



BLOODY MEMORIES: AFFECT AND EFFECT OF WORLD WAR II MUSEUMS IN CHINA AND JAPAN

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For political elites in any nation, war museums serve as powerful story-tellers. They may reflect and even help shape collective identity. But the effect is especially strong in the case of authoritarian regimes that are able to tell a consistent, coherent narrative about a past conflict. In this analysis, drawing on insights from commemoration studies, comparative politics, and international relations, I look at three museums in Japan, which is politically divided over how to remember World War II, and three museums in China, which has achieved a revised, but still top-down consensus over that war. The comparison suggests that all of these museums use “affect,” more or less successfully, to tell their stories. But it also reveals that the shared history recalled in Chinese war museums is more effective and thus “useful” for Chinese elites than competing histories recalled in Japanese museums are for Japanese elites.

INTRODUCTION

On the train to Hiroshima, I tried to warn her. The images at the Peace Museum are shocking, sometimes horrifying, but they come with a history, or at least a story—a long and bloody background that could never excuse, but that certainly might explain why the United States did what otherwise was inexplicable. Why it unleashed a nuclear assault on that cursed city.

Although she was not yet 10 years old, my half-Japanese/half-American daughter listened carefully as I told the story of Japan’s occupation of Manchuria, its subsequent invasion of the rest of China, its use of kamikaze pilots to harass U.S. battleships, its sacrificial attempt to hold Okinawa—a long, bubbling stream of events that, I thought, flowed naturally into *Little Boy*’s explosion. She seemed to follow my U.S.-biased narrative. So I was stunned when she turned to me at the museum and said, in the language we used in our Tokyo

home, “Daddy, *Amerikajin ga daikirai desu*” (Daddy, I hate Americans.)

I really shouldn't have been so surprised. Well-designed museums tell compelling stories. With vivid videos, still photographs, artifacts, a small number of carefully chosen words, and a haunting space, the Hiroshima Peace Museum enacted an emotionally brisk, understandable tale that resonated with my daughter much more than my comparatively clunky, complex story. It projected a cinematic picture of the past (or *a* past), one that carefully cultivated *affect*, and was thus far more gripping than mine.¹

This is an article about that museum and several others like it in Japan and China. It seeks to understand the present, not the past—how memories of World War II have been forged in these two countries, and what the different processes of remembering say about the domestic politics, especially the political culture, of each nation, as well as about international politics, including the relations between these two states. It concludes that Chinese museums offer a remarkably consistent narrative of the war, one that has helped shape the collective identity of a proud, increasingly assertive country. By contrast, Japanese museums spin radically different, even competing narratives about the war, contributing to the public's dissonance and ultimately its apathy about its own modern history. I refer to the former as “authoritarian, affirming memory,” and the latter as “democratic, debilitating memories.”

My point here is not that democracy sours the soul or that authoritarianism is uplifting; rather, I argue that the Chinese party-state, by controlling the historiography of WWII or, as Michel-Rolph Trouillot might suggest, by “silencing the past” remembered by others in China, is able to build a shared and thus useful memory that can be effectively mobilized in global affairs.² In Japan, on the other hand, the public project of looking back, of inscribing the past, serves as a persistent cleaver, sharply dividing the political Left and Right. The result is mostly historiographic cacophony, an ineffective tool for international relations.

Political scientists do not write much about museums, which is strange because these spaces routinely make epistemological and emotional/affective claims that are inherently political (i.e., claims associated with the exercise of power or claims that influence the contest for power). As Timothy Luke notes, they also serve as high-profile venues for power struggles: “Different social forces—to the left, on

the right, and at the center—all are intent on defining what reality is, will be, or has been, and major museums quickly can become embattled bastions of resistance or threatening outposts of invasion in the cultural war that these forces wage against each other.”³

Political analysis of museums is uncommon, but such analysis from an international relations perspective is even rarer. Here, I hope to fill some of that lacunae.

At the outset, I confess to harboring a couple of poststructuralist beliefs. First, history is forever reproduced and thus reshaped in the human drama of remembering. We cannot treat it like a jewel that, once cleansed of its geological gunk through scientific research, will blind us with its overpowering, objective truth. Second, power matters. In reproducing the past, strong voices tend to be heard; weak or muted voices are not heard or are rendered not “coherent.”⁴

At the same time, though, I reject a more radical version of poststructuralism, which asserts that the past has no autonomy and that it is therefore folly to try and decipher it. Although we must always interpret the past through the imperfect lens of the present, some renderings are more distorted than others. In steering a middle course here, I adopt Tessa Morris-Suzuki’s notion that historiography should be about “truthfulness,” the quest for a sensible interpretation of the past that is nonetheless mindful of the interpreter’s own biases.⁵

The article proceeds with an overview of the Japanese debate over World War II and the historical consensus in China and then moves to a discussion of six different museums that represent the relative breadth and vigor of that debate in Japan and the relative coherence of that consensus in China. The three Chinese facilities are the Nanjing Massacre Museum and the Unit 731 Museum, both of which trumpet the bitter nationalism that emerged after Mao’s death, as well as the Museum for the Anti-Japanese Resistance in China, which embraces the ethos of victimization while also paying homage to the revolutionary heroism emphasized during Mao’s rule. The three Japanese museums are the Yushukan, reflecting a rightist view of World War II; the Women’s Active Museum, reflecting a leftist perspective; and the Hiroshima Peace Museum in Japan, representing a more mainstream position. The article concludes with a discussion of the political meaning of these different recollections or commemorations of past events.

HISTORIOGRAPHY IN TWO NATIONS

Japan's Debate over History

There are, today, multiple narratives in Japan about World War II, generating a lot of political noise and heat. But this was not always so.

Until the 1980s, most Japanese politicians and citizens did not reflect very deeply on their country's behavior in the Pacific War.⁶ They focused more on the future, especially the economic redevelopment of Japan, than on the past. When they looked back, they tended to view Japan as a victim, a nation hijacked by rogue militarists who carried out misdeeds in the rest of Asia and pushed it into a suicidal confrontation with the United States.⁷ That confrontation ended in an unparalleled, radioactive tragedy with the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. War, according to this broadly pacifist perspective, is universally awful; Japan's behavior in World War II was therefore unexceptional. The U.S. occupation of Japan (1945–52), and especially the U.S.-backed Tokyo Tribunal, played a central role in shaping this perspective. By purging the military but generally not the civilian bureaucracy,⁸ and by exempting Emperor Hirohito from prosecution, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) appeared to point the finger at “bad apples,” not the country as a whole.

Of course, not everyone in Japan embraced this view. The Japanese Left, from radical union leaders to Marxist academics, routinely criticized the dominant perspective. Leaders of Beheiren, for example, rallied not only against the Vietnam War (and Japanese support for U.S. policy), but also against what they viewed as neo-imperialist efforts to whitewash Japan's history and thereby justify remilitarization. Ienaga Saburo, a writer of Japanese history textbooks, emerged as the Left's hero on this issue. In a long-running court case, he doggedly challenged the Ministry of Education's screening system for textbooks, and, more specifically, its requirements that he revise controversial passages highlighting Japanese atrocities in WWII. Japan's Supreme Court ultimately sided with Ienaga on many of his claims.

More importantly, the court of public opinion gradually shifted in a more critical direction. This was, in part, a response to pressure from outside Japan; Asians, especially Chinese and Koreans, began to complain loudly that Japan had failed to openly acknowledge or

condemn the wartime behavior of its military. But in larger part, the shift was generated from within. Japanese citizens began to read the reports of enterprising writers who were digging up the past in all its horror.⁹ In 1981, for example, Morimura Seiichi, a novelist turned investigator, wrote *The Devil's Gluttony*, about Unit 731 of the Japanese military in northeast China, which—for the purpose of developing tools in biological and chemical warfare—carried out sadistic and often lethal experiments on live Chinese patients. In 1987, Honda Katsuichi, a reporter for *Asahi*, a left-of-center newspaper, wrote *The Road to Nanjing*, a book that documented the December 1937 rampage in China's southern capital, including a so-called killing contest among Japanese soldiers.¹⁰ And in 1992, Yoshimi Yoshiaki, a historian at Chuo University, published the results of his research showing the Japanese Imperial Army's role in setting up so-called comfort stations where Asian women conscripted as sex slaves serviced Japanese soldiers.

By the mid-1990s, the Left's position on history appeared ascendant. This was evident in the public discourse of that time, when numerous politicians stepped forward to issue what sounded, to me at least, like sincere apologies for Japan's wartime behavior. The most notable was socialist Prime Minister Murayama Tomiichi's 1995 statement, which became the rhetorical standard for future leaders. He expressed "deep remorse" for "the tremendous damage and suffering" Japan inflicted on its Asian neighbors in the Pacific War. And it was just as evident in the history textbooks of the era. I scrutinized the textbooks my eldest daughter brought home from the junior high school she attended in Tokyo. In my opinion, they offered more thorough treatment of Japanese war crimes than most U.S. history textbooks have covered the genocide of Native Americans, the enslavement of African Americans, or the wanton destruction of the Vietnam War.

But the Japanese Right soon seized the offensive. In 1996, nationalist scholars forged an association, *Tsukurukai*, to produce a new Japanese history textbook that would avoid what it panned as the "biased" and "masochistic" approach of prevailing texts. Its own baby (*Atarashii Rekishi Kyoukasho*, or *The New History Textbook*) was born five years later, triggering howls of protest from China and Korea for "whitewashing" twentieth-century atrocities. That same year, 2001, brought Koizumi Jun'ichiro to power. Although he, like other prime ministers, confirmed the Murayama statement, he took

other actions that revealed his right-wing nationalism. Most significantly, Koizumi annually made a pilgrimage to the Yasukuni Shrine, where fourteen Class A criminals from World War II are enshrined along with other fallen Japanese soldiers.

Today, the “history problem” (*rekishi mondai*) continues to divide Left and Right in Japan—even though the debate has shed some of its ideological rigidity. In recent years, many corporate executives, traditionally aligned with the Right, have spoken out against revisionist historiography. Even *Yomiuri*, the leading right-of-center newspaper, published an exhaustive series of reports on Japan’s war of aggression, seeking to assign ultimate responsibility to specific individuals and groups. Expressions of cosmopolitanism from big business and its allies reflect the simple fact that Japan’s economy is increasingly dependent on trade with East Asia.

But if it has lost support from business, the patriotic Right has gained it from a new and perhaps surprising constituency: Japanese youth, many of whom are fed up with what they view as unyielding, unfair “Japan-bashing” from Asia and constant kowtowing by Japanese politicians. Many have gravitated to figures such as Kobayashi Yoshinori, a popular writer and *manga* artist who penned a decade-long series of cartoons extolling the Pacific War as Japan’s heroic struggle to liberate Asia from Western imperialism, and to anonymous, Internet text-boards like “2ch,” which are filled with jingoistic and xenophobic messages. The domestic battle over history goes on.

China’s Consensus on History

One could easily imagine that Chinese citizens have spent a very long time stewing over Japanese treatment of China in two wars (1894–95 and 1937–45), an occupation (of Manchuria, 1931–45), and more broadly (e.g., the “21 demands” of 1915). But the consensus perspective of Japan as an unrepentant war criminal is relatively new.

Indeed, from 1949, when the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was born, until the 1980s, political elites downplayed the suffering of the Chinese people at the hands of the Japanese. For example, Mark Eykolt reveals that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the 1960s covered up the results of research by Nanjing academics on the massacre in that city.¹¹ It did not want this story of suffering widely shared. The party also routinely distinguished between “the militarists,” who designed and executed Japan’s brutal war of aggression, and “the

Japanese people,” who were portrayed as innocent victims. In this way, then, Chinese historiography paralleled Japanese historiography for about three decades, but for very different reasons.

First, Mao Zedong wanted to focus the Chinese public’s attention on the revolutionary and heroic role of the Communist Party (as opposed to the “counter-revolutionary” Guomindang, or Nationalist Party), not on the crippling weakness of the nation. History was thus a tool to secure the legitimacy of the CCP. But Mao also had a geopolitical reason for adopting this approach. Following the revolution, “New China” was isolated in the international system, the target of a U.S.-led containment policy. It launched a campaign of People’s Diplomacy to foster closer ties with its neighbor, undermine the U.S.-Japan alliance, and break out of its isolation. Mao’s slogan at the time was “Oppose America, Support Japan.”¹²

On issues ranging from the treatment of Japanese war criminals to the repatriation of Japanese, the PRC in the 1950s and 1960s proved remarkably generous. It pardoned and immediately released more than a thousand war criminals, sentencing only forty-five to prison terms. Even those inmates, however, were released before very long. And Beijing moved quickly to repatriate about 29,000 Japanese nationals who had become stranded in China at the end of the war. Significantly, it did so before Japan reciprocated on repatriating Chinese nationals.

Even in the 1970s, when China achieved rapprochement with the United States and then Japan, communist leaders continued to repress bad memories, to hush up stories about Japanese atrocities. Most dramatically, it signed a communiqué in 1972 that absolved Japan of its war guilt and thus of any responsibility to compensate Chinese victims. This was consistent with Mao’s policy of not punishing the Japanese people for the military’s behavior. But it also reflected an interest in building a longtime economic relationship that would include foreign aid, investment, and technology transfer from Japan.¹³

It was six years after Mao’s death that China finally began to protest the past. In 1982, the Japanese Left panned textbooks authorized by the Ministry of Education in Tokyo, triggering news coverage that floated across the waters.¹⁴ Chinese media quickly exploded. The official CCP organ, *Renmin Ribao* (*People’s Daily*), led the way, condemning Japan in a series of fiery editorials. Deng Xiaoping, the party’s unofficial, behind-the-scenes leader, authorized the angry response; he hoped to consolidate power and protect his economic reform agenda by burnishing his credentials as a patriot.¹⁵ Three years later, Chinese

students exploited the precedent, demonstrating in the streets against Japan's presumed failure to apologize for its previous militarism.

The history issue was born, and in that decade, the 1980s, China designed all three of the war museums reviewed here.

The past came to loom even larger in the 1990s, after the Tiananmen Square incident and deepening market reforms conspired to undermine the ideological salience of communism in China. Jiang Zemin, general secretary of the CCP and president of the PRC, initiated the Patriotic Education Program to give Chinese youth a new reason to rally behind the ruling party. Textbooks began to tell shocking new stories of Japanese treachery and brutality—how they slaughtered Chinese civilians in Nanjing and dissected live Chinese patients in Harbin—along with the already well-known stories of heroic resistance. This became the shared Chinese narrative of World War II, and the Communist Party was the dominant narrator. Citizens began to speak out in the late 1990s, and individual victims began to directly press the Japanese state for compensation—despite a 1972 communiqué exempting Japan from state-to-state payments.¹⁶ But individuals and social groups did not openly challenge the party-state's official reproduction of the past.

CHINESE WAR MUSEUMS

The Memorial Hall for Victims of the Nanjing Massacre

A smooth, granite wall here is engraved with the unambiguous number of Chinese civilians murdered by Japanese troops in December 1937: 300,000. The number is an iconic image, repeated throughout the museum. You can't escape it, let alone contradict it. Indeed, if you ask a recent graduate of high school in the PRC, you will hear the same number offered up in confident precision: 300,000 Chinese were murdered in the Nanjing massacre. Not 299,999. Not 300,001.¹⁷

The original museum, designed by Nanjing architect Qi Kang and built in 1985 on top of the "Mass Grave of Ten Thousand Corpses," feels much like a religious space: Incense burns in an urn at the front door; a piano plays, eerily, by itself, at the rear door. In between, one traverses a courtyard with giant bronze sculptures of body parts: an arm emerging from the ground, with a desperate hand, palm down, groping for leverage and perhaps, eventually, some air; a battered and severed head, wholly inert. Over the site looms a stone cross with the dates of the massacre.

In December 2007, less than a year before it hosted the Olympic Games in Beijing, the Chinese party-state opened a much bigger, much glitzier museum in Nanjing. During reconstruction, workers uncovered a new mass grave with nineteen full or partial skeletons, which now serves as the gruesome centerpiece of the expanded space. To get to that pit of bones, you walk down a long, dark stairway with strobe lights flashing on each side. You descend into a tomb, a designer's version of hell, passing under an archway emblazoned with two characters. One is lit, and in relief: "human." The other is dark, a void left in the hollowed out space: "holocaust." In case anyone missed the otherwise obvious message, a tour guide tells a group of Chinese tourists entering this space: "The Japanese dragged the Chinese from the light into the dark."

This underground space looks like the interior of a bombed-out building, dwarfed by broken balconies and a wall painted with black soot. Rubble is scattered about. Focused lighting replicates smoke, and a sign says, "No flash allowed." Darkness is essential to maintain this feeling of unrelenting doom.

In adjacent rooms, you pass before a series of grisly photographs, including many whose authenticity has been challenged by right-wing Japanese historians. One shows a woman lying on her back, her entrails spilling across her naked body. The caption says she was raped and then sliced open. Another shows a Japanese soldier, hands on hips and a broad smile on his face, as a comrade appears to ready himself for the beheading of a Chinese man. Nearby is an oil painting by Li Zijian, a U.S.-based Chinese artist. It is a morality-tale triptych that recalls Hans Memling's *The Last Judgment*. Stuck between good, represented by a Buddhist monk attending a victim in the right panel, and evil, represented by two callous Japanese soldiers in the left panel, Nanjing's most horrible and thus most memorable story lives on in the center panel, where a crying baby sits atop a sky-high mound of bound and blood-soaked bodies.

Before you exit from this underground space, you come to a mostly dark, rectangular chamber with what looks like a blue pool of water on the ground and small photographs of Chinese victims on the wall. A clock ticks in the background. Every twelve seconds, a different photograph is illuminated and a drop of water falls into the pool, triggering a heavily amplified *ping*. A sign does the math for you: The Japanese military killed 300,000 Chinese over a six-week period, the equivalent of one every twelve seconds.



Figure 1. The Nanjing Massacre Museum is built on top of human remains uncovered at different times. This pit of bones serves as a kind of altar, a sacred center of the site. Photograph by the author.

The subtle design delivers a heavy-handed message about the presumed scale, and persistence, of the massacre. An adjacent room is much bigger and brighter, but the emotional impact is similar. This huge space with skylights houses the Archive Wall, a series of shelves from floor to forty-foot ceiling that contains 12,000 documents from witnesses to the Nanjing massacre. It looks like a bigger, new-fangled version of an English aristocrat's home library, except that there is no ladder on wheels to reach the top shelves. Even so, it smacks of authority: truth is captured here in clean, black binders.

I wander into a nearby alcove, a smaller space for visitors to jot down their thoughts. A Chinese woman has just finished writing hers: "I hate the Japanese and wish they all would die."

Climbing some stairs, I leave the claustrophobic tomb of the very specific, very immediate Nanjing Massacre and gain a more global perspective on the "fourteen years of [Chinese] resistance." This leads me, quite naturally, into the Reconciliation Room, the museum's denouement, which focuses on contemporary relations between China

and Japan and encourages us to “cherish peace and create a better future.” There are pictures of leaders from the two countries shaking hands, a chart of bilateral agreements, and a discussion of Japanese foreign aid to China from 1979 to 2004. We learn that “the Chinese government and people firmly insist that these two nations should live in friendship from generation to generation by taking history as a mirror to guide the growth of the ties between the countries in the future.”

You think you are done here. But back outside the complex of buildings, where tourists snap photographs of one another in front of enormous bronze statues, familiar images reappear: people fleeing danger (“Run! The beasts are coming!”), mothers carrying babies (“frightened by the vicious laugh of the brutal devils”), contorted, broken bodies (“the inhuman massacre”). Without special lighting or sounds, the emotional impact is comparatively muted, but the statues still evoke strong feelings, including anger. Although it sits nearby, just across a moat and over the museum’s wall, the reconciliation room now feels miles, or decades, away.

Unit 731 Museum (Harbin)

Although it opened in the same year as the Memorial Hall in Nanjing, this public facility is smaller and less ostentatious—even after two major renovations. You need a forty-minute taxi ride, or an hour-long trip on public bus, to get here from the center of Harbin, a Russian-influenced city in China’s northeast. And unlike the Nanjing facility, which requires no admission fee, you have to pay cash to enter. All of this may explain the reduced hours and lower foot traffic at the Unit 731 Museum.

Curator Wang Peng has done a lot with a little. Before they surrendered in 1945, Japanese troops blew up most of the buildings they had used in Manchuria to study “cutting-edge” methods of biological and chemical warfare. And then they apparently cut a deal with the U.S. military, secretly turning over the results of their research on live Chinese patients in exchange for silence at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal.¹⁸ So the eleven rooms in this museum are long on exhibits with clay, wax, and plastic figures reenacting ghastly experiments, but short on artifacts. The exception is room #9, which is also the most sickening space in the entire building. Here, you will find a sampling of some of the medical instruments—needles, saws, and vivisection hooks—used by military doctors and technicians to inject patients with germs, remove

body limbs, hang extracted organs. One Western reviewer (Frommer's) praises the Harbin museum: "[I]t lets the images and details tell the story, rather than resorting to the heavy-handed propaganda that plagues other Chinese war memorials like the Nanjing Massacre site." But I didn't find any significant difference in the narrative tone. In an introductory room, the curator declares that the Japanese military produced "the most vicious fascist war criminals in human history." And a plaque soon refers to them as "warlike savages who could not say 'no' to chemical weapons" (*bu shi yong kong bao ji zuo wei yi zhong zuo zhan fang fa*). We learn that the Japanese committed "monstrous" and "heinous" war crimes by experimenting on Chinese people and that this medical research represented "evil under the [rising] sun."

Compared to the museum in Nanjing, this one in Harbin seems uninspired by DreamWorks or Disney. The story of Unit 731 is presented in a rather unfiltered fashion with limited use of technology, multimedia, or "special effects." But this may simply reflect the fact such effects are unnecessary to elicit outrage in a place where, among other horrific acts, the limbs of patients were cut off and attached to different parts of the body.

Chinese visitors react to the exhibits with understandable upset, much as Jewish visitors to Auschwitz respond when they learn about Nazi medical experiments.¹⁹ On the day I visited, a group of People's Liberation Army soldiers moved through the building with obvious discomfort, donning brave smiles only for a camera. But a group of schoolgirls seemed more typical. They whispered to one another, made spontaneous "tsk-tsk" noises, and shook their heads as they stood before a montage of photographs of partially naked patients with bloated limbs, puss-filled wounds, scars, and scabs.

There is no space devoted to "reconciliation" in this museum, but the last two rooms ask us to imagine a more virtuous world. Room #10 highlights "peace" and has pictures of doves plastered all over the wall. But it also has a "patriotic education" exhibit, with books on Unit 731 and other Japanese atrocities. Room #11 highlights "repentance" and tells us about Japanese who subsequently acknowledged their complicity in war crimes. For example, Mio Yutaka, a police officer who delivered Chinese prisoners, or *maruta* (logs), to the laboratory, refused his government pension.

The setting of the museum is perhaps its most haunting feature. Exhibits are housed in what was, in the early 1940s, the administrative headquarters of Unit 731. So when I walk from the ticket booth,

across a long, stone path toward the refurbished exhibit hall, I am overcome by a feeling of foreboding. What lingers? What remains? The museum's campus is vast, unlandscaped, and almost barren. Instead of artwork there are, behind the exhibit hall, old ruins, including smokestacks that had been used to incinerate bodies, and concrete blocks from the building used for germ research.

There is irony as well as eeriness here. Harbin, once the site of military-minded chemical experiments, is now a center of China's emerging pharmaceutical industry, with a number of drug companies located around the city and elsewhere in Heilongjiang Province. The museum has no need to mention such disconnected continuity.

Museum of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression

This massive facility, which opened in 1987, two years after the Nanjing and Harbin museums, has a split personality. Like its smaller predecessors, it shakes an angry fist at the various war crimes committed by Japan. But unlike the other museums, it also trumpets the anti-imperialist heroism of the guerrilla fighters, and even the Guomindang troops, who fought the Japanese invaders. In this way, the "Museum of the War of Chinese People's Resistance Against Japanese Aggression" draws liberally from both Maoist and Dengist historiography.²⁰

Located in a western suburb of Beijing, just beyond the Lugou (Marco Polo) Bridge, the building is a creamy block of marble, fit for an emperor, or perhaps a member of the politburo. As hefty as it is, the structure is still dwarfed by a sprawling campus divided down the middle, with seven lawns in each half. This is a numerical nod to the day and month in 1937 when Japan used a small skirmish at the Lugou Bridge as the pretext to launch an all-out invasion of China. Dozens of tall bronze pillars stand like evergreens here. They are festooned with fettuccine figures, intertwined, replicating scenes of conflict during the long Japanese invasion and occupation. In one scene, an enemy soldier swings his sword, and a shirtless Chinese peasant bravely anticipates the cutting blow.

Given the scale of this space, it is unsurprising to learn that the central committee of the CCP, along with the city of Beijing, financed the construction as well as a major renovation in 2005. You enter the enormous museum by walking past a roaring lion perched next to a Chinese flag and then up the stairs, like a guest of the royal family, or perhaps the Communist Party. Immediately you confront a bigger-than-life

bronze relief of Chinese soldiers and citizens, amassed in five-deep unity. They are vigilant, ready for confrontation. The relief, stretching across a long, red background, is titled *Build Our Great Wall with Our Flesh and Blood* (*Ba women de xue rou zhucheng women xinde changcheng*), a line from China's national anthem.

Soon you encounter a labyrinth of rooms with nearly 900 exhibits. Many of them use photographs and relics to tell the stories you already have heard at Nanjing and Harbin, stories of brutal war crimes, of Japanese atrocities. But the Maoist theme of heroic resistance is also on display nearly everywhere in this museum. A statue celebrates a courageous shepherd boy. A large diorama, using visual projections as well as wax figures in a leafy forest, shows Chinese villagers emerging from a tunnel, armed with ropes and pikes, battling better-equipped Japanese invaders. An oil painting, forty meters in



Figure 2. The Museum of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression tries to remind guests that, despite the past, Chinese and Japanese leaders are facing forward together. Here are Emperor Hirohito (L), Zhuo Lin (wife of the Chinese leader), Empress Kojun, and Deng Xiaoping during the Chinese leader's October 1978 visit to Japan. Photo by the author.

length, serves as the backdrop for a twenty-minute multimedia spectacle about the fight for Lugou Bridge. You sit in a small, semicircular theater, engulfed by smoke, artillery fire, voices, and flames; you are part of the resistance.

The history presented in this museum is simple: From 1931 to 1945, China fought a terribly brutal but ultimately successful struggle against Japanese imperialism; the United States apparently played little if any role in the final outcome. It was a singularly Chinese victory over a uniquely evil enemy.

These two ideas—the indignity suffered by the victim, and the heroism exhibited by the victor—are captured neatly in the Martyrs Exhibit, which occupies its own circular room away from the other exhibits. At the center of the room is a bronze statue of a Chinese fighter who has fallen to the ground, but is not yet supine. He props himself up with his gun, apparently ready to climb back on his feet. Hovering over the statue are fourteen red marble steles, each representing a year of anti-Japanese resistance. Each stele contains the names of martyrs, including fallen members of the People's Liberation Army as well as Guomindang soldiers.²¹

Like the other museums, this one leads to a final exhibit encouraging Chinese viewers to appreciate China's current relationship with Japan, even as they condemn the past. There is a chart showing the total volume of Sino-Japanese bilateral trade, the accumulated volume of Japanese foreign direct investment in China, the annual number of visitors traveling from one country to the other, the number of sister cities. There also is a remarkable photograph from October 1978: Emperor Hirohito stands stiffly next to Deng Xiaoping's wife, who stands awkwardly, like a rocketeer with a propulsion pack about to blast off, next to Emperor Hirohito's wife, who smiles weakly as she stands next to Deng Xiaoping, who is rigidly erect, dressed in the traditional tunic of a party cadre. All face forward, toward the camera. Japan meets China, while the past encounters the present—without obvious discord but with noticeable discomfort.

JAPANESE WAR MUSEUMS

Yushukan

In the heart of Tokyo, the Yasukuni Shrine and its associated museum are shaded by some of the country's finest cherry trees. From

1869, when it was founded in honor of the warriors who died while ousting the Tokugawa shogun, until 1945, when U.S. occupation authorities mandated a separation of religion and government, Yasukuni served as the symbolic center in a system of state Shinto, a system that treated Japanese citizens as members of a national family led by a divine emperor. After World War II, Yasukuni became a private religious corporation, but its nationalist Shinto priests continued to enshrine the dead. In 1978, they even enshrined fourteen Japanese convicted as Class A war criminals in the International Military Tribunal for the Far East. This action, which was kept secret for several months, set up a political dilemma for future Japanese prime ministers: If they continued the tradition of visiting the shrine to honor Japan's war dead, they would upset Chinese and Korean patriots; if they stayed away, they would enrage Japanese conservatives, including the Izokukai (Japanese Association of Bereaved Families of the War Dead).

The right-wing ideology of Yasukuni is expressed passionately in its backyard museum, which was built like a German castle in 1882, rebuilt like a Japanese castle in 1932, left to decay after Japan's surrender, and then neatly, defiantly renovated in 2002. As you enter the lobby with its large, glass walls and high ceiling, you confront a variety of military machines, including a Mitsubishi zero fighter plane with the *hinomaru* (rising sun) logo on each wing. In the first gallery, up an escalator and down the hall, you receive a history lesson about the actual purpose of these machines: sacrifice for a sacred cause (the sovereign nation). This gallery, entitled The Spirit of the Samurai, displays a brilliantly lit sword, decorated with a gold braid, hovering above a poem penned by Otomo no Yakamochi:

We shall die in the sea,
 We shall die in the mountains.
 In whatever way,
 We shall die beside the Emperor,
 Never turning back.

Although the Yushukan honors the Japanese "deities" who sacrificed themselves in every military battle since the Meiji Restoration, it

reserves a special place (the entire first floor) for those who fell in what this private museum calls “the Greater East Asian War,” which is portrayed as a valiant if unsuccessful struggle to liberate the region from the yoke of Western colonialism. On the day I first visited, the museum showed a film entitled *We Do Not Forget* (*Watakushi-tachi wa wasurenai*). In a high-pitched voice endlessly quavering with emotion, a female narrator reconstructs the pre-1945, militarist version of World War II against a backdrop of marching soldiers and flag-waving villagers: how the West dominated Asia; how Japan came to the region’s aid; how the United States tried to starve a righteous rival; how a small nation with a big heart stood up for itself; how Indonesians, Filipinos, and others inspired by the Japanese example then resolved to claim their independence.

In the film, and in the museum’s first floor exhibits, Japan is forever defending itself, its neighbors, its principles; it is never on the offensive, never aggressive. What was presented in Chinese museums as “brutal imperialism” is presented here as “noble sacrifice.” What was presented in Chinese museums as “people’s resistance” is presented here as “terrorism.” There is no mention of Unit 731, and only scant discussion of Nanjing. The one exhibit devoted to the “incident” describes December 1937 as a time of Chinese treachery: Chiang Kai-shek ordered his troops to defend the city, “and then abandoned them. The Chinese were soundly defeated, suffering heavy casualties.” Once the Japanese military managed to “mop up” the mess, which included Chinese soldiers dressed in civilian clothes, taking potshots at those trying to restore law and order, the people of Nanjing were “once again able to live their lives in peace.”

My tour of the museum comes to a triumphantly sad ending in a room filled with profiles of some of the 2.2 million “deities” who sacrificed themselves for Japan during World War II—from school children who are too innocent for battle to kamikaze pilots who appear, in the solemn, black-and-white profile photographs, not so much older. A young girl next to me sniffles as she reads a letter from one of the pilots: “I have learned why I was born and where I, as a man, must die.” The letter ends with this appeal to his parents, and—the curators must hope—to a new generation of Japanese citizens: “I hope you will be proud of me when I go calmly to my death.”

Minutes later, in the gift shop, I paw through a few of the many right-wing books for sale. One has an especially catchy title: *Shushou no yasukuni jinja sanpai wa touzen desu* (*Of Course the Prime*

Minister Should Make the Pilgrimage to Yasukuni). A middle-aged woman notices what I am reading and moves within earshot: “Most of us don’t think that way,” she whispers in Japanese. I try to reassure her: “Don’t worry. I know.”

Women’s Active Museum

Except for the fact that it, too, is private, this museum promoting feminist activism shares little or nothing in common with the Yushukan. It is relatively new, having opened in August 2005, comparatively small (five rooms), and enthusiastically left-wing (anti-imperialist). The Right would describe the Women’s Active Museum (WAM) as a purveyor of national “masochism,” for its exhibits do not merely acknowledge Japan’s misdeeds during the war; they shine an intense spotlight on them, especially the abuse of Asian women who were forced or deceived into serving as sex slaves for the imperial troops.



Figure 3. WAM doubles as a space for the public to view exhibits about the military’s mistreatment of women and a place for activists to organize on behalf of women’s rights. Photo by the author.

Ultrationalists have threatened the women who run WAM, but without much success thus far. Credit goes in part to location. The museum is nestled in a quiet, well-to-do, mostly residential neighborhood in western Tokyo, just a couple minutes by foot from Waseda University, which has a long history of student radicalism. Access is through a courtyard maintained by the National Christian Council in Japan.

As you enter the museum, you come face-to-face with dozens of “comfort women” who stare out from rectangular, red-framed, black-and-white photographs covering the walls of the first exhibit room. Their earnest expressions speak in accented, echoing testimony to the pain they experienced when they were younger, and the courage they have managed to muster as older women—individually and in common.

Inside, WAM looks less like a war museum than an academic research center, or perhaps the headquarters of a political campaign. The largest of its rooms is a cluttered library/office with desktop computers, phones, and shelves filled with books and magazines that you are encouraged to peruse. Staff and volunteers use this space to educate themselves and the public, as well as organize fellow progressives. When I visited the museum during its first week of operation, the curator-activists were frantically engaged in four simultaneous activities: 1) staging an exhibit on the Women’s International War Crimes Tribunal, a mock trial of Japanese military officers that took place in Tokyo in December 2000; 2) running a “comfort women hotline” to gather information over the phone from veterans and victims; 3) publicizing an upcoming demonstration to demand an official apology from the Japanese government for the wartime treatment of Asian women; and 4) hosting a seminar on the emperor’s role in setting up “comfort stations” throughout the empire.

The seminar was led by Professor Yamada Akira, an expert on modern Japanese history at Meiji University. He spoke for nearly two hours, using government documents to show that the military’s program to build a network of brothels was assisted by the Home Ministry with the full knowledge and support of the Showa emperor. As if his talk was not enough, Yamada distributed a seven-page, single-spaced handout to advance his points.

The tribunal exhibit featured a number of pictures—mostly photographs of the women who play-acted as prosecutors or judges, and of the real-life women who had been compelled to serve as prostitutes during Japan’s occupation of Korea, China, and Southeast Asia. But unlike exhibits I have seen elsewhere, it was not buoyed by affect.

Rather, it was weighed down by its own words—lengthy biographies of victim plaintiffs, detailed descriptions of the tribunal’s findings, and a long letter from academics criticizing the Japanese media’s coverage (or noncoverage) of the event. I stood and read for a long time. There were no flashing lights. There was no heartrending soundtrack.

I have returned to the museum twice since then, most recently in October 2012 to view an exhibit, *Armed Forces Do Not Protect Women*, about sexual assaults on Okinawa. The same Spartan esthetic greeted me. The exhibit featured a map of the many U.S. military bases occupying nearly 20 percent of the island, a few photographs, and a large amount of text documenting the long history of violence against Okinawa women—first by Japanese troops but now, and since the late 1940s, by U.S. soldiers.

WAM prides itself on transparency in fund-raising and organization. In a brochure about the museum, the twelve members of the steering committee identify the bank account they use for donations, and they introduce themselves. They also explain that WAM is a project of the Women’s Fund for Peace and Human Rights, a feminist organization based in Tokyo.

“We don’t have deep pockets,” confides Nakahara Michiko, a retired Waseda professor who serves on the Fund’s board. Over a meal, she explains that the Fund scrambles to pay the museum’s rent, as well as the salaries of its two staff members. “But we are making do.”²²

For Nakahara and the other activists who founded and still operate this museum or resource center, WAM is a noble undertaking, an invaluable opportunity to organize women across Asia and to educate youth in Japan, especially the many schoolgirls who visit on field trips. “I recognize that the museum is modest, or even simple,” explained Nakahara. “But what we are doing is very important.”

Hiroshima Peace Museum

In 1955, a decade after the *Enola Gay*, a B-29 Superfortress heavy bomber in the U.S. Air Force, dropped its atomic payload, the city of Hiroshima used national funding to open what is the closest thing to a public war museum in Japan.²³ Over the years, and after numerous renovations (the most significant of which happened in 1994), it has become a magnet for peace activists throughout the world, a memorial

to the singular suffering of the Japanese people, the only people in all of humanity to be subjected to a nuclear attack in wartime.²⁴

The museum, designed by Tange Kenzo, is a long cylinder on concrete stilts, elevated to express the determination of the *hibakusha*, the survivors, to rise from the ruins. It sits at the far end of a meticulously landscaped park, with the bombed-out skeleton of the old Hiroshima Commercial Exhibition Hall, the A-Bomb Dome, across the river at the other end. These two poles, the historic hypocenter of the blast and the current seat of collective memory, are connected visually by a saddle-shaped monument in the middle of the park, a cenotaph that houses an eternal flame of hope for peace.

You begin in the East Building, which paints a somewhat abstract picture of the world, the country, and especially the city before the nuclear attack. The center of this open space is taken up by a large, wooden mock-up of Hiroshima with all of its buildings still intact. The walls are covered with panels that highlight Pearl Harbor and the



Figure 4. The Hiroshima Peace Museum has preserved the stone steps of a local bank. A woman had been sitting there when the nuclear blast incinerated her, leaving a shadow in her place. Photo by the author.

Manhattan Project, as well as panels that describe the city as a regional hub of military activity after the first Sino-Japanese War (1894–95) and a place from which soldiers were conscripted for the second Sino-Japanese War. Only one of these twenty-one panels makes any mention of Japanese atrocities during the war (“many Chinese people were massacred—*gyakusatsu sareta*—by the Japanese Army in Nanjing”).

Heartache and revulsion greet you in the West Building, just beyond a cosmopolitan display of books about nuclear weapons and a commercial display of T-shirts with pacifist slogans. First you learn the grisly details: The shock wave obliterated buildings, ripped off clothes, and blew people several meters off the ground; the fireball, at about 5,000°C, melted roof tiles and incinerated human bodies; the blast killed 40 percent of those within a mile of the hypocenter that day. Thousands died later from radiation sickness.

Here, you confront the shadowy void left by a person who had been sitting on the stone steps outside a bank; human bones melted into a pile of debris; a scorched set of tonsils; a kimono pattern burned into a woman’s back; a jar of floating keloids (the excess growth of scar tissue), which look like the mushy results of a high school biology experiment; the strangely beautiful, thin lines of radioactive, mud and soot-encrusted “black rain” on a white wall. These exhibits are almost guaranteed to make you sad or sick. For me, however, they are not as upsetting as the stories and photographs attached to actual names. Names like Ohshita Nobuko, a thirteen-year-old girl who died the night of the blast. In the West Building, you see the burnt, ripped, and rumpled school uniform she wore that day. You also see a clump of hair that fell off the head of Yoshida Hiroko, an eighteen-year-old girl who became ill from radiation poisoning. You encounter the grotesquely deformed fingernail of Takahashi Akihiro, a fourteen-year-old boy whose body was burned so badly that melted skin hung from his back, and the melted, rusted tricycle that belonged to four-year-old Tetsutani Shi’inchi.

What upsets me most, I suspect, is the age—and thus the innocence—of these victims. But my emotion is neither idiosyncratic nor random; the museum, and the peace park more generally, has been designed to evoke precisely these feelings of lost innocence or, according to the message inscribed on the cenotaph, “enduring grief.” The recurring theme of lost innocence is reinforced at the Children’s Peace Monument, located midway in the park between the museum and the A-Dome. It tells the story of Sasaki Sadako, who was only two when

the bomb exploded. A decade later, she died of leukemia—but not before inspiring other schoolchildren with her dedicated effort to fold one thousand paper cranes in her hospital bed. A statue of Sadako now stands atop the bomb-shaped pedestal, arms outstretched to reveal a golden paper crane.

In the late 1950s, when the children's monument was established, Koreans began pushing for recognition of their own victimization at Hiroshima. As many as 40,000 Koreans, many of whom had been forced to leave their occupied homeland and come to work in wartime Japan, were living in the city on that tragic day. At least 20,000 were killed in the bombing. But the narrative under construction in the peace park was an ethno-national one, and the proposal for a monument to Korean victims did not fit. So until 1999, the City of Hiroshima would not allow the alter-memorial inside the park. Yoneyama suggests this was “symptomatic of the subaltern status of the *zainichi*,” or Korean residents of Japan.²⁵

In my first two visits to Hiroshima, I was struck by the absence of “history” in this, arguably the world's most famous, museum of history. Nothing of significance appeared to happen before August 6, 1945, before Japan was mysteriously nuked. Then, in 1994, following complaints from some foreign visitors, the curators added the twenty-one panels in the East Building, which I described earlier.²⁶ I thought then that this was “progress,” a correction—until my half-Japanese daughter turned to me, halfway through the West Building, and expressed disgust for the other, American half of herself.

CONCLUSIONS

All over the world, war museums function as compelling storytellers. In London, for example, the Churchill War Rooms—a branch of the government's Imperial War Museum—narrates a dazzling drama of cigar-chomping pluck and determination from, literally, a hole in the ground. To the north, in Dublin, Kilmainham Gaol, a former prison for freedom fighters, serves as the set for the Irish Republic's harrowing tale of its own bloody birth, its independence from Churchillians. Both museums are cinematic in their liberal use of visuals, sounds, and lighting to make an emotional statement.

Like monuments, songs, rituals, and textbooks, national exhibitions like these are often quite effective; they have the ability to shape—or at least consolidate—a particular collective identity. Elites, those

with enough power to tell a story that can be heard, routinely use them to instill pride or generate outrage over something that becomes a shared experience, an emotionally charged and thus very present past. These museums, then, are as much political as they are historical.

In general, though, the construction of an affirming, unified identity is easier under an authoritarian regime that speaks with one clear voice. Because the Chinese party-state dominates domestic discourse, its war museums are able to present a coherent, common narrative about China's past. The CCP "wants to determine historical truth," Chinese historian Yang Jisheng told the *New York Times*.²⁷ "It worries that if competing versions are allowed, then its legitimacy will be called into question." From Nanjing to Harbin to Beijing, war museums set up and operated by the party-state affirm nationalism by suggesting, in near unison, that China was viciously mistreated by Japan during World War II, but that it rallied to defeat imperialism and become a great power.²⁸

In Japan, by contrast, war museums project a cacophony of voices about the past. Some, usually from the right wing, tell a fiercely nationalist story that defends, or even praises, the wartime conduct of the Japanese military; others, usually voices on the left, are far more critical of Japan's behavior in World War II. Still others try to split the difference, condemning war in general while avoiding careful analysis of Japanese militarism.

This does not mean that Japanese museums are, in the aggregate, better than China's, or that Japan is more deeply engaged in a kind of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past). It only means that the past is more internally dynamic, more politically contentious, in contemporary Japan.

Kazuhiko Togo takes a teleological view of this process or debate. He anticipates a "synthesis" emerging in Japanese foreign policy, a "patriotic but internationalist" approach that represents the best of right-wing and left-wing positions.²⁹ I have yet, however, to see much evidence for this. Instead, polling data suggest that the political schism in Japan remains and may even be widening. Most significantly, as the debate continues to rage, loudly and with vitriolic static, it appears that many Japanese—and, perhaps especially, younger Japanese—are just tuning it out, or turning to a different frequency.³⁰

In 2005, one of Japan's three leading news organizations (Asahi) joined forces with one of South Korea's top three media outlets

(Dong-A Ilbo) to gauge citizen attitudes about the past. In a survey of 1,781 Japanese citizens, 60 percent said that Japan had not yet completed the task of compensating Korean victims of colonization; a little more than 30 percent said they believed the issue was settled; fewer than 10 percent chose not to answer. Five years later, in 2010, the news organizations returned to the field to ask a very similar question: Is it necessary or not necessary for Japan to review the issue of compensation for victims of colonial rule? This time, 30 percent of the 2,347 Japanese respondents said yes; 57 percent said no; and 13 percent indicated they did not know, or would not say. Likewise, when asked whether Japan had apologized sufficiently for its annexation or colonization of Korea, 30 percent of respondents said no; 55 percent said yes; and 15 percent offered no answer.³¹

My point, though, extends beyond the domestic political debate. I am arguing that, in the ideational field of international relations, China's relatively coherent historical narrative is far more useful (for Chinese political elites) than Japan's relatively incoherent narrative (for Japanese elites). A national network of war museums that projects a consistent, coherent narrative may be a particularly useful tool in a state's cultural diplomacy. Specifically, it serves two purposes. First, it secures sympathy for that state from foreign visitors, those who participate in the growing industry of dark tourism and then enter domestic or international debates about history. To understand this effect, you only have to go online and read the Trip Advisor or Virtual Tourist reviews of the three Chinese war museums. There you will find a massive outpouring of goodwill for China, and outrage toward Japan, from European, Latin American, and even many U.S. American reviewers. Second, and most critically, a national network of museums, like China's, that projects a consistent, coherent narrative can rally domestic social forces on behalf of the state in its contested relations with a former aggressor or perpetrator of war crimes. This is the same effect engendered by patriotic history textbooks. In the case of China, museums and textbooks have produced strongly anti-Japanese emotions that have erupted in, for example, the territorial dispute over the Diaoyu (Senkaku) islands.

By contrast, in the case of Japan, domestic tourists who visit all three museums are likely to be left with confusing questions rather than a cinematic punch line. I acknowledge that the Hiroshima Peace Museum attracts far more Japanese (and foreign) visitors than the Yushukan and WAM combined. But as a kind of compromise narrative

(“something really terrible happened, and the Japanese people suffered”), its message is already muddled and therefore less effective.

What I am suggesting may seem unremarkable, a natural by-product of democracy. When the state is unable to impose a particular viewpoint on society, political entrepreneurs compete for epistemological domination. I saw this in Berlin in July 2009. At the German Historical Museum, curators for the private (but government-financed) foundation sponsored an exhibit on “Germany and Poland,” which documented not only the Nazi invasion in 1939, but Prussian efforts dating back to the late eighteenth century to seize Polish land. Across the street at the Kronprinzenpalais, German lawmaker Erika Steinbach’s controversial organization, the Federation of Expellees, hosted an exhibit, *Die Gerufenen* (The Called), that told a far more positive story about Germans who had migrated to Central and Eastern Europe. For example, the exhibit showed how ethnic Germans established textile operations in central Poland in the early nineteenth century, helping transform Łódź into a “Polish Manchester.” Steinbach was using *The Called* to promote a revisionist narrative that blithely skips over Germany’s role in World War II, emphasizing instead the fact that some Germans were displaced by postwar agreements redrawing national boundaries.

We can go too far, however, in asserting that democracy produces a rich diversity of approaches to remembering the past.³² Powerful groups in even the most pluralistic (and militaristic) society can stifle dissenting historiographies. That is what happened in 1995, when the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C., tried to stage an intellectually ambitious but morally ambiguous exhibition on the 50th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki attacks. Curators wanted to raise questions about why the bombs were dropped, and who suffered when they exploded. But these questions threatened to shake up what, in the United States, has become a mostly settled interpretation: Japan had gone politically berserk, and the United States had no other policy choice at the time. Veterans groups, desperate to defend the dominant narrative, successfully lobbied Congress to shut down the show.³³

It appears, then, that organized interest groups can sometimes impose a historical narrative even on a democratic society. The past then becomes a closed book. In the case of Japan, however, history has not come to an end. The battle over World War II still rages—on the street outside Yasukuni every August 15th, and in various museums every day. In China, by contrast, few shots are ever fired.

NOTES

1. There is extensive literature on the production of affect. See, for example, Kate Gregory and Andrea Witcomb, "Beyond Nostalgia: The Role of Affect in Generating Historical Understanding at Heritage Sites," in *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed*, eds. Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, and Sheila E. R. Watson (New York: Routledge, 2007), 263–275.

2. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).

3. Timothy W. Luke, *Museum Politics: Power Plays at the Exhibition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), xiii.

4. See, for example, Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, and Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London: Verso, 1994), especially 3–48.

5. Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Past Within Us: Media, Memory, History* (London: Verso, 2005), 27–30.

6. To learn about exceptions such as the Japan Teachers Union, see Franziska Seraphim, *War Memory and Social Politics in Japan, 1945–2005* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

7. See, for example, Fujiwara Ki'ichi, *Sensou o kioku suru: Hiroshima, horokousuto to genzai* (Remembering War: Hiroshima, the Holocaust, and the Present) (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2001).

8. The exemption was Hirota Koki, who was convicted as a Class A war criminal for his role as foreign minister during the Nanjing massacre.

9. Veterans and other witnesses also contributed to the revelations. In 1986 and 1987, Asahi opened a section in its newspaper, entitled "The War," and invited letters from citizens with stories to tell.

10. Honda already had written a series of articles in *Asahi* that documented Japanese war crimes, including the Nanjing Massacre. That series, entitled *Chugoku no Tabi* (Travels in China), ran during the 1970s.

11. Mark Eykolt, "Aggression, Victimization, and Chinese Historiography in the Nanjing Massacre," in *The Nanjing Massacre in History*, ed. Joshua Fogel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 25–26.

12. Kurt W. Radtke, *China's Relations with Japan, 1945–83: The Role of Liao Chengzhi* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 98.

13. The 1970s, like the 1960s, were not without conflict between China and Japan. But bilateral disagreements generally did not invoke the past.

14. We now know that the Japanese Left overreacted, and the Japanese media misreported some of the supposed changes in textbook content in 1982. For a careful analysis of this, see Caroline Rose, *Interpreting History in Sino-Japanese Relations* (London: Routledge Curzon, 1998), 80–94.

15. I am confident that domestic politics motivated Deng's sudden interest in history, as well as his decision to establish war museums. But I am not persuaded that public concerns about "spiritual pollution" played a serious role, as Takashi Yoshida suggests in *The Making of the "Rape of Nanking": History and Memory in Japan, China, and the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 106.

16. Bin Xu and Gary Alan Fine, "Memory Movement and State-Society Relationship in Chinese World War II Victims' Reparations Movement Against Japan," in *Northeast Asia's Difficult Past: Essays in Collective Memory*, eds. Mikyoung Kim and Barry Schwartz (Houndmills, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 166–189.

17. And that number is higher, in some cases six times higher, than ones cited by historians outside China who agree that a terrible massacre occurred.

18. See John W. Powell, "Japan's Germ Warfare: The U.S. Cover-up of a War Crime," *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, October 1981. Powell concluded that U.S. prosecutors promised immunity to Japanese personnel in Unit 731 in exchange for access to their data. They were desperate to secure an advantage over the Soviet Union in the development of biological and chemical weapons. For example, in a March 1947 memo, the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee told its investigative team: "If any information gleaned is too sensitive, instruct [Japanese scientists] not to divulge information to Soviets."

19. I suspect that African Americans are similarly horrified to learn that the U.S. Public Health Service carried out a syphilis study on hundreds of poor, black sharecroppers in Macon County, Alabama, between 1932 and 1972. The patients were never told they had the disease and were never treated for it.

20. The same conclusion was reached by Kirk Denton, "Heroic Resistance and Victims of Atrocity: Negotiating the Memory of Japanese Imperialism in Chinese Museums," *Japan Focus*, October 17, 2007.

21. An anonymous reviewer noted that this museum has, like others, changed significantly over time. Specifically, it began in 2005 to recognize Chinese fighters, now in Taiwan, who had participated in the anti-imperialist struggle. In so doing, the reviewer suggests, the renovated museum "substantially expanded the definition of 'the Chinese people'."

22. Interview by the author, Tokyo, October 4, 2012.

23. In 1949, the Diet passed a special financing measure, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law, to build the park, exhibition hall, and museum. The city of Hiroshima has managed the museum from its inception, although it has—since 1998—entrusted the task to the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation.

24. For a good analysis of how this museum has changed over time, see Stefanie Schäfer, "The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and its Exhibition," in *The Power of Memory in Modern Japan*, eds. Sven Saaler and Wolfgang Schwentker (Folkestone, UK: Global Oriental, 2008).

25. Lisa Yoneyama, "Memory Matters: Hiroshima's Korean Atom Bomb Memorial and the Politics of Ethnicity," *Public Culture* 7, no. 3 (1995): 503.

26. Kim concludes that the new panels represented a political compromise between Japanese conservatives who had wanted to maintain a focus on Japan's victimhood and progressives who had wanted to challenge the narrative of innocence. Progressives, she notes, had lost an earlier battle over a proposed "Kagaisha (Perpetrators) Corner" in the museum, an exhibit that would have highlighted Japan's colonialism in Korea, its military aggression in China, and its war crimes across Asia. See Mikyoung Kim, "Japanese Pacifism: Problematic Memory," in Kim and Schwartz, *Northeast Asia's Difficult Past* (2010): 61–65.

27. Ian Johnson, "At China's New Museum, History Toes Party Line," *New York Times*, April 3, 2011.

28. While focusing a harsh light on the crimes of the Japanese military, Chinese museums sometimes also cast a softer light on the good deeds of Japanese citizens. For example, the Lu Xun Memorial Museum in Shanghai tells the story of the writer's time in Japan (Sendai), and the friendships he cultivated there. And even the Nanjing Massacre Museum hosted a special exhibit by Japanese cartoonists using *manga* to document the suffering of the Japanese people. For more on this, see Yoshimi Ishikawa, "Healing Old Wounds with Manga Diplomacy," in *Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* (March 8, 2010), available at <http://www.japanfocus.org/-Kono-Michikazu/3315>.

29. Kazuhiko Togo, "Japan's Historical Memory: Overcoming Polarization toward Synthesis," in *East Asia's Haunted Past: Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism*, eds. Tsuyoshi Hasegawa and Kazuhiko Togo (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2008), 59–79.

30. To me, much that passes for "nationalism" among Japanese youth today looks more like ennui or social alienation. Kitada calls it "cynical nationalism." See Kitada Akihiro, *Warau Nihon no "Nashonarizumu"* (Sneering Japanese 'Nationalism') (Tokyo: NHK Shuppan, 2005).

31. The Mansfield Foundation maintains a Web site with the results, questions translated into English, and a brief overview of methodology for these polls: http://www.mansfieldfdn.org/backup/polls/polls_listing.htm.

32. Many democratic states in Europe, including Germany, have criminalized Holocaust denial.

33. See, for example, Steven C. Dubin, *Displays of Power: Controversy in the American Museum from the Enola Gay to Sensation* (New York: NYU Press, 2001).