hoaglund, “Wings” uses interviews with several surviving kamikaze pilots and two GIs, along with comments by Ohnuki-Tierney, John Dower, and Morimoto Tadao of Ryūkoku University, to tell the kamikaze story from the participants' perspective. The major historical details are included; we learn about the creation of the Special Attack Forces (Tokkōtai) late in 1944; the drafting of 4,000 pilots as Japan's military situation deteriorated, and the downing of scores of American ships. But the focus is on the motives, feelings, and memories of the men who were selected to make the attacks, as well as those whose ships were bombed. Backed by visual footage of training camps, graduation ceremonies, bombing raids, and life back home, the film tells a powerful story of the ordinariness of human tragedy. While it posits no claim that these interviewees represented all kamikaze pilots, it nonetheless makes it clear that significant numbers, probably most, of the suicide pilots departed from the stereotypes, in a narrative style designed to provoke lively discussion, both in the classroom and around the table or bar.

On one level, the pilots belonged to Japan's elite, since a high percentage were former college students and a third were army and navy officers, but at the human level, the film shows them to have been quite ordinary, reacting not as zealots but as the thoughtful, insecure, complex people most soldiers are. Early on, for example, the Japanese survivors discuss their typically human inability to talk about their kamikaze experiences once the war was over. One reason for the hesitance lay in the criticism they felt from many of their fellow citizens (a rejection that bears comparison with the experience of American soldiers returning from Vietnam twenty years later): they had lived while their compatriots had died; they had failed to secure victory; they reminded neighbors of the great shame that the war itself had become. Another was rooted in the

complicated, hard-to-articulate emotions triggered by the kamikaze experience itself: fear, failure, self-doubt. While history provides evidence of more than a few pilots who saw their mission as heroic, none of the men in “Wings” did so; theirs was the ambiguity of confused, even frightened young warriors. Survivor Nakajima Kazuo says that to this day his neighbors do not know that he was a kamikaze pilot. “It’s nothing to boast about,” he says, adding that his fellow pilots “mostly . . . died in vain.”



Kamikaze gunner Nakajima Kazuo, as a kamikaze gunner and at the time of the filming

The stereotype of patriotic heroism is challenged too by the film’s depiction of the difficulty military leaders experienced in securing enough recruits to fill the Tokkōtai. When air force

pilots refused to volunteer, extensive public relations campaigns ensued. Parades were staged and slogans propagated to encourage young men to join the Pilot Cadet Academy; local citizens were called on to boost the morale of kamikaze-in-training by inviting them to their homes for rest and games, and sewing cloth dolls for the pilots to carry on their flights; recruits were not only told repeatedly how badly their country needed them, they were promised that they would become gods if they died. And pilots were prompted endlessly to sing a kamikaze anthem:

You and I are cherry blossoms in season. . . .
Every flower knows it must die.
We will die gloriously, then, for our homeland.

Even with all of this pressure and inducement, however, securing recruits never became easy. As “Wings” points out, not a single air academy officer ever volunteered for the Tokkōtai. The result was that the air force had to turn, finally, to the drafting of poorly trained teenagers and students, a point made repeatedly by the interviewees.

To a person, the recruits in this film also shared a pervasive—and ordinary—fear of death. Indeed, no theme reverberates more consistently in “Wings” than that of fear. “You can see the shadow of death on my face,” says Ena Takehiko, looking at a photo of himself as a pilot; “you see, it’s my funeral portrait.” Another recalls his guilt-ridden sense of relief on hearing about the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, because he knew the war likely would end before he had to fly a mission. And Nakajima recalls seeing graffiti on his barracks wall by someone recently ordered on a kamikaze mission; it said that when his number was called, he thought, “Until now it was someone else’s problem. Now I have to go, goddammit.” “I wanted to live; I didn’t want to die,” he says at another point, giving the lie to the American newsreel, also reproduced in the film, which assured Allied citizens that “there can be no more honorable death” for the kamikaze pilots “than self-immolation and crashing a plane on the deck of one of our warships.”





Navigator pilot Ena Takehiko, who survived when his plane crashed on a remote island.

Perhaps the most surprising of Morimoto's and Hoaglund's findings is the pilots' antipathy, not only toward cruel training officers but also toward the emperor. It probably should not surprise us that the pilots held the men who trained them in contempt. These were men, after all, who beat them, cursed them, and treated them, in Nakajima's words, "like wastepaper." Expressions of anger toward the emperor, however, are unexpected. It may be that these men's memories have been distorted by the passage of six decades since the war, making it easier to separate patriotism (to which all lay claim) from love of the emperor (which they deny having felt). But their attitudes toward the Shōwa Emperor were remarkably consistent, very much in tune with the findings of recent researchers who have studied documents left by kamikaze pilots. Ohnuki-Tierney, for example, has found that pilots typically became "less patriotic" while in training, and Yuki Tanaka of the Hiroshima Peace Institute notes that very few pilots' wills, diaries, or letters expressed "loyalty to the emperor." [4]

"I love Japan, but that Emperor, . . . that Emperor!" comments one of the interviewees, before launching into a tirade about his sovereign's failure to bring the war to an end and save "tens of thousands of lives" once it was clear that Japan was doomed. So much for dying for a beloved emperor; so much for faithfulness to the imperial father who had been exalted in the texts these men had read as youths. While the interviewees' views may not represent those of all TokkÅ • tai (perhaps not fully of themselves sixty years ago), the fact that not one expresses any love for that emperor is significant.



The shadow of a plane over a Japanese ship suggests the threatening, grim conditions in which Japan fought the last months of the war.

“Wings” is superbly suited to both the classroom and public showings. The visuals are graphic and often gripping; the interviewees are provocative, engaging, and surprising; and their conversations raise the kinds of fundamental, troubling questions that, handled well, ought to make discussions easier to start than to conclude. Moreover, the film is supplemented with a forty-eight page teaching guide, prepared by Gary Mukai of Stanford University’s Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education (SPICE), which provides a host of practical and provocative supplementary materials: letters from the producers and the scholars involved in the film, sample discussion questions, tests, and creative learning activities, along with maps and a glossary.

One reason “Wings of Defeat” merits extensive classroom use is that it is chock full of complex questions that many students, reared in the cultures of Madison Avenue and anime, will grasp only if encouraged to dig more deeply. The humanity of the pilots is obvious and likely will require limited comment. Other issues deserve careful attention.

Consider, for example, the issue of comparing the suicide pilots to the suicide bombers who populate today’s headlines. Both have undertaken self-destructing missions, reputedly out of belief in some higher cause. But are they really similar in anything but name? If so, what are the points of comparison? Today’s terrorists, at least in the popular mythology that surrounds them, choose their course freely, out of religious conviction and hatred of the enemy—who happens, once more, to be “us”—while the kamikaze pilots were drafted, then ordered into missions they found it impossible to refuse. “Wings” tells us, however, that our myths about the Japanese pilots were inaccurate. We thought them fanatics, but few were. We “knew” that almost all of them went happily to their deaths, driven by love of their emperor, but we were wrong. What then should we think when we read today’s accounts of jihad-driven suicide bombers?

Any discussion certainly must take account of the clear differences between the current and former fighters: the fact that today’s suicide bombers do the bidding of non-governmental groups and organizations, in contrast to the state-directed military commands that impelled Tokkōtai members; and the willingness of today’s terrorists to attack civilian targets, while the kamikaze

bombed only military ships. But there also are clear similarities. Both resorted to extreme measures mainly because they lacked the technology and resources to fight their enemies on equal terms; both sought primarily to inflict psychological rather than material damage, and both were impelled by rhetoric with religious overtones, whether the attackers personally believed that rhetoric or not. Both groups also were demonized as fanatics and devils by their more powerful enemies. [5] Discussion of such issues will do more than help students understand the kamikaze better; it should take some of the mystery and exoticism out of suicide bombers both then and now.

Another issue, even more troubling and pertinent, is why the pilots followed the suicide orders even when they despised the officers who issued them or questioned the emperor in whose name they served. Wartime diaries and letters from the home front make it clear that by late 1944, most Japanese—kamikaze pilots included—knew that, official propaganda to the contrary, their country's situation was desperate, and that many shared the fatalism of letter-writing Hatano Isoko's husband who "says it would be a complete absurdity to die in such a war as this." [6] So why did many kamikaze pilots follow orders, even to the point of death? The GIs interviewed here offer valuable insight when they comment that, had they received similar directives, "We have people who would have done that. We were that patriotic." Their point seems to be that, given orders, soldiers and pilots typically follow. But is that reason enough? And if so, why do soldiers almost always follow orders, even when their intellect, or even their fear of death, tells them not to? This film provides few explicit answers; indeed, it deals little with the contradictions between the kamikaze pilots' hatred of officers or fear of death and their reluctance to disobey orders. But its content raises the question most powerfully, as will many a sensitive teacher.



A fighter pilot stands in front of his plane, ready to take off

Tanaka has argued in *Japan Focus* that the Tokkōtai forces fought out of a combination of loyalty to their country and family (though not their nation-state), solidarity with fellow pilots, and a fear of being irresponsible or cowardly. And Ohnuki-Tierney, one of the film's commentators, argues elsewhere, in a study of kamikaze pilot diaries, that one answer lay in the state's ability to "aestheticize" the military, to make student-pilots take the fragile cherry blossom as the soldier's symbol and thus idealize service to their country even when they have lost faith in the emperor and his generals. The young pilots, she says, were thus left unequipped emotionally to resist even fatal and irrational orders. That was why they reproduced the military's "ideology in action while defying it in their thoughts." [7] A similar point has been made by "Wings" producer Hoaglund,

who felt “fuzzy” sympathy and wept, as a young student in Japan’s schools, whenever the kamikaze anthem was sung. Only in doing research for this film, she says, did she realize “that my fuzzy notions were actually a web of fabrications designed to protect the Japanese militarists who condemned the Kamikaze to a horrible self-inflicted death.” [8]

This contradiction between sentimental acquiescence to national myths and realistic appraisal of objective situations carried the seed of tragic consequences, for the nation as much as for individual pilots. And it continues to do so today, in a time when the red-white-and-blue flag resonates as loudly for many Americans of military age as the cherry blossom did for highly educated young Japanese pilots—a time when, “nationalism is the dominant ideology of our era.” [9] The differences between Japan in 1945 and the United States in 2008 may be striking in some respects; certainly opposition to war is more open and more widespread today than it was in Japan then. But the tendency to accept national myths uncritically continues, largely unabated, as does the willingness of leaders to send young men and women into crusades guaranteed to end in large numbers of deaths, both military and civilian. And that very fact suggests how essential such a discussion is.

A final—no less weighty—issue is raised by another survivor, Ena Takehiko, at the end of “Wings.” “Unless we abolish war,” he says, “I believe this planet is doomed.” The simplicity of his assertion is striking, almost shocking. It raises the question of how and why soldiers who fight their nations’ battles as youths (whether or not they support the war’s issues or agree with its commanders) often become peace advocates when they near death: why Prime Minister Tōjō Hideki allegedly came to understand that greed had led Japan to war only when he sat in Sugamo Prison, awaiting execution as a war criminal, or why the American sailors in “Wings” spent decades hating the kamikaze pilots, then decided after visiting Japan to let go of their hatred and work for reconciliation and peace. [10] This question may be the most difficult of all. It also may be the most important.

Wings of Defeat (2007), produced by Risa Morimoto and Lisa Hoaglund, can be rented or purchased from New Day Films, PO Box 1084, Harriman, NY 10926 or from New Day Films. For more about the film and to view the trailer, click [here](http://www.wingsofdefeat.com/) (<http://www.wingsofdefeat.com/>).

James L. Huffman, Professor of History Emeritus at Wittenberg University, has written widely on the press of Meiji Japan, as well as on Japanese nationalism; he is currently writing a textbook on Japanese international history and doing research on the daily lives of Japan’s poor in the late nineteenth/early twentieth century.

Notes

[1] John A. Garraty, *The American Nation*, II (Harper and Row, 1979), 700.

[2] Morimoto letter, A Teachers Guide for “Wings of Defeat,” Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education, 2008, 7.

[3] Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze Diaries: Reflections of Japanese Student Soldiers* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), 37.

[4] *Ibid.*, 6; Yuki Tanaka, Japan’s Kamikaze Pilots and Contemporary Suicide Bombers: War and Terror,” *Japan Focus*, November 25, 2005.

[5] Tanaka's "Japan's Kamikaze Pilots and Contemporary Suicide Bombers" presents a thoughtful discussion of similarities and differences. For Allied characterizations of the kamikaze pilots, see John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy* (Pantheon Books, 1987), 52-53.

[6] Undated October 1944 letter, Isoko and Ichiro Hatano, *Mother and Son: The Wartime Correspondence of Isoko and Ichiro Hatano* (Houghton Mifflin, 1962), 62.

[7] Tanaka, op. cit.; Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms* (University of Chicago Press, 2002), 300.

[8] E-mail correspondence from Hoaglund, September 11, 2008.

[9] Mark Selden, "[Japan, the United States and Yasukuni Nationalism: War, Historical Memory and the Future of the Asia Pacific](#)," Japan Focus, September 10, 2008.

[10] The Tōjō account comes from Murakami Hyoe, *Japan: The Years of Trial 1919-52* (Tokyo: Japan Culture Institute, 1982), 213-214. The material on the GIs is found in "Wings of Defeat: Another Journey," a 39-minutes companion film on their visit to meet the kamikaze pilots.

The Songs of Nippon, the Yamato Museum and the Inculcation of Japanese Nationalism

Yuki Tanaka

Si vis pacem para pacem

Over many years textbooks and conservative educational policies such as “moral education” have been central to the discussion of the propagation of Japanese nationalism. These are important facets of the persistent efforts to raise national sentiment. In recent years, however, new avenues for inculcating nationalism have emerged. This essay examines two such examples to gauge the role of popular culture in creating “love of nation” among children and youth.

The Songs of Nippon and Yasukuni Shrine

In April 2006, Yasukuni Shrine ran a music competition, inviting people to submit newly composed songs on the theme “Songs that make you love Japan,” as part of an event to commemorate “the end of the Great East Asian War.” Two hundred and thirty one songs were submitted in the three months before the closing date and six songs were ultimately selected by a panel of judges headed by musician Tsunoda Hiro. All six songs were written and sung by young amateur or semi-professional musicians, who are virtually unknown in Japanese music circles.

Tsunoda is a 58 year old singer, jazz drummer, and composer. In the early 1970s he played at famous jazz festivals in Montreuil and Newport as a member of one of Japan’s top jazz groups, the Watanabe Sadao Quartet. In 1971, his song *Mary Jane* became a big hit. However, his fame as a jazz musician quickly faded and subsequent efforts to form new bands all ended in failure. His recent songs express strong national sentiment.

Following the competition, Yasukuni Shrine produced a CD entitled *Nippon no Uta (Songs of Japan)*, comprise of the above mentioned six songs, together with another song, written by Uchida Tomohiro, a relatively unknown writer of children’s songs, and arranged by Tsunoda. All the songs on the CD, except for one, composed and sung by a group called Arei Raise, are in the fashionable folk song style, characterized by a soft, slow melody, with sentimental, hackneyed phrases mingled with patriotic sentiments.

The following are extracts from some of these songs.

Spin your endless dream
Keep walking without looking back
Your heart is unshakable
Embrace your motherland
This is the nation to which you will always return
The land of Yamato, with its gentle breeze’

‘We are blessed with peaceful days
Thanks to those who endured harsh times
Those who had little food and water day after day
Yet kept a strong will and dreamt of a distant future
I pray for eternal peace and love
That is what I wish, sitting by this little stream of pure water

One of the songs entitled *The Last Courage*, by a group called Lily, does not include a single reference to Japan, the nation, or subjects which imply national sentiment. Instead it is a mélange of hackneyed phrases like these:

We live helping each other, connecting with each other
 Dream, you, love and I
 How long should we keep running
 We do not realize even if we are running the wrong way
 The more we struggle to live, the more happiness we gain
 We don't want to cry, therefore we believe in the last courage.

Riding on A Dragon, the song written by Uchida and arranged by Tsunoda, exudes Japanese sentiment, through evocation of the courage and sacrifice of the wartime generation:

No matter how times change, there are things that we must not lose
 We will revitalize this nation that you loved so much
 Atop a cherry tree where we aspire to be,
 We find a blossom of our unchangeable oath
 You protected this nation of eight islands with your own hands,
 With endless dreams and ever-lasting love
 Thank you for your dreams, Thank you for your love
 We, too, will protect this golden country
 Riding on a dragon, riding on a dragon.

Are not these songs too mediocre to attract the attention of young people and become big hits? Indeed, few copies seem to have been sold at the Yasukuni Shrine shop.

One exception is the song entitled *Kyoji (Heroic Spirits)*, a rap song, by the group Arei Raise [Eirei Raise], comprised of three young boys. This group was formed when one of the boys saw a leaflet for the Yasukuni music competition shortly before the closing date. Indeed, they did not even have time to name their group before submitting their work. When their music was selected as one of the best pieces, Tsunoda named the group Arei Raise, a pun on a Japanese expression meaning “departed spirits of war heroes in the next world.”

Here is a full translation of *Kyoji*:

Even with those two atomic bombs
 You could not burn down our nation, Sir
 We overcame that disaster
 Japan is great, after all
 With few natural resources
 With many descendants of talented people
 Who overcame the human experiment with nuclear weapons
 Let's learn from the wisdom of our ancestors
 With the full experience of the Sino-Japanese, Russo-Japanese, and Great East Asian
 Holy Wars
 The experience of Edo, Meiji, Taisho, Showa and Heisei
 This spirit of progress cannot be replaced by anything else
 That is our unauthorized intangible cultural asset

Japan's counterattack will soon be launched
First we must arm our hearts with nuclear arms

People always survive, thanks to the sacrifice of others
But the important thing is what we do with that sacrifice
It has been sixty years since the war ended
It's now time to respect the spirits of war heroes and the end of the war
Japan's war was noble and grand, whether it was right or wrong
To fight the enemy, knowing you would be defeated
To fight to win from time to time at the risk of your own life
Our ancestors were not wrong
We just love Japan
We are neither right nor left, we are simply bald headed
We like Japan and the Japanese a lot
Don't forget our hopes and pride
For a start, raise your voices, you Japanese boys and girls
The spirit of Kamikaze is always with us
Let's change the way people see "the typical Japanese"
With hip hop scenes

We really love this country
So we want to keep our hearts as gold as our nation is
We Japanese are strong minded, training ourselves day after day
Let's make our song everlasting
We can get together here whenever we like
Our feelings echo each other
And become a rainbow under the sky of Yasukuni
There are things that we cannot do
Yet there are things that only we can do
Things that even we can do
Let's keep singing until our voices grow hoarse
Don't forget what we inherited from our ancestors
Keep them in mind all the time
And pass them on to the next generation
Let's walk together towards our future

Nippon, A beautiful country
Nippon, The country where the sun rises
Nippon, A magnificent country
Nippon, Nippon, Nippon
Nippon, The country where gods live
Nippon, The country that we love so much
Nippon, Our country
Nippon, Nippon, Nippon

View and listen to it [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snDrZKBZx1Y) (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snDrZKBZx1Y>). Listen [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4I-GsLtzat4) (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4I-GsLtzat4>) to their song *Kudan* (an allusion to Yasukuni Shrine) with photos of kamikaze pilots and texts of their letters home.

This song, particularly the last phrase with the repeated words “Nippon” (“Japan”), is so jaunty and rhythmic that it could easily be chanted by a crowd of Japanese supporters at a World Football Cup match. In fact, chanting “Nippon” seems to be adopted from the actual football support group cheering at the World Cup games.

On August 15, 2007 - the 62nd anniversary of the end of the war - Arei Raise launched its first CD album, entitled *Kyoji*, using the title of its first song selected for the Yasukuni CD. This new CD contains eight rap songs including a rap version of the national anthem *Kimigayo* and the above-mentioned title track. One of the other songs, *Kudan*, bears the name of the district in Tokyo where Yasukuni Shrine is located. This song, dedicated to kamikaze pilots, uses extracts from the last letter sent home by a young Kamikaze pilot - ‘Dearest Father, Dearest Mother, the only regret I leave on this day is that I was unable to show you sufficient filial piety. I can’t thank you enough for giving birth to me and allowing me to live a fruitful 20 plus years.’



出撃前仔犬と遊ぶ特攻隊の若桜

Kamikaze pilots prior to takeoff

Rap music is extremely popular among Japanese youth, as it is among young people in many parts of the world. Its historical origins - as an expression of rebellious sentiment by American black and Hispanic youth - have endeared it to some Japanese minority youth, particularly those of Ainu and Okinawan origin, who have begun to adopt rap and integrate it with their own ethnic

melodies, thereby creating somewhat novel and appealing new music. One example is the band, Ainu Rebels, comprised of 16 Ainu youth who recently formed a band that promotes Ainu pride through rap performance.



Ainu Rebels band

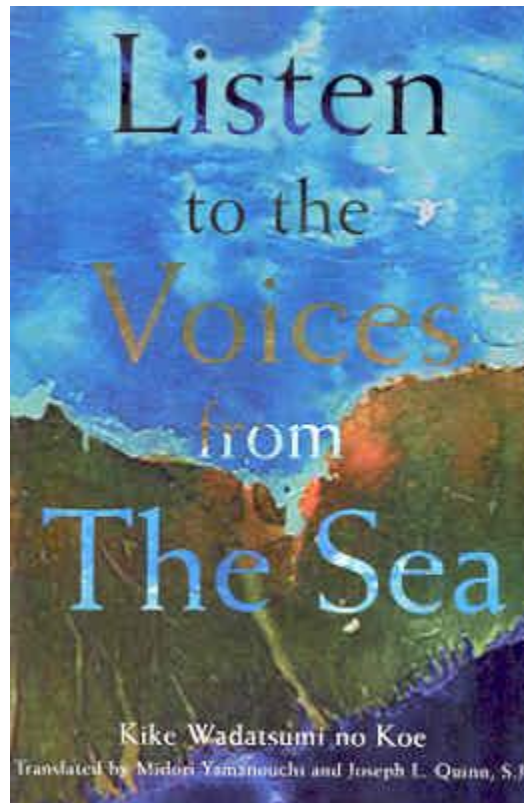
This enthusiasm for imported styles is not shared by some Ainu elders, however, who fear the mixture of foreign music with their own may destroy the authenticity of Ainu culture. The leader of the Ainu Rebels, Sakai Mina, is the 24 year old daughter of Sakai Mamoru, who was active in organizing worker movements against the exploitation of day laborers in Sanya in the 1980s, and died mysteriously in April 1988. His body was found floating in a canal near the Tokyo Bay.

Ainu rebels [perform](#) live at Alta Space

It is ironic, however, that rap is now eagerly adopted by groups like Arei Raise, which promote national sentiment and thus endorse the anti-minority policies adopted by Japanese state authorities. It is well recognized that the authorities continue to sanitize Japanese wartime atrocities not only against neighboring Asians but also against Japanese minority groups, as is evident, for example, from the recent text book affair regarding the compulsory group suicide of Okinawan citizens during the battle of Okinawa. There are, of course, those who think rap and hip hop music are an insult to the heroic Japanese spirits enshrined at Yasukuni Shrine. Regardless, it seems that songs by Arei Raise have a youth following – particularly among the so-called NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Indeed, the members of Arei Raise themselves belong to NEET. It is well known that some young NEETs seek identity through patriotism, as a means of regaining self-respect. Some, for example, are fans of nationalistic and xenophobic comics, such as those written by Kobayashi Yoshinori. There seems to be a similar phenomenon developing in the world of Japanese rap music as well.

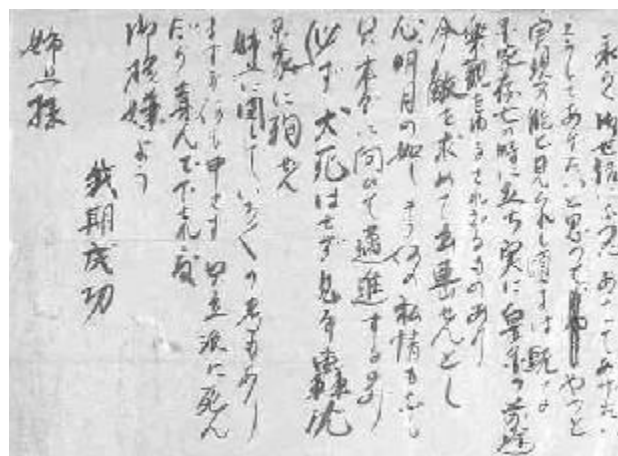
It is also ironic that these patriotic NEET youths, who are themselves the victims of Japanese government policies of “economic restructuring and social reform” are unable to understand that young Kamikaze pilots - who were of a similar age at the time - were exploited by the military

leaders and politicians of a government on the verge of collapse. If one reads carefully *Kike Wadatsumi no Koe* (Listen to the Voices from the Sea: Writings of Fallen Japanese Students), a collection of wills and letters written by young student soldiers including Kamikaze pilots, one can easily understand that Kamikaze pilots did not die for the “noble cause” of defending Japan.



Listen to the Voices from the Sea

Rather, through an indescribably painful psychological process, many sought justification for their *forced suicide* in an effort to defend their own beloved family members.



Letter from Kaiten pilot in Naval special forces

Some professional military pilots rejected the logic of the Kamikaze. Lieutenant Seki Yukio, a professional naval pilot, is a case in point. In October 1944, when ordered to carry out a suicidal mission by his senior officers, Seki told a colleague shortly before departure ‘We can no longer save Japan. It is a desperate measure that they have now decided to kill the best pilots like myself. I can drop a 500 kilogram bomb on the deck of an enemy aircraft carrier without killing myself’; ‘I am not going to die for the emperor, nor for Imperial Japan. I am going to carry out this mission for my beloved wife. I cannot refuse an order, so I will die to protect my wife. I will die for my beloved. Is that not splendid?’

In Usa city of Oita Prefecture, a Japanese restaurant called Tsukushi-Tei was frequented by many Kamikaze pilots before departing for their last missions. The columns and lintels of the Japanese rooms of this restaurant are full of marks of sword cuts that the young Kamikaze pilots made, heavily drunk and swinging around their swords. These marks convey the frustration experienced by these boys and the depths of bitterness at their forced self-annihilation. If any rap music is to be composed about Kamikaze pilots, it should convey the profound bitterness and anger of these youths. Undoubtedly, their anger, which they could not be clearly expressed in the political situation at the time, was directed at the military leaders and politicians who had little concern for the sacrifice of the lives of thousands of young men under the grand but meaningless justification of “defending the nation,” despite their clear knowledge of unavoidable defeat in the war in the very near future.

In addition to the music competition, Yasukuni Shrine is trying to appeal to young people through other new programs. For example, “ecology” is one of the issues that Yasukuni Shrine has recently begun promoting. On November 11, the World Peace Commemoration Day of 2007, the shrine held a public symposium on ecology and education under the title *To Live*. Here is the text which advertised the symposium:

Protect the Japanese “Spirit”
Japan’s nature is unusually rich in the world
Dense forest, pure water, and mild climate have had a considerable influence on the
Japanese “spirit”

Japan’s education used to be outstanding and impressed the rest of the world
It provided children with the world’s highest level of academic ability

However, now, Japan’s nature is suffering
Japan’s education is distorted
Such conditions may seriously damage the Japanese “spirit”

What is the Japanese “spirit”?
What should we do to protect the Japanese “spirit”?

Let’s think about these issues, with our guest speakers, ecological mountaineer Noguchi Ken, and educational scholar Takahashi Shiro, who tackles education problems.

Noguchi is well known in Japan as a young and sincere mountaineer who regularly goes to Mount Everest and collects garbage that other mountaineers have left at various places in the mountains.



Noguchi Ken

He is popular among youth and often appears on TV shows, but hardly expresses any nationalistic opinions. He seems to be apolitical and politically naïve. He perhaps feels that he should utilize any occasion to promote ecological issues, even an event organized by a controversial institution like Yasukuni Shrine. Takahashi, on the other hand, a professor at Myojo University in Tokyo, is one of the nationalist academics who belong to the Society for History Textbook Reform, an organization promoting a revisionist history textbooks. From the above-mentioned advertisement, it is clear that the real topic that the Yasukuni Shrine wished to highlight at the symposium was the controversial school textbook issue, the ecological issue and the star power of Noguchi Ken to attract an audience. Yet, it is ironic that Yasukuni Shrine, which glorifies war – one of the most ecologically damaging human activities – exploits popular ecological concern for the propagation of their real aim: to inculcate nationalism and patriotism among the youth in Japan.

The Yamato Museum and Supremacy of Japanese Technology

The Japanese government and the Ministry of Defense are also utilizing ostensibly non-militaristic issues such as scientific technology in order to quietly infiltrate nationalistic ideas into the minds of Japanese youth, in order to pave the way for the eventual abolishment of Article nine of Japan's constitution. One such example is the Yamato Museum.

On April 23, 2005, just months before the 60th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the end of the Asia-Pacific War, Kure City Maritime History and Science Museum was officially opened at the port of Kure, about 40 kilometers from Hiroshima city. Despite its name, this four-storey museum is filled almost entirely with exhibits related to the Japanese Imperial Navy. They include a huge model of the Battleship Yamato, replicas of artillery shells used by the Yamato and other Japanese battleships, a replica of the Kaiten (a human suicide torpedo) and zero fighter planes. A more accurate name would be the Kure Military History and Science Museum," although the museum is known throughout Japan as the Yamato Museum. This refers to the main exhibit, which is a model, one-tenth the actual size of the battleship Yamato, the world's largest, heaviest, and most powerful battleship ever

constructed with nine 460mm canons firing 1.36 tonne shells. A pamphlet produced by the Kure City Council calls it “the Yamato Museum,” and the official title is not used at all. The museum’s official website also uses the name “Yamato Museum”.

Visitors to the museum pass through the entrance on the ground floor to a huge hall displaying a 26.3meter long model of the Yamato, which is the centerpiece of the museum and can be viewed from all four stories of the building.

Visitors then proceed to a separate exhibition room containing small models of many other battleships constructed at the Kure Naval Dockyard before and during the Asia-Pacific War. A series of panels explains how Kure developed into a modern industrial city and prospered, thanks to the Naval dockyard. In the center of the room is a large panel with a copy of one of the original blueprints and other panels that proudly explain the sophisticated technology used at the time to construct and assemble the world’s largest battleship. In addition, panels tracking the path the Yamato took on its last mission against more than 1,000 US ships off Okinawa. Diagrams and photos show how the ship was attacked and destroyed by U.S. planes and bombers on April 7, 1945, well before reaching the sea of Okinawa. Interviews with surviving crew members are also shown on a screen.

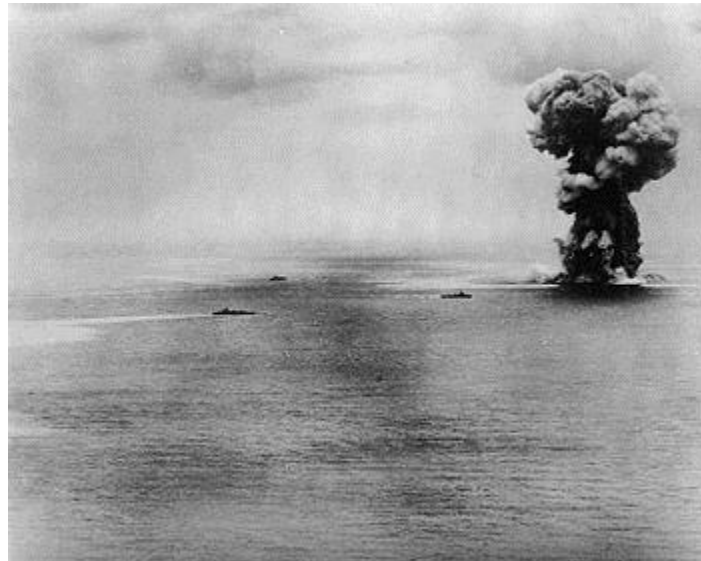
Yet, there is no mention of the fact that Admiral Ito Seiichi, the commander of Operation Ten-Go for which the Yamato and several other ships were mobilized, considered the mission strategically absurd strongly protested to Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Fleet, Admiral Toyoda Soemu, up to the last moment. One panel circuitously notes that “3,056 out of 3,332 crew members met their fate alongside the ship,” avoiding the word “dead.”

The highlight of this section, however, is a large screen, which repeatedly shows a colorful 15 minute long film which explains in a very simplistic manner how post-war Japanese industrial technology, ranging from oil tankers, to automobiles, bullet trains, electric appliances, binoculars and more, developed as a result of the technology used to construct the Yamato.

Beyond these pre-war and war time exhibits, visitors proceed to another room displaying post-war industrial technology used by local factories in Kure. These appear almost as if they are advertisements for private companies. As one enters the section, a small panel mentions with scant explanation “the law for transforming former naval ports,” Most visitors pass this without really understanding the meaning of this law, which was enacted in 1950, and which applied to the four former naval base cites – Yokosuka, Kure, Maizuru, and Sasebo. The law transferred the Imperial Navy facilities of these cities to privately-owned facilities or those managed by local communities, so as to redirect their industries to peaceful ones. Article 1 of this law stated that ‘by changing former naval port cities to peaceful industrial port cities, this law aims to contribute to accomplishing the ideal of establishing a peaceful Japan.’ Ironically, however, not long after the enactment of the law, all four cities began to provide facilities for the U.S. Naval Forces in the Korean War. They soon became important bases for Japan’s Maritime Self Defense Forces. In other words, the U.S Navy and the Japanese Self Defense Forces have violated this law almost since its inception and continue to do so today.

The museum’s official website homepage states that ‘The battleship Yamato was the world’s largest battleship, secretly constructed and completed in December 1941 at Kure Naval Dockyard, as a culmination of the foremost technology of the time. On April 7, 1945, it was sunk

by American planes, while en route to a mission in Okinawa, and 3,056 out of 3,332 crew members met their fate alongside the ship.



The Yamato moments after the explosion that sank it

Yet, the technology used in the construction of the battleship Yamato survived and was subsequently applied, not only to the construction of large scale oil tankers, but also to many other fields, including the production of automobiles and electric appliances, thereby supporting Japan's post-war rehabilitation. This model of the battleship Yamato, conveys the *importance of peace* and brilliance of scientific technology to future generations.' (emphasis added) Despite this grand claim, however, it is difficult to find any message about the importance of peace among the museum exhibits celebrating Japan's wartime navy.

In May 2006, a group of concerned citizens from Kure city lodged a request to the museum to reconsider the way the museum displays and explains its exhibits, emphasizing the following four points.

- (1) There is no explanation that arms and weapons including battleships are designed to kill large numbers of people.
- (2) There is no reference to the fact that, in the 15 years of the Asia-Pacific War, during which most items at the museum were produced and used, Japan plundered natural resources and food in many parts of Asia and killed a large number of Asian civilians, and that at the same time some 3 million Japanese people also died. The museum chooses, simply, to emphasize proudly the different aspects of military technology.
- (3) In the section on historical background, there is no reference to the forced labor of Korean and Chinese workers, nor to the underground trenches in and around Kure city made by exploiting these workers. Instead, the museum emphasizes only that the people of Kure enjoyed a modern life style from early in its history, thanks to the Navy, as they were the first in Hiroshima prefecture to have train and city water services.
- (4) The museum exhibits show little consideration for visitors from neighboring Asian countries such as Korea, China and Indonesia.

In responding to this request, the director of the museum, Mr. Todaka Kazunari, stated that the museum demonstrates to visitors that there are two aspects to technology – a good one and a bad one. Ideally, he explained, visitors to the museum should understand that the abuse of technology can result in tragedy. Yet nowhere in the museum exhibits is there a reference to the “two aspects” or the “abuse of technology.”

The building of this museum was a costly exercise. Kure city spent 6.5 billion yen (approximately US\$60 million), of which 1.1 billion yen was funded by the Self Defense Agency and 1.3 billion yen by the Japanese government. Given this financial support, it would seem likely that the museum’s basic policies have been influenced considerably by the official Japanese government view of the Asia Pacific War and the conduct of the Japanese Imperial Navy during the war. Yet, it is important to note that the museum does not openly express strong patriotism or militarism. Instead, as described above, it takes an indirect approach, emphasizing Japan’s wartime technological superiority in the production of battleships and urges visitors – particularly children on school excursions – to admire Japan’s military power. In this sense, there is a certain similarity between the exhibition of the model battleship Yamato and that of the B-29 bomber, Enola Gay, in the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center of the U.S. National Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C. The Enola Gay is presented as evidence of U.S. military might and technological supremacy, with no information about the devastating destruction of Hiroshima City and the mass killing of civilians by the atomic bombing.



The Enola Gay at the National Air and Space Museum

The Yamato Museum actively encourages school excursions and school study tours from all over the country to the museum, falsely claiming that the museum is “the establishment from which peace messages are dispatched.” It also runs various special events and workshops for children at the museum on weekends and during school holidays. In order to attract children and young adults, the museum also has a small manga library, which is filled mostly with the manga series *Uchu Senkan Yamato* (The Space Battleship Yamato), one of the most popular manga which was made into a series of films, as well as a long-running TV animation series from the mid 1970s to early 80s. In fact, the story of this manga has little reference to the real battleship Yamato. Set in

the year 2199, the Earth is attacked with radioactive bombs by an alien known as the Gamilas, and as a result, becomes uninhabitable. The surviving people live in refuges deep underground, and convert the ruin of the Japanese battleship Yamato into a spaceship. The space battleship departs for a long journey to the planet Iscandar, 148,000 light years away from Earth, to obtain a device called the Cosmo-Cleaner D, which can clean radiation covering the Earth. In this journey, the Yamato faces various crises that have to be overcome to save the Earth. The Yamato Museum made Matsumoto Reiji, the comic artist who produced this manga series, an honorary director of the museum. It is rather ironic that a museum located so close to the city that was the first target of the atomic bomb has little concern with the reality of the actual effects of radiation upon human beings. On the contrary, it promotes the manga which creates the myth that human beings can still survive even when all of Earth is contaminated with radiation. Fantasizing the battleship Yamato through the science fiction form of manga and animation also distracts children and youth from the real issues surrounding the battleship: the horrors of war and the sacrifice of many lives for meaningless missions.

In the first 197 days after the official opening of the Yamato Museum on April 23, 2005, one million people visited the museum. In the next 188 days, a further one million visitors viewed its exhibits, and by May 20, 2007, three million people had visited the museum. The opening of the museum coincided with the release of the film, *Otokotachi no Yamato* (Men's Battleship Yamato), which became a big hit in Japan. This film does not openly glorify the suicidal mission of the Yamato, but instead romanticizes the deaths of more than 3,000 crew members of the Yamato by emphasizing the young boys' feeling that they were sacrificing their lives in order to defend their families and lovers. Thus the film does not question the fundamental issue of sacrificing people's lives for war. There is no doubt that the film also contributed to the popularization of the museum itself.

The museum shop sells not only toy models of the Yamato and other Japanese battleships, fighter planes, submarines and tanks, but also the serial pictorial publication, *Welfare Magazine*, whose cover title shows the 'f' of 'Welfare' as a pistol pointing down. The title remains a conundrum to this critic, as this glossy magazine is filled with photographs illustrating the ways and activities of the Self Defense Forces, from haircut styles, to uniforms, equipment, weapons and arms. It would appear to be a fascinating source of information to young boys whose imagination is stirred by the myths of the heroism of war.

The long-term impact of the exhibits in the Yamato Museum and Yasukuni Shrine's various tactics for shaping the ideas of Japanese youth on war and peace cannot be underestimated. Many people throughout Japan are currently actively involved in grass-root movements opposing revision of the Japanese peace constitution, the militarization of Japan, revisions of school history textbooks, relocations and expansion of the U.S military bases on Japanese soil and the like. Some young activists are trying to use musical and visual tools to promote their campaigns. Yet in general, Japan's grass-root movements remain narrowly focused on "political issues," and are not developing as wide-ranging "cultural movements." Can these movements cultivate and develop a distinctive peace-oriented popular culture – music, manga, films, theatre, fine art and the like – to reach the wider population, including children and youths. Such a popular culture must counteract the "nationalistic sentimentality" that Yasukuni Shrine inculcates, and the mythos of "technological superiority" that the Japanese government and the Ministry of Defense propagate. Such a culture would help people understand the harsh reality of war (i.e., the reality that people do not die for war, but rather, that war brutalizes and kills people), and at the same

time show the values of peace, love and friendship. There is profound truth in the proverb “*Si vis pacem para pace* (If you seek peace, prepare for peace),” peace activists’ variation of “*Si vis pacem para bellum* (If you seek peace, prepare for war).”

Yuki Tanaka is Research Professor, Hiroshima Peace Institute, and author of [Japan's Comfort Women. Sexual slavery and prostitution during World War II and the US Occupation](#), and a coordinator of Japan Focus.

Compulsory Mass Suicide, the Battle of Okinawa, and Japan's Textbook Controversy

Aniya Masaaki, The Okinawa Times, and Asahi Shinbun

For more than three decades, historical memory controversies have been fought over Japanese school textbook content in both the domestic and international arenas. In these controversies, Japanese textbook contents, which are subject to Ministry of Education examination and revision of content and language prior to approval for use in the public schools, repeatedly sparked denunciations by Chinese and Korean authorities and citizens with respect to such issues as the Nanjing Massacre, the comfort women, and coerced labor. In 2007, the most intense controversy has pitted the Ministry of Education against the residents and government of the Japanese prefecture of Okinawa. The issue exploded in March 2007 with the announcement that all references to military coercion in the compulsory mass suicides (shudan jiketsu) of Okinawan residents during the Battle of Okinawa were to be eliminated. The announcement triggered a wave of anger across Okinawan society leading to the mass demonstration in Ginowan City of 110,000 Okinawans addressed by the top leadership of the Prefecture. It was the largest demonstration since the 1972 reversion of Okinawa, exceeding even the response to the 1995 rape of a twelve-year old Okinawan girl by three US GIs.

We present three articles that illuminate the controversy and the tragic events of the Battle of Okinawa, including both the Japanese originals and English translations. Aniya Masaaki, an Okinawan historian and emeritus professor of International University examines the issues of the Battle and the textbook controversy, showing how the Ministry of Education rejected the testimony of Okinawan witnesses in favor of two soldiers who filed a defamation suit against novelist Oe Kenzaburo for his work on the military-enforced mass suicides. An Okinawan Times editorial that follows provides a detailed examination of the hair-splitting language politics that lie behind the Ministry of Education's rejection of the reference to military force in the compulsory group suicide that was imposed on Okinawan citizens, and its partial retreat in the face of citizen anger. Finally, the Asahi Shinbun's editorial offers a judicious examination of the politics of attempt to censor the issue from the nation's textbooks. Together, these articles cast a brilliant light on the fraught political manipulation of the textbooks examination system. MS



Okinawan sculptor Kinjo Minoru's relief depicting the horror of the Battle of Okinawa, during which many Okinawans were killed or forced to commit suicide after seeking refuge in the island's caves.

I. Compulsory Mass Suicide and the Battle of Okinawa

Aniya Masaaki

Translation by Kyoko Selden

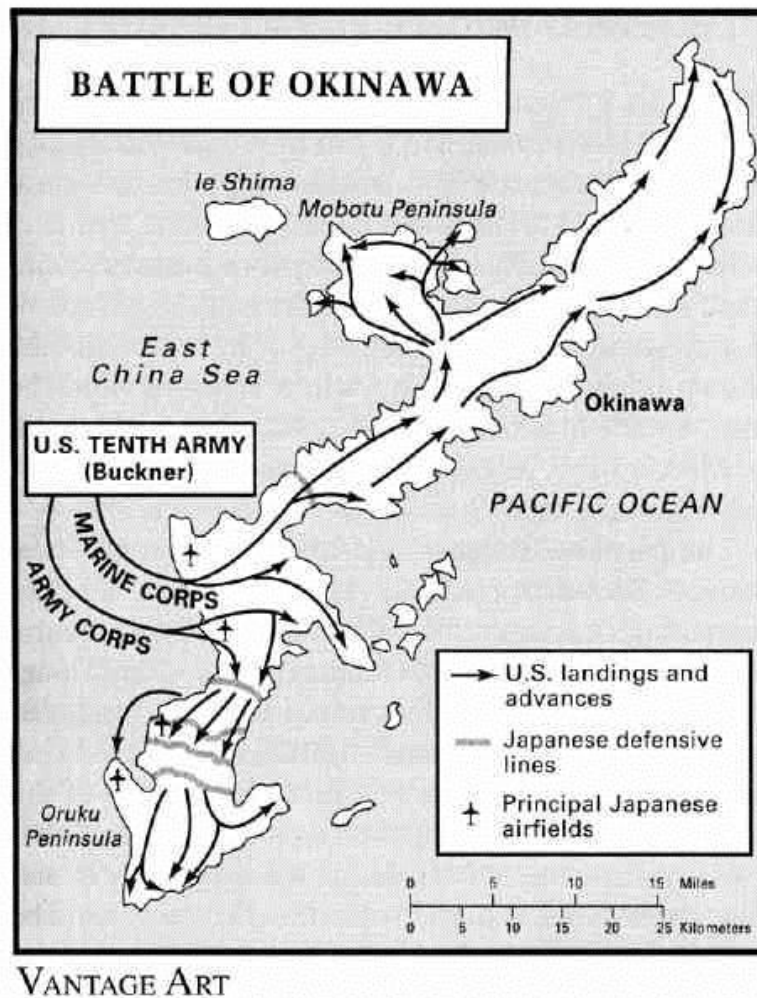
Textbook Inspection Which Denies Historical Truth

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (Monbukagakusho, hereafter Ministry of Education) on March 30, 2007 announced the selection of high school textbooks for use beginning in 2008. With respect to the question of compulsory mass suicide (shudan jiketsu) during the Battle of Okinawa, they demanded revision of statements saying that there was a suicide order (jiketsu meirei) or coercion (kyoyo) by the Japanese military. This refers to statements in seven textbooks published by five companies.

The gist of the Ministry of Education's comments is this: "The order to commit suicide (jiketsu meirei) by the Japanese military cannot be verified. The suggestion that people were cornered into compulsory suicide by the Japanese military leads to a false understanding of the Battle of Okinawa. Okinawan prefectural citizens protested saying, "this distorts the truth of the Battle of Okinawa." The Okinawan Prefectural Assembly and all the municipal assemblies protested the ruling by the textbook examiners concerning military involvement in compulsory suicide, unanimously passing a resolution demanding retraction of the order to revise the texts.

However, the Ministry of Education rejected the claim of Okinawan citizens, merely reiterating that “The textbook inspection counsel decided this”, and ignoring the unanimous view of Okinawan citizens.

Concerning the disaster experienced in the Battle of Okinawa, there have been various attempts to warp understanding and lead historical awareness astray.



Okinawa Battle map

One such move concerns the Tokashiki, Zamami, and Kerama islands of the Kerama Island group. The Japanese military on the Kerama Islands had 300 suicide attack boats and approximately 300 men in the marine advance corps, along with 600 affiliated members of a special water-surface work corps comprised of Koreans. There was also a locally-drafted defense corps and volunteer corps that were incorporated into the defense corps of the island.

The marine advance corps on Kerama Islands was the army's suicide attack corps meant to destroy enemy ships with one-man suicide boats carrying 120 kilogram torpedoes. The actual situation of this corps has been the subject of exaggerated reports, but I understand that local people had discomforts and doubts about “the army's marine suicide corps.”

On March 26, 1945, the American military, with the support of artillery launched from both sea and sky began landing on Kerama Islands, and by the 29th had seized nearly the entire area. The fact is that the army's attack boats did not attack even a single enemy boat.

During these battles, horrendous "mass suicide" (shudan jiketsu) of citizens occurred on Keruma, Zamami and Tokashiki Islands. This means that the inhabitants were forced to commit suicide by the coercion (kyosei) and inducement (yudo) of the Japanese military. But, the military leaders of the island now claim that "there was no military order."

The family of Akamatsu Yoshitsugu, the former colonel who headed the military on Tokashiki, and Umezawa Yutaka, the former major who headed the military on Zamami, brought suit in the Osaka court against Oe Kenzaburo and his publisher Iwanami for his book *Okinawa Notes*, on grounds of "disparaging their reputations" and demanded compensation for damages. Calling this trial a lawsuit on false charges concerning Okinawan mass suicides "Okinawa shudan jiketsu enzai sosho", they criticize Oe and Iwanami.

The plaintiffs claim that "Shudan jiketsu of inhabitants on Tokashiki and Zamami Islands were not by military order. They chose death with lofty self-sacrifice spirit."

This is not merely an issue of reputation damage, but a revisionist scheme to justify aggressive war and acquit the imperial army of responsibility for its atrocious deeds. Statements by former military officers in Okinawa, who welcome field surveys by groups like the Liberal View of History Group and government officials, are distorting understanding of the battle of Okinawa. The textbook review this time concerning shudan jiketsu, adopted without verification the claims by unit leaders who say there was no military order. The testimonies by the people of the islands who were forced to kill close relatives were probably ignored as not credible. They are looking at things from the perspective that testimonies by the commanders alone have credibility. It is out of the question to use the one-sided claims by Akamatsu and Umezawa, who are involved in the lawsuit, as the foundation for textbook approval.

The Battle of Okinawa on Which the Maintenance of the National Polity (Kokutai) Rests

The Battle of Okinawa, fought with the understanding that Japan's defeat was inevitable, was the last ground combat between Japan and the US in the Pacific War. For the Japanese imperial government, the maintenance of the national polity was the first principle, and gaining time to prepare for the decisive battle on the mainland and negotiations for the conclusion of the war were crucial.

Former prime minister Konoe Fumimaro, on January 14, 1945, right before the Battle of Okinawa, memorialized to the emperor that the war situation had reached a grave situation.

Regrettably, defeat in the war has already become inevitable Defeat in the war will constitute a great flaw for our national polity (kokutai), but the consensus of England and the US has not yet gone so far as reforming (henkaku) the national polity Therefore, if it is just defeat in the war, I do not think that we need worry so much in terms of national polity What we have most to fear from the viewpoint of the maintenance of the national polity, is communist revolution which could occur following defeat in the war.

Therefore, from the perspective of preserving the national polity, I am convinced that we should think about the way to conclude the war as soon as possible, by even a single day . . . (Hosokawa Morisada, Hosokawa Nikki (Hosokawa Diary))

The report by former Prime Minister Konoe is remarkable for openly explaining to the emperor the need to conclude the war as a member of the Japanese leadership. But the main point is that although defeat in the war was inevitable, rather than defeat itself, he was most concerned about the disintegration of the ruling structure by the imperial system (*tennosei shihai kiko*) by a communist revolution. To Konoe's advice the emperor responded "I think it is quite difficult unless we achieve a military result just once more." This indicates that the Showa emperor, even at this late point, had passion for leading the war effort.

The battle of Okinawa was "a battle on which the national polity hung," yet one which presupposed Japan's defeat. It is said that Okinawa served as "a stone to discard for the sake of the defense of the mainland," but in fact it was "a battle to postpone the decisive battle on the mainland" and to gain some time for the preparation of that battle on the mainland and to negotiate the end of the war, and was not a battle to protect the people (*kokumin*) of the mainland. It was a preliminary battle before eventually taking the entire nation (*kokumin subete*) to death along with the Emperor.

The Japanese imperial government, in preparation for the final battle on the mainland, reinforced its total war system intended to mobilize the entire nation.

On May 22, 1945, the wartime education law (*senji-kyoiku rei*) was made public and even elementary schools and schools for the blind, deaf and dumb were ordered to organize student military units. On June 23, when the Okinawa defending force (32nd Battalion) was defeated and systematic fighting ended, a volunteer soldiers law was promulgated and women, too, were ordered to serve in national volunteer combat units.

On July 8, 1945 in Tokyo, military units of the Okinawan Normal School and the Okinawan Prefectural First Middle School were honored in a ceremony without the presence of the awardees. Minister of Education Ota Kozo told students throughout the country to follow the student military units of Okinawa and dedicate their lives in order to defend the national polity. (*Asahi Shinbun* July 9, 1945).

When the Japanese imperial government accepted the Potsdam Declaration, maintenance of the national polity was the central issue.

On August 6 and 9, the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, destroying the cities. But the Japanese leadership was preoccupied with the threat of Soviet entry into the war, more than with the destructiveness of the atomic bomb.

On August 8, 1945, the Soviet Union renounced the Soviet Union-Japan neutrality treaty, declared war and attacked Manchuria, Sakhalin, and North Korea. Consequently, the Japanese leadership felt the crisis of the imperial system and decided to bring the war to conclusion.

In the middle of the night on August 9, an imperial conference was held. At 2:30 a.m. on the 10th they accepted the Potsdam Declaration on condition of the maintenance of the national polity (*kokutai goji*). This was called an imperial decision.

Anami Korechika, then Minister of the Army, writes in his diary:

With the understanding that the conditions stated in the three countries' combined declaration dated from the 26th of last month do not include the demand to change the emperor's prerogative to rule the state, the Japanese government accepts this.

A Japanese politician has said that by dropping the atomic bombs "Japan's defeat was made earlier, so it can't be helped." [The reference is to former Defense Min. Kyuma Fumio. Tr.] But this is a thoughtless statement by one who follows US policies while being ignorant of the affliction of citizens.

Why did the US drop the atomic bombs? Young people who have studied in Hiroshima and Nagasaki the reality of the bombing explain their findings clearly as follows.

1. The US wanted to carry out attacks on the cities to display the bomb's power. The ability to destroy with shock waves and ultra-high heat, the influence on human bodies and the environment by radioactivity. The atomic bomb is not a matter of a single moment à there is also secondary radiation and radiation in the womb. Hibakusha are not only Japanese à there were also Koreans and Chinese forced laborers (kyosei renko) as well as allied POWs.



Memorial for the Korean victims of atomic bombing in Hiroshima

2. They proudly flaunted the power of the atomic bomb to the Soviet leadership, a strategy that anticipated the US-Soviet postwar conflict.
3. The B-29 which set out from Tinian in Micronesia at 2:49 a.m. on August 9 dropped the atomic bomb on Nagasaki at 11:02. That aircraft landed at Bolo Airport in Yomitan in the main Okinawan island at 1:09 on the 9th. After refueling it returned to Tinian at 22:55 on

the 9th. At that time, US forces in Okinawa had set up an airport with a 2,000 meter runway that could accommodate B29s.

Compulsory Mass Suicide Forced by the Imperial Army

The Okinawa defense force issued a directive to Okinawan prefectural citizens calling for unification of the army, government and civilians living together and dying together (*kyosei kyoshi*), and stating that even a single tree or blade of grass should be a fighting power. They mobilized for battle all people, down to young and old, women and children.

The military and paramilitary locally recruited in Okinawa numbered more than 25,000 (soldiers on active duty, drafted soldiers, defense units, student units, volunteer units, etc.). We have to realize that one fourth of the Okinawa defense force were “Japanese soldiers” coming out of Okinawa prefecture. It is a mistake to think that Japanese forces in the battle of Okinawa were exclusively officers and men from the mainland (Yamato troops).

During the last stages of the battle of Okinawa (June-July) the American forces indiscriminately attacked Japanese forces and residents of the area within caves and called this “Jap hunting”.

The imperial army drove residents from shelters, took their food, prohibited them from surrendering, tortured and slaughtered them on grounds of suspected spying. They forced people into “mutual killing” among close relatives, and left the sick and handicapped on the battlefield.

The war dead among civilians in the battle of Okinawa is estimated at more than 150,000.

When we think about the damage to citizens in the battle of Okinawa, *shudan jiketsu* can be raised as the most peculiar case.

First of all we have to clarify the term *shudan jiketsu*.

When we say “*jiketsu*” (self-determination, suicide) the precondition is “spontaneity, voluntariness of those who choose death.” It is impossible for infants and toddlers to commit “*jiketsu*” and there is no one who spontaneously kills close relatives.

Mutual killing of close relatives, meaning that “parents kill young children, children kill parents, big brothers kill little brothers and sisters, and husbands kill their wives,” occurred on the battlefield where the imperial army and citizens mingled.

In *Army Strategies in the Okinawa Area* compiled by the War History Office of the Ministry of Defense, it is written: “They achieved *shudan jiketsu* and died for the imperial country with a sacrificial spirit in order to end the trouble brought on combatants.” But this claim goes against the facts. Citizens on the battlefield did not choose death voluntarily.

Although there are numerous interrelated factors, basically people were forced to kill close relatives by compulsion of the imperial army and local leaders who followed the imperial army. Enforcing the mutual killing of close relatives is of the same quality and the same root as the killing of citizens by the imperial army.

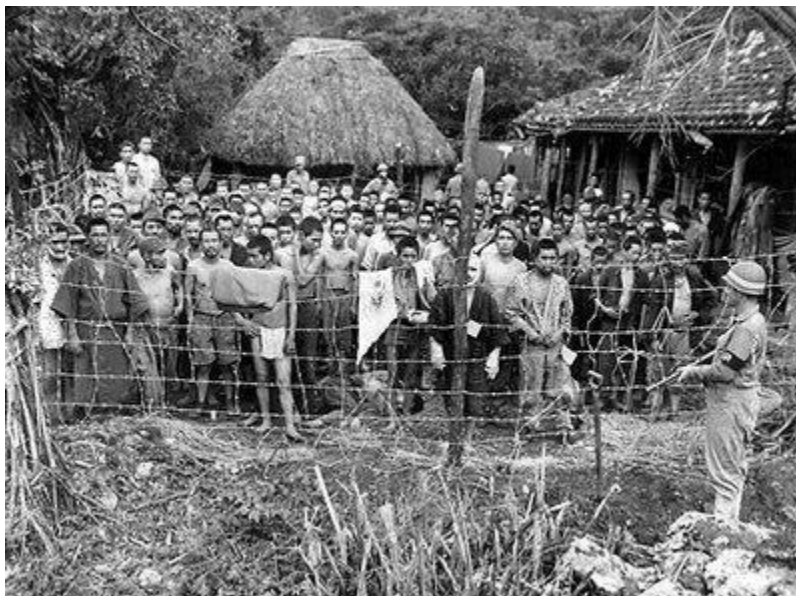
One cannot call the death of people who “were forced” or “cornered” *shudan jiketsu* [if the term indicates voluntary suicide]. It is improper to call this reality *shudan jiketsu*. Hindering properly conveying reality, it invites misunderstanding and confusing.

The term *shudan jiketsu* has been used since the 1950s and some say that “it walks on its own with an established meaning,” but if one uses the term *shudan jiketsu* without explaining the realities behind it, that invites misunderstanding and confusion. The reality of the term *shudan jiketsu*, I must reiterate, is “residents mass death by the imperial army’s coercion and inducement.”

Behind “residents mass death” in the Battle of Okinawa was imperial subject education (education to make everyone an imperial subject) which rendered dying for the emperor the supreme national morality (*kokumin dotoku*). In the Battle of Okinawa, “the unification of the military, government, and civilians living together and dying together” was emphasized, and “a sense of solidarity about death” was cultivated. At that moment, knowledgeable Okinawans played essential roles, including those in the Association of Reservists, the Support Group of Adult Men, and police and military affairs chiefs of local and municipal government.

When given hand grenades by the Japanese military, leaders of the islands accepted them, thinking it natural that “all residents die when the moment demands”. We cannot, however, think of this as “spontaneity and voluntariness” of “*shudan jiketsu*”. This was an era when it was impossible to decline “death” ordered by the imperial army.

The extreme fear of “brute Americans and British” [cultivated by the Japanese military] was a factor that made people choose death. Japanese military experiences of slaughter of Chinese people on the continent since the “Manchurian Incident” was widely discussed; and about the fate of residents at large at the time when the war turned out to be a “losing battle”, people despaired anticipating plunder, violence, slaughter by the American military. There were returned migrants who thought “the American military can no way be expected to kill residents”, but returnees were regarded as suspected spies and hence were unable to speak positively. To make such a statement was to court denunciation as a spy and slaughtered.



**A Marine guards Japanese prisoners of war after the Battle of Okinawa.
More than 148,000 civilians died in the campaign.**

There are people who were driven by the perverse idea that, rather than seeing female siblings and wives being killed cruelly and outraged by brute Americans and Brits, it was an act of love by close relatives to kill them with their own hands.

The fear of spy hunting by the imperial army accentuated the sense of despair among residents. The imperial army's policy was never to hand over residents who knew military secrets. To accept the protection of the US military was regarded as spying. Residents positioned between the Japanese and American military were driven to "death". Their hope to live was cut off by the shelling of the islands. Knowing that there was no escape route, they anticipated a cruel death. That too was one cause of their "hurrying to death".

"Mass death of residents" took place when these elements joined together, causing panic that led to mutual killing of close relatives in local communities. Fear and madness overwhelmed village communities.

"Mass Death" in Encircled Areas

At the time of the Battle of Okinawa, had lost the control of the sea and sky of the entire area of the Southwest islands had passed to the US military. Communication and transportation with Kyushu and Taiwan were cut off and the islands were surrounded. The Okinawa defending force gave orders about matters involving the jurisdiction of the prefectural and local governments, unifying the military, government and civilians to live together and die together. All actions of prefectural citizens were controlled by commanders of stationed forces. Here there was no civil government. This kind of battlefield was designated "encirclement areas" in military terminology. These areas were designated by "martial law" as ones to be on the alert when surrounded or attacked by the enemy.

In such areas, commanders of stationed forces wielded full power. This overrode the constitution, and all legislation, administration and jurisprudence were under military control. During the Battle of Okinawa, martial law was not proclaimed, but the entire Southwest islands were virtual encirclement areas. It was for this circumstance that the administrative authority of the prefectural governor and mayors of villages was ignored and the stationed forces handled everything as they pleased. Directives and orders to local residents were received as "military orders" even if conveyed by town and village governments and local leaders.

On Tokashiki Island of the Keremas, Col. Akamatsu Yoshitsugu wielded total authority. On Zamami Island, Major Umezawa Yutaka held complete authority. The village administration was placed under the control of the military; there was no civil administration. Under military rule, those who played an important role in communicating military orders were military affairs directors of the village office.

These were local leaders who took charge of military affairs including coordination of the draft list, verification of the whereabouts of people of draft age, handling of such things as draft delay petitions, distribution of draft cards, and aid to bereft families of war dead and wounded soldiers.

The main duty of military affairs directors at the time of the Battle of Okinawa was to draft soldiers demanded by the stationed forces, to hand them over to the army and to communicate military orders (supply of labor power, evacuation, assembly and eviction) to the residents.

Toyama Majun, who was a chief of military affairs of the village of Tokashiki, testifies:

On March 28 at Fijiga (katakana) in the upper reaches of the On'na river, the collective death (shudanshi) incident of residents occurred. At that time, defense unit members brought hand grenades and urged residents to commit "suicide".

This testimony by the military affairs director vividly conveys the reality of residents "shudanshi". One can see that a military affairs director, who conveys the military order in an encirclement area, bore a crucial responsibility. Japanese citizens had been taught that a military order was "the emperor's order". There was also the aspect that people believed that "choosing death" rather than become POWs was "the way of imperial subjects". They were, in accord with the instruction of local leaders and the imperial army, made to implement the field service code (senjinkun), which said "Do not live to receive the humiliation of becoming a prisoner".

This article was published in Gunshuku mondai shiryo (Disarmament Review), December 2007. Aniya Masaaki is Professor emeritus of Modern Japanese History at Okinawa Kokusai Daigaku, (Okinawa International University).

II. A Political Decision that Obscures Historical Reality: "Involvement" approved, "Coercion" Kyousei) disapproved in Okinawa Mass Suicide Textbook Treatment.

***Okinawa Times* editorial**

Translation by Kyoko Selden

Regarding the high school Japanese textbook examination issue, the Textbook Approval Council (Kyoukasho-you Tosho Kentei Chousa Shingikai, Investigation Council for Examining and Approving Publications for Textbook Use) reported to Tokai Kisaburou, the Minister of Education and Science, the results of the deliberations on wordings related to "mass suicide (compulsory mass death, shudan jiketsu)" during the Battle of Okinawa, concerning which six textbook publishers had petitioned for revision (teisei shinsei, a petition to revise an already approved textbook).

We would like to ask all high school students within Okinawa prefecture:

Of the following three sentences, (1) was the original draft [in one of textbooks in question]. Later, at the direction of the Ministry of Education and Science and of the Textbook Approval Council at work, it was rewritten to (2) [this version was approved in March 2007]. In response to the strong protest from many Okinawan citizens, the textbook publisher petitioned to revise the expression. As a result, the wording changed to (3) [this has met approval]. Now, concerning these three sentences, what changed and how? Why did these changes have to be made? What was the aim?

(1) "There were residents, who, by the Japanese military, were driven out of shelters or driven into mass suicide." (Nihon-gun ni yotte goh wo oidasare, aruiwa shudan jiketsu ni oikomareta juumin mo atta,)

(2) "There were residents, who, by the Japanese military, were driven out of shelters, or committed suicide." (Nihon-gun ni goh kara oidasaretari, jiketsu shita juumin mo ita.)

(3) “There were residents who, by the Japanese military, were driven out of shelters, or were driven into mass suicide.” (Nihon-gun ni yotte goh wo oidasaretari, aruiwa shuudan jiketsu ni oikomareta juumin mo atta.)

How do these sound?

Because the changes are such that they are hardly discernible without careful comparisons, we would like you to read them slowly twice, and thrice over.

In version 1, the relationship is clear between the subject, “the Japanese military,” and the predicate, “were driven to mass suicide.” In version 2, however, the subject and the predicate are disconnected, leaving the relationship between the two ambiguous. Version 3 is like one of the two peas in a pod together with the original. One can say that it nearly restores the original, yet it gives the impression that the connection between the subject and the predicate is somewhat weaker.

What comes in and out of sight through this series of editing stages is the intention behind: “if possible we want to erase the subject, the Japanese military,” “we want to make the relation between the Japanese military and the mass suicide ambiguous.”

The conclusion of the Textbook Approval Council can be summarized into the following three points.

First, the Council has not withdrawn its Approval Statement (kentei ikensho, a written opinion or a statement of one’s views). Second, it does not adopt an expression like “were coerced by the Japanese military,” which specifies military enforcement. Third, wordings like “were driven” by the Japanese military, which indicate military involvement, were approved.

This means that they tried to settle this issue by restoring “coercion,” which had disappeared in the approval examination process, in the form of “involvement.”

What Characterizes the Battle of Okinawa

The resolution adopted by the Okinawan protest rally of September 29 had two points, “withdrawal of the Approval Statement” and “restoration of the wording.”



Thousands of protesters in Ginowan, Okinawa, demanded that Japanese government drop plans to remove references in textbooks to the coerced mass suicides on their island in 1945.

Certainly, the Okinawans' consensus moved the Textbook Approval Council, resulting in a degree of restoration of the wording. It is not at all the case that Okinawan efforts were for nought.

However, despite the fact that textbook publishers petitioned for approval of revision while carefully working out the wording with the aim of restoring "coercion," the Council judged that "the revision cannot be approved with the wording as it is," demanding another round of rewriting.

Why they shun the use of the term "coercion" to this extent is simply incomprehensible.

In deliberating on the petitions for revision, the Approval Council listened to the opinions of eight specialists from inside and outside the prefecture. One specialist commented that residents being driven into a corner by the Japanese military was the very characteristic of the Battle of Okinawa, and that the presence of the Japanese military played a decisive role.

Another specialist pointed out that the policy that says, "those without combat ability should commit suicide (jiketsu, gyokusai) before becoming prisoners of war," was based on a strategic principle across the entire military. It was not an issue at the level of whether or not a specific commanding officer ordered it at a specific point in time." We agree.

We must not confuse the issue of the existence of a commander's order with that of coercion by the Japanese military.

Reforms Are Necessary for the Textbook Approval System

In response to the objection from Okinawa, some said, "There should be no political interference." But, if that is the case, I would like them to answer the following question as well.

Until 2005, reference to military coercion had been approved. Why, despite the fact that there has been no great change in academic understanding, did the issue this time receive an

examination comment? Why is it that the Council made the claim of one party in a trial in progress the foundation of its examination comment?

What has been exposed this time is the locked room nature of the examination system. The contents of the deliberations of the Textbook Approval Council are private, and the proceedings have not been made public. Details of examination comments, as I understand, are not put into writing. The majority opinion is merely stated orally.

The Council passed the textbook investigation officials' draft statement with no in depth discussion. In what relation the investigation officials stand to the Council too remains veiled. [A textbook draft first goes to Kentei chousakan (examination and approval investigation officials), who, or one of whom, drafts an examination and approval (Kentei) statement. If necessary the textbook goes also to a specialist committee member (sen'mon iin) or members. Then the textbook goes to the Textbook Approval Council.]

This editorial appeared in the Okinawa Times, December 27, 2007. Textbook Review Council Report, part one of two.

III. Mass Suicides in Okinawa

***Asahi Shinbun* editorial**

Education minister Kisaburo Tokai announced Wednesday reinstatement of history textbook references about the Imperial Japanese Army driving civilians into committing mass suicide in Okinawa in the closing days of World War II. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology approved revisions submitted by six publishers on passages concerning the 1945 Battle of Okinawa for senior high school textbooks to be used from the 2008 academic year starting in April.

As a result of the revisions, these textbooks will contain passages with the following content:

Many local residents were driven to commit mass suicides because of the Japanese military's involvement.

Due to coercive circumstances over the military's prohibition on civilians becoming prisoners of war, many local residents felt they were driven into mass suicides and mutual killings.

In textbook screening conducted in spring this year, the education ministry ordered publishers to remove all references to the military's involvement in the mass suicides as well as statements that people were forced into the gruesome acts by Japanese soldiers.

The ministry says the changes are based solely on applications from the textbook publishers and don't represent a retraction of its original decision. Probably, it would be closer to the fact to say that the ministry was forced into a virtual retraction of the decision in the face of strong public criticism about it, mainly from people in Okinawa.

The blame for this fiasco clearly rests with the extraordinary instructions the ministry issued to the publishers. The ministry had all references to the military involvement in mass suicides removed. It argued these passages could generate the misunderstanding that all these actions were carried out under orders from the military.

After the publishers submitted revisions early last month, the education ministry asked the Textbook Authorization and Research Council, a ministry-appointed panel to check the proposed changes. The council heard from experts, including academic researchers on the Battle of Okinawa, and then developed its own opinions as the basis for debate on the revisions.

While insisting there is no solid evidence to confirm direct orders from the military, the council admitted that education and training by the wartime government were behind the mass suicides. The panel also pointed out that the distribution of grenades among local residents by the army was a key factor that created the situation responsible for the mass suicides.

The council's argument must be convincing for many people. In essence, it said people in Okinawa were driven to mass suicides under extreme pressure from militarism, which fanned fear about the invading U.S. soldiers among local residents and prohibited them from becoming POWs.

In its discussions on the proposed revisions, however, the council stuck to its insistence that straightforward expressions like "the military forced" civilians into mass suicide should not be used. This stance should be questioned.

It is hard not to wonder why the panel didn't come up with such common sense opinions for the textbook screening this past spring. If it had done so, the panel would not have endorsed the reviews by the education ministry's textbook inspectors. One of the panel members has conceded that they should have discussed the issue more carefully.

At that time, the government was led by former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, whose motto was to "break away from the postwar regime." Was the expert panel in some way influenced by the Abe administration's political posture? Ironically, this outrageous move by the education ministry caused the grueling wartime episode to attract unprecedented public attention.

Previously, most school history textbooks contained only brief descriptions about the mass suicides in Okinawa. The revisions submitted by the publishers also included descriptions about the social background for the tragedies. As a result, the textbooks offer much more information about the bloody battle fought in Okinawa in 1945.

The public controversy over the textbook references raged for nine months. A huge protest rally was held in Okinawa during that period, which gave many people the opportunity to learn not only about the bloodshed in Okinawa but also about the serious flaws in the ministry's textbook screening system.

The bitter lessons from the experience should be used for the good of the nation.

This editorial appeared in The Asahi Shinbun, Dec. 27 and [the International Herald Tribune/Asahi](#) on December 28, 2007.

Kyoko Selden is a senior lecturer in Asian Studies, Cornell University and a Japan Focus associate. The first two volumes of her [Annotated Japanese Literary Gems](#) have just been published, featuring stories by Tawada Yoko, Hayashi Kyoko, Nakagami Kenji, Natsume Soseki, Tomioka Taeko and Inoue Yashushi.

The Martyrdom: Children and the Battle of Okinawa

Mark Ealey

While the debate about the use of children in war is relatively new, the practice is ages old. Long before education became a right rather than a privilege it was common for boys to be recruited into the military in roles that saw them face death at the front line. Joining the army or navy was the accepted fate of many young lads from poorer backgrounds, and in that respect, the boys who carried armor for Spartan hoplites or stood watch on a juggernaut at Jutland had much in common. Nowadays, insurgents and pro-government militia groups throughout the world use brutal coercion to recruit children. Boys and girls are forced to carry supplies, act as spies, messengers or lookouts, and in extreme cases, even to serve as human mine detectors or to take part in suicide missions. In addition to those who volunteered at a young age, ending up as drummer boys at Waterloo or Gettysburg, and the contemporary boy soldiers compelled to fight by their masters in Sierra Leone, East Timor or Angola, there is a third category, a group caught up in a whirlwind of nationalist fervor, “willingly” answering the call to face an invading enemy portrayed by propaganda as being bent on total destruction.

Two very familiar instances of this third scenario stand out in 20th century history. As the pool of adult males available for conscription dwindled in Germany and Japan in early 1945, both of these beleaguered nations used children in military and paramedical roles. Powerful images circulate of Hitler Jugend boys with panzerfausts cycling through the rubble-strewn streets of Berlin or Japanese boys and girls training to meet the enemy with sharpened bamboo sticks. The “willingness” of these children to hurl themselves at Soviet or American tanks in no way mitigates the tragedy of youthful patriotism being wasted in the end-game madness of a manipulative adult world.

Yoshimura Akira’s historical novel, *Junkoku – Rikugun Nitōhei Higa Shin’ichi* (Translated as Typhoon of Steel. An Okinawan Schooboy’s Quest for Martyrdom in the Battle of Okinawa) looks at the Japanese and Okinawan experience of the eighty-day Battle of Okinawa through the eyes of 14-year old Higa Shin’ichi. Yoshimura graphically depicts the tragic involvement of the boys of the Blood and Iron Student Corps and the girls who attended the wounded as nurse-aides of the Himeyuri Student Corps. Approximately 2,000 Okinawan high school students were mobilized to support the Imperial Japanese Army in the defense of Okinawa. Only half of them survived.

Depending upon how one looks at this battle, it may actually be more appropriate to state that “as many as half survived.” The odds were heavily stacked against them coming through alive. By 1945, American tactics placed greater emphasis on delivering overwhelming firepower from air, sea and land to suppress stubborn resistance by Japanese dug in in caves throughout the main island and to borrow a euphemism coined during the Vietnam War, “collateral damage” among Okinawa’s civilian population reached horrific levels. In addition, at least partly because of the nature of the fanatical resistance on Saipan, Iwo-jima and Peleliu, the U.S. forces in Okinawa fought as much to exterminate the enemy as to secure territory. When we add to this the fact that the Imperial Japanese Army encouraged and at times forced the local inhabitants to commit group suicide rather than be captured and that it often claimed shelters and caves from civilians, the scene was set for the closing stages of the battle to be an enormous tragedy. Over 250,000 Japanese died, including approximately 150,000 civilians - a one quarter of the island’s population.



FIGURE 81.—Civilians of Okinawa, casualties from the battle areas, await their turns at the military government medical aid station, Gushikhan, Okinawa, June 1945.

The translation of Yoshimura's book is timely for two reasons: firstly because 2005 marks the sixtieth anniversary of the Battle of Okinawa and secondly because any literature that encourages us to look at "zealotry" from another angle must help us come to grips with the challenges of the early 21 st century.

Yoshimura Akira is a prolific writer of documentary-style historical fiction. Many of his works focus upon aspects of the human condition set against a backdrop of Japan's involvement in the Second World War.

*New Zealander Mark Ealey is a freelance translator specializing in Japan's foreign relations. *Typhoon of Steel. An Okinawan Schooboy's Quest for Martyrdom in the Battle of Okinawa* is his sixth book-length translation and his third historical novel by Yoshimura, following on from "[Shipwrecks](#)" (1996) and "[One Man's Justice](#)" (2001.)*

*Here is a portion of Chapter 3 of *Typhoon* describing the withdrawal from the Shuri Line.*

Chapter Three

Where the order came from wasn't clear, but it was quietly communicated among the nurses with a kind of ominous finality. It was short and to the point: "Move out, taking those who are capable

of walking unaided.” The hidden meaning was of course: “Leave the seriously wounded where they are.”

An awful tension and growing panic started to spread amid the filth and stench of the hospital caves. The wounded had already been given the straightforward instruction: “All those who can walk, get outside now.” Whether they understood what was afoot was not clear, but an eerie atmosphere fell over the place. Those patients who, minutes earlier, had been pestering the young nurses for water, fresh bandages or bedpans, had gone quiet and were now lying still on their beds.

Shin’ichi and his friends helped the girls lead the walking- wounded outside, sensing the agonizing silence of those who were unable to get up from their beds.

Everyone knew that the field service code prescribed that those unfortunate souls who were wounded in battle should bravely take their own lives rather than be captured by the enemy. Even so, the thought that the several thousand patients they were about to leave behind would have no choice but to commit suicide weighed heavily on his conscience.

Those feelings were then blown away in an instant. A messenger, covered in mud, ran into their midst from the eastern section of the cave complex, about two hundred meters away. Panting for breath, he shouted: “You’ve gotta get out of here now. The enemy’s starting to come into the cave from the east.”

There was a frenzy of activity as Shin’ichi and his friends rushed to get the walking-wounded out. As they helped the soldiers down the middle of the cave, the doomed on both sides stretched out their arms imploringly like dozens of pallid tentacles. Shin’ichi knew all too well what they wanted, but he pushed his way forward as fast as he could.

“Nurse, thank you for what you did for me,” the badly wounded men called out as the young girls made their way outside. The girls nodded, wiping away the tears rolling down their cheeks.

Once those capable of walking were all outside, a couple of medics in a corner a short distance from the entrance started hurriedly adding drops of something to small bottles of condensed milk. The girls standing by sobbed uncontrollably as they watched, knowing that three of their classmates were being left behind among the seriously wounded. When they realized that cyanide was being put into the milk so the patients could take their own lives, the girls had tried to carry their friends out, but the wounded girls had refused, telling them, “Get out. Look after yourselves.”

One of the medics screamed at the girls when he saw them standing there. “What the hell are you doing? Get out there and help the walking-wounded!”

Outside in a field, a thin black line moved slowly through the pelting rain. In among them there were girl students, carrying bags of medical supplies suspended from the ends of poles, or helping wounded men walk through the mud.

To keep stragglers to a minimum, each person in the line took hold of the rope that gave the line its form. When Shin’ichi caught up with the last people in the line, he grabbed the end of the rope dragging behind them.

The sound of machine gun fire rang out behind them. Startled, Shin'ichi looked back in the direction of the hill, but couldn't see any enemy soldiers.

His gaze shifted to the slope where the hospital caves were and, in the light of an illumination shell, he caught sight of a group of people bunched closely together as they moved down the slope.

For a moment he thought that they must be the enemy, but their movement was far too slow and labored for enemy troops. The harder he looked the more it seemed that the whole slope was covered in moving forms.

A shiver ran down his spine. The badly-wounded were crawling down the slope after them. These men must have dragged themselves out rather than take their own lives inside the cave - or maybe they thought that they could still fight. Shin'ichi let go of the rope and stood still, gazing through haunted eyes at the painstakingly slow movement back there.

The rain intensified and the dark spots on the slope became harder to make out. The line of people moving in front of him was veiled in spray from the pouring rain.

The line of wounded advanced at a snail's pace. When those capable of walking had been ordered outside, men far too badly wounded to seriously consider standing unassisted had somehow managed to drag themselves out of their beds and join the group outside. Every movement was agony for these men, slipping to their knees in the mud time and time again as they struggled forward. Each time Shin'ichi saw a man slip he would run over and help him back to his feet.

The road was visible in front of them, but enemy warships were shelling it.

"Let go of the rope! We've got to spread out or these shells will get us all!" A shrill voice from the front of the line was heard above the sound of the rain.

Shin'ichi hurriedly pulled the rope out of the wounded men's hands.

Finally, the men started moving from the field up on to the road in an extended line.

Before he knew it, Shin'ichi found himself propping up a burly, middle-aged man as he walked. The man's head was swathed in bandages that obviously had not been changed for some time. The fat, white bodies of maggots could be seen moving in the gaps in the filthy cloth. Maybe the maggots moving around made his wound itchy, but every so often, the man would groan as he rubbed the bandages with his fingers. Each time he did this, the foul odor of the pus from the festering wound became more pronounced.

Trudging through knee-deep mud with the weight of the man bearing down on him made Shin'ichi feel so exhausted that he felt that his knees might give way at any moment. The man was incredibly heavy and Shin'ichi seemed to be supporting almost every pound of him as he walked.

Just when they came to a bend in the road, a few meters ahead of them, Shin'ichi saw an emaciated soldier topple over sideways like an old tree that has snapped at the ground. He tried to free himself from the man he was supporting so he could run and help the wounded soldier, but the man held him in place with a surprisingly strong grip. Shin'ichi could feel the man pulling him against his body.

Shin'ichi twisted his neck to look up at the man's face. The bandages hid too much to distinguish any facial expression, but between the strips of cloth he could see a look of fierce determination in the man's eye not to let go of this boy who was keeping him upright.

A feeling of panic ran through his mind. This man was clearly trying to stop Shin'ichi from helping the other wounded soldier. Judging from the strength of his grip on his shoulder, the man had more than enough energy left to walk unaided. Nevertheless, he was clinging on to his young helper's shoulder, determined not to let go.

Shin'ichi was amazed. He had always believed that right from the very start of the war, every soldier and civilian - without exception - had shared a common resolve, and that that resolve was born of the willingness by everyone to sacrifice themselves for the cause. But here was a man who obviously still had the ability to walk by himself, happy to leave a comrade by the wayside. It just didn't make sense.

Still trapped under the man's arm, Shin'ichi edged his way closer to the soldier lying beside the road, stopping when they came level with him.

He was lying on his back almost submerged in the mud. Indifferent to the rain falling on his face - his eyes were wide open and his mouth moved ever so slightly.

"That feels good. The air's so good," he said, a hint of a smile on his face. Released from the stench of pus and excrement that hung in the stagnant air inside the cave, the young soldier seemed overjoyed to feel the cool rain on his face under the night sky.

The man's head sank back into the mire, muddy water flowing across his eyes and into his mouth until his face was completely covered.

The burly man tightened his grip on Shin'ichi to urge him forward along the road. Shin'ichi started walking again.

An unbearable feeling of disgust towards this man welled up inside Shin'ichi. Maybe it was to stop him escaping, but the man seemed to be bearing down on him far more heavily than necessary. This pushed his feet deeper into the mud, but when he got stuck the man would pull Shin'ichi's small frame up so he could move forward again.

All of a sudden two shells fired from offshore slammed into the ground and exploded on either side of the road ahead of them. There was a huge flash and the blast hurled Shin'ichi and his captor into the mud. The shockwave from the explosions was such that for several seconds the sky rained mud and dirt.

Bodies moved all over the road, as people staggered back to their feet and formed a line again, but many remained lifeless where they had fallen.

"Come on! Get up or I'll kill you!" screamed the young officer in charge of leading the group, drawing his sword and striking the fallen soldiers with the back of the blade as though demented.

The line moved forward again.

The man, now covered in mud from his bandaged head to his feet, shuffled forward, holding onto Shin'ichi's shoulder with an even stronger grip than before. As they walked, it wasn't long before Shin'ichi sensed a look of naked fear in the man's eyes.

Shin'ichi felt like laughing in the man's face. Wounded and weak though this man might be, someone who propped himself up on a boy half his size and was terrified of every incoming round, was not fit to be called a soldier. No doubt, Shin'ichi thought, this man's wounds were the result of an act of cowardice rather than bravery in combat. Shin'ichi had been in the Student Corps for less than two months now, but he felt no fear of the enemy and neither did any of the other boys around him.

The man wasn't wearing any badges of rank, but Shin'ichi imagined that he must be a sergeant or a low-ranking officer. From the way he grabbed hold of Shin'ichi and controlled his movements, he must be of a rank used to giving orders and being looked after. If that were the case, then he should be trying to encourage the other wounded men and taking the lead in the withdrawal.

Once they passed the Yamakawa Junction - of which he had a vague recollection - the line quickly lost its form and every step became a struggle. Shin'ichi sensed himself losing the feeling in his legs and shoulders and fading in and out of consciousness. The man was now panting heavily and would occasionally stop to catch his breath. Just when Shin'ichi was wondering how far they had walked, he heard a voice above the sound of the explosions and the rain.

"Put the wounded and the medical supplies on to the trucks!"

"Trucks?" said the man in a thin, rasping, almost feminine voice, quite unbefitting such a large man. It was the first time Shin'ichi had heard him utter a word. The man looked up and still leaning heavily on Shin'ichi, started walking in the direction of the trucks.

There were two trucks parked in the lee of a hill. It was a well-chosen spot to avoid shells fired from warships and there was a crowd of people milling around the vehicles.

Once they got a little closer, Shin'ichi could tell that most of the people were civilians. They were covered from head to toe in mud, making it impossible to know whether they were male or female. Very few of them were holding any belongings, and many were squatting on the ground with small children strapped to their backs.

They looked up despondently at the trucks, which were obviously reserved for the wounded soldiers. The flat-decks of both vehicles were full of soldiers lying prone, exhausted from just getting up there, and the rearmost part was literally piled up with wounded men.

The man put his hands on the tailgate and said to Shin'ichi, "Push me up!" Knowing that this meant he would finally be free from his captor, Shin'ichi pushed with all his might against the man's mud-covered backside. Once up on the flat-deck the man stepped over bodies to make his way forward and sat down behind the drivers cab, not once looking back at Shin'ichi.

Before long, the trucks pulled away, shaking their human cargo as they moved. As he was splattered with mud from the truck's tires, Shin'ichi allowed himself to mutter a profanity about the despicable character he'd just seen off. All around him wounded soldiers who had been unable to get on the trucks sat, exhausted, in the mud. The man Shin'ichi had helped was oblivious to the plight of others, shamelessly focussing only on his own survival.

Exhausted, the girls were sitting among the wounded soldiers in the mud - a bizarre scene, where the mire and the people in it seemed to have melded into one.

“We’re moving out!” shouted the young subaltern and the mud-covered human forms slowly got to their feet. The nurse-aides lent their shoulders to the most badly wounded and picked up the remaining medical supplies.

Shin’ichi slipped under the shoulder of an emaciated soldier who had lost his right hand. The soldier turned slightly to face Shin’ichi and bowed his head, so exhausted that even uttering words of gratitude was beyond him. The dark forms of Yaeju-dake and Yuza-dake loomed into view.

As the line lost its form the number of stragglers increased - some had sat down in the mud to rest and others were bent over on all fours trying to catch their breath. Shin’ichi could do nothing for them. He was now barely capable of supporting the soldier he was with.

Not far from the hamlet of Yuza the officer instructed them to take a short rest so they could then get the line back into some semblance of order. Shin’ichi and the wounded soldier collapsed on to the ground. Before they had even rested ten minutes, several illumination shells burst in the night sky, closely followed by high-explosive rounds from the warships off shore. Staying huddled together was too dangerous, so they moved off again in line. Maybe it was because they had had a rest, but Shin’ichi felt as though his muscles were seizing up and his feet felt as if they were encased in lead.

About 50 meters ahead of them, Shin’ichi noticed something scattered in the mud. When he got a little closer he saw two large shell holes in the field on one side and that the road was covered with body parts.

The line did not change its course. They trudged on past a decapitated head that had rolled to the side of the road, and a torso buried in the mud without any limbs or head attached – no doubt the remains of the soldiers and nurse-aides who had been at the front of the line.

Shin’ichi plodded on through the red-stained mud. The thought went through his mind that had he been at the front of the line it would have been his body scattered on the ground in pieces, but he felt no emotion.

Once through the hamlet of Yuza they came out upon a piece of higher ground. All of a sudden, the sound of nearby explosions stopped and instead, there was a roar like that of flames being fanned, as large caliber shells passed overhead - the target had obviously switched towards Yaeju-dake and Yuza-dake.

They rested beside the spring at the ruins of Nanzan Castle. The rain had eased and the sound of shells flying through the air became fainter. The wounded soldiers and the nurse-aides collapsed on their backs in the mud.

Shin’ichi had no idea how long he had been asleep, but he awoke to the shout of “We’re off!” He shook the soldier next him awake and helped him to his feet.

The rain had stopped and the sky was starting to show the first signs of dawn.

The line moved along a raised path between two paddy fields.

Shin’ichi realized that everything around him was quiet - an eerie silence had descended upon the scene. His eardrums no longer assailed by the relentless blasts from explosions, he could hear frogs croaking in the paddy fields.

He stopped. The last time that he had heard that sound seemed like a memory from his distant past. The croaking rose from the paddy fields through the morning air with the same vitality as the sound of waves on the rocks. The scene reminded him of time spent with his little sister.

Shin'ichi had often taken her down to the paddy fields to catch frogs with a hooked piece of wire. She had never wanted to touch them, but Shin'ichi would adeptly remove their skin and guts and cook them over a fire before making his frail little sister eat the legs.

Born to a farming family, to Shin'ichi frogs were creatures close to his heart. The sound of so many of them croaking in the paddy field reminded him that some aspects of life were actually unchanged amid the devastation of war. He now found himself in a spot where there was no bombing or strafing, no shells coming in from warships offshore and seemingly no risk of dying a wasted death. It was like a dream in which he had been transported to an altogether different world.

They may have been safe from the enemy for the moment, but those walking in the line were already stretched far beyond their physical limits. The girls were totally exhausted, breathing loudly as they lay flat on their backs on the path between the paddy fields. Their faces were black from the soot of working by candlelight in the caves and their eyebrows a grayish white from clusters of lice eggs.

By the time they reached the hamlet of Makabe there were as many as 50 or 60 people in the line. Shin'ichi's orders were to escort the wounded soldiers to Makabe, from where they were to be divided up and sent to nearby villages before going on to Army hospital caves.

Shin'ichi and the teacher with the nurse-aide girls walked around the little village trying to find safe haven for the wounded soldiers. There were small makeshift shelters that the locals had built, and stone tombs, but they were all full of civilians and there was nowhere that looked as though it could accommodate the wounded soldiers. After walking around for about an hour, he heard from one of the locals that there was a good-sized natural cave just outside the village.

Shin'ichi and the teacher headed in the direction of the cave. They found the entrance on one side of a low hill and once inside they saw 20 or 30 soldiers asleep.

When a sergeant appeared from the back of the cave the teacher explained that they had brought wounded soldiers from the hospital at Haeburu and pleaded that they be allowed to take shelter in the cave, even for just a short time. There seemed to be more than enough space to accommodate another 50 or 60 men. The sergeant did not mince his words in his response.

"You must be joking! There's no room for you in this cave. We've already flushed civilians out and we're going to make a stand against the enemy from here. This is part of the defensive line and not a fucking hospital. Piss off and get out of here!"

The cold glint in the sergeant's eye suggested that he would brook no argument, so Shin'ichi and the teacher left the cave straightway.

When they got back to where the girls and the wounded soldiers were, they found them all sound asleep, but they had to wake them and start looking for shelter again. They knew that it would be best for them to stay in this village. Wounded soldiers from other hospital caves would arrive soon so their first priority was to follow orders and find a place for their group to shelter.

“Let’s rest here,” said the teacher, stopping in front of a ruined house on the side of the road.

They trudged through the doorway, gingerly lying down on the floor without uttering a word.

Shin’ichi lay on his back and stared up at the ceiling. The line of holes above him was obviously from machine gun bullets that had passed through the roof from above. As he cast his eyes around the house, he wondered where the people who had lived there had gone. The Buddhist altar lay on its side in a corner of the room next to an overturned table. There was no indication that the family had gathered their belongings and fled, so maybe they had all been killed by the same machine gun that left the holes in the ceiling.

Only a minute or so had passed and already a loud snoring rose from among the exhausted, mud-covered bodies on the floor.

Still thinking about the family, Shin’ichi too was overwhelmed by the need to shut his eyes. “Are they all dead?” he muttered to himself as he slipped into a deep sleep.