# History, citizens and morality in the Twentieth Century Remembering traumatic events in China and Japan

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"Crime and suffering are not frightening, indifference and numbness towards crime and suffering is." Dedication by Lu Yuegang to his book *Great country, powerless citizens.*[1]

*Summary*

This paper argues that even in the age of globalization and so-called "borderless society" we need to be aware of the importance of the relationship of individuals to their state. This relationship is not only determined by the current political system of the state in question, but also by the historical genesis of state and society. This brings history into the picture, as well as the moral dimension of the relationship between individual, his society and his state. In **Part 1** I discuss the issue of citizenship in relation to individual responsibility and guilt of citizens for actions committed by his "group" (society, state). Individual and collective responsibility (guilt) are issues that are important not only in per-modern society, but also in a secularized state. This may best be observed by analyzing a traumatic crisis that deeply affects the relationship of the individual to his society and state. In **Part 2** I analyze how the collapse of belief systems affected this relationship, choosing Japan's moment of defeat as observed in Japanese diary entries for August 15, 1945, and Chinese sources reflecting on the impact of the Cultural Revolution on the attitude of individuals towards society and state. In both cases, nationwide "moral missions" ended in violence and moral collapse. In the case of pre-war Japan, pride in the army was a central factor influencing the attitude of citizens towards their state. Defeat, and the Tokyo Trial virtually destroyed the roots of such "psychological militarism", bringing about a radical change in individual attitudes towards the state. In China, the Communist Party remained in power although it was responsible for launching the Cultural Revolution that was

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1 Lu Yuegang *Daguo Guamin*, Zhongguo dianying chubanshe, Beijing, 1998.

not only accompanied by widespread massive violence, but deeply affected all aspects of Chinese society. In this paper I attempt to develop ways to study the effects of these events on the "anonymous majority" in China and Japan. In both cases, a central theme is continuity and discontinuity before and after the event. In *Part 3* I focus mainly on literary sources published in China in recent years to search for clues that may provide answers to the questions raised above.

Our images of China and Japan still influence the position of both countries in the international system. It is not just the present economic and political situation that shape the structure of the relations between the individual, his society and the state. The aftermath of the traumatic turning points in the history of both countries continue to affect attitudes of citizens of those two countries, but also their standing in the international arena. This is one reason why issues such as the responsibility of citizens and their states for actions in the past remain important in this globalizing age.

## Part 1

### Citizenship, responsibility and guilt

The Japanese war against China, the tyrannies of Hitler, Stalin, the Great Leap Forward and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution caused deep sufferings and death for dozens of million individuals in Eurasia. This century was truly traumatic: such tragedies should not have occurred in the modern world, with all its pretence for rationality. One may of course also ask whether the quest for absolute rationality in politics and economics must not also be partly held responsible for these accidents. These events are not merely past history. The current position of countries in the international system is deeply influenced by foreign images of the involvement of Germany and Japan in the Second World War, just as images of Communist rule in China continue to be influenced by memories of the Cultural Revolution. Not altogether unrelated is the fact that citizens of Japan and China seem to have less of a voice among the contemporary international community than citizens of some other countries.[2] The Relationship of citizens to their respective states is of great importance in this globalizing age, since it also influences international perceptions of the "defective legitimacy" of some states, which in turn provides one of the key indicators for an informal ranking of states in the international system. There is a need to understand clearly how memories of traumatic events of the past continue to shape the relationship of citizens to their society and state.

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2 Citizens of Asia's largest democracy India may also feel their voice is seldom heard.

Another issure that is still with us is the ease with which situations of violence and war give rise to simplified images of "enemies" who seem to enjoy less human rights than others. Both fascism and communism created their different varieties of "nonpeople". Despite the secular pretences of these modern Western ideologies, they eventually fell prey to temptations of killings thought to be characteristic for a pre-modern age. Then as now witch hunts and pogroms were directed against human beings stigmatized as nonpeople. Wang Yi has recently argued that many features of the Cultural Revolution echo the blood-curdling religions of prehistoric times: even some of the slogans, such as "using a big stick" to drive out "evil spirits", "ox ghosts and snake spirits", and going as far as the ritualistic digging up of graves and cannibalism, suggest that the primitive past is still with us.[3] At the root of this phenomenon is the (in)human tendency to regard enemies as devils (in German, *die Verteufelung des Gegners*). Frank discussions of history may help us to overcome unjustified discrimination. We also need to reflect on ways to conceptualize these rather difficult and sensitives issues.

### Individual and collective responsibility
### Should individuals belonging to a "people" or "state" be held responsible collectively?

Collective participation in acts of violence, such as human or animal sacrifice, or even the highly sublimed expression of bodily in Christian churches, are acts that shape bonds of collective identity. The secularization of political systems has not necessarily liberated us from a bloodthirsty past. Modern "systems" all make claims of superior morality for their systems as such, and this applies equally to communism, socialism, and market democracy. Eventually, most systems engage in some kind of institutionalized violence, either in self-defense or as open aggression. The question arises whether all constituents of these systems-i.e., citizens of modern (nation) states-have to assume individual responsibility for deeds committed in the name of their states.

This is, of course, an eternal issue that is also a core issue in the Jewish Torah, couched in terms of the relation between individual, the people, and the Lord. The citizens of modern nation states rarely form a homogenous people in the racial sense, and none of the larger modern nation states could claim racial and religious unity uniting their citizen in a common bond with a superior being. The quasi-religious claims towards leadership by Hitler, Stalin and Mao Zedong defy the secularized pretence of modern totalitarianism. Pre-war Japan's "emperor" system clearly made use of religious attributes for its leader, the Tenno, but the system maintained a careful

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3 Wang Yi "Wenhua dageming" yemanxing he cankuxing de wenhua genyuan," pp. 10, 15. One may wonder to what extent Wang Yi has been influenced by Frank Dikoetter's work (see bibliography).

distance from the frequently changing political leaders of a modern-style government-Hirota, Konoe, and Tojo, to mention only a few. "In Japan, there is no general support for the idea that it was justified to conduct atrocities aganist ordinary Japanese since [government leaders such as] Tojo and the like were aggressors."[4]

### Secular Citizenship, responsibility and guilt

The development of the Christian religion and Islam of necessity had to take quite a different approach concerning the relation of believers towards the respective ethnic groups and state organizations. The tension between Christian religious institutions and other kinds of political institutions became a central theme of European history. As I suggested above, there is good reason to question whether German and Austrian citizens should invariably be treated as belonging to one group bearing collective responsibility *as if they were "one people"*. Despite, or exactly because of the mythology of the existence of a German ethnic people created by the Nazis, one should be rather hesitant to use the argument of *ethnic* guilt. To avoid any misunderstanding, this writer holds that the successor state to the Third Reich should, as a matter of course, shoulder the necessary responsibilities. It is arguable, however, that moral responsibility must be born by those directly or indirectly involved in crimes prepetrated. The perpetrators ought to shoulder the guilt as well. Guilt is related to internalized value systems (not necessarily religious ones) of those directly involved in wrongdoing, but shouldering responsibility is a social act that depends on the structure of the socio-political environment. For that reason, all members of a group should bear responsibility for actions of the group even if the individual may not be guilty personally.

### Nonpeople in China and Japan

In past ages Christian churches in Eastern and Western Europe had been linked to institutionalized violence. During the twentieth century it was some states that instigated violence involving several hundred million Europeans most of whom probably regarded themselves as heirs to European Christian civilization in a positive sense. During the twentieth century Christian institutions appeared to be unable to prevent the wars and massacres executed by European states and radical political movements. Mass killings and wars of aggression were of usually accompanied by propaganda that declared large groups of human beings to be either "inferior", or even nonpeople, individuals who were not to be treated as ordinary citizens of their states. Communist dictatorships as a rule grouped people in terms of "classes", with members of

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4 *Massatsu sareta nihonjin no gendaishi*, p.61.

"landlord" or "reactionary" classes having reduced, or no citizen rights whatsoever. This was not merely a legal issue. The following quotations from the Chinese novel *Fangzhu* (Banished, Driven Out) by Liu Fangwei may illustrate this point.

> "The concept of "class struggle" made people regard those belonging to the landlord class not as human people."[5] "When a landlord died it was impossible to express grief in public, although there was no special rule on this, any realistic person understood this."[6] Discrimination continued even after death: "The rules on cremation were very explicit; the ashes of [such] people belonging to the four categories (*4 lei fenzi*) could not be taken home."[7]

Japanese prewar state ideology, but also unofficial Asianism advocated the cooperation of peoples in Asia and stressed the communality of races in Korea and China under Japanese leadership. It is impossible to draw up a simple picture of the way race relations in Asia developed and changed after 1868, the foundation of modern Japan. Many Chinese and Japanese supported the slogan "a common culture, a common race". This did not prevent both people from portraying the "enemy" in times of war not only as "different", but also as "inferior".

In theory, the Soviet Union was committed to a universalistic approach goving equal rights to all ethnic groups-in actual fact of *"russifikatsia"* from the Baltic to East Asia underlined the colonial nature of the Russian Soviet Empire. The perversion of communist internationalist ideals was made all the easier by the elevation of Lenin and Stalin to figures of super-human stature with quasi-religious attributes. In short, it was not necessarily "secularization" that destroyed traditional positive values-despite the pretence of secularization, some modern states indulged in the glorification and mystification of "people"(Volk) with a motley assembly of religious elements.

### Responsibility and guilt of modern citizens

Citizens of these aggressor states-with the exception of those individuals declared nonpeople-were forced to take part in collective violence perpetrated by their leaders. The nagging question remains whether the moral responsibility for their crimes should be carried by "the system" itself, a numerically relatively small group of leaders, and to what extent individual citizens who happened to have (acquired) the nationality of these states should feel morally responsible.

One ought to separate the question of the "political legitimacy" of a state or government, and the question to what extent an incividual feels morally responsible for the action of the

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5 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu*, p. 458.
6 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu*, p. 460.
7 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu*, p. 466.

government of the state of which he is a citizen. Linked to this is the question whether a modern secular government should be seen as an expression of the will of an imagined or real "people", with its long-term moral responsibility, and whether individual citizens of a secular state should feel moral responsibility for actions of the state as a representative of his "people". These are issues which must be raised in an age indulging in ideas about a "borderless" world and globalization-although I will be the first one to admit that globalization certainly des not imply internationalism old style.

Perhaps the larger part of the world's population lives in countries that do not more or less coincide with a long shared history-and the same may be said of countries like Australia, and the United States. An immigrant acquiring US citizenship by 1980 can hardly bear responsibility for what happened during the Vietnam War -and should individual citizens of Iraq -which consists of several larger different ethnic/religious groups-be all held responsibe for the deeds of the Saddam government, governing a country whose borders were drawn up by a colonial power?

In China, "civic" responsibility is still a sensitive issue, since advocating incividual responsibility invariably undermines the claim by the Party to set moral standards. The relation between private, public and social morality is usually not a static one, but changes in the course of history. During the twenties there were numerous articles in China on *kokkashugi*, the idea of the state, such as by Li Huang.[8] Li Huang argued that in Chinese history for thousands of years private, family, and individual morality were at the center, but not civic responsibility.[9] Such views were fairly common during the prewar period. Like others, Li Huang is fascinated by the idea that Jews too preserved their national identity even during long when they did not have a state.[10]

In a recent interview the brother of the Emperor, Mikasanomiya recalled that during the war Japanese were convinced that China had not known nationalism in the sense of having a concept of state (*kokka kannen*).

"Being a true Chinese means following familism."[11]

To sum up, questions of trauma, guilt and responsibility have a close bearing on the relation of individual to society, religious and secular institution. In discussiong these issues with respect to the recent history of China and Japan it will therefore be necessary to place them in the context of the different structure of the social, political and moral heritage of both countries.

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8 "Kokkashugi shakugi Li Huang," in *Pekin mantetsu geppoo tokukan*, No.5.

9 "Kokkashugi shakugi Li Huang," in *Pekin mantetsu geppoo tokukan*, No.5, p. 19–20

10 "Kokkashugi shakugi Li Huang," in *Pekin mantetsu geppoo tokukan*, No.5, p. 18.

11 Nakano Kunimi et al. "Yami ni hoomurareta kooshitsu no gunbu hihan. Sanboo/Mikasanomiya no "kikenbunsho" hakken," in *This is Yomiuri*, August 1994, pp. 40–88.

## Part 2

### Reacting to traumatic events. The post-war period in Japan and the Cultural Revolution in China

I first focus on the reactions of individuals in China and Japan to traumatic events within their own countries, such as the Japanese defeat and surrender in 1945, and the consequences of the Cultural Revolution (late sixties) and its aftermath in China. In this paper the emphasis is on reactions by the "anonymous majority" which, while living through these events, have not received attention as victims of particular cruelty. I believe that both in China and Japan collective memories exist that are not suitably expressed in official sources and statements, and which do have do have a bearing on the way memories of these historical events are constructed, and the way they are forgotten as well. Huge numbers of people in China, Japan, Germany and elsewhere appear to have sincerely believed in causes and ideologies which they more or less suddenly had to abandon. To many these beliefs had appeared to be a genuine, if not "holy" cause. The sudden, often unexpected profanation and desecration of such beliefs was followed by the accusation that having believed means having been gulllible, if not outright (dangerously) stupid and criminal as well. Questions of individual and collective responsibility arise. The answers seem obvious, certainly answers to be given in the public place, but individuals often attempt to bypass clear answers, and this often also applies to political parties, governments, and states. In some societies "official histories" (*zhengshi*) are entrusted with the task of settling issues and providing "final" judgment. How to settle differences of historical judgement among nations has become a very real issue in international relations, as in East Asia, and moves have been made to set up joint committees of historians from former enemy countries to establish "correct history". To this one may reply that the writing of history can never be closed, nor does history itself ever come to a conclusion. Despite the great political relevance of the historical past on international relations, neo-realist theories of international relations usually pay insufficient attention to its significance.

### The question of sources-the end of the war in Japan

There is a huge amount of literature written in many languages on issues related to Japan's wars, civil war and the Cultural Revolution in China. Even half a century after the Japanese war in China we are still far removed from the compilation of histories that present systematic and balanced analyses on the basis of sources published by communist and non communist, Chinese, Japanese and non-Asian sources. Numerous studies of the impact of the last war on Japan focus on the effects of Japan's fight and surrender against (mainly) US forces, or are devoted to Japan's military actions in one of the numerous war theatres in Asia. Studying the

impact on psychological reactions by individuals, communities, and Japan as a whole requires an insight in the complexity of the way the "two wars" -the one on the Asian mainland and the war against the United States, interacted. I dealt with this issue in a separate study.[12] In this paper I will focus mainly on one published selection of Japanese diary extracts of the day of defeat, August 15, 1945.[13] Since this paper deals with this specific aspect of Japanese reactions on the day of defeat I will not refer to some larger issues, such as the role of the Yasukuni Shrine in the remembrance of the war.[14] Despite the existence of a research field on the construction of collective memories, what has been said about the Vietnam War may be equally true for other wars:

"The war in the consciousness of the Vietnamese themselves is even much more difficult to assess, despite the many memoirs, personal recollections and occasional meetings between scholars and between former enemies."[15]

## The Cultural Revolution

By now we can speak of studies on the Cultural Revolution as a particular branch of the scientific study of China. It has been the subject of numerous conferences, and archives have been established around the world, partially accessible through internet. The Harvard-Yenching Libary, the Hoover Institute Library, and the East Asia Library at the University of Michigan, to mention only a few, have established special collections. Among recent conferences, the workshop on "China's Cultural Revolution: political causes and social consequences," held at the CPAS at Stockholm University in 1995, Sweden deserves special mention. In this study I will focus on the way Chinese literary sources reflect the events and memories of the Cultural Revolution. I will not discuss the veracity of their descriptions, but analyze the way the Cultural Revolution is remembered in these sources.

## Reactions to traumatic events
### Collapse of belief systems and the continuity and rupture of socio-political systems
At the moment belief systems collapse, individuals are challenged to re-examine the way they were individually bonded and linked to the imagined community of the past. It is clear that at such turning points the relationship between "citizen" and society, and his/her state will

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12 At the time this paper was written I had no access yet to John Dower's recent book *Embracing Defeat*, which deals with some of these issues.

13 There are numerous other sources such as *Doojitudookoku: taiheiyoo sensoo kaisen no ichinichi to shuusen no 15nichi* by Yamada Futaro, 1979 (I owe this reference to Yoda Yoshiie).

14 Murakami Shigeyoshi, *Irei to shookon-Yasukuni no shisoo*, Iwanami shinsho, 1974 (reprint 1995).

15 Kleinen,"The Vietnam War", pp. 345-368.

undergo an important change. It seems impossible to present a statistically valid survey of changes in individual attitude towards society and the state in reponse to such transitions. As time goes by, historians, the destroyers and creators of myths present their own evaluations, and together with other unofficial and official sources of opinion create a new web of memories that seeks to fix the past in a static, manageable image.[16] This includes moves to create joint teams of Chinese and Japanese historians to "settle history" in a quasi-official way, as it were, in order to lay the foundations for a better future history. The citizens of China, Japan, the Soviet Union and Germany found themselves in quite different environments after the period of trauma had ended: Germany was divided and placed under direct military administration, Japan was occupied, but did neither suffer division nor direct military rule. The Soviet Union collapsed, and it is only in China that the major institution ruling the country at the time, the Chinese Communist Party, is still in power. It should not surprise, then, that the processes of dealing with the past differ considerably, not just at the official, but also at the individual level. After the Cultural Revolution the Party often avoided drawing a clear line between victims and perpetrators -it wanted to lay the blame for the Cultural Revolution on a limited number of people. In this way, it was hoped, the Party could largely avoid being blamed for this tragedy itself.

### The "moral mission" of the Chinese Communist Party

In China, the Communist Party tried, during the height of its dictatorial powers, to create an awareness of "proletarian morality" and "proletarian loyalty" that would bond Chinese citizens not to the state, but rather to the party. This process facilitated a double exclusiveness: a privileged group of people standing above the mass of citizens of the state, and an excluded group nonpeople who were actually prevented from enjoying any legal protection.

Modern Chinese nationalism did not automatically imbue members of Chinese society with an acceptance of collective responsibility as members of the Chinese people or a state, quite apart from the position of ethnic groups other than the so-called "Han". The "belief crisis" that emerged full force during the eighties and virtually destroyed what had remained of the moral authority of the Communist Party, also raised questions about the relationship between Chinese individuals and their bond with the Chinese state. As was the case in the past, especially in non-urban areas of China we are witnessing a revival of traditional clan structures where the individual owes its first loyalty not to the state as a member of the Chinese "people", but to his

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16 Radtke,"Troubled Identity", in China's *Modernisation: Westernization and Acculturation*, Kurt W. Radtke and T. Saich eds., Stuttgart 1993, p.37.

respective clan.[17] These issues come to the fore in the way responsibility for the cultural Revolution is conceptualized. The official view has been that the suffering had been caused by the usurpation of the CCP by a few "corrupt leaders". As early as the seventies dissidents like Wen Yizhe had ventured beyond, blaming the totalitarianism of the Party as such. More recently, some writers questioned whether social and cultural traditions of Chinese society (or the Chinese poeple) may not also have contributed to events such as the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. There have been relatively few thorough discussions about the way this discourse influences the civic consciousness of citizens of the Chinese state.

It may come as a surprise that in the post-war period few Japanese see the Japanese "people" as such as responsible for Japan's acts of aggression against its Asian neighbors, and the war against the Allied countries. As the war progressed numerous Japanese soldiers were actively trained to regard Chinese, for instance, as lesser human beings. Forced participation in collective violence was one of the means to numb individual pangs of conscience, so vividly described by Shikada Masao in his account of bayonet practice on live Chiese prisoners of war. One aim and consequence was also the destruction of pride and self-esteem among the perpetrators themselves.[18]

### The "moral mission" of Meiji Japan

The development of the modern Japanese state also saw appeals to Japanese racial superiority which clearly echo nineteenth century European racial theories. In this sense, Japan followed the ways of those European secularized totalitarian parties that created their own myths about their respective "peoples". Despite the strong awareness of "being Japanese" there is little sense of the continued responsibility of the post-war young generation of Japanese for the actions committed by pre-war Japan. The recent book by Sakaiya Taiichi (current Head of the Economic Planning Agency, see below) attempts a rational explanation. His rationalizing explanation emphasizes the "hollownes" (fancy charactoer, *kuusoo*) of Japanese propaganda for an emperor state. He regards this feature as a fairly short term aberration. He argues that prewar and postwar Japan were basically poised towards the creation of a strong modern ecomomy.[19] It would be difficult to deny

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17 The revival of "clan norms" (*zongfa*) in parts of China has created an eveironment in which the individual is easily subject to social control by traditional clans in society. This creates a latent danger for the state, since it constitutes a reversal of a contemporary pattern of individual social responsibility towards the state in the direction of the traditional pattern "individual-clan-society". He Qinglian *Xiandaihuade xianjing*, pp. 282 ff.

18 Shikada Masao "Sankoo (Sanguang) sakusen to tameshikiri," *Sekai.* (tokushuu: kagai no shoogen. ⟨7. 7⟩ Rokookyoo jiken 60 nen), July 1997, p. 98–104. My article "Negotiations Between the PRC and Japan on the Return of Japanese Civilians and the Repatriation of Prisoners of War" contains numerous comments on the issue of Japanese war crimes as seen from China. For a report on a Japanese delegation of former soldiers to China, see "Riben jiu junren daibiaotuan fangwen feigu zhi jianwen", in *Feiqing guancha baogao*, vol. 2, January 1957, pp. 33–54. On Japanese "refuseniks" opposing the war, see Akiyama Yoshiaki, *Chuugoku sensen no hansen heishi.*

19 Sakaiya Taiichi *Jidaimatsu*, p. 107 ff.

that since the Meiji Reform numerous Japanese felt very strongly about the moral mission the Japanese people carried, and their moral obligations towards Asia as a whole. This should not simply be seen in terms of some facile "nationalism".[20] Studying the reactions of individual Japanese to the surrender of August 1945 few express sorrow or anger at the failure to achieve such a Japanese moral mission. Japan's surrender was not necessarily conceptualized as "defeat", a major difference to the German experience of "defeat" in May 1945 (see the references to "defeat" in the diaries referred to below). In the awareness of most Japanese, surrender was caused by US military superiority at sea and in the air, followed by the sudden and unexpected early end to the war through the use of nuclear weapons. This left many Japanese with the feeling that they had not been defeated in the war on the Asian continent. In my view the different conduct of war against the allies under US leadership and in Asian war theatres has complicated images of the war, especially when it comes to discussions of atrocities committed in Asia.[21] One of the purposes of the Tokyo Tribunal was to establish a clear parallel between the defeat of the German people as a people carrying collective responsibility, and the Japanese situation. Japanese writers of the left, the center and the right have consistently denied the applicability of the German precedent for establishing a Tokyo trial, since according to them Japan had not engaged in the kind of collective genocide aganist "nonpeople" that was a major charge aganist Germany.[22]

### The pride of Japan: the role of the Japanese army in modern nation building [23]

There have been few discussions in Japan concerning issues such as guilt by association, or responsibilities emanating from indirect involvement in Japan's prewar aggression. Following Shimada Kazushige I would argue that even more so than the "emperor system" one should seek the roots of Japan's aggression in the ability of the army to establish itself as the symbol for

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20 Kawashima Naniwa was a Japanese deeply involved in Mongolian "independence movements" striving for autonomy, or full independence from China. His convictions were not merely driven by jingoistic Japanese nationalism, but by the kind of sense of mission characteristic for colonialism everwhere. See the text of a confidential speech of his listed in the bibliography.

21 Japan was the only Asian democratic modern nation state included into the post-war common camp of anit-communist states under U.S. leadership. The victims of Japanese aggressions-whether communist or anti-communist-with few exceptions developed into dictatorships whose human right credentials were extremely dubious, and this includes the two Koreas, Communist China, Taiwan, and the countries of Southeast Asia. West Germany remained rather reluctant to aceept proof of war crimes supplied by Communist governments, which were frequently supplied selectively with clear political motives, and Japan showed a similar reluctance. Compare Himeta Mitsuyoshi, 92 ff.

22 *Massatsu sareta nihonjin no gendaishi*, p. 116–7, The Tribunal has been frequently blamed for applying here an inappropriate (Western) view of history to the history of pre-war Japan (cf. Sakaiya Taiichi Jidaimatsu, p. 129). Comparisons between German and Japanese dealing with war responsibiliy are found in Kuriya Kentaro et al, *Sensoo sekinin*.

23 For a recent relevant study, see Peter Wetzler *Hirohito and* War.

the new, and successful, Japan.[24] Whereas pride in the Japanese army-especially following the defeat of Russia contributed to its subsequent unchallengeable status, Hitler's tyranny fed on feelings of revenge for Germany's defeat in the First World War, and the weakness of the Weimar Republic. This differnce of outlook among German and Japanese citizens may be one of the reasons for the difference of general emotional reactions towards the past.

Taking pride modern style national armies dates back to the time of Napoleon when all children longed to become a soldier of Napoleon. In Japan, soldiers became models for the citizen of the new nation. Japan's pride in the army was not invariably linked to issues of morality, but in a sense, pride itself became a moral value.[25] As Shimada pointed out, putting up the issue of the Nanking massacre in the Tokyo trial aimed to destroy the charisma of the Japanese army within Japan once and for all. The US succeeded in this way perhaps more effectively to uproot the core of the pre-war state than if it had focused on the Japanese emperor personally as the root of all evil.[26] The psychological importance of the Nanking Massacre also relies on the fact that it draws a clear and explicit parallel between acts of genocide by Nazi Germany and pre-war Japan.[27] Destroying Japan's pride was one thing, but this did not lead to feelings of collective guilt so important for an understanding of post-war German history. Japan's reluctance to apologize to its neighbors during the fifties, sixties and seventies may also be related to the fact that this would have meant that the newborn democracy should bow its head to the dictatorial governments of neighboring countries in Asia such as Communist China.

### Remembering the past: the Japanese Left

It would be wrong, however, to suggest that Japan as a whole subsequently simply ignored, or forgot its war past. The outlook of the socialist and communist parties who consistently polled more than 30% of the votes during the fifties blamed the peculiar combination of premature capitalism and a still partly feudal society for the development of "Japan's own brand of fascism". In a sense, this view is structurally not too dissimilar from those American views that

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24 *Massatsu sareta nihonjin no gendaishi*, pp. 107, 116-7.

25 *Massatsu sareta nihonjin no gendaishi*, p. 107.

26 *Massatsu sareta nihonjin no gendaishi*, p. 116-7.

27 The Nanking Massacre started to play a significant role in the evaluation of Japan's conduct in Japan only well into the occupation period. For this reason only, I dispense with a treatment within the framework of this paper. On the importance of "Nanking", see for instance Noda Masaaki "Sensoo to zaiseki. Nihonhei ni okeru [kanashimi] no mondai," in *Sekai*. (tokushuu: kagai no shoogen. ⟨7.7⟩ Rokookyoo jiken 50nen), July 1997, p. 150-160. The report compiled by Hsu Shuhsi, *A Digest of Japanse War Conduct* is a striking example of a contemporay source on "Nanking" which strives meticulously to report only facts observed by reliable witnesses. For a recent Japanese comment, see Hata Ikuhiko's contribution in *Japan Echo*, August 1998. See also Joshua Fogel ed. *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*, University of California, *1999*.

regard the depression of 1929, and Japan's peculiar structure of business conglomerates that cooperated with military leaders as a major cause for Japan's "aberration" from the path towards true parliamentary democracy.[28] But even beyond the left, contrary to the general impression outside Japan, there has been a continuous stream of critical publications in Japanese on the war, and Ienaga Saburo is only one among many.[29]

### The Cultural Revolution in China. Whose pride, whose responsibility? Army, party and state in China

In China, the communist armies played a major role in the building of a new, unified nation state; for long periods, the army was able to claim that it had been able to defend the "correct" (socialist/communist) line more faithfully even than the CCP itself. Differing from Japan where adulation of the army became a main reason for Japan's policies of aggression the PLA was not regarded as the root of the evils of the Cultural Revolution, although the image became certainly tainted by the appearance of Lin Biao's "party soldiers". In China it was not the army that had formed the "moral" core of the nation. Neverthless, we should not underestimate that in China, too, the descriptions of war in novels clearly depicts how legends of new heroism linked nation building (*minzuhua*), the creation of mass society (*dazhonghua*) and the spirit of a new age, in novels couched in peasants' language. Pan Xianwei argues that the mentality of the war literature still reflects traditional ideas of the gentry elite (*shidafu*).[30] The role of "war" (civil wars as well as wars against foreign armies) has so far mainly been studied from its implications for the rise of nationalism, while its role in the building of an awareness of a modern Chinese state has received less attention. The awareness of being "Chinese" works differently in a period where China is merely one among numerous "nation states", and no longer the center of the known world. For this reason it is futile to search for defenitions of ethnicity that are consistently, and equally applicable for the past as well as the present.[31]

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28 One of the earliest contemporary serious discussions about the issue of "fascism" in Japan is found in the Selected Works of Hasegawa Nyozekan, a liberal journalist. *Hasegawa Nyozekan senshuu*. Vol. 2, 1969.

29 See e.g. the Oral history project of Tokyo University, *Tokutei* Kenkyuu [*bunka masatsu*] , published in numerous volumes during the eighties by the International Relations Research Center of the Kyooyoo Faculty, Tokyo University. Contributions by Arai Shin'ichi, Yoshimi Yosiaki and Yoshida Yutaka to the quarterly journal *Kikan sensoo sekinin kenkyuu*, published by the Nihon no sensoo sekinin shiryoo senta http://www.jca.ax.apc.org/JWRC/index.html, are more recent examples of Japanese attempts to cope with the question of war responsibility.

30 Pan Xianwei "Lun Zhong Su Zhanzheng xiaoshuo shenmei de qutongxing he chayixing," p. 42.

31 Deng Fan *Chuantong minzu yu xiandai minzu guojia*, passim. I have dealt with this theme in my paper entitled "National Identity in China and Japan. Intended and Unintended Consequences of Japan's Expansion on the Asian Continent", presented at a Workshop held at the Nordic Institure of Asian Studies (Copenhagen) on 18 June 1999. Anthropologists are usually loath to apply the term "nation" or "people" in a "racial" sense. See for instance, Emily Honig *Creating Chinese ethnicity: Subei People in Shanghai, 1850-1980*.

## Violence: aggression or self-defense? The League of Nations, the United Nations, and supra-national morality

Finally, I should raise another point which is unfortunately of particular relevance today. Questions of "national" (if not a "people's") guilt and responsiblility are closely linked to the question of whether military actions beyond borders are acts of aggression, or should on the contrary be interpreted as actions in self-defense. One of the major purposes of the establishment of the United Nations at its inception was the condemnation of Japan and Germany as "aggressor nations", and the prevention of future wars. The ability and/or legitimacy of the United Nations to act as a supranational moral arbiter had never been universally accepted, and was once more thrown into doubt in the current war in Central Europe. This should not come as a surprise. No (secularized) institution can discharge the function of a universal moral arbiter. Questions of moral judgment rest with each individual, and cannot be subject to (democratic) vote, or a system of representation.[32] By the same token, military actions of democratic governments against other states are not inherently "moral", even if directed against non-democratic dictators.

The brother of the Showa Emperor, Mikasanomiya, argued in a rare interview that with the departure of Japan from the League "Japan turned the whole world into its enemy. Subsequently, the feeling got lost from the hearts that Japan had to keep international law". He seemed to imply that for Japan at that time "supra-national morality" was part of a modernized, international world represented by the League of Nations, and not a set of internalized values.[33]


## Reacting to traumatic events: the "anonymous majority" in China and Japan

The term "traumatic events" has long been overused, and shown inflationary devaluation. Modern psychiatry has for several decades engaged in research on the causes and consequences of "trauma". So far, there have been relatively few broadly based studies of the effects of individual trauma on the history of societies as a whole, with the exception of Israel perhaps. There exists no generally accepted methodology to classify and generalize the human experience of hundreds of millions of people exposed to widely varying impact of violence and war. The widespread awareness of "trauma" in its clinical sense is in fact of very recent date. Twenty years ago trauma researchers in Europe complained about having insufficeint numbers of patients

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32 *Partly* due to the recent bombing of Yugoslavia by NATO there have been increasing doubts concerning the continued authority of the Security Council of the UN to approve or reject military actions as being in self defense.
33 "Sanboo/Mikasanomiya no "kikenbunsho" hakken", in *This is Yomiuri*, August 1994, pp. 40–88, esp. p. 64.
34 Interview with Prof. dr. Rolf Kleber, Catholic University Brabant, Netherlands, in *Volkskrant*, 13 March 1999.
35 John J. Sigal *The Nature of Evidence for Intergenerations Effects of the Holocaust.*

for conducting research of their syndrome.[34] Moreover, we have to take into account the possibility that effects of traumas are transmitted to the following generation.[35] In China, there are far fewer trauma specialists as a percentage of the population, but there is also a lack of a general awareness of trauma as a syndrome. This does not mean trauma did not exist. There have been some studies about the impact of events such as the Cultural Revolution on individual personality, but it is fairly difficult to find suitable sources describing mass reactions to traumatic events, especially where the expression of such reactions may be culturally conditioned. Needless to add that field research in a country like China is encumbered by the sheer size of the country and the fact that conditions vary not only among macro-regions, but may differ substantially even among neighboring villages. Non-Chinese researchers, but also Chinese researchers with little background knowledge of a particular village (and its dialect) may find it quite difficult to conduct interviews without local assistance-trust necessary for such research is not easily gained, even if there were no (local or other) political pressures.[36i] On many issues involving social transformations and individual reactions literary sources are therefore a welcome aid. There, however, we find a truly staggering amount of published literature: counting "long novels" (*changpian xiaoshuo*) alone, the number published has been around one thousand per year. For purposes of research the particular Chinese genre of "reporting Literature" (*baogao wenxue*) is particularly interesting.[37] They are often published locally, or in regional serial publications not easily available.[38] It is obvious that at this stage no systematic survey of literary sources is feasible, and that my selection of works consulted is of necessity fairly arbitrary.

### Continuities and discontinuities: the developmental state, and the Emperor in prewar and postwar Japan

The comparative study of continuities and discontinuities in China and Japan has to take into account the impact of war and violence on the cohesion of communities in both countries,

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36 Mia Turner "Up from the snake pit After decades of hiding its mental illnesses, China is once again turning to the practice of Psychiatry. *Time International*, European edition, November 6, 1995 (vol. 146, no. 19). A fairly early study is by Anita Chan, *Children of Mao: personality development and political activism in the Red Guard generation*, Seattle, University of Washington Press 1985. Please refer to the endnote for detailed bibliographic information.

37 As I stressed decades ago in doing research on literary traditions other than one's own, one has to accept that the definition of literary genres, and the disstribution of literature over various genres differs in Chinese, Japanese and English language literatures. This has important implications for the (literary) evaluation of sources that are all too often ignored. *Baogao wenxue* stands in the Chinese literary tradition of striving towards verisimilitude. The dramatization of events by the "reporting writer" allows the concrete presentation of insights which (Western) traditions of analytic sometimes fails to catch.

38 For a general survey of recent literature dealing with social change in China, see e.g. Hagino Shuuji *Chuugoku "Shin jiki bungaku" ronkoo. shisoo kaihoo no sakkagun*. 1995 Kansai daigaku shuppanbu. There of course numerous other surveys on recent Chinese literature. An interesting study is by Qi Shuyu *Shichang jingjixia de zhongguo wenxue yishu*, Beijing daxue chubanshe, Beijing, 1998, who uses the post-modernist approach suggested by Frederic Jameson.

communities that were also deeply affected by political events such as the occupation of Japan, the changes imposed by the Chinese Communist Party, and industrialization and urbanization. This is particularly relevant when considering issue related to the question of individual and collective responsibilities and guilt.

I should like to introduce here the views of Sakaiya Taiichi on the link between prewar and postwar Japan, as presented in the second volume of his recent book entitled *End of a period (Jidaimatsu)*. Sakaiya is not only a well-known commentator on social and political issues, but currently also Head of the Economic Planning Agency of the Japanese government.

> "Since the nineties in discussions with youngsters entering high school I was sruck by the fact that they have virtually no interest and no knowledge about the Pacific War. There are some who view the whole of the actions of prewar Japan in extremely bad terms as taught by members of the leftist teachers union (*Nikkyoso*), but this is a story completely unrelated to their own existence. For them, cruelties by the Japanese army in China and the holocaust of Nazi Germany are similarly "crimes committed by others in the far distant past".[39]

In Sakaiya's view, this is related to the disappearance of moral communities at the level of family and neighborhood as one of the relevant features in modern urbanized Japan.[40] Japan succeeded in rapid postwar reconstructin despite the collapse of the "Great Japanese Empire". According to him this was possible since Japanese prewar society had also internalized different concepts of a modern industrializing society, concepts in agreement with those propounded by the occupation forces. Our analysis of pre-war Japan should take into account that social discourse in terms of the "Empire" was but one side of the coin-the *tatemae*, so to speak, while other concepts of a modern industrialized society were hidden from direct view (*honne*).

> "Military and civil officials as well as business all aiming towards a modern industrial society geared towards mass production had compromised with fancy (*kuusooteki*) Japanists pleading for a patriarchal emperor system."[41]

He concedes that some may object stongly to this interpretation, since historical sources appear to show that Japan was willing to sacrifice concepts of a modern economy and society to those of a militarized emperor state. In this view, we cannot simply identify the contents of written sources with the ultimate goals cherished by society.

> "In such a situation, the intentions of organizations at a distance from state goals, and the hysterics of the abnormal situation on war play their own role. We may argue that the

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39 Sakaiya Taiichi *Jidaimatsu*, p. 100.
40 Sakaiya Taiichi *Jidaimatsu*, p. 102.
41 Sakaiya Taiichi *Jidaimatsu*, pp. 107–111.
42 Sakaiya Taiichi *Jidaimatsu*, pp. 110–11.

Japanese Empire in its final phase was in a situation where the *honne* and *tatemae* were considerably at variance.[42] ⋯ When the Pacific War intensified ⋯ the deficiencies in military strength and the absence of feelings of moral justice (*seigikan*) became apparent"[43]

He subsequently points out that even in purely organizational terms, Japanese military forces were not truly unified (as they ought to be in a modern nation state).

"In addition, contemporary Japanese neither had the ability nor the enthusiasm to spread the ideals of their patriarchal emperor system abroad. ⋯ The establishment of Shinto temples based on traditional myths of the Japanese people was merely a means of gaining points in domestic politics."[44]

Sakaiya subsequently explains Japan's reckless war (*muboo na sensoo*) not as an abandonment of modernization and economism (*keizaishugi*), but as a way to secure the means for modernization such as the assured supply of raw materials.[45] It was in his view this particular structure of Japan that explains why the emperor could fulfill a key role in making Japanese leaders accept surrender, and once the leaders had accepted surrender, make the people accept surrender.[46]

Like Nakasone Yasuhiro and some other politicians, Sakaiya goes to considerable lengths to exonerate the Emperor from any participation in crimes committed by the Japanese govenment in his name.[47] Sakaiya obviously accepts a division of awareness among more "rationally oriented" leaders and ordinary Japanese who had been educated to believe in the absolute authority of the emperor. He adds, however, that while being caught in their ideas about the emperor state, Japanese at all levels had in fact already lost confidence in victory. The acceptance of surrender by the emperor resulted in a rather surprising situation, namely the relative absence of a genuine feeling of defeat both among the people and the leaders. The latter were under the impression that there would be no need for a drastic change of Japanese politics and administration.[48] Sakaiya explains the smooth course of demobilization as due to the fact that "originally, the Japanese are a peaceful people, not familiar with weapons."[49] Despite the authority exercised by MacArthur and his occupation headquarter Sakaiya stresses that Japan was the only country defeated in the second world war which did not suffer direct military rule, and ascribes a deep significance to this fact.[50]. He also refers to a speech by former prime minister Kaifu Toshiki

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43 Sakaiya Taiichi *Jidaimatsu*, pp. 105–6.
44 Sakaiya Taiichi *Jidaimatsu*, pp. 106–7
45 Sakaiya Taiichi *Jidaimatsu*, p. 107.
46 Sakaiya Taiichi *Jidaimatsu*, pp. 122–3.
47 Sakaiya Taiichi *Jidaimatsu*, pp. 114ff. This tendency is also evident in the articles collected in "Sanboo／Mikasanomiya no "kikenbunsho" hakken", in *This is Yomiuri*, August 1994, pp. 40–88.
48 Sakaiya Taiichi *Jidaimatsu*, pp. 122–3.
49 Sakaiya Taiichi *Jidaimatsu*, p. 126.
50 Sakaiya Taiichi *Jidaimatsu*, p. 127.

who during a visit to the United States quoted a post-war popular song: "a dream in my right pocket, a chewing gum in my left one", to reflect the feelings of ordinary Japanese soon after the surrender, with its easy switch from the emperor ideology to a materialistically oriented economism.[51]

## The day of surrender in Japanese diaries

In this brief survey on the publication of diary entries for the few days from August 15, 1945 gathered in Ei Rokusuke's book.[52] Generally speaking these entries present a much more complex picture than Sakaiya's view summarized above. First of all, there are frequent references to the willingness, or the individual belief in the ability of Japan to continue the fight.[53] As in Germany we encounter the belief that the use of miracle weapons such as poisonous gas more powerful than nuclear bombs was imminent.[54] Japan's surrender was frequently met with expressions of disbelief.[55] Many reacted by crying for as long as twenty or thirty minutes at the very realization that "Japan had been broken" (yabureta).[56] Some Japanese walked hand in hand, like children, crying.[57]

There are usually very few concrete indications of what exactly defeat would mean-not surprising, perhaps, for a nation that had never had to face an occupation of its homeland in its long history. Many were deeply saddened by the realization that surrender meant that all personal sacrifices, especially when remembering close relatives that had died in the war, turned out to have been in vain.[58] There were reports of suicides, most famous of which was the suicide by the minister for the army, Anami.[59] Although the occupation itself passed relatively orderly, there were also scattered reports of looting, and even active opposition to the surrender (such as reports concerning the Konoe Unit).[60] Ordinary people had been thrown into the war withour being aware of what was happening, and the end of the war came just as sudden and unexpectedly.[61] Some were apprehensive about the coming burden of reparations, and the

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51 Sakaiya Taiichi *Jidaimatsu*, pp. 130-1.

52 Ei Rokusuke *Hachigatsu juugonichi no mikki, Kodansha, 1995*. For a recent Western study, see Frank Gibney, *Senso: The Japanese Remember the Pacific War*, M E Sharpe, 1995.

53 *Hachigatsu juugonichi no nikki*, pp. 132, p. 136.

54 *Hachigatsu juugonichi no nikki*, p. 132.

55 Kido Kooichi, *Hachigatsu juugonichi no nikki*, p. 40, and see also pp. 134f. and feelings of bewilderdness, p. 2.

56 *Hachigatsu Juugonichi no nikki*, p. 21.

57 *Hachigatsu Juugonichi no nikki*, p. 40.

58 *Hachigatsu Juugonichi no nikki*, p. 157.

59 *Hachigatsu Juugonichi no nikki*, p. 2.

60 *Hachigatsu Juugonichi no nikki*, p. 2.

61 Takahashi Aiko, housewife, in *Hachigatsu Juugonichi no Nikki*, p. 35.

62 See the diary entries by two writers, Tsuboi Shigeji, p. 167, Nagayo Yoshiroo and Umezaki Haruo, all in *Hachigatsu juugonichi no nikki*, pp. 171-2.

difficulties of reconstructing the Japanese economy and society.[62] Perhaps surprisingly, the diaries make virtually no mention of the fear of revenge by the occupying forces, and there are a number who at the moment of surrender look forward to reconstruct Japan as a way to overcome defeat. This is most clearly expressed by a member of the imperial family:

"How can we face our ancestors now that we are losing an imperial state (kokutai) that has lasted for three thousand years? We added a stain on three thousand years of shining Japanese history-ah, all is finished now."[63]

But rather than remaining in this self-pitying mood, she continues:

"We now have to develop science, and build an even more splendid Japan.⋯ In response to the emperor's gracious heart heart our citizens will do their best to strive for the country's development."[64]

A business leader like Murata Shoozoo welcomed the end to the battering of Japan, and a new chance for the reconstruction under the occupation. The coming occupation was clearly not seen in terms of a threat of revenge, but as a period for the reconstruction of Japan.[65]

Little, or rather no thought is given to the sacrifices inflicted on Koreans, Chinese, Americans and others attacked by Japan. Different from the situation in Germany where Germans were particularly afraid of the occupation by the Soviet Red Army, Japanese in the homeland had apparently little personal apprehension about the coming occupation. There are only few diary entries that spend some thought about what the end of the war may mean in terms of the suppression of Japanese in Korea and Manchuria.[66] These diaries reflect emotions at the instant of surrender. It took some time before Japan started to tackle the question of who was to blame for the outbreak of war, and to look into the deeper causes of the war.


### Conspiracy for war? Who had led Japan to attack the Asian mainland, and subsequently the United States?

Japanese leadership before and during the during the war changed frequently, and none of the leaders-including Tojo-ever achieved a quasi-permanent position of national leadership. There was little belief in the "personal leadership" by Japanese politicians, rather a general feeling of obligation towards the country, symbolized in loyalty towards the emperor. The emperor himself does not appear as an active leader engaged in the conduct of the war, and the refusal by the United States to charge him with war crimes further contributed to the feeling of diffusion of

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63 Nashinomotonomiya Ituko in *Hachigatsu juugonichi no nikki*, p. 23.
64 Id. See also Otabe Yuuji ed. *Nanihomotomiya Itsuko hi no nikki*, Shoogakkan 1991.
65 *Hachigatsu juugonichi no nikki*, p. 43, p. 160.
66 *Hachigatsu Juugonichi no nikki*, pp. 171-2, the writer Umezaki Haruo. It may be added that some other collections of

leadership. The size and depth of the actual purges was far smaller than originally anticipated; the occupation itself was scheduled to last for a considerable time, but was cut short by the United States in the context of the outbreak of the Korean War. While the left engaged in soul-searching about the social for the outbreak of Japanese fascism, few Japanese would be prosecuted for war crimes in Japan itself.

There was clearly a sense of loss of direction in the early phase after Japan's surrender. The vagueness of the actual content of the Emperor system, in the name of which the war had been conducted, and the continued functioning of the Emperor as an institution, albeit robbed of its "god-like" status (a misleading term), also implied that the breakdown of the "belief system" in Japan led to less soul-searching than was the case in Germany, where the monstrosity of Nazi rule had annihilated the pretence of German society as standing in the tradition of a humanist, Christian European civilization. Generally speaking, no such fundamental questioning took place in Japan; few individuals seem to have asked similar fundamental questions about their individual relationship towards the society they belonged.[67]


## Part 3

### The Great Prolearian Cultural Revolution: just the work of the "Gang of Four" and Mao Zedong?

Japan's wars of aggression and the eventual defeat can of course not directly be compared with China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, but both events may tell us something about the relation of the citizen towards his state. The Cultural Revolution was an event that Chinese inflicted upon Chinese, and not just on orders of the leaders during the Cultural Revolution. To many Chinese, it was a traumatic event that raised the question about how such an event could occur in a country that had already embarked on the road towards modern nation building. The hesitation to deal with this question is only partly explained by referring to the dictatorship of the Communist Party.


### The social effects of the Cultural Revolution

The end of the Cultural Revolution meant the end of an historic age. Individuals would start asking questions about the how and why. The questions asked, and the answers given provide clues not just about the tragedy of the Cultural Revolution, but also tell us about the relation of

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diaries kept during the war are rather difficult to interpret for obvious reason-such as awareness of censorship. See, for instance, *Sen'eki noomin heishi no tegami*, Iwate ken nooson bunka kondankai.

67 I owe thanks to Norman Hu with whom I discussed these issues. On the reluctance of Japanese to address the consequences of the war, see Gerald Sigal "How to Jibunshi", in *Jornal of Asian Studies*, November 1996.

the individual Chinese towards his/her people, the nation, the state, and the Party. It is mainly from this perspective that I should like to peruse some literary sources. By way of introduction, a few words are needed about the social effects of the Cultural Revolution. It needs little comment that once the Communist Party tried to distance itself from the Cultural Revolution, it used its its age-old tactics of blaming past error on a small group of people who had illegally, and temporarily, usurped party leadership. The monstrosity of violence, and the wide scale on which society had taken part in the Cultural Revolution, did not lend credibility to this attempt. Rather than blaming the state, to which the individual citizen had only a tenuous relationship knowing that it was an instrument of power of the Party, the Party as such ought to have been the focal point of massive blame. Apart from some dissidents such as WenYiZhe who dared blaming the "Lin Biao system", fear of repression meant, however, that discussions focused on blaming some individual leaders at the center, and some extremist leaders at the local, village and neighborhood level. There were few voices blaming general features of Chinese society for the relative ease with which the Cultural Revolution could spread through society as a whole.

The Cultural Revolution, through its actual administrative reforms in the People's Commune, and through its actions in the course of "revolutionary activities" (zaofanpai), in fact often strengthened pre-modern features of Chinese society. One such feature was that it increased social control and isolation of one community from the other.[68] In fact, immobility and traditional features of Chinese society were still preserved in features of the People's Communes.[69] This actually closed local society off from neighboring societies. Rather than just considering the Red Guards as an anonymous nation wide phenomenon, it is essential to also study their activities as part of inter-village and intra-village life.[70] "Rebels" frequently preferred to take more drastic action in a neighboring village than in their own.[71] In some villages, villagers tried as much as possible not to take part in excessive "struggles" against their covillagers. Very often, family members and whole families were held responsible for "crimes" committed by one of the family members.[72] The Cultural Revolution exerted social and ideological control not just over an individual, but families and villages as a whole-it strengthened "collective individuality".

Before the Cultural Revolution and its initial phase, the "Four Clean" movement, party cadres had usually still maintained social contact with families of traditional high standing, such as when invited to weddings, but not on public occasions.[73] Often, a village would suffer from the tyranny of a local leader who used "class struggle" to maintain his personal power. "Class

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68 Zhang Letian *Gaobie lixiang*, p. 432, 436.
69 He Qinglian *Xiandaihuade xianjing*, pp. 288, 289.
70 Zhang Letian *Gaobie lixiang*, p. 210 ff.
71 Zhang Letian *Gaobie lixiang*, p. 432.
72 Zhang Letian *Gaobie lixiang*, p. 211.

struggle" was not just a question of "genuine ideological" struggle. "Struggle" (*douzheng*) was one of the means to terrorize local society and the country at large. Far from being an intellectual discussion, it was the application of kangaroo court methods against individuals, not just by an anonymous party organization, but by party members acting as local bullies using abuse and physical torture.[74] Long years of class struggle meant that some individuals were not regarded as ordinary humans any more-they became nonpeople.[75] This was not just by chance. Systematic terrorizing required the continued existence of such nonpeople, termed class enemies, who were usually not able to free themselves from this label:

> "Father died in the Cultural Revolution, and although he had tried to make all sorts of contributions, he was not accepted by the revolutionary camp.[76]

In an apparent contradiction the totalitarian state does not allow anybody to live outside the system, as to vividly describedy in an allegorical short story by Han Shaogong.[77] Exercising power over a community required the terrorizing of a few scapegoats. Needless to say, these people did not enjoy the rights of citizen of the state. With the end of the Cultural Revolution numerous people such as landlords and their relatives were suddenly elevated to the status of a citizen (*gongmin*) of the People's Republic of China, in other words gaining certain rights,[78] although this process might have taken more time in some areas than in others.


### After the Cultural Revolution: Chinese society returning to where?

The end of the Cultural Revolution did not, however, mark the beginning of a return to society as it was before the Great Leap Forward. Despite the continuing political dictatorship of the Communist Party at the higher levels, its role as a totalitarian party controlling all sectors of society down into the villages was seriously undermined. At the same time, it strengthened the revival of features of local society that the Party had attempted to eradicate.

> "The cultural value outlook of the broad peasant population has not changed at all. In the void, in the contryside society the obligations and custom of bonds among relatives (*xueyuan guanxi*) very easily caused peasants to switch their reliance from administrative leadership towards relatives and their strongmen. ⋯ The revival of clan norms (*zongfa*) in some sense has created an environment where the individual is controlled by traditional clans in society,

73 Zhang Letian *Gaobie lixiang*, p. 437.
74 Lu Yuegang *Daguo Guamin*, p. 290f.
75 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu*, p.487.
76 Han Shaogong *Guiqulai*, p. 238. Leo Ou-fan made some interesting comments on Han Shaogong in his article "On The Margins of the Chinese Discourse." See also Curien, Annie "La tentation autobiographique dans l'oeuvre de deux ecrivains chinois contemporains: Han Shaogong et Shi Tiesheng." I owe these references to Mabel Lee.
77 Han Shaogong *Guiqulai*, p. 216.
78 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu*, p. 480.

and a reversal from a contemporary pattern of social responsibility [in the direction] of "individual-state" towards the traditional pattern of "individual-clan-society" ⋯ with its latent danger for the state".[79]

## The Cultural Revolution as a Religious Phenomenon

The phenomenon of the Cultural Revolution and its effects can however only imperfectly be grasped by reference to such social and political events. Below I will introduce in some detail an essay on the Cultural Revolution by Wang Yi, who sees streaks of atavism and religious madness on a large scale, which partly explain the cruelty meted out to political oponents, in particular noneople-and thereby points to a feature that clearly parallels what happened in Hitler's Germany.

> "Even if the barbarity and cruelty of the Cultural Revolution makes us loath to look back, at the same time, it is exactly our responsibility to explain its genesis from the beginnings of our culture."[80]

Wang Yi subsequently describes in detail how classics of Chinese civilization, such as the *Shanhaijing*, describe the early gods of Chinese civilization such as Fu Xi, Nuwa and Gonggong as beasts with human heads, and this also applies to Xiwangmu. It was an age in which frightened people attempted to defend themselves by driving out and killing "hungry ghosts". He goes on to draw parallels between the language and images used during the Cultural Revolution dealing with "enemies". Dormant ancient religious traditions such as digging up graves were revived. ⋯

> "Violence became not just the tool of a small handful of henchmen, on the contrary, became a holy duty of society as a whole, referred to in slogans such as "long live the dictatorship of the masses".[81]

As in primitive religions, the vilification of others as devils was repeated during the Cultural Revolution, a phenomenon observable in the religious courts of medieval age of Europe. Wang Yi also refers to St Augustin who blamed all illnesses of Christians as being caused by ghosts. Wang admits that in Chinese tradition there were similar prejudices against those of heretic convictions and beliefs as well, as exemplified in prejudices against the *Bailian* teaching. During the Cultural Revolution society saw itself as surrounded by myriads of evil and frightening spirits (*niugui sheshen*)which demanded their cruel and ruthless extermination. Wang quotes from

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79 He Qinglian *Xiandaihuade xianjing*, pp. 282 ff.
80 Wang Yi "Wenhua dageming" yemanxing he cankuxing de wenhua genyuan,", p. 9.
81 Wang Yi "Wenhua dageming" yemanxing he cankuxing de wenhua genyuan," p. 9.

Mao Zedong's poem *Dubaoshi* of 1961 to demonstrate that these ideas can also be found in Mao's writings of that period. This went so far that in the mad environment of the Cultural Revolution countless people imagined themselves to have become ghosts.[82]

### *Glorification of violence during the eighties*

The appearance of the glorification of local bandits and acts of violence during the eighties should also been seen in the context of the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. It has been argued that this tendency was in opposition to the attempt by the Party to obliterate this aspect of China's past (in real and folkloristic terms). Rather than being a mere "search for roots" (*xungen*) it certainly also contains worrying features in its nearly "romantic" details of physical violence of barbarism during the civil war, the anti-Japanese war, and also during the Qing dynasty.[83] It is not surprising that some have discovered similarity to fascist thinking in such stories. Similar to the description of bandits in the novel *Shuihuzhuan*, there is often little distinction between mere bandits and fighters for justice, as in Han Shaogong's description of violence during the late Qing period.[84]

> "Some bandits changed into goverment forces, and then hung up posters announcing that
> they were in charge of rooting out (other) bandits.[85]

Recently, a new study by Zhou Zhengbao has thrown new light on the portrayal of "war" as a phenomenon in Chinese novels.[86]

The revival in the eighties of the glorification of local bandits (*tufei*) can be linked to views on authority in a traditional peasant society, resulting in a peculiar view on morality.[87] The publication of studies on the "superstitions" of warlords must be linked to this general revival of interest. Pan Xianwei points out that the rise of banditism usually occurred at times when peasant discontent was on the rise, even before the outbreak of full scale peasant rebellion.[88] He sees in it a dangerous tendency exposing "weakness and blind actionism (*mangmuxing*) of peasants".[89] Qu Chunjing follows a similar argument.[90]

> "The Cultural Revolution was not merely the result of some political scheming by a few

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82 Wang Yi "Wenhua dageming" yemanxing he cankuxing de wenhua genyuan,", p. 14.
83 For an example, see the short story by Mo Yan "Hong Gaoliang", pp. 164, p. 176.
84 See also Pan Xianwei "Lun Zhong Su Zhanzheng xiaoshuo shenmei de qutongxing he chayixing," p. 55.
85 Han Shaogong *Guiqulai*, p. 174.
86 *Zhanzheng muguang*.
87 Zhao Deli "Tufei shenmei; minjian quanwei de wenhua chanshi," p. 55.
88 Pan Xianwei "Lun Zhong Su zhanzheng xiashuo shenmei de qutongxing he chayixing," p. 59.
89 Qu Chunjing. "Fan shenhua yu wenhua dageming zai sikao," in a comment on the novels of Li Rui. In "Chongxuan 90 nianday xiangcun xiaoshuo zonglun," Lui Yutang refers to the feverishyly mad and blind peasants, who in "normal times" are both pragmatic and weak (p. 34, p. 14).
90 Id., pp. 13-4.

ambitious politicians, but there were also cultural reasons for 800 million Chinese falling into this trap. [The writer] Li Rui exposed that tradition in our people (*minzu*).

Jin Dinghai refers to the Little Red Soldiers (*hongxiaobing*) during the time of the Great Leap Forward (1958−60), who are now nearly forgotten but are clearly precursors of the Little Red Guards of the Cultural Revolution.[91] If we regard the rule of the Communist Party in China as a "system" it shows how such a system, despite claims for its moral character and ideals, misuses and abandons those who engage in idealist actions. Any account of changes in China, whether in the past or at present, must take into account the extremely important traditional division of China in a people of peasants and those "above", a division which one may claim has led to the existence of two Chinese "peoples" on Chinese soil, a division that includes different cultural traditions. Communist guidelines for the mobilization of peasants during the anti-Japanese war bears witness to an awareness of these divisions.[92] A recent short story by Han Shaogong describes how a youngster in his twenties is sent to act as a cadre in a village he was not familiar with. A local cadre instructs him how to deal with peasants.

> "I tell you, dealing with the peasants requires first, intimidating them, and secondly barbarity (*yeman*). With peaceful attitudes you get nowhere fighting down capitalism ···"

The actions of the youngster-the narrator himself-actually result in the suicide of an innocent young woman. While the party exonerates him, he gradually starts developing feelings of individual guilt in a process of awakening.[93] Such reference to a gradual awakening on the basis of personal experience has become fairly common. Here Chinese writers emphasize an individual morality that is not the outcome of teachings by any political or religious belief system. This approach has the advantage that the writer need not expressly attack the role of the Party System in order to make his point.

Its persuasive power is all the greater since the writer does not attempt to criticize on the basis of arguments used by foreigners, which may all too easily risk being dubbed "anti-Chinese".

## Liu Fangwei's novel Fangzhu

This is clearly not the place to attempt a full interpretation of the novel *Fangzhu* (driven out, banished), and a few references to some major themes have to suffice. In a way, the novel seems to have been written also as a kind of history textbook for those young Chinese who have had no personal experience of the Cultural Revolution and its background. From a literary point of view, numerous didactic comments in the novel detract from its literary coherence. The novel

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91 Jin Dinghai, pp. 167, 169.
92 Related aspects are dealt with in my study of guerilla mobilization and warfare entitled "No Time for Revolution".
93 Han Shaogong *Guiqulai*, p. 8.

does not only refer to events of the "official", or formal history of the Cultural Revolution, but also repeatedly refers to other important events, such as Liu Binyan's report *Ren Yao zhi jian*, or the reminiscences of Yu Luoke's sister about her elder brother Yu Luojin, who had writen the famous work *Xuetonglun*, at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, and who was executed.

There are two main protagonists, Zhuo Ran, who grew up in the countryside as if he were from a peasant family, and Liu Beifang, the son of a famous general. Both belong to a completely different social environment, Liu Beifang to the privileged urbanized military elite, Zhuo Ran who suffers frome a deep inferiority complex because of his upbringing in the countryside. It was a countryside in which not only the landlords, but also the children of landlords, "seeds of landlord families", suffered deep discrimination.[94] The so-called revolutionary, and therefore unassailable cadre Wang Guosheng is the local tyrant who determines the fate of all the people within the village, including engaging regularly in the rape of young girls and married wives alike. He is the absolute perversion of the standard Chinese social image of officials/party cadres as "fathers and mothers to people".[95] Life wakes both of them in quite different ways to the lies dominating their respective societies. It is significant that the change in Zhuo Ran's first came about while in Beijing, where he observed and experienced a wave of "opening up" policies (*kaifang*, usually wrongly translated as liberalization), not in the countryside. The life experience of some protagonists reflects the harshness of Chinese society: "Human society was apparently governed by a universal rule: "the more a person is pitiable, the more life is cruel to him."[96] There seems little trust in goodness:

> "Since Darwin, nature had exposed to us the non-intentional (*wuyizhide*), great and at the same time fortuitous work of creation (*zaohua*)." "What looks fortuitous to us, is merely a specific happening of a more abstract necessity."[97]

Fate had linked the families of Zhuo Ran and Liu Beifang, allowing Zhuo Ran to use his connection to Liu Beifang to save his father from prison. His father had been arrested without further trial since he had dared to defend the true Mao by writing a letter to his successor, Hua Guofeng-needless to say, the letter never got there. While his father was imprisoned for a year, Zhuo Ran heard from his mother for the first time about the vicissitudes in his father's life, due to father's straightforwardness and his moral goodness.[98] Mother told him that

> "The treatment of prisoners in prison is very cruel, basically not the way the papers write, as if prison implemented some kind of revolutionary humanism ⋯ Prisoners when just

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94 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu. p. 388.*

95 Ho Bozhuan, *Shan'ao shang de zhongguo*, p. 301.

96 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu*, p. 441.

97 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu* p. 456; see also the passage on p. 487.

98 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu*, p. 240.

relased have a very irritable temper, behave in unexpected queer ways, requiring slow adaptation, time to treat the mental wounds inflicted on them. The reason why they were persecuted was not at all because they had committed any crime, but just because they had put forward suggestions to the party they trusted, about improving work, in a spirit of serving high communist ideals.[99]

The mental illness of Zhuo Ran's father did not improve, on the contrary, deteriorated, because they did not have money for treatment.[100] Two years after Mao's death the Mao Zedong period formally came to an end. With it, numerous nonpeople regained their citizen status. Mother said happily,

"The authorities have agreed that he should be treated like a retired person, saving the costs of the medicine,""This is all due to Great Man Deng Xiaoping-it seems that lately at a certain meeting he had stated the "three-nots" (*sanbu*) were to be implemented, not to "clutch tails", "not to use the stick", and not to force hoods on people's heads."[101]

During the Cultural Revolution homes were often ransacked, and family members interrogated about letters they had received, and even about those that had not even arrived.

"Of couse he had his reasons to hate this, because it disrupted life in the family and meant unjust treatment for his parents, but in another sense this meant that the outside world and his family had an imseparable link, proved, that he and his families were not mere peasants (*tulaomao*), and that they had wide social links and social background.[102]

When the Mao era had ended. Liu Beifang eventually started wondering whether Mao's decisions had all been wrong? The general could not get clear about this in his mind. If that was the case, what about all the suffering for these long years? All in vain?"[103] He eventually begins to

"treasure independence of thought, because he clearly realized [now] that the reasoning used in official utterances could not explain to him any more all sorts of things that happened in real life.[104]

The novel also introduces to us some young intellectuals who attempt their own, different explanations of the reasons for the Cultural Revolution.[105]

"Now the Cultural Revolution was completely repudiated, the crimes and destruction to society brought about by the Cultural Revolution, but why could it so easily be launched? Was it possible to blame it on individual superstition or on the wily devilish schemes of the

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99 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu*, p. 292.
100 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu*, p. 338.
101 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu*, p. 368.
102 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu*, p. 289.
103 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu*, p. 344.
104 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu*, p. 589.
105 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu*, p. 565.

Gang of Four?"

Another one retorts that inequality in Chinese society, and the phenomenon of corruption, were to blame. On this a third one comments that

> "It seems that many foreigners study the Cultural Revolution, and have established the new science of "Cultural Revolution Studies". If it was really brought about by the corruption of power, don't you think that corruption is now even more serious than at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution?"

Along letter (several pages in the printed novel) points out that individual morality had been replaced by "the system" long before the Cultural Revolution.

> "In present society all courageously and deeply discuss the loss of morality, as if this was the privilege of the Little Red Soldiers of the Cultural Revolution. In reality, however, according to sources now available to us ⋯ this habit of encouraging people to expose and betray each other started already during the movement "Catch the AB team" in the period of the Red Army, and matured during the "Yanan Rectification covement"(1942). The Cultural Revolutin merely saw a widening of this practice."

### *Great Country, Lowly People-the Reporting Novel* **Daguo guamin**

The terror of the Cultural Revolution came to an end, but the consequences are still being felt. Witness to this is the reporting novel by Lu Yuegang. It focuses on the attack of a husband on his wife who seeks a divorce, as a revenge for this "insult" by his wife. He disfigures her, by pouring sulfuric acid over her. The application for divorce has its origin in a marriage arranged by the girl's parents from a poor village to a husband from a neighboring, prestigious model village of national fame. That village regards the request for divorce as bringing intolerable shame over the whole village, which also fears for the loss of national status as a model. The crime of the husband up is eventually covered up by local, regional and provincial police forces that conspire against justice. Relevant for the theme of this paper is that the Cultural Revolution, far from liberating the individual, on the contrary strengthened the hold of local "authority" over the individual. Individual criminal responsibility is ignored. In his novel *Fangzhu* Liu Fangwei commented that individual morality had been replaced by "system morality" when people began informing on each other-a practice with a long tradition.[106] As Lu Yuegang stresses, the issue is not just vicious crime and unethical behavior, but the question why society apparently tolerates and accepts such behavior in "the period of the eighties when the souls of Chinese who for a long time had been gagged, been isolated (*fengbi*) and

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106 Liu Fangwei *Fangzhu*, p. 599.

suppressed, was waking up.[107]

### Forgetting or Remembering?

In the end, moral judgement of the past not be the exclusive domain of historians or the state-each individual shoud feel responsible as well. Towards the late seventies there was a wave of rehabilitation for members of the elite, an issue that has still not been completely settled, vide the recent book by the daughter of Luo Ruiquing, Luo Diandian *Diandian jiyi* (Scattered notes, a pun on "*diandian*").[108] A recent issue of the literary journal *Beijing wenxue* (*Peking Literature*) commemorating the Cultural Revolution contains a number of contributions on this issue.[109]

> "The pupil of the primary school (of the days of the GPCR) is now married, and has now her own daughter. She'd like to forget, but never can forget how she spit on teacher's face, doesn't want to tell daughter, can't bring it out ··· those girl pupils who beat until blood flowed, now a mother, but how to tell her children? or pretend to be forgetful? At peace, or not?···
>
> Later millions of people were living in the dark, hundreds of millions fell into a bottomless dark cave; behavior of slave society, bound up in feudal society, aimless wars of the warlod period, were all performed by putting out revolutionary slogans.
>
> Temples thousand year old, city walls eight hundred years old, historic paintings and writings, were all called "the four bad things", and all we could utter was one word: "destroy"! What was destroyed in the ame breath was human norms, human feelings, human character, human civilization ··· we commonly call the Cultural Revolution a "nightmare", "a nightmare of ten years, "nightmare of our people"(*minzu emeng*), or more popular "*haojie*" (wastage) ··· but we can't build halls of remembrance, museums, and we don't have rules for the compilation of official and unofficial histories of that period. ··· This may be the age of forgetfulness. Xianzhe has written a famous work called "For remembering what is forgotten". This is a double irony of things that cannot be forgotten: abroad there is a famous saying: forgetting history equals being sentenced. China we talk about "forgetting our roots". Most recently an entrepreneur has been collecting items from the Cultural Revolution, and the motto of dedication in the catalogue is: a people good at forgetting is

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107 Lu Yuegang *Daguo Guamin*, p. 32. In this context he also refers to the movie "Bei aiqing yiwangde jiaoluo" (A corner forgotten by love), id. p. 33.
108 *Diandian juyi, Hongse jiazu dang'an*, Hong Kong, 1998. She the review in *Yazhou zhoukan* of March 29, 1999.
109 *Beijing Wenxue*, September 1998.

sure to encounter great disaster."[110]

For better or worse, Friedrich Nietzsche warned against being stifled by the past.

"There is a kind of insomnia, of wallowing in history that damages the living which eventually perishes as a consequence, whether this concerns an individual, a people or a culture." "One needs to forget so that the past does not become the henchman of the present."[111]

In a globalizing world we need to study the influence of history, its traumatic and not so traumatic events, on the minds of individuals. The relationship of individuals to their social environment, to their place of work, to organs of the state is undergoing once more deep changes, but processes of integration in a "borderless" world do not automatically wipe out memories. History is replete with memories of wars and violence that stigmatize peoples and nations for generations, in its turn creating new enmity. The young generation is not guilty of deeds committed by their mothers and fathers. The burden of the past creates responsibilities that must not be forgotten, but stigmas of the past should not stand in the way of a more peaceful future.

### Unanswerable questions

The rationalization of past disasters and traumas by the living is one thing-the unanswered questions of the dying another. In the dramatic climax of the short story *Hong gaoliang* (Red Gaoliang) by Mo Yan the dying heroine cries out:

"Is this dying? ⋯ Heaven, Heaven gave me a lover, children, prosperity, 30 years of life as

110 *Beijing Wenxue*, September 1998, p. 43.

111 Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie fuer das Leben*, Leipzig, P. Reclam 1946.

112 Mo Yan "Hong Gaoliang", p. 216 ff.

i A few references may provide the non-specialist reader with some impressions of the state of psychiatry in China. In the first instance, *Hong Kong Journal of Psychiatry* (vol. 8 No. 1)August 1998 Special Issue: psychiatry in China; and also articles in the *Hong Kong Journal of Psychiatry* vol. 7 No. 2 August 1997. Among better known studies, I shoud like to mention Cooper, J. E. and Sartorius, N. eds. *Mental Disorders in China*, 1996, Gaskell, London; Lin, K.M. "Traditional Chinese medical beliefs and their relevance for mental illness and psychiatry," in *Normal and Abnormal Behavior in Chinese Societies*, ed. by Kleinman, A. and Lin T.Y. D. Reidel Publishing Company, Dordrecht, 1981; Pearson, V. *Mental Health Care in China: State Policies, Professional Services and Family Responsibilities*, Gaskell, London, Mercian Psychiatric Press, New York, 1995; Pritchard, C. 1996 "Suicide in the People's Republic of China categorized by age and gender: evidence of the influence of culture on suicide," *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* 93: 362–367; Tseng, W.S. "The development of psychiatric concepts in traditional Chinese medicine. *Archives of General Psychiatry* (29, 4), 1973, 569–577; Kleinman, A. *Somatization: the interconnections in Chinese society among culture, depressive experience, and the meanings of pain*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985, 429–490. Hsu, J. & Tseng, W.S. *Culture and Family Therapy: Problems and Theraphy, New York, Haworth Press, 1991. Hsu, J.* "Family therapy for the Chinese: problems and strategies," *in Chinese Societies and Mental Health*, ed. T.Y. Lin, W.S. Tseng and E.K. Yeh, New York, Oxford UP, 1995. It is striking how few references are made to events during the Cultural Revolution as a specific cause for disorders. This also applies to the bibliography in "Apathy: case reports and a selected review of the literature," by Gabor S. Ungvari, Helen F.K. Chiu and Linda C.W. Lam, in *Hong Kong Journal of Psychiatry*, 1997. 7(2)40–46. John J. Sigal "The Nature of Evidence for Intergenerational Effects of the Holocaust", rev. of Martin S. Germann and Milton E. jucovy, eds. Generations of the Holocaust. New York, Basic Books, 1982.

rich as Gaoliang. Heaven, don't take from me what you gave me, spare me, save me. Heaven, you judge me guilty? ⋯ Heaven, what is truth? what is the true norm? what is good, what is bad? You have not told me, and I have only lived according to my own ideas, I love happiness, I love strength, I love beauty, my body is mine, I am my own master, I am not afraid of having sinned, not afraid of having sinned.[112]

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