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The Long-Term Effects of Japan's Traumatic Experience in the Second World War and Its Implications for Peace in Northeast Asia

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Abstract

This article is an introductory report on the work of a Japanese study group whose primary aim is peacemaking, which it seeks by promoting a greater understanding of the long-term effects of their country's traumatic experience of the Second World War. The group does not adopt a position of victimhood but seeks to understand the full picture of Japan's role in the war, including its role as perpetrator. We came together with the shared assumption that the country's inability to take responsibility for its role of the war is inextricably tied to its own traumatization. If this assumption is true, then the healing of Japan's collective wounds will be the first step toward its taking responsibility for its role in the war. We have sought to understand how the impact of the collective and cultural trauma from the war has affected the Japanese psyche, especially the devastating experience of defeat. Numerous historical and sociological studies of Japan's role in the Second World War have been published. But we believe that this multi-disciplinary group's work to understand, through a psychological lens, Japan's traumatic experience of the war offers a unique approach to encouraging the country to reconsider its role in a series of devastating events in the region, and the continuing effects of those event on regional political stability.

Eugen Koh is a senior fellow at the Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, University of Melbourne. Tadashi Takeshima is president of the Japan Liaison Committee for Mental Health and Welfare and director of the Kawasaki City Center for Mental Health and Welfare.

This introductory report discusses the contextual basis and rationale that informed the creation of a study group that seeks to promote a greater understanding of the long-term effects of Japan's experience of the Second World War and the tasks that it set itself. It also presents some of the group's initial findings.

We have been prompted to report on our work, though it is still in its early stages, by the increasingly unstable situation in Northeast Asia, particularly in the relationships Japan has with China and North and South Korea. Also, we wish to draw attention to the existence of groups in Japan that are addressing the long-term legacy of the Second World War, especially some of its enduring aspects.

This multi-disciplinary group is made up of Japanese psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, psychologists, social scientists, historians, and theologians as well as those whose background is in the arts and cultural studies. The authors of this article are the founding members and co-convenors of the group. The first author, the only non-Japanese member, is an ethnic Chinese from Australia and a psychiatrist and psychoanalytic psychotherapist with an interest in the psychodynamics of conflict and collective trauma. Most of the ideas that are presented here have emerged from discussions within the group and we wish to acknowledge their contributions accordingly.

Background

Japan invaded Korea in 1910, Manchuria in 1931, and China in 1937, before its simultaneous attacks in December 1941 on the United States at Pearl Harbor and its territories in the Philippines and Guam and on the British territories of Hong Kong and Malaya (and later Burma, Singapore, Australia, and New Guinea). With these later events, Japan initiated the Second World War in the Pacific, which ended soon after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. Japan has always called this part of the Second World War the Pacific War, and it will be referred to as such throughout this article.[1]

The impact of the Pacific War was severe. Approximately 75 million people died during the Second World War; almost half of those deaths (35 million) occurred in the Pacific War. Of these, more than 20 million were civilians, a figure that gives some sense of the impact of the Second World War. China suffered the highest casualties with the loss of over 20 million, of whom approximately 3 million were military personnel and 7 million civilians who died as a result of warfare and another 10 million died from famine and disease during the war. Hundreds of thousands of Koreans were conscripted into the Japanese army and their loss has not been accurately accounted for, while approximately half a million Korean civilians were killed.[2]

Japan itself had more than 2 million of its military killed (25 percent of its 8 million military personnel), and an estimate of almost a million of its civilians perished, including more than 200,000 from the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Approximately 120,000 Okinawans, a quarter of the population of the prefecture at the time, died as a result of the Battle of Okinawa, and most of the casualties were civilians. In a study of Japanese casualties during the Second World War, John Dower writes: "Sixty-six major cities . . . [were] heavily bombed, destroying 40 percent of these urban areas overall and rendering 30 percent of their population homeless. In Tokyo, the largest metropolis, 65 percent of all residencies were destroyed. In Osaka and Nagoya, the country's second and third largest cities, the figures were 57 and 89 percent."[3]

Whether or not Japan has apologized sufficiently for its role in the Second World War remains a source of debate. Some argue that Japan admitted its guilt by signing the San

Francisco Treaty of Peace in 1952 and that since then, Japan has admitted guilt in at least four official statements.[4] These include an unambiguous statement by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama on the fiftieth anniversary of the war's end in 1995:

> During a certain period in the not too distant past, Japan, following a mistaken national policy, advanced along the road to war, only to ensnare the Japanese people in a fateful crisis, and, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations. In the hope that no such mistake be made in the future, I regard, in a spirit of humility, these irrefutable facts of history, and express here once again my feelings of deep remorse and state my heartfelt apology. Allow me also to express my feelings of profound mourning for all victims, both at home and abroad, of that history.[5]

Those who argue that Japan has sufficiently admitted guilt for its actions in the Second World War also point to the financial compensation of $800 million outlined in the 1965 Treaty of Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea.[6]
Others, however, have complained about what they call Japan's ambivalent apology, charging that, on one hand, the country admitted to its role but, on the other hand, sought to justify or minimize its role. Surveys of the general public opinion, inside and outside Japan, have pointed out that Germany's apology has received greater acceptance than Japan's.[7] A Pew Research study in the United States found that only 1 percent of Koreans and 4 percent of Chinese, compared with 48 percent of Japanese, think that Japan has apologized sufficiently. The results of surveys within Japan, however, reflect polarized opinions.[8]

We have no objective definition of, or universally agreed-on list of the criteria for, an "adequate" apology; what constitutes a "sufficient" or "acceptable" apology is wholly subjective. We often speak of "heartfelt" apologies that are demonstrated by symbolic gestures and supported by practical reparations. Countries that are still seeking genuinely heartfelt apologies from Japan watch vigilantly for any signs that negate earlier admissions of guilt. In an article in the *Washington Post* marking the seventieth anniversary of Japan's surrender at the end of the Second World War, Anna Fifield assesses why its numerous apologies have not been accepted. She notes: "A big part of the problem stems from the fact that Japan's official apologies have been partially undone by remarks—like when then-justice minister Shigeto Nagato said in 1994 that the Nanjing massacre 'was fabricated.'" She also emphasizes that recent governments have asked a United Nations special rapporteur to revise a 1996 report on wartime "comfort women."[9]

This unresolved issue continues to be a source of tension and instability in Northeast Asia, with sporadic outbreaks of conflict between Japan and China and North Korea, and more recently the outbreak of a trade war with South Korea. There is a general reluctance in Japan to discuss its role in the Second World War, and questions about war atrocities, such as the Rape of Nanking,[10] are still keenly contested.

Rationale

Why Japan has been unable to take full responsibility for its role in the Second World War is unclear. Because the task of making collective claims, such as a national apology, is usually undertaken by government leaders, it is often assumed that the reason for this situation is political. The politics in Japan, as in any other country, have always been complex, and it is beyond the scope of this article to discuss them in detail. It is, however, the aim of this study group to discuss and debate relevant political issues as they arise.

For now, we would like to highlight three political reasons. The first and most commonly held is that the government is controlled by conservatives and nationalist sections of the society. This reason might seem insufficient, since both liberal and socialist Japanese governments have not addressed the situation. It has been suggested, however, that the ability of successive governments to act in the decades after the war has been influenced not only by a domestic agenda but also by global politics, including the Cold War, during which the liberals aligned with the United States, while socialists aligned with Russia and China. This deep split and polarization contributed to a degree of paralysis.

The second reason for Japan's seeming inability to take full responsibility for its role in the Second World War is that it is disadvantageous for Japan to accept its responsibility in terms of its international relations and the possible cost of reparations. But the situation cannot be explained by concern about financial reparations alone, since Japan has readily made financial reparations to Korea, though with no explicit acknowledgment of guilt. With regard to international relations, Japan's position in the world would be greatly enhanced by its taking responsibility and would improve its relationship with the countries that it attacked and invaded, many of which still harbor mistrust and grievances.

The third reason is that the shame of losing the war has been too severe to overcome and it has been a political and sociocultural bridge too far to cross. This third reason, the issue of shame, is not just a political problem. There is a view that leaders and politicians are products of the people who elected them, and that their policies and actions are made in response to popular sentiments that exist in the country. In accordance with this view, therefore, Japan's political failure to take responsibility for the Second World War is a result of its people's inability to face up to their own personal and collective responsibility for what happened. The question then is, "Why is it that the Japanese people, both as individuals and as a collective whole, have been unable to assume their responsibility?" This study group aims to find that answer.

The group, initiated by two psychiatrists, began with the belief that a large part of the answer to this question lies in the psychology of the Japanese people. After almost a decade of considering this question, the authors of this article and co-conveners of the group have concluded that the Japanese people, as individuals and as a collective whole, are unable to be responsible for what happened because they have not been able to face their own massive and overwhelming trauma from the war and thus have to hide the total episode from their collective memory (with varying success).

Throughout his engagement with professional colleagues and others in Japan during the past decade, Eugen Koh, the first author of this article, observed a general reluctance to discuss the war and, when conversations turned to that topic, an avoidance of eye contact and a downward gaze suggesting shame. But is it simply shame at losing the war that is preventing engagement with the topic? The situation, he found, is far more complex. One line of analysis begins with the fact that the Japanese people have not been able to face their own pain of loss and grief from the war; if one is unable to experience the pain of loss, one will not be able to bear the pain of shame and humiliation, and guilt. Exposure to the painful emotions associated with loss and grief arouses deep feelings of shame and guilt; such feelings would be utterly overwhelming and traumatic and must therefore be avoided.

This possibility came to Dr. Koh following a conversation with a psychiatrist who led a bereavement service for survivors of the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami of 2011, in which about 20,000 people died and more than 350,000 were left homeless. He asked why it was that only a few survivors had sought help from his service, five years after the event. He

wondered whether the survivors who had lost families preferred to mourn in private, since Japanese are private about their emotional experiences. He also wondered, however, whether the real reason was that they had not mourned.

Avoidance of or delay in mourning is commonly observed in groups that have experienced massive traumatic loss, such as survivors of the Holocaust and the Cambodian genocide. Many of these survivors did not grieve their catastrophic losses until decades later, if at all. It was simply too painful to mourn, especially while they were still in a survival mode of existence. Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich have written about a similar experience of the Germans after the Second World War in Europe in their classic text *The Inability to Mourn*.[11] Kai Ogimoto, a member of this study group, discusses this possibility in "The Inability to Mourn in Japan after 1945."[12]

It seems plausible that many Japanese have avoided mourning or been unable to mourn their losses from the war. If such an avoidance of mourning is to be overcome, one must consider the psychodynamics of trauma and find ways to address the cumulative psychic pain that has resulted from the loss and grief caused by the war and its long-term aftereffects. Of particular concern is the transgenerational trauma among the descendents of those initially affected and the collective and cultural trauma that have been embedded into Japanese culture today. The study group came together to gain and then to promote an understanding of this multi-layered situation.

Origin of the Study Group

The study group emerged from more than a decade of collaboration and friendship between the two authors of this article. Tadashi Takeshima had been working for many years on mental health and suicide prevention for Japan's policy development. He visited Melbourne, Australia, annually for almost a decade to study its mental health system and suicide-prevention strategies. He was interested in the work of the Dax Centre, a unique organization that is dedicated to the promotion of mental health through the use of art, and in particular its use to address the societal stigma of mental illness. Dr. Koh was the director of the organization for more than twelve years and was also the director of another organization called CASSE, which is dedicated to assisting organizations and communities to "create a safe and supportive environment" through psychodynamic understandings of conflict and violence. Dr. Takeshima's interest in the work of these organizations led him to invite Dr. Koh to Japan to assist with various projects during the past decade.

Dr. Koh has always maintained a clinical practice and has, over the past two decades, assisted individuals and communities affected by severe trauma. He has worked with Aboriginal communities severely traumatized by colonization, as well as survivors of the Holocaust and communities affected by the conflict in Northern Ireland and natural disasters (such as the tsunami). Since 2013, he has given up his work with the Dax Centre and CASSE and focused on international consulting on culture, trauma and conflict resolution, and peacebuilding. He does, however, have a personal interest in Japan's role in the Second World War. His grandfather, who was educated in Shanghai, considered himself a Chinese patriot and played a role in securing funding throughout Southeast Asia to support China's war effort against Japan in Manchuria in early 1930s. Dr. Koh grew up in Malaysia in the 1960s, only a couple of decades after the Japanese occupation of Malaya of more than three years. He can recall many stories of the torture and killing of ethnic Chinese.

Despite these experiences, Drs. Koh and Takeshima have a mutually respectful relationship and have enjoyed regular frank and open discussions about the war, over many years of fruitful

collaboration. The worsening instability of the world, including the increasing political tension in Northeast Asia in recent years, prompted them to put together this broad multidisciplinary group. (The names and respective areas of interest and expertise of the other members of the study group are listed in the Appendix. We are hoping that a few more experts from the field of history and social and political science will join the group soon.)

Objectives of the Study Group

The aim of the group is to promote peacemaking by increasing understanding of Japan's long-term legacy from the Second World War and the implications of this legacy for peace today. Of particular consideration are Japan's inability to take responsibility for its role in initiating conflict and for its conduct during the war.

To achieve its overall aim, the group is set to address the following questions:

1. What were the historical, sociocultural, and political factors that led Japan to attack the United States and countries in Asia and to initiate the Second World War in the Pacific?

2. What was Japan's role during the war and what claims have been made about Japan's conduct during the war?
3. What was the impact of the war on Japan itself and, in particular, on its civilians and sociocultural life?
4. What was the impact on Japanese society of the seven-year US occupation after the war and what is its legacy today?
5. What happened to Japan's society and sociocultural life from the end of the war to the present day?
6. What are the long-term transgenerational psychosocial effects of Japan's experience of the war?
7. What are the factors that contribute to Japan's continuing inability to accept responsibility for its role as the perpetrator/aggressor in the war?
8. What can be done to bring healing to the historic trauma resulting from the war?

Although the primary lens through which the group will investigate these questions is psychological, we will also incorporate important insights from other disciplines and frameworks, including history, social and political science, and cultural studies and the arts. Only through such a broad multidisciplinary approach can we establish a sufficiently rich and detailed understanding of this complex situation to accurately inform a psychological analysis.

The study group recognizes that the understanding gained from this research might also benefit individuals and communities who are still suffering the effects of the war, in Japan and elsewhere. For example, a deeper understanding of what happened during the war and why Japan started it will help the survivors to better process their traumatic experiences. Descendents of those killed during the war, soldiers and civilians alike, will be better able to bring closure to an unresolved (and often unspoken) wound, three generations later.

Method and Process

Recognizing that some residue of trauma from Japan's past may linger in some members of the group, we have adopted an approach in our work together that involves respectful dialogue and mutual support. Even when the issues under discussion focus on the actions of Japan as a nation, with the exception of Dr. Koh, we cannot escape the reality of our being Japanese and thus

identifying at some level (even unconsciously) with the actions of their forebears and their country.

One of the effects of trauma is shame and humiliation. As the group seeks to engage with the traumatic history of Japan, we are vulnerable to the experience of shame and humiliation. This experience is threefold. First, there is the shame one feels on behalf of one's own country, as much as one identifies with one's country. It is much like the shame one feels when the sports team one supports loses. Second, there is the shame one feels because of a direct connection to a shameful act; for example, one can feel ashamed on discovering one's ancestors did something shameful. Third, there is the shame that comes from avoidance; one can feel ashamed for lacking the courage to face the reality and truth of a situation.

Shame can be intensified by exposure to the presence and judgment of others, especially others who are different and who might be seen as outsiders. Dr. Koh is very aware of being "an outsider" to his Japanese colleagues, even though he is very much a part of the group. His presence, however, risks heightening any experience of shame among the Japanese group members; thus, he seeks to be vigilant and to respond with care.

As an outsider, Dr. Koh, who, as a founding member and co-convenor of the group necessarily has a central role, is free to question and highlight issues that his Japanese colleagues might avoid through fear of unconscious collusion. Anticipating and exploring the many other possible aspects of group dynamics is beyond the scope of this article, particularly at this early stage.

One of the key tasks of the group is to link and integrate what has happened (and is still happening) in the real and complex world of politics and broader sociocultural life with what is known from focused research and theories. The group is vigilant about the limitations of applying theory to real and complex situations, especially when it comes to the application of psychodynamic principles to individual and collective lives.

Five-Year Project and Beyond

It is said that the work of peacemaking is never finished. It could also be said that the task of understanding the reason for war and the comprehension of its long-lasting effects is likely to extend over many lifetimes. Confucius said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. While the group is daunted by the enormity of the task ahead, we take comfort in having taken the first step in our work of peacemaking by developing the goodwill and collaboration across the divide between our Japanese and Chinese identities. We hope that in the future our colleagues from China, North Korea, and South Korea will join our effort.

To break this enormous task into manageable parts, we have set ourselves a five-year project that consists of twice-yearly meetings where research findings are presented and issues are discussed and debated; an international symposium involving thirty to forty researchers and others who are working in peacemaking, within two years; publication of the proceedings of the symposium in English and Japanese; a conference for researchers, peacemakers, politicians, and the leaders of various social and cultural groups toward the end of the fifth year; and strategic dissemination of the research findings to encourage greater interest and participation among other researchers and increase awareness of the issues in the broader community.

This is a short and ambitious time frame; it is likely that the necessary work will take at least twice as long. We have set this limited time frame to maintain a certain focus and momentum. Our mindfulness that this important work could extend beyond our lifetimes has led us to include younger researchers and leaders in this project.

Some Early Findings
Collecting Research from Other Sources

Soon after we came together we identified other researchers who have been working on the same issues we have. Among their published accounts are the histories *Even So, Japan Chose a War* by Yoko Kato and *Japanese Demobilisation in the Process of Japan Empire Falling Down* by Hiroshi Masuda, and the excellent sociological account *The Long Defeat: Cultural Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Japan* by Akiko Hashimoto.[13]

Works by psychoanalysts include "Contemporary Manifestations of the Social Unconscious in Japan: Post-Trauma Massification and Difficulties in Identity Formation after the Second World War" and "Trauma, Shame, Guilt, and the Social Unconscious in Japan" by Kaoru Nishimura; "Transgenerational Transmission of Atomic-Bomb Trauma: Denial, Dependency, and Splitting" by Kai Ogimoto; and "The Japanese Contribution to Violence in the World: The Kamikaze Attacks in World War II" by Shigeyuki Mori.[14]

We are confident that there are more relevant research studies that should be added to this body of knowledge and integrated through a psychological lens, and so we invite other researchers to contact the group to share their work with it. One of the aims of this study group is to bring together researchers who have worked on these sensitive topics in relative isolation and introduce them to a broader audience. An important task will be to integrate what each researcher brings into a comprehensive whole. By establishing a fuller picture, we hope to better understand what happened then, why it happened, and, generations later, what is happening now.

Studying the Effects of Trauma

At our first meeting, in Osaka on June 25, 2019, Dr. Koh presented a framework to consider the long-term psychosocial effects of Japan's traumatic experience of the Second World War. The framework begins by highlighting the limitations of the present understanding of trauma that was developed from the medical paradigm of disease and disorder and the dominance of the concept of PTSD. It then proposes a broader concept of trauma that focuses not only on the event or the effect but on the *experience* of the individual or the collective. The framework defines trauma as a system's experience of a distorted or diminished capacity to process or make sense of a situation; the "system" in the individual is the mind, and for the collective, it is the social conscious and unconscious, or more simply, its culture.

The long-term effects of a traumatic experience can be considered from the perspectives of individual and collective psychologies. When the long-term traumatic effects on individuals are considered across several generations the impact has been conceptualized as *transgenerational trauma*.[15] The impact on a collective such as a community or society across generations, in this instance, more than seventy-five years, has been conceptualized as *cultural trauma*. In other words, the collective consciousness that carries the trauma from one generation to another is its culture.

At our second meeting, in Tokyo on September 20, 2019, Dr. Koh elaborated further on this distinction between transgenerational trauma and cultural trauma, presenting a recently developed understanding of culture from a psychological perspective. The word "culture," which originated from the Latin *cultura*, was first documented in the writing of a Roman philosopher and statesman in 45 BC, in an agricultural metaphor describing culture as like the soil that holds and nourishes a plant. If one were to consider a grapevine, for example, the qualities of the soil influence the growth and character of the vine and its grapes. Dr. Koh presented two models of

cultural trauma: the first, proposed by Jeffery Alexander and colleagues, considers trauma as *defined events* that influence a collective's identity[16]; the second, proposed by Dr. Koh, regards trauma as *a process* that distorts, compromises, and even destroys a collective's ability to make sense of shared experiences.[17] This model was developed out of an appreciation of the devastating impact of colonization on the culture of Australian Aboriginals.

Confronting Japan's Role as Perpetrator

Responding to an unsettling tension within the group between a desire to address the subject of Japan's role as a perpetrator of the Second World War in the Pacific and a more general tendency to ignore it, Dr. Koh expressed the following reservations: while there was obviously a need to address the issue of Japan's role as a perpetrator and the impact of its aggression, there was a risk that the group would become stuck in that complex and difficult emotional space, unable to see the bigger picture, the broader context of the war. The group agreed that to establish a fuller understanding of Japan's experience of the war, we needed to consider the broader historical, sociological, and political context that led the country to war. But we also needed to recognize the risk of being caught in the perpetrator-victim paradigm that so commonly besets any consideration of trauma, whether individual or collective. It is not uncommon for perpetrators to claim victimhood.

The group seemed to agree to explore the issue more broadly, bringing up from time to time Japan's role as perpetrator. But there seemed also to have been an unspoken understanding that the group as a whole had not yet reached the level of mutual trust, respect, empathy, and maturity necessary to address this difficult topic.

Although we considered many important issues related to the Second World War, such as the experience of veterans and orphans after the war, the interest of current generations in historical evidence of Japanese occupation across the Pacific and South East Asia, and cultural manifestations of residues from that period, the discussion often returned to that unanswered question: "Why did Japan choose war?"

Examining the History of Japan's Cultural Trauma

One member of the group suggested that the cultural trauma that finally led to Japan's aggression overseas can be traced to the Meiji Restoration, the restoration of the emperor, in 1868, which toppled the shogunate and brought an end to the Edo era.[18] The ending of the Edo era was accompanied by the end of the centuries-old feudal system and the samurai culture. The significance of the changes brought on by the Meiji Restoration can be appreciated only if they are considered in the light of the ending of the 250-year Edo era, during which Japan was relatively isolated from the rest of the world.[19]

During this period of isolation Japan developed and refined a culture dominated by the bushido culture of the samurai and the refinement of Zen Buddhism that is now known to the world as "traditionally Japanese." The culture that developed, however, was self-referential and did not equip Japan for its forced encounter with Western culture that began in 1853 when Western countries, led by United States and the force of its navy, under the command of Commodore Matthew Perry, coerced Japan into trade and thus to open to the people and cultures from these countries.

From the Japanese perspective, the action amounted to colonization, and a major part of it was cultural colonization. It was traumatic and shameful. Some historians have highlighted another aspect of shame from this encounter with the West: Japan came to see that, by

comparison, it was underdeveloped economically and technologically. This realization led to a frantic effort at modernization.

Other members of the group have argued that the history related to the Meiji Restoration and its role in Japan's subsequent modernization and militarization has a political dimension. Some point to revolutionary forces consisting mainly of the extremists of Satsuma Domain and Changzhou Domain, which encouraged the emperor to modernize and establish military power in order to overthrow the shogunate. They argue that this period of the centralization of the emperor's power and its militarization was a crucial step in Japan's path to war.

The period of the Meiji Restoration, however, was not just one of political turmoil; it was associated with the enormous cultural upheaval that came with the abrupt end of the Edo era and the shame and humiliation of a largely cultural and economic colonization. The extent to which the people of Japan felt colonized, however, remains a source of debate.

Examining Japan's History from a Psychological Perspective

From a psychological perspective, Japan's path to war may be considered a response to the shame and humiliation it experienced as a result of its "colonization" and how it compared itself with the modern Western countries. It responded by attempting to become a new country, like its colonizers, rather than remaining like the old Japan that was colonized. By invading its neighbors (Taiwan in 1874 and 1895, Korea in 1910, Manchuria in 1931, and China in 1937), Japan can be said, in psychoanalytic terms, to have *identified with its aggressors*. Some members of the study group, however, prefer to understand these invasions as Japan's choosing to be a colonizer simply to negate the reality of being colonized.

The effort to understand and explain why Japan went to war left the group members with the uneasy feeling that our effort could be seen as an attempt to find an excuse for our country's role as a perpetrator. The charge that an excuse is sought often follows whenever efforts are made to understand a perpetrator's position. The common and overwhelming response to wrongdoing is usually one of judgment rather than understanding; the judgment is often simplistic, black and white. In such a binary world, there are only perpetrators and victims, those who did wrong and those who were wronged, those who should be punished and those who deserve compensation. In that world there are no gray zones or ambiguities and no opportunity for a nuanced understanding of all the complexities around a situation.

The strategy that our study group is trying to adopt is to examine the whole situation in all its complexity and to withhold judgment (though not remove it altogether) until a substantial understanding of the problem has been reached. It is not easy to withhold judgment when a situation involves unimaginable human suffering. The usual course among those who have suffered at the hands of others is to feel hatred, to harbor grievances, and to seek vengeance. But, we believe, to make peace at such a time requires us to have the strength and courage to withhold judgment in order to understand things more clearly.

Appendix: Members of the Group

In addition to the co-conveners, Dr. Eugen Koh and Dr. Tadashi Takeshima, the study group includes the following members:

Ryoji Aritsuka is a highly respected psychiatrist who documented late-onset post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among survivors of the Pacific War in Okinawa. He has been working in

Fukushima since the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami of 2011, assisting survivors of the natural disaster and ensuing nuclear accident.

Kenta Awazu, a sociologist of religion at the Institute of Grief, Sophia University, Tokyo, has studied the emergence of the ritual of "a minute's silence" in Europe since the First World War and Japan's adoption of this practice.

Nobuko Fuji is a former professor of psychology at Ritsumeikan University. She is a psychologist, psychotherapist, and group psychotherapist who has established many support groups for professionals who worked in the aftermath of disasters.

Kenji Kawano has developed and conducted research on school suicide-prevention education programs from the perspective of community psychology. He has also conducted qualitative psychological research on postvention for people bereaved by suicide.

Eriko Koga is an associate professor of human sciences at Osaka University of Economics, Japan. She is a clinical psychologist and group psychotherapist who has worked in a psychiatric hospital for almost thirty years; she has a special interest in therapeutic communities.

Shiguyeki Mori is a professor of psychology at Konan University and a clinical psychologist, psychoanalyst, and trauma-focused psychotherapist who has also researched Japanese war children (Kriegskind) in collaboration with German psychoanalysts and published on Japan's role in the war.

Toshie Mori, whose background is in cultural cinema studies, has a particular interest in Japanese films related to the war and the role of anime characters in portraying aspects of Japanese culture.

Kuniko Muramoto is professor of psychology at Ritsumeikan University and a clinical psychologist who has worked with traumatized women and children. She has a special interest in multigenerational trauma caused by war and disaster.

Eri Nakamura is a post-doctoral research fellow at Keio University and a historian of war, medicine, and masculinity in modern Japan. She has published on war neurosis and Japanese military psychiatry during the Pacific War.

Akira Nishimura is an associate professor of the University of Tokyo, specializing in religious studies. He is chair of the Society of Sociology of Warfare.

Kaoru Nishimura is a senior associate professor of psychology at International Christian University in Tokyo. He is a psychologist, psychotherapist, and group psychotherapist and has engaged in the research of the "social unconscious."

Ryota Nishino, whose background is in social and cultural history, has published on Japan's representation of war memories through travel writing about sites of war in the Pacific. He is currently working on Japanese representations of the war in memoirs and films and documentaries.

Tetsuro Noda is a professor of psychiatry who has conducted research on the trauma of natural disaster victims since the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake in Kobe in 1995. His research interests include measures of trauma prevention for Japan Self-Defense Forces personnel.

Kai Ogimoto is a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist. He is interested in the transgenerational transmission of trauma and guilt in Japan. He presented a paper titled "The

Inability to Mourn in Japan after 1945" at the 51st Congress of the International Psychoanalytical Association in 2019.

Mayumi Oka, a graduate in French literature, is an associate professor at the Graduate School of Health Management, Keio University. In 1995, she joined the Asian Women's Fund under the jurisdiction of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was involved in interviews of war victims in Asian countries.

Yoshiro Okajima is a professor of psychiatry at Saitama Medical Center, Jichi Medical University. He is a psychiatrist and group psychotherapist and is engaged in educational activities for group psychotherapy.

Richard Okuno, a graduate of Stanford and Harvard Universities, is an independent management consultant based in Tokyo with thirty years of international experience in the global financial services industry.

Tomomi Sakamoto is an academic social worker at Japan College of Social Work who has undertaken research on children orphaned by the war.

Hisashi Sasaki is a member of the editorial board of Kyodo News, a leading news agency in Japan with a significant outreach into Asia. His father went to China as a soldier, and his uncle was detained and died in Siberia.

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