

Introduction

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It appears that history, which used to play a supporting role, has become the leading player on the East Asian international political scene where the past is more unpredictable than the future.—YOICHI FUNABASHI, chief diplomatic correspondent, “East Asia’s History Creating Mistrust,” *Asahi Shimbun*, 4 January 2005

In April 2005, Chinese-Japanese relations were convulsed by a wave of protests in cities across China. Thousands of chanting demonstrators carried banners and posters calling on the Japanese government to apologize for its actions in China sixty years earlier, during the Asia-Pacific War. “Face up to history,” read one. “The anti-Japanese war is not over yet,” declared another, more belligerent poster. On April 12, protestors gathered outside the Japanese embassy and the ambassador’s residence in Beijing. The following weekend, protestors in Shanghai overturned a Japanese car, attacked several Japanese restaurants, and hurled rocks and paint bombs at the Japanese consulate.¹ History had once again taken center stage in Asian politics.

Chinese and Korean complaints about Japan’s historical amnesia had become a common feature of the political landscape during the previous two decades. This new wave of protests seemed more serious, however, as it had the potential to disrupt international relations throughout the region. Take the problem of North Korea, for example. Chinese and Japanese cooperation seemed essential to the success of the American-led multinational effort to rein in North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. But would China and Japan be able to agree on policies affecting the future of Asia if they could not agree on how to view the events of the past? Concerned by the escalating crisis, the American ambassador to Japan, Thomas Schieffer, encouraged both sides to resolve their differences. Publicly, the ambassador remained confident that the demonstrations would not impair efforts to resume the so-called six-party talks on Korea, but he was no doubt relieved

when Japanese and Chinese leaders managed to restore a semblance of calm by the end of the month.²

Although the demonstrations had run their course, most observers realized that nothing had been done to address the causes of the protests. As the placards carried by the demonstrators indicated, competing views of the Asia-Pacific War provoked this latest flurry of protests from one of Japan's neighbors. In this case, the spark that ignited the demonstrations was a decision by the Japanese Ministry of Education to approve a nationalistic history textbook for use by middle school students. By 2005, textbook controversies had become a recurring issue in Asian politics. As the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the war, however, 2005 appeared to hold greater significance for all of the parties involved. "We cannot avoid history," Chinese President Hu Jintao told an international conference. "I want [Japan] to deal with the problem properly. In particular, 2005 is a sensitive year that marks the 60th anniversary of anti-fascist victory."³

Lacking the symbolic weight usually associated with a fiftieth anniversary, 2005 nevertheless drew special commemorative significance from the realization that many of the war's survivors were passing from the scene.⁴ That awareness gave rise to a growing concern on the part of many countries in Asia that, as the living memory of the war faded, Japan might find it easier to shed its past and, with it, the various political, constitutional, and moral constraints that had shaped Japanese foreign policy in the postwar era. Japan's quest for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council and growing support within Japan for revision of Article 9 of the constitution, with its famous renunciation of war as an instrument of the state, fed anxieties across the region. These concerns were sharpened by the belief that the Japanese government has never forthrightly taken responsibility for its actions during the war.

As the historian James Orr has noted, in the past sixty years many Japanese scholars and commentators have denounced Japan's aggression in Asia in the strongest terms. But interest groups and the Japanese government have blunted the impact of those condemnations by simultaneously identifying Japan as one of the victims of the war.⁵ More recently, critics outside of Japan have complained that official apologies, when they have been made, have always seemed grudgingly offered and less than heartfelt, as if they were scripted by a committee in the Foreign Ministry.⁶

As if to emphasize the significance of the sixtieth anniversary, the campaign of protests against Japan began on January 1, with a massive electronic assault that shut down the website of Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine. The New Year's Day cyberattack actually resumed a bombardment campaign that had begun shortly after Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro visited the shrine in September 2004. Like previous prime ministers, Koizumi insisted that his official visits to the shrine were intended to pay tribute to the several million souls memorialized there who sacrificed their lives for Japan during the Asia-Pacific War. Since 1978, however, the shrine has also memorialized fourteen convicted war criminals, including the wartime prime minister, General Tojo Hideki. Critics complain that in visiting the shrine in his official capacity, the prime minister is also honoring some of Japan's most notorious war criminals. In February 2005, the cyberprotests over the visits to Yasukuni expanded into a broader campaign directed at various government facilities, including the website of the prime minister's official residence. Japanese authorities traced the assault back to a Chinese website that posted a message boasting, "We have carried out an attack on *xiao riben* [little Japan]."⁷

The new year brought additional reminders of the political volatility of war-related memories. In early January, the Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* printed a story claiming that several right-wing politicians had pressured the NHK public television network into revising a documentary on the Imperial Army's wartime system of sexual slavery. The documentary in question reported on an international civil tribunal—its detractors called it a "mock trial"—held to call to account those who had forced an estimated 100,000 to 200,000 "comfort women" across Asia into military brothels. Although it lacked the authority to impose penalties, the tribunal nevertheless sought to bring before the bar of public opinion all those found to be responsible, including the late Emperor Hirohito. According to the *Asahi* report, executives at NHK deleted segments of the program that offended the complaining politicians' nationalistic sensibilities, including any references to the emperor. As a political storm broke over allegations of censorship at NHK, observers were reminded that the politicians involved in the controversy also supported the campaign to revise history textbooks.⁸

In contrast to the controversies that flared across Asia, Americans and Japanese solemnized the different milestones in the war's end in

ways they deemed appropriate without giving offense to the other. Inasmuch as the memory of the Asia-Pacific War remained such a volatile issue in the region, this absence of sharp disagreement was telling. In 2005, the relative calm that characterized the sixtieth anniversary ceremonies extended to other aspects of the U.S.-Japan relationship. Economic disagreements persisted, but they lacked the intensity that had troubled relations a decade earlier. Even more significant, during 2005, the two governments strengthened their ties as allies in “the global war on terror” by concluding new military agreements. As part of those negotiations, Tokyo assented to the relocation of the key American base on Okinawa, despite the strenuous opposition of many of the island’s inhabitants.⁹

In June, the emperor made the first royal visit to a battlefield outside of Japan when he attended ceremonies on Saipan. During his brief stop he paid homage to Americans and Koreans killed during the battle and to the Japanese who ended their lives in suicidal leaps from the island’s cliffs.¹⁰ Meanwhile, Americans combed the Pacific battlefields courtesy of the various travel agencies that sponsored heritage tours. The tourists included veterans, most of whom were returning to the islands for the first time, family members, and the historically curious.

On June 23, a ceremony was held at Camp Foster, part of the continual American military presence on the island since 1945, to commemorate the end of the battle of Okinawa, the last major battle of the war. The commanding officer of the U.S. Marines said that both sides in the battle had fought with determination, skill, courage, and valor. He also spoke of the healing effects of time passing and of the bonds that had developed between Japan and the United States.¹¹

Boilerplate references to the skill and courage of one’s former enemies may be standard fare on such occasions, but in the case of Okinawa they created a picture of the enemy that few American veterans would have recognized. They also blithely ignored the story of the battle told at many of Okinawa’s memorials. There one reads of the Japanese military’s suicidal ferocity and its disregard for the lives of Okinawans. Indeed, for Okinawans, the last battle of the war is remembered as the first time they were sacrificed to the interests of the Japanese government. The second came with the peace treaty in 1952 which left the Americans in control of the island for another two decades. Americans commemorated the last battle of the war as the

beginning of a peaceful postwar relationship. Okinawans remembered the war's end differently, as a cataclysm that destroyed their island and ushered in an era of military occupation. Fueled by those memories, the opponents of new agreements promised to continue their campaign of political protest and nonviolent resistance against the American and Japanese governments' plans for the island.¹² Once again, as in the April demonstrations in China, differing memories of the Asia-Pacific War had the potential to disrupt regional politics.

In light of the events surrounding the sixtieth anniversary of the war's end, it seems safe to say that the so-called memory wars are a significant factor in current Asian affairs. The essays that follow expand upon that point by evaluating the role that memories of the war have played in the development of transpacific relations since 1945. In exploring a range of topics, the authors are concerned with the many ways in which memories were created, preserved, and revised. In particular, they ask how contemporary events or concerns influenced and framed memories of the Asia-Pacific War. Although several of the authors make their own original contributions to the developing theories of collective memory, all proceed from several generally accepted ideas about what is variously called collective, social, or popular memory.¹³

The first proposition is that memory is a reconstruction of the past, not a reproduction. This means that attempts to preserve the past inevitably alter it. Historians are familiar with this phenomenon. Simply by asking certain questions about the past, a historian is deciding to concentrate on one area and ignore another. If a historian does his or her job well, the picture that results is a faithful rendition of a part of the past, but not a perfect copy. Societies or groups do something similar in seeking to preserve the past. Decisions about what to preserve inevitably result in decisions, conscious or unconscious, to ignore or forget some other aspect of the past. Frequently, those decisions are culturally and politically sensitive, especially since what is remembered is crucial to a society's identity and sense of itself. Those groups that have a stake in what is remembered debate, challenge, and contest which version of the past will be remembered. And those debates reflect present-day concerns. In this way, contemporary issues contribute to a framing of the past.

To cite one example from this book, many observers believe that Beijing is exploiting the history of the Asia-Pacific War to whip up Chinese nationalism during a time of considerable social disruption at

home. Another, complementary argument is that Beijing has been disturbed by signs of a growing nationalism in Japan. Thus the Chinese government has sought to remind the world of what it views as Japan's lack of contrition about its past as a way of preventing developments in Japanese foreign policies that Beijing opposes.

The extent to which the present shapes the past is a subject of debate among scholars. Some argue that there are limits to how far a group can go in transforming the past to suit the present. Others argue that in our consumer-oriented society the past becomes a marketable commodity that can become completely detached from its original context for commercial purposes. It is not possible to resolve this debate here. But for our purposes it suffices to note that most scholars agree that in creating collective memories, societies are not bound by the same rules of evidence and logic that discipline historians.

The essays that follow are written by scholars who are primarily concerned with the history of international relations. They perceive those relations broadly to include a wide range of nongovernmental groups and organizations that contribute to the interactions of peoples across the Pacific. This volume builds on the work of other scholars who have explored the role of memory in various aspects of trans-pacific relations. These essays contribute to that scholarship in several ways. Together they employ a wide variety of sources to examine the interaction between contemporary events and memories of the Asia-Pacific War. These include the archival records traditionally used by historians but also film, literature, museums, monuments, and mass media. Most of the authors explicitly discuss the relevant literature on collective memory that informed their analysis, and they do so in a way that is readily accessible to the nonspecialist. Another contribution of this volume is to show that in some instances shared memories have played a constructive role in international relations and even nurtured new relationships across the Pacific.

Some of the previous studies dealing with memories of the Asia-Pacific War have concentrated on a single issue, such as the atomic bomb. Others have sought to recover some of the forgotten experiences of the war by assaying memories from a range of perspectives and locations, giving special attention to the memories of often powerless groups.¹⁴ In looking primarily at American, Chinese, and Japanese memories, we have sacrificed some of the benefits of that more expansive approach. Our hope is that by presenting essays that are more

closely connected to each other we will provide the reader with a solid foundation for future inquiry.

A brief discussion of nomenclature is in order. The varying perspectives that one can employ to view this subject is suggested by the terminology used to name it. The term “Asia-Pacific War” is a recent formulation. Japanese scholars seeking to emphasize Tokyo’s aggression in Asia sometimes use the term “Fifteen-Year War” to describe Japan’s wars in China, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific. Nationalists have countered with a revival of the term “Greater East Asia War,” a label that recalls Japanese wartime propaganda. On the other hand, official histories refer to the “Pacific War,” a term first favored by American occupation authorities as an alternative to the politically charged “Greater East Asia War.” But “Pacific War” also has its critics. They perceive in the label an attempt to justify Japanese actions by implying that Japan’s real battle was against Western imperialism, in the form of the United States, and not China.¹⁵

Official media in the People’s Republic of China employ several labels, including “the Anti-Japanese War,” for which the dates 1937 to 1945 are often used, and “the War of Resistance.” In contrast, Americans tend to view the war against Japan as part of the larger struggle against fascism, most commonly known as World War II. When discussing the campaigns against Japan, American histories often focus on what the Americans called the Pacific Theater, thereby appearing to slight the war in China. As one can readily see, labels, even the most innocuous-sounding ones, reflect the user’s assumptions and perspective. With that cautionary note in mind, we have used the term “Asia-Pacific War” in the title and introduction in an effort to be as inclusive as possible. It seemed counterproductive, however, to try to impose a single label on the different conflicts described throughout the book.

Emily Rosenberg’s “Remembering Pearl Harbor before September 11, 2001,” serves as an introduction to this volume by addressing a variety of ways that collective memories are formed. In particular, she explores the various international, political, and cultural contexts that contributed to the reemergence and renewed prominence of Pearl Harbor images in U.S. media during the decade before September 11. In doing so she introduces the reader to some of the foundational works on the role of social institutions and groups in the formation and perpetuation of collective memories and vividly demonstrates “the constant interaction between past and present in shaping the meanings of both.”

The next three chapters analyze how officials in the United States and Japan have used the lessons of the past to guide them in foreign policy decisions. Government officials in China, Japan, and the United States take a keen interest in how the past is represented to their citizens. In some cases government officials weigh in on debates over museums and memorials because they view them as important to the formation of national identity or as valuable instruments in foreign affairs. But this sensitivity to the past may also be derived, at least in part, from policymakers' own understanding of how important historical memory is in their own decision making.

Haruo Iguchi's "The First Revisionists: Bonner Fellers, Herbert Hoover, and Japan's Decision to Surrender" explores a little-known chapter in the historical debate over Japan's decision to surrender. Iguchi shows that almost as soon as Japan surrendered, a group of American conservatives led by former president Herbert Hoover and the less well-known Bonner Fellers tried to shape the American public's understanding of the end of the war. Fearful of Soviet expansion and opposed to New Deal-style reforms in Japan, Hoover and Fellers were among the first Americans to argue that supporters of the policy of unconditional surrender had deliberately prolonged the war and that the atomic bombs were unnecessary. In publicizing their claims, Fellers and Hoover auditioned arguments that would become staples in the New Left historiography of the atomic bombs and the origins of the cold war. Aspects of the Hoover-Fellers critique continue to fuel public debate today, although the circumstances in which those arguments were first made and the conservative uses to which they were put are nearly forgotten.

Frank Ninkovich begins his essay, "History and Memory in Postwar U.S.-Japanese Relations," with a straightforward question: "What part has collective memory played in the recent history of U.S.-Japanese relations?" He replies by saying that short-term memories of the war mattered less to U.S. policymakers than accounts in contemporary media would suggest. He posits that for American policymakers historical understanding was a form of collective memory that outweighed the lived experience of the war. Instead of treating collective memory as an easily manipulated tool at the disposal of opportunistic policymakers, Ninkovich presents it, in the form of historical understanding, as a powerful influence shaping policy. In doing so, he argues that American policymakers' understanding of history led them to situate

U.S.-Japanese relations within a liberal vision of global modernization that provided the foundation for a constructive postwar policy toward Japan.

Takuya Sasaki diverges from Ninkovich's essay by asking how specific memories of the Pacific War shaped American and Japanese policies in Asia beyond the period of the occupation. In "Cold War Diplomacy and Memories of the Pacific War: A Comparison of the American and Japanese Cases," Sasaki analyzes the memories of foreign policymakers in Washington and Tokyo as they responded to the rise of Soviet power and the cold war. Although Sasaki sees the war producing very different legacies and lessons for policymakers in the United States and Japan, he suggests that those differences remained submerged until after the demise of the Soviet Union. Equally important, he discusses how the contemporary "history wars" in Asia may be one of the unexpected legacies of the influence of historical understanding on American policy.

The communal remembering of an event is a highly selective act involving complex choices about what to preserve and how to record and symbolize it. Memory is made tangible through museums, monuments, and memorials that impart an aura of authority to the stories they tell. Frequently, the process of memorializing becomes political. But as the essays in Part III show, the creators of museums and memorials do not control how different groups experience them. Xiaohua Ma's "Constructing a National Memory of War: War Museums in China, Japan, and the United States" focuses on the establishment of a special kind of museum, the war museum, to analyze the politics of war memorializing in the context of international relations in the Asia-Pacific region. Ma examines the internal and international reasons for China's own memory boom and records the numerous modifications undertaken by governments and private groups to make museums provide lessons from the past that are consistent with the concerns of the moment. In doing so, she shows how museum construction became a source of friction in official Chinese-Japanese relations while simultaneously fostering transpacific communities of memory in China and the United States.

Waldo Heinrichs's "The *Enola Gay* and Contested Public Memory" examines the public battle over the Smithsonian Institute's attempt to commemorate the end of World War II and the surrender of Japan. Heinrichs draws on previously unused records of the Air Force Asso-

ciation, as well as museum scripts, commentaries, and a wide range of news and opinion pieces from the national and regional press, to provide a case study of an aroused collective memory in action, in this case the memory of World War II veterans.

Yujin Yaguchi, in “War Memories across the Pacific: Japanese Visitors at the *Arizona* Memorial,” shows readers how Japanese tourists view one of the most recognized landmarks in America: the USS *Arizona*. Not surprisingly, Japanese visitors tend to understand the memorial and interpret its significance quite differently from the majority of U.S. visitors. But as Yaguchi’s fieldwork at the memorial shows, in one important respect the site still serves its purpose by crystallizing a sense of difference based on national identities and encouraging a historical understanding based on a nationalist framework.

The last two chapters look at the role of racial and ethnic identity in the formation of transnational memories, a subject broached by Xiaohua Ma toward the end of her essay. In “Memory and the Lost Found Relationship between Black Americans and Japan,” I discuss how collective memory functioned in the African American encounter with Japan before World War II. I note the recent scholarly interest in that relationship and ask how the story was “lost” in the first place. The essay begins by explaining the importance of collective memory in shaping black American perceptions of Japan’s historic role as a challenger to white supremacy. I then discuss how that memory was gradually displaced or rescripted into a new narrative that sought to commemorate African Americans’ role in World War II.

In the last chapter, “Entangled Memories: China in American and Japanese Remembrances of World War II,” Daqing Yang notes that for Americans and most Japanese, collective memories about the Asia-Pacific War are bracketed by Pearl Harbor at one end and Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the other, to the almost total neglect of Japan’s long war in China. That is beginning to change, owing in part to the efforts of individuals and groups who seek to correct what they see as a tragic omission from collective remembrances of the war. In recounting these efforts, Yang asks how the growing awareness of the Chinese-Japanese war in American and Japanese memories of World War II complicates those older memories and affects current international relations. To further understand how memory functions in a transpacific perspective, Yang examines the role of ethnic and interest groups in Japan,

China, and the United States in reshaping the memories of what some historians have begun to call Asia's Great War.

This collection of essays ends by gathering up some of the related threads woven through the different chapters. "Concluding Remarks" makes some suggestions for further study and offers some additional observations about the role of memory in transpacific relations. We hope that readers will find the following essays helpful in thinking about the many ways that societies create collective memories and that they will gain a better appreciation for the variety of forms that such memories can take. All of the authors have sought to show how memories of the Asia-Pacific War shaped and continue to influence transpacific relations. But we have also sought to demonstrate the interplay between contemporary events and concerns and the formation of those memories. The dynamism inherent in that process is what makes the future of the past unpredictable.

Notes

1 "Huge Anti-Japanese Protests," *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 17 April 2005, 1; "Editorial: Crisis in China Ties," *asahi.com*, 19 April 2005, at www.asahi.com/English/Herald-asahi/TKY200504190095.html.

2 "Schieffer Concerned," *Japan Times*, 21 April 2005.

3 Funabashi Yoichi, "East Asia's History Creating Mistrust." *Asahi Shimbun*, 4 January 2005.

4 Laura Hein, "Remembrance of World War II and the Postwar in the United States and Japan," *Japan Focus*, *ZNet/Japan*, 30 May 2005, at www.zmag.org/content/print_article.cfm?itemID=7977§ionID=17.

5 James J. Orr, *The Victim As Hero: Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001), 173–176.

6 Alexis Dudden, "The End of Apology," *Japan Focus*, *ZNet/Japan*, 16 February 2005, at www.zmag.org/content/print_article.cfm?itemID=7257§ionID=17; David McNeill and Mark Selden, "Why Is Japan Suddenly Indulging in Rosy Reinterpretations of the Past?," *History News Network*, News Abroad, 18 April 2005, at hnn.us/articles/11354.html.

7 "Internet Intruders," *Asahi Shimbun*, 14 April, 2005, 1; "Yasukuni Shrine, Nationalism and Japan's International Relations," *Japan Focus*, *ZNet/Japan*, 6 June 2005, at www.zmag.org/content/print_article.cfm?

itemID=8016§ionID=17; Roger B. Jeans, "Victims or Victimizers? Museums, Textbooks, and the War Debate in Contemporary Japan," *Journal of Military History* 69 (January 2005): 151–157.

8 Gavan McCormack, "War and Japan's Memory Wars: The Media and the Globalization of Consciousness," *Japan Focus*, *ZNet/Japan*, 29 January 2005, at www.zmag.org/content/print_article.cfm?itemID=7140§ionID=17.

9 Gavan McCormack, "Okinawa and Revamped U.S.-Japan Alliance," *Japan Focus*, *ZNet/Japan*, 16 November 2005, at www.zmag.org/content/print_article.cfm?itemID=9132§ionID=17.

10 "Emperor Honors Saipan War Dead," *Japan Times*, 29 June 2005, 1.

11 "Military Pays Tribute to All Battle of Okinawa Victims," *Japan Update*, 23 June 2005.

12 "The Battle of Okinawa," *Asahi Shimbun*, 24 June 2005; McCormack, "Okinawa and Revamped U.S.-Japan Alliance." For the views of an activist and opponent of the plan who links memories of the war to contemporary protests, see Miyagi Yasuhiro, "Rising Magma," *Japan Focus*, *ZNet/Japan*, 9 December 2005, at www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=17&ItemID=9294.

13 The starting point for most scholars is Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, edited, translated, and with an introduction by Lewis Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), and Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). For helpful introductions to the subject, see David Thelen, "Memory and American History," *Journal of American History* 75 (March 1989): 1117–1129; Barry Schwartz, "Social Change and Collective Memory: The Democratization of George Washington," *American Sociological Review* 56 (April 1991): 221–236; and John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). Other relevant works are cited throughout the individual chapters.

14 Michael J. Hogan, ed., *Hiroshima in History and Memory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Lisa Yoneyama, *Hiroshima Traces: Time, Space and the Dialectics of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Philip West, Steven I. Levine, and Jackie Hiltz, eds., *America's Wars in Asia: A Cultural Approach to History and Memory* (Armonk, N.Y.: East Gate Books, 1998); and T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama, eds., *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002).

15 See Daqing Yang's essay in this volume and Orr, *Victim As Hero*, 31.