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## **Face and Its Effect on Modern Historical Memory: Nanjing, China's Massacre and Japan's Incident**

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Face and Its Effect on Modern Historical Memory:  
Nanjing, China's Massacre and Japan's Incident

Channing Alexandria Baker

## Abstract

Rising tensions and an increased number of incidents between China and Japan in the current century show that the Nanjing Massacre has had an indisputable effect on modern Sino-Japanese relations politically and socially. Iris Chang's book of popular history, *The Rape of Nanking (1997)*, both renewed scholarly research and moved the debate into the public eye. This shift in the debate has led to continuing tensions between the two societies even as their governments officially maintain a peaceful relationship. The culture of "face" has made these Sino-Japanese tensions consistently intractable in the 21st century and sparked a number of anti-Japan protests in China. After Japan betrayed its position as inferior to the superior China by committing atrocities upon the Chinese people and has since refused to directly apologize for these atrocities, the Chinese people have been unable to resolve the issue of their humiliation as a country.

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	2
<b>Table of Contents</b>	3
<b>Introduction</b>	4
<b>Section 1: The “Century of Humiliation” and the Nanjing Massacre</b>	8
China’s Century of Humiliation	11
The Issue of the Nanjing Massacre	18
Post-War: The Slow, then Sudden Rise of Anti-Japanism	21
What is “Face”?	26
<b>Section 2: Public Memory of the Nanjing Massacre</b>	31
Emerging Historiography	31
Protests of the Chinese People	37
<b>Section 3: Government Memory and Political Usage of the Massacre</b>	48
The Beginning of Modern Anti-Japanese Sentiment	48
The Words of the People and the People’s Republic	53
“National Dignity” and “Face”	62
<b>Conclusion: Face, Politics, and the Question of History</b>	64
<b>Works Cited</b>	71

## Introduction

The remembrance of the Nanjing Massacre in the current century has caused many conflicts between Japan and China, particularly within shared political and social spheres. As interest in the Massacre has been renewed and scholarly research on the topic — as well as how both countries have studied and responded to it — has gradually developed, the tensions between the populaces of both countries have worsened. The topic of the Nanjing Massacre, an event preceded by a hundred years of humiliation and Sino-Japanese conflicts, has led to public anti-Japan protests in China that make the issue of the Massacre seem intractable in the current century.

Since the beginning of the modern era, the accessibility of modern technology has allowed for cross-cultural communication and awareness on a broader scale. It has also opened discussions and issues of diplomatic relations to the common populace, not just between governments. This increased common diplomatic awareness has led to an international revival of historians' interests in the topics of East Asia's past, among them being the Nanjing Massacre. In Iris Chang's *The Rape of Nanjing: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (1997), she argues that the Nanjing Massacre (December 1937 - January 1938) of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) is an event forgotten by both historians and the rest of the world for the majority of the late 20th century. Chang's popular, easily-accessible book brought into discussion in both public *and* scholarly fields disagreement on the number of dead and whether the Massacre was truly an atrocity and mass killing of civilians or simply a regrettable but unavoidable incident of war.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This paper does not address the substance of these debates (see below), but rather the impact of their existence. 阿羅健一. 南京事件: 日本人48人の証言. 東京: 小学館文庫, 2001. FISCO. “名古屋市長の「南京事件」発言、中国外交部が謝罪要求.” *Reuters*, January 28, 2017, [https://www.reuters.com/article/idJP00093300\\_20170129\\_00720170129](https://www.reuters.com/article/idJP00093300_20170129_00720170129). Joshua A. Fogel. “Introduction: The Nanking Massacre in History.” In *The Nanking Massacre in History and Historiography*, ed. Joshua A. Fogel, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.

The Japanese and Chinese have had differing views about the Massacre since it occurred, but the release of Chang's book also prompted Western attention to the subject and made these varying perspectives more publicly noticeable. Historians of East Asia, in particular, were sparked into researching and debating on the subject. These historians include those who sympathize with China as well as those who are in favor of the Japanese denial of the events. As Matthew Penney, a professor of Japanese history at Concordia University, says, "Many scholars in Japan and the English-speaking world have criticized both Chang's history of the Nanking Massacre and the Chinese government's assertion that more than 300,000 civilians were murdered by Japanese soldiers."<sup>2</sup> As many people debate the truth of the incident, it becomes clear that the two countries remember the Nanjing Massacre differently, and each believes the other party has remembered it incorrectly.

This remembrance has led to strife and tension between the two countries in the current century. Though the Japanese have been vilified by the Chinese people and some writers on the subject<sup>3</sup> for doing nothing to take responsibility for the terrors committed against the Chinese people, the Japanese themselves, as Penney claims, often recount their inhumane deeds with great respect to their memory.<sup>4</sup> He notes that, for example, "depictions of the Nanking Massacre in works aimed at young Japanese are prolific" and that they often portray Japan in the role of the victimizer.<sup>5</sup> Even the Japanese word used to refer to the Massacre, though it directly translates to "incident," is most commonly used in its cultural context to denote extremely serious and shameful crimes such as genocide.<sup>6</sup> Due to this, it is clear that the Japanese have a

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<sup>2</sup> Matthew Penney. "Far from Oblivion: The Nanking Massacre in Japanese Historical Writing for Children and Young Adults." *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 22, no.1 (2008), 25. For a more recent Western example, see: Paul de Vries. "Politics Keeps Holding on to 300,000 Nanjing Massacre Tally." *JAPAN Forward*, December 13, 2020, <https://japan-forward.com/bookmark-politics-keeps-the-west-holding-on-to-300000-nanjing-massacre-tally/>.

<sup>3</sup> Such as Iris Chang.

<sup>4</sup> Penney, "Far from Oblivion," 26.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, 39, 41-42.

<sup>6</sup> Penney, "Far from Oblivion," 47.

very different view about their memory of the Massacre in comparison to both Chang and the Chinese.

However, after Mao's China and "a quarter of a century of unprecedented economic growth, most Chinese no longer fear Japan, and a long suppressed anger at Japan has resurfaced."<sup>7</sup> Japan's questioning of the historical accuracy of the Nanjing Massacre was not simply a "Japan problem," but one that provoked Chinese cognizance and concern. Unlike Penney, some historians argue that "Japan has not from the perspective of China or a number of its neighbors dealt well with the legacy of its wartime crimes against the peoples of the nations it attacked and occupied in 1894 ... and 1945 when WW2 ended."<sup>8</sup> In the eyes of the Chinese, the denial of the Japanese to give the Chinese a direct apology for the event shows that they have yet to properly atone for their war crimes, and it was these beliefs that escalated a number of social, political, and military conflicts between China and Japan in the current century.<sup>9</sup>

This process of the public once again acknowledging and remembering the Massacre has led to many social and political conflicts between the two countries, with the majority of each side believing their own nation to be in the right. The culture of both countries suggests that the issue of the Nanjing Massacre will continue to be an intractable issue in Sino-Japanese relations. To better understand these questions, one must first acknowledge the influence of Chinese culture on the re-remembering of the Nanjing Massacre. These growing tensions between China and Japan are not simply the product of a "lack of apology" over an event that happened decades ago, but the loss of honor the Massacre caused China as a whole. This loss of honor, or loss of

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<sup>7</sup> Peter Hays Gries, "China's 'New Thinking' on Japan," *The China Quarterly* 184, Cambridge University Press (2005), 846.

<sup>8</sup> Gregory J. Moore, "History, Nationalism and Face in Sino-Japanese Relations," *Chinese Journal of Political Science* 15, no.3 (2010), 290.

<sup>9</sup> Gries, "China's 'New Thinking' on Japan," 837-838.

“face,” is the cultural factor that led to the social power of this re-remembrance of the Nanjing Massacre and has been escalating these tensions with Japan in modern China.

To analyze this affect of the loss of face on the reemergence of the Nanjing Massacre in Chinese public discussion, this paper reflects a close examination of news articles and official statements released from Chinese sources since the beginning of the 21st century to study the effects of the memory of the Nanjing Massacre on Sino-Japanese relations and conflicts. Immediately after the Nanjing Massacre and throughout the 20th century, neither the Chinese government nor the Chinese people spoke much about the Nanjing Massacre. However, as revealed in the seemingly sudden rise of protests at the start of the 21st century, the Nanjing Massacre had not been forgotten in China’s collective memory, and the Japanese atrocities had not been forgiven.



## Section 1: The “Century of Humiliation” and the Nanjing Massacre

Since the beginning of the 21st century, there has been a significant increase in tensions and incidents between China and Japan. Historians<sup>10</sup> such as Dr. Gregory Moore, a Professor of Global Studies and Politics at Colorado Christian University, have taken note of a recent drastic increase in tensions between China and Japan. Moore says, in “2004-2005 ... a Chinese submarine appeared in Japanese waters, 10,000 Chinese protestors appeared in front of the Japanese Embassy in Beijing, [and, in response,] Tokyo’s right-wing governor landed on an islet claimed by China to wave the Japanese flag in front of reporters.”<sup>11</sup> Chinese individuals and these scholars like Moore argue that this incident, along with the Japanese politicians’ continued visits to the Yasukuni Shrine (a cemetery for former soldiers, including those from the Second Sino-Japanese War) reflects the Japanese lack of atonement and regret for the atrocities they committed during World War II.<sup>12</sup>

Even after hearing complaints from the Chinese public and government, individual Japanese continued to visit the shrine, even though “when Japanese politicians go there to worship, Chinese nationalists view it as a sign of Japanese militarism and Japan’s continuing lack of repentance for wartime aggression against China.”<sup>13</sup> The incidents all have a common root in what is arguably the most humiliating event in Chinese history: the Nanjing Massacre.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For example, see also: Peter Hays Gries, “China’s ‘New Thinking’ on Japan,” *The China Quarterly* 184, Cambridge University Press (2005): 831-850.

James Burnham Sedgwick. “Memory on Trial: Constructing and Contesting the ‘Rape of Nanking’ at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, 1946-1948.” *Modern Asian Studies* 43, no. 5 (2009). Cambridge University Press: 1229-54.

<sup>11</sup> Moore, “History, Nationalism and Face in Sino-Japanese Relations,” 283.

<sup>12</sup> “Sino-Japanese” refers to events between China and Japan

<sup>13</sup> Gries, “China’s ‘New Thinking’ on Japan,” 834.

<sup>14</sup> In discussion of these events, the new standard of the pinyin system will be used for the romanization of Chinese characters. Quotations from Chinese sources will be roughly translated by the author to English in the text, and the original Chinese text will be cited in footnotes after each direct quotation for reference to improve readability for non-Chinese-speaking audiences. Any romanized pronunciations of terms or names used in the text that are not translated into English will also be cited in their original Chinese text in footnotes. The same formula will be used for any Japanese names, titles, or quotations, following the romaji romanization system.

Nanjing Dàtúshā (南京大屠杀)

Tensions in China towards Japan and Japanese militarism have been increasingly visible since the start of the 21st century. These observations by historians show general alignment of the sentiments of the Chinese people regarding the Nanjing Massacre and towards the Japanese deniers. However, the Chinese people's expression of anti-Japanese sentiments did not begin all at once.

Many of these anti-Japanese sentiments have their roots in China's substantial pre-modern history, in which China was the world's leading civilization in technological and cultural advancements. Dr. William C. Johnstone of SAIS (John Hopkins University) perfectly summarizes the history of China before 1800, and how China, as a result, accurately viewed its global standing.

Inheritors of 2,000 years of civilization with a high level of artistic achievement, systems of philosophy, and advances in the arts of government, they were imbued with a sense of superiority and self-satisfaction. The Chinese of 1800 saw their empire as the "Middle Kingdom," the center of the highest in human achievement in a world peopled by inferior "barbarians." In the Chinese world view, others could only approach the Celestial Empire in the humble spirit of paying tribute and by open acknowledgment of Chinese superiority.<sup>15</sup>

Not only was China more economically and technologically advanced than the rest of the world before the 1800s, but it also had hundreds of years of historical, artistic, and cultural development. The more advanced Chinese culture permeated each surrounding territory, lending to Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and others adopting the Chinese writing system, imperial system, and Confucian beliefs.<sup>16</sup> It was only logical for the Chinese to assume that eventually, China would come to realize its position as the greatest civilization in the entire world. This "Sino-centricism," is reflected in the Chinese term that is used today to refer to China as a

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<sup>15</sup> William C. Johnstone, "The Problem of China," *SAIS Review* (1956-1989) 14, no. 3, 1970, 21.

<sup>16</sup> D. E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800: Critical Issues in World and International History* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013), 3.

country: “zhongguo”<sup>17</sup> roughly translates to “middle country”, which linguistically shows the Chinese belief that their civilization is the center of the world, and thus, superior in every way.

Sino-centricism led to a system of tribute — rooted in Confucian ideals — given by the “inferior” countries and peoples to the “superior” China.<sup>18</sup> When a foreign country interacted with China, it was expected to send embassies carrying gifts to the Imperial Court of China, “signifying their subservient status to the Chinese,” and, in return, those foreign embassies would be granted “rewards of the emperor’s benevolent paternalism.”<sup>19</sup> By consistently reaffirming with foreigners the difference between their lesser power and China’s great advancements, the tributary system served as a “regional institutional configuration founded on China’s superior position with respect to its neighbours.”<sup>20</sup>

The value of hierarchical relationships from Confucianism dictated that those inferior in status must show respect and deference to those above them. In this way, the tributary system constantly reaffirmed China’s position as the most advanced and longest-standing country, especially in East Asia, and strengthened its own cultural and ethnic pride. Any “borrowing of Western architecture and technology during the period 1500-1800 was driven more by Chinese intellectual curiosity and aesthetic pleasure rather than by political or economic motives.”<sup>21</sup> However, as the rest of the world began to catch up with China’s superior advancements, this Sino-centricism was challenged for the first time in history. After thousands of years of being the most advanced civilization in the world, China faced a national humiliation at the hands of

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<sup>17</sup> Zhōngguó (中国)

<sup>18</sup> Yuan-kang Wang, “Explaining the Tribute System: Power, Confucianism, and War in Medieval East Asia,” *Journal of East Asian Studies* 13, no. 2, 2013, 207.

<sup>19</sup> Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800*, 4.

<sup>20</sup> Zhou Fangyin, “Equilibrium Analysis of the Tributary System,” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 4, no. 2, 2011, 148.

<sup>21</sup> Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800*, 80.

Western imperialists — and later, Japanese imperialists — during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This period is known as China’s “Century of Humiliation”<sup>22</sup> (c. 1840-1949).

### China’s Century of Humiliation

Despite periods of warring states and weak governments existing throughout China’s over three thousand-year history, “China’s superior position within Asia was the norm ... and had direct influence on the expectations and diplomatic behaviour of regional actors.”<sup>23</sup> Even as Europe began experiencing cultural, economic, and industrial revolutions, China did not expect its superior position to change. Yet, with the passing of a single century, “China declined into an outmoded empire that failed to come to terms with the modern world until it was practically swallowed by the imperialist powers.”<sup>24</sup>

Starting just before 1800, tensions with Great Britain revolving around the British East India Company’s trade with China in Canton had already begun to appear. Due to not having export products that were desirable in China, Britain traded for Chinese goods with precious metals, which quickly led to a British deficit in silver that the Chinese were not inclined to help solve.<sup>25</sup> As Britain started to push for more trading ports to be opened for its access and for China to import more products instead of accepting silver as payment for exports, China remained strongly set in its traditions.

When Britain sent an embassy led by Lord George Macartney (1737-1806) and Sir George L. Staunton (1737-1801) with gifts to persuade the Chinese to be more accommodating to British trade desires, “the Chinese saw the embassy in terms of traditional guest ritual. British

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<sup>22</sup> Bǎinián Chǐrǔ (百年耻辱)

<sup>23</sup> Fangyin, “Equilibrium Analysis of the Tributary System,” 148-149.

<sup>24</sup> Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800*, 1.

<sup>25</sup> Man-houng Lin, “Opium: The Culprit?” In *China Upside Down: Currency, Society, and Ideologies, 1808–1856*, 1st ed., 270, Harvard University Asia Center, 2006, 72.

attempts to receive special treatment from the Chinese were doomed by the obligations of guest ritual to treat all nations equally.”<sup>26</sup> China’s acceptance of Britain’s gifts as a continuation of the idea of the tributary system led the country to underestimate the growing Western threat. At this failure to achieve what it desired, Britain turned its eyes to an opium trade with China.

Thus, by the mid-1700s, China had already been devastatingly affected by the West through the selling of and, later, smuggling in of Indian opium.<sup>27</sup> Despite the Qing Dynasty’s Qianlong Emperor (1736-1795) making opium illegal, when the East India Company abandoned its official monopoly on the opium trade, the smuggling of opium into China escalated. Opium quickly became “a lucrative source of profit” for the British merchants, and “so valuable had this trade become by the late 1830s that its threatened closure by the Qing government caused the British government to send ships and troops to attack Canton,” thus starting the First Opium War (1839-1842).<sup>28</sup> With a relatively quick and decisive victory, the British succeeded not only in opening up Chinese trade to British merchants by opening access to five more Chinese ports, but they also humiliated China politically and militarily. The Treaty of Nanjing (1842) that accomplished this was the first of many treaties that held unequal conditions against China, relying on Western military power to force the Chinese government into fulfilling the undesirable terms of the treaties.

Despite the military threat of the Western powers looming over China, the Chinese government continued to oppose the illegal sale of drugs in their country. The Second Opium War (1856-1860) resulted from remaining tensions and Qing authorities continuing to refuse to legalize the sale of opium. The Qing Dynasty attempted to retain its own agency and place of

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<sup>26</sup> Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500-1800*, 152.

<sup>27</sup> John F. Richards, “Opium and the British Indian Empire: The Royal Commission of 1895,” *Modern Asian Studies* 36, no. 2, 2002, 376.

<sup>28</sup> Richards, “Opium and the British Indian Empire,” 377.

superiority as a country, people, and culture by refusing Western advances. However, in the Second Opium War, the superior might of Franco-British naval forces occupied Beijing and burned the Yuanming Garden Palace (1860), thus declaring to the world the end of Chinese supremacy.<sup>29</sup> This was only one of many symbolic humiliations of Chinese national pride to result from foreign invasion and domestic corruption during the “Century of Humiliation.”<sup>30</sup>

In this time period, China was continuously humiliated by the foreign “barbarians” it had long-since considered inferior to its more advanced civilization, with these humiliations piling up in quick succession. Following shortly after the Opium Wars was the rise of Japan and the start of military Sino-Japanese conflicts. The First Sino-Japanese War (1894) ended with the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki (April 17th, 1895), and “eliminated China as a contender for influence in Korea.”<sup>31</sup> With the Treaty of Shimonoseki, China lost both its primary tributary state of Korea and some of its own northern land to Japan.<sup>32</sup> Then, in the Russo-Japanese War, the Treaty of Portsmouth (1904-1905) transferred certain economic rights in southern Manchuria to Japan and political control of Korea to Japan, which showed that Japan’s standing as a rising world power was officially recognized by other countries such as the US.<sup>33</sup>

These two wars further undermined the superior global position of China. Great Britain and France had revealed China’s military inferiority in the First and Second Opium Wars. Then, with the Russo-Japanese War, Manchurian land that held many ethnic Chinese was transferred to Japan’s sphere of influence from Russia via American arbitration. China’s lack of ability to affect

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<sup>29</sup> William A. Callahan, “National Insecurities: Humiliation, Salvation, and Chinese Nationalism,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 29, no. 2, 2004, 208.

<sup>30</sup> Callahan, “National Insecurities,” 208.

<sup>31</sup> Marius B. Jansen, Samuel C. Chu, Shumpei Okamoto, and Bonnie B. Oh, “The Historiography of the Sino-Japanese War,” *The International History Review* 1, no. 2, 1979, 191.

<sup>32</sup> Hans Lengerer, “A Pre-History of the Sino-Japanese War 1894–1895: Introduction and Summary,” *Warship International* 56, no. 1, 2019, 53.

<sup>33</sup> Keith Stevens, “Between Scylla and Charybdis: China and the Chinese During the Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905,” *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 43, 2003, 127-128, 152.

and decide these events brought about yet another Chinese humiliation by showing the military weakness of the country. Not only was China defeated by the West in every instance, but China was also losing influence in territory from which the reigning Manchu-led Qing dynasty hailed to the rising power of Japan, which it had long since considered a lesser and tributary state.

Japan's actions didn't just uproot the Confucian practice of being subservient to those of higher position than oneself by disrespecting China's claims to Korea and Southern Manchuria. Rather, Japan's victories completely reversed this traditional, hierarchical belief by adopting Western practices to gain the military power necessary to threaten China and take its place as the superior Asian country. How this reversal of power was an utter humiliation to China might be difficult for a Western audience to understand in their own cultural context, but the impact of these humiliations on the Chinese was great enough that it can still be seen today.

William Callahan of the University of Durham, UK, argues that humiliation in China is “a social practice that needs to be understood in terms of political and historical narratives,” and the moral narrative of national humiliation is defined as “foreign imperialism encouraged by domestic corruption.”<sup>34</sup> The Chinese state's and culture's superiority was undermined in these humiliations by foreigners, who imposed these wars and expectations upon China in a series of unequal treaties that the Chinese were politically and militarily unable to resist.<sup>35</sup> Yet, the culmination of these greatest global humiliations of China, the Nanjing Massacre of the Second Sino-Japanese War, still loomed on the horizon in the early 20th century.

China's humiliation began when, to solve the growing problem of China rejecting trade, the Western powers used military might to impose a “Treaty System” upon China in the 1800s.<sup>36</sup> This series of treaties put upon China by the superior military might of Westerners left the

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<sup>34</sup> Callahan, “National Insecurities,” 201, 205.

<sup>35</sup> This is why this time period is also referred to as the time of “Unequal Treaties.”

<sup>36</sup> Johnstone, “The Problem of China,” 21.

country facing a sense of shame like never before in its long history. In the early 20th century, China experienced a wave of popular desire to overcome this humiliation by Westernization, which culminated in the 1911 revolution.<sup>37</sup> This attempt to overcome China's humiliation ended not just the Qing dynasty, but the dynastic system. Rather than creating greater stability, China fell victim to political disintegration and a warlord-ruled society. The first challenge to the Republic of China came just three-and-a-half years after the initial revolution with a Japanese ultimatum.

Japan's Twenty-one Demands (January 18th, 1915) to China was a Japanese answer to the humiliation China was suffering: solve the military weakness of East Asia compared to the West by copying the West's imperialism and enforcing Japanese rule and policies on China.<sup>38</sup> China's previous attempts to modernize had all ended in failure. At the same time, Japan had been growing in power exponentially since the forced opening of its borders to the Western powers and their influence in the 1850s. With this newfound power, Japan sought to take China and its resources in order to establish a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in order to remove Western influence from East Asia and establish itself as the dominant Asian power.<sup>39</sup> Japan's claims to China in its attempt to create a singular, East Asian, anti-Western force, however, made China once again realize that the "inferior country" of Japan had become more powerful than itself.

The Twenty-one Demands called for giving special rights of trade, administration, and (or) other unexplicit forms of control for Japan in Manchuria and on the islands off China's

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<sup>37</sup> Rana Mitter, "1911: The Unanchored Chinese Revolution," *The China Quarterly*, no. 208, 2011, 1009–20.

<sup>38</sup> Johnstone, "The Problem of China," 27.

<sup>39</sup> Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (大東亞共榮圈, *Daitōkyōeiken*): Following ideas of what is also known as Pan-Asianism, Japan sought to form an economic and military collection of nations (arguably, which would actually be an empire) in Asia for the mutual prosperity of the Eastern-living (Asian) peoples of the world and to rid Asia of Western colonization and influence. For further reference, see: Jeremy A. Yellen, *The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere: When Total Empire Met Total War*, Cornell University Press, 2019.



coast, and they also sought to have control over China through advisers of Chinese financial, political, and policing affairs. The Demands were seen by both China and the West as “proof of predatory Japan militarism.”<sup>40</sup> As China’s President Yuan was forced to accept all of the demands except for the Japanese control over internal Chinese affairs, these Demands and the Nine-Power Treaty that followed greatly undermined Chinese sovereignty and, as such, strengthened anti-Japan — and anti-foreigner — sentiment in China. The discourse that took place in China regarding the Demands was especially public, resulting in protests and riots throughout the streets.<sup>41</sup> These hostile reactions from the Chinese people to Japan’s Demands were the first shows of “national humiliation in an organized form.”<sup>42</sup> The Twenty-one Demands were “the first challenge to China as a modern nation state.”<sup>43</sup>

The reaction of the Chinese (and Westerners) to the Twenty-one Demands “startled the Japanese statesmen, who had seen their demands as a formalization of existing arrangements and a natural outgrowth of economics.”<sup>44</sup> Unlike China, which saw the Japanese encroachments as a reversal of traditional societal standings, Japan saw its takeover of land and resources as logical and befitting of the currently most-advanced East Asian nation. After Japan’s own humiliation by the West from being forced to open its borders in 1853, the country became more economically and militarily advanced, and it saw the stagnant economic state of China as a problem. This “China Problem” was one that Japan sought to solve with “a gigantic projection of its successful program of economic development in Manchuria to China and other areas of Asia.”<sup>45</sup> This projection of Japan’s influence was carried out overtly by military takeover of Manchuria in

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<sup>40</sup> Marius B. Jansen, “Yawata, Hanyehping, and the Twenty-One Demands,” *Pacific Historical Review* 23, no. 1, 1954, 31. Since these events later culminated into the military aggression Japan displayed in 1931 and in 1937, especially, it would appear in hindsight that mayhaps the Chinese opinion was correct.

<sup>41</sup> Callahan, “National Insecurities,” 210.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 210.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, 211.

<sup>44</sup> Jansen, “Yawata, Hanyehping, and the Twenty-One Demands,” 31.

<sup>45</sup> Johnstone, “The Problem of China,” 29.

1931, which eventually culminated into the Second Sino-Japanese War (July 7, 1937 - September 9, 1945), also known in China as the War of Resistance against Japan.

The first stage of the Second Sino-Japanese War from 1937-1941 was the ultimate humiliation in Chinese history. During the war, “almost twenty million Chinese soldiers and civilians were killed, dozens of cities were destroyed by air shelling and military operations, [and] several hundred million fled their homes and villages, becoming refugees and displaced people.”<sup>46</sup> The largest and most culturally impactful event of this war was the Nanjing Massacre, a massacre and rape of approximately 300,000 Nanjing civilians by Japanese soldiers. Even as the war ended, due to the victory being achieved primarily by the US and not China, the humiliation China felt did not dissipate. Despite some historians marking the Century of Humiliation as ending in 1949 with the victory of Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and reunification of China, the impact of the war and the Nanjing Massacre remained. While the issue of the Nanjing Massacre largely escaped national and international attention for the rest of the century, a variety of factors led to a reemergence of its study and memory in the 21st century, along with a rise of anti-Japanism in China.

#### The Issue of the Nanjing Massacre

While the Second World War is an international cataclysm that requires no definition, the Second Sino-Japanese War that coincided with it has been understudied. Even in China, until recently, “debates on the war have generally been part of a wider argument about the origins of the Chinese Communist revolution,” not the details of the war or the tragedies that occurred

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<sup>46</sup> Laura De Giorgi, “Little Friends at War: Childhood in the Chinese Anti-Japanese War Propaganda Magazine *Kangzhan Ertong* 抗战儿童 (*The Resistance Child*),” *Oriens Extremus* 53, 2014, 61.

during it.<sup>47</sup> The most impactful of these atrocities, and the one with the single highest death count, is the Nanjing Massacre.<sup>48</sup>

The problem of discussing the Nanjing Massacre is, first, that strong historiography on the topic did not exist until the current century, especially not outside of China. Secondly, there are controversies between Japanese-sympathetic scholars and Chinese-sympathetic scholars about both the details and the basic events of the Massacre, such as if the incident should be referred to as a “massacre” at all. While “one could make a plausible claim that the war was the single most devastating event in China's modern history ... for decades, the debates surrounding it have existed in a historiographical penumbra.”<sup>49</sup>

One of the most prominent debates about the Massacre is how many casualties it entailed. The People’s Republic of China (PRC) has advanced that the case of the Nanjing Massacre “was a pre-meditated, systematic ‘Massacre’ of 300,000-plus civilians and POWs that, along with 20,000 to 80,000 rapes of women, took place in the city from December 1937 to January 1938.”<sup>50</sup> On the opposite side of the spectrum, since the atrocity at Nanjing, some Japanese individuals<sup>51</sup> say that the Massacre did not occur at all.<sup>52</sup> Many Japanese who accept the existence of the Massacre still argue that the death toll is much lower than the PRC claims.<sup>53</sup> This

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<sup>47</sup> Rana Mitter and Aaron William Moore, “China in World War II, 1937–1945: Experience, Memory, and Legacy,” *Modern Asian Studies* 45, no. 2, 2011, 227.

<sup>48</sup> For a general retelling of the Massacre’s basic events, see: Peter Harmsen, *Nanjing 1937: Battle for a Doomed City*, Philadelphia: Casemate, 2015.

<sup>49</sup> Mitter, “China in World War II, 1937–1945,” 226.

<sup>50</sup> Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, “Review of *The Nanking Massacre: Now You See It, . . .*, by Tanaka Masaaki, Takemoto Tadao, Ōhara Yasuo, and Masahiro Yamamoto,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 56, no. 4, 2001, 523-24. For more examples than Wakabayashi gives, see also: Suzuki Akira. *The Illusion of the Nanjing Massacre*. Tokyo: Bungei Shunju, 1973.

<sup>51</sup> Including scholars, officials, and the Japanese public. For example, see also: Sections 2 and 3 of this paper.

<sup>52</sup> James Burnham Sedgwick, “Memory on Trial: Constructing and Contesting the ‘Rape of Nanking’ at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, 1946-1948,” (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1245.

<sup>53</sup> For example, see also: Matthew Penney. “Far from Oblivion: The Nanking Massacre in Japanese Historical Writing for Children and Young Adults.” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 22, no.1 (2008): 25-48.

For early but prominent discussion on this topic, see: Honda Katsuichi, Frank Gibney, and Karen Elsa Sandness. *The Nanjing Massacre: A Japanese Journalist Confronts Japan's National Shame*. Armonk N.Y. M.E. Sharpe, 1999.

has led casualty estimates of the Massacre to be anywhere from 20,000 and 40,000 to 200,000 and upwards of 400,000 victims that were beaten, raped, and killed.

Of the issues relating to these estimates, one of the greatest is that the PRC and the “imperial army and government officials systematically burned primary documents needed to verify the nature and scope of that guilt as well as their role in it.”<sup>54</sup> Another problem is that “no one complained about a Nanking ‘Massacre’ ... at the time or shortly after it allegedly took place. Chinese protests designed to win world sympathy in 1938 expressly cited actions at Canton” instead.<sup>55</sup> Thus, as the discussion on the Massacre did not begin until well after primary sources to serve as reference could be found, and those documents that did exist were either hidden away or destroyed, neither side felt any inclination to yield to the other on the topic of what it believes is historical fact.

Following this issue of the accuracy of the number of casualties is the problem of how the history of the Nanjing Massacre should be presented to the Chinese and Japanese people. The differences in how both societies remember the Nanjing Massacre has led to many Sino-Japanese tensions and conflicts in the current century. One example of this is the question of history textbooks, in which many shameful events in Japanese history were censored or erased completely from a few Japanese school-approved textbooks during the 1980s and 90s. The most notable of these textbooks, promoted by the National Council to Defend Nippon, gained approval from Japan’s Ministry of Education in 1986.<sup>56</sup> *Shinpen Nihonshi*<sup>57</sup> was “mainly written by ... an ultranationalist. To gain certification, [the textbook] underwent some 250 revisions over

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<sup>54</sup> Wakabayashi, “Review of *The Nanking Massacre: Now You See It*,” 521.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 524.

<sup>56</sup> National Council to Defend Nippon (Nippon o Mamoru Kokumin Kaigi, 日本お守る国民会議, fd. 1997): A patriotic group of Conservative revisionists in Japan. For further reference, see: Guthmann, Thierry, and Aike P. Rots. “Nationalist Circles in Japan Today: The Impossibility of Secularization.” *Japan Review*, no. 30 (2017): 207–25.

<sup>57</sup> 身辺日本史

four screenings that elicited 800 ministry fix-it slips.”<sup>58</sup> Mostly because the textbook withheld information about the events of Japanese conflicts and the author refused to use the term “genocide”<sup>59</sup> in regards to the Nanjing Massacre, news of the approval of this textbook and others like it caused social conflict between China and Japan.<sup>60</sup> After twenty years without much Sino-Japanese conflict, the censorship in these heavily edited textbooks was one of the underlying reasons directly responsible for the protests between the two countries in the 1980s and again in 2005.<sup>61</sup> However, as these tensions were left to dissipate, the conflicts between the two countries escalated as China has regained its economic and military strength since the start of the 21st century.

The Nanjing Massacre, even though it has been difficult for the two countries to accurately and precisely agree upon what occurred, continues to be historically relevant. The indeterminacy of historical fact on the event has led to two different politically and culturally motivated mindsets about the Nanjing Massacre in China and Japan, and these varying mindsets have heavily influenced Sino-Japanese relations in the 21st century. The connection between the Massacre and the Sino-Japanese protests can be found in both the underlying shame and anger revealed by protestors and the Chinese government when speaking about Japan, as well as their direct reference to the Nanjing Massacre. What is most problematic to many scholars, however, is that these problems seem to have suddenly appeared, and are a 21st-century problem that somehow emerged from a 20th century event. With an understanding of the events prior to the Massacre and those that eventually led to the rise of China in the 21st century, however, one can

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<sup>58</sup> Wakabayashi, “Review of *The Nanking Massacre: Now You See It*,” 522.

<sup>59</sup> Dai gyakusatsu (大虐殺)

<sup>60</sup> Wakabayashi, “Review of *The Nanking Massacre: Now You See It*,” 522.

<sup>61</sup> Moore, “History, Nationalism and Face in Sino-Japanese Relations,” 292.

apply a knowledge of the Chinese culture to see what, specifically, has led to this “sudden” rise of Sino-Japanese tensions and talk of the Nanjing Massacre.

#### Post-War: The Slow, then Sudden Rise of Anti-Japanism

The rise of anti-Japanism in China can be compared to a build up behind a dam. Water building up over time behind the wall of a dam might not be noticeable to outsiders or passersby, and it would likely only catch the attention of those living in a house by its shores in certain increments. However, with just the right conditions, such as the wall that held back the water slowly eroding and weakening, the water would first burst through the dam in opened cracks and holes. Once a crack appeared in the dam, it would only be a matter of time until another appeared, and then another, and another, until the wall became little more than sedimental remained from an entire river bursting through. Would outsiders and passersby notice before then that the dam was leaking, or would they only see when the dam had burst?

In this analogy, the water is the growing tension and resentment of the Chinese people towards Japan. The dam itself is the inhibition that kept the Chinese from speaking out about the culmination of their Century of Humiliation: the Nanjing Massacre. The holes are the protests and anti-Japanism that have appeared in the 21st century, which were made possible by China’s growing military power as a country that no longer had to rely on others and had enough international influence to not be put under unequal treaties. This increasing international influence is what has slowly enabled China to chip away at the inhibitions holding back the shame of its people. The water held by the dam, the tension, was more than enough to begin causing conflict between China and Japan by the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War; however, the events that occurred before the early 2000s were what added to those pre-existing tensions and caused the dam to begin to overflow.

In the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), “Japan showed itself stronger than anticipated, and Manchu China was revealed to be far weaker than many had believed.”<sup>62</sup> Japan’s imperialistic military campaigns reversed the Chinese traditional view of Japan as a lesser and insignificant tributary to China. Japan’s campaigns cemented China’s position as what was formerly a great kingdom, but now was a weak East Asian country. This humiliation is evident in 1949 when Mao Zedong proclaimed the founding of the PRC and declared that: “Ours will no longer be a nation subject to insult and humiliation. We have stood up.”<sup>63</sup> The PRC’s described narrative of overcoming those who had wronged China as a nation depended “upon [China’s previous] national humiliation; [Mao’s] narrative of national security [depended] upon national insecurity.”<sup>64</sup> For Mao to declare that China had unified and risen above their previous insult and humiliations was dependent on the fact that those humiliations existed and continued to haunt the Chinese people. However, these attempts to recover from national humiliation internationally did not cause open talks with nations outside of China until twenty years later.

In the summer of 1972, China expressed willingness to mend diplomatic relations with Japan. However, Chinese Premier Chou En Lai said this was only the case if the new Japanese government “decides to earnestly take up the normalization issue.”<sup>65</sup> To the Chinese, that included the affirmation that the Chinese government in Beijing was the sole representation of the whole of China, which was to include Taiwan.<sup>66</sup> This stance by China went against the Treaty of Taipei (1953) that Japan had signed with the Nationalist Government of Taiwan, which separated the Republic of China from the People’s Republic of China both by political institution

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<sup>62</sup> Johnstone, “The Problem of China,” 25.

<sup>63</sup> Mao Zedong, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, vol. 5 (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1977), p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> Callahan, “National Insecurities,” 203.

<sup>65</sup> Tillman Durdin Special, “China Reported Willing to Open Talks With Tanaka on Diplomatic Relations,” *The New York Times*, July 8, 1972, <https://www.nytimes.com/1972/07/08/archives/china-reported-willing-to-open-talks-with-tanaka-on-diplomatic.html?searchResultPosition=3>, 2.

<sup>66</sup> Taiwan had been taken from China by Japan in 1895 after the First Sino-Japanese War.

and land holdings. While Japan did not agree to sign the peace treaty with China under those terms, the two countries did eventually reach a different agreement.

While this stance seems at first to be one of reestablishing China's superior place in the world, in September of the same year, China "[renounced] its demand for war indemnities from Japan" as part of the agreement with Japan to resume some diplomatic ties.<sup>67</sup> The signing of these diplomatic agreements officially ended the war that had technically still existed between the two states even with the end of government-sanctioned hostilities in 1945, but the agreement for China to renounce its demand for war indemnities was also an acknowledgment that it needed friendly Sino-Japanese relations more than it needed an official apology for the Japanese invasion.

The wish for better relations with Japan also coincided with the Sino-Soviet split during the Cold War that blossomed after 1960, with a following period of extreme tension and border skirmishes in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In the summer of 1978, the *New York Times* published a news article that showed one of the reasons behind China's push for relations with Japan. This article began: "The Japanese decision to press on with talks on concluding a peace treaty with China in the teeth of Soviet opposition indicates a growing self confidence in this country, long regarded as too timid to have a foreign policy of its own."<sup>68</sup> The focus of this article on Japan shows that, internationally, the West considered Japan as the leading power of the two in Asia, and that Japan had a responsibility to help China against the threat of the Soviets.

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<sup>67</sup> "China and Japan Agree to Resume Diplomatic Ties," *The New York Times*, September 29, 1972, <https://www.nytimes.com/1972/09/29/archives/china-and-japan-agree-to-resume-diplomatic-ties-premiers-sign.html?searchResultPosition=2>, 1.

<sup>68</sup> Henry Scott Stokes, "Japan Showing New Self-Confidence in Talks With China," *The New York Times*, June 24, 1978, <https://www.nytimes.com/1978/06/24/archives/japan-showing-new-selfconfidence-in-talks-with-china-analysis-japan.html?searchResultPosition=3>, 1.



By making peace with Japan diplomatically, it can be argued that China had not made any successful attempts to recover from its national humiliation. Japan still remained as China's equal, if not its superior, and China remained unable to claim itself as the strongest country in East Asia once again, let alone as having a superior position on a global scale. If anything, the willingness to ignore the Century of Humiliation showed that China was still weak and recovering from its loss of power. China had not only not recovered from its national humiliation, but was also still losing face as Japan continued to violate its traditional place in the East Asian hierarchy.

Further talks between the two countries concluded similarly, with immediate economic and security priorities continuing to preclude any attempt to confront the Nanjing Massacre. China, instead, invited Japan to join in oil field developments, arms manufacturing, and other financial trades and developments, even as Japan continued to have open ties with Taiwan.<sup>69</sup> However, tensions with Japan continued to exist beneath the surface. As mentioned previously, the problem of Japanese history textbooks in the 1980s and 90s caused a stir of protests in China, one of the first times that the remaining tensions of the Second Sino-Japanese war were revealed in Chinese society. These censored history textbooks were the first visible cracks in the dam. Then, this outbreak of protests was the first, slowly dribbling leak from these cracks in the dam's structure that would soon burst.

In response to these protests, the Chinese government made a statement, as quoted in an American newspaper, that "the Japanese Education Ministry is wrong in distorting this period in the textbooks."<sup>70</sup> China's statements showed, for the first time since 1949, an outright

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<sup>69</sup> "China Strengthens Its Ties With Japan," *The New York Times*, July 23, 1978, <https://www.nytimes.com/1978/07/23/archives/china-strengthens-its-ties-with-japan-initiates-joint-economic.html?searchResultPosition=2>, 2.

<sup>70</sup> Christopher S. Wren, "China Assails Japan's Books on 30's Invasion," *The New York Times*, July 28, 1982, <https://www.nytimes.com/1982/07/28/world/china-assails-japan-s-books-on-30-s-invasion.html?searchResultPosition=2>, 2.

disagreement with Japan and mention of the Nanjing Massacre. However, the lack of the immediate change demanded by the Chinese to the Japanese textbooks revealed once again that Japan continued to stand in a superior place of power above China.<sup>71</sup> Even with the growing power of China, the national humiliation had not been forgotten, and as China continued to grow in power and influence, the Chinese people slowly began to become increasingly vocal about these tensions.

The change that allowed protests against Japan and the Nanjing Massacre is visible in the difference in response in early 2001 to an incident that China perceived as an insult to itself as a country. That year, a U.S. spy-plane had a collision over the South China Sea with a Chinese jet, which sparked protests and immediate action from the Chinese government. To the Chinese people, the incident “was much more than simple violation of Chinese sovereignty: It was seen as a moral problem, another in a long line of humiliations that China has suffered since the Opium War.”<sup>72</sup> In order to resolve this problem, China wanted symbolic recognition of its influence and power as a country and “demanded a public apology from the United States.”<sup>73</sup>

This incident with the U.S. was much unlike the way China has previously interacted with Japan. Rather than bowing to a “superior” country, China brought to the forefront its desire for public recognition of its sovereignty, and it demanded an official apology to overcome its national humiliation. This behavior reveals how the concept of “face,” deeply ingrained in Chinese culture, was now affecting government action. China had lost territory to Japan, and its own government was dictated by foreign powers to accept enforced treaties before 1945. In this way, the Chinese government saw that “China lost face ... to Western powers and Japan ... [and]

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<sup>71</sup> Henry Scott Stokes, “Japan Pledges Textbook Revision,” *The New York Times*, August 27, 1982, <https://www.nytimes.com/1982/08/27/world/japan-pledges-textbook-revision.html?searchResultPosition=3>, 2.

<sup>72</sup> Callahan, “National Insecurities,” 201.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, 201.

now it must make sure not to lose face again.”<sup>74</sup> The national humiliation China had suffered from the Century of Humiliation and the Nanjing Massacre remained, however much hidden from sight behind the cracking walls of a dam. Now, as China grew in power, the dam’s restraints slowly became unnecessary in their society, and China’s foreign policy slowly grew bolder.

What is “Face”?

In understanding this startling change in policy in a twenty-year time period, it is important to understand the concept of “face.” To understand “face”, it is useful for a Western audience to first understand what is most easily defined as Chinese nationalism. Put simply, the Chinese sense of self dignity and image directly correlates with the great history of Chinese civilization, which leads to a pride in the nation. This sense of superiority as a country and people long existed before the rise of modern nationalism, and the loss of this superiority was, in itself, “an integral part of the construction of Chinese nationalism.”<sup>75</sup> The loss of this superiority, however, also led to a loss of face: China’s image and reputation in the world.

Unlike nationalism, face is the result of a social interaction or exchange between two parties who have a relationship and, therefore, have expectations of behaviour and responsibilities to uphold within that relationship. To lose face is as simple as one party acting improperly before another party, or the other party bringing the one party shame or humiliation through actions. Regaining lost face is especially difficult due to the need for reciprocity amongst the involved parties. Whether one party was simply an observer or the direct cause of the loss of face, the other party must be the one to repair the loss of face. In the case of others directly causing the loss of face — such as the Japanese to China — they would need to directly

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<sup>74</sup> Callahan, “National Insecurities,” 211-212.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 200.

apologize for their actions that caused the loss of face. This apology would have to be specific in explaining what occurred, how they behaved improperly due to the Chinese societal hierarchy, and that they are deeply and truly regretful for this behaviour. If the other party refuses to assist in helping the other regain face<sup>76</sup>, then one way to convince this opposing party to assist in regaining one's lost face is to lower the other party's position in the relationship and make them lose face as well.<sup>77</sup> The party that has the superior position in the relationship is expected to guide the other on proper moral and social action, so requesting an acknowledgement of the other party's wrongdoings to its perceived superior, at this point, would not be a loss of face to the original party.

In the case of China, leading up to the 21st century, Chinese nationalism and the desire to regain its face from the Century of Humiliation is what led to the revival of Chinese international influence. The first step for China to regain its face was to address the weakness that Japan originally took advantage of to cause the loss of face. The tensions and anger over suffering humiliation from Japan were hidden underneath these revitalizing efforts, and, with the start of the 21st century, have started to become noticeable in public. Now that China has become a strong country on the international stage once again, the next step for it to regain its lost face would be to use its superior position to "guide" Japan into making the proper apology.

The history and memory of the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Nanjing Massacre, specifically, since 1945 "has not been a central part of the historical agenda" in either China or the West.<sup>78</sup> Instead, the growth of Chinese economic and military strength in order to cleanse the

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<sup>76</sup> This could be done by formally recognizing the other party's power and elevating the other party's position in the relationship.

<sup>77</sup> However, forcing the other party to acknowledge this loss by gaining a higher position over them would then lead to the other party's loss of face, as they would then not only have to acknowledge their wrongdoings, but also that they would have to defer to the party who originally lost face but had gained a superior position in the relationship.

<sup>78</sup> Mitter, "China in World War II, 1937-1945," 226.

national humiliation was at the forefront of Chinese focus, and the topic of the Nanjing Massacre did not come back into debate until the 21st century. One scholar, Tadashi Wakabayashi, argues that this phenomenon stems from the fact that “postwar Chinese [government and society] have wanted to forgive and forget; that is why Nanking was a non-issue for decades.”<sup>79</sup> However, Wakabayashi does not consider the history of humiliation and the Chinese concern of their lost face in his argument.

With patriotic nationalism as a national unifier after the Reform and Opening Up (1978)<sup>80</sup> in China, Chinese nationalism became not just about celebrating the glories of Chinese civilization, but also an alteration and commemoration of China's previous weakness.<sup>81</sup> China felt that it was the foreigners, the barbarians, who had brought such great humiliation to their nation, which is directly related to the Confucian mindset of understanding one's own position in society by the relation of the self to others.<sup>82</sup> The “core concept of Chinese social operation is “guanxi”<sup>83</sup>, and the extension of human feelings, face and power operation.”<sup>84</sup> By this idea, the Chinese people are all connected to each other and are different from those who are not Chinese. The national humiliation reemphasized the difference in China between “Chinese” and “foreigners,” which had been prominent in China since early in its history as all outsiders were seen as uncultured barbarians. This national humiliation had been used “to draw ethical boundaries between self and other, between domestic and foreign,” with the “self” being Chinese and the “other” being everyone and everything else.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, ed. *The Nanking Atrocity, 1937-1938: Complicating the Picture*, Oxford, NY: Berghahn Books, 2017, 8.

<sup>80</sup> Gǎigé kāifàng (改革开放)

<sup>81</sup> Callahan, “National Insecurities,” 202.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 215.

<sup>83</sup> This concept directly translates to “relationships” (关系).

<sup>84</sup> 翟学伟, “《人情、面子与权力的再生产》 | 从社会学的角度看“中国关系”,” 北辰遴选, July 31, 2021, 中国:南京大学, <https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/394653955>, 1.

“中国社会运作的核心概念就是“关系”, 以及由此延伸出来的人情, 面子与权力运作等。”

<sup>85</sup> Callahan, “National Insecurities,” 203.

The Chinese people as a whole had been humiliated by being degraded as a country, and as a whole, they had lost their honor. By losing its superior societal position, China lost its face not just as a country but as an entire culture and people.<sup>86</sup> Having face and being able to gain it can be done by one's "adherence to a common code of conduct that is also recognized by others. ... If a person follows this principle, he will be affirmed by himself and others, and it can be said that he 'has face'."<sup>87</sup> However, as previously mentioned, regaining face lost due to the influence of another cannot be done unilaterally. By having its superior position as a condition undermined by Western powers and Japan, China was humiliated by outsiders and lost face as a people and nation. Japan, which had previously been the inferior in its relationship with China, is seen especially as the cause for China's loss of face. If the Nanjing Massacre was the greatest humiliation of China, then the remembrance of this war and Japan's lack of a properly-deemed apology is the catalyst that has led to the bursting of the dam holding back tensions between China and Japan since the start of the 21st century.

What contributed to the seemingly sudden "re-remembrance" of the Nanjing Massacre in the early 2000s is a combination of multiple factors. The growing economic and industrial power of China, the increased vocalization of younger generations, and the ease of communication through the internet all enabled the Chinese to speak out about the loss of face that China received and had yet to be rectified. While much of face has to do with abiding by accepted moral and social norms, face can also be derived from wealth, power, and influence.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, as China has gained more wealth, power, and international respect, the accompanying return of

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<sup>86</sup> Li Qing Kinnison, "Power, Integrity, and Mask – An Attempt to Disentangle the Chinese Face Concept," *Journal of Pragmatics* 114, 2017, 36.

<sup>87</sup> 翟学伟, "中国人的“脸”与“面”: 共识与困惑," Tencent, June 22, 2021, <https://new.qq.com/rain/a/20210622A01P8000>, 4.

"它不过是指在一特定的交往中, 个人对他人也认可的一种共同行为准则的遵循。如果一个人遵循了这一原则, 他就会得到自己和他人的肯定, 这时就可以说他“有了面子”。"

<sup>88</sup> 搜狐网, "从西方学者角度, 探究中国传统文化中的“面子”," 搜狐网, October 18, 2018, [https://m.sohu.com/a/260317572\\_100101531?\\_trans\\_=010004\\_pcwzy](https://m.sohu.com/a/260317572_100101531?_trans_=010004_pcwzy), 2-3.

face has allowed the Chinese people to become more enabled to speak about the horrors and shames they had previously endured. In other words, now that China has the power and influence to request an official apology from Japan, the public's demands for such have become vocal and visible to even those outside of China through the reporting on Chinese protests.

Thus, the underlying concept of face led the Chinese people to silently hold on to their anger towards the Japanese militarists after the Nanjing Massacre and not demand and secure an apology from Japan both to avoid further humiliation and due to the weak state of China. While there has been an official peace between China and Japan since the restoration of diplomatic relations in the 1970s, the culture of face has left a larger problem of Sino-Japanese tensions that has yet to be resolved. China's efforts to grow as an international power have not been enough to restore its face as the loss of it came from Japan's transgressions against China and overthrowing China's previous superiority in their relationship. So long as there is recalcitrance in Japan about apologizing "properly" for its humiliation of China, China is unable to restore its face. Thus, in order to influence Japan to apologize, the culture of face has led to these protests and vocalized anti-Japanism in the current century.

## Section 2: Public Memory of the Nanjing Massacre

The many conflicts between China and Japan since early 2000 show that the loss of face from the horrors of the Massacre have continued to linger in the minds of the Chinese people, becoming a continuous reminder and aggravator for them. In this way, the Nanjing Massacre has remained an object of shame, emblematic of Japanese militarism and right-wing extremism. The emergence and continual appearance of these conflicts also reflect to the Chinese the inability of Japan to adequately apologize, which prevents the Chinese face from being restored. Until the Chinese face can be regained in the minds of the Chinese public and government, the Massacre will continue to cause tension between China and Japan.

### Emerging Historiography

As a primarily Confucian country, China has held onto the culture of filial piety, social hierarchy and the “rightful place” each individual has in society.<sup>89</sup> The efforts of Japan’s war and war crimes against China went directly against the Confucian ideals of respecting and deferring to those who are older and have had higher positions in the world for longer. Despite the efforts of Mao Zedong and the CCP during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) to do away with traditional values in the Chinese culture through government policies, the continuation of the practice of relational hierarchies and the concept of face in 21st century China shows how deeply ingrained this culture is in China. The persistence of these cultural values, despite efforts to alienate them, reveals how incendiary the reversal of China’s position over Japan and its following humiliation truly was. The visible impact of China’s humiliation shows how the memory of this loss of face could persist into the 21st century. The massacre and rape of Nanjing, especially, broke this traditional hierarchical order by the younger, “little brother”

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<sup>89</sup> Francis L. K. Hsu, *Americans and Chinese: Passage to Differences*, 3rd ed. Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1981, 378.



country of Japan revolting and harming the more powerful “older brother” country of China. Japan’s actions caused the Chinese people the communal and personal dishonor of losing face by not upholding the expectations it had set for itself as the superior country, society, and people.

This “ultimate humiliation” after China’s century of humiliation has since instigated outrage and anti-Japan sentiments amongst the Chinese public, as they demand apologies from those in Japan who deny the Massacre and seek to regain their lost face. In the early 1970s and 1980s, the governments of China<sup>90</sup> and Japan issued a few joint statements to restore bilateral relations, which included indirect Japanese acknowledgments of their wrongdoings in Nanjing. In 1972, for example, in one of these joint statements, “the Japanese side feels a great sense of responsibility for the grave harm brought upon the people of China through war by Japan, and reflects deeply [upon this].”<sup>91</sup> This statement, which gives a sense of remorse for the events of the Sino-Japanese war even without naming it directly, might be seen by some as an apology to the Chinese. However, Sino-Japanese relations did not improve much after this, in part due to the implicit wordings of these statements.<sup>92</sup>

This is one of the reasons why, in 1982, Japan’s Prime Minister, Zenko Suzuki, issued another indirect statement to apologize for the denial of the Massacre on behalf of his country. He said: “I am painfully aware of Japan's responsibility for inflicting serious damages ... during the past war. ... We need to recognize that there are criticisms that condemn [Japan's occupation] as invasion.”<sup>93</sup> Prime Minister Suzuki’s statement, like the one given in 1972, also did not mention the Nanjing Massacre directly, nor did it directly state the Japanese fault or detail those

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<sup>90</sup> This refers to the People’s Republic of China, *not* the Nationalist government in Taiwan. Taiwan’s reactions are not considered in this paper.

<sup>91</sup> “Nit-chu Kyōdō Seimei,” in *Nihonshi shiryō—Gendai* (Japanese History Primary Sources: The Modern Period), ed. Reishigaku Kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997), 346–47.

<sup>92</sup> Penney, “Far from Oblivion,” 31.

<sup>93</sup> 田原総一郎, “Shortlist of War Apologies by Japan,” *Japan News*, April 12, 2005, Tokyo: Shogakkan, <http://www.ikjeld.com/japannews/00000132.php>, 161.

faults. Though Japan has made more direct and sincere apologies since then, this previous habit of what the Chinese see as insincere apologies is what was remembered by the Chinese people. Chinese critics seize on the lack of forthrightness from these high-ranking spokespeople of Japan. Without directly mentioning the Nanjing Massacre and admitting that the Japanese were wrong in their actions, the apology does not count in the culture of face as enough for China to recover from its humiliation. Therefore, particularly in the minds of the Chinese government and citizens, the Japanese had not issued a sincere enough of an apology, which accounts for persisting tensions.<sup>94</sup>

The protests and complaints against Japan were the result of the culmination of a generation that had lived through the 1937 Massacre and passed these stories quietly along to their children, combined with upcoming younger generations who became increasingly vocal about their dissatisfaction with Japan's penance for its war crimes. When Iris Chang released her book, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*, in 1997, she brought the Nanjing Massacre into the sight of international audiences and reminded China of Japan's war crimes. While Chang's popular history of the Nanjing Massacre has been both discussed and criticized by historians since its release, some of the difficulties she faced in her research are prevalent in the historiographical field of the Massacre.<sup>95</sup> This is especially true in the struggles she faced in interviewing older Chinese and researching the Massacre.

Like many in her generation, Chang learned about the Massacre through the stories of her parents. She recalls that "their voices quivering with outrage, my parents characterized the ...

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<sup>94</sup> Sedgwick, "Memory on Trial," 1251.

<sup>95</sup> For an example of these discussions, see: Joshua Fogel, "The Controversy over Iris Chang's Rape of Nanking." *Japan Echo* 27, no. 1, 2000. David MacDonald. "Forgetting and Denying: Iris Chang, the Holocaust and the Challenge of Nanking." *International Politics* 42 (December 2005): 403-427. doi:10.1057/palgrave.ip.8800111. Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, ed. *The Nanking Atrocity, 1937-1938: Complicating the Picture*. Oxford, NY: Berghahn Books, 2017. doi:10.2307/j.ctvw049jm.

Nanjing Datusha [massacre] ... as the single most diabolical incident committed by the Japanese.”<sup>96</sup> However, as she began to study the Massacre, she had to go through strenuous effort to encourage some older Chinese individuals to even speak of the event, and she noted a distinct lack of texts on the Massacre.<sup>97</sup> Individuals were not open to being interviewed. She found a deeply-ingrained sense of shame that seemed to keep interviewees from speaking.<sup>98</sup>

Even when the information Chang sought was available, it was often mentioned only in passing. “The Rape of Nanking did not penetrate the world consciousness in the same manner as the Holocaust or Hiroshima because the victims themselves had remained silent.”<sup>99</sup> Even with the trouble Chang had researching the Massacre, the fact that her parents shared these stories with her shows that it remained an event whose memory affected the Chinese people. She says that her parents “never forgot the horrors of the Sino-Japanese War, nor did they want [her] to forget.”<sup>100</sup> Throughout the course of her book, Chang discusses her belief that the lack of research on the Massacre, despite its impact on the Chinese people and China’s silence on the topic, must be due to political reasons. She concludes that “the People’s Republic of China, the Republic of China, and even the United States contributed to the historical neglect of this even for reasons deeply rooted in the cold war ... [and] the 1949 Communist Revolution in China.”<sup>101</sup> Chang’s argument faults the Chinese government, the newly established PRC for wanting to hide China’s shame. The PRC wanted to stand once again on the world stage, and chose not to dwell on the Nanjing Massacre.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Iris Chang, *Rape Of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust Of World War II*, (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 8.

<sup>97</sup> Chang, *Rape Of Nanking*, 8-9.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, 11, 183-185.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, 11, 183.

Chang's argument accurately describes the case of the Chinese people's silence immediately after the Nanjing Massacre. The rise in Chinese protests against Japan at the start of the 21st century suggests, however, that there is an increasingly prevalent need for retribution for the loss of face with the Nanjing Massacre since the release of Chang's book.<sup>103</sup> As China has gained power and international influence, the Chinese people have also been able to be more outspoken about their shame because gaining power lessened the country's humiliation of not having a strong economy and military might. This enabled an insistent demand in China to undo the loss of face from the Century of Humiliation and the Nanjing Massacre.

After decades of silence, there has been an eruption of outcry and demands for Japanese repentance among the younger generation of Chinese, influenced by both the West and the stories of their elders. The general message of these protests appears to be that, despite official apologies given by Japan, the Chinese believe many individuals are still unrepentant. This is mostly due to the lack of direct mention of the Nanjing Massacre and Japan's responsibility in the statements of Japanese government officials. Chang represents the outrage of the Chinese public well in her book: "[A]lthough some bravely fight to force Japanese society to face the painful truth, many in Japan continue to treat the war crimes as ... events that simply did not occur."<sup>104</sup> Though both China and Japan have changed in the current century, the events of the Nanjing Massacre remain relevant in discussions between the two countries as tensions rise over the actions of certain high-ranking Japanese individuals.

Xiaokui Wang, a scholar of the Massacre currently studying it with the funding of the People's Republic of China, offers a further explanation for this sudden increase in anti-Japan protests and sentiments in China. Wang argues, after diplomatic relations between the two

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<sup>103</sup> Chang, *Rape Of Nanking*, 372-377, 428.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, 200.

countries normalized in the late 20th century, “the efforts by rightwing forces in Japan [continued] to deny the country’s responsibilities for its aggression provoked China, prompting a process of ‘re-remembering’ the Nanjing Massacre” in China.<sup>105</sup> The different ways in which China has remembered and responded to the Nanjing Massacre have led to a “re-remembrance” of the incident that has prompted conflicts on an increasingly larger scale. This process of the Chinese public once again acknowledging and remembering the Massacre has led to many social and political conflicts between the two countries as the majority of each side believes its own nation to be in the right. While Wang and other historians hope for the public normalization of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the culture of both societies suggests that the situation will continue in its current trajectory amongst their citizens.

In early 2003, six years after the release of Chang’s book, there was a surge of anti-Japan demonstrations in China demanding a “proper” apology from Japan.<sup>106</sup> These demonstrations became increasingly vocal in their dissatisfaction and all held a similar message: the Chinese people wanted more than an indirect apology from Japan, especially in the light of the denialism of highly-ranked Japanese individuals. In many East Asian cultures, “in order to avoid face loss, people use facework tactics including indirect communication, presenting themselves in a positive light and threatening others’ face.”<sup>107</sup> Prime Minister Suzuki’s previously mentioned indirect apology for Japan’s war crimes is one such example.<sup>108</sup> In 1992, Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa said: “We the Japanese people ... have to bear in our mind the fact that your people experienced unbearable suffering and sorrow during a certain period in the past because of our nation's act. ... I ... would like to once again express heartfelt remorse and apology to the people

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<sup>105</sup> Xiaokui Wang, “Historical Shifts in Remembering China’s “Nanjing Massacre,” *Chinese Studies in History* 50, no. 4 (October 2017), 333.

<sup>106</sup> Wang, “Historical Shifts in Remembering China’s “Nanjing Massacre,” 295.

<sup>107</sup> Ella Miron-Spektor, Susannah B. F. Paletz and Chun-Chi Lin. “Abide, Push Back or Challenge? Face Loss and Creativity in Face, Dignity and Honor Cultures,” *Academy of Management Proceedings* (2014), 2.

<sup>108</sup> See page 32.

of your nation.”<sup>109</sup> Without the mention of the Massacre itself, both of these statements show a tactic to keep Japanese face without directly acknowledging the degree of the acts committed by Japanese soldiers. By giving these indirect apologies, Japan placed itself in a more positive light to some, but prevented China from regaining its face. Even with officials of the Japanese government giving more sincere apologies since, until the Chinese people feel that their loss of face has been rectified, the memory of the Nanjing Massacre will continue to spark protests against both denialist Japanese individuals and possibly Japan as a whole.

### Protests of the Chinese People

In January of the year 2000, a Japanese scholarly conference at Tokyo’s International Peace Center, entitled “The Verification of the Rape of Nanking: The Biggest Lie of the 20th Century,” led to objections by the Chinese people. Upon hearing the plans for the forum, Chinese communities in Osaka urged municipal and prefectural governments to ban and cancel the presentation.<sup>110</sup> The spokesperson of China’s Foreign Ministry was one of the officials who responded to the public’s outrage, requesting that the Japanese scholarly forum put a stop to the event, saying that “the massacre is an atrocity by the Japanese militarists against the Chinese people,” and should not be presented as anything else.<sup>111</sup> However, the Osaka International Peace Centre, where the conference took place, refused to ban the meeting “in the spirit of free speech and assembly, which is guaranteed by the constitution.”<sup>112</sup> While the Chinese Foreign Ministry

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<sup>109</sup> 主宮澤, "大韓民国大統領盧泰愚閣下ご夫妻主催晩餐会での宮澤内閣総理大臣のスピーチ. 宮澤演説集," In 宮澤演説集, edited by 世界と日本』: 日本政治・国際関係データベース, 東京: 東京大学, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150924035848/http://www.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/~worldjpn/documents/texts/JPKR/19920116.S1J.html>, 89.

“私たち日本国民は、まずなによりも、過去の一時期、貴国国民が我が国の行為によって耐え難い苦しみと悲しみを体験された事実を想起し、反省する気持ちを忘れないようにしなければなりません。”

<sup>110</sup> “Nanjing Denial Triggers Outrage,” *Mainichi Newspaper Co.*, January, 19, 2000, <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/55/538.html>, 1.

<sup>111</sup> “Nanking Massacre Denied,” *BBC News, World: Asia-Pacific*, January 23, 2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/615457.stm>, 2.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

protested this conference and the viewpoints it presented, the Osaka International Peace Centre decided that Japan would go ahead with the event. Just as face led China to demand that this denialism forum be stopped, the threat of losing face by acknowledging that the opinions presented in as wrong kept Japan from complying. This led to outrage in the Chinese community, especially those Chinese living in Japan.<sup>113</sup>

Journalist Mainichi Shimbun quoted Chinese protestors in Japan saying that the forum's objective was to both deny historical actuality and "make a mockery of the Chinese people."<sup>114</sup> The Chinese viewed the conference organizers as disregarding and disrespecting Chinese wishes to not include the objectively immoral lecture that insulted China. During this lecture, Shudo Higashinakano, a professor of history at Tokyo's Asia University, said "[t]here was no massacre of civilians at Nanking."<sup>115</sup> The Japanese soldiers beside him reassured the applauding audience that those soldiers who had come forward previously had lied about there being a systematic raping and murder of Chinese civilians.<sup>116</sup> Shudo said that Japan's Foreign Ministry "has said the atrocity is an indisputable fact. I say, that's not the case at all."<sup>117</sup> The scholar's direct denial of the existence of the Massacre led to the rally of protestors inside the conference and outside the building to roar in disapproval, a clear contrast to the cheers the denialism received.

The Chinese were personally insulted at the denial of the atrocity that Japan had committed against them. The protestors claimed "it [was] a serious provocation against peace-loving Chinese and Japanese people, which may undermine the trust between the two

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<sup>113</sup> "Rape of History," *Washington Times*, January 29, 2000, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2000/jan/29/2000129-010847-5715r>, 2-3.

<sup>114</sup> "Nanjing Denial Triggers Outrage," 1.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>117</sup> "Denial of Nanking Massacre Leads to Emotional Protest," *The Utah Statesman: World & Nation* January, 24, 2000. Issuu: USU Libraries Digital Commons, <https://issuu.com/usudigitalcommons/docs/scaua-25p05s08-2000-01-24>, 13.

nations.”<sup>118</sup> This quotation shows a link between the personal and the collective sense of belonging the Chinese feel to their nation<sup>119</sup>, which explains why they might believe they themselves were insulted at the same level as their nation by the controversial conference. The Chinese Vice-Consul, Teng An-jun, reflected the people's sentiments in his own response: “the whole of China is horrified and angered by this. Peace Osaka was established as an anti-war museum to support the pacifist movement, and yet, it is holding a forum that romanticizes the invasion.”<sup>120</sup> Here, the Chinese government and people show similar beliefs towards an event directed against China’s stated history. Similar replies from both the common people and government solidify the argument that these portrayed beliefs are more likely to be aligned when there is a sense of the Chinese face being discredited.

Reactions to this event also revealed the views of the Chinese government and public on the Japanese people’s beliefs on the Nanjing Massacre as a whole. Under pressure from this Chinese outrage, Sadaaki Numata, of Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that the denialists at the conference “certainly don't represent the government of Japan's view, nor do they represent the view of perhaps the majority of Japanese people.”<sup>121</sup> However, Chinese protestors such as Leung Kwok-hong<sup>122</sup> said, “I think a lot of Japanese will listen to the right-wing group. ... They want to cover up the war crimes.”<sup>123</sup> The grievances of the protestors were not eased with Japan’s indirect response, which, while it disassociated the Japanese government and people as a whole from the conference’s denialists, it also did not condemn them. Not directly condemning the denialists, which would have admitted to the Japanese fault of the Nanjing Massacre, saved

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<sup>118</sup> “Nanjing Denial Triggers Outrage,” 1.

<sup>119</sup> Which therefore leads to a collective sense of face and humiliation

<sup>120</sup> “Nanjing Denial Triggers Outrage,” 1.

<sup>121</sup> “Nanjing Massacre Denied,” 3.

<sup>122</sup> Wade-Giles name translation comes directly from the article source, and it was kept in Wade-Giles in the text for ease of reference to the article.

<sup>123</sup> “Denial of Nanking Massacre Leads to Emotional Protest,” 13.



Japanese face, but it also led to responses of Leung Kwok-hong. Without a direct admission and condemnation of the Massacre denialists, the Chinese saw the Japanese government as either in agreement with them, as Leung did, or in ways otherwise that reflect the Japanese views to be actually unapologetic for the Massacre.

When delivered in this indirect way, the Chinese view any apology that the Japanese government offers as insincere or insufficient because Japan does not elaborate on what, exactly, it does believe. Without admitting to the Chinese people that its actions during the Sino-Japanese war and the crimes conducted at Nanjing, specifically, were wrong, and detailing what those acts were and acknowledging how atrocious they were, any apology given by Japan is incomplete. Incomplete apologies allow denialists to continue to assert their beliefs without public ramifications, and they do not fulfill the requirements for the Chinese people to be satisfied and regain their face. Despite many decades passing since the Nanjing Massacre occurred, the loss of face and belief that the Japanese have no desire to apologize, admit to their wrongdoings, and, by doing such, restore China's dishonor continues to be a common public sentiment. Whether the denialism by high-ranking Japanese individuals at the conference incited further pressing from China or simply highlighted it in the public eye, these anti-Japan demonstrations demanding a "proper" apology from Japan continued to spark any time China's face as a country and people were seemingly disrespected.<sup>124</sup>

In the early 2000s, Japan was denied a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council after both China's objections to the proposal and the denialism of highly-ranked Japanese individuals' gaining international press.<sup>125</sup> The Japanese government paid 17-21% of the U.N.'s regular budget between 1995-2000, as well as similar numbers in years prior since the

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<sup>124</sup> Moore, "History, Nationalism and Face in Sino-Japanese Relations," 295.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 296.

beginning of the Cold War.<sup>126</sup> Japan, “with its growing economic stature ... not only came to feel even more entitled to a permanent Council seat, but also started to become more politically active ... and [began] to [deploy] its economic power to gain more support” for the upcoming bid for permanent seats in the early 2000s.<sup>127</sup> This high amount of contribution to the UN put Japan in the position where it seemed possible for it to achieve a permanent seat on the UNSC council. However, complaints from China, which already held a permanent seat, stopped Japan’s proposal.

These complaints stemmed from Japan’s attempt to place itself internationally as a country with equal prominence to China. The attempt itself again insulted China’s face by going against the Confucian beliefs of deference to elders, especially due to the fact that “[f]or the first two decades after the two countries restored diplomatic relations in 1972, Japan treated China as a pitiful backward nation in need of charity.”<sup>128</sup> These insults to China’s position as an increasingly powerful nation are combined with sentiments left over from the Nanjing Massacre. China’s premier, Wen Jiabao<sup>129</sup>, said in an interview, “I think the core issue in the China-Japan relationship is that Japan needs to face up squarely to history.”<sup>130</sup> Shortly after this, he said that Japan “must face up to its past aggression toward its Asian neighbors before it will be ready for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council.”<sup>131</sup> This is especially true since, no matter how strong Japan’s international influence and its economic strength, no amount of wealth would allow it to buy a UNSC seat. On another occasion, Wen Jiabao made the comment that

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<sup>126</sup> Reinhard Drifte, "Japan and Security Council Reform: Multilateralism at a Turning Point?," *Asian-Pacific Law & Policy Journal* 1, no. 2 (June 2000), 5.

<sup>127</sup> Drifte, “Japan and Security Council Reform,” 5-6.

<sup>128</sup> Jonathan Watts, “Violence Flares as the Chinese Rage at Japan,” *The Guardian: World News*, April 16, 2005, China: Shanghai, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/apr/17/china.japan>, 3.

<sup>129</sup> Wēnjiābǎo (温家宝), Premier of China (2003-2013)

<sup>130</sup> Watts, “Violence Flares as the Chinese Rage at Japan,” 1.

<sup>131</sup> Leta Fincher, “China Against Japan Getting a Permanent Seat on UN Security Council,” *VOA News*, October 28, 2009, <https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-2005-04-13-voa3-66920632/377195.html>, 1.

“only a country that wins the trust of people in Asia and the world can take on greater responsibilities in the international community.”<sup>132</sup> While these comments came directly from an individual in China’s government, they also reflect the sentiments seen in the public protests in objection to Japan’s proposal to obtain a permanent UNSC seat.

Protesters filled the streets of the cities in China when Japan’s early 2000s bid to receive a permanent position on the security council became public. One news article released about the event noted: “For most of the tens of thousands of anti-Japanese demonstrators who took to the streets of Shanghai yesterday, it was the first public protest they had ever seen. ... It was one of the biggest displays of people power ... since the protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989.”<sup>133</sup> Public protests in China were not common in the news before this point, and were discouraged by the Chinese government. The appearance of these protests shows just how much tension had been stirred amongst the Chinese people from Japan’s treatment of China and its denial of the Massacre. Over three weeks, the world witnessed protestors who “were singing the [Chinese] national anthem, [while] others chanted anti-Japanese insults and vowed to defend China with their lives.”<sup>134</sup> Reporters commenting on and publicizing the events said that “the spark for the latest row was Tokyo’s approval of a new history textbook that whitewashes Japan’s wartime atrocities, including the massacre of ... civilians in Nanjing in 1937.”<sup>135</sup> The extenuation of the role of the Japanese in the Nanjing Massacre as well as the glossing over of the severity of the atrocity across Japan led to anti-Japanese sentiments throughout China. These anti-Japan sentiments, in turn, related to other actions that the Japanese were attempting to make, such as having a permanent seat on the UNSC.

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<sup>132</sup> Fincher, “China Against Japan Getting a Permanent Seat on UN Security Council,” 1.

<sup>133</sup> Watts, “Violence Flares as the Chinese Rage at Japan,” 1.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>135</sup> Watts, “Violence Flares as the Chinese Rage at Japan,” 3.

Despite the previous lack of protests about Japan's denial of the Massacre, the painful memory of losing face affected the Chinese people. As the memory of disgrace was passed down generation to generation, tensions and anti-Japanese sentiments grew. Then, the treatment of China and denialism of the Massacre by high-ranking Japanese individuals in the current century led to the revival of the memory of disgrace from the Massacre. This memory of disgrace aggravated tensions in both events related to and separate from the conflict of denialism between China and Japan, such as the issue of the UNSC permanent seat. These protests are a piece of the visible ramifications of this loss of face, showing that there is more underneath the surface of Sino-Japanese tensions, and that these tensions continue to worsen without a clear resolution of their causation.

For example, the protests that took place in China against Japan's proposal for a permanent UNSC seat led Shoichi Nakagawa, Japan's Minister of Trade, to comment that China must be a "scary country," which was followed by Japanese officials requesting an apology for the protests and compensation for the damage to diplomatic relations.<sup>136</sup> By calling China a "scary country," Japan saved its own face by establishing itself as a country that is not "scary", unlike those Chinese involved in the protests. More specifically, Japan placed itself into a position as the victim that deserved reparations for China's aggravations. These face-keeping comments from some of Japan's government officials led to public speculation that "the latest dispute is about far more than history. It is the result of a tectonic shift in East Asia as China grows more powerful and Japan moves closer to the United States to protect its interests. ... Nationalism ... [is] pushing the two East Asian giants further apart."<sup>137</sup> As China continues to

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<sup>136</sup> Fincher, "China Against Japan Getting a Permanent Seat on UN Security Council," 2.

<sup>137</sup> Watts, "Violence Flares as the Chinese Rage at Japan," 3.

Note: The impact of the United States on the events and phenomenon described seems considerable, but it is not being discussed or considered in this paper.

grow in influence and threaten Japan's international position as a leading East Asian power, issues such as the denialism of the Nanjing Massacre are a persistent problem that could escalate easily, especially as both countries fight to save face. This observation that China's anger is not limited to a specific issue or location shows again that the country's loss of face in the Nanjing Massacre created a general resentment among the Chinese people. The Nanjing Massacre, as the event that is a culmination of the entire Century of Humiliation, has become an easy and dramatic shorthand for all of Japan's violations of China's previously superior position. Japan's denialism and backwards treatment of China to save its own face enraged the dormant feelings of dishonor that the Chinese people personally felt by the Nanjing Massacre, sparking action and protests as the bolder young generation grew more assertive.

Japan's bid for a permanent UNSC position was a proposition for international acknowledgment to stand on equal terms with China, which has long considered itself superior. Japan's denial of the Nanjing Massacre and its other wartime atrocities in these public settings were loud enough to receive international attention. By bringing the fight to an international stage, Japan reminded China of its lost face and put down China's efforts to regain its honor, all while working to become an equal to China in the public eye.

The Chinese people who express displeasure with the Japanese primarily seem to desire an explicit apology for the previous denialism from the Japanese government as well as the current denialism of high-ranking individuals. As Japanese individuals continue to refuse to acknowledge the atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers and promote denialism, it compounds the offense to China as a positive feedback cycle of grievances. The refusal to apologize becomes another grievance next to Japan's original lack of a direct apology. In an interview on the 70th anniversary of the Massacre, a survivor from Nanjing, Xiang Yansong, said: "Some

Japanese refuse to admit the truth.”<sup>138</sup> He added that he was still waiting for a proper apology.<sup>139</sup> As noted by Wang Feng, the interviewer of these survivors, the “denial of wartime atrocities by Japan”<sup>140</sup> and this lack of apology “remains a simmering tension in the relationship for the elderly in China ... and for young people who believe Japan has never really reflected on its war crimes.”<sup>141</sup>

As the actions of certain Japanese individuals have continued to demonstrate this lack of reflection, the Chinese people both at home and abroad have increasingly campaigned against Japanese denialism. With the continuance of the public denialism of Japanese individuals, any previous apology to China starting from the 1970s appears to be insincere, which keeps the issue of the Chinese desire for a direct and specific apology a prevalent issue. The remembrance of dishonor and the lingering anger is one of the many reasons why Chang’s popular history of the event became so well-known in such a short period of time. The loss of face the Chinese experienced from the Nanjing Massacre also exaggerated future tension between individuals of Japan and China as a whole.

#### The Loss of Face of the Chinese People

Dr. Leo Ching of Duke University argues what sparked these anti-Japanese protests is “less about Japan than about China’s own self-image mediated through its asymmetrical power relations with Japan throughout its modern history.”<sup>142</sup> Ching says this self-image is primarily

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<sup>138</sup> “有些日本人拒绝承认事实”

<sup>139</sup> 王丰, “70年後, 南京大屠杀仍给中国人带来伤痛”, *Reuters/China Daily*, December 12, 2007, <https://www.reuters.com/article/idCNChina-305920071212>, 2.

<sup>140</sup> “但日本一些人对战时暴行的否认”

<sup>141</sup> 王丰, “70年後,” 2-3.

“对于中国那些遭受战争记忆折磨的老人。。。仍旧是两国关系中一触即发的紧张因素”

<sup>142</sup> Leo T. S Ching, “‘Japanese Devils’: The Conditions and Limits of Anti-Japanism in China,” In *Anti-Japan: The Politics of Sentiment in Postcolonial East Asia*, (Duke University Press, 2019), 37.

represented in the protests and the use of the terms “Japanese Devils”<sup>143</sup> or “Little Japan,”<sup>144</sup> which have been used in Chinese culture for decades. He says that these terms “[reaffirm] a concept of Chinese superiority over an inferior and barbaric Japan or Japanese,” especially when China had been dishonored by both of the Sino-Japanese Wars and the Second World War.<sup>145</sup> However, by studying how and why these terms became so popular in Chinese society, it can be seen why tensions with Japan have continued to increase since the Nanjing Massacre.

Ching states that “the emergence of the term “*guizi*”<sup>146</sup> during the War of Resistance came to signify not only the specific modern notion of Japan and the Japanese, but also the imagined community of China.”<sup>147</sup> This “imagined community of China,” Ching notes, includes both those Chinese living in the Chinese mainland as well as Chinese living abroad. News reports on the Chinese people’s sentiments and resulting actions toward Japan support Ching’s argument. However, these anti-Japanese views and the terminology that expresses them have a basis in a different cultural factor.

Due to the perceived lack of remorse from Japan, China’s loss of face has yet to be rectified. The assumed view that the Chinese have not received a proper apology led to “China’s tacit realization of its (subordinate) positionality within the newly reconfigured modern

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<sup>143</sup> “日本鬼子” Riběn guǐzi

日本 = Japan

鬼子 = A derogatory term very loosely and unimpactfully translated by Ching to the English word “devil.” In short, this is simply a very bad and offensive word that the author of this essay does not recommend to be spoken aloud in pleasant, Chinese-speaking company.

<sup>144</sup> “小日本” Xiǎo rìběn

The “小” here refers to the Confucian teachings. In the Analects, there are many passages that refer to being “small” as undesirable and shameful. In passage 2.14, for example, the small man is described as having a narrow vision and not being inclusive. In 4.11, the small man is also described as cherishing things that an esteemed scholar would not bother with, such as wealth and property. Calling Japan “small” creates a sense of “other” between the Chinese and Japanese, and it also serves as an insult to Japan while placing China on a higher moral pedestal.

For further reference, see: Leo T. S. Ching. *Anti-Japan: The Politics of Sentiment in Postcolonial East Asia*. Duke University Press, 2019.

<sup>145</sup> Ching, “Japanese Devils,” 38.

<sup>146</sup> See footnote 143

<sup>147</sup> Ching, “Japanese Devils,” 40.

imperialist system” and made China “weak” until these other countries acknowledge their suffering.<sup>148</sup> The unwillingness to grapple with the loss of face from the Massacre continued in China since the event and throughout the period without a direct Japanese apology in the 1970s and 80s. In the current century, the memory of dishonor from the Nanjing Massacre has grown and spread, building up tensions in Sino-Japanese relations and in the eyes of the Chinese public. Even situations not directly related to the Massacre have increased tensions between China and Japan as the Nanjing Massacre and loss of face continues to resonate with the Chinese people. If the observed pattern continues, these tensions will perpetually worsen until the dishonor the Chinese people faced has been notably rectified.

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<sup>148</sup> Ching, “Japanese Devils,” 41.



### Section 3: Government Memory and Political Usage of the Massacre

The memory of the Nanjing Massacre has led to many conflicts between Japan and China, particularly within their shared political and social spheres. After the reunification of the Chinese people under the Chinese Communist Party into the People's Republic of China in 1949, the government's response to the Nanjing Massacre influenced a communal lack of memory of the Massacre in Chinese society. However, the impact of losing face and fear of losing it again on the international stage has led the People's Republic of China to support a stronger public memory of the event, which has led to an increase in Massacre memorials. At the same time, a resurgence of anti-Japanese sentiments appeared in modern-day China.

#### The Beginning of Modern Anti-Japanese Sentiment

Since the beginning of the modern era, the accessibility of modern technology has led the discussion of issues of international diplomatic relations to be available to a country's populace. The ease of accessibility of contact with East Asia started a revival of interest of international historians on the topics of East Asia's past, one of which is the Nanjing Massacre.

In Iris Chang's *The Rape of Nanjing: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* (1997), she calls the Nanjing Massacre an event forgotten by both historians and the world's common populace for the majority of the late 20th century. Though her book sparked a revival of scholarly research on the subject, many of these new studies begin with historians disagreeing with her statements. While Chang writes that "Japan's denial of the rape of Nanjing would be politically the same as German denial of the Holocaust," many historians note the differences of scale and memory between the two events.<sup>149</sup> David Macdonald, in his article "Forgetting and Denying: Iris Chang, the Holocaust and the Challenge of Nanking," argues that Chang's analysis

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<sup>149</sup> Chang, *Rape Of Nanking*, 201.

reflects heavy bias and the thoughts of Chinese diaspora groups.<sup>150</sup> In short, Macdonald believes that Chang's analysis — or lack thereof — of the historical memory of the Massacre is lacking in depth knowledge of the topic's historiography. He specifically argues against her comparison of the Nanjing Massacre to the Holocaust, and he argues that her study does not consider the role of Chinese victims in the lack of historical memory of the Massacre.

Macdonald's study on how the historical remembrance of Nanjing has affected Sino-Japanese political relations led him to note that Chang does not consider the Chinese responsibility in the problem of remembrance.<sup>151</sup> He argues that the Chinese victims should have been more vocal about what happened to them and pushed for reparations and (or) an apology immediately after the Massacre and not waited to do so half a century later when historical fact would be harder to define.<sup>152</sup> In light of this, he argues that Chang's focus on appeals to humanitarianism instead of analyzing the fault of each party is done in order to advertise her views and bias against the Japanese.<sup>153</sup> MacDonald, for instance, says that "comparing Jews and Chinese implicitly suggests that the Chinese have been active and diligent in promoting Nanking, while the Japanese bear the lion's share of the blame for the West's lack of knowledge."<sup>154</sup> MacDonald's argument reflects a general trend in Chinese historiography on the Massacre after the release of Chang's book and the 21st century that there was a distinct lack of both international attention on the subject and efforts of the Chinese government to promote awareness of the event.

However, in the current century, as Macdonald notes, Chinese casualty numbers<sup>155</sup> of the Japanese invasion and the Chinese people's knowledge on the event has been well advanced by

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<sup>150</sup> MacDonald, "Forgetting and Denying," 417.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, 403.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, 403.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 403.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 421-422.

<sup>155</sup> As mentioned in Section 1, the PRC's official casualty count is over 300,000 individuals.

the People's Republic of China.<sup>156</sup> While some Japanese officials continue to say that the Nanjing Massacre did not occur at all, there was a turn in previous trends of the Chinese government allowing the memory of the Massacre to stay in the background.<sup>157</sup> Instead of staying silent and allowing the Japanese denialism, there was a shift in the Chinese government's policy. Though the People's Republic of China has officially not made any statements against Japan itself, instead encouraging peace, it has worked towards increasing public memory of the Massacre, which appears to have also increased anti-Japanese protests and sentiments in China. In regards to this change, one part of Chang's argument that Macdonald and other scholars tend to support is her observation that "the custodian of the curtain of silence was politics."<sup>158</sup> She states that this shift in the official stance of the Chinese government towards bettering public memory of the Massacre was due to political and social reasons to consolidate its power and increase national unity after the Communist Revolution of 1949.

After the victory of the Chinese Communist Party in 1949, the newly created People's Republic of China did not demand wartime reparations or an official apology from Japan. The People's Republic instead kept victim accounts away from the public domain as it fought with the newly-exiled Republic of China (now in Taiwan) for Japanese trade and political recognition.<sup>159</sup> If the Chinese people had desired such an apology or reparations for the atrocities inflicted upon them during the Second Sino-Japanese War, these sentiments were not high enough on the new government's priorities to pursue. By 1985, however, protests and anti-Japanese sentiments spread throughout China in response to the revision of some Japanese textbooks to either not include or excise the retelling of Japanese war crimes during World War

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<sup>156</sup> MacDonald, "Forgetting and Denying," 407.

<sup>157</sup> Sedgwick, "Memory on Trial," 1245.

<sup>158</sup> Chang, *Rape Of Nanking*, 11.

<sup>159</sup> Daqing Yang, "Challenges of Trans-National History: Historians and the Nanjing Atrocity," *SAIS Review (1989-2003)* 19, no. 2, 1999, 140.

II.<sup>160</sup> While these sentiments soon decreased, another incident rekindled anti-Japan outcries in China later the same year. The visit of Prime Minister Nakasone Tasuhiro to the Yasukuni Shrine, a Shinto shrine commemorating those who died in the service of Japan, at first led to a lukewarm, indirect, and pacifying response from Chinese officials, who said: “The Japanese people have different opinions on this matter.”<sup>161</sup> Just a week later, however, in an echo of the sentiments of the Chinese public, the Chinese government likened the visits of Japanese officials to this shrine as honoring those soldiers who raped Chinese cities and continuing militarism in Japan.

A leading scholar on the topic, Dr. Mark Ekyholt, argues that this change in official statements was a political play of the Chinese government to incite a stronger sense of unity in China through patriotism while also bettering Sino-Japanese relations. As the Chinese government recognized the fortieth anniversary of the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War, Ekyholt found that they also emphasized the importance of the Guomindang’s (GMD)<sup>162</sup> participation in fighting the Japanese invaders.<sup>163</sup> Despite some arguments immediately after the war that any “positive or even nuanced mention of the GMD’s role in victory over Japan [would be] politically toxic in the mainland,” forty years later, the mention of the Nationalist Party’s contributions had the opposite intention.<sup>164</sup>

This recognition of the Communist government’s previous political opponents was likely meant to act as a unifier between opposing political ideals within the country. The memory of winning the war as a country and people also increased the sense of belonging and patriotism

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<sup>160</sup> Mark Ekyholt, “Aggression, Victimization, and Chinese Historiography of the Nanjing Massacre,” in *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*, edited by Joshua Fogel (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 33.

<sup>161</sup> Ekyholt, “Aggression, Victimization, and Chinese Historiography of the Nanjing Massacre,” 33.

<sup>162</sup> GMD, Nationalist Party in China led by Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石, Jiǎng Jièshí, 1887-1975)

<sup>163</sup> Ekyholt does not include these direct citations in his article, instead giving a summary of what he has found in his studies.

<sup>164</sup> Mitter, “China in World War II, 1937–1945,” 227.

with the citizens of China. Ekyholt argues that Chinese media at the time highlighted the strong connection between patriotism and the development of the country. He says: “the government used anti-Japanese war sentiment to bolster public momentum for economic reform ... and emphasized friendly relations with Japan ... to gain the capital and technology necessary” for that economic reform.<sup>165</sup> Not only was the government promoting a stronger collective memory of the Massacre, but it was also facing Japan with official talks of continuing peace. Even with this double-fronted political usage of the Massacre, Ekyholt’s study shows that anti-Japanese sentiment existed amongst the Chinese and was used for political and social ambitions.

The anti-Japanese sentiments in China are, therefore, not just a 21st century phenomenon. These public and official sentiments are direct results of the cultural phenomenon of the Chinese face and the shame of losing it due to the Nanjing Massacre. To analyze these effects of face and its resulting impact on both people and administration in China, it is necessary to look at instances in which China’s loss of face has been affronted or otherwise brought back to the forefront in the modern day.

#### The Words of the People and the People’s Republic

After the end of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1945 and the creation of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the memory of the Nanjing Massacre was relegated to the individual mind alone, not expressed by the Chinese public, and not promoted by the Chinese government. In the current century, the People’s Republic of China often promotes public memory of the Nanjing Massacre. These reminders come to the Chinese people in the form of announcements, monuments, the annual remembrance day, and a plethora of news articles released when one of the few living survivors passes away.

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<sup>165</sup> Ekyholt, “Aggression, Victimization, and Chinese Historiography of the Nanjing Massacre,” 34.

Tourists to China can now visit the “Wailing Wall,” formally entitled the “Wall of the Victims in the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders,” which had its groundbreaking ceremony on the 73rd anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre in 2010.<sup>166</sup> Behind the “Wailing Wall” lies the “mass grave” which holds engravings of the names of more than 1000 victims. Even before this, in early July 2005, “‘Never Forget’ The Nanjing Massacre Historical Materials Website” launched in China, providing easy access to historical data written for public consumption.<sup>167</sup> As of early July 2017, visitors can also visit the updated galleries of the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall that hold an increasing amount of donated materials.<sup>168</sup> These monuments and museums have greatly contributed to the remembrance of the Massacre, and as knowledge of the Massacre has spread throughout Chinese society and grown in importance, these smaller contributions to spreading communal memory led to the declaration of a national remembrance day in 2014.

December 13, 2017, marked the fourth National Memorial Day for Nanjing Massacre Victims, who were saluted and remembered by sirens designating a period of silence throughout the entire country. Chinese President Xi Jinping, after meeting with representations of survivors, also gave a speech that encouraged both moving on from the past and standing against those who might try to deny it.<sup>169</sup> His speech reflected the sentiments given before at the same memorial ceremony three years prior:

The ironclad evidence of the Nanjing Massacre is solid and cannot be tampered with. Anyone who wants to deny the fact of the Nanjing Massacre, history will not consent, the souls of the 300,000 innocent victims will not agree, the 1.3

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<sup>166</sup> 刘星, “如何拥有共同的“南京大屠杀”?” 中日学者路还长,” 中新社, December 16, 2010, <https://www.chinanews.com.cn/cul/2010/12-16/2725726.shtml>, 1.

<sup>167</sup> 邱观史, “‘永不忘却’ 侵华日军南京大屠杀史料网站开通,” 中新闻, July 8, 2005, <https://www.chinanews.com.cn/news/2005/2005-07-08/26/596581.shtml>, 1-2. As of 4/20/2023, to see this website, see: <https://neverforget.sina.com.cn/>. Also, note that the author has found that Western computers occasionally have difficulties opening this site for undetermined reasons.

<sup>168</sup> 陈海峰, “美籍华人13年来13次捐赠南京大屠杀史料,” 中国新闻网, July 6, 2017, <https://www.chinanews.com.cn/cul/2017/07-06/8270832.shtml>, 1-2.

<sup>169</sup> 郑芳, “如何擦亮历史的镜子, 习近平这样说,” 央视新闻, December 14, 2017, <https://xuexi.cctv.com/2017/12/14/ARTIpFW9wo6eykovp5Izdbx4171214.shtml>, 2-4.

billion Chinese people will not accept, and all peace-loving and justice-loving people in the world will not concur.<sup>170</sup>

Xi Jinping's comments suggest that the government's official stance is now firmly towards assuring that the Nanjing Massacre is remembered by the Chinese people. His words about not allowing the memory of the Massacre to be denied, however, also show a strong resistance to the denialism of some high-ranking Japanese officials. Each reminder of the Nanjing Massacre to the Chinese people also appears to act in this way, as both a reminder of the shame and loss brought to the Chinese people as well as who inflicted it. The release of these reminders by sources other than the Chinese government, especially news articles, also suggests that the government agrees with the public sentiment enough to not prevent its circulation in the media.

The government has not acknowledged explicitly its sentiments against Japan for the Massacre. It also does not, however, prevent the publishing of articles that show public anti-Japanese sentiment or might serve to ignite it amongst the Chinese people. For example, each time a survivor of the Massacre dies, there is an article released on it, and at the end of each year there are also articles published detailing the number of remaining survivors. The Chinese government has the power to censor these articles and does not, which suggests governmental approval of these articles.

The news articles released following the death of each of the remaining Massacre survivors also reflect this double-purposed argument.<sup>171</sup> An article from 2004 was titled "Nanjing Massacre survivor Li Xiuying dies."<sup>172</sup> Another news article, released in 2011, was titled

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<sup>170</sup> 郑芳, "如何擦清历史的镜子," 2.

<sup>171</sup> 刘亮, "送别! 2020年4位南京大屠杀幸存者离开了我们..." 央视新闻, December 13, 2020, <https://news.ctv.com/2020/12/13/ARTI8vIFERX9OPWXEWjx2ycn201213.shtml>, A.

<sup>172</sup> 李燕, "南京大屠杀幸存者李秀英病逝," 中新网, December 5, 2004, <https://www.chinanews.com.cn/new/s/2004/2004-12-05/26/513343.shtml>.  
"南京大屠杀幸存者李秀英病逝"

“Ninety-seven-year-old Nanjing Massacre survivor Wu Xiulan dies.”<sup>173</sup> These articles show the deep-rooted Confucian values of honoring one’s elders that still exist in Chinese society. Each article is an example of this traditional culture asserting itself in the 21st century. Even up to the current day, in the year 2023, it is common to find an article released in China entitled “Only 49 survivors of the Nanjing Massacre remain.”<sup>174</sup> As seen in this title, these articles often include a statement about how many survivors are left, like a clock ticking down to the day that there is no living memory of the horrors experienced in China during the age of Japanese Imperialism.

These images are not simply those of a grieving country remembering its losses and dead. They are all visual reflections of the culmination of anger and dishonor from the loss of national face China experienced. These articles are published not because these late individuals are societally important for any reason outside of the Massacre. Being survivors of the Massacre is in itself what gives them importance in society. These articles serve as reminders to the Chinese that they not only experienced loss in the past, but they have continued to do so without a directly-worded apology from the Japanese. Without the resolution an apology from the Japanese might offer, the reminder of the lost face continues to aggravate the Chinese people. This aggravation is especially prominent during modern Sino-Japanese incidents in which the Chinese people have protested.

Stemming from the issue of the Yasukuni Shrine incident and the “textbook issue” gaining international press over a decade prior, in the early 2000s, China’s official and informal public objections to the proposal led to Japan being denied a permanent seat in the UN security

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<sup>173</sup> 辽宁卫视, “九十七岁南京大屠杀幸存者吴秀兰去世,” 中新网, February 12, 2011, <https://www.china-news.com.cn/shipin/2011/02-12/news33146.html>.

“九十七岁南京大屠杀幸存者吴秀兰去世”

<sup>174</sup> 李霁韵, “南京大屠杀在册在世幸存者仅剩49人,” 中新网, January 2, 2023, <https://www.chinanews.com.cn/gn/2023/01-02/9926193.shtml>.

“南京大屠杀在册在世幸存者仅剩49人”



council.<sup>175</sup> China's objections towards Japan put Japan's denial of the Nanjing Massacre and its other wartime atrocities on an international stage. This incident sparked public anti-Japan demonstrations demanding a "proper" apology from Japan.<sup>176</sup>

In a news article written for the *New York Times* in Chinese, Japanese editor Kato Kaichi writes that, though he had heard of the public outrage previously from the seemingly on-going Yasukuni Shrine and Japanese history textbook incidents, this outrage about Japan's bid for a UN seat was the first "anti-Japanese demonstration" he had witnessed.<sup>177</sup> He said: "Many ordinary people in Japan were shocked to find that the Chinese not only hated Japan, but also attacked the Japanese."<sup>178</sup> At the same time, many observers found the Chinese government to be sympathetic to these demonstrations. One foreign newspaper argues that "the government does not interfere with the students' behavior, because the anti-Japanese sentiment is in line with the government's current political considerations."<sup>179</sup> The Chinese government not issuing official reprimands to the protesters, as this article argues, suggests that the political utility of the Massacre is a primary reason for the government's efforts to revitalize the memory of the Massacre in Chinese society. Incidents occurring even a decade later contribute to and solidify this argument.

In the summer of 2012, the online Chinese *New York Times* released an article in Hong Kong on the anti-Japanese protests occurring in China over Japanese activists landing on the Diaoyu Islands, isles that are between China and Japan and have historically been contested territory.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Moore, "History, Nationalism and Face in Sino-Japanese Relations," 296.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid*, 295.

<sup>177</sup> 加藤嘉一, "从2005到2012, 日中不睦何以至此," 纽约时报中文网, May 14, 2013, <https://cn.nytimes.com/world/20130514/cc14kato/>, 2.

<sup>178</sup> 加藤嘉一, "从2005到2012, 日中不睦何以至此," 2.

<sup>179</sup> 德国之声中文网编辑部, "反日抗议并非自发行动| 媒体看中国," *Deutsche Welle*, December 4, 2005, <https://www.dw.com/zh/%E5%8F%8D%E6%97%A5%E6%8A%97%E8%AE%AE%E5%B9%B6%E9%9D%9E%E8%87%AA%E5%8F%91%E8%A1%8C%E5%8A%A8/a-1549698, 1>.

<sup>180</sup> Diaoyu Islands (钓鱼岛) in Chinese, Senkaku Islands (尖閣諸島) in Japanese.

Chinese media reported that each of the demonstrations that spanned throughout the eastern provinces were small, with approximately two hundred participants each.<sup>181</sup> Foreign news sources, however, observed that the demonstrations, while small, were relatively intense and violent.<sup>182</sup> Online posts from Weibo and other Chinese social media showed images of Chinese protestors vandalizing cars, storming businesses with supposed Japanese ties or sympathies, and carrying signs reading, “Even if there are graves all over China, all the Japanese will be killed.”<sup>183</sup> The article’s authors stated there were posts throughout Chinese social media that portrayed “outrage” toward the Japanese.<sup>184</sup> These posts, before they were deleted, called their own government “cowardly” in having allowed these disputes to be possible by not outrightly supporting public sentiment and forcing Japan to apologize.<sup>185</sup>

This displeasure with Japan also appears in a 2019 article written by Liang Zhi (梁智), the Chinese President of the China (Mainland) Branch of the World Chinese Fishing Protection Alliance. This article discusses the disputes surrounding the Diaoyu Islands from 1970 to the present day. The Chinese discovered the Diaoyu Islands in the late 14th or early 15th centuries and claimed sovereignty over them until the late 19th century when the Japanese claimed the uninhabited territory.<sup>186</sup> China showed little interest in the islands during the declining Qing Dynasty and under the rule of Chiang Kai-shek in the early 20th century, who was indifferent on

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<sup>181</sup> 梁智, “强大的中国必将统一钓鱼岛列屿必将回归——民间保钓回顾与展望,” *US-China Forum (Bilingual)*, August 3, 2019, <https://www.us-chinaforum.com/27599369133554222727/2980537>, 1.

For more relation of this incident to the Chinese concept of “face”, as is what will be attempted in the main body text below, see: Gregory J. Moore. “‘In Your Face’: Domestic Politics, Nationalism, and ‘Face’ in the Sino-Japanese Islands Dispute.” *Asian Perspective* 38, no. 2 (2014): 219–40.

<sup>182</sup> Keith Bradsher and Martin Fackler, “中国民众抗议日本人登上钓鱼岛,” 纽约时报中文网, August 20, 2012, <https://cn.nytimes.com/china/20120820/c20japan/>, 2.

<sup>183</sup> Bradsher, “中国民众抗议日本人登上钓鱼岛,” 3.  
“哪怕华夏遍地坟, 也要杀光日本人”

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid*, 5.

<sup>186</sup> Corrie Goldman, “Stanford Scholar Illuminates History of Disputed China Sea Islands,” *Stanford News*, August 5, 2015, <https://news.stanford.edu/2015/08/05/islands-chiang-diaries-080515/>, 1.

the issue, stayed unmotivated to retake them until after the Second Sino-Japanese War.<sup>187</sup> Under the Okinawa reversion agreement (1971), the United States affirmed the Japanese claim to the territory just as oil and natural gas resources were found there and Chinese interest in the islands was being renewed.<sup>188</sup> At this point, the islands became a continual source of tension between China and Japan, especially since, “many Chinese also perceive the Diaoyu Islands as a symbol of China’s historical defeats.”<sup>189</sup>

Liang Zhi claims that obtaining and protecting the islands is a matter of defending China’s sovereignty and, most importantly, its national dignity.<sup>190</sup> As the territory had been long-disputed between the two countries, the challenge to China’s claim over the islands fanned China’s displeasure with the Japanese people. Liang argues that these anti-Japan sentiments have become increasingly common amongst the Chinese people and have been reflected by governmental action such as increased patrols in the waters around the islands.<sup>191</sup> Liang Zhi states that China had a victory in the Second World War with Japan’s defeat and China’s reacquisition of territory, such as the Diaoyu Islands.<sup>192</sup> Liang says “today's China is no longer the weak China of the past,”<sup>193</sup> and, “any attempt to split China, occupy China's territory, or endanger China's core interests is wishful thinking!”<sup>194</sup> Thus, Liang believes that as China is growing stronger, it will not allow itself to be looked down upon by other countries such as Japan.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Goldman, “Stanford Scholar Illuminates History of Disputed China Sea Islands,” 1-2.

<sup>188</sup> This agreement still stands today, officially making the Diaoyu Islands Japanese territory.

<sup>189</sup> Goldman, “Stanford Scholar Illuminates History of Disputed China Sea Islands,” 1.

<sup>190</sup> 梁智, “强大的中国必将统,” 1.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid*, 2.

<sup>192</sup> Again, however, let it be noted that the islands, as of 2023, are under the US and UN recognized control of Japan.

<sup>193</sup> “可是, 今日之中国, 已不是旧时羸弱之中国”

<sup>194</sup> 梁智, “强大的中国必将统,” 2.

“任何企图分裂中国、侵占中国领土、危害中国核心利益的图谋都是痴心妄想!”

<sup>195</sup> 梁智, “强大的中国必将统,” 2.

These objections show that the Japanese claims to the islands agitated the anti-Japanese sentiments in China. Just as the Japanese bid for a permanent UN seat was an insult to China's international standing, so was Japan's claim to the Diaoyu islands. Chinese news sources, such as the Sina News Center<sup>196</sup>, say that "the underlying reasons behind Japan's insistence on 'purchasing the island' ... [is that] they are determined to overturn the historical conclusions of World War II ... such as the 'Nanjing Massacre'."<sup>197</sup> The appearance of news articles relating Japan's claim of the Diaoyu islands to the insult and horror of the Nanjing Massacre were no coincidence.<sup>198</sup> China's national face had been insulted, and the Chinese people and government quickly related these emerging conflicts to the events that had been left unresolved.

Some of the Chinese government's responses to Japanese claims of rightful sovereignty over the islands were that they came from extreme right-wing individuals in Japan and did not reflect the sentiment of the entire country. The Chinese government also encouraged disengagement with and the public shaming of the Massacre deniers instead of blaming the entirety of Japan. In one statement, however, the PRC said, "especially this year, the Japanese government has repeatedly condoned the right-wing forces' in the 'purchasing islands' storm, thinking that it will pave the way 'to obtain the islands' by itself."<sup>199</sup> This statement shows that if

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<sup>196</sup> Sina 新闻中心 (Xīnwén zhōngxīn)

<sup>197</sup> 王海运, "专家称清算历史问题是稳定中日关系的治本之策," *Sina* 新闻中心, September 12, 2012, <https://news.sina.com.cn/c/2012-09-12/060925153630.shtml>, 1.

"日本执意'购岛'的深层原因...执意要推翻二战历史结论...对... '南京大屠杀'."

For more on this topic, see: 刘建平. "钓鱼岛事变"的历史意味与中日关系再认识." 爱思想: 学习型社会领航者, October 2012, <https://www.aisixiang.com/data/59513.html>.

<sup>198</sup> For example, see: 宋鲁郑. "钓鱼岛争端与东亚安全(下)." 观察者, December 9, 2013, [https://www.guancha.cn/SongLuZheng/2013\\_12\\_09\\_191333.shtml?web](https://www.guancha.cn/SongLuZheng/2013_12_09_191333.shtml?web).

This article is an especially helpful example, as it relates the problem of the Diaoyu Islands directly to the Nanjing Massacre and mentions occasions that have been previously mentioned in this paper that the Chinese see as Japanese militarism and non-apologeticness such as the Yasukuni Shrine incidents.

<sup>199</sup> "钓鱼岛——中国的固有领," 中华人民共和国驻波兰共和国大使馆, September 25, 2012, [http://pl.china-embassy.gov.cn/zt/dyd/201210/t20121016\\_2464004.htm](http://pl.china-embassy.gov.cn/zt/dyd/201210/t20121016_2464004.htm), 11.

"特别是今年以来姑息纵容右翼势力掀起'购岛'风波, 以为自己出面'购岛'铺路搭桥。"

the government of Japan does not discredit those “right-wing” individuals, then China will assume the government as guilty by association.

Therefore, in some cases, the government’s statements reflected the growing anti-Japan sentiments of the public. An article released by the *People’s Daily*, a top government-endorsed news source in China, stated, “Japan must stop creating new incidents”<sup>200</sup> and quoted the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “China has indisputable sovereignty over the Diaoyu Islands ... measures taken by Japan ... are illegal and invalid.”<sup>201</sup> By saying that “Japan,” as a country and a people, needed to stop creating new incidents that provoke the memory of China’s loss of face, the government saved face with its own people. Also, as the PRC government is instructing Japan on what to do, it is reaffirming its position as the superior in the relationship, as it is the responsibility of the superior to instruct and guide the inferior. Not only is the PRC government practicing this responsibility to Japan, but it is also saying that the Japanese government has the same responsibility to guide its own people, and reminding Japan that good superiors — or leaders — should correct the wrongs of those inferiors.

This responsibility of leaders to correct the wrongs of those “inferiors” might also explain the Chinese government allowing protests against Japan and the spread of anti-Japan sentiments. However, it perhaps should also be considered that the sentiments of the Chinese people are too strong for the government to contain without significant backlash, and that this fear of cracking down on people who care so intently about the dispute might cause internal conflict. Whatever the reason, without the explicit acknowledgement of the Chinese government for its peoples’ demands to Japan, some protestors have expressed displeasure about the lack of support. In an

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<sup>200</sup> “日本必须停止在钓鱼岛问题上制造新的事端”.

<sup>201</sup> 蔡尚伟 钟勤, “刍论“钓鱼岛国有化”事件中国政府的舆论引导,” 人民网首页 October 16, 2012, <http://media.people.com.cn/n/2012/1016/c40628-19281824.html>, 1-2.

“中国对钓鱼岛及其附属岛屿拥有无可争辩的主权。日方对钓鱼岛及其附属岛屿采取任何单方面举措, 都是非法和无效的”.

interview, a Chinese protester of the Diaoyu Islands dispute said: “No matter how reactionary a protest is, the government has to support it, even if superficially. It will be logically unreasonable if the government opposes it.”<sup>202</sup> These protestors speak on the incidents that have been affected by the historical memory of the Massacre because, “to most Chinese, the Japanese are ‘demons’ ... [which is a view that] dates back to the atrocities committed by the Japanese during World War II, such as the Nanjing Massacre.”<sup>203</sup>

The demonstrators declare their protesting as an act of “patriotism,” which is why they believe the government should publicly support their efforts over focusing on maintaining peace with Japan. One journal article stated that Chinese police and government generally prohibit any public protests, unless they meet the needs of the CCP or promote nationalist sentiments.<sup>204</sup> When asked if the police nearby minded the protests and damaging property, one of the protestors said, “not at all.”<sup>205</sup> In this case, the protestor’s comment suggests that their protests meet with this tacit approval. While most of the government’s displeasure towards Japan is indirect or, in the case of the Massacre specifically, does not put blame on the country as a whole, the consistent inaction of the Chinese government towards the illegal protests on its soil delivers a clear message on its true stance.

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<sup>202</sup> 乔龙, “中国多座城市民众反日示威游行,” 自由亚洲电台, August, 19, 2012, <https://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/ql-08192012181400.html>, 3-4.

“任何一个政府, 不管你再怎么反动, 也要表面上给予支持, 反对的话, 情理上说不过去”.

<sup>203</sup> “一周新闻聚焦: 钓鱼岛与民族主义,” 民主中国, August 27, 2012, <https://minzhuzhongguo.org/default.php?id=29407>, 28.

“对大多数中国人而言, 日本人就是“恶魔”。。可以追溯到遥远。。一直延伸到第二次世界大战期间日本人犯下的暴行, 比如南京大屠杀。”

<sup>204</sup> 梁智, “强大的中国必将统,” 3-5. For more information, see: Mark Findlay and Thomas Chiu Chor-Wing. “The Law of Assembly in the People’s Republic of China: Implications of the Retreat to Formal Legalism for the Legislative Process in China.” *Journal of Law and Society* 18, no. 3 (1991): 365–73.

<sup>205</sup> 乔龙, “中国多座城市民众反日示威游行,” 3.  
“没管”

### “National Dignity” and “Face”

These protests of the Chinese people, when combined with the tacit approval of the Chinese government, show a political usage of the memory of the Massacre by the Chinese government towards Japan. One Chinese article on the Diaoyu Island protests argued: “yes, the Chinese people have the desire to protest against Japan, but if the authorities don't approve, nothing will happen in China.”<sup>206</sup> While the Chinese people denounce Massacre deniers and demand apologies and social reparations for their loss of face, the government keeps face with both its people and the international stage by both allowing the protests and publicly pushing for peaceful relations with Japan.

The government's response to the Diaoyu Islands protests can be explained by working to avoid a loss of face with its citizens and undermining Japan's face internationally. In order to avoid losing face, “people use facework tactics including indirect communication, presenting themselves in a positive light and threatening others' face.”<sup>207</sup> The Chinese government and police officials did not act directly against the protests of their people, nor did the Chinese government encourage these protests. After the public's sentiments became clear with increasing protests and violence on China's streets and in front of the Japanese embassy, the Chinese government released a public statement. The foreign ministry of the PRC stated: “China strongly urges Japan to respect history and international law, and immediately stop all actions that undermine China's territorial sovereignty.”<sup>208</sup> China then took the high ground by mentioning its disaster relief support to Japan in the previous year. After this, while still calling for friendly

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<sup>206</sup> “一周新闻聚焦:钓鱼岛与民族主义,” 民主中国, August 27, 2012, <https://minzhuzhongguo.org/default.php?id=29407>, 2.

“不错, 中国民众有反日游行的欲望, 但是如果当局不允许, 中国什么都不会发生”

<sup>207</sup> Ella Miron-Spektor, Susannah B. F. Paletz and Chun-Chi Lin. “Abide, Push Back or Challenge? Face Loss and Creativity in Face, Dignity and Honor Cultures,” *Academy of Management Proceedings* (2014), 2.

<sup>208</sup> 中华人民共和国外交, “钓鱼岛是中国的固有领土, 白皮书(2012年9月),” 中华人民共和国国务院新闻办公室, October 9, 2015, [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/diaoyudao/chn/flfg/zcfg/201510/t20151009\\_8560598.htm](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/diaoyudao/chn/flfg/zcfg/201510/t20151009_8560598.htm), 4.

“中国强烈敦促日本尊重历史和国际法, 立即停止一切损害中国领土主权的行为”

relationships between the countries, China increased its boat patrols in the waters of the Diaoyu Islands. This anti-Japanese statement from the Chinese government portrays the effect that face has had upon modern day China, especially since the Nanjing Massacre.



### Conclusion: Face, Politics, and the Question of History

The anti-Japanese protests from the Chinese public and the reactions of the Chinese government signify the effect that face has had upon modern day China, especially since the Nanjing Massacre. The events that have aggravated anti-Japan tensions in the 21st century reminded the Chinese people of the memory of being subjugated, raped, and conquered. This memory, when combined with the Century of Humiliation, created the image of China being the “weak”, old country of East Asia instead of the advanced, mentor-like civilization it had claimed for centuries before the Sino-Japanese wars.<sup>209</sup> Just as China viewed itself as having fallen from glory, so had it lost face. Even as the country gains power, the scenarios that remind them of this shame feel as like subjugations back into that time of humiliation. With that new power, these incidents require shows of strength to regain face and restore China to its place as the superior in its relationship with Japan.

Sino-Japanese tensions have been heavily influenced, if not directly caused, by the memory of the loss of face and Japanese denialism, leading to the Chinese inability to regain their honor. Without Japan taking responsibility and directly apologizing for the atrocities it afflicted upon China, the Chinese have remained unable to restore their lost face as a country and people. Japan's repeated disrespect of China and its traditional view of China's superior place in the world have aggravated the sentiments of the Chinese people. Japan's words, in the eyes of most Chinese, show no remorse for causing China the continual loss of face that continues to cause disturbances between the two countries.

As Sino-Japanese relationships continue to worsen, news articles often bring up insults which one might reasonably expect to be forgotten. In a 2005 article published in Chinese in *Deutsche Welle*, an internationally-viewed news source, the “textbook issue” and the visit of

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<sup>209</sup> Chih-yu Shih. “A Rising Unknown: Rediscovering China in Japan's East Asia,” *China Review* 11, no. 1, 2011, 9.

previous Japanese Prime Ministers to the Yasukuni Shrine were brought back into the public debate.<sup>210</sup> It says that the Japanese government, through the actions of the Prime Minister, “has repeatedly added salt to the wound” because “his visit to the Yasukuni Shrine ... and his approval of new textbooks that do not mention the large number of victims of the Nanjing Massacre are actions that insult Chinese ancestors.”<sup>211</sup> This article — amongst others of its kind — shows that these actions of the Japanese, while seemingly small, have had a lasting impact on the Chinese people. As the Chinese have not received what they believe to be a proper apology for these actions, their face remains lost and their honor insulted. Thus, until these feelings are properly rectified, they have provoked a “re-remembering” of the Massacre in the more capable, rich, and powerful modern-day China.

By reminding the Chinese people of the insults they have experienced in the past left unrectified by Japan while Sino-Japanese social and political conflicts are occurring, previous offenses act as a catalyst to worsen how those conflicts are perceived by the public. This re-remembering of the Massacre is driven by China’s loss of face and the government’s use of it on the political stage. One reason for these issues to be repeated in Chinese media is to remind and encourage the hatred of a common enemy in order to unify the Chinese people. The same article as mentioned above argues that this has created a relatively successful public anti-Japanese front which “provides an outlet for political dissatisfaction, because no other field of political activity is allowed” and allows the Chinese government “take nationalist arrogance to new heights.”<sup>212</sup> At the same time, Chinese officials, such as Wen Jiabao, the prime minister, said: “Commemorating ... history can remind us of the sufferings that the war brought to the

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<sup>210</sup> “时代周报:反日是中国政治的需要,” *Deutsche Welle*, April 17, 2005, <https://p.dw.com/p/6WPX>, 1.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

“在中国人看来, 他参拜供奉...以及批准不提及南京大屠杀受难者大量人数的新教科书都是有辱中国先人的行为”

<sup>212</sup> “时代周报:反日是中国政治的需要,” 1.

Chinese people, the Asian people, and even the Japanese people ... Sino-Japanese cooperation has great potential ... and our goal is to achieve mutual development for the two countries.”<sup>213</sup>

While the Chinese government advocated for and celebrated continuing peace between China and Japan, the anti-Japanism amongst the Chinese public continued to grow with the continued reminders of the loss of face and national dignity.

This reaction to the discreditation of face was seen again in 2017, when Chinese people in Tokyo moved to protest the Japanese APA hotel chain after its president wrote under a penname to deny the existence of the Nanjing Massacre and Korean comfort women. The books placed in hotels by the APA hotel chain intending to house athletes during the Sapporo 2017 Asian Winter Games likely sparked these protests. This book, titled “The Real History of Japan: Theoretical Modern History II,” declares the Nanjing Massacre an “imaginary” event promoted by China in order to criticize Japan.<sup>214</sup> The book also denies that the “comfort women” of China and Korea were forced to provide sex to Japanese soldiers during the Sino-Japanese wars.<sup>215</sup> This contesting of the Nanjing Massacre led to outrage amongst the Chinese, leading many to declare their misgivings in the streets in Japan. While some of these protestors carried signs portraying doves or saying “Friendly China”, these protests encouraged direct action from the Chinese Olympic Committee.<sup>216</sup> Chinese tourists and tourism authorities severed ties with the hotel chain, boycotting it in person and on social media.<sup>217</sup> Public outcry led to an official response, and the

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<sup>213</sup> 春天, “我国领导人高度重视中日关系,” 央视国际, April 20, 2005, <https://ent.cctv.com/news/china/20050420/101279.shtml>, 3.

“可以使我们回忆起战争给中国人民、亚洲人民以至日本人民带来的苦难。。。中日友好合作有很大的潜力。。。我们的目标是实现两国的共同发展”

<sup>214</sup> Mari Yamaguchi, “Japan Organizer: No History Book At Hotel During Asian Games.” *Associated Press: Worldstream*, January 31, 2017. NewsBank: Access World News, Research Collection, 1.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid*, 1.

<sup>216</sup> Reuters Staff, “Nanjing Massacre-denying Japanese hotel boss sparks Tokyo protest,” *Reuters News*, February 5, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-japan-china-hotel-protests/nanjing-massacre-denying-japanese-hotel-boss-sparks-tokyo-protest-idUSKBN15K0GX>, 2-3.

“中国友好”

<sup>217</sup> Reuters Staff, “Nanjing Massacre-denying Japanese hotel boss sparks Tokyo protest,” 2-3.

Chinese government took action with the Olympic Council of Asia. Government officials said: “We have urged the Japanese side to strictly observe the Olympic Charter as well as related regulations of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA). We have also written to the OCA, asking them to urge the Japanese side to correct its mistake promptly.”<sup>218</sup> Despite continuing protests of both those supporting the hotel group’s public display of denialism as well as their opposers, the OCA deferred to China’s request, which suggests that Japan was not willing to acknowledge China’s advice given with China in the position of the superior in the relationship.

During the 2017 Asian Winter games, the Japanese Organizing Committee of the event removed the controversial history books from the APA hotels where the Chinese athletes planned to stay. When asked by reporter Yamaguchi Mari, the game officials stated that “contentious history books will be removed from guest rooms at a hotel that will be used to house athletes ... to ensure religious and political neutrality.”<sup>219</sup> Despite the Japanese game organizer’s statement, the fact that books denying the actuality and existence of the Nanjing Massacre and had been written and placed in the hotel in the first place served to protestors as evidence that these Japanese individuals were not apologetic for their wartime actions.<sup>220</sup>

After the first Chinese protests against the hotel, the spokesperson for China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Hua Chunying, said: “to forget about the history is betrayal, and to deny the guilt is doubling the crime.”<sup>221</sup> The Chinese see the Japanese denial of the Massacre as an affront to the Sino-Japanese relationship, and the denialism of any Japanese fault in the atrocities is another offense added to the act of the atrocities themselves. Hua also said that Tokyo should “realize the gravity of the issue” and “properly handle” the issue so as not to disrupt bilateral

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<sup>218</sup> Reuters Staff, “Nanjing Massacre-denying Japanese hotel boss sparks Tokyo protest,” 2.

<sup>219</sup> Yamaguchi, “Japan Organizer: No History Book At Hotel During Asian Games,” 1.

<sup>220</sup> Ching, “Japanese Devils,” 36.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

relations.<sup>222</sup> The Chinese loss of face was not a surface-level wound but a deep offense that had persisted into the 21st century, and the refusal of the Japanese government to acknowledge its part in the atrocity and directly apologize for the matter was causing tension in its relationship with the Chinese.

Hua's statements were followed by China's National Tourism Administration requesting national and international tour companies to stop cooperation with APA hotels and for Chinese abroad to boycott the hotel chain.<sup>223</sup> When the government requested the removal of these books, the spokesperson of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that China "once again [urges] the Japanese side to face up to and reflect on history, educate its people with a correct historical view, and win the trust of its Asian neighbors and the international community with practical actions."<sup>224</sup> China indirectly encouraged Japan's official disengagement from those who denied the Massacre. In doing so, they gave the Japanese government a way to continue Sino-Japanese political discussion. At the same time, by giving the Japanese government a suggestion on how to rule their people, China re-established itself in a superior position and undermined the Japanese face. The Japanese hotel chain, despite its prior refusal to remove the textbooks, caved under the force of Chinese public boycotts and protests and removed the textbooks before the Olympic games began.<sup>225</sup> The Japanese had, in this situation, fulfilled the obligation of the perceived inferior in the Sino-Japanese relationship. In this way, the Chinese government once again used the influence of the anti-Japanese sentiments created by the Massacre to achieve a political victory, keep face with the Chinese people, and regain some of its lost national face.

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<sup>222</sup> Ching, "Japanese Devils," 3.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>224</sup> "外交部发言人就日本APA酒店在客房中放置右翼书籍事答记者问," 中华人民共和国驻日本国大使馆, January 17, 2017, [http://jp.china-embassy.gov.cn/sgkxnew/201701/t20170117\\_9430456.htm](http://jp.china-embassy.gov.cn/sgkxnew/201701/t20170117_9430456.htm), 1. "我们再次敦促日方切实正视和反省历史, 以正确的历史观教育国民, 以实际行动取信于亚洲邻国和国际社会"

<sup>225</sup> Wang Lei, "Japan's APA hotel chain won't remove right-wing books during Tokyo Olympics - CGTN," *China Global Television Network*, June 3, 2017, [https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d67544d3045444e/share\\_p.html](https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d67544d3045444e/share_p.html), 1-3.

While the government advocated for peaceful bilateral relations with Japan, the Chinese protestors cared visibly less about these political motives and focused more on regaining their loss of honor. One observer of these demonstrations notes that, “in contrast to students' protests against domestic corruption and authoritarianism 16 years ago, today's university elites are increasingly indulging in xenophobic nationalism ... like during the Cultural Revolution, they used it to serve party policy.”<sup>226</sup> These protests show that the government’s political usage of the tensions created from historical slights against China exist and have been successful.

Even online in open, public chat forums and social media, “China’s internet is frequently dominated by aggressively nationalist zeal ... that has become a major factor in regional politics and international relations.”<sup>227</sup> However, there is one problem that has possibly developed with the political usage of the loss of face from the Massacre that led to these anti-Japanese sentiments. The spread of engagement with the internet has furthered these public sentiments and taken them, plausibly, out of the government’s far-reaching control. At the same time, it can be said that “the leadership seems fairly effective at retaining its ‘guidance’ of political discourse across digital realms.”<sup>228</sup> No matter the argument, however, it is clear that the loss of face of the Nanjing Massacre has created tensions and anti-Japanese sentiments among the Chinese public. The Chinese government’s promotion of the memory of the Massacre and use of these tensions have increased since the beginning of the 21st century and seem likely to continue until it feels its loss of face has been rectified. The government’s allowance of articles to be published commemorating the death of each survivor, for example, serves as a reminder to the loss of face. However, without the tensions resolved, even after the last Massacre survivor has passed, the

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<sup>226</sup> “时代周报:反日是中国政治的需要,” *Deutsche Welle*, April 17, 2005, <https://p.dw.com/p/6WPX>, 1.

<sup>227</sup> Florian Schneider, “Mediated Massacre: Digital Nationalism and History Discourse on China’s Web,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 77, no. 2, 2018, 430.

<sup>228</sup> Schneider, “Mediated Massacre: Digital Nationalism and History Discourse on China’s Web,” 430.

Chinese people seem determined to remember the slight against their country in relation to Japan. The shame brought to China from the Nanjing Massacre was not simply individual, but a loss of face to the Chinese identity itself.

The observed increase in Nanjing Massacre memorials occurred because, like the Chinese public, the Chinese government had lost its face after the Massacre. In order to keep face, the government encouraged the public's anti-Japanism while officially pushing for peaceful relations with Japan. By calling out Japanese denialism and the actions of extreme right-winged individuals as militaristic, the Chinese government has also undermined the Japanese face by linking militarism and extremism with denying the Massacre and by speaking to Japanese officials on how to lead Japan.

These actions show China's political use of promoting the memory of the Massacre. Due to the indirect undermining of Japan's face and indirect allowance of these protests, the Chinese government has enabled the anti-Japan sentiments to grow. Some scholars familiar with the matter, however, wonder if the insult to the people's face has grown so memorable that it is spiraling out of the Chinese government's control. If allowed to continue, the anti-Japanese sentiments in China could grow past the need to receive a proper apology for the loss of face from the Massacre. As the Chinese continue to feel that it has been insulted as a people, the memory of the Massacre could be a catalyst for the anger in society to grow.

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