



# Historiography of the Asia-Pacific War in Japan

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Interpretations of Japan's involvement in the Pacific War and its war crimes have changed over time, and corresponding changes in social and political contexts both within and outside Japan have influenced these evolving interpretations. Today the people of Japan are far from a consensus over the meaning of the Asia-Pacific War (1931-45), and disputes relating to such topics as the Nanjing Massacre, Japan's colonial occupation of Korea and Taiwan, and the sexual enslavement of the so-called Comfort Women continue to haunt the national memory. However, the current divisions over the significance of the war did not always exist. To the contrary, in the immediate postwar period the Japanese came to a consensus that the war was unjust and reckless. Many expressed their atonement for the atrocities committed during the war, and a strongly prevalent climate of peace activism replaced the wartime culture of militarism. Since the end of American Occupation in 1952, revisionists have tried to urge the nation's citizens to see the war in a positive light. Nevertheless, the influence exerted by these revisionists over the public was relatively marginal until the mid-1990s. A history of disputes over the Asia-Pacific War, including issues regarding Japan's war crimes, underscores the ever-changing public perception of the Asia-Pacific War from the defeat of Japan in 1945 to the present.

## I. War Memory in the Early Postwar Years (1945 - 1971)

As the American occupational forces entered Tokyo in 1945, they found no widespread knowledge of Japanese wartime atrocities, nor any great evidence of collective guilt among the general public in Japan. Therefore, the Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) of the SCAP launched the "war guilt program" at an early stage of the occupation. The program included the publication of the Allies-slanted *History of the Pacific War* in Japanese national newspapers, a radio series titled *Now It Can Be Told*, and the creation of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE). [1]

To draft its history of the Pacific War, which appeared in Japanese national newspapers on the day of the fourth anniversary of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, CIE relied on such sources as *America's Far Eastern Policy* by Thomas Bisson (1945), *Time*, and *Newsweek*. The prologue of the English version stated that reports of the crimes committed by the militarists "will be released from time to time and documented by unimpeachable sources until the story of Japanese guilt has been fully bared in all its details without censorship or deference to the persons involved." [2] The prologue urged the people to "know the full story of the war in order that they may understand how defeat came and why they must endure the suffering engendered by militarism." [3] CIE believed that informing Japanese about their country's wartime atrocities was necessary to reconstitute Japan as a peaceful nation.

Through various media, many Japanese were consistently exposed to the stories of the Japanese wartime atrocities that SCAP considered important. Such atrocities included the story of Nanjing in 1937, where the Japanese troops killed tens of thousands of Chinese civilians and non-combatants, the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, and the inhumane treatment of Allied prisoners throughout the war. On the other hand, CIE censorship prohibited the Japanese media from criticizing the Allied wartime and occupational policies toward Japan, including the use of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Unquestionably somewhat influenced by carefully filtered information that was released to them, many Japanese embraced the reforms initiated by SCAP, including IMTFE, and editorials and letters from readers printed in newspapers often expressed deep remorse and heartfelt wishes to atone for Japanese atrocities. [4]

Examples of Japanese remorse can readily be found in the popular reaction to the International Military Tribunal for the Far East. For example, after witnesses testified the atrocities in Nanjing before the court in July 1946, the editorial of the *Yomiuri newspaper* stressed that Japanese correspondents bore a certain responsibility for not reporting the crimes committed by the Japanese military in Nanjing. The editorial

went on to urge its readers to acknowledge various crimes committed by the militarists during the war. [5] A farmer in the Chiba prefecture sent an op-ed to the Asahi newspaper, arguing that the Japanese people should sign a non-aggression covenant to atone for the crimes committed in Nanjing by the military. [6]

The court issued its judgment in November 1948, including seven death penalties and sixteen sentences to life imprisonment. During the three years that followed the judgment, SCAP analyzed newspaper editorials and articles reacting to the court's actions. It found that an overwhelming number of them supported the judgment and that, in general, any expression of sympathy toward the war criminals sentenced to death received general criticism in Japanese society. [7] The verdict of the tribunal supported the narrative that a small number of war criminals had dragged Japan to the reckless war and that this handful of villains were responsible for the suffering and misery now being felt by the people. The images of Imperial Japan and of its military dwindled, and, in the immediate postwar period, few Japanese were willing to argue publicly that Imperial Japan had fought for the good of Asia.

Even a critic who, in the 1980s, was to accuse the trial of imposing victors' justice and demonizing Imperial Japan, was more apologetic when he wrote in the 1950s. Immediately after the occupation ended in April 1952, Tanaka Masaaki published *On Japan's Innocence: The Truth on Trial* (Nihon muzai ron shinri no sabaki). Tanaka offered a Japanese translation of a dissenting opinion of Radhabinod Pal, an Indian judge who concluded that all of the accused war criminals were not guilty. While Tanaka implicitly questioned the legitimacy of the trial by invoking Pal's words, he refrained from asserting his own judgment as to whether the tribunal was just or unjust. At the time he also admitted that Japan, to a certain degree, had planned and waged an aggressive war. [8]

Critical observations of Japan's conduct of the war can be found in early issues of the newsletter published by the Association of War-Bereaved Families. Today this group is known as an organization that supports the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (established in 1955) and has striven to elevate the controversial Yasukuni Shrine from its current status as a private religious site to the government-sponsored national institution that it was before Japan's defeat. In December 1949, the newsletter printed a letter from a World War II veteran who expressed his resentment toward the wartime society that, he argued, had deprived Japan of freedom of speech. The writer urged the members of the Association to build a new Japan. He admitted that, although he had always regarded Japan's war with China as neither just nor winnable, he had lacked the courage to speak out at the time and had instead joined the military. Perhaps trying to placate other readers who were still grieving over the deaths of their loved ones, the veteran insisted that by denouncing the war he was not disrespecting the Japanese soldiers who had given their lives for the empire. [9]

The war inflicted a staggering cost on Japan. Approximately 3.4 million Japanese combatants and civilians were killed during the war, 4.5 million demobilized soldiers were registered as wounded, and 9 million Japanese were left homeless. [10] Because the memory of the war was so vivid and the human and material sacrifices were so immense, the widespread consensus among Japanese that the war was reckless and wrong is hardly surprising. The strong anti-war sentiment and various peace movements that flourished in postwar Japan are therefore easy to understand. Although in general, until the early 1970s, Japan's peace activism rarely focused on the millions of non-Japanese victims of Japanese aggression, this did not mean that no-one in Japan was concerned about the history and memory of Japanese wartime victimization.

One of the first movements to focus on non-Japanese victims originated in Hanaoka as early as 1949. During the closing years of the war, more than 2,300 Chinese were forced to work in the mines at Hanaoka. Because of the inhumane conditions, 586 Chinese died there. Among the dead were sixteen teenagers, some as young as sixteen. [11] Chinese, Japanese, and Korean activists cooperated to excavate the remains and send them to the People's Republic of China. Organizations such as the Japan-China Friendship Association, the Hanaoka Liberal Labor Union, the Association for Koreans in Japan, and the Japan

Communist Party initiated the movement. [12] In 1951, the first memorial service for the victims of slave labor was held at Hanaoka's Shinshōji temple. In the same year, the Japan-China Friendship Association published *The Story of Hanaoka*, a collection of wood-block prints intended to preserve for all time the memory of the atrocities in Hanaoka. In 1953, Matsuda Tokiko published a book on the incident called *Underground People* (Chitei no hitobito). [13] Between 1953 and 1964, Japanese delegations made nine pilgrimages to China to bring the remains of the victims back to their homeland. [14] An ongoing, vibrant spirit of peace activism can still be felt in Hanaoka today.

Until the mid-1950s, China held 1,100 Japanese detainees whom it had captured during the war. In 1956, the Chinese Communist government allowed all but a hundred or so of these inmates to return to Japan. By the mid-1960s, even those who had been tried and sentenced for criminal acts in wartime were all repatriated. The Chinese treatment of these detainees was not only non-punitive, but also surprisingly lenient. The detainees received Japanese-style cuisine three times a day and expensive medical treatment when they were ill. They had no obligation to labor either. In lieu of traditional punishments, they were forced to reconsider what they had done during the war. Many of them became deeply ashamed of atrocities in which they had participated. After their return, the detainees founded the Group of Returnees from China (Chūgoku kikansha renraku kai) and became diehard peace activists. One of their early works was the publication of *Three Alls* (Sankū) in 1957. In the book, members of the Group confessed the crimes they had committed against Chinese people, including arson and murder of civilians. They believed that their confessions, however shameful, would enlighten their fellow Japanese as to the reality of the war and would contribute to peaceful relations between Japan and its neighbors. [15]

The first scholarly study of Korean forced labor Pak Kyong-sik's *The Record of Korean Forced Mobilization* (Chōsenjin kyūsei renkō no kiroku) appeared in 1965. [16] Pak was born in Korea under the Japanese rule and later migrated to the Japanese archipelago, where his father worked as a common laborer. Contrary to the popular assumption, Japan is not a racially homogeneous nation, and ethnic minorities in Japan, as well as concerned Japanese peace activists, have continually tried to remind their fellow citizens of the suffering and devastation inflicted by Imperial Japan during the war. Nevertheless, it was only in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s that numerous detailed studies of Japanese wartime atrocities and colonialism became available to the public.

In the early postwar years, disputes over the war often evolved, not around specific historical terms, but with regard to a more general theme. For instance, progressives such as Masaki Hiroshi, a lawyer who challenged the government war effort throughout war years, blamed the Imperial form of government. In *Up Close* (Chikakiyori), a journal that he published at his own expense, Masaki argued in 1946 that overthrowing the emperor system was the first step toward taking responsibility for Japan's wartime misconduct both at home and abroad. [17] In 1949, Hani Gorō, a renowned Marxist historian elected to the Diet two years earlier, called for the dismantling of the emperor system, pointing out that the war was fought in the name of the emperor. [18] In 1965, the first of many school textbook controversies sparked dissent. When the government demanded that he delete the term *reckless* from his description of the war, textbook author Ienaga Saburō filed a lawsuit challenging the government's textbook screening system. [19]

Revisionist accounts that challenged the orthodoxy that the war was unjust and reckless appeared from the 1950s on. Tanaka Masaaki's volume, discussed above, was one example. Tanaka's views were complemented by Ueyama Shunpei's *The Significance of the Greater East Asian War in Intellectual History* (Daitō-A senshō no shisōshiteki igi) published in the monthly journal *Chūkyōron*. Ueyama, a philosopher, questioned the legitimacy of IMTFE. To him, Japan's alleged war crimes were no different from the actions of other powers in the Korean, Algerian, and Suez Wars. [20] Beginning in September 1963, Hayashi Fusao, a novelist and social critic, wrote a series of articles titled *The Affirmative Thesis on the Greater East Asian War* (Daitō-A senshō kōteiron). These articles were later republished as a

two-volume book. Hayashi argued that IMTFE was an act of vengeance by the victorious Allies and had nothing to do with justice, humanity, or civilization. He also claimed that the war Japan waged was a part of the Hundred Years War against Western encroachment. In his eyes, Japan had been motivated, not by aggression, but by self-defense. [21] A booklet titled *The Problem of Deplorable Textbooks* (Ureubeki kyMkasho no mondai), published by the conservative Democratic Party in 1955, condemned the existing textbooks for spreading communist ideology among school children because they denounced Imperial Japan and its military. [22]

During the 1950s and 1960s, revisionists' accounts were thus available and, in the eyes of some Japanese, appealing. Nevertheless, accounts that advocated pacifism and denounced the cruelty of the war, including textbooks, comic books, and films, were still far more numerous in the media. In the 1960s and the 1970s, a number of comic books and films carried anti-war messages to their audiences. The former included *Taka: Fighter Pilot of the Violet Lightning* (Shidenkai no Taka), authored and drawn by Chiba Tetsuya, one of the repatriates from Manchuria. *Taka* appeared in *Boys Magazine Weekly* (ShMnen magajin) from 1963 to 1965. [23] In the cartoon, Chiba underscores the cruelties of the war while emphasizing the humanity of his characters. Other popular comic book artists such as Mizuki Shigeru, Shirado Sanpei, Satonaka Machiko, and Nakazawa Keiji touched on the inhumanity of the war, the plight of women in the war, and vivid images of the nuclear devastations. One especially daring comic depicted Japanese soldiers who resort to cannibalism in order to survive. [24]

Most Japanese films about the war, including *Listen to the Voices from the Deep* (Kike wadatsumi no koe; 1950), *Tower of Lili Corp* (Himeyuri no tM, 1953), *Twenty-four Eyes* (Nijk-yon no hitomi, 1954), and *Burmese Harp* (Biruma no tategoto, 1956) featured only Japanese characters and skirted the issue of minority oppression in the Empire. However, films such as *Zone of Emptiness* (Shinkk chitai, 1952) harshly criticized the Imperial Army, and *Human Condition* (Ningen no jMken, 1959-61), a trilogy that underscored humane values and decried the cruelty of the war, directly confronted the plight of Chinese slave laborers in Manchuria and atrocities committed against them. [25] As Setogawa SMta, a film critic, pointed out, *Human Condition*, directed by Kobayashi Masaki, was the first Japanese film that frankly depicted Japanese devils in China in great detail. [26]

Although early Japanese pacifism is often criticized as victim-oriented pacifism, meaning that its proponents regretted the war for what it had done to Japan, rather than the pain it had caused to Japan's adversaries, this victim-oriented pacifism began to transform in the 1970s into a more international pacifism " one that candidly discussed Japanese war crimes. Detailed studies of specific atrocities, such as the Nanjing Massacre, Japan's chemical and biological warfare, and military sex slavery were on the rise.

## II. The Rise of Victimizer Consciousness (1971-89)

America's war in Vietnam reminded many self-critical Japanese of Japan's own aggression during the Asia-Pacific War and prompted them to examine the details of Japan's war crimes. For example, Honda Katsuichi, a Vietnam War correspondent for *Asahi newspaper* correspondent, traveled through China for one hundred days and reported Japanese war crimes committed during the war, such as the Nanjing Massacre and atrocities in Pingdingshan. [27] Honda, who had witnessed and reported atrocities in Vietnam, was moved to examine the Asia-Pacific War from the viewpoint of the Chinese victims of Japanese wartime atrocities. In his serialized article, Honda reported the vivid and vicious memories of the survivors of Japanese atrocities. He also included photographs of bayonet scars and survivors crying. The *Asahi*, one of the four largest national newspapers, had four million subscribers, and Honda's article drew both praise and outcries. Those critics who disagreed with Honda's approach, such as Yamamoto Shichihei, challenged the authenticity of Honda's reportage on the Nanjing Massacre. [28] Both Honda and

Yamamoto had supporters, and each aired his own views through the available media. Their well-publicized dispute inspired a new popular and scholarly interest in Nanjing.

From the early 1970s on, concerned schoolteachers began to teach the history of Japan's war crimes to students who had no personal memory of the Asia-Pacific War. Pedagogical journals such as *Geography and History Education* (Rekishi chiri kyMiku) began to publish lesson plans that highlighted Japanese wartime atrocities abroad. [29] These teachers thought it essential to reveal the devastations inflicted on other Asian countries by Imperial Japan. It was in the 1970s that both junior high school and high school textbooks began to be more candid about atrocities such as the Nanjing Massacre, though the detail of their descriptions varied considerably. [30]

Moreover, it was the 1970s that many more peace activists came to understand the Asia-Pacific War not only from the perspective of a victim, but also that of a perpetrator. For example, Maruki Toshi and Iri, painters well known for their depictions of nuclear destruction, completed a series of canvases that implicitly indicted Imperial Japan: *Death of American Prisoners of War* in 1971, *Crows* in 1972, and *The Rape of Nanking* in 1975. The Marukis had lost relatives in the bombing of Hiroshima. Therefore, until they traveled to the United States in 1970, they perceived the tragedy of the war only from the position of the victims of the atomic bomb. Nonetheless, their conversations with American peace activists led them to expand their sympathies beyond national and ethnic boundaries. *Death of American Prisoners of War* depicted American prisoners who survived the blast of the atomic bomb, but were then killed by angry Japanese in Hiroshima. *Crows* is a visual lament for the Korean victims of Hiroshima, whose bodies the painting shows being devoured by crows. Denied burial because they were Korean, these victims suffered discriminatory treatment even after death. In *The Rape of Nanking* the artists filled the canvas with numerous decapitated corpses to illustrate the horrors in Nanjing. [31]

Whereas peace activists began to pay more attention to Japan's war crimes in the 1970s, the Japanese government increased its efforts to restore some of its prewar educational policies. In order to instill patriotism and a sense of nationhood, the government implemented a revised curriculum standard (gakushū shidō yōryō) in elementary, junior high, and high schools in the 1970s. [32] The government required schools to have students sing the national anthem and raise the national flag on special occasions, though many schoolteachers who had lived through the wartime years protested. In history education, teachers were required to teach myths asserting the divine origin of the Japanese nation, such as those recounted in *Records of Ancient Matters* (Kojiki) and *Chronicles of Japan* (Nihon shoki). [33] In 1979, the government also resurrected the Japanese calendar system (gengō) that had been used prior to the country's defeat. [34] By the late 1970s, a significant rift had widened between the government, which tried to erode memories of the Asia-Pacific War, and progressive forces that tried to preserve them. Nevertheless, prior to the 1980s, disputes over the history and memory of the Asia-Pacific war were confined within Japanese national boundaries. This changed after the history textbook dispute in 1982.

In June 1982, national newspapers in Japan reported that the government was tightening its inspection standard over history textbooks and toning down the books' descriptions of the 1930s campaign against China. Although the reports were in some respects inaccurate, they ignited both domestic and international protests. Two months later the Japanese government issued an official statement, stressing that Japan would take responsibility for rectifying historical distortions and would promulgate a new standard of authorization in order to foster mutual understandings and friendships with neighboring countries. [35]

Critics such as Watanabe Shōichi, Professor of English at Sophia University, took umbrage at the government's apology, which was perceived as a concession to alleged communist sympathizers who, they believed, had intentionally planted misleading stories in the press in order to embarrass the Japanese government into making a needless apology. [36] Watanabe based his allegations of intentional fabrication on the fact that the newspaper reports had erroneously stated that the government had demanded that the

Japanese military action be characterized as an invasion instead of an advance. Using this one relatively small inaccuracy, Watanabe argued hyperbolically that the press reports were entirely false. To this day, those who try to deny Japan's war crimes and champion Imperial Japan continue to repeat Watanabe's accusation, although their argument seems much more intentionally erroneous than the press's initial mistake. [37] Whereas, as Watanabe pointed out, no change was made regarding Japan's invasion of China, Japan's invasion of Southeast Asia was indeed altered to read: Japan's advance into Southeast Asia. Moreover, while it is true that the government did not particularly tighten its screening policy in 1982, the government had long pressured textbook writers to tone down descriptions of Japan's wartime atrocities as well as their discussions of destruction on the home front.

The Japanese government's conciliation of foreign protesters infuriated certain critics, intellectuals, veterans, politicians, and journalists. Thereafter, revisionist accounts of issues relating the Asia-Pacific War, including Japan's war crimes and the IMTFE, increased substantially. For example, the journalist Kitsukawa Manabu, published his book *Japan Was Not an Aggressive Nation* (*Nihon wa shinryaku koku de wa nai*) in 1983 in order to teach his countrymen the true Japanese history. [38]

Tanaka Masaaki, who translated Pal's Judgment in 1953, published *The Illusion of the Nanjing Massacre* in 1984 and argued vociferously that the Nanjing Massacre was a myth concocted by the victors during IMTFE. [39] Frustrated politicians, including members of the Cabinet, expressed their denials of Japanese war crimes in journals such as *Bungei shunju*. [40]

While the revisionists published accounts that excused or even extolled Japan's wartime policies and militarism, those who wished to enlighten their fellow citizens regarding Japan's war crimes and colonialism passionately published studies that reached the opposite conclusion. In 1984, Honda Katsuichi, Kasahara Tokushi, a historian, Watanabe Harumi, an attorney, and others founded the Research Committee on the Nanjing Incident (*Nankin jiken chMsa kenkyukai*). Since that time, they have written numerous detailed analyses of the Nanjing Massacre. [41] In 1985, Ienaga SaburM published *War Responsibility* (*SensM sekinin*), in which he argued that, as long as people continue to be born Japanese, they will remain responsible for the crimes committed by Imperial Japan. [42] While one may question Ienaga's association of nationality with eternal guilt, his strident tone epitomizes the depth of emotion with which commentators on both sides pursued the controversy, particularly around the end of the ShMwa period in 1989.

### III. Reconciliation vs. Revisionism (1989- Present)

Hirohito's illness and his eventual death in 1989 inspired many Japanese to reconsider Hirohito's responsibility for the war and the entire history of the Asia-Pacific conflict. In December 1989, Motoshima Hitoshi, mayor of Nagasaki, expressed his personal view that the emperor was responsible for the war and that a vast number of human lives would have been saved if he had decided to surrender earlier. [43] An extreme right-wing activist later tried to assassinate Motoshima because of his comments, but violence did not succeed in changing the mayor's opinion. More than 380,000 people nationwide signed a declaration in support of Motoshima's view. [44] Meiji Gakuin University, a private Protestant university in Tokyo, organized a series of public lectures on the history of the war, including one which addressed Hirohito's war responsibility. Other academic institutions presented similar programs. [45]

Both the social and political context of the early- and mid- 1990s favored those who advocated historical reconciliation between Japan and its neighbors. In December 1991, three Korean women who had been forced into sexual servitude during the war filed a lawsuit against the Japanese government. They demanded an apology and compensation. Kim Hak-sun, one of the plaintiffs, urged young Koreans and Japanese to educate themselves about what Imperial Japan had done to women. Her words moved Yoshimi

Yoshiaki to commence his now-influential research on Japan's military sexual slavery. [46] In January 1992, a document that he discovered led the Japanese government to officially acknowledge its involvement in establishing brothels in Japan and abroad. [47] Yoshimi was not unique. The coming out of the so-called comfort women inspired many Japanese to study the topic and to conduct archival research on this issue. Yoshimi is a founding member of the Center for Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility, founded in 1993, which publishes a quarterly journal, *Study of War Responsibility Quarterly* (Kikan sensu sekinin kenkyu). Its first issue in fall 1993 focused solely on the Japanese military's comfort women. The journal reprinted some sixty newly discovered documents on the women forced into sexual slavery. [48] As of August 2007, the Center had published fifty-six issues dealing not only with comfort women, but also with such topics as the Nanjing Massacre, forced labor, and compensation lawsuits filed by the victims of Japanese atrocities and militarism.

In the 1990s, survivors of Japan's wartime atrocities and misdeeds filed lawsuits one after another. Japanese lawyers helped the plaintiffs, not only offering their services *pro bono*, but also occasionally paying the travel costs of researchers seeking evidence in China and South Korea. These lawyers have also hosted victims from other countries so that they can testify before the Japanese courts. From 1990 until 1999, at least fifty-nine cases were filed that demanded compensation from the Japanese government and companies. [49] One of the groups of lawyers seeking justice for war victims is the Counsel in the Case for Awarding Compensation to Chinese War Victims (Chugokujin sensu higai baishu seikyū jiken bengodan). Founded in 1995, the Counsel comprises 250 lawyers. Between 1995 and 2006, cases argued by the Counsel have resulted in a total of twenty-one judgments. Whereas four cases have led to judgments for the plaintiffs, the others have held for the government and the various corporate defendants, citing either the statute of limitations or peace treaties that have been held to preempt the plaintiffs' compensation claims. Nevertheless, in all cases, the courts acknowledged the atrocities and misdeeds committed by the Japanese government and companies and expressed sympathy for the psychological and physical pain that the survivors endured. [50]

Some Japanese companies chose to settle the claims out of court. In September 1997, Nippon Steel Corporation agreed to pay 20,050,000 yen (approximately \$173,950) to the eleven bereaved families in South Korea and 10,000,000 won (approximately \$10,640) for a commemoration ceremony in South Korea. [51] In 1999, another steel maker, NKK Corporation, agreed to pay 4,100,000 yen (approximately \$35,500) to Kim Kyung Suk, who was beaten after being forcibly taken to Japan. [52] In 2000, both Fujikoshi, a bearing manufacturer, and Kajima Corporation, the largest general contractor in Japan, reached settlements with plaintiffs. Fujikoshi agreed to pay 30,000,000 yen (\$260,000), to be divided among three Korean women forced into labor and an organization of bereaved families. [53] In the case of Kajima, the company established a fund of 500,000,000 yen (\$4.6 million) that is administered by the Chinese Red Cross to compensate the victims of the slave labor in Hanaoka. [54] Because none of these companies admitted legal fault, these settlements did not satisfy all of the plaintiffs' demands. Nevertheless, until the case of Nippon Steel Corporation, Japanese companies had never accepted responsibility in any form, and it was thus a significant step for these companies to embrace financial responsibility for their wartime misdeeds. Perhaps the settlements between the plaintiffs and the involved companies are not the important point. What may matter more is that the victims and the survivors of the Japanese atrocities had an opportunity to closely work with humanitarian lawyers who were deeply aware of Japan's role as a victimizer and who devoted their time and resources to promoting historical reconciliation.

A widespread awareness of war responsibility in Japanese society may be inferred not only from these numerous lawsuits in the 1990s, but also from the opening of a number of museums which displayed Japanese wartime atrocities and colonialism. In 1988, the Lkunoshima Poison Gas Museum (Lkunoshima dokugasu shiryūkan), a public museum that displays artifacts regarding Japan's use of chemical weapons on the Chinese front, was opened in Hiroshima. In 1989, a high school teacher and his supporters opened their ideal private peace museum called Grass Roots House (Heiwa shiryūkan kusa no ie). Located in

Kochi, this museum not only displays evidences of Japan's victimization of the region, but also organizes tours to visit sites of significance in the Asia-Pacific War in China and South Korea. [55] In 1991, another public museum, Peace Osaka (Osaka kokusai heiwa senten), was created in downtown Osaka. The facility exhibits not only the effects of the American fire bombing of the city, but also Japan's wartime aggression in other parts of Asia. A year later Ritsumeikan University, a private university in Kyoto, opened its peace museum, called the Kyoto Museum for World Peace (Ritsumeikan daigaku kokusai heiwa mykijiamu). The artifacts of the museum underscore that ordinary Japanese, too, supported the government's war effort and were responsible for the war. After long reflection upon its having supported Japan's aggression during the war, the university has, since the end of the war, adopted a mission to contribute to promoting world peace. [56] In 1993, Saitama prefecture opened its peace museum, which also displayed artifacts of Japanese war crimes (Saitama-ken heiwa shiryokan).

In 1994, local activists in Nagasaki inaugurated the Oka Masaharu Memorial Peace Museum (Oka Masaharu kinen Nagasaki heiwa shiryokan) whose displays are dedicated solely to the victims of Japanese war crimes.

In addition to these permanently established peace museums, local peace activists often organized temporary special exhibitions on the Asia-Pacific War at local community centers, churches, shopping malls, and other public sites. These special exhibitions became particularly popular beginning in the 1980s. At first, these exhibitions were limited to major cities such as Tokyo and Osaka, but, gradually, they spread nationwide. These local organizers began to develop a network and occasionally organized exhibition tours. [57] For example, from July 1993 to December 1994, more than 230,000 people visited special traveling exhibitions on Unit 731, Japan's chemical and biological warfare unit. The organizers borrowed artifacts from the Unit 731 Memorial Museum (Qin-Hua Rijun di 731 budui zuizheng zhenlieguan) in Harbin, China. [58]

The opening of many peace museums in Japan between the late 1980s and the mid 1990s, however, by no means implied that Japanese society had reached a consensus. There was no universal agreement that the nation needed to apologize for its wartime aggression and colonial exploitation. To the contrary, as many more Japanese became more critical of Japan's war crimes and ordinary people's responsibility for them, disputes over the history and memory of the Asia-Pacific War intensified in the 1990s. The mid-nineties saw the election of three consecutive prime ministers who sought reconciliation with Japan's neighbors by confessing the country's war guilt: Hosokawa Morihiro, who, immediately after becoming prime minister in August 1993, condemned the war as an act of Japanese aggression; and his two successors, Hata Tsutomu, April-June, 1994; and Murayama Tomiichi, June 1994-January 1996 also made a point of doing so.

Nevertheless, these prime ministers encountered strong opposition from various circles. Hashimoto Ryukar, a Liberal Democratic Party politician and chairman of the Association of War-Bereaved Families, denounced Hosokawa's view and complained that Hosokawa's remark had embarrassed many bereaved families. [59] In May 1994, Nagano Shigeto, Justice Minister during the first half of the Hata administration, claimed that the Nanjing Massacre was a fabrication and argued that Japan's goal in waging the Asia-Pacific War had been to liberate Asia from Western aggression. [60] Because of his comments, Nagano was forced to give up his seat in the Cabinet. Between September 1993 and May 1995, the National Committee for the 50th Anniversary of the End of World War II (Shiksen gojussukunen kokumin iinkai), consisting of organizations such as the Association of War-Bereaved Families, collected approximately five million signatures to oppose the forthcoming Diet resolution expressing regret for the war " a resolution that originally included such terms as aggressive war and colonial rule. [61]

Displays of Japanese war crimes in museums, particularly public ones, often became the targets of protest. The newly renovated atomic bomb museum in Nagasaki had a modest exhibit section titled The

Sino-Japanese War and the Pacific War near the end of the exhibition. There, museum curators included photographs and video footage, including American wartime propaganda that deliberately complicated the narrative of blame. Although the exhibition space dedicated to the section was insignificant, the display caused a controversy. In April 1996, approximately three hundred right-wing extremists gathered in Nagasaki and, through loudspeakers mounted atop a number of vans, demanded the removal of the entire section and the resignation of the mayor. [62] In October of the same year, Ishikawa Mizuho of the *Sankei* newspaper accused Peace Osaka of wasting taxpayer's money to exhibit what he called a series of forged photographs of Japan's war crimes. In the eyes of revisionists such as Takahashi Shirō, professor of education at Meisei University, Peace Osaka was nothing but a masochistic, anti-Japanese museum. [63]

In the latter half of the 1990s, terms such as masochistic, *sayoku* (pinko) and anti-Japanese became widely popular among revisionists. Burgeoning discussions of Japanese war crimes in various media contributed to uniting and vitalizing the revisionist effort. The Diet resolution and museum displays are two examples of such unifying forces. Nevertheless, candid discussions of Japan's war crimes in the 1997 editions of junior high school history textbooks triggered a still longer and more intense revisionist repercussion. Following the 1982 textbook controversy, textbook descriptions of Japanese colonialism, aggression and war crimes became more detailed and inclusive of critical material as time went by. In the 1997 editions, for example, all seven history textbooks issued to junior high schools discussed the comfort women. Regarding the Nanjing Massacre, six textbooks introduced a specific estimated body count of the victims of Japanese atrocities, and four of them included the controversial official Chinese estimate. Arguably, the 1997 editions examined the history of modern Japan more critically than any other editions published in the postwar years. [64]

In the eyes of Fujioka Nobukatsu, professor at the University of Tokyo, and Nishio Kanji, professor at the University of Electro-Communications, the 1997 editions were not a sign of progress resulting from vigorous peace activism in postwar Japan, but a symptom of the degradation of Japanese citizens, caused by their neglect of their national honor. To Fujioka and Nishio, the 1997 editions were anti-Japanese and masochistic and completely demonized the history of modern Japan. [65] Together with their supporters, in December 1996, Fujioka and Nishio founded an organization called the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (*Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho o tsukurukai*), whose objective is to transfer the correct version of our history to Japan's future generations. [66] To do so, the Society edited its own junior high school history textbook, titled *New History Textbook* (*Atarashii rekishi kyōkasho*). Although the government demanded that the authors make a number of changes it did eventually authorize the textbook in 2001. In the preface, the authors urged the students not to apply current standards of good and evil to Japan's militaristic past and to refrain from evaluating historical events from a twenty-first century perspective. The textbook emphasized the uniqueness and superiority of Japanese culture, championed the modernization that occurred in the Meiji period (1868-1912), criticized Western imperialism in Asia, and stressed Western hostilities against Japan in the 1930s and the 1940s. [67] In summary, the textbook is not so different from the wartime history textbook that applauded Japanese expansionism and legitimized Japan's waging of war against the Allied Powers.

Although the Society hoped that its textbook would garner more than ten percent of the market share, it sold only 543 copies, or 0.039% of the market. [68] In terms of sales, the textbook failed completely to accomplish its goal. Nevertheless, through a persistent campaign of harsh criticism and accusation, the Society and its allies succeeded in generating enough of a reaction to force the other publishers of junior high school history textbooks to impose self-restraint and to adopt less controversial descriptions.

For example, only three 2002-edition junior high school history textbooks included a discussion of the comfort women. As to the Nanjing Massacre, only two 2002 editions continued to use specific numbers to describe the atrocities. Instead of referring to the controversial death toll, the other editions used vague terms such as many and massive, apparently to avoid challenges from the Society and its supporters. [69]

The 2006 edition of the Society's textbook raised its sales to 4,912 copies, but its share of the total market remained low, a mere 0.39%. [70] As to the other seven textbooks, although wartime forced labor and Japan's colonial rule were still discussed, five publishers decided to delete the term forced mobilization (*kyūmei renkō*) from the textbooks. According to Ishiyama Hisao, Chairman of the Association for History Teachers, the progressive character of these seven junior high school textbooks was further eroded in the 2006 editions. [71]

The year 1997 saw not only the advent of the Society for History Textbook Reform, but also the organization of the Japan Conference, the largest pro-Imperial revisionist organization. Just like the Society, the Conference works toward the reform of current Japanese education which, in its view, deprives Japanese youth of its patriotic pride. In addition, the Conference hopes to revise the Constitution, drafted by the American Occupational forces after the war, and promulgate a Japanese-made constitution. It further wishes to establish a government that pursues a diplomacy founded not on apologies, but upon the pride of the nation and the brave sacrifices of its martyrs. [72] The organization has strong ties with politicians. For example, as of July 2006, 235 Diet members have joined the Diet Members' Committee of Japan Conference, a non-partisan branch organization of the Conference. More than half of the Liberal Democratic Party Diet members, including Abe Shinzō, a former prime minister, and Asō Tarō, Secretary General of LDP, are the members of this organization. [73]

## IV. Conclusion

From the late 1990s on, numerous revisionist accounts have been available in Japanese bookstores. Denials of Japan's war crimes such as the Nanjing Massacre and military sexual slavery have become routine among the revisionists. However, to assume that the revisionists fully represent the Japanese people's understanding of the Asia-Pacific War is to blind oneself to the complexity of the make up of the nation's collective memory of the time. It is also to overlook a more ambiguous trajectory of the history and memory of the Asia-Pacific War. The significant increase in the number of revisionist accounts in the last decade was a response to a flourishing consciousness of the role of the Japanese state and the ordinary people in Japanese colonial rule and the commission of war crimes. The battle over the history and memory of the Pacific War seems far from over. Neither peace activists nor revisionists will give in to their adversaries, and they will continue to publicize their own perceptions in order to win public support.

Indeed, differences in the interpretation of the contested events of the war are so profound that consensus now seems impossible. For example, Kasahara Tokushi, of Tsuru Bunka University, now accepts that the Nanjing Massacre is an indisputable fact, although he does not believe that the Japanese troops slaughtered 300,000 civilians in Nanjing. Based on an analysis of Chinese, English, and Japanese sources, Kasahara concludes that the Japanese forces killed between 100,000 and 200,000 Chinese combatants and civilians from December 1937 till March 1938. [74] Rather than becoming bogged down in controversies over numbers, Kasahara's approach underscores human rights violations by the Japanese military in Nanjing. In contrast, Higashinakano Osamichi, of Asia University, focuses on the number of the deaths in Nanjing and argues that the Nanjing Massacre, as described by progressives, was not factual because the Japanese troops did not slaughter 300,000 Chinese civilians. His argument perversely uses the uncertainty as to the precise number of deaths as a means of effectively denying the entire event. [75] In the eyes of Nishino Rumiko, director of the Women's Active Museum on War and Peace founded in 2005, the system of comfort women was a violent system initiated by the Japanese state to coerce women into sexual slavery and deprive them inhumanely of bodily control, pride, security, future, and hope. [76] To Nishino, remembering the history of these women and restoring their honor is an urgent task, and she has devoted herself to enlightening the public through the museum displays, journal articles, and public lectures. In contrast, Fuioka Nobukatsu believes that the comfort women were not sexual slaves, but professional

prostitutes. He argues that, since the textbooks do not discuss sexual violence against women by the other nations during and after the Asia-Pacific War, the textbook descriptions unfairly exaggerate Japanese misdeeds against women. [77] Whereas Awaya Kentarō, from Rikkyō University, finds the International Military Tribunal for the Far East contributed to the historical studies by compiling an immense archive concerning Japan's war crimes, Tanaka Masaaki understands the tribunal as an instance of retaliation outside the bounds of legal justice because it ignored any atrocities or war crimes committed by the Allied Powers. [78]

The lengthy dispute over the history and memory of the Asia-Pacific War in Japan has produced both fruitful and fruitless outcomes. It has encouraged concerned individuals across the world to study details of the Asia-Pacific War, and cross-national and cross-disciplinary scholarly accounts of the war are now more abundant than a decade ago. Japanese, Chinese, and South Korean authors have recently published *History That Opens Future*, a book meant to be used as a modern East Asian history textbook in all three countries. Less encouragingly, the dispute has inspired a resurgence of nationalism and ethnocentrism not only in Japan, but also in other parts of the world. Regardless of the nationality of any particular authors, these accounts perceive the world with black-and-white simplicity and apply chauvinistic double standards, refusing to extend their sympathies to people whose ethnicity marks them as presumed adversaries. As long as people continue to voice opinions about the Asia-Pacific War that are dictated by the speaker's national and ethnic identity rather than objective rationality and a sense of our shared humanity, the task of the historian will remain unfinished.

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[3] *Ibid.*

[4] As to the details of the American Occupation, see John Dower, *Embracing Defeat* (New Press, 1999). According to a study conducted by the United States Strategic Bombing Survey in November and December 1945, an overwhelming number of those interviewed supported the American Occupation. The United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Effects of Strategic Bombing on Japanese Morale* (June 1947), no. 14, pp. 150-55.

[5] Chkgokujin ni shai (Gratitude to Chinese People), *Yomiuri shinbun*, 31 July 1946, p. 1. The text reads:

Newspaper correspondents accompanying the army that captured Nanjing were more or less aware of the atrocities by the army. They witnessed innumerable atrocities during the so-called sacred war, which was in fact a war of aggression. Yet they dared not remonstrate to the military, deeming it wiser to shut their eyes and to excuse the brutality as an unavoidable wartime evil. The irresponsibility of war correspondents, ourselves included, is reprehensible in its disregard of humanity.

Despite the fact that the military committed unspeakable brutalities, the government issued a statement declaring that Japan would consider Chinese people its friends. Such contradictory actions were characteristic of all Japanese policies on China, resulting in spreading hostility toward Japanese among Chinese people. This hostility remains the bitterest in the more than one-thousand-year history of relations between China and Japan. We must acknowledge the crimes committed by the militarists, epitomized by the Nanjing Massacre, as an ineradicable blot in our history (Takashi Yoshida, *The Making of the Rape of Nanking: History and Memory in Japan, China, and the United States* (Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 49.

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