

Comments

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It is my great honor to serve as a commentator for the papers of the three distinguished scholars from the United States, Professors Yoneyama Lisa, Robert McMahon and Marianna Torgovnick.

I am a diplomatic historian. My main research interest has been in US-Japan relations or US relations with East Asian countries during the Cold War period. So my comments will be mainly from an international relations perspective.

I read the papers with great interest and found them quite stimulating and informative. Let me begin with Professor Torgovnick's paper. This is a fascinating presentation of how Hiroshima and Nagasaki are generally represented in films in the US. Effectively utilizing the motif of the Empty City, she vividly demonstrates how most of the films, books, and media featuring Hiroshima and Nagasaki have failed to show or describe the atrocities of atomic bombings and fire-bombings of cities in Japan. As a result, many Americans simply do not realize that the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki "typically produced charred and damaged bodies and corpses barely recognizable as human remains".

Her paper raises the question of remembering and forgetting. As a matter of fact, all three papers raise this question, but let me focus for the moment on Professor Torgovnick's presentation. She clearly shows that filmmakers', writers' and media's omissions, repression and denial involve more conscious process of representation, while their ordinary audience is more or less a complacent consumer of whatever information is provided by them. The overall effect is that people are led to remember certain things and to forget others.

Generally speaking, the victims remember the bitter memory of their sufferings while the victimizers tend to forget the damages and sufferings they have inflicted upon the victims. This perennial question of the gap between remembering and forgetting makes historical reconciliation more difficult.

I can think of two reasons that will explain why American culture has tended not to represent Hiroshima and Nagasaki. One of the explanations is that American people regard WWII as a 'good war'. The use of A-bombs was justified to end the war as soon as possible, but their image of the war as a 'good war' or a 'just war' helped them rationalize the use of atomic bombs. The problem with this rationalization is that fighting the 'just war' does not necessarily justify the means employed. The dropping of atomic bombs upon civilian populations was a violation of the Hague Convention IV of 1907 that had made it illegal to adopt

methods of warfare to injure the enemy or destroy his property without any limit whatsoever. Its preamble--the Martens Clause--had placed all peoples under the protection of rules resulting "from the laws of humanity and the dictates of the public conscience."

Another factor to explain the tendency of American culture to hide the negative aspects of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was the imperative of the Cold War situation. The Cold War environment required the US governments to justify the potential use of nuclear weapons not only to defend the US national security but also to maintain its hegemony over its allies by providing them with the 'nuclear umbrella'.

In this connection, it is worthwhile to recall that in the drafting of the Geneva Convention IV of 1949 on the protection of civilians, the US, together with Great Britain, made efforts to ensure that civilians would be left unprotected from air attack. The Truman administration at that time wanted civilians deprived of protection from atomic bombs and the US air force legally allowed the targeting of economic infrastructure. When the Soviet Union attempted to include within Article 32 of the Geneva Convention IV a prohibition on the "extermination of the civilian population," they rejected it. Raymond T. Yingling, chief US delegate to the conference, saw the Soviets' language as "an obvious attempt to obtain the unconditional ban on the use of atomic weapons."¹

Such an attitude on the part of the US governments has continued into the post-Cold War years. In 1993-94 the UN Security Council established ad hoc trials to deal with atrocities in the former Yugoslavia through the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and also Rwanda, through the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). It should be noted that their mandates no longer included the most important element of the Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals, namely the crime against peace.

Also, in 2002 the permanent international court (ICC) was established under an independent prosecutor whom the US could not easily control. Many US elites regarded the ICC as a diplomatic defeat and the Bush (junior) administration refused to sign the Rome Statute of 1998 establishing the ICC. Even the Obama administration officials allow US troops in Afghanistan to bomb civilians and continue to justify the victims as 'collateral damage'.

The fact that there is not much change in the US establishment's attitude toward many civilian deaths in US wars, even after the ending of the Cold War, suggests that the crux of the matter lies not only in the continuation of the Cold War paradigm (the national security paradigm) but also may lie somewhere deeper than that. Professor Torgovnick's paper suggests that these occurrences are rooted in American culture. However, she does not necessarily elaborate what elements of the American culture perpetuate the recurrences of repression, displacement, denial or de-realization concerning the harsh realities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki or fire-bombings of Japanese cities. I wonder how and why such culture was nurtured. How did it originate?

In 1996, Arthur Miller, an American playwright and author of *Death of a Salesman*, wrote an essay for the *New Yorker*, in which he reflected on the changing politics surrounding his play “The Crucible,” which he wrote in 1952. In this essay, he wrote as follows: “Few of us can easily surrender our belief that society must somehow make sense. The thought that the state has lost its mind and is punishing so many innocent people is intolerable. And so the evidence has to be internally denied.” Is such tendency more or less common to all societies or is there something unique in American society? Why does the cultural pluralism so widely accepted in American society often remain nationally bound? To what extent is the ethnocentric nature of US cultural pluralism related with the position of the US as a hegemon in world affairs? To what extent does it reflect the US as a hegemonic power in which political leaders are well aware that they will not be punished for their violations of international law? Furthermore, to what extent is such tendency a reflection of American exceptionalism? I would appreciate it if Professor Torgovnick could share her thoughts on these questions that have been inspired by her paper.

Historical reconciliation must be a two-way process. It is in order to examine the issue of the Pearl Harbor attack and contested memories in the US and Japan that Professor McMahon takes up in his paper. He addresses an important question of why and how so critical an event as the Pearl Harbor attack could not occupy an important space in the collective memories of the Japanese people. He makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the collective memories of the Japanese people concerning the Pearl Harbor attack. He came up with five pertinent factors that explain this. I agree with him on these factors. But I would like to elaborate on these points from my own perspective.

The first two factors, that is, the fact that the US did not ask for a Japanese apology for Pearl Harbor and Japan was an US ally under the US-Japan security treaty, were closely related to the US Cold War requirements. The conservative government in Japan also shared the US Cold War rationale and depended for Japan’s security upon the US nuclear protection. Throughout the Cold War period, the Japanese government did not ask for a US apology for Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Moreover, to meet the requirements of US nuclear deterrence, the Kishi Nobusuke administration, in defiance of the strong anti-nuclear sentiments among the Japanese people, even made the secret deal in January 1960 with the Eisenhower administration so that the US warships carrying nuclear weapons could enter Japanese ports without prior consultation even though the exchange of notes dated January 19, 1960 provides that “major changes in their equipment,” which is understood to mean the “introduction” (*mochikomu*) of nuclear weapons, shall be the subject of prior consultation with the Japanese government. Many Japanese also tacitly accepted the US ‘nuclear umbrella’ for the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East as Article VI of the US-Japan security treaty stipulates. Such an ambiguous and ambivalent

attitude among Japanese toward nuclear weapons tarnished the peace message of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as the first victim of nuclear weapons in human history.

Not only that, the US-Japan collaboration during the Cold War years also gave rise to the so-called Yoshida Doctrine as well as 'Ampo Hanei ron', the assertion that the security treaty made Japan's postwar prosperity possible by minimizing the defense expenditure. The popular memory of the Cold War as benefiting Japan, together with the growing acceptance of the security treaty in the early 1970s and thereafter, contributed to Japan's forgetting of their responsibility for the damage and suffering caused by the Pearl Harbor attack.

Just as important is the fact that the Japanese memory of the US-Japan collaboration during the Cold War also contributed to their forgetting of responsibility for the victims among Asians. More specifically, the Japanese notion of victimhood was influenced by the way the Tokyo trial was conducted. On the one hand, the politics of the Tokyo trial that absolved Emperor Hirohito and the Japanese population from being prosecuted paved the way for cordial relations in the postwar years between the US and Japan. On the other hand, the Tokyo trial did not take up the responsibility of the Japanese for their invasions and colonial rule in Asia, which added not only to their unilateral sense of victimhood but also resulted in further weakening of their notion of wartime responsibility for the victims of other Asian countries.

Professor McMahan regards the last and fifth factor, the disproportionality thesis, as "a central component of Japanese recollections of World War II". Comparatively speaking, however, it seems this question is not as problematical as it is between Japanese and Chinese or Japanese and Koreans. Both Chinese and Koreans suffered enormous human and material costs during Japan's invasions in China and her colonial rule in Korea, even though they eventually emerged victorious in the Asia-Pacific war. The sheer reality that the victors had incurred a disproportionate share of the costs vis-à-vis the defeated nation is psychologically hard to swallow. On the other hand, the popular notion among Japanese that Japan is the defeated nation vis-à-vis the US helps Japanese to accept the disproportionality of pain and suffering as a *fait accompli* or the logical consequences of the Pearl Harbor attack.

More crucial in thinking about historical reconciliation is the third factor that Professor McMahan points out, that is, the problematical notion of Japanese victimhood that put the responsibility of war largely on the military clique in Japan. Madoka Futamura, professor of international relations at Doshisha University, calls this aspect of the Japanese victimhood as the "individualization of responsibility", which led to "people's self-immunization from war responsibility."²

Emperor Hirohito, apparently an active participant in the war, was not even allowed to be questioned at the tribunal by the US government and MacArthur. It seems to me that the emperor's immunity from war responsibility as well as the retention of the emperor system as the symbol of Japan in the final analysis

created more problems for the Japanese.

Now, there is one important question Professor McMahon did not discuss concerning the Asia-Pacific war. So I would like to bring up this question here. The Tokyo trial prosecuted the war criminals of the vanquished not only for crimes against peace but also for crimes against humanity. The serious defect in the trial was that the atrocities and crimes committed by the US and its allies were intentionally placed outside the Tokyo trial. The US responsibility for the killing of hundreds of thousands of civilians by dropping atomic bombs and through fire-bombings of Japanese cities was intentionally suppressed or disregarded by the judges as well as by the GHQ. Those important omissions were at the time and still remain unresolved issues of historical reconciliation.

In the past, the question of war responsibility has been addressed and discussed without making a clear distinction between the responsibility for initiating or waging a war of aggression and the responsibility for the conventional war crimes committed in violation of the laws or customs of war while a war is being fought or, in the case of the crimes against humanity, for the crimes such as “murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population” during the war. The Pearl Harbor attack by Japan belongs to the former or the crimes against peace as applied at the Tokyo trial. On the other hand, the atomic-bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki or fire-bombings of Japanese cities both of which intentionally targeted civilian populations fall under the latter category. With regards to the conventional war crimes and the crimes against humanity, only the soldiers of the defeated nation were prosecuted at the Tokyo tribunal while those of the victors were placed outside the trial. For our better understanding of the question of war responsibility, it is necessary for us to make the distinction between the two different categories mentioned above. The need to address the question of war responsibility by making the above distinction has been actually heightened because US governments have subsequently continued to disregard the legal precedents established at the Tokyo trial, especially the crimes against humanity. For example, US soldiers’ crimes continued to be reported during the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Given the fact that the US played a central role in the Tokyo trial, the subsequent behaviors of US governments in wars unfortunately tend to give credence to the Japanese conservatives’ and rightists’ criticism that the Tokyo trial was the victor’s ‘justice’, thereby undermining the effort of liberals in Japan to move toward ‘a common understanding of the past’. I would like to invite Professor McMahon’s comments on this aspect of the history question.

Professor Yoneyama’s paper addresses the relationship between the “cultural wars” and battles over memories from a trans-Pacific or global perspective, and convincingly argues that both are closely interrelated and that battles

over memories constitute an integral part of the “cultural wars”. Most of us will agree with her assertion that a nation’s collective experience and memory is not a monolith and that collective memories are internally heterogeneous, contradictory, and transnationally constituted. She persuasively demonstrates this by examining both the “Enola Gay” controversy in the US and the neo-nationalists’ attacks on the 2000 Women’s International Tribunal in Tokyo that adjudicated Japan’s wartime comfort women’s system.

She suggests that we should view culture, nation, identity, history and memory as multiple, diverse, overlapping, transnational and ever-shifting rather than homogeneous, pure, internally coherent and exclusive.

This proposition raises an important question in terms of historical reconciliation. If history and memory are to be internally heterogeneous, diverse, ever-shifting and even contradictory, that will make it extremely difficult for us to reach ‘a common understanding of the past’. I wonder if Professor Yoneyama thinks it possible for us to reach historical reconciliation in the future among peoples in East Asia or between Japan and the US. How will it be possible? What is a prospect for reconciliation in East Asia?

Let me venture into pondering how I view the history question and historical reconciliation, given the dynamics of East Asian international relations. As the remarkable rise of China’s power indicates, international relations in East Asia have experienced huge structural transformations at the systemic level since the ending of the Cold War. Moreover, with the acceleration of globalization in the last two decades, great changes have been also taking place at the societal level. Facing the rise of civil society, political leaders in Asia find it increasingly difficult to control popular demands. Professor Yoneyama points out that Japanese neo-nationalists’ campaign to amend the postwar constitution reflects their “patriarchal nationalism and misogyny” and that their movements can be located in “the racialized trauma of emasculation” that was rooted in the defeat in war and the subsequent American occupation. This is a good example of how collective memories are transnationally constituted. The Japanese neo-nationalists’ movements often interact in a negative way with those counterparts in civil societies in China and Korea, which in turn makes it harder for governments to keep historical friction under control.

What makes the East Asian situation more complicated is that the rise of nationalism and the competitive impulses for leadership between China and Japan tend to be linked with the history question. A good example is China’s objection to Japan’s membership to the UN Security Council in 2005. The Chinese government adroitly exploited Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro’s repeated visits to Yasukuni Shrine which enshrines and honors those who had sacrificed their lives for the country in the past wars. China’s use of the history card implied that Japan was not qualified for Security Council membership as Koizumi’s behavior showed lack of apology for the past war.

Given the dynamic forces of regional integration as well as migration of many

Asians within East Asia, however, I am hopeful in the long run about a prospect for reconciliation in the region. It is possible that these forces of regional integration will contribute to creating transnational space, especially at the societal level, in which Asians migrating within East Asia will eventually come to share such values and norms as basic human rights, basic human needs, non-violence, democracy as well as respect for diversity, tolerance and laws.

More careful attention should be paid not only to aspects of economic interdependence but also the fact that an increasing number of Asians today migrate within the East Asian region. Advocates and supporters of the 'East Asian Community' often focus on increasing economic interdependence, a significant phenomenon for promoting mutual understanding among Asians. However, deepening economic interdependence in the region by itself may not necessarily lead to the creation of 'we-feelings' among Asians. Also, many others who study regionalism in Asia single out cultural diversity in the region as an obstacle for regional integration. However, some others will argue that cultural diversity is not as serious a hindrance to regional integration, especially when we note the migration of people across the border. People cross borders as they are attracted by cultural diversity and differences of other countries. Cultural diversity is an important factor for ever-increasing migration of people across the border in East Asia.

The accelerating migration of Asians within the region will eventually enhance East Asian identity. The East Asianization of consciousness among Asians will conterminously advance formation of transnational space in East Asia in which they share a certain degree of universal norms and values mentioned above. Such transnational space, if formed, would contribute to promoting our mutual understanding of history and otherness, which in turn would help contain potential sources of the history frictions. It is not farfetched then to expect that this process would eventually lead to historical reconciliation in the region.

Professor Yoneyama duly warns elsewhere, however, that "things commonly shared" have been mistakenly assumed to have higher moral value than differences. In her paper she also points out that "the practices that appeal to seemingly universal value tend to be regarded as morally superior, hence held normative, to those concerns that are perceived to be particularistic." Thus they function as "a mechanism of discrimination and exclusion."³

There seems to be a dilemma here. If we want to move toward reconciliation, it seems we need a certain degree of sharing some basic norms and values upon which we interpret our past. However, as Professor Yoneyama points out, an undue emphasis on basic values or norms of universal nature may lead to discrimination and exclusion of those things regarded as morally inferior or particularistic. I wonder if she could elaborate more on the relationship between particularism or differences, on the one hand, and values or norms of universal nature, on the other.

Before closing my comments, I would like to add one more thing. When we approach the question of historical reconciliation, it is important to examine the difference in historical perceptions in the changing context of the Asia-Pacific order. At issue here is what kind of world order we want to create in the long run. We ought to search avenues to reconciliation by working toward the kind of order that will be regarded as fair and just by the peoples concerned. So far as Japan is concerned, at the heart of the 'history question' is the role Japan wants to play in the international community. As Gareth J. Evans, the former Australian foreign minister aptly suggested, what is at stake is how the Japanese people redefine their 'greatness' at this juncture in the 21st century. Are the Japanese people going to identify themselves with a 'peaceful nation' or with a 'normal country'?

What matters in this context is the postwar image of Japan that other Asian countries have come to embrace. Documentary filmmaker John Junkerman filmed the movie titled "Japan's Peace Constitution." He interviewed Chinese, Koreans, and Americans to get their views and came to the conclusion that Article 9 of the constitution has been accepted by educated Asians as Japan's promise to never again embark on military aggression overseas. Article 9 grew out of the Japanese experiences of World War II. As long as the majority of Japanese make an effort to maintain it while working wholeheartedly toward reconciliation, Asian peoples may begin to appreciate Chalmers Johnson's insight that Article 9 itself is an apology.

All three papers that were presented today also have reminded us that, in spite of our celebration of the 50th anniversary of the US-Japan security treaty after its revision in 1960, the two allies have still not achieved reconciliation about the historical issues raised today. This in itself is an interesting question. How long can the resilience of the bilateral alliance or security and economic interests associated with it contain the emotions of historical memory? Mike Mochizuki, Professor of Japanese politics and East Asian international relations at George Washington University wrote as follows:

"If Americans are to play a constructive role in facilitating a positive dialogue about history between Japanese and Chinese and between Japanese and Koreans, then perhaps Japanese and Americans must also address their own issues of history as well. What then would be the most constructive ways for doing so?"⁴

Professor Mochizuki has his own suggestions in his paper. It is also the task for all of us here to do likewise.

Notes

1. Herbert P. Bix, "War Crimes and Double Standards: Legacies of the Asia-Pacific War", Kan Hideki ed. *Reisengo Higashi Ajia Kokusai Kankei no Kozohendo to Rekishi Ninshiki no Kosaku* (Structural Changes in East Asian International Relations and the History Question) (Tokyo: Gaifusha, forthcoming).

2. Futamura Madoka, *War Crimes Tribunals and Transitional Justice: The Tokyo Trial and the Nuremberg legacy* (London/N.Y.: Routledge, 2006), pp. 118-119.
3. See also Yoneyama, *Hiroshima: Kioku no Politiksu* (Iwanami Shoten, 2005), pp. 18-33.
4. Mike Mochizuki, "Unfinished Task of Historical Reconciliation in East Asia: Implications for Regional Security & U.S. Strategy," Kan ed., *Reisengo no Higashi Ajia Kokusai Kankei no Kozohendo to Rekishi Ninshiki no Kousaku*, *op. cit.*