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JAMES REILLY

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*Remember History, Not Hatred: Collective Remembrance of China's War of Resistance to Japan**

JAMES REILLY

The University of Sydney, Department of Government and International Relations, Merewether Building (H04), New South Wales 2006, Australia, Email: james.reilly@sydney.edu.au

Abstract

Chinese leaders have repeatedly insisted upon the contemporary relevance of the 'War of Resistance to Japan' (1937–1945). However, the content of the official history of the war and the lessons drawn from it have changed dramatically from 1949 through 2010. This paper begins by reviewing theories of collective remembrance and then covers four historical periods: China's 'benevolent amnesia' on Japan's wartime atrocities before 1982; China's patriotic education campaign from the mid-1980s; the rise of history activism in China in the late 1990s; and the post-2005 reversal in official rhetoric on Japan and the wartime past. It concludes that, while the party-state retains an impressive capacity to shape the narratives of critical periods of modern Chinese history, Chinese leaders are likely to find themselves increasingly constrained by domestic forces and by external events beyond their control.

Introduction

前事不忘　　后事之师

'The past, if not forgotten, is a guide to the future'.[1]

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[1] Wang, S. (1992) Zhan Guo Ce Quan Yi [Complete Translation of Stratagems of the Warring States], Guizhou People's Press, Guizhou, p. 34.

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On the evening of 27 September, 1972, after an intense three days of negotiations on normalizing diplomatic relations, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai's toast to Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei ended with a poignant reminder:

> Japanese militarists invaded China, bringing great disaster to the Chinese people, as well as deep suffering to Japanese people. The past, if not forgotten, is a guide to the future: this experience and lesson we should resolutely remember.[2]

Zhou's use of this Zhou Dynasty aphorism quickly emerged as the lodestar for Chinese rhetoric on the wartime past. Chinese President Jiang Zemin wielded the same phrase as a veiled warning against a resumption of Japanese militarism during his contentious visit to Japan in 1998. A decade later, Premier Wen Jiabao repeated Zhou's wording in his historic speech at the Japanese Diet, this time clarifying that 'by stressing the importance of drawing the lessons from history, we do not mean to perpetuate hatred. Rather, we want to secure a better future for our relations'.[3]

While Chinese leaders have repeatedly insisted upon the contemporary relevance of the War of Resistance to Japan (*kangri zhanzheng*, 1937–1945), the content of the official history of the war and the lessons they draw from it have changed dramatically over the past half-century. In revising official narratives of the war, Chinese leaders have played what Robert Putnam calls a 'two-level game'; manoeuvring on both domestic and international levels simultaneously to advance multiple goals.[4] The domestic context, however, has radically changed since the Maoist era (1949–1976). While the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) retains an impressive propaganda capacity, the rise of more well informed and assertive non-state actors are also shaping the process of collective remembrance in China. This paper begins by reviewing theories of collective remembrance and then covers four historical periods:

[2] Hu, C. (2009). Zhou Enlai waijiao zhihui: Yinlin 70 nian zhongri guanxi pobing [The wisdom of Zhou Enlai's foreign policy: Looking into breaking the ice in China-Japan relations in the 1970s], (27 August), available at: http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/zgzx/60nian/2009-08/27/content_8625198.htm [accessed 23 December, 2009].

[3] Wen, J. (2007). Speech by Premier Wen Jiabao of the State Council of the People's Republic of China at the Japanese Diet (12 April), http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjb/zzjg/yzs/gjlb/2721/2724/t311544.htm [accessed 23 December, 2010].

[4] Putnam, R. (1988). Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games, *International Organization*, **42**, 427–460.

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- China's benevolent amnesia on Japan's wartime atrocities before 1982;
- China's patriotic education campaign from the mid-1980s;
- the rise of history activism in China in the late 1990s;
- the 2005 reversal in official rhetoric on Japan and the wartime past.

I conclude that, while the party-state retains an impressive capacity to shape the narratives of critical periods of modern Chinese history, Chinese leaders are likely to find themselves increasingly constrained by domestic forces and by external events beyond their control.

Collective Remembrance: what is it and why does it matter?

Our sense of who we are is shaped by what we remember. As John Gillis explains,

> The core meaning of any individual or group identity, namely, a sense of sameness over time and space, is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity. We are constantly revising our memories to suit our current identities. Memories help us make sense of the world we live in.[5]

For Gillis, 'identities and memories are not things we think *about*, but things we think *with*'.[6] Memories, like identities, are socially constructed.[7] Collective memory, then, is a socially constructed discourse encompassing mnemonic practices carried out by social actors in symbolic forms such as narratives, images, and sounds.[8] Once established, collective memories exist as a kind of Weberian social fact that can exert an independent influence on individuals and society. The process of creating these collective memories and narratives of the past is known as 'collective remembrance'. 'Collective remembrance', explain Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, 'is public recollection. It is the act of gathering bits and pieces of the past and joining them together in public'. It is, they insist, the 'outcome of

[5] Gillis, J. (1996). *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, p. 5

[6] Ibid., p. 5, *italics in original*.

[7] See: Halbwachs, M. (1992). *On Collective Memory* (trans. and ed., Lewis A. Coser), University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

[8] Yang, G. and Yue, M. (2005). Introduction: Gilded-Age Memories of the Cultural Revolution, *The China Review* **5:2**, 1.

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agency, the product of individuals and groups who come together to speak out'.[9]

By themselves, individuals' memories rarely have political and social implications. 'Only when memories have been woven together into a narrative which is both widely held and publicly expressed do they have the potential to secure political effects' explain Ashplant, *et al*.. Collective remembrance is thus a deeply political process. 'The politics of war memory and commemoration is precisely the struggle of different groups to give public articulation to, and hence gain recognition for, certain memories and the narratives within which they are structured'.[10] These struggles occur within 'arenas of articulation', and involve 'agencies of articulation'—social actors who promote and seek recognition for their war memories.[11] Through a selective process of remembering and forgetting, the politics of memory evoke contestation over historical experiences and the use of these memories for political purposes. State leaders are particularly concerned with shaping collective remembrance of wartime experiences, since war commemoration 'evokes both the sacrifice that may be required from the citizen as the cost of belonging, and the means by which the nation-state persuades its citizens to die for it'.[12] Margaret Thatcher, for instance, used narratives of British resistance during World War II to gain popular support for the Faulklands War.[13]

Efforts by the state to appropriate and promulgate individual memories and experiences to advance a favoured narrative require negotiations with society. After all, only *people* can remember. Individuals' personal memories engender them with a certain power of authenticity. Furthermore, people are the ultimate consumers of the collective memories promulgated by the state. As Hobsbawm explains, a state's efforts to shape collective memory will prove persuasive only if they fulfil a felt need among society.[14] If official historical

[9] Winter, J. and Sivan, M. (1996). *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 6.

[10] Ashplant, T. G., Dawson, G. and Roper, M. (2000). *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*, Routledge, London, p. 20.

[11] Ibid., pp. 16–17.

[12] Ibid., p. 8.

[13] Dawson, G. and West, B. (1984). 'Our Finest Hour? The Popular Memory of World War Two and the Struggle over National Identity', in Hurd, G. *National Fictions: World War Two in British Films and Television*, Routledge, London, p. 11.

[14] Hobsbawm, E. (1992). 'Mass-producing Traditions: Europe, 1870–1914' in Hobsbawm, E. *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 307.

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narratives fail to ring true, the state project will inevitably fall short and alternative narratives will emerge. The resurgence of subaltern, collective memories in the wake of the Cold War in Eastern Europe serves as a poignant reminder of the persistence and power of collective memories and the limits of even powerful authoritarian states to suppress or appropriate social memories.

In China, the Communist Party has struggled to sustain a 'memory regime' that determines which memories are acceptable and the narratives into which they fit.[15] The inconvenient fact that Guomindang (GMD) forces led the resistance to Japan in central China meant that for decades, events such as the Japanese bombing of Wuhan and Chongqing were not included as part of the official memory of the war.[16] Even the same events can fit into different narratives, implying an alternative lesson taught by the past. Japan's invasion, for instance, could support a narrative of a century of foreign incursions and humiliations, teaching a lesson of state-strengthening: 'our nation cannot afford to be weak and divided again, as we risk invasion and suffering'. An alternative narrative might suggest that 'we can never trust Japan again' and so 'we must struggle constantly to defend against the danger of the re-birth of Japanese militarism'.[17]

Contestation over such diverging historical narratives occurs, according to Carol Gluck, at four 'terrains' of public memory: official commemoration such as public monuments and school textbooks; vernacular memory at the societal level such as movies, popular literature, and political activism; individual or personal memories; and 'meta-memory'—public debates about memory.[18] Four aspects of the *content* of collective memories are particularly significant. Which events are being remembered and which ones have been ignored? How are events and individuals presented? Secondly, what is the broader narrative into which these events are being slotted and how are individual events used to tell the broader story? Third, what are the

[15] Yang, G. (2005). Days of Old Are Not Puffs of Smoke: Three Hypotheses on Collective Memories of the Cultural Revolution, *The China Review*, **5:2**, 13–41.

[16] MacKinnon, S. (2008). *Wuhan, 1938: War, Refugees, and the Making of Modern China*, University of California Press, Berkeley, California.

[17] The latter phrase is from a plaque at the September 18 History Museum in Shenyang; the former, from an interview with a Chinese historian in Shenyang, both in 2001.

[18] Gluck, C. (2007). 'Operations of Memory: 'Comfort Women' and the World' in Jager, S. and Mitter, R. *Ruptured Histories: War, Memory and the Post-Cold War in Asia*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, pp. 47–77.

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lessons drawn from this history for contemporary society? Finally, in what venue or through what mediums is the history being presented? A second set of issues relate to the *process* of collective remembrance. Who shapes this process? What is the relationship between popular and official modes of commemoration? Do official narratives dominate popular narratives, or do popular approaches percolate up to the official level? How do ideas and images flow between state and society?

The past decade has seen a proliferation of scholarship on what Arthur Waldron dubs 'China's new remembering'—Beijing's newfound acknowledgement of GMD resistance and denunciations of Japanese wartime atrocities.[19] Most studies agree that negative propaganda towards Japan represents a dangerous double-edged sword, which bolsters Party legitimacy at the risk of undermining social controls. Surprisingly, the CCP's efforts to blunt the second side of this sword after 2005 have largely remained unexamined.[20] This essay places this remarkable reversal in historical context, focusing on how changing interactions between state and society have shaped collective remembrance of China's wartime past.

China's benevolent amnesia: 1945–1982

The GMD first adopted a restrained approach to Japanese wartime atrocities, in the hope of forging a strong relationship with Japan. In his 15 August, 1945, speech to the Chinese people, Chiang Kai-shek insisted:

> We have…repeatedly declared that we were only opposed to the Japanese people and harboured no enmity for the Japanese people…. While we must insist on the strict compliance with the term of the surrender, we must not look forward to retaliation, and much less shall we impose insults on the innocent civilians. We can only sympathise with their plight—coerced and

[19] Waldron, A. (1996). China's New Remembering of World War II: The Case of Zhang Zizhong, *Modern Asian Studies* **30:4**, 945–978. See also: Mitter, R. (2000). Behind the Scenes at the Museum: Nationalism, History and Memory in the Beijing War of Resistance Museum, 1987–1997, *The China Quarterly,* **161**, 279–293; Zhao, S. (1998). A State-led Nationalism: The Patriotic Education Campaign in Post-Tiananmen China, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* **31:3**, 287–302; Wang, Z. (2008). National Humiliation, History Education, and the Politics of Historical Memory: Patriotic Education Campaign in China, *International Studies Quarterly,* **52**, 783–806.

[20] Reilly, J. (2011). *Strong Society, Smart State: The Rise of Public Opinion in China's Japan Policy*, Columbia University Press, New York.

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misled as they have been by their Fascist and Nazi leaders, and hope they will repent of their mistake and sin.[21]

The Communist Party applied a similarly lenient approach. In military tribunals in 1956 in Shenyang and Taiyuan, only 45 Japanese military and civilian personnel were indicted out of 1,108 detainees. None received the death penalty or life imprisonment. In 1956, all Japanese who were not indicted were allowed to return home; and by mid-1964 even the 45 indicted Japanese had been repatriated.[22] These returnees later emerged as some of Japan's most dedicated advocates for closer relations with the PRC. Throughout this period, Chinese diplomats trod cautiously over the wartime past. As Premier Zhou Enlai told visiting Japanese Diet members in 1954:

> The history of the past sixty years of Sino-Japanese relations was not good. However, it is a thing of the past, and we must turn it into a thing of the past. This is because friendship exists between the peoples of China and Japan. Compared to the history of a few thousand years, the history of sixty years is not worth bringing up. Our times have been unfortunate, because we have only been living in these sixty years. However, our ancestors weren't like this. Moreover, we cannot let such history influence our children and grandchildren.[23]

By the late 1960s, Chinese leaders began to seek ways to engage Japan as part of Mao Zedong's strategy to balance against the Soviet Union, even welcoming a Japanese military build-up.[24] The 1972 normalization of relations ushered in a decade-long honeymoon in China-Japan relations during which discussion of Japanese wartime atrocities in China was suppressed as 'harmful to the Sino-Japanese friendship', in favour of a victor narrative designed to encourage a triumphant and proud Chinese national image at home.[25] While largely ignoring the GMD role in fighting Japan, memorials were built to honour heroic Communist resistance

[21] Kai-shek, C. (1945). *Statements and Speeches by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek*, 3; cited in: Yoshida, T. (2006). *The Making of the 'Rape of Nanking:' History and Memory in Japan, China, and the United States*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

[22] Yoshida, *The Making of the 'Rape of Nanking'*, p. 67.

[23] Quoted in: Kikuichirô, Y. (1955). *Hoshutô kara mita shin Chûgoku*. Yomiuri shimbunsha, p. 130.

[24] Iriye, A. (1992). *China and Japan in the Global Setting*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, p. 114.

[25] Yang, D. (2002). 'Mirror for the Future or the History Card? Understanding the "History Problem"', in Söderberg, M. *Chinese-Japanese Relations in the Twenty-first Century*, Routledge, London; Gries, P. H. (2004). *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy*, University of California Press, Berkeley, pp. 69–86.

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rather than document Japanese atrocities. Filmmakers were urged to avoid depiction of Chinese wartime suffering that would 'dilute our hatred of imperialism' and 'lower our morale'.[26] Scholars who tried to investigate the Nanjing Massacre were criticized for 'stirring up national hatred and revenge'.[27] To justify normalizing ties with Japan, state propaganda distinguished between 'the small handful of Japanese militarists' responsible for the war, and ordinary Japanese people, who were treated as victims of the militarists. Chinese history textbooks denounced not 'Japan', but only *ridi* (Japanese imperialism), *rijun* (Japanese military), or *rikou* (Japanese bandits).[28] After 1972, Japan became a model for study, and in some cases, for emulation.

Beijing's attempt to create an illusion of Sino-Japanese friendship in the 1970s without first settling the historical account was largely successful. Most young Chinese at that time had minimal knowledge about Japanese war atrocities. Private stories about the 'Japanese devils' survived, but only within families and small communities. Moreover, because of the tight controls over mass-media at the time, ordinary Chinese people had no way to learn about Japanese history textbooks, leaders' visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, or right-wing activists.[29] The Chinese government remained concerned, however, with popular emotions. In his 1972 talks with Japanese Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei, Zhou Enlai noted privately that 'we need to explain [diplomatic normalization with Japan] to our people. If we don't educate the people, we cannot persuade the masses that had suffered under Japan's "Three All" policies [during the war]'.[30]

Beijing's new history lessons

In the early 1980s, Chinese leaders' fears of a Soviet threat were assuaged by the rapprochement with the USSR under Mikhail

[26] Bo, C. (1960). Genggao di juqi Mao Zedong sixiang hongqi, wei chuangzuo gengduo genghao de geming junshi ticai yinpian er nuli [Lifting higher the red flag of Mao Zedong's thoughts, striving to produce more and better revolutionary military movies], *Dianying Yishu* (August), pp. 5–6; cited in He, Y. (2007). Remembering and Forgetting the War: Elite Mythmaking, Mass Reaction, and Sino-Japanese Relations, 1950–2006, *History and Memory,* **19:2**, 69.

[27] Yang, D. (1999). Convergence or Divergence? Recent Historical Writings on the Rape of Nanjing, *The American Historical Review,* **104:3**, 858.

[28] He, Remembering and Forgetting, p. 49.

[29] Ibid., p. 50.

[30] Minutes of the Tanaka-Zhou talk are online at: http://www.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~worldjpn [Accessed 23 December, 2010].

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Gorbachev, only to be replaced by anxiety over Japan's expanding military capacity, rapid growth in wealth, and close military alliance with the US. Frictions emerged over China's cancellation of plant orders from Japan, a dispute over Japan's Taiwan policy, and a Japanese court ruling over a student dormitory. Images of Chinese wartime suffering soon appeared in new history museums, textbooks, public memorials, state-sponsored movies and television dramas, and public commemoration events. The Memorial Hall for the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre was established in 1984, followed by the Memorial Hall of the People's War of Resistance Against Japan in 1987 in Beijing, and the September 18 History Museum in Shenyang in 1992. New movies on the Nanjing Massacre were released in 1982, 1987, and 1995. After the suppression of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, the campaign intensified. In 1990, the State Education Commission instructed schools to teach students to 'remember historical lessons, and not to forget imperialist invasion and Chinese people's heroic resistance'.[31] The August 1994 *Outline of Implementing Patriotic Education* declared: 'It is the sacred duties for the press and publishing, radio, film and television departments of all levels to use advanced media technology to conduct patriotic education to the masses'.[32]

The patriotic education campaign was *not* designed to promote anti-Japanese sentiments. Rather, it was envisioned as a way to enhance popular support for the Party and its goals of economic development, national unity, and state-strengthening. Reminding the public of past humiliation at the hands of foreign invaders was primarily a motivational device. As a plaque at the 18 September History Museum in Shenyang declares: 'China must increase its national strength to avoid the backwardness which leads to bullying and humiliation'.[33] In order to be effective, the patriotic education campaign had to induce strong emotional reactions. Only when the horrors of the Japanese invasion were painfully clear, would Chinese citizens recognize the imperative of continuing to follow the CCP's leadership. Finally freed up to publicize Japanese wartime atrocities, Party propagandists did not hold back. War movies graphically depicted Japanese acts of brutality. History museums hosted student visits, conducted field studies, distributed publicity materials, and donated books to nearby

[31] He, Remembering and Forgetting, p. 57.

[32] *Aiguo Zhuyi Jiaoyu Shishi Gangyao* [Outline on the Implementation of Education in Patriotism] (1994). Government Printing Office, Beijing.

[33] Personal visit to Shenyang (August 2001).

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schools. The Beijing museum even held a 'summer school' for students which incorporated simulated battles with 'Japanese devils'.[34] A teachers' guide accompanying new textbooks explained:

> During the war of aggression against China, invading Japanese troops committed innumerable crimes such as murder, arson, looting, and rape. One is the Nanjing Massacre. Nanjing Massacre is among the most brutal crimes committed in China by the invading Japanese troops. . .another is Japan's Unit 731. Unit 731 is the bacteriological (warfare) unit of the Japanese army. In ruthless manner, it conducted vivisection and bacteriological experiments on Chinese alive, manufactured biological weapons and brutally harmed numerous Chinese. These three cases are but a window to the atrocities of invading Japanese troops. They are not only war crimes; judged by their unspeakable criminal means, they are bestial crimes against humanity.[35]

The vitriolic rhetoric on Japanese wartime atrocities began to erode the traditional distinction between a few militarists and the mass of innocent Japanese people. References to Sino-Japanese friendship and positive images of Japan grew scarce. Instead, Chinese diplomats began to play the history card. In response to Japan's decision to suspend its grant aid to China in 1995 after Beijing's nuclear test, Premier Li Peng warned: 'Japan should never try to apply pressure on China by economic means' when 'Japanese militarist aggression inflicted such gigantic damage upon China as to dwarf the Japanese government credits so far extended'.[36] Beijing's critical tone at home and abroad soon provided an opening for non-state actors to publicize their own memories of the war.

China's history activists

In the mid-1990s, state-society relations in China were rapidly changing. An expansion in commercial media, information technology, and international engagement provided new resources and opportunities. A group of dedicated 'history activists' seized upon the patriotic education campaign to demand compensation for wartime victims, seek official commemoration for wartime anniversaries,

[34] Mitter, Behind the Scenes, p. 290.

[35] *Zhongguo xiandai lishi: jiaoshi zhidao* [Modern Chinese history: a teacher's guide] (2002). People's Education Press, Beijing.

[36] Mochizuki, M. (2003). 'Terms of Engagement: The U.S.-Japan Alliance and the Rise of China' in Krauss, E. *Beyond Bilateralism: U.S.-Japan Relations in the New Asia-Pacific*, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto, California, p. 103.

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oppose economic cooperation with Japan, and publicize Chinese wartime suffering.[37] While not directly opposing the state, these populist initiatives challenged the nuanced official narratives carefully woven around the wartime past, sparking a wave of protests that undermined the Party's pragmatic diplomatic and domestic objectives. These interactions reflect Joel Midgal's description of the 'state in society'. Midgal argues that the state is hemmed in and transformed by social forces, just as society is shaped by the openings and limits created by the state. For Midgal, the state is at once a singular, powerful body *and* one made up of loosely connected, conflicting parts, 'a contradictory entity which acts against itself'.[38] In this case, the Chinese state operated both as an actor promoting a specific historical narrative and as a venue of contestation.

In the 1920s, Chinese nationalists regularly commemorated what James Hevia describes as 'National Humiliation Days' on the anniversaries of unequal treaties, territorial leases, and foreign incursions.[39] Although replaced after 1949 by the CCP with more heroic memories, China's history activists sought to resume this tradition. In 2000, Hong Kong activists succeeded in getting the Legislative Council to unanimously pass a motion demanding a written apology and compensation from Japan for wartime atrocities. Over the next four years, Wang Jinsi, a National People's Congress (NPC) delegate from Hong Kong, lobbied over 100 NPC representatives to support draft legislation urging the official commemoration of 18 September, the anniversary of Japan's 1931 invasion of northeast China, and 13 December, the date of the Nanjing Massacre.[40] In March 2004, 24 of the NPC and the Chinese People's Consultative Committee (CPCC) motioned for an official national day of mourning on 18 September, but the motion failed. Over the summer, activists, academics, and NPC members petitioned the NPC and the State Council Legal Office to hold official commemorative events on

[37] Reilly, J. (2004). China's History Activists and the War of Resistance Against Japan: History in the Making, *Asian Survey* **19:2**, 276–294.

[38] Midgal, J. (2001). *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute Each Other*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 22–34.

[39] Hevia, J. (2007). 'Remembering the Century of Humiliation: The Yuanming Gardens and Dagu Forts Museums' in Jager, S. and Mitter, R. *Ruptured Histories: War, Memory and the Post-Cold War in Asia*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, p. 197.

[40] Cong, W. (2005). Renda diaobiao huhu yigao guige jinian kangzhang shenli 60 zhounian [NPC Representative Calls for Greater Official Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of War Victory], *Beijing qingnian bao* [Beijing Youth Times] (8 March).

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18 September. After the petition also failed, they decided to organize a series of unofficial activities on 18 September, including collective horn-blowing, art displays, and an academic symposium.[41] Activists also held a public demonstration at Wangfujing, Beijing's central shopping district, where they displayed signs and distributed leaflets. Similar demands, this time supported by an online petition campaign, were again presented, and rejected, at the annual meetings of the NPC and CPCC in March 2005.[42]

The Internet soon proved a powerful vehicle for history activism. One of the first activist websites was 'China 9–18', established by a middle-aged engineer and his daughter in March, 2000, to commemorate Japan's invasion of northeast China. In 2002, the website called for an 'online war of resistance' against Japanese right-wing groups, inspired by the actions of Feng Jinhua.[43] Feng Jinhua was a Chinese worker living in Japan who came to fame on 14 August, 2001, when he spray-painted '*Gaisi*' (Go to Hell) on a wall of the Yasukuni Shrine. Upon his return to China, Feng soon joined Lu Yunfei at the newly founded 'Alliance of Patriots' website, which the two quickly catapulted to the forefront of China's online activism.[44] By 2004, China was host to some 1,000 Japan-focused websites.[45]

The appeal of this campaign to Chinese youths reflects what Mirianne Hirsch calls 'post-memory', in which individuals who did not experience a war become the most powerful advocates of 'remembering' the war.[46] Indeed, 'memories' from China's wartime past soon proved a powerful mobilizing tool. The 2003

[41] These were coordinated by the 9/18 War Research Association of Beijing, in collaboration with the China 9–18 and Patriots Alliance websites. See: China refuses to back events marking anniversary of Japanese aggression, *Kyodo News Services* (15 September, 2004).

[42] Zhengxie weiyuan jianyi meinian Nanjing datushari juxing guojia gongji [Consultative Committee Representative Proposes a National Day of Commemoration on the Date of the Nanjing Massacre], *Xinjing bao* (*New Beijing Times*) (10 March, 2005).

[43] Available at: http://www.china918.net/918jn/918gkx.htm [Accessed 23 December, 2010].

[44] Han, X. 2003: Wangluo minzuzhuyi faren [2003: Internet Nationalism Explodes and Endures], *Guoji xianfeng daobao* (*International Herald Tribune*, Beijing) (19 September).

[45] Shen T. (n.d.) *Shilun dangdai zhongguo wangluo minzuzhuyi jiqi dui zhongri guanxi de yingxiang: yi aiguozhe tongmengwang wei li* [Contemporary Chinese internet nationalism and its impact on Sino-Japanese relations: A case study of the 'Patriot Alliance'], Unpublished m.s.

[46] Hirsch, M. (1996). Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile, *Poetics Today* **17:4**, 649.

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online petition campaign opposing Japanese involvement in building a high-speed railway in China began with an online manifesto warning against Japan 're-invading' China, drawing parallels with the Manchurian railroad built by Japan in the 1920s.[47] A month later, a petition campaign demanding compensation from Japanese abandoned chemical weapons in China declared: 'We will definitely not allow Japan to escape legal responsibility this time', a thinly veiled critique of the CCP's decision to forgo war compensation. A movement to boycott Japanese goods soon spread rapidly across the Chinese internet, urged on by postings demanding that Japan 'pay off its bloody debts'.[48] Online reports of a sex-orgy by Japanese businessmen in southern China on 18 September 2003, further inflamed popular sentiments. Riots soon broke out in Xi'an in response to a licentious skit by Japanese university students and again after a China-Japan soccer match in Beijing. Even Japanese car advertisements and video games sparked online protests. Wildcat strikes erupted in Japanese-owned factories in Shenzhen and Dalian.[49]

The wave of protests peaked in spring 2005 with a massive online petition campaign opposing Japan's efforts to obtain a permanent seat at the UN Security Council. Within a week, there were over 2.5 million signatories, with public sign-on events being held in cities across China.[50] On 9 April, massive street protests broke out in cities throughout China. In Beijing, protesters surrounded the Japanese embassy, smashing windows and vandalizing Japanese businesses.[51] The following weekend, marches of several thousand people were reported in cities, including Tianjin, Shenyang, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Hangzhou. In Shanghai, 20,000 demonstrators threw rocks at the

[47] The website is: *Aiguozhe tongmeng wang* [Alliance of Patriots] at http://bbs.1931-9-18.org/ [accessed 23 December, 2010]. The link to the sign-on campaign is no longer available.

[48] Yu, V. (2003). Abandoned war-era gas claims its first victim; China lodges a protest with Japan over the father's death 18 days after accident, *South China Morning Post* (23 August).

[49] Yanhui, C. (2005). Dalian riqi yuangong bagong shijian diaocha [Research on the Incident of Strikes by Workers at Japanese Firms in Dalian] *Fenghuang Zhoukan* (*Phoenix Weekly*), (December), pp. 28–32.

[50] Lewu, P. (2005). 1000 Wan qianming de quanliucheng [The Complete Process of Gaining Ten Million Signatures] *Nanfang Zhoumou* (*Southern Weekend*) (31 March), available at: http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2005-03-31/19286254269.shtml [Accessed 23 December, 2010].

[51] Onishi, N. (2005). Tokyo Protests Anti-Japan Rallies in China, *The New York Times* (11 April).

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Japanese consulate and vandalized Japanese cars and businesses.[52] In Shenzhen, the government deployed a massive riot police force to prevent striking workers, mostly migrant women, from taking to the streets. The *China Labor Bulletin* wrote:

> The present strike...contains echoes of the strikes directed at Japanese enterprises that exploded in the 1920s fuelling nationalist and revolutionary movements. It also evokes the Chinese government's worst fears during the 1989 movement upsurge: that workers might join the protests on the side of students and intellectuals.[53]

By spring 2005, it was clear that history activists had exceeded the pragmatic, state-strengthening objectives of the state's patriotic education campaign, undermining diplomatic relations and domestic stability. In response, Beijing's public diplomacy and domestic propaganda sought a return to the approach of the pre-1982 era, combining public diplomacy, domestic propaganda, and political repression in a sophisticated effort to reassert state control over collective remembrance of the wartime past.

Recasting Japan

China's propaganda reversal began with a crackdown on anti-Japanese activism. After the violent Shanghai protests, Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing warned 3,500 propaganda officials that 'the masses...must believe in the party and the government's ability to properly handle all issues linked to Sino-Japanese relations'. The *People's Daily* urged young people to act 'calmly and reasonably' toward Japan, while Shanghai's *Liberation Daily* denounced the protests as part of an 'evil plot' with 'ulterior motives' designed to undermine the Communist Party.[54] The government arranged for a number of top Japan experts to give talks at universities encouraging students to adopt a more 'rational' stance towards Japan. Experts also led a series of closed-door study sessions

[52] French, H. (2005). China Allows More Protests in Shanghai Against Japan, *The New York Times* (14 April).

[53] *China Labor Bulletin* (2005). Striking Shenzhen Workers at Japanese-owned Wal-Mart Supplier Firm Demand Right to Unionize, available at: http://www.japanfocus.org/-China_Labor-Bulletin/2105 [Accessed 23 December 2010].

[54] Reilly, J. (2009). The Rebirth of *Minjian Waijiao*: China's Popular Diplomacy toward Japan, *Japan Policy Research Institute Working Paper* (115), http://www.jpri.org/publications/workingpapers/wp115.html [Accessed 23 December, 2010].

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for the editors of China's leading news websites in which they urged: 'don't feed the fire of anti-Japan sentiments; help us to put it out'.[55]

The domestic crackdown was followed by diplomatic engagement. In welcoming Prime Minister Abe Shinzo to Beijing in September, 2006, Premier Wen Jiabao issued a five-point proposal for improving relations which failed to even mention history issues.[56] In his return visit to Japan in April, 2007, Wen gave a landmark speech at the Japanese Diet, the first by a Chinese leader since 1985. He insisted that 'I have come for friendship and cooperation'. Wen reiterated China's longstanding view 'that it was a handful of militarists who were responsible for that war of aggression. The Japanese people were also victims of the war, and the Chinese people should live in friendship with them'. He acknowledged Japan's repeated apologies and pledged that 'The Chinese people will never forget Japan's support of China during our opening, reform, and modernization'.[57] Interrupted ten times by applause, Wen's speech was praised as 'masterly' by South Korean media.[58] As Wen explained to an audience of Chinese residents in Japan, 'This is the most important task since I took office. I did a lot of preparation. Every sentence is written by myself and I did all the research work myself. Why? Because I feel our nation's development has reached a critical moment. We need to have a peaceful and conducive international environment'.[59]

President Hu Jintao followed Wen's example in his 'warm spring trip' to Japan in May, 2008. Failing to even mention the wartime history in his meetings with the Emperor and Diet members, Hu instead emphasized his role in the controversial 1984 visit of 3,000 Japanese young people to China as the head of the Communist Youth League. The joint statement establishing a 'mutually-beneficial strategic relationship' did not mention Japanese 'apologies' or 'reflection' over the wartime past. In his speech at Waseda University, Hu praized the 2,000 years of friendship between China and

[55] Interview with Japan expert who was asked to give such talks (Beijing, 17 April, 2008).

[56] Wen jiabao yu anbei pusan shouxiang huitan jiu weilai zhongri guanxi fazhan tichu wuge yijian [Wen Jiaobao Meets Prime Minister Abe Shinzo, Puts Forth Five Suggestions for the Future Development of Sino-Japanese Relations] *Renmin Ribao* (9 October, 2006), p. 1.

[57] Wen, Speech by Premier Wen Jiabao.

[58] Premier Wen Jiabao's Masterly Visit to Japan, *Chosun Ilbo* (16 April, 2007).

[59] French, H. (2007). Letter from China: Wen reveals himself as a new kind of Chinese leader, *International Herald Tribune* (19 April).

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Japan, interrupted only briefly by Japan's 'war of aggression'. He explained:

> This brief unhappy period of history brought deep disaster to the Chinese people, and also brought deep suffering to Japanese people. We emphasise history not for hatred, but because it can be a mirror, reflecting to the future, [teaching us to] treasure peace, maintain peace, and ensure that the Chinese and Japanese people leave together peacefully for future generations, so that the people of the two countries can enjoy everlasting peace.[60]

Chinese leaders augmented their diplomatic outreach with a domestic media campaign. As Qian Xiaoqian, the Vice-Director of the State Council Information Office, declared in 2007: 'The media has an obligation to play a positive *(jiji)* role in promoting China-Japan relations and mutual understanding'.[61] Chinese television coverage of Wen Jiabao's 2007 visit to Japan showed Wen jogging in a popular park, taking part in a Japanese tea ceremony, talking with farmers and students, and pitching a baseball. [62] Prime Minister Fukuda Yasuo's speech at Beijing University in December, 2007, the first time in 23 years that a Japanese Prime Minister had made a public speech in China, was broadcast live nationwide.[63] China Central Television (CCTV) News followed Fukuda's speech with an in-depth study describing Fukuda as a 'calm, rational, warm person' and emphasizing his pledge not to visit the Yasukuni Shrine.[64] In March 2008, President Hu Jintao's arrival in Tokyo was televised live on CCTV in order to create an air of anticipation and excitement back home. Hu's visit was spotlighted on CCTV-1's nightly news show every night *and* featured in the *Focus* (*Jiaodian fantan*) news programme which immediately follows the nightly news. Every night for two weeks before Wen's visit, CCTV-News broadcast a series entitled 'Viewing Japan from Close Up' on the popular news journal *Oriental Horizon*. Reports featured sympathetic interviews with Japanese cultural figures, famous novelists, movie

[60] Hu, J. (2008). Zai riben tadaotian daxue de yanjiang [Speech at Waseda University] *Renmin Ribao* [*People's Daily*] (9 May), p. 2.

[61] Qian, X. (2007). Presentation at Beijing-Tokyo Forum (Beijing, 28 August).

[62] Original information was taken from Chinese television programmes, clips of which had been posted on the internet, but which are not longer available. 'CCTV Evening News' (12 April 2007) CCTV News.

[63] Original information was taken from Chinese television programmes, clips of which had been posted on the internet, but which are not longer available. 'CCTV News Special Broadcast' (26 December 2007) CCTV News.

[64] Original information was taken from Chinese television programmes, clips of which had been posted on the internet, but which are not longer available. 'CCTV News Special Broadcast' (27 December 2007) CCTV News.

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directors, and even former Prime Minister, Nakasone Yasuhiro.[65] The interview with Prime Minister Abe's wife praised her as an articulate, attractive, energetic woman who represents the 'new generation of Japanese leaders'. The reporter claimed that 'as Abe and his wife descended the plane steps in Beijing, hand in hand, it gave many Chinese people a deep impression'.[66]

Chinese newspapers also downplayed the threat of historical revisionism. The popular *Global Times* urged readers not to 'overly emphasise' the 'very small number of right-wingers in Japan', and instead 'overcome the distinction between left and right, and strengthen foreign relations with Japan through comprehensive dialogues and exchanges with the mass of the Japanese people'.[67] The same edition also explained to readers that 80 per cent of Japanese citizens oppose changing the peace constitution.[68] A few days later, another *Global Times* article argued that China-Japan should establish 'mature great power relations', a rare acknowledgement of Japan's legitimacy as a 'great power'.[69] CCTV-2 interviewed an elderly Japanese businessman, praising his success in creating two Fortune 500 corporations while overcoming the negative stigma attached to the 'Made in Japan' label. The moderator then turned to Chinese experts to explain the 'lessons' that Japan's economic success can 'teach' for China's own export-oriented economy.[70] The *Beijing News* reminded readers:

Thirty years ago, Japan reached out a helping hand to support China's reform and opening up. Japan provided Official Development Assistance (ODA) to China ever since the signing of the 'China-Japan Treaty of Peace and

[65] Original information was taken from Chinese television programmes, clips of which had been posted on the internet, but which are not longer available. The video of the interview with Nakasone was broadcast on the programme 'Interviews' (1 April 2007) CCTV 4.

[66] Original information was taken from Chinese television programmes, clips of which had been posted on the internet, but which are not longer available. 'Interviews' (3 April 2007) CCTV 4.

[67] Ding, L. (2007). Chaoyue 'zuo' 'you' kan riben [Surpassing 'right' and 'left' in viewing Japan], *Huanqiu shibao* [*Global Times*] (6 April).

[68] Riben bacheng minzhong yuan youngfang zhanzheng [Eighty percent of Japanese people wish to forever forgo war], *Huanqiu shibao* [*Global Times*] (6 April 2007).

[69] Xin, G. (2007). Zhongri guanxi shi erzhi de daguo guanxi? [Are China-Japan relations youthful great power relations], *Huanqiu shibao* [*Global Times*] (11 April).

[70] Original information was taken from Chinese television programmes, clips of which had been posted on the internet, but which are not longer available. CCTV-2 (11 May 2008).

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Friendship' in 1979. Though ODA is coming to an end this year, Japan provided an essential injection of support for China's economic construction. Chinese people will not, and should not, forget this. Up until the end of the 1980s, Japan was a leading model of successful modernization and economic development in Chinese people's hearts. Chinese people would take Japan as a teacher without the slightest amount of embarrassment or discomfort. At that time, every time Deng Xiaoping would meet visiting Japanese friends, one sentence repeatedly came out of his mouth: 'study from Japan'.[71]

Veterans' malleable memories

As part of the propaganda blitz, Chinese officials sought to redirect attention away from Japanese wartime atrocities in favour of a heroic narrative of the wartime past. The personal recollections of Chinese military veterans proved a valuable resource. In December, 2006, the Central Propaganda Ministry, along with the Party History Research Office, Academy of Military Science, and Xinhua News Agency, embarked on a new propaganda campaign entitled: 'The Eternal Monument: Red Memories'. Based on 50 major events in PLA history, the campaign sought to generate a 'vivid curriculum which will provide an idealistic, persuasive education, patriotic education, knowledge about Party history, the tradition of revolution, and moral education for youth'.[72] The centrepiece was the 'Genealogy of the Heroes of the War of Resistance' (*kangri yinxiong pu*), based on 32 veterans' life stories.[73] Countless veterans also travelled around the country, telling their personal stories to schoolchildren and at public events. When one such veteran, Zhang Xu, died in 2009, there was a blitz of publicity praising his efforts to teach the younger generation.[74]

The campaign used individual memories of the war to bolster Party propaganda. An article on 'Listening to the Stories of the 8th Route Army', quoted Chen Xifu, a local 80 year-old veteran:

[71] Lu, N. (2008). 'Yiri weishi' zutui zhongguo gaige ['Japan as a teacher' helps push forward China's reforms] *Xinjing Bao* [Beijing News] (7 May).

[72] Available at: http://news.cctv.com/china/20061226/102683.shtml [Accessed 11 January 2011].

[73] Available at: http://www.cctv.com/news/special/C15905/07/index.shtml [Accessed 23 December, 2010].

[74] Zhao, L. (2009). Zhuiji mofan gongchangyuan Zhang Xu [Remembering model Party member Zhang Xu] (25 March). http://www.hb.xinhuanet.com/hbpeople/2009–03/25/content_16056634.htm, available at: [Accessed 23 December, 2010].

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Some people are more familiar than others with the history of the War of Resistance to Japan, the history of the 8th Route Army and the history of the (Chinese) revolution—that's very normal. However, the spirit of the 8th Route Army and of the revolution remains very precious today. A people and a nation-state both need this kind of spirit.

Chen emphasized that the Party's goal of establishing a 'harmonious society' (*hexie shehui*) must begin with the youth.[75] Chen Wanjun, another veteran, was quoted in a local Wuhan newspaper:

Children are the future of our motherland. Only if they know that victory did not come easy will they be able to properly take up the tasks of the previous generation. Therefore, I will continue to speak about the revolutionary tradition until the day my heart stops.[76]

While most Chinese propaganda on the wartime era relies upon unrealistic stories rife with worn rhetoric and familiar phrases, using the voice and image of a living veteran is designed to add passion and vividness to the message. As one article noted, although these veterans are elderly and in poor health, 'this reporter can still feel the blood boiling in their veins'.[77]

The campaign also augmented the CCP's outreach to the Nationalist Party on Taiwan by commemorating KMT wartime resistance. A 2007 CCTV programme praised a former GMD general who went to Taiwan after the civil war, and whose former residence in Taibei was being turned into a museum.[78] Another television programme commemorated the 'top ten GMD generals in the War of Resistance'.[79] A Guilin newspaper seized upon the traditional *Qingmingjie* holiday, when Chinese visit the graves of

[75] Zhu, X. (2006). Ting laobalu chenxifu jiang geming gushi [Listening to revolutionary stories from old 8th route army member Chen Xifu] (25 December), available at: http://www.tianshannet.com/special/content/2006–12/25/content_1535862.htm [Accessed 23 December, 2010].

[76] Huang, M. (2009). Yong bulixiu de xinsi jun lao zhanshi [An old solider from the new number four who will never retire] *Dajiang wanbao* (*Great River Evening News*) (23 March), available at: http://www.wuhunews.cn/whnews/200903/166403.html [Accessed 23 December, 2010].

[77] Jinian zhongguo kangri zhanzheng shengli 62 zhounian laobing zhuiyi Zeng Rongsui [Commemorating the 62 anniversary of victory in the War of Resistance to Japan with the memories of old soldier Zeng Rongsui] (15 August 2008), available at: http://discovery.cctv.com/20070815/111929.shtml [Accessed 11 January 2011].

[78] Liu, L. (2007). Kangri mingjiang Li Youbang taibei guju pai [War of Resistance famous general Li Youbang's ancestral home in Taibei] (10 December). http://news.cctv.com/taiwan/20071210/104836.shtml [Accessed 11 January 2011].

[79] http://news.cctv.com/science/20071207/109037.shtml [Accessed 11 January 2011].

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their ancestors, to commemorate locals who joined the GMD air force.[80] The revamped Nanjing Massacre Museum reflects this revised approach. Exhibits praise the 'defending Chinese army' (*zhongguo shoujun*) and even describe Nanjing as 'China's capital', even though it was only the seat of the Nationalist government. A picture of Chiang Kai-shek is prominently displayed over his quote urging all Chinese people to resist the invading Japanese army, as is a Nationalist flag flown by GMD soldiers in Nanjing. Plaques praising individual soldiers include a number of GMD officers who ended up in Taiwan.[81]

The campaign also reflects a localization trend in Chinese propaganda. For decades, identical history textbooks were used in schools nationwide. Almost every city had a nondescript memorial to veterans, but few honoured local memories. National media campaigns identified a single hero whose story was then promulgated nationwide. In recent years, authorities have begun to encourage efforts to identify and highlight unique aspects of local history in order to increase the effectiveness of propaganda. In 2005, the national Education Ministry urged local educational authorities to develop their own approaches to doing 'patriotic education' based upon local history.[82] The 'Red Tourism' campaign promotes and commemorates local instances of heroism and patriotism. Seven different versions of high-school history textbooks are now written and published in different regions of China, each of which augments national history with local examples and individuals. The veterans' campaign reflected the localization trend. As one Jiangxi paper noted:

> The Long March of 70 years ago changed the fate of China. Many details of the past are long gone. We have only the image of those heroes in our memories. The existence of so many veterans of the Long March from Jiangxi proves the

[80] Huang, L. (2009). Qingmingji: qingshan shunzhonggu zhanzheng kongjun qiaozi [Qingming offerings: looking for heroes' remains in the blue mountain: distinguished airman, son of Guilin from the war of resistance] *Guilin Wanbao* [Guilin Evening News] (31 March), available at: http://news.guilinlife.com/news/2009/03–31/48396.html [Accessed 23 December, 2010].

[81] Personal visit to the museum (8 April, 2009).

[82] Jiaoyubu Yaoqiu zhongxiao xuexiao jihe kangri zhanzheng peiyu minzujingshen [Education Ministry Requires Middle and Elementary Schools to Combine the study of The War of Resistance to Japan with Patriotic Education] (4 March, 2005), available at: http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2005–03-25/213954659 72s.shtml [Accessed 23 December, 2010].

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contribution and sacrifices made by the heroes from Jiangxi to the success of the Chinese revolution.[83]

For the most part, stories on the War of Resistance carefully framed their language to avoid presenting an overly negative image of Japan. Critical reports referred not to 'Japan' or 'Japanese people,' but to the 'invading Japanese army'. In some local media reports, the careful use of language eviscerated in favour of denouncing the 'Japanese devils' (*riben guize*).[84] However, such language was notable mostly for its absence, particularly in national-level publications. More typical were stories depicting former Japanese soldiers who had returned to China to express their regret and to apologise. One national CCTV programme described a Japanese soldier who has returned to Shandong province several times to apologize for his wartime actions. The story highlighted the calligraphy scroll he presented to Chinese friends which expressed: 'apologies and regret for the invasion; [wishes for] friendship and goodwill between China and Japan'.[85] Another article told of a Henan family who found an injured Japanese soldier during the war who had lost his memory. 'Repaying evil with good', they took him in, caring for him in their home for a number of years before they arranged for him to go home to Japan to find his family and friends in 1993. Residents of his hometown in Japan later donated 6 million yen to build a 'China-Japan Friendship Botanical Garden' and 'China-Japan Friendship School' in the village. The story concludes with a quote by Wang Zhongke, a local resident and descendent of the family which had sheltered the Japanese soldier:

These last few years, I always wanted to do one thing: to build a 400 square meter memorial hall to commemorate the heroic deeds done by my forefathers and elder generation of this village in rescuing the injured Japanese soldier. I want to include a mural showing the letters and material goods exchanged between these two villages, so that the next generation in

[83] Buxiu de yingxiong [A hero who has not withered] (28 August, 2006), available at: http://www.jxnews.com.cn/jxrb/system/2006/08/28/002324189.shtml [Accessed 23 December, 2010].

[84] Li, G. (2007). Kangzhan laobing Ji Lin 16sui toushen junyin rudui [An old solider of the war of resistance threw his body into the military camp at 16 years old] *Haikou Wanbao* [Haikou Evening News] (27 July), available at: http://www.hainan.gov.cn/data/news/2007/07/35263/ [Accessed 23 December, 2010].

[85] Fan, J. (2007). Riben qinhua laobing xiezui shandong taian kangri lieshi lingyuan [An old invading Japanese soldier apologies for crimes at a cemetery for heroes from the war of resistance in Taian, Shandong] (11 November), available at: http://news.cctv.com/china/20071111/102483.shtml [Accessed 11 January 2011].

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China and Japan could always remember this moving story of peace in which people were able to 'beat their swords into plowshares'.[86]

One of the most striking aspects of the veterans' commemoration campaign is that Japan itself is nearly invisible. The heroism of Chinese veterans is spotlighted, rather than Japanese atrocities or aggression. It is almost as if there was a war with a faceless enemy. In a text of over 1,000 characters of one television news programme memorializing a wartime martyr, the word 'Japan' never appears, and 'Japanese army' (*rijun*) appears only four times. The story instead refers repeatedly and simply to the 'enemy' (*diren*). 'After his death in battle', the story concludes, 'his comrades loudly shouted "revenge for our platoon leader" and charged the enemy boats. There was a fierce battle for over an hour, and eventually they completely annihilated the enemy'.[87] Such stories seek to stir emotion by focusing on the heroism of Chinese soldiers rather than Japanese atrocities. A Jiangxi papers' interview with 'a hero who has not withered', adopts a similar tone:

> After my comrade fell, I lifted up the machine guy with both hands, and together with my comrades, repelled wave after wave of the encroaching enemy. Soon, all of our bullets were used up. Large numbers of the enemy seized the opportunity and swarmed toward us. The situation was extremely dangerous. I picked up the sabre at my side and thrust it at the enemy. At the time I thought, I will definitely die, but at least, I will take down some of the enemy with me. My aim proved accurate, and many of the enemy soldiers fell beneath my sword. We in the Red Army were not afraid of death. Our spirit of heroism shocked the enemy, and they did not know what do. All they could do was run and hide like a mouse looking for a hole. . . .[88]

New history museums also adopted traditional narratives of the war. Museums established in 2007 included a Hebei province museum commemorating local resistance efforts led by the famed 8th Route Army, and a museum in Shanxi province commemorating KMT-led efforts.[89] A museum in suburban Beijing based on a tunnel used in

[86] Xiong, Y. (2006). Yide baoyuan: henan nongmin sandai shouyang riben shangbing 47 zai [Returning evil with good: three generations of Henan farmers care for an injured Japanese soldier for 47 years] *Zhengzhou Wanbao* [*Zhengzhou Evening News*] (10 August), available at: http://www.ha.xinhuanet.com/add/wssf/2006-08/10/content_7743029.htm [Accessed 23 December, 2010].

[87] http://www.cctv.com/news/special/C15905/20060608/104333.shtml [Accessed 11 January 2011].

[88] A Hero Who Has not Withered (see footnote 83).

[89] 'Jidong kangzhan jinianguan jicheng kaiguan' [The opening of Jidong's war of resistance memorial hall] (29 September 2007), available at:

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the anti-Japan resistance was listed as one of the top 100 national-level patriotic education sites.[90] The Nanjing massacre re-opened on 13 December, 2007, with a clear message of forgiveness. One plaque features a phrase attributed to John Rabe, a German who helped shelter Chinese victims in Nanjing: 'We can forgive; but we cannot forget'. Another quotes Mei Ru'ao, the Chinese judge on the International Military Tribunal for the Far East: 'I'm no revanchist (*fuchou zhuyizhe*). I have no intention to settle the blood debt (*xuezhai*) created by the Japanese militarists with the Japanese people. However, I do believe that forgetting the sufferings of the past may cause calamity in the future'. Most prominent of all is a quote from a massacre survivor, Li Xiuying, urging Chinese people to: 'remember history; don't remember hatred'.[91]

Commercial constraints

While official propaganda promoted a heroic narrative on the wartime past and a forward-looking approach towards contemporary Japan, China's commercial media sought opportunities to provide sensationalist, negative coverage of Japan. This gap between Party and popular media was evident in the coverage of Prime Minister Koizumi's final visit to the Yasukuni Shrine on 15 August, 2006. While denouncing the visit, China's Foreign Ministry emphasized that, 'The Chinese government and people are on the same path (*yidao*) as Japanese politicians and the great mass of Japanese people who cherish and devote themselves to China-Japan friendship'. *People's Daily* (RMRB) ran eleven stories criticizing Koizumi over three days, yet most were brief and none appeared on the front page. One RMRB article assured readers that most Japanese young people and teachers wish to 'correctly acknowledge' history, another quoted a Japanese

http://military.people.com.cn/GB/42964/57866/6330990.html [Accessed 23 December, 2010]; Shanxi xiangningxian kangzhan jinianguan zhuanmen jinian guomindan shibing [Xianning county of Shanxi province opens a memorial hall specifically to commemorate Nationalist Party soldiers] (20 September 2007), available at: http://news.163.com/07/0920/10/3OR1MCJM0001124J.html [Accessed 23 December, 2010].

[90] Beijing jiaozhuanghu didao zhan yizhi jinianguan xinguan luocheng kaifang [The opening ceremony for the memorial hall for Beijing jiaozhuanghu tunnel relics] (13 August 2005), available at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/newscenter/2005–08/13/content_3348520.htm [Accessed 23 December, 2010].

[91] Personal visit to the museum (8 April, 2009).

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reader from Osaka apologizing for the wartime aggression, a third described Japanese criticism of Japan's Prime Minister, Koizumi.[92] While most commercial media mirrored this restraint, *Global Times* published 14 stories on Koizumi's visit within three days, including an inflammatory front-page story on 15 August, warning of a visit with pictures of South Korean protests of Koizumi.[93] One author declared 'Enough already! He [Koizumi] must believe that the Asian people can easily be deceived. . .does this really seem like the leader of a country'?[94] A third article warned that Koizumi's visits were designed to build up a 'chip' which Japan could trade in: if the next Prime Minister did not go to Yasukuni, Japan could claim that it had made a concession to China and so demand compromises from China. 'This really is a preposterous joke', the author concluded. 'If Japanese leaders keep going to Yasukuni, they must be forced to pay an even greater political price'.[95]

Party and commercial media coverage also diverged during the controversy over Prime Minister Abe Shinzo's 1 March, 2007, suggestion that the 'comfort women' may not have been coerced.[96] Although Abe soon retracted his statement, the issue dogged his first visit to the US. *The Washington Post* called for the Prime Minister to 'straightforwardly accept responsibility for Japan's own crimes—and apologize to the victims he has slandered'.[97] Even the US State Department urged Japan to address the issue 'in a forthright and responsible manner'.[98] Beijing's response was far more restrained. On 10 March, the RMRB stated that 'mature politicians need to choose their words carefully'. It criticized 'some politicians' and 'right wing people' who do not respect history—but did not name Abe personally.[99]

[92] For the previous points, see: Cao, P. (2006). Fansi, qianyi [Regrets and apologies], *Renmin Ribao* [*People's Daily*], (17 August).

[93] Wang, L. (2006). Xiaoquan canbai chengmouti jiaodianzhong hanfan yingling shijie guanzhu, riben yinglai mingan yitian [Koizumi's visit becomes a focus point, China and South Korea opposition makes the world pay attention, Japan should be sensitive for one day] *Huaqiu shibao* [*Global Times*], (15 August).

[94] Xiaoquan cunyiliang de jinshen shijie [Koizumi Junichiro's spirit world], *Huanqiu shibao* [*Global Times*], (16 August, 2006).

[95] Lei, Z. (2006). Jingxi riben ba canbai dang chouma [Beware of Japan using the visit as a bargaining chip], *Huanqiu shibao* [*Global Times*], (15 August).

[96] Przystup, J. (2007). Japan-China Relations: New Year, Old Problems, Hope for Wen, *Comparative Connections,* **9:1**, 4.

[97] Abe Shinzo's Double Talk, *Washington Post* (24 March, 2007).

[98] Denial Reopens Wounds of Japan's ex-sex slaves, *New York Times* (8 March, 2007).

[99] Jiang, A. (2007). Zhengzhijia qing jingyan zhenxing [Politicians, please speak and act with caution], *Renmin Ribao* [*People's Daily*], (10 March).

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Several days later, the paper provided a brief notice on page 10 noting Abe's retraction.[100] CCTV News adopted a similar low-key approach, briefly noting Abe's subsequent apology but not the original controversy.[101] Popular media provided far more extensive coverage: six commercial papers printed a total of 56 articles on the 'comfort women' issue from 10 to 27 March. The *Global Times* ran prominent stories on the draft resolution in the US Congress demanding an apology from Japan. Another article described the incident as typical of Japan's 'flip-flopping' on history issues, followed by an editorial which asked: 'Why is regretting the past more difficult for Japan than Germany'?[102] The *Southern Metropolitan Daily* quoted a Phoenix Television reporter: 'Chinese officials should collect, organise, and preserve the materials regarding the comfort women case', and ran a story praising US demands for Japan to 'forthrightly' admit its wartime crimes.[103] The *Beijing News* and *Xinmin Evening News* printed front-page articles strongly critical of Abe, written by their own journalists or Chinese professors, as well as carrying the official Xinhua stories on the issue.

Official media also downplayed sensitive wartime anniversaries. No national leaders came to the 13 December, 2007, re-opening of the Nanjing Massacre Museum, so it did not have to be, and was not, mentioned on CCTV's nightly news. RMRB's sole article on the anniversary noted that 2007 is a 'sensitive year' in China-Japan relations and urged the public to 'remain calm'. It explained that

> correctly understanding the past can help people to remain calm in understanding the past, reasonably deal with current contradictions and controversies between the two countries, objectively guide a scientific foreign policy strategy and policies.

[100] Wu, G. (2007). Riben zhongshen chengren 'Heyetanyua' lichang [Japan reaffirms the stance of the 'Muruyama statement'], *Renmin Ribao* [*People's Daily*], (13 March).

[101] Original information was taken from Chinese television programmes, clips of which had been posted on the internet, but which are not longer available. "Evening News" (9 March 2007) CCTV-News.

[102] Fanshen lishi, riben weihe bi deguo nan? [Why is expressing regret for the past more difficult for Japan than Germany], *Huanqiu shibao* [*Global Times*], (27 March, 2007).

[103] Xu, L. (2007). Fenghuang weishi junshi pinglunyuan kaijiang yingjin kuai zhengli weianfu zhuanmen dan'an [Phoenix TV military affairs commentator declares that the special records on the comfort women should be quickly organized], *Nanfang Dushibao* [Southern Metropolitan Times], (10 March); Meiguo: riben ying 'tanbai' renzui [US: Japan should 'forthrightly' admit its crimes], *Nanfang Dushibao* [*Southern Metropolitan Times*], (28 March, 2007).

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The article highlighted the long period of China-Japan friendship and noted China's role in the global war against fascism. The description of the war took up just one paragraph, failing to mention details of the massacre or even the number of Chinese deaths in Nanjing.[104] The very next page had an article on Politburo member Zeng Qinghong's meeting with an LDP politician which did not even mention the Nanjing Massacre or history issues; presumably an example of a more 'reasonable' approach to Japan.[105] CCTV coverage of the anniversary was framed by the slogan: 'we can forgive, but we cannot forget'. A CCTV-1 programme emphasized that the massacre 'is not just commemorated by Chinese people, but by people around the world' including Japanese people, which proves that 'we all want peace'.

Despite warnings by the Propaganda Department for popular media not to be 'self-serving' in their coverage, commercial newspapers covered the Nanjing anniversary extensively.[106] The six commercial papers reviewed here published an average of six stories on the anniversary over four days, far exceeding the RMRB.[107] The *Beijing Youth News* ran a front page story augmented by a two-page spread inside with pictures and emotional coverage.[108] A *Global Times'* story criticized Japan for not opening up its archives on the massacre, contrasting it unfavourably with Germany.[109] The *Southern Metropolitan News* was particularly active, with 16 stories on the anniversary over four days. They reported on activities by local middle school students and academics, and even conducted an informal survey of pedestrians, concluding that inadequate awareness of Nanjing as a 'Day of National Humiliation' (*Guochiri*) showed the need for

[104] Wang, B. (2007). 'Yong jinian qukaikuo weilai' [Use commemorations to open the future] *Renmin Ribao* [*People's Daily*], (13 December).

[105] Zeng Qinghong huijian riben zimindang qiang ganshizhang [Zeng Qinghong meets the previous secretary-general of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party] *Renmin Ribao* [*People's Daily*], (13 December, 2007).

[106] For the official warnings, see: Przystup, J. (2007). Japan-China Relations: Wen in Japan: Ice Melting But..., *Comparative Connections* **9:2**, 136.

[107] The distribution was: *Beijing Youth News*: 2; *Global Times*: 5; *Southern Metropolitan News*: 16; *Beijing News*: 8; *Xinmin Evening News*: 7.

[108] 70 Nian buneng wangqu de jinian [Unforgettable 70 year-old memories], *Beijing Qingnian Bao (Beijing Youth Times)*, (13 December, 2007).

[109] Yu, Q. (2007). Shijie renqing lishi zhenxiang riben xu yongyu peihe jiean [The world directly faces the truth of history but needs Japan's cooperation to close the case], *Huanqiu Shibao* [*Global Times*], (13 December).

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more education about the massacre.[110] Such negative coverage in commercial press served to release public frustration at home while signalling Beijing's frustration to Tokyo over history issues. Yet Chinese officials remained wary. As one Beijing journalist explained, 'we received repeated warnings during this time not to be too proactive (*jidong*) in our coverage of Japan. We generally knew where the line was, and what was permitted and what was not'.[111] The party-state had hardly relinquished its efforts to shape popular attitudes towards Japan or collective memories of the wartime past.

Conclusion

In George Orwell's *1984*, the Party slogan ran: 'who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past'. In China, if collective memories are to be harnessed to goals of state-strengthening, then the state must be able to shape the form of these memories, the narratives into which they fit, and the lessons they teach for the present. Yet as social space opened up in the mid-1990s, activists challenged and expanded the official narratives carefully woven around the wartime history. Once this popular engagement grew into a threat to domestic stability and diplomatic autonomy, Chinese leaders rapidly reversed course; returning, in many ways, to the pre-1982 narratives on the War of Resistance. Chinese society, however, will not go back. While the CCP was largely successful in cooling popular anger and stabilizing diplomatic ties, a number of constraints mitigate against its ability to continually reshape the content and process of collective remembrance.

The emergence of a media market in China means that even state propaganda must be market-sensitive. Official and commercial newspapers, magazines, television, and even internet sites all compete with each other for the attention and the wallets as well as the 'hearts and minds' of the Chinese public. Propaganda, like news programmes and advertisements, will only be effective if it attracts and persuades

[110] Lu, X. (2007). Shoushao baonian Nanjing datusha: foshan liuzhong xuesheng zili Nanjing datusha zhuti shouchabiao [Random survey report on Nanjing Massacre: a spontaneous survey conducted by the middle school students at Foshan number 6 middle school], *Nanfang Dushibao* [Southern Metropolitan News], (14 December). See also: Callahan, W. (2006). History, Identity, and Security: Producing and Consuming Nationalism in China, *Critical Asian Studies* **38:2**, 179–208.

[111] Interview with journalist in Beijing (9 April, 2007).

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the audience. The market economy has also brought new actors onto the scene. Companies driven by the pursuit of profits will promote whatever sells—video games in which players kill Japanese soldiers, popular books showing wartime atrocities in graphic detail, movies on wartime suffering, sensationalist news stories criticizing Japan. Like all successful businesspeople, they use publicity to help create demand, and so shape the subsequent marketplace within which all actors must operate, including the state. Overseas actors, particularly the Chinese diaspora, have also broadened the venue of memory contestation beyond the borders of the PRC. Rapid information flows and unpredictable events abroad further limit the Party's flexibility. Perhaps the most fundamental constraint is intellectual. Manipulating wartime memories for political pragmatism is, after all, hypocrisy. Even the world's largest and most powerful Communist Party cannot control the past; not forever.

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