Chapter 5
Postmemorial Conservatism: mobilizing memories of the war dead

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*This is the final chapter of my book manuscript entitled: *Yasukuni: Memory, Practice, Politics* that examines Yasukuni Shrine, a war memorial established in 1869 in which spirits of all military dead from Japan's modern wars are commemorated. It is a contested site that has come to represent all unresolved war crimes that Japan has committed during the Asia-Pacific War (1931-1945). In my book, I examine five key periods from the shrine's history to demonstrate the complexities in the roles Japanese people (both military and civilian) played in Japan's modern wars. In particular, I argue against a clear distinction between the victim and perpetrator roles during wartime, and suggests a more nuanced approach in order to enable a better understanding of Japan's contested past.

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It is
a way of life that constitutes the core of
the existence of Yasukuni.
The numerous eirei*, who,*
since the upheaval that marked the end of the Edo period,
sacrificed their own lives
in order to protect
the independence and dignity of Japan.
Why are the eirei *noble?*
Why is it necessary
for all Japanese
who live today
to understand and respond to
the noble spirit of the eirei*?*
From the opening of the film *Mitama o tsugu mono*.

The film *Mitama o tsugu mono* (To carry on the spirit of the war dead, 2008), from which I introduce the epigraph above, is aired four times daily at the Yūshūkan Museum on Yasukuni Shrine grounds. As the last five lines of the epigraph demonstrate, the film is an attempt to reintroduce the term *eirei* (heroic spirit)—invented in the early twentieth century in order to attribute a noble quality to Japanese military dead (see chapter 3)—in ways that are relevant to the generation who were born decades after 1945 and have little connection to those that experienced the Asia-Pacific War. As such, it is an important tool to bridge the postwar generation to the brand of nationalism that was propagated through Yasukuni Shrine in the years leading up to and during the Asia-Pacific War, and garner support—both ideological and financial—for the shrine. The film, however, includes little material from the war years. Instead, it introduces, as the bridge between wartime and today, a seemingly irrelevant item: coffee. According to the film, a major producer of coffee consumed in Japan is Papua New Guinea, a state Japan "liberated" from Western imperialism during the war. As such, Japanese youth today (like those presumably in the audience of the film) are able to enjoy coffee because of sacrifices the *eirei* made during that war—the *eirei* that are enshrined at Yasukuni. By extension, many other contemporary commodities available in Japan today, and moreover, the peace and prosperity that Japanese are able to enjoy today have been realized by *eirei*'s wartime sacrifices. I will discuss the film in more detail below, but this chapter as a whole examines the various ways that beliefs associated with Yasukuni Shrine, exemplified by the term *eirei*, have been repackaged and re-presented in recent years, of which the film *Mitama o tsugu mono* is one example. The passage of time since 1945 has motivated various groups to engage in activities to preserve and relay wartime memories, from recording oral history narratives and mounting museum exhibits, to hosting of websites and mailing lists, some of which I introduce below. Many of these efforts had started as early as the 1970s, but, as I will demonstrate in this chapter, the latest repackaging efforts are being driven by a need beyond mere preservation.

In recent decades, bearers of Asia-Pacific War memories have shifted from the generation that had experienced the war as soldiers and civilians to the "postmemory generation": a generation born after the event (after 1945 in this case), and therefore, had never directly experienced the trauma of all-out war. According to Holocaust scholar Marianne Hirsch, who coined the term postmemory, members of this generation have grown up "dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation [and] shaped by the traumatic events that can be neither understood or recreated."[1] This is a generation that has inadvertently inherited their parents' trauma through the environment in which they have grown up. As such, the transmission is never complete. Further, the inherited trauma is not comparable to the immediate experience. But this legacy is significant for certain communities such as the children of Holocaust survivors (from which the concept was derived), and also of Asia-Pacific War survivors, (whom I will discuss in this chapter), since, as I will argue, the inherited trauma can be much more complex and thus sometimes more difficult to overcome.[2]

In what ways has the remembrance of the war transformed with this generational shift, and what are the particularities of the situation in the case of post Asia-Pacific War Japan? One useful area of inquiry is the increasingly active production and promotion of culture, in fields such as literature, visual media, and education, on themes associated with the war experience. In particular, I find scholarship on preservation and representation of Holocaust memories useful for the abundance of rich, sophisticated analyses produced on the subject.[3] The more recent cultural productions in Japan, however, demonstrate a trend distinct from those associated with Holocaust memories. In Japan, the focus is on the creation of a revisionist narrative, rather than the Jewish tendency in preservation and relaying of past experiences. Instead of engaging with issues of war responsibility or investigating the reasons why Japan was embroiled in an extended military conflict that encompassed nearly fifteen years, the newly created narratives attempt to reimagine an idealized past that is eerily reminiscent of the state initiated propaganda of the war years. According to this idealized narrative, Japan did not commit an imperialistic armed invasion of East and Southeast Asia, but rather, was engaged in the liberation of those nations from Western imperialism. And the current peace and prosperity of not only Japan, but also other nations in East and Southeast Asia, is a result of the tremendous suffering and sacrifice of the Japanese during the war years. Such revisionist history, with its roots in wartime state propaganda, has always existed since 1945, but here I am interested in its radical resurgence of the recent years and the fact that not only the intended audience, but also the authors of these narratives are of the postmemory generation.

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[1] Marianne Hirsch, "Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile," in *Poetics Today* 17.4 (Winter 1996), 659-686. See, also, Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, narrative and postmemory* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997), and "The Generation of Postmemory," in *Poetics Today* 29.1 (Spring, 2008), 103-128.

[2] Here, I am not arguing that the inherited trauma is a more difficult one, but rather, that the process of overcoming can be more difficult due to the complex nature of the trauma.

[3] Sources on Holocaust memory work.

Not surprisingly, events hosted at Yasukuni Shrine and the exhibits mounted at the recently renovated Yūshūkan Museum follow this trend. Yūshūkan, in particular, has been completely reinvented in the recent years into a site for the education of postmemory generation in conservative revisionist history. The key actor in these new creations is the *Yasukuni Jinja Sūkei Hōsan-kai* (Association for the Support and Reverence of Yasukuni Shrine; *Hōsan-kai* hereafter) established in 1998 in commemoration of Yasukuni's 130th anniversary.[4] A brainchild of then head priest Yuzawa Tadashi and Yamauchi Toyoasa, a former lieutenant colonel in the Imperial Army, *Hōsan-kai* was to function as a formal support system for the shrine, which, by then, was struggling financially with the decrease in number of bereaved family members.[5] The *Hōsan-kai* has played a key role in the recent initiatives at the shrine to engage the postwar generation in learning and participating in the revisionist history, from the 2002 renovation of Yūshūkan Museum to the formation of various associations and events targeting the young.

The objective of this chapter is two-fold. I will first introduce the ways that management and supporters of Yasukuni Shrine have attempted to reinvent the institution for the twenty-first century. I will then analyze this trend within a larger framework that encompasses the Japanese postwar experience. In addition to an analysis of the exhibits at Yūshūkan Museum and other recent initiatives by the *Hōsan-kai*, I examine similar trends in a larger context, including museum exhibits that address the Asia-Pacific War and other types of cultural representations of the war from popular media. I find in this trend the postmemorial generation's need for a conservative (and redemptive) discourse for the purpose of not only overcoming their inherited past, but, at the same time, also evading the issue of war responsibility that they have inadvertently taken on along with the traumatic memories. Here too, the overarching trend is the insistence of a stark separation between victims and perpetrators, which I have explored in the previous chapter. I suggest that by acknowledging a more complex and often overlapping relationship between the two roles—a way of thinking that allows for what Giorgio Agamben has referred to as the "gray zone," the area that makes judgment impossible; the zone in which, in the case of the Holocaust, "victims become executioners and executioners become victims"—we can identify a more productive way of untangling the issues prominent in Japan's postwar experience, most important of which deals with reparations of past injustices.[6] This complex framework might help us think about Japan's postwar in ways other than the question of "who is responsible," and ultimately, push the peace promotion discourse beyond the prevailing narrative of "Japanese people suffered because of the war"—one that currently stands regardless of political leanings of

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[4] http://www.yasukuni.jp/~sukei/ [accessed May 29, 2011].

[5] See chapter 6 for the relationship with the bereaved family members (*Nihon izoku kai*) and Yasukuni Shrine.

[6] Here, Agamben is paraphrasing Primo Levi's argument, in which defines the "gray zone" as the zone in which the "long chain of conjunction between victim and executioner" comes loose. Agamben expands on this concept by introducing, as the extreme figure of the "gray zone" the *Sonderkommando*, or the group of deportees responsible for managing the gas chambers and crematoria. Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (New York: Zone Books, 1999), 17, 21, 24-5.

the narrator, and that results in the simplistic conclusion offered in most cultural representations of wartime Japan: "war causes suffering, and thus we should avoid future wars at any cost." My main objective here is not to critique the Yasukuni brand of wartime history, but rather, to highlight the powerful presence of the victim discourse in postwar Japanese culture that complicates Japanese attempts to come to terms with its wartime past.

Trauma and Recovery

It is their parents' trauma that the postmemory generation inherits. Thus in order to fully understand the kind of memory work that the younger generation encounters, we must first familiarize ourselves with the process of overcoming trauma. Studies and analyses of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and the succeeding recovery process are useful here.[7] Very briefly, according to psychiatrists that specialize in trauma recovery, the path to recovery from PTSD involves the victim/survivor to reconstruct the self. This process includes working through, or re-mastering of the traumatic memory. The survivor must transform the traumatic memory—which consists of disjointed fragments—into a coherent narrative that can be told to and be understood by others. The production of a coherent narrative allows the survivor to objectify the event and create a sense of distance—a distance that is both temporal and spatial—from the experience. Establishing the event as separate from the current self enables the survivor to mourn the losses experienced in the trauma and, ultimately, to work through the event. This is not an easy process, in part because of the difficulty associated with piecing together the fragmented memories from the event, but also due to the impossibility of representing and communicating a truly traumatic experience.[8]

The application of this trauma theory to the postmemory generation raises an interesting problem: what happens to this process of recovery when the trauma is not one's own, but rather, an inherited one? How does one overcome this kind of a trauma that has no well-defined origins, structure, nor a clear beginning and end? Here is where the rebuilding of the past comes in: the rebuilding of a tangible past with finite temporal and spatial boundaries that can be acknowledged and finally overcome. Some members of the Holocaust postmemory generation have found original ways of rebuilding. For artist Shimon Attie, for example, this rebuilding attempt resulted in a series of projections in a Jewish quarter of Berlin. He collected local archival photographs taken prior to the Holocaust, identified the exact location at which they were captured, and projected them onto the spot allowing the images as if to fill in the void. The result was the highlighting

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[7] Here, I rely primarily on Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The aftermath of violence—from domestic abuse to political terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1997). Also useful is Susan J. Brison, "Trauma Narratives and the Remaking of the Self," in which Brison recounts her own experience of overcoming a traumatic experience. Brison, in Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crew, and Leo Spitzer eds., *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (Hanover and London: Dartmouth College, 1999), PAGE.

[8] Treat, *Writing Ground Zero*, James Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust*, Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, History* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

of the absence of Jews in the area today.[9] Another photographer David Levinthal captured with the camera his imagined re-creations of the Nazi pageantry using vintage figurines he collected, since such representations were his only historical reality.[10] A number of artists have toured concentration camps to photograph their aftermaths (with virtually no trace of the tragedies that occurred on those sites), others have captured images of their own Holocaust-themed interventions in their daily lifescapes.[11] In short, these artists are recreating the imagined past in ways that they can visualize, as the first step in their process of coming to terms with their inherited trauma.

In discussing such postmemorial responses to the Holocaust, James Young explains their motive as the desire to incorporate the "truth of how [the postmemory generation] came to know the Holocaust."[12] What Young points out is an important component of the postmemorial attempt to come to terms with the unexperienced past. But from the perspective of trauma and recovery, that is only part of the motive. More important, it seems to me, is their need to recreate and take ownership of this inherited past that was never a part of their own experience. The graphic novel *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, a child of Holocaust survivors, is useful for understanding this need.[13] A key plot of *Maus* is Art's relationship to the haunting presence of his older brother Richieu, whom he has never met; a brother that did not survive the Holocaust but whom his parents can never cease to mourn over. Art's trauma then is not the trauma of the Holocaust experience itself, but rather, the trauma of having grown up with survivor parents who had been, and still are, traumatized by their Holocaust experience. Overcoming this kind of an inherited trauma for Art necessitates, first and foremost, an understanding of the original trauma—that of his parents—but also a deconstructing of the inherited one to enable its retelling as his own narrative. The latter process might involve the reconstructing of the postmemorial vicarious experience in order to contextualize it within the parents' trauma. The development and creation of *Maus*

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[9] Shimon Attie, *Sites Unseen: Shimon Attie's European Projects: installations and photographs* (Burlington, VT; Verve, 1998). Scholarly analyses of Attie's works include: Peter Muir, *Shimon Attie's Writing on the Wall: History, Memory, Aesthetics* (Farnham, Surrey, England ; Burlington, VT : Ashgate Pub, 2010); James Young, *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000); Dora Apel, *Memory Effects*; chapter in *Image and Remembrance*

[10] David Levinthal, *David Levinthal, work from 1975-1996: essays and interview* (New York : International Center of Photography in association with D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers, 1997); *Mein Kampf* (Santa Fe, N.M. : Twin Palms Publishers, 1996). Young, *At Memory's Edge*;

[11] Ulrich Baer, *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), Dora Apel, *Memory Effects: The Holocaust and the Art of Secondary Witnessing* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

[12] Young, *At Memory's Edge*, 4.

[13] Art Spiegelman, *Maus*. Scholarly analyses of *Maus* include: Dominick LaCapra, Hirsch, James Young, "Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and the After-Images of History," in *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 12-41.

involved Art conducting interviews with his father on the elder Spiegelman's Holocaust experience as a way for Art, the son, to rebuild the traumatized past—not just the trauma of his parents that he had never experienced, but also his own.[14]

Why is it necessary this generation to rebuild an unexperienced past? Here, I turn to another Holocaust scholar, Dominick LaCapra. In addressing the process of overcoming historical trauma such as the Holocaust or the Apartheid, LaCapra points out the importance of distinguishing between two kinds of conditions in which the object of desire is not present: absence and loss.[15] "Absence" refers to the condition where the object of desire has never been present, whereas "loss" indicates the object having been present at some point in time. The distinction between the two is important in understanding trauma and recovery since the process of working through a traumatic experience involves the re-establishing of the self in spite of the loss. In the case of a war, the loss may be either concrete (anything from people and objects) or abstract (a sense of security or happiness). Working through and overcoming the trauma of war enables the survivor to re-establish her life without what was lost. For the postmemory generation, however, the loss experienced by the parents and grandparents never existed as a concrete past in their reality. While it is possible (and necessary for the overcoming process to) work through, come to terms with, and restructure oneself around a loss, it is never possible to overcome the non-presence of something that never existed to begin with. In other words, in trauma theory, it is never possible to overcome an absence. Hence the rebuilding of a past using the inherited memory (and recreating the loss) in order to overcome the trauma.

I have talked at length about how the Holocaust experiences have been theorized because I find the ideas useful in thinking through the ways that the Japanese postmemory generation has had to grapple with their heritage. But I would also like to point out here the oddity of the situation where theories related to Holocaust victims can be useful in thinking about the Japanese war experience. In ways similar to children of Holocaust survivors, many Japanese born to parents that experienced the Asia-Pacific War in some capacity have grown up in an environment similar to what Marianne Hirsch has described: one that is shaped by memories of their parents' experience as well as by cultural productions aimed at preserving the memories of Japan at war. But how is it that there are similarities between experiences of the postwar generation in Japan (the perpetrator) and in the households of Holocaust survivors (victims)? Here, I return once again to the prevalence of the victim's narrative in postwar Japan: the narrative where all Japanese suffered because of the war; where Japanese people were the victims of not only the air attacks by the Allied forces but also the reckless policies of their own government. This narrative is fueled by, and in turn, also fuels the cultural productions I examine in this chapter.

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[14] Hirsch's discussion of postmemory is specific to the Holocaust experience in that the attempt of the succeeding generation is to bridge not only the temporal gap but also spatial, both of which cannot be achieved: temporal, because of the impossibility to go back in time, and spatial, because the site from which their parents had been exiled from no longer exists. Hirsch, "Past Lives," 662.

[15] Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

In my view, the Japanese examples of recent war-related cultural productions are distinctly different from the Holocaust case studies in two ways. First, the Japanese examples are typically not on the level of personal trauma and recovery (as was the case with Attie and Spiegelman) but strive for acceptance as a collective memory, and are presented through media such as textbooks, museum exhibits and a variety of visual culture including film and comic books. Second, they are overwhelmingly more about rebuilding of an idealized past (what I refer to as revisionist history) than about maintaining memories of their past. In 1996, for example, historian Fujioka Nobukatsu established the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (*tsukuru kai*) that is on a crusade to teach revisionist history in Japanese classrooms. The group argues that the Japanese history that is currently being taught presents a "masochistic view" of Japan's past, and pushes for a curriculum that presents a kind of history that the younger generation can be proud of.[16] The group has since succeeded in having its textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education, and continues to pressure junior high schools throughout Japan to adopt its publications.[17] 1997 saw the establishment of Japan Conference (*Nippon kaigi*), a conservative group whose agenda includes the revision of the Japanese constitution that would make revisions to Article 9 with which Japan renounced war.[18] Similar narratives prevail in popular culture as well, particularly in films and graphic novels, where sacrifices such as those made by the *kamikaze* pilots are aestheticized to the extent akin to the construction of a new national mythology.[19] These

[16] Website. Of course Japanese conservatives are not alone in attempting to utilize the classroom to teach their interpretation of national history. Hein and Selden's book on representing history. For a critique of the national history textbooks used in Korea, see, for example, I Yonfun (SP?), "Kokyshi kyōkasho ni kakareta nittei no shūdaku no yōsō to sono shinwa sei, in Komori Yōichi, et al., eds., *Higashi Ajia rekishi ninshiki ronsō no meta historī* (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2008), 82-104.

[17] As of 2001, however, only 0.039 percent of public junior high schools have adopted the new textbook. Tawara Yoshifumi, "'Tsukuru kai' no rekisi wankyoku kyōkasho to '2005 nen mondai'" in Komori Yōichi, et al., eds., *Higashi Ajia rekishi ninshiki ronsō no meta historī* (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2008), 73.

[18] Japan Conference is a corporate producer of film *Mitama o tsugu mono*, along with *Eirei ni kotaeru kai* (The Association to Respond to *Eirei*), another organization whose goal is to legalize cabinet members' visits to Yasukuni.

[19] Film examples.

Sociologist Oguma Eiji locates the recent popularity of nationalism among the younger generation in their disillusionment with the existing social collectives such as family, school, and other local communities. According to this idea, the youth (with the direction of such popular figures as Kobayashi Yoshinori) now looks to the nation state as their ideal community precisely because it is something beyond their grasp. Their sense of nationalism is thus a result of a sense of crisis that developed out of no longer being able to rely on the existing social collectives and needing an idealized object of their collective identity. Oguma Eiji and Ueno Yōko, *"Iyashi" no nashonarizumu: kusa no ne hoshu undono jisshīo kenkyū* (Tokyo: Keiō Gijuku Daigaku shuppankai, 2003), 20-24.

two differences result from the gap between the victim consciousness that Japanese feel in general and the perpetrator role that Japan played during the war.

One important agenda for the Japan Conference is to revise the constitution so that visits to Yasukuni Shrine by prime ministers would be legalized. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Japanese prime ministers' visits to Yasukuni have generated discussions both inside and outside Japan on the relationship between the state and the act of memorializing war dead. Japanese conservative parties' use of the shrine has been well documented, but such discussions mostly concentrate on the interpretations and appropriations of the shrine. My focus here is on the agency of the shrine's management and supporters, represented in the narrative that they promote through the shrine. According to the current management of the shrine, Yasukuni is an institution to promote peace.[20] In a manner similar to the LDP's argument for supporting the shrine, Yasukuni management contends that since the peace and prosperity that is enjoyed by Japan today is the result of sacrifices endured by the previous generations (those people who are enshrined at Yasukuni), to offer tribute to Yasukuni is to show gratitude for their sacrifices.

Yasukuni's shift from a national war memorial to a shrine for peace is a result of the change of status that the shrine went through immediately after World War II when the Shinto Directive of December 1945 forbade state patronage of any organizations associated with Shinto.[21] A state institution from its inception in 1869 to the end of the war, Yasukuni was forced to privatize as a result of this Directive and redefine itself as a private corporation. Its main source of postwar funding has been donations by members of the Japan Association of Bereaved Families (people whose family members are commemorated at Yasukuni). With those generations quickly disappearing in the recent decades, Yasukuni has needed a conceptual makeover to cultivate a new following that will support the shrine financially. Particularly in the recent decades, the shrine administration has put forth a variety of initiatives to engage the postmemory generation in its activities, in part, to increase the number of younger supporters, but also as an opportunistic response to the increasingly conservative cultural milieu I have briefly outlined.

Yūshūkan as a museum for peace

Here I turn to the military museum Yūshūkan to examine Yasukuni management's attempts to popularize their revisionist history through museum display. Nowhere is the Yasukuni brand of modern Japanese history more apparent than in Yūshūkan, particularly as a result of the relatively recent renovation in 2002 that was a part of the series of projects executed in commemoration of the shrine's 130th anniversary. The museum's current exhibit narrates the imperialist history of modern Japan as the protection and liberation of the rest of Asia from Western imperialism. Today, in addition to its role as the repository of mementos that belonged to those enshrined at Yasukuni, Yūshūkan promotes itself as an educational facility—more specifically, as an institution that teaches the younger generation the "true history" of modern Japan as a way to promote peace.

[20] Official website, museum catalog, my interview with curator.
[21] Hardacre

The Yūshūkan renovation project, along with other "peace education" initiatives, is managed by the *Hōsan-kai* with an eye for solidifying a new generation of supporters. In today's Japanese society that has long renounced war, highlighting of virtues associated with war death needs creativity. *Hōsan-kai* seems to have picked up hints from other war-related institutions in Japan: a focus on peace. The group's founding objectives hint at the connection between *eirei* worship and peace promotion: "Propagating such knowledge as the spirit of the *eirei* and the vestige of their sacrifice and dedication will contribute to the improvement of the spiritual decline observed today, as it will nurture a sense of gratitude towards the previous generations and will function as an educational role in the reacknowledgment of the traditional way and ethical spirit of our country."[22] Building on the objectives, the fourth clause of the general rules of the group states its goals as: 1) the support and reverence of *eirei*; 2) reverence and cooperation toward commemorative events and operation of Yasukuni Shrine; 3) reverence and cooperation toward various activities and operation for the promotion of national ethics; and 4) research, publication of books and newsletters, and editing of visual material all for the reverence of the *eirei*.[23] Since its inception, *Hōsan-kai* has hosted symposia on the theme of "What it means to live" (an interesting choice of subject matter for an institution that is identified with the glorification of death) and a lecture series inviting speakers with backgrounds ranging from university professors, lawyers, and such conservative journalist-celebrities as Sakurai Yoshiko, to other figures of nationalist interest including the parents of Yokota Megumi, victim of much publicized North Korean abductions in 1964. In addition to the Friends of the Yūshūkan Museum and initiatives for elementary school children, both of which I will briefly discuss below, the *Hōsan-kai* has also opened a youth branch (Asanagi) for those persons between the ages of 18 and 40.[24] The group through its two branches (eastern and western Japan) conducts, in addition to its own lecture series, various organized activities (such as the cleaning of Yasukuni grounds and the Imperial Palace Plaza) that are typically categorized as "voluntary service work (*hōshi katsudō*)."[25] The Yūshūkan renovation, with a focus on education, fits firmly into the objectives of the *Hōsan-kai* along with its other activities.[26]

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[22] *Yasukuni Jinja Sūkei Hōsan-kai setsuritu shui*, http://www.yasukuni.jp/~sukei/page004.html [accessed May 18, 2011].
[23] http://www.yasukuni.jp/~sukei/page010.html [accessed May 18, 2011].
[24] Joining in Asanagi does itself not require a separate fee, as a membership in either *Hōsan-kai* or the Friends of Yūshūkan (depending on the age of the member) is a prerequisite. http://asanagi.com/nyuubunitsuite.html [accessed May 18, 2011].
[25] These kinds of "voluntary service work" was a daily occurrence at key national sites such as the Imperial Palace Plaza, as well as Shinto shrines during the war. See Akiko Takenaka, *The Aesthetics of Mass-Persuasion: War and Architectural Sites in Tokyo, 1868-1945*, Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2004.
[26] Benefits of establishing this group, of course, extends into the financial. Membership to the *Hōsan-kai* requires either an annual fee of 50,000 for a sustaining member or 3,000 yen for a regular member. It is also possible to become a lifelong regular member for a one-time 50,000 yen fee. Members receive privileges including an annual amulet, a monthly newsletter, free entrance to the Yūshūkan Museum, and discounted prices to

The new Yūshūkan, planned with the blessings and support of the *Hōsan-kai*, is markedly different from its past presence both before and after 1945. As I have demonstrated in chapters 4 and 5, Yūshūkan Museum was an integral part of Yasukuni Shrine since its inception in 1882 until September 1945, when it was shut down by the Allied Occupation Forces. The museum building was then leased to the Fukoku Life Insurance Company between 1946 and 1980. (This served as a means of income for Yasukuni Shrine that had become a private religious corporation on February 1, 1946.)[27] In April 1961, Yasukuni reopened an abridged display, "Treasures and articles of the deceased (*Hōbutsu ihin kan*)," using the second floor of what used to be the National Defense Hall (renamed Yasukuni Hall postwar). When the original museum building reopened for exhibition in July 1986, however, the display showed little resemblance to its predecessor.[28] Although utilizing the very same space in the main museum building that, at the time of its completion in 1931, so prominently promoted a Japan that was both modern and grounded in tradition, both cosmopolitan and ultra-nationalist, the newly opened museum was a mere shadow of its glorious past. The first postwar museum was a chronological display of objects associated with Japan's modern wars, but without a coherent narrative.[29] The highlight of the exhibit had shifted from representations of Japan's military might (i.e. spoils of war and weapons utilizing latest technology) to mementos that had belonged to the war dead.[30] The museum boasted an average of over 10,000 visitors per month in the initial years, but by the time I first visited in the summer of 1998, visitors were few and far in between.[31] Inside an ill-lit and rather dusty series of rooms, uniforms, small-scale weapons, and other mementos occupied old-fashioned display cases.

From the beginning of its postwar inception, Yūshūkan's display was set up as a site for learning. According to the first postwar curator Itō Yoshiyuki, the museum was conceived as an education facility meant to encourage the understanding that Yasukuni Shrine is directly associated with the foundation of peace and prosperity of contemporary Japan. Visitors were to acquire adequate information for a "correct understanding (*tadashii ninshiki*) of the gods honored at Yasukuni through the museum exhibits."[32]

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nearby hotels. The sub-groups that target the younger generation also have their own fee and privilege structure.

[27] As was the case with many life insurance companies, Fukoku Seimei used to be a "conscription insurance (*chōhei* hoken)" company until 1945. Fukoku *seimei gojūgo nen shi*.

[28] The opening day was scheduled to coincide with the first day of the *mitama* festival. Itō Yoshiyuki, "Yasukuni Jinja Yūshūkan: Kaikan ichinen han no genjō to kadai," in *Hakubutsukan kenkyū* 23.1 (January 1988), 50.

[29] At the outset, fifteen display rooms contained approximately 3,000 objects. Ōyama Shingo, "Yasukuni Jinja Yūshūkan," in *Gunjishi gaku* 30.1 (June 1994), 96. For a brief description of the museum displays prior to the renovation, see *Yōkoso Yasukuni Jinja e…*

[30] Kinoshita Naoyuki

[31] The number of monthly visitors between July 1986 and November 1987 is available in Itō, 51.

[32] Itō, 51.

When the newly renovated and expanded Yūshūkan opened its doors in 2002, the museum had doubled its exhibit space; the number of rooms increased from fourteen to twenty. The marked change in the exhibit style was the introduction of colorful, large-scaled panels with narrative accounts of the modern Japanese foreign relations complete with charts, maps and photographs. The panels also provide summaries in English.[33] The museum renovation was a large-scale project that involved academics and a professional production company. Researchers of military history at the National Institute for Defense Studies (*Bōeishō Bōei Kenkyūjo*) compiled information to be printed on exhibit panels that provided the historical narrative. Planning and design company Nomura Kōgei took on the spatial production of the museum, following the general direction presented by the shrine priests.[34] The two main themes that the priests presented as focal points around which the exhibit should be developed were the education of Japanese military history of the modern period and the memorializing and honoring of the spirits enshrined. Yasukuni supporters contend that all the political controversies surrounding the shrine stem from a lack of understanding of Japan's modern wars, and thus, it is an important mission for the shrine to educate the visitors with proper history through its museum.[35]

"True history" of Japan at Yūshūkan Museum

What does this "true history" look like? Here I briefly present a walk-through to give a sense of the narrative a museum visitor encounters.[36] A visitor to the new museum enters from a large two-story high glass atrium situated to the south of the symmetrical 1931 building. Immediately inside is the large airy entrance hall that features a refurbished zero fighter plane, a locomotive, and a tank, among other large items. The text describing these objects is telling. For example, the label for the locomotive simply reads "Model C56-31 locomotive." Further information follows in smaller text: "This is a locomotive that was produced in our nation and actively utilized in the "Thai-Burma Railway" that connected Thailand and Burma during the Great East Asian War. In the postwar period, it played an active role in regional development as a part of the Thailand National Railway."[37] The text gives has no indication of why Japan was building a railway in the area, or of the notorious violence Japanese military carried out to the local people and Allied prisoners in its construction. This, of course, is the tone consistent throughout the museum. As writer Zushi Minoru summarizes in his unofficial guide to the museum, the

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[33] The film *Mitama o tsugu mono* also has English subtitles.

[34] Interview with curator Iki Hiroshi, January 28, 2005. Iki, who was chief curator of the museum at the time of the interview, also held the title of deputy priest (*gon negi*) at the shrine. Iki (nor any others who held the position) had received no training as a curator, but rather, had come to the shrine to train as a priest, and was appointed for a limited period to the museum.

[35] Interview with Iki Hiroshi, January 28, 2005.

[36] The description is based on my visits to the museum as well as official and unofficial guidebooks to the museum including…

[37] Text at the time of my visit on March 13, 2011.

text in the exhibit is consistent in its message: all wars conducted in the name of the emperor are just wars.[38]

The exhibit proper begins on the second floor where a visitor arrives via an escalator that overlooks the large-scale exhibits in the entrance hall. The escalator ride experience is that of an ascension during which the visitor is literally lifted up through the airy space towards a light that filters through a large window at the top. The light creates a halo around a small statue that stands in front of a glass panel. The statue is simply titled "Statue of a soldier (*Heishi no zō*).[39] Etched on the glass panel behind it is a poem by 3C B.C. Chinese philosopher Xunzi, which is offered as the description of the museum's namesake: "travel far and learn from noble people in order to become a man of virtue." Next to the exhibit entrance are two theaters, in which films produced by Yasukuni (including *Mitama o tsugu mono* that I started this chapter with) are aired daily (more on this later).

The first two exhibit rooms situate the origin of the Yasukuni narrative in the spirit of the warrior. Room 1, entitled "The spirit of the warrior" features a replica of the marshal sword (*ganshi tō*), used by the emperor's guards in the Heian era. Scrolls with calligraphy of classical poems themed after noble war deaths hang inside glass cases. Particularly of note is the composition by Nara period (710-794) poet Ōtomo no Yakamochi entitled "Umi yuka ba," which became the lyric for one of the most popular military songs during the Asia-Pacific War.[40] If room 1 represents the warrior spirit philosophically, room 2 accomplishes this by objects and narratives from Japan's premodern wars. Featured here are mythical figures such as Emperor Jimmu[41] and Yamato Takeru,[42] as well as historical individuals including Kusunoki Masashige[43] and Oda Nobunaga.[44] Objects displayed are, of course, primarily military-related, as the objective here is to establish the importance of warfare (a civilized and noble one at that) to nation building as a concept that has been an integral part of Japan's history since the ancient times.

In room 3, the narrative jumps to the modern period, beginning with the encroaching of Western powers to Asia. The first wall text depicting the whole of Asia in danger frames all of Japan's modern wars as resistance against Western imperialism for

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[38] Zushi Minoru, *Yasukuni no Yami ni yōkoso: Yasukuni Jinja,Yūshūkan hikōshiki gaido bukku* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyōronsha, 2007), 122.

[39] The sculptor Hinago Jitsuzō's other works include the monumental tower situated in the Heiwadai Park, Miyazaki Prefecture, upon which the infamous word "hakkō ichiu (eight corners of the world under one roof)" is engraved.

[40] "Umi yuka ba" gained popularity through the same venue as the poem "Yasukuni no," which I started the introduction to this book with. While the accompanying music was composed in 1880 in response to a commission by the Imperial Navy, it did not gain popularity outside the military until the song was picked up by the NHK for the national song series. Ogawa Kandai, *"Umi yuka ba" o utatta koto ga arimasu ka* (Tokyo: Kabushiki geisha H and I, 2006).

[41] Jimmu description

[42] Yamato Takeru description.

[43] Kusunoki Masashige description.

[44] Oda Nobunaga description.

the sake of Asia, rather than the reality, in which Japan also aspired to exercise imperialism upon the same territories. The theme of Asia's resistance against the West is consistent throughout the exhibits. In the following rooms, for example, visitors learn that Japan's earlier wars against China and Russia were conducted for the sake of Korea, rather than for Japan's imperial aspirations. The language used is similar to that of the *Tsukuru kai'*s history textbooks. The start of military aggression in China in 1931, for example, was an attempt to support the Chinese Nationalist government in its civil war against the Communist party led by Chiang Kai-shek, not because Japan eyed taking over lands in northern China for its abundant natural resources. The innocuous name China Incident (*Shina Jihen*) is used for the undeclared, all-out war against China triggered by a skirmish between Japanese and Chinese troops at the Marco Polo Bridge outside Beijing on July 7, 1937. Invasion and occupation of cities such as Nanjing "resulted in peace and happiness in the city," and the infamous atrocities in the city that brutally murdered hundreds of thousands are described as "identification of the Chinese troops in civilian disguise."[45]

Since the entire first floor is dedicated to the period that Imperial Japan used to call (and conservatives still refer to as) the Greater East Asia War (*Daitōa sensō*: December 1941-August 1945), the narrative of the second floor extends to the end of the 1930s. Most rooms are comprised of a combination of colorful explanatory panels and a collection of objects ranging from newspaper clippings and other archival documents to uniforms, tools and weapons that used to belong to the deceased. There are two rooms, however, whose curatorial style does not fit in with the others. Room 7 "Panorama Hall of the Russo-Japanese War (*Nichiro sensō panorama kan*)" and Room 9 "Shōkon ceremony grounds (*Shōkon saitei*)" offer a multi-sensory experience complete with background music and lighting effects. Room 7 (Panorama Hall) is loosely modeled after the panorama building, a popular war themed entertainment venue at the beginning of the twentieth century (see chapter 2). Inside the room, the blasting music of "Battleship March (*Gunkan māchi*)" is augmented by a regular insertion of cannon blast sound and a rousing narrative that starts with "And [thus] Japan stood up! (*Nihon wa tachi agatta*)." The visitor enters into the room through a miniature replica of a triumphal arch, a popular commemorative feature of the Russo-Japanese War period. Film clips of battle scenes are projected on the back wall. In front of the filmic representation stand sixteen mini-pillars of translucent glass, on which photographs of major military figures are etched along with their ranking and accomplishments.

Room 9 (Shōkon ceremony grounds) is a quiet contrast from the Panorama Hall. In the center of the dimmed room is a lit up replica of the palanquin used for the *shōkon* ceremony. To one side of the palanquin is a miniature reproduction of the *shōkon* procession: priests carry the palanquin towards the shrine building. Live radio broadcast of the ceremony can be heard in the background. In the glass case along one wall are mementos that the visiting bereaved family members would have received (invitation card, schedule of events, tickets, etc.). Enlarged photographs of families waiting for the

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[45] While historians have come to some basic agreements on what happened in the city of Nanjing in December 1937, depictions of this tragedy varies significantly not only within Japan but also internationally. See, for example, Joshua Fogel ed., *Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*

procession cover other walls.[46] While these two rooms offer a contrasting impression to the visitor, the presentation style is similar, as are the visitors' reactions. Lacking in these two rooms is the aura of authenticity provided by the actual objects, photographs, and documents, which are the strength of the Yūshūkan exhibit.[47] Visitors show markedly less interest in the displays in these two rooms when compared to the others in which numerous objects from the wartime are prominently featured.

Objects, photographs, and documents are key to the narrative presented on the first floor, where first five rooms introduce the historical context (Greater East Asia War 1-5), whereas the last four are dedicated to the "Gods of Yasukuni." The tone that portrays Asia as the victim of Western imperialism continues here: Japan attacked Pearl Harbor because they were under an unreasonable encroachment by the ABCD forces (America, Britain, China, and the Dutch), not because they did not want to accept Allied demands to pull their troops out of China and Southeast Asia. The narrative presented in this section is consistent with that from the previous wars: Japan is fighting for Asia; Japan is a peace-loving nation whose people were willing to sacrifice not just for their own sake but also for the well being of the rest of Asia.

One distinct characteristic of the Greater East Asia War section is the frequency with which focus is placed upon individuals. The first example is the "nine gods" from Pearl Harbor: the young men who charged to their deaths in the midget submarine mission that was to precede the attack from the air.[48] Nine photographs are displayed along with telegrams reporting the success of the mission and newspaper pages with headlines such as "Declaration of war against tyrants America and Britain."[49] Photographs of the fallen are placed throughout the display cases along with mementos such as pieces of clothing, weapons owned, items used at the battlefront, and handwritten letters sent home. Objects such as caps, notebooks, or flags may have little significance if displayed independently. But when presented as a cluster together with the photograph of its deceased owner, along with a short description of his achievements (or description of how his young life came to an abrupt end) and an item that records a personal trace of the dead (handwritten letter, diary, last note, etc.), they create a powerful and emotional narrative that invites the viewer to personally identify with the deceased.

The final rooms, named "Gods of Yasukuni," are meant to provide a moving experience that would become the last and lasting impression for the visitors. Entire walls of each room are completely covered with hundreds of monochrome photographs depicting uniformed faces of the fallen. Each photograph is supplemented by information that is both basic and telling: rank and name (with the suffix "*mikoto*" to signify their god status), date of birth, location of death, and their home prefecture. Although the death date is not provided, their birth years suggest how young they still were when their lives

[46] See chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of the ceremony and associated activities for the visiting family.
[47] The placement of *shōkon* ceremony related documents in Room 9 is obscured by the location hidden behind the palanquin replica as well as the dimmed room.
[48] James Dorsey in *The Culture of Japanese Fascism*
[49] *Yomiuri* newspaper, December 8, 1941, front page.

ended.[50] The rooms also contain glass cases containing belongings of the deceased, and continue to encourage personal identification with the "gods." Among the objects are several dolls of women in kimono. The dolls are donations by family members of the young men who never had the chance to marry. These miniature brides are believed to become wives of the unmarried fallen in the afterlife.[51] In the last "Gods of Yasukuni" room, several wall panel spaces remain open—as if to encourage the already dead to find their way to their final resting place on the walls of Yūshūkan among their fellow gods.[52] Inconspicuously placed among the rows of portraits are three photographs of Class A war criminals including Tōjō Hideki.

The central atrium of the original museum building is still utilized for the display of large-scaled weapons. The itinerary takes the visitor through the atrium between exhibit rooms 18 and 19. (While room 19 is a part of the "Gods of Yasukuni" series, the atmosphere here is markedly different—although photographs and mementos are on display, the focus of the room is the row of high backed chairs lined in front of a desk space along one wall, where visitors are invited to write down their thoughts in the notebooks provided by the museum.) Notable large-scale weapons include *Ōka*, a glider plane equipped with an armor-piercing bomb, and *Kaiten*, a manned torpedo that was used to charge underwater into enemy ships. These weapons are a product of desperation in the final years of the war, when little material was available to manufacture legitimate weapons; when human life was considered to be the only viable replacement for the heavy metals required to build fighter planes and battleships, of which Japan no longer had enough.[53] While accompanying panels only provide the technical specifications of these weapons, the way the viewing experience is framed firmly situates these missions into the Yasukuni ideology: that the men whose mission was to operate these weapons willingly and proudly undertook them. The kind of thought processes that the more educated *tokkō* pilots experienced—their doubts about the war in general, their knowledge that it was impossible for Japan as a nation to have a meaningful outcome from this war, their resolve to go on the mission for their family—find no place in this exhibit.[54]

The "Gods of Yasukuni" rooms and the central atrium displaying the *tokkō* weapons provide an emotional climax to the museum experience set up by the first fifteen rooms. By the time the visitor arrives at these last rooms, they will have seen that Japan has, at least in the modern period, always needed to fight against Western imperialism, not just for the sake of Japan but also, or perhaps more importantly, for the well-being of East and Southeast Asia. In the process, Japan has always followed the path dictated by the spirit of the warrior as presented in the first two exhibit rooms. Early efforts at technological development yielded a series of "successful interventions" towards Asian safety and stability, including the "independence" of Korea and the establishment of a multi-ethnic paradise, which was Manchukuo, the Japanese puppet state in Manchuria.

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[50] Exact date and location of death is not known for many of the war dead, particularly in the latter years of the Asia-Pacific War.
[51] Ellen Schatt-Shneider in *The Culture of Japanese Fascism.*
[52] The process of getting the photos up on the wall.
[53] Note on the model of *fukuryū*.
[54] Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Wadatsumi*

Turning of the tide in the 1940s produced an increasing number of young deaths, representative examples of which were prominently showcased in the "Greater East Asia War" rooms to neatly fit into the narrative of a nation proudly sacrificing for the good of East Asia. In the final rooms the visitor is surrounded by visual testimony, in the form of countless photograph portraits, of the history they had witnessed in the previous rooms. In the central atrium, the visitors encounter the machinery that aided them to their courageous final moments.

The last stop in the museum visit is the gift shop at the corner of the entrance hall. Merchandise available range from plastic model kits of fighter planes and battleships, replica of items from the Japanese military including hats, flags, and pre-packaged food consumed in wartime by military personnel, CDs of battle hymns and other patriotic songs, along with other merchandise and toys from the 1930s and 40s that are not directly related to the war. Also available are reprints of wartime textbooks. The book selection is extensive, ranging from publications by the *Tsukuru kai* and such conservative celebrity figures as Kobayashi Yoshinori, collection of the last words of the *eirei* (*Eirei no kotonoha*), and a wide variety of revisionist history books. The war-themed products here are firmly situated in an atmosphere of nostalgia. Taken in the context of contemporaneous objects such as dolls and tops, the replicas and reprints begin to take on an innocuous quality that invokes a sense of nostalgia for the wartime generation and a fascination with things retro for the younger generation.[55] This quality of nostalgia is a theme I will come back to below.

Cultivating a younger generation of supporters

The renovation initially succeeded in increasing the number of visitors, but interest in the museum plateaued soon thereafter at around 250,000 a year. The generational composition has shifted, however. Prior to the renovation majority of visitors were bereaved family members and war veterans, who had come from faraway prefectures as a part of organized tours for an official worship at the shrine.[56] Visitors to the renovated museum seem to be mostly of the postwar generation. According to Iki Hiroshi, chief curator of Yūsūkan whom I interviewed in 2005, the museum also often receives formal and informal visits from groups of school children. Not surprisingly, Iki emphasized the importance of teaching the history of modern warfare, which is not adequately covered in school education except to relay the message that "Japan did bad things at war."[57]

Yasukuni's desire to cultivate a larger number of supporters from the postwar generation is also apparent in the architectural design of the new museum addition for the 2002 renovation. Unlike the quasi-traditional design of the original structure, the new addition utilizes abundant glass and steel to create a distinctively modern atmosphere. The deliberation process of the new wing involved a comparative analysis of three designs. The first featured an addition clad in the same Imperial Crown Style as the existing building, the second a factory-like design with a brick finish, and the third: the glass and steel structure that was ultimately selected. The design, with no resemblance to any of the existing structures in the Yasukuni compound, was not popular with all the

[55] Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*
[56] Describe *shōden sanpai*.
[57] Interview with Iki Hiroshi, January 28, 2005.

Hōsan-kai constituencies. One member, for example, engaged in a lengthy, written exchange in protest of the selected design with the shrine representatives, who responded by emphasizing the importance of appealing to the younger generation. Yasukuni's Chief of General Affairs (*sōmu buchō*) who drafted the response also noted that the openness of the design allowed glimpses of the exhibits as well as the activities within the museum building, serving as an invitation to passers by.[58] The more compelling reason, however, seems to be the design's potential to showcase the zero fighter plane, prominently placed and easily noticeable from the outside, to entice young men to enter into the building.[59]

The museum also encourages visits of the younger generation by the production and presentation of feature films with narratives that support the Yasukuni discourse, which have been restructured into a present day account (rather than storylines from the 1930s and 40s) so that they may resonate with visitors in their teens and early twenties. On September 1, 2008, Yūshūkan's theater began showings of Yasukuni's newest film production, *Mitama o tsugu mono*. It is a romantic drama that features protagonist Ishibashi Takanobu, an unemployed twenty-five year old college graduate with no particular goal in his life: a role that can resonate with many Japanese of his generation. Takanobu, depicted as an angry and unmotivated young man at the beginning of the film, is particularly irritated with his father whose life revolves around a successful career that sometimes advances at the expense of others. Living in the same household is his paternal grandmother, who had lost her husband and brother in Papua New Guinea in the last years of the Asia-Pacific War, during which she also served as a military nurse. The film thus attempts to represent the stereotypes of the three generations that make up the visitor profile of the museum.

The film follows Takanobu as he encounters Yasukuni and the concept of *eirei* through his girlfriend Manami. War enters very slowly into the narrative, and the viewer is expected to learn and become familiarized with the concept gradually along with the protagonist. Early segments of the film deal more with issues that might interest Takanobu's generation such as friendship, romance, family relations and job prospects. About a third of the way into the narrative, Takanobu begins to apprentice under Manami's uncle Yasaki Masato, who seems to make a living manually roasting coffee beans in tiny batches. Through conversations with Yasaki, Takanobu learns about the origin of the beans (Papua New Guinea), and here both Takanobu and the viewer are alerted to the relationship between coffee beans and the Asia-Pacific War. According to the narrative put forth in the film, coffee production is possible today in Papua New Guinea because Japan had liberated the island from Western imperialism during the Asia-Pacific War. It is through his interactions with Yasaki, who sternly trains him to become a qualified coffee roaster, and Manami, who seems to demonstrate a kind of altruism

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[58] Correspondence between *sūkei hōsankai* member Sakuta Masaaki and Yasukuni Chief of General Affairs, Hanada Tadamasa, dated January 10 and 14, 2000. Correspondence photocopy in possession of the author.

[59] According to Miwa Yūji, who represented the planning company Nomura Kōgei for the Yūshūkan renovation, the glass wall, against which the plane is situated, can open up, connecting the entrance hall to the open space immediately outside. Initial plan to open up the wall and pull out the fighter plane onto the outdoor space, however, was never realized. Miwa Yūji, interview with the author, January 28, 2005.

through her work at an institution for the disabled, that Takanobu begins to foster respect for his grandparents' generation for their sacrificial role in the war. The film connects the lifestyles of Manami (working to help the weak) and Yasaki (continuing to work for the sake of the people of Papua New Guinea that Japan liberated in the past) to the principle of the *eirei*, those young men that had sacrificed their own lives for the good of Japan. In short, these two are living a lifestyle of the *eirei* in today's context. Takanobu ultimately vows to live a selfless life to follow, in concept, the way of the *eirei*. In an interview on Channel Sakura, a conservative satellite television network founded in 2004, director Matsuda Takeyuki discussed his goal through the film as to stress the importance of a selfless relationship with others, as that would allow Japanese to become the kind of people that will be supported by the spirit of the *eirei*.[60] The employment of three generations in the film (grandmother, father, and son) was a way not only to expand viewership to all generations, but also to create a link between Yasukuni and the future generations.[61] The film thus functions an evangelical role for this belief system that centers on a concept that might be described as the way of the *eirei*.

Yasukuni supporters' networks also look to the younger generation. To mark the grand opening of the renovated exhibit, *Hōsan-kai* started through the museum the Association for Friends of Yūshūkan (*Yūshūkan tomo no kai*) that provides incentives and privileges similar to the *Hōsan-kai* at a more affordable membership fee for people twenty-five years or younger.[62] For an annual fee of 1,000 yen (*Hōsan-kai*'s annual fee is 3,000 yen), members gain free entry into the museum, and are also invited to attend symposia, study groups, and nature camps that are run on themes associated with Yasukuni.[63] In 2004, as a part of the Association, Yasukuni started programs for elementary school children to participate in with their parents (who are also members of the postmemory generation). Events for the younger cohort include gatherings for girls' festival (March 3rd), children's day (May 5th), and *tanabata* festival (July 7th). On July 11, the first Sunday after July 7th, approximately 400 parents and children gathered at Yasukuni. The children wrote down their wishes on pieces of paper, which they carried to the main shrine where they received purification and participated in the offering of a prayer for health and academic success. After attaching their prayer papers to large bamboo branches on shrine grounds in accordance with the tanabata festival tradition, the group viewed "Family Concert of Singing Pirate Group (*Utau kaizokudan famirii*

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[60] Japanese Culture Channel Sakura, http://www.ch-sakura.jp/about.html

[61] When Yasukuni initially approached Matsuda, the rough idea for the film was to have an elderly woman walking through the Yūshūkan with her granddaughter, recounting memories of her past experiences that were triggered by the objects on display. Interview with Matsuda Takeyuki, October 8, 2009, http://circle.zoome.jp/matarihosyu/media/495

[62] According to the museum, "the Association for Friends of Yūshūkan was established in order to further strengthen the connection between Yūshūkan and people twenty-five years or younger, so that they may inherit the noble spirits of the *eirei* that sacrificed their precious lives for the sake of their nation, and learn the accurate history of modern Japan. Nishikawa, 45.

[63] Other privileges include the right to check books out at the Yasukuni library, 10% off of purchases at the museum shop and café, and discounts at nearby hotels. http://www.yasukuni.jp/~sukei/page161.html [accessed May 13, 2011]

consāto)" and participated in a quiz rally in the Yūshūkan Museum.[64] The Newsletter of the *Hōsan-kai* concludes the report with wishes that by participating in such events associated with traditional Japanese culture, "the children would learn about the honorable spirits of the *eirei* and the correct modern history of Japan."[65] The relationship between the singing pirates and the honorable spirits of the *eirei* was not apparent in the newsletter.

These new initiatives build upon existing narratives that target the young generation. "Poppo," the white pigeon, is one such example. During a children-parent gathering that took place on February 27, 2011 for celebration of girls' festival (*hina matsuri*), the participants viewed "Poppo-chan visits Yasukuni (*Poppo chan no Yasukuni mairi*)," an introductory film of the shrine designed for a young audience in which Poppo the pigeon introduces the shrine and its associated beliefs using simple yet persuasive language.[66] Poppo represents the approximately 300 white pigeons that are bred in Yasukuni. According to the shrine website, only one out of every ten thousand pigeons is of pure white color—the kind that represents peace—suggesting that these symbols of peace naturally chose Yasukuni grounds as their residence.[67] While the Poppo video was only introduced in recent years, the cartoon white pigeon has been a staple of Yasukuni for many years. Pamphlets available at the shrine feature Poppo explaining the significance of Yasukuni and the gods enshrined in simple language and with phonetic guidance for kanji characters. The pamphlet is presented in a question and answer format with the knowledgeable Poppo responding to children's questions about the history of the shrine, the meaning of the word Yasukuni, and the gods enshrined within. Poppo encourages the young readers to visit Yasukuni in order to demonstrate gratitude for the gods that protected the peace and independence of Japan and also to pledge to become fine beings (*rippa na hito*).[68] Here again, the value of a good person is equated to the demonstration of appreciation for the *eirei*.

The Poppo pamphlet is currently also available in a version that lists English, Chinese, and Hangul. The translation does not always accurately reflect the Japanese version, however. The Japanese pamphlet, for example, refers to the war criminals as "one thousand and several hundred people whose lives were mercilessly taken when they were unilaterally accused as war criminals in the perfunctory trial conducted by the Allied forces that fought with Japan" that the Yasukuni Shrine refers to as "Showa

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[64] One objective of this quiz rally is to get children, who might otherwise be turned off by the wordy panels, into the museum and develop interest in the material displayed. Interview with Iki Hiroshi, January 28, 2005.

[65] *Sūkei hōsankai dayori* 106, August 2010, "Heisei 22 nen tanabata matsuri oyako no tsudoi hōkoku," http://www.yasukuni.jp/~sukei/page161.html [accessed May 13, 2011]

[66] The objective of these children's events seems to be two fold: to cultivate followers at a very young age, and to encourage the parents (typically in ther 30s and 40s) to participate in Yasukuni events. Interview with Iki Hiroshi, January 28, 1005. pamphlet, article about Poppo-chan.

[67] http://www.yasukuni.or.jp/precincts/dovehouse.html [accessed May 14, 2011]

[68] "Yasukuni daihyakka: watakushi tachi no Yasukuni Jinja," pamphlet obtained at Yasukuni on June 1, 2008 [check date].

martyrs (*Shōwa junansha*)."[69] The English version, however, merely refers to them as "people who were labeled war criminals and executed after having been tried by the Allies." Similar inaccuracies have been pointed out in the museum exhibit text as well.[70]

Conflating the traditional and the ideological: the *Mitama matsuri*

Ref: Tokoro Isao, "Yasukuni Jinja mitama matsuri no seiritsu to hatten," *Meiji Seitoku kinen gakkai kiyō* 44 (November 2007), 204-225.

The grand opening of the newly renovated Yūshūkan took place on July 13, 2002 to coincide with a major annual event at Yasukuni: the *Mitama matsuri* (festival), which takes place for four days from July 13. Here again, narratives of the past are revised so as to seamlessly tie into the present and connect to the future. At first glance, *Mitama matsuri* is a typical summer shrine festival. Over 200 vendor stalls that sell snacks and trinkets line the approach to the shrine, barkers stand in front of old-fashioned freak show huts inviting visitors to enter, and people clad in summer kimono engage in the traditional *bon* dance around the wooden stage that enclose the Ōmura statue. Some 300,000 people visit the shrine for the festival each year.[71] The festivities take place in an atmosphere that is markedly different from the politically charged one that would take place only one month later on August 15, the day when Japan acknowledges the anniversary of its defeat in Asia-Pacific War. At night, the shrine is filled with young couples that stroll up and down the approach way brightly lit by rows of 30,000 yellow votive lanterns,[72] stopping every now and then to check out the vender stalls. Approximately fifty kinds of shows, both traditional and contemporary, take place on the Noh stage in the shrine grounds during the festival days. Little indication of militarism is present, save for some elderly men (presumably veterans) in military uniforms and occasional singing of war songs.

Mitama matsuri is a postwar invention. It began in 1947 at the initiative of a young priest Sakamoto Sadao, who approached the renowned ethnologist Yanagita Kunio with the idea of reviving the traditional festival to honor the ancestral spirits at Yasukuni. According to an official publication by the shrine, Yanagita wholeheartedly agreed, noting that "the memorialization of the *mitama* is an extremely important activity that

[69] The Allied forces are explained in parenthesis as "America, Britain, Dutch, and China," echoing the ABCD powers that, according to the Yūshūkan narrative, surrounded and pressured Japan to wage war against the United States.

[70] Content that might provoke controversy is often omitted from the translation. For example… (Judge Pal statement not included in the English, Chinese, Hangul version of the daihyakka)

[71] *Ichigaya keizai shinbun*, July 14, 2010. http://ichigaya.keizai.biz/headline/892/ accessed May 25, 2011.

[72] These lanterns, which function as an act of appreciation for the *eirei* and offering of prayer for a peaceful world, are a major source of income for the shrine. The cost to have a lantern placed on the shrine is 12,000 yen for a large size and 3,000 yen for a small. For more substantial prices of 200,000 yen (large) and 70,000 yen (small) one can arrange to have a lantern hung during the festival every year. http://www.yasukuni.or.jp/schedule/mitama.html accessed June 14, 2011.

would contribute to world peace.[73] The festival should be joyful and refined (*hanayaka de fūryū*).” The publication continues:

> With the support of bereaved family members and veterans associations, the first *Mitama matsuri*, which took place for four days from July 13 in the 22nd year of Showa (1947), was a huge success. The festival, which takes place under bright lantern lights, increased in scale every year and is now reminiscent of the *shōkon* festivals from the earlier years that boasted horse races and fireworks.[74]

As I noted in chapter 2, *matsuri* occupies a central place in the propagation of Shinto. It is reasonable then that the postwar Yasukuni has taken advantage of this relationship to promote its refurbished image as an institution for peace. Just as the festivities succeeded in attracting Tokyoites to the newly established Tokyo Shōkonsha in 1869, *Mitama matsuri* contributed to the postwar reinvention of Yasukuni from a military memorial to an institution for peace.

A key difference between the earlier festivals (that I have discussed in chapters 2 and 3) and *Mitama matsuri* is the use of space. Unlike the horse races and victory celebrations that transformed the outer garden into a park, *Mitama matsuri* maintains the spatial practice of a Shinto shrine. Regardless of the attractions situated along the approach and throughout the shrine grounds, the intended traffic is linear. A typical visit to the festival involves a stroll through the main *torii* gate and up the approach with the worship hall as the destination—a pattern of traffic identical with a shrine visitor at non-festival times, whose main objective is to offer a prayer to the gods. After paying tribute at the worship hall the festival-goer might wander further into the shrine grounds to take in the entertainment at the Noh stage or visit the Yūshūkan museum, but will most likely return via the main approach and through the *torii* gate—just like a visitor would on a day without special events. This spatial practice, which reinforces the festival-goer’s acknowledgment of the space as a Shinto shrine (or a religious institution at the least), emphasizes the their perception of the site as an institution for peace where one’s participatory role is to offer prayer to gods that protect the nation.[75] Through their own spatial practice, the festival-goers become participants in the Yasukuni discourse by creating a spectacle in which they, at least on the surface, act in compliance with the recommended visit pattern that involves a prayer for peace at the worship hall, preferably in the Shinto style (bow twice, clap hands twice, and bow once). And by observing and being observed by others that use the space in a similar manner, the visitors reinforce, through a kind of mutual surveillance, the innocuous presence of the site as an institution

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[73] Yanagita seems to have become sympathetic to the discourse, in a lecture he presented to Tokyo University students in fall of 1941, that Japanese *matsuri* made him reconsider his objection to the Japanese government’s stance that Shinto was not a religion. In the lecture, he argued that worship of god is the essence of Japanese life, and at the same time, of Japanese politics. Yanagita Kunio, “Nihon no matsuri,” in *Yanagita Kunio Zenshū* vol. 13 (Tokyo: Chikuma bunko, 1990), 236-7.

[74] Yasukuni no inori henshū iinkai, *Yasukuni no inori* (Tokyo: Sankei shinbun nyūsu sābisu, YEAR), 174.

[75] Lefebvre

for peace that Yasukuni supporters wish to endorse.[76] In this system of mutual surveillance, it does not matter what the objective of the visit is, since, on the surface, they are all performing the formal practice expected at a Shinto shrine (linear traffic pattern and properly offering prayer at the worship hall).[77]

Entertainments offered during the festival also promotes the Yasukuni ideology by its repackaging that conflates ideology with nostalgia. This newly invented festival maintains an impression of being a traditional event through offering the kinds of attractions that one associates with summer festivals at typical Shinto shrines. Some of the seemingly traditional venues also harken back to the earlier days of Yasukuni Shrine. For example, *mitama matsuri* is well known for its horror house (*misemono goya*), which is reminiscent of the vulgar entertainment that attracted many Tokyoites in its early history.[78] Thus Yasukuni's presence, at least during these four summer nights, has, to the popular mind, little in common with the news items that will follow in less than a month fueling tension between Japan and the rest of East Asia, as well as among the various political constituencies within Japan.

"Yasukuni view of history" in popular culture

Yasukuni and Yūshūkan thus successfully participates in and also, at the same time, advances the conservative groups' attempts to rebuild an idealized past for the postmemory generation. But they are not the only venues that propagate these messages. While Yūshūkan is now a private institution, numerous exhibit facilities run by public funds participate in the narrating of a revisionist history through the display of objects. Of over 200 facilities that exhibit some aspect of the Asia-Pacific War in Japan, more than half are managed by the Self Defense Forces.[79] The Army, Navy and Air Force divisions of the SDF own and operate a total of 130 so-called Public Relations Facilities (*kōhō shisetsu*), usually inside their bases located throughout Japan.[80] Like other Japanese museums, their exhibits focus on the Asia-Pacific War. The most popular SDF facilities include "Sail Tower" at the Sasebo base in Nagasaki and the newest: the PR Center in Asaka City, Saitama, that opened in 2002, which offers virtual and actual experiences to its visitors in forms of flight and firing simulators, a "battle dress uniform" corner where visitors can try on military attire, and helicopters, tanks and other vehicles on which

[76] Michele Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

[77] In March 2009, Okinawan newspaper *Ryūkyū shinpō* published a series on Yasukuni enshrinement in thirteen installments. The beginning of the first installment, which portrayed a typical scene at Yasukuni Shrine included the description of the site as "even evoking a sense of tranquility (*heiwa sae kanji saseru*)." "Soko ni hisomu mono: Okinawa to Yasukuni, engohō 1," *Ryūkyū shinpō*, March 1, 2009, morning edition, p.31.

[78] There is only one other shrine in Tokyo where a *misemono goya* is showcased on a regular bases: the Hanazono Shrine in Shinjuku. Iwata Shigenori, *"Ohaka" no tanjō: shisha saishi no minzokushi* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2006), 180.

[79] Laura Hein and Akiko Takenaka, "Exhibiting World War II in Japan and the United States," in *Pacific Historical Review*

[80] Bōei hakusho 12 nendo-ban, shiryō-hen: militia no kōhō shisetsu nado. http://jda-clearing.jda.go.jp/hakusho_data/2000/w2000_00.html. Accessed May 27, 2005.

visitors selected by lotteries are invited to ride.[81] These facilities promote a narrative that creates a seamless tie between the pre-Asia-Pacific War military and the contemporary SDF branches. For example in a film aired in the "Sail Tower" operated by the Navy branch, the narrator sets the tone by noting that "the Maritime branch of the Self Defense Forces protect our nation just as Katsu Kaishū protected the seas of Japan in the years leading up to the Meiji Restoration," thus skipping clear over the problematic Asia-Pacific War years.[82]

These SDF establishments are driven by a clear objective: to encourage young visitors to choose a career in one of their branches. But these are not the only exhibit facilities operated with public funds that promote a conservative narrative of the war years with a particular focus on suffering and sacrifice of the Japanese. Another driving force behind the exhibiting of conservative narratives is the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (which I talked about in the previous chapter regarding their collaboration in Yasukuni enshrinement) that has, in recent years, established several exhibit spaces on some aspect of the Asia-Pacific War. Each of their venues highlights particular interest groups that have demanded reparations to the Ministry for their wartime suffering. For example, the Showa Hall (Shōwakan, 1999), located on a site formerly owned by Yasukuni (where Panorama Hall used to stand in the early 20th Century), narrates the suffering experienced by the so-called "war orphans (*sensō iji*)," those Japanese who lost their fathers at war.[83] On the 48th floor of a skyscraper in Western Shinjuku is the Exhibit Hall for the Commemoration of Peace (Heiwa Kinen Tenji Shiryōkan, 2000), which displays the sufferings of three interest groups: veterans who did not qualify for pensions (*onkyū kekkaku sha*), returnees from Japan's former colonies (*hikiage sha*), and Japanese soldiers who were interned by the Soviet Union after the war.[84] Shōkei Hall (2006), also within walking distance from Yasukuni, commemorates servicemen who were wounded or fell sick during the war.[85] These facilities were all established as an indirect response

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[81] Content and character of the SDF museums are diverse. Kanoya Museum, for example, has a memorial room with photographs, letters and belongings of the Kamikaze pilots, and the exhibits focus on the history of warplanes. Sail Tower, on the other hand, features commanders of the base and battleships. Harada Keiichi, "Sensō to heiwa no shiryō ni tsuite: Jieitai gokoku jinja no shiryōkan tanbō-ki," Kikan sensō sekinin 14 (Winter 1996): 15-21.

[82] Date of visit (May 22, 2005)

[83] For a detailed analysis of the exhibits, see Kerry Smith, "The Shōwa Hall: Memorializing Japan's War at Home," in *The Public Historian* 24.4 (Fall 2002), 35-64. An overview of the exhibit hall's difficult path to completion is provided in Ellen Hammond...

[84] Most soldiers drafted after 1943, and hence experienced the most brutal period of the war, do not qualify for pension. At the end of the war, 7.5 million veterans did not meet the qualifications. Curator Furudate Yutaka, oral history interview with the author, January 30, 2005. The section on those who did not qualify for pensions has since been renamed as "soldiers' narratives."

[85] The Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare undertook the establishment of this exhibit hall in response to a 1996 demand from the Japan Association of Disabled Veterans (Nihon Shōi Gunjin Kai) to preserve and relay their suffering. For a brief history of its

by the Ministry to demands by interest groups that the Japanese government acknowledge and make reparations for their suffering. As state institutions that must recognize the difficulties experienced by the Japanese at war, their exhibits cannot include content that might offend various constituencies including the groups represented in particular, but also the Japanese taxpayers in general. Attention to international visitors is also required. As a result, the exhibits have been streamlined to omit the kind of topics that might potentially be problematic.

Notable absences common to all three exhibits are the enemy (both Asia outside Japan and the Allies in the World War II phase of the long war) and the Japanese state. Showa Hall, for example, narrates the homefront experience from 1935 to the end of the war and during the recovery period (1945-1955) through the display of objects including documents, household items, and photographs. The Shinjuku exhibit and Shōkei Hall also cover the same themes (suffering, loss, and perseverance of members of the interest groups) utilizing objects and oral history narratives with little reference to why or against whom the war was being fought. The official aim of the exhibits is the acknowledgment of suffering experienced by the interest group. And yet, the use of public funds necessitates the presentation of a narrative that would not offend the general public. The focus on the suffering of the interest group as the victim allows war experiences to be narrated without touching upon potentially controversial topics that are associated with injustice and responsibility.[86] The fact that these exhibit halls do not purport to be museums of the Asia-Pacific War, but rather, of these particular groups of people, allow the content to be devoid of a larger context that is the long war.

In a manner similar to the Yūshūkan gift shop and *Mitama matsuri*, nostalgia obfuscates potentially ideological content in these exhibits. A common occurrence at Showa Hall in its early years was that of elderly (and typically female) visitors carefully observing the household items on display and noting their familiarity with fondness (the word typically used is *natsukashii*). For these women, the objects are reminders of their personal history, which happened to take place during a time when Japan was at war.[87] Their identification with the objects allows them to place their lives within the official narrative presented through the exhibit. By participating in the official narrative, they are

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inception as well as a description of the exhibits, see Ueno Masumi, "Shōkei kan (Senshō byōsha shiryō kan)," in *Gunji shi gaku* 43:3,4 (March 2008), 510-514.

[86] A focus on a narrow subject matter with limited context is a common strategy employed for the exhibiting of historical events while avoiding controversy. One notable example of this tactic took place in the United States for the Enola Gay exhibit mounted at the National Museum of Air and Space in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. Edward Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt eds., *History Wars: The Enola Gay and other battles for the American Past* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996); Kai Bird and Lawrence Lifschultz eds., *Hiroshima's Shadow (Writings on the denial of history and the Smithsonian Controversy)* (CITY: Pamphleteer's Press, 1998); Laura Hein and Akiko Takenaka, "Exhibiting World War II in Japan and the United States since 1995," in *Pacific Historical Review* 76.1 (February 2007), 61-94.

[87] According to curator Watanabe Kazuhiro, evocation of nostalgia was one of the goals of the exhibit. The hope of the planners was to console the "war orphans" through nostalgia. Watanabe, oral history interview with the author, January 26, 2005.

enabling complicity with (and also providing a reinforcement of) Showa Hall's storyline in which Japanese people are presented as a victim of an unspecified perpetrator.

The nostalgia factor operates differently for the postwar generation, which in part is influenced by the staff's curatorial technique. The "curator" at most of these smaller scaled war-themed facilities has not received professional training to manage museum exhibits.[88] Iguchi Kazuki, historian and director of Kyoto Prefectural Library and Archives (*Kyōto furitsu sōgō shiryō kan*), has pointed out that this lack of training results in instances where the objects are not displayed in ways that would allow them to convey adequate information. One example he has highlighted is the *akagami* (draft paper), a ubiquitous presence in war-themed exhibits.[89] A typical display would showcase, along with other similar themed objects such as a banner congratulating deployment or *sen nin bari*,[90] the front side of the paper with a brief text noting what the paper meant (the man who received it had to report to duty), but little else. The reverse side of the paper, on which instructions as to what one must do upon receipt were printed, is typically not shown. Also missing is information about the formal processes through which the recipient was selected and how the notice was delivered. As such, the display presents the impression that these notices just appeared one day (from where?), and men who received them left (to where?). Here again, the state and the enemy are rendered nonexistent. Without the additional information, the significance of these objects to the postwar generation viewer is limited to their age value. To the postwar generation viewer, the objects have a place in a museum setting because they are old objects; they have little meaning beyond the fact that they were in use long before the viewer was born. The effect of such an exhibit then is an emphasis on the distance between the present day and the war. The nature of the time period in question (the war years) has little relevance to the postwar generation viewer. While the key goal of these exhibits is to relay to the future generations the suffering and sacrifice endured by the Japanese at war, the curatorial style that focuses on the victim ironically reinforces the passage of time between the subject matter on display and the viewer.

Competing narratives

The kind of history presented at Yūshūkan and museums operated by the Self Defense Forces, as well as in the recent spate of conservatism in popular culture, is not the only

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[88] Large scaled museums, including Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and Kyoto Museum for World Peace, have curatorial staff with postgraduate training. This was not always the case, however. The Associate Chief of the curatorial division at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in 2005, for example, was a public servant who had, a few years earlier, been reassigned from the division of motor vehicles of the city. Aizawa Michie, interview with the author, February 1, 2005.

[89] Iguchi Kazuki, "Gendaishi kenkyū to tenji: sensō tenji o chūshin ni" in *Rekishi hyōron* 256 (February 1994), 38-47.

[90] The term *sen nin bari* literary means "a thousand people's stitches." It was a piece of clothing (typically a sash or a vest) upon which women stitched a knot each. Wearing this piece of clothing was believed to prevent getting killed by a bullet. Wives and mothers of deployed men standing on street corners asking for passers-by to contribute a stitch was a typical scene in wartime Japan.

scenario that targets the postmemory generation. Many public museums were built as a result of citizen's movements to preserve home front memory of the final years of the Asia-Pacific War, when Japanese cities were under constant attacks by Allied air raids. Attempts to preserve memories of the war years began almost at the same time as Japan's defeat. Earliest examples include literary representations of experiences on the battlefront by authors such as Umezaki Haruo, Noma Hiroshi, and Ōoka Shōhei.[91] Home front experiences, on the other hand, were generally not represented until decades after the war. One milestone year was 1970, when Japan commemorated the 25th anniversary of its defeat.[92] *Asahi* newspaper published a series "Tōkyō hibaku ki," which depicted Tokyo residents' experiences under the air raids.[93] On August 5, 1970, writers Arima Yoshinori and Saotome Kastumoto, along with former police photographer Ishikawa Kōyō and other air raid survivors, established the Association to Record the Tokyo Air Raids (Tōkyō kūshū o kiroku suru kai) with the blessing of then Tokyo governor Minobe Ryōkichi, himself an air raid survivor. While the group quickly published a five-volume collection of records and memories from March 1945 (*Tōkyō dai kūshū sensai shi*, 1974) in addition to their attempts to establish a museum devoted to this particular tragedy, the museum was not completed until March 2002 due to economic and political difficulties.[94] In the meantime, however, the Tokyo initiative inspired other prefectures to begin compiling memories of their own air raid experiences. The attempts to record local air raid experiences took two methods: publication of oral history narratives, and the display of tangible objects that survived the raids. In the 1970s and 80s, the display efforts took the form of temporary exhibits that often took place in the month of August or on the anniversary of the local air raids.[95] Some of these groups turned their exhibits into an annual event that gradually increased in scale, while at the same time, worked with their local administration to establish a permanent exhibit dedicated to the local air raid experience. Successful outcomes include Peace Osaka (1991) and Shizuoka Peace Resource Center (Shizuoka heiwa shiryō sentā, 1992).[96]

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[91] Representative works include Umezaki, *Sakurajima* (1946), Noma, *Shinkū chitai* (1952), and Ōoka, *Furōki* (1948) and *Nobi* (1952).

[92] On the time-lag between 1945 and the start of memory work:

Dower in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*

Sebald, *On the Natural history of destruction*

[93] Reprinted as Asahi shinbunsha, *Tokyo hibaku ki* (1971).

[94] For the lengthy process of the establishment of The Center of the Tokyo Air Raid and War Damages see Cary Karacas, *Tokyo From the Fire: War, Occupation, and the Remaking of a Metropolis*, doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 2006.

[95] Saitō Hideo, "Kūshū o kiroku suru undō," in ED, *Nihon no kūshū* vol. 10

[96] 1990s was a decade often dubbed as the period of "museum boom," during which numerous museums, dedicated to both art and history, opened throughout Japan. Most of these museums were planned during the period of bubble economy. Some local groups succeeded in the collection of memories and objects but never amassed enough funds to open a physical museum. Their solution has been to create a virtual museum with hopes to one day achieve their goal. Examples include: Shiga Ken bācharu heiwa kinenkan (Shiga Prefecture Virtual Peace Commemorative Hall), http://www.pref.shiga.jp/heiwa/;

These museums that developed out of citizens movements attempt to critically engage with the issue of war responsibility. The exhibits are consistent that Japan's military engagements in East and Southeast Asia, as well as Japanese treatment of Allied prisoners, constituted numerous war crimes. At the same time, they view the wartime Japanese government as the culprit for the suffering and loss experienced by the residents during the air raids. Peace Osaka (Osaka International Peace Center), which opened in a corner of the Osaka Castle Park in September 1991, has been the primary target of right wing attacks due to its exhibit that highlight Japan's aggression in China.[97] The main stated objective of this museum is to educate contemporary local residents about the approximately fifty American air-raid attacks that the city suffered during the last years of the war.[98] In order to explain why the city was attacked so many times, the planners agreed on an exhibit that portrayed Japan not only as victim but also as aggressor: that while the air-raids and the atomic bombs caused tremendous suffering, the war had happened because of Japan's assaults in Asia. The exhibit also explained that Osaka Castle Park, in the heart of the city, was used as a munitions factory during the war, acknowledging that Osaka had been a military as well as a civilian target, potentially justifying the American bombardment. The section on the Asia-Pacific War discusses such Japanese actions as the bombing of Chongqing and the Nanjing Massacre, for which Japanese commanders were later convicted of war crimes at the Tokyo Tribunal, and also other atrocities for which they were not prosecuted, such as the activities of the biowarfare Unit 731. Other local museums, including those in Kawasaki and Saitama address Japan's role in the Asia-Pacific War as the aggressor. The new renovations at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum (1994) and Nagasaki Prefectural Peace Museum (1996) incorporated narratives that explained why those cities were targeted for the atomic bomb.[99]

To me, these museums that acknowledge war crimes committed by the Japanese state only reinforce the victims' narrative already held by the viewers. The narratives presented consistently fault the Japanese wartime state as the sole perpetrator of all war crimes committed internationally. More importantly, by presenting a parallel narrative that highlights the suffering and loss experienced by the local residents as a result of Allied bombing, the exhibits as a whole also suggest that it was the Japanese state that caused tremendous suffering and loss not only to its wartime foes, but also to the Japanese people.[100] Here again, the drive to set a clear distinction between the victim and

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and Intānetto sensō shiryō ten (Internet war resource exhibit) of Nagoya City, http://www.pref.aichi.jp/kenmin-soumu/chosakai/ [both accessed May 14, 2011].

[97] Laura Hein and Akiko Takenaka, "Exhibiting World War II…"

Yūshūkan's display has not been exempt from such controversy. As a result of international criticism, the exhibit opened on January 1, 2007 (after a brief closure?) with a slightly revised narrative that the shrine staff and the consultants deemed less offensive. Source.

[98] Over 15,000 people died in these raids, including one on August 14, 1945, and 344,000 homes were destroyed.

[99] Articles on controversies over Hiroshima and Nagasaki exhibits.

[100] Similar trend can be seen in publications that critique Yasukuni and Yūshūkan. For example, the publication *Field Work: Yasukuni Jinja, Yūshūkan* edited by Tokyo no

perpetrator roles, absolves all except for the top leaders (in both civilian and military roles) from any responsibility associated with the Asia-Pacific War.

The main objective of these local air raid museums is also to preserve and relay memories of wartime experiences to the future generation. As such, they must grapple with the same issue as such facilities as the Yūshūkan museum: how to create the past relevant for today's youth, and how to connect the past to the future. The tactic employed is typically seen in the final segment of the exhibits, which deals with a peaceful future. In most museums, this section has an atmosphere markedly different from the dark and oppressive quality of the rooms depicting the air-raid experiences. In Peace Osaka, for example, this room, which is brightly lit up, addresses ongoing global conflicts focused on, but not limited to, warfare. Topics introduced in this room include dangers of nuclear warfare and environmental degradation. These are important topics to address, and yet, in the context of the entire exhibit, the narrative framework is similar to one presented at Yūshūkan only without the presence of the *eirei*. Witness all the suffering we Japanese have experienced as a result of war, the exhibits call out. Let this be a lesson to you; we should never wage war because this is what will result from it. Missing from the discourse are important questions such as: How did we allow this tragedy to happen? What can we do differently the next time?

Victims, perpetrators, responsibility

The significance of such transmission and transformation of memory in the Japanese case is manifold. The defeat in 1945, for Japan, was a conclusion to a military conflict that had continued for a total of fifteen years and resulted in a loss of approximately 2.5 million lives both military and civilian. The massive loss of lives and other valuable resources has been compounded by Japan's defeat as well as difficulties associated with the allocation of accountability. Ongoing debates in the postwar decades have not yet reached a consensus as to who the responsible party was (the emperor, the Japanese government, or the people at large?), or how to deal with the issues of reparation (who was the victim? The Japanese state, the Japanese people, East Asian nations that Japan invaded?).

Senseki o Aruku Kai (Tokyo War Sites Exploration Group) notes that the Yūshūkan exhibit fails to address the Japanese state's responsibility for dragging Japanese people into a mistaken war (*ayamatta sensō ni kokumin o maki konda sekinin*). Tokyo no Senseki o Aruku Kai, *Field Work*, 46.

Regional air-raid memory museums are not the only venues for Japanese state as the perpetrator discourse. Kyoto Museum for World Peace at Ritsumeikan University, for example, places its focus on war responsibility and highlights Japan's aggressions in China in its exhibit of Japan's fifteen-year war. Since its inception in 1992, the museum has worked comprehensively on peace education through not only its exhibits but also with a substantial focus on research and outreach education. More recently, in March 2010, the National Museum of Japanese History opened a new section in its permanent exhibit: "Permanent Exhibit Room 6: The Contemporary World, Part 1." The kind of investment the museum allocated towards producing this new unit is apparent from not only the amount of research and collection involved in creating the exhibit itself but also the thought processes that accompanied curatorial decision-making.

Postmemory generation in Japan has inherited two types of "past" to overcome. The first past is similar to the Holocaust postmemory experience: the suffering and losses of their parents' generation that have become an integral part of the postmemory generation through oral history narratives, popular culture, and education. This is the absent trauma that the postmemory generation needs to rebuild for working through. But this rebuilding process is complicated in Japan through the presence of another kind of a past that needs to be overcome: that of war responsibility. The survivor generation—those that lived through the war—attempted to evade this issue by casting blame on the wartime government and the military. According to their narrative that casts a stark distinction between the victim and the perpetrator, the Japanese people were the victims of their own government, and thus bear no responsibility for the crimes committed during war. The lack of sufficient war reparations to the rest of Asia and the resulting international tension has left the postwar generation with the feeling that they are somehow (and often unfairly) responsible for the crimes committed by the previous generation. As such, the primary trauma for this generation is not the experience of the war itself, or even of growing up surrounded by the experiences of the previous generation, but rather, is that of living in the never-ending postwar of Japan's defeat, and of having been burdened with the task of repairing past injustices.

One response to this inherited responsibility is the argument against the need to be accountable for something that happened before they were born. One public example of this school of thought is a 1995 comment by Takaichi Sanae, then a member of the Lower House. Takaichi argued that she was under no obligation to contemplate on (*hansei suru*) Japan's war responsibility, since she was not even alive at the time.[101] Takaichi's statement drew a variety of responses. Liberal media, including *Asahi* newspaper, condemned her point as woeful (*totemo kanashii*).[102] At the same time, many Japanese from her generation—including those who acknowledge Japan's wartime crimes—admitted to holding similar sentiments.[103] This latter response suggests a trend more complex than a generation that is refusing to bear responsibility for something that had happened before they were born. Those that do acknowledge Japan's war crimes feel that the Japanese state has an obligation to pay for their wartime injustices, but feel no need to take responsibility for the actions themselves.

Many claim exemption from war responsibility since they were never participants in the process of making judgments or able to take actions during the war years in question. In response to these kinds of denials, some scholars have introduced the concept of "postwar responsibility"—the need to bear responsibility not just to Japan's crimes committed during the fifteen-year war, but also to the fact that war reparations have not been dealt with in a sufficient manner in the decades after the war: the years that the postmemory generation has lived through.[104] But the kind of narrative that has been

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[101] *Nihon keizai shinbun*, March 17, 1995.
[102] *Asahi shinbun*, March 18, 1995.
[103] "Editorial," *Kikan sensō sekinin kenkyū* no. 11, Spring, 1996, PAGE.
[104] Awaya Kentarō et al., *Sensō sekinin, sengo sekinin: Nihon to Doitsu wa dō chigau ka* (Tokyo: Asahi sensho, 1994), Miyazaki Tetsuya ed., *Bokura no "shinryaku sensō": mukashi atta ano sensō o dō kangaetara yoi no ka* (Tokyo: Yōsensha, 1995), Taguchi

created for the postmemory generation—a narrative where the wartime is already in the past; a narrative where all Japanese (with the exception of those who were at the top levels of the political and military systems) were victims—does not give us a compelling reason to engage with the need to make reparations for past injustices. War responsibility thus remains an ongoing problem for Japan and the Japanese.

The kind of revisionist history that I have introduced through Yasukuni and Yūshūkan absolves the postmemory generation from war responsibility (since there was no crimes or wrong doings to account for in the first place). Following LaCapra's argument, the postmemory generation in Japan has recreated a past so that they may convert their absences into losses—something that the Holocaust postmemorial generation has also been conducting. But in the case of Japan, the past that has been recreated is structured in a way that absolves Japan from any kind of responsibility for its actions in the 30s and 40s. In this revisionist narrative, the past does not require the second kind of overcoming (in the form of reparations). In this scenario, Japan has no obligation to address the issue because it never existed in the first place. The revisionist scenario satisfies the need to convert the absence to a loss by the rebuilding of something lost, but at the same time, allows a political reinterpretation of the past to fill the void left by the absence of the past, absolving the postwar generation of responsibilities for deeds committed by their nation before they were born. The distinction between the victim and the perpetrator continues to be reinforced by the revisionist history that is in turn fueled precisely by that distinction.

Hiroshi, *Sengo sedai no sensō seknin* (Tokyo: Kino hana sha, 1996), Takahashi Tetsuya, *Sengo sekinin ron* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2005).