

Transnational Asian Masculinities

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Japanese War Cinema

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1

Introduction

Remembering the War On-Screen

In the most extreme case, the boundaries between fact and fiction, image and the real have been blurred to the extent of leaving us only with simulation, and the postmodern subject vanishes in the imaginary world of the screen.¹

August 15, the date that marks the end of World War II in the Pacific, has been remembered around the world in strikingly different ways. In 1945, it was enthusiastically celebrated by the Allies as Victory over Japan Day or V-J Day, perhaps most memorably in the famous *V-J Day in Times Square* photograph by Alfred Eisenstaedt. Since 1949, South Korea has referred to August 15 as Restoration of Light Day (Gwangbokjeol), a day to celebrate the end of Japanese colonial rule; in North Korea, it is remembered as Liberation of Fatherland Day (Chogukhaebangŭi nal); both of these celebrate the end of Japanese colonial rule, albeit in ways that highlight the different political systems and ideologies of the two Koreas. In contemporary Japan, August 15 is commemorated somberly as the Memorial Day for the End of the War (Shūsen-kinenbi), a subdued time wherein Japanese citizens recall the horrors of the nuclear bombs and pray for peace.²

August 15 has also been invoked throughout the years by associations, filmmakers, and politicians to signify a range of meanings from reconciliation to resistance. In 1951, August 15 became a date for national reconciliation, as the Japan-China Friendship Association encouraged Japanese citizens to send letters to China and Taiwan recognizing Japanese aggression in the Marco Polo Bridge Incident on that date.³ In the 1972 Japanese film *Under the Flag of the Rising Sun* (Gunki hatameku moto ni), on August 15 of each year, a bereaved war widow

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1. Andreas Huyssen, "Monument and Memory in a Postmodern Age," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 6 (1993): 249.
 2. "Zengoku senbossha tsuitō shiki ni tsuite," *Kōseirōdōshō*, accessed November 4, 2014, <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/houdou/2007/08/h0808-1.html>.
 3. Franziska Seraphim, *War Memory and Social Politics in Japan, 1945–2005* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 121.

demands to know the truth of her husband's wartime death. In the August 15, 1982 issue of the Chinese newspaper *People's Daily* (Renmin Ribao), the following warning resounded amid the first textbook controversy between China and Japan: "Past experience, if not forgotten, is a guide to the future."⁴ August 15 is also the contentious date that several Japanese prime ministers have selected to visit the controversial Yasukuni Shrine and an important date for Chinese citizens to protest Japanese historical revisionism.⁵ Such diverse remembrance reflects the ways in which memory, rather than receding into the past, remains present, urgent, and ever-changing.

Discourse on war memory has emerged forcefully over the past two decades, particularly in China and Japan, the subjects of this study. The subjugation, violence, and loss of the war left physical, psychological, economic, and social wounds on both nations, or what cultural trauma studies refers to as an "interpreted shock to the cultural tissue of a society."⁶ In China, the war is considered one part of a "history of pain": a century of colonial incursion, unequal treaties, lost territory, and domestic turmoil.⁷ From this historical perspective, Japanese aggression in China stretches back in time before World War II to include the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), the Boxer Rebellion (1900), the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), and the Mukden Incident or 9.18 Incident (1931). In Japan, the war marks both uncomfortable memories of aggressive colonial expansion and tremendous personal devastation and loss. The contested nature of recalling the past in Japan is reflected by its numerous names, which include the Greater East Asia War, the Pacific War, the Fifteen-Year War, and "that war."⁸

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4. Caroline Rose, *Interpreting History in Sino-Japanese Relations: A Case-Study in Political Decision Making* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1.
 5. Prime Minister Miki Takeo of Japan made the first unofficial visit in 1975, although the visit went largely unnoticed because Class A war criminals were not enshrined until 1978. A visit in 1985 by Prime Minister Nakasone Yasuhiro prompted strong protests among Chinese students. Later visits by Prime Minister Koizumi Jun'ichiro between 2001 and 2006 incited angry reactions in countries affected by Japanese colonialism. See Alan Taylor, "Anti-Japan Protests in China," *The Atlantic*, September 17, 2012, accessed November 5, 2014, <http://www.theatlantic.com/infocus/2012/09/anti-japan-protests-in-china/100370/>.
 6. Cultural trauma can also be considered in terms of Claude Lévi-Strauss's term "hot moment" and Gerbner's term "critical incident." For more on cultural trauma, see Piotr Sztompka, "Cultural Trauma: The Other Face of Social Change," *European Journal of Social Theory* 3, no. 4 (2000): 449. For more on hot moments and critical incidents, see Barbie Zelizer, *Covering the Body: The Kennedy Assassination, the Media, and the Shaping of Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 4.
 7. Michael Berry, *A History of Pain: Trauma in Modern Chinese Literature and Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).
 8. Akiko Hashimoto, "Divided Memories, Contested Histories: The Shifting Landscape in Japan," in *Cultures and Globalization: Heritage, Memory and Identity*, ed. Helmut Anheier and Yudhishthir Raj Isar (London: SAGE, 2011), 240.

Chinese and Japanese remembrance has undergone three major historical phases since the end of the war. In the first phase of memory (1945–1972 for Japan; 1945–1978 for China), postwar relations suppressed historical discussion between the two nations, obscuring the trauma of the war with the immediate crisis of the Cold War order.⁹ For China, the desire to create a new socialist nation led to the repression of victim narratives during this era. The government emphasized socialist heroism in lieu of colonial victimization, and personal accounts, artistic representation, and academic studies on victimhood were not allowed. Meanwhile, Japan was protected and, in many ways, “rehabilitated” by the United States, which needed an ally in the region to battle the “threat” of communism. The countries were thus insulated from each other’s national narratives and experienced a “hibernation” period.

From the signing of the Joint Communiqué of the Government of Japan and the Government of the People’s Republic of China in 1972, in which the Chinese government signed away all rights to wartime reparations “for Sino-Japanese friendship,” the two countries enjoyed a brief respite of friendly relations.¹⁰ This “honeymoon period” also marked the second wave of collective memory (1972/1978–1989). In China, the 1980s saw a veritable outpouring of collective remembrance, much of it focused on the traumatic experiences of Chinese citizens.¹¹ These memories included not only Japanese colonialism but also the mass suffering experienced during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.¹² In Japan, memory of colonialism and overseas aggression had faded for the most part until American atrocities during the Vietnam War revived discussion of Japanese atrocities. Moreover, the postwar return of Japanese orphans left in China (*Chūgoku zanryū koji*) also emerged as an emotional site of Sino-Japanese reconciliation.

The third wave of memory began in 1989 and continues to this day. In China, the 1989 protests exposed the ideology vacuum created by the open-door policy and led Deng Xiaoping to conclude that “the biggest mistake for the CCP in the 1980s was that the party did not focus enough attention on ideological education.”¹³ Soon after, the government began to promote patriotic education

9. Although China signed a normalization treaty with Japan in 1972, it was not until the open-door policy instituted in 1978 that foreign companies could invest in China. That year also marks the beginning of film coproductions with Japan.

10. Chalmers Johnson, “The Patterns of Japanese Relations with China, 1952–1982,” *Pacific Affairs* 59, no. 3 (1986): 402–428.

11. Daqing Yang, “Reconciliation between Japan and China: Problems and Prospects,” in *Reconciliation in the Asia-Pacific*, ed. Yōichi Funabashi (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003), 69.

12. This can be seen in the “scar cinema” of the 1980s and early 1990s.

13. Zheng Wang, “National Humiliation, History Education, and the Politics of Historical Memory: Patriotic Education Campaign in China,” *International Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (2008): 788.

in the “Never Forget National Humiliation/One Hundred Years of Humiliation” (*wuwang guochi/bainian guochi*) campaign, which was accompanied by the construction of numerous memorials and museums after 1991.¹⁴ This time period also showed a notable increase in anti-Japanese films and a shift in Chinese sentiment. In Japan, the end of the Cold War and death of Hirohito also marked a new stage in US-Japan relations and a change in Japanese identity. As Yoshikuni Igarashi argues, “With the disappearance of Hirohito’s body—the key element in the foundational narrative—war memories returned to the Japanese media, both as nostalgia and as critical reflection.”¹⁵ In addition to the death of the wartime emperor, the Gulf War and Japan’s financial involvement further prompted reassessment of Japan’s lack of military and “unnatural” political situation.¹⁶ Compounding this period of transition, Nanjing and comfort women discourse merged with American Holocaust discourse, fundamentally changing US-China-Japan memory dynamics. This period marked what Yoshimi Shun’ya refers to as “the shift from the postwar economic growth-centered nationalism of the Cold War era to the crisis-driven neonationalism of the age of globalization.”¹⁷ In other words, the unstable economic and political state of Japanese society, mixed with uncertainty about the future and an increasingly global visibility of collective memory, further contributed to this “memory boom.”

The globalization of media has also fueled this rise in memory conflicts. With the advent of the internet and digitization, many Japanese war films have become widely visible, with even obscure works like Kobayashi Masaki’s 1983 documentary *Tokyo Trial* (Tōkyō saiban) now rendered widely available to Chinese audiences via streaming platforms like Youku. While war films were previously limited to a domestic or art house audience, they are now broadcast internationally and come under heightened scrutiny when they aim to conceal or ignore the trauma that Japan’s military expansion wreaked on invaded nations. In China, the focus on “One Hundred Years of Humiliation” has intensified Chinese nationalism and resulted in public outcries over Japanese revisionism both real and perceived, the violence of which is also broadcast internationally. When mixed with Western and

14. According to Wang, “The patriotic education campaign was made official by two documents issued in August 1991: ‘Notice about Conducting Education of Patriotism and Revolutionary Tradition by Exploiting Extensively Cultural Relics’ and ‘General Outline on Strengthening Education on Chinese Modern and Contemporary History and National Conditions.’” Wang, “National Humiliation,” 789.

15. Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945–1970* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 204.

16. Francis Fukuyama and Kongdan Oh, *The US-Japan Security Relationship after the Cold War* (Santa Monica: National Defense Research Institute, 1993).

17. Shun’ya Yoshimi, “Television and Nationalism: Historical Change in the National Domestic TV Formation of Postwar Japan,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 6, no. 4 (2003): 483.

regional anxiety over an economically ascendant China, this has undermined sympathy abroad.¹⁸ Increasingly negative media depictions on both sides have contributed to shocking shifts in public sentiment, with the vast majority of Japanese citizens switching from a positive view of China in the 1970s to an overwhelmingly negative image by the early aughts (2000–2005) and continuing to today.¹⁹

Taking the apparent “tidal wave” of Chinese and Japanese memory in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as its subject, this book explores remembering in a specific context, World War II in Asia (1937–1945), and through a specific mode, film.²⁰ Viewing memory as the collective narrating of the past, I begin with an overview of film-as-memory. I argue that film is a significant mode of popular memory that constructs the past in a unique way through its reproducibility, affective impact, appeals to authenticity, and manifestation of time and space. I maintain that war films are both national and transnational in ways that can dramatically limit or expand their reception. While many war films articulate a narrative centered on the national self for primarily domestic audiences, they can also travel easily due to our increasingly connected global societies and to the increased scrutiny of how other nations frame history. I elaborate on how the narratives within these films use images of race and gender to symbolize national identity, positing that by analyzing Chinese and Japanese war films, we can examine current narratives of national identity. I conclude with an overview of my central argument, which speculates that Chinese and Japanese war films from the 1980s onward demonstrate a change in prosthetic memory, which is generated by a transnational memory network I term the “memory loop.” This is both fueled by and fueling a seismic shift of identity and power in the Pacific region.

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18. For more on “One Hundred Years of Humiliation,” see William A. Callahan, “National Insecurities: Humiliation, Salvation, and Chinese Nationalism,” *Alternatives* 29, no. 2 (2004): 199–218, and Peter Hays Gries, “Tears of Rage: Chinese Nationalist Reactions to the Belgrade Embassy Bombing,” *China Journal* 46 (2001): 25–43.
19. An overview of several public opinion polls conducted by agencies in China, Japan, Korea, and the United States concludes: “Whereas over 60 percent of Japanese surveyed in the late 1970s felt positively toward China, an equally negative view was presented by 2006. This reversal of goodwill is the same for the Chinese toward Japan.” Mindy Kotler, Naotaka Sugawara, and Tetsuya Yamada, “Chinese and Japanese Public Opinion: Searching for Moral Security,” *Asian Perspective* 3, no. 1 (2007): 93–125.
20. For “tidal wave,” see Pierre Nora, “Reasons for the Current Upsurge in Memory,” *Eurozine*, April 19, 2002, accessed April 13, 2014, <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2002-04-19-nora-en.html>. America’s involvement in World War II (1941–1945) is typically described as the Pacific theater of World War II, the Asia-Pacific War, or the Pacific War, with the conflict beginning with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Chinese and Japanese involvement is usually referred to as the Second Sino-Japanese War. I use World War II throughout this book to include both Sino-Japanese events of the 1930s such as the Nanjing Massacre of 1937 (wherein American witnesses were such an integral part) and the battles between Japan and the United States.

ongoing process characterized by repeated attempts to collectively remember a specific event that involves multiple nations such as the Nanjing Massacre or the Tokyo Trial, or a larger, less temporally specific collective experience like a world war or colonialization. The memory loop shares characteristics with Anna Reading's concept of global memory, which imagines memory as an assemblage of embodied, local, and global memory agents who delineate memory in ways shaped by uneven hierarchies of power.¹⁰⁹ However, in visualizing this specific debate over memory in the Pacific as a transnational loop, I aim to highlight the importance of specific national memory discourses as "nodes" that connect and interact within this global assemblage and the particular ways in which they overlap and diverge. By using the term "loop," I aim to emphasize the cyclical nature of this process, as each national discourse returns to the same shared historical event year after year, often propelled forward by the real or imagined narrative of the other nation(s). While the memory loop is perpetually in search of a destination (e.g., the remembrance of the particular event or the establishment of a globally recognized official narrative of that event), the event can never be fully captured. Propelled onward by the momentum of mutual visibility, as well as history's continuously building layers of discourse and compounding collective pain and controversy, the cycle of memory can be infinite on a memory loop. War films are not mere static sites of memory; they are what makes up this interconnected superhighway of remembrance. Transformed by each domestic and transnational discursive contact, these films continue to circle, overlap, and intersect in search of the same ineffable moment in time.

In this book, I analyze how these films participate in a memory loop in terms of visual representation (framing, mise-en-scène, costumes, makeup, camera movement, editing), audio (music, sound effects), and narrative structure (plot, heroes, victims, conflict, resolution), drawing inspiration from the work of David Bordwell and Jacques Aumont, among others.¹¹⁰ I also draw from Astrid Erll's framework, which divides the paratexts of "film as memory" into what she terms the intra, inter, and pluri layers. The inter layer refers to the narrative inside the film, or the text. The intra layer is the interaction between texts, such as premediation (genre conventions, previous literatures) and remediation (how the film is represented again and again in other contexts and through other texts). The final layer is the pluri layer, the context around the film such as academic controversies and awards ceremonies.¹¹¹ These filmic texts are further mediated

109. Anna Reading, "Memory and Digital Media: Six Dynamics of the Global Memory Field," in *On Media Memory: Collective Memory in a New Media Age*, ed. Motti Neiger, Oren Meyers, and Eyal Zandberg (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 241–252.

110. David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (New York: Routledge, 2013) and Jacques Aumont, ed. *Aesthetics of Film* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992).

111. Astrid Erll, "Literature, Film, and the Mediality of Cultural Memory," in *Media and Cultural Memory*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter), 389–390.

by the pluri layers of the individual and collective identities of the filmmakers and the governmental and market constraints. This book is thus a diachronic and cross-cultural comparative study in which I compare Chinese and Japanese films within their respective cultures and with each other. I approach these texts from the historical context, the context of the production, the narrative of the film, and the film's difference from past versions. The narrative of these films, as well as their production and reception, reveals the interplay of local, national, and cosmopolitan processes of memory. Through their intranational, intragenerational, and transnational dimensions, we can explore individual, communicative, and cultural intersections of memory.

My selection of films centers on the popular and contemporary, as I aim to discover the dominant trends of remembrance. I am also concerned with the specific trends that inspired transnational debates over memory, or memory loops centered on specific events and issues, like the Tokyo Trial or wartime sexual violence. I select films on the basis of their popularity or ubiquity, such as how well they performed at the box office or whether they played on a major television network or were widely advertised (see Tables 1.2 and 1.3 for Chinese and Japanese war films at their respective box offices). In addition, because the discourse is more "fractured" in Japan among right, left, and mainstream, I juxtapose popular Japanese films against less popular films from the right or left to discuss the differences in mainstream and more right- or left-wing discourses. In Chapter 4, since there are no recent mainstream Japanese films on the Nanjing Massacre, I discuss how rape is represented in right- and left-wing discourses. Although I mention prominent international art films like *Devils on the Doorstep* (Guizi lai le, 2000), *Lust, Caution* (Se, jie, 2007), and *The Emperor's Naked Army Marches On* (Yuki yukite shingun, 1987) briefly, my central focus is on the films that reached the widest audience domestically and which had the greatest impact on domestic narratives of remembrance.

In Chapter 2, I discuss what I see as the foundational event of the East Asian WWII memory loop, which is the perceived "foundational narrative" of the war as established at the postwar International Military Tribunal for the Far East or Tokyo Trial (1946–1948). The Tokyo Trial narrative positions the United States as hero, Japan as perpetrator, and China as victim. The popular Chinese film *Tokyo Trial* (2006) challenges both this narrative, portrayed as American "meddling," and the Japanese revisionist narrative, which is presented as the sole Japanese perspective on the war. Japanese films demonstrate two trends. Mainstream films focus on victimhood while concurrently retaining aspects of the foundational narrative; right-wing films appeal to heroism, ignore East Asia, and argue for a more equitable US-Japan relationship. While the victimhood narrative is still dominant, the heroic narrative, appearing at a time when heroic narratives are more prominent in Japan, is significant.

In Chapter 3, I explore the rise of new masculinities in Chinese and Japanese combat films as further evidence of Chinese and Japanese challenges to the so-called Tokyo Trial narrative of the war. These films are the most domestic and least controversial of the memory discourses, as the heroic action film is uncontroversial genre-wise and generates little energy in terms of a transnational memory loop. In combat films, the memory dispute is imagined as the competition of masculinities. The emergence of new Chinese heroes shows an increasingly aggressive challenge to Japanese revisionism through the clash of Chinese and Japanese cultural tropes (*karate* versus *wushu*; Chinese machetes and “drawing sword spirit” versus Japanese *katana*) and a changing relationship with Taiwan, as the *Hanjian* (Chinese collaborators) are subtly rehabilitated. Mainstream Japanese films show a problematic victim-hero and the softening of the upper levels of the military, whereas more “right-wing” films portray the unambiguous veneration of military sacrifice and a desire for normalization.

Chapter 4 discusses the problematic representation of the Nanjing Massacre and so-called comfort women, a euphemism for women who were forced into sexual slavery during the war. More than any other discourse, these films display the most diverse and problematic responses to war memory. They are also the most interconnected and dynamic memory loop, highlighting the uneasy overlapping of Chinese, American, and Japanese memory discourses. Chinese and Japanese films on wartime rape—often via dialogue with equally problematic narratives in America—tend to obscure the trauma of individual women in order to support broader political narratives. Many Chinese films struggle to narrate an “emasculated” past, whereas Japanese right- and left-wing films on Nanjing tend to fight over the national honor or dignity of the Japanese soldier and broader issues of national identity.

Chapter 5 examines Sino-Japanese remembrance outside of American memory discourses. This chapter discusses attempts in Chinese and Japanese popular media to build a narrative beyond the Tokyo Trial. Tracing different stages of reconciliation narratives, it argues that there has been a slow disappearance of reconciliation in China and Japan both outside the narrative (via coproductions) and inside the narrative (via the image of familial reconciliation). Recent narratives even twist the Sino-Japanese family—originally a symbol of national reconciliation—into a vehicle for nationalism.

I conclude that the promotion of nationalism in China and Japan has not been advanced as much by state nationalism as by cultural nationalism, such as debates over the issue of war remembrance in academic journals and popular media such as magazines, television, and manga. These debates are by their nature transnational, a memory loop generating ever more memory discourse through high-speed translation, migration, and communication. These expressions of popular nationalism have emerged in the post-Cold War period in part

as a response to shifts in the power relations in the Pacific caused by economic and ideological uncertainty, a rising China, and an ambiguously situated United States. Structurally, the internet has globalized media, generating immediate visibility and new ways of visualizing the past. Moreover, changes in the market system, particularly in China, have changed the way that war films have been produced and sparked new kinds of narratives. As I will maintain, increasingly savvy Chinese audiences are becoming more demanding consumers; their desire for more complexity often produces new kinds of narratives. In Japan, the generational “fading” of memory, rising nationalism due to economic uncertainty, and producers’ desire to capitalize on action spectacles has contributed to the rise in politically ambiguous war films.

As with the date August 15, generation after generation of filmmakers and audiences return to the same moment in time in an attempt to define the past. The emergence of the East Asian memory loop circling around the question of remembering WWII suggests an intensification of the post-1989 transformation of Chinese and Japanese domestic identity and a shift in US-China-Japan relations. It also demonstrates the tension of narrating collective pasts in a technologically and financially interconnected era. Gender is central to the representation of (trans)national memory, with male soldiers, judges, political leaders, and patriarchal father figures representing Japanese and Chinese challenges both to each other’s geopolitical power and to the perceived American “foundational” narrative of the war. This process continues to intensify through the transnational memory loop, which drives this cycle of transmission, translation, and reassessment.

4

Contested Images of Wartime Rape

The rape of a motherland is far worse than the rape of actual mothers; the death of a nation is the ultimate tragedy, beyond the death of flesh and blood.¹

From December 1937 to February 1938, the Imperial Japanese Army committed numerous atrocities against Chinese civilians and prisoners of war in the city of Nanjing, then the capital of China.² According to Daqing Yang: “As the verdict of the Tokyo trial put it, the Japanese troops in Nanjing engaged in organized and wholesale murder, committed indiscriminate killing and rape, as well as looting and destruction. Over 200,000 Chinese civilians and POWs were believed to have been murdered in the Nanjing area during a six-week period in the winter of 1937–1938, while approximately 20,000 cases of rape occurred within the city alone. The verdict of the Nanjing trial was similar, except for a higher death toll of over 300,000.”³ The carnage in Nanjing was reported at the time in both Chinese and Western media and later established at the postwar trials in Nanjing and Tokyo, where five officers were executed for their participation in the atrocities.⁴

Due to Cold War relations, the Nanjing Massacre was largely submerged in popular memory until after Sino-Japanese and Sino-American normalization in the 1970s.⁵ In Japan, the work of historian Hora Tomio and journalist Honda Katsuichi brought the massacre to widespread attention in the late 1960s and

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1. Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: SAGE, 1995), 4.
 2. For collections of essays from scholars based in Asia and the United States, see Joshua Fogel, ed., *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), and Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, ed., *The Nanking Atrocity, 1937–38: Complicating the Picture* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2013).
 3. Daqing Yang, “Convergence or Divergence? Recent Historical Writings on the Rape of Nanjing,” *American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (1999): 844.
 4. Yang, “Convergence or Divergence?,” 844.
 5. Takashi Yoshida, who has analyzed how discourse on Nanjing has emerged in strikingly different ways over different eras, identifies four stages of remembrance (1937–1945; 1945–1971; 1971–1989; 1989–present) and three sections each (China, Japan,

early 1970s.⁶ In China, the first historical account of the massacre was compiled locally in Nanjing in the 1960s, becoming more widely known nationally after the first Japanese textbook controversy in the early 1980s. In the United States, Nanjing first emerged in Chinese American communities in the 1980s.⁷ It became even more widely well known in the mid-1990s after the publication of Iris Chang's controversial book *The Rape of Nanking* and the efforts of US House of Representatives member Mike Honda to acknowledge wartime sexual violence committed by the Japanese army.⁸

Since the "globalization" of Nanjing discourse in the 1990s, there have emerged nearly as many works on the problems of writing the historiography of Nanjing as actual histories of Nanjing. Contemporary debates have focused on issues including the Tokyo Trial, where the Nanjing Massacre was established as a war crime; the "numbers game," wherein historians and critics fight over the precise number of people killed in Nanjing; debates over whether the "hundred-man killing contest" was propaganda or reality; and arguments over how to refer to the massacre itself (the Rape of Nanjing, the Nanjing Incident, the Nanjing Atrocity, etc.). As historian Joshua Fogel writes in his introduction to a volume on Nanjing: "It is a telling state of affairs historically that I must say

and the United States). Takashi Yoshida, *The Making of the "Rape of Nanking": History and Memory in Japan, China, and the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

6. Yang notes that the first historical book was written by Japanese historian Hora Tomio in 1967, yet it was reporter Honda Katsuichi's work that brought more widespread exposure in Japanese media and prompted the first wave of debates. Yang, "Convergence or Divergence?," 844.
7. Yoshida, *Making of the "Rape of Nanking,"* 124–125; Fogel, "The Nanking Atrocity and Chinese Historical Memory," in *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*, 267.
8. Honda has taken up the issue of wartime sexual violence in Asia by supporting American monuments for comfort women and Chang (who committed suicide in 2004) in California and New Jersey. In 1999, Honda passed resolution AJR 27 in the California Assembly, which states that Japan should "finally bring closure to concerns relating to World War II by formally issuing a clear and unambiguous apology for the atrocious war crimes committed by the Japanese military during World War II." See Monsy Alvarado, "Palisades Park 'Comfort Women' Memorial Saluted by Japanese-American Congressman," *Northjersey.com*, June 27, 2013, accessed June 10, 2014, <http://www.northjersey.com/news/palisades-park-comfort-women-memorial-saluted-by-japanese-american-congressman-1.593660>; "Bronze Statue of Writer and Journalist Iris Chang Dedicated," Hoover Institute, February 8, 2007, accessed June 10, 2014, <http://www.hoover.org/news/bronze-statue-writer-and-journalist-iris-chang-dedicated>; "Bill Number: AJR 27," Official California Legislative Information, accessed June 10, 2014, http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/99-00/bill/asm/ab_0001-0050/ajr_27_bill_19990826_chaptered.html; Kinue Tokudome, "The Japanese Apology on the 'Comfort Women' Cannot Be Considered Official: Interview with Congressman Michael Honda," *Japan Focus*, May 31, 2007, accessed June 10, 2014, <http://japanfocus.org/-Michael-Honda/2438>.

in this introduction that none of us doubts that a great massacre occurred in an around Nanjing from December 1937 through February 1938.”⁹ Despite these debates and controversies, historians agree that Japanese soldiers committed major atrocities in Nanjing, including the widespread rape and murder of unarmed Chinese civilians and soldiers.

Like other major traumatic events of World War II, the Nanjing Massacre has become the subject of numerous documentaries, feature films, and television dramas and is one of the most dynamic and fraught transnational memory loops. Since the 1980s, producers in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan have made several major feature films depicting the massacre. From the early aughts (2000–2009), filmmakers in the United States, Germany, and Australia have focused on Western witnesses and the Nanjing Safety Zone. Mainstream Japanese cinema has largely been silent on the subject of wartime sexual violence committed by Japanese forces, with the topic emerging in fringe films of the right and the left from the late aughts. The circumstances of the productions themselves are also useful in revealing the dynamics of remembrance, such as how the massacre is being framed, by whom, and for whom.

Gender is central to these films and to the discourse surrounding Nanjing. As Yuki Tanaka states, “It is imperative to closely analyze the symbolic parallel between the violation of a woman’s body and the domination over others (enemies) on the battlefield or through colonial institutions.”¹⁰ The rapes of Chinese women are frequently presented in Chinese and American discourse as the rape of the Chinese nation or, as Chinese American writer Iris Chang famously framed it, “the rape of Nanking.” In Japan, it is notably the masculinity-preoccupied right wing that responds most vociferously to the specter of Japanese military sexual violence in an attempt to rescue Japan’s “besieged” national honor. This chapter draws on arguments developed by Chungmoo Choi and C. Sarah Soh in their analysis of how comfort women discourse in Korea is framed by patriarchal nationalism.¹¹ It also builds upon Tanya Horeck and Sarah Projansky’s work

9. Joshua Fogel, “Introduction,” in *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography*, ed. Joshua Fogel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 5. Bob Wakabayashi similarly describes several disagreements over statistics and phrasing over essays published within the same book. Wakabayashi, *Nanking Atrocity*, 20.

10. Yuki Tanaka, *Japan’s Comfort Women* (London: Psychology Press, 2002), 4.

11. The comfort women stations were a system of mass sexual slavery created under the direction of the Japanese Imperial Army. Concerned by conflicts with the Chinese populace and widespread venereal disease among the soldiers, Japanese military leaders institutionalized prostitution. Under their purview and with the participation of local prostitution industries, the army regulated the sexual activity of their troops by swiftly expanding the number of stations. Many women in these stations were from occupied nations, coerced into the system by false promises of factory work, sold by struggling family members, or abducted. Meanwhile, comfort women have been variously referred to as prostitutes or slaves, in what Hasegawa and Togo refer to as the

on the issues of representing rape on-screen to examine the dual problems of representing sexual violence both on-screen and as part of a national narrative.¹² Focusing on the subjectivity of the female characters, it argues that Nanjing films often foreground national myths of masculine honor/power, framing the female subject in a transnational dialogue where her rape is ultimately a “conversation between men.”¹³

Rape, Gender, Nation

Numerous studies have established the ubiquity of rape during wartime, though scholars differ in their understanding of why it occurs. Some arguments focus on its employment as a systematic weapon to inspire fear and subjugation in the conquered.¹⁴ A second argument suggests that it is a form of genocide to “replace” the

“military brothel” and the “rape center” schools of the debate. Hasegawa, Tsuyoshi, and Kazuhiko Togo, *East Asia's Haunted Present: Historical Memories and the Resurgence of Nationalism* (Westport, CT: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 153. For more on comfort women discourse, see Chungmoo Choi, “The Politics of War Memories toward Healing,” in *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001): 395–410 and Sarah C. Soh, *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

12. In the analysis of films on sensitive historical events, one runs the risk of appearing insensitive to or even obscuring the traumatic events of the past. This chapter is an analysis of film narratives, not a work of historiography or even a commentary on history, nor does it in any way dispute the violence experienced by Chinese people, the crimes committed by the Japanese army, or the services rendered by Western witnesses who documented and bore witness to these atrocities. Critiques of Chinese and Japanese films are intended to illustrate some of the issues of narrating female trauma as national trauma, particularly via the cinematic medium, not to revise any understanding of the events which occurred in Nanjing. Young deals with similar concerns in the introduction to his book: James Edward Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).
13. Zoë Brigley Thompson and Sorcha Gunne, “Introduction: Feminism without Borders: The Potentials and Pitfalls of Retheorizing Rape,” in *Feminism, Literature and Rape Narratives: Violence and Violation*, ed. Sorcha Gunne and Zoë Brigley Thompson (New York: Routledge, 2010), 8.
14. According to Jacqui True, “private sphere” crimes against human rights such as rape were not fully recognized until the UN Vienna Conference on Human Rights of 1993. In 2008, the UN Security Council passed resolution 1820, which defines sexual violence as a wartime strategy; in 2009, resolution 1889 declared that quantitative data should be collected on sexual violence. Jacqui True, *The Political Economy of Violence against Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 114–116. See also Claudia Card, “Rape as a Weapon of War,” *Hypatia* 11, no. 4 (1996): 5–18; Nancy Farwell, “War Rape: New Conceptualizations and Responses,” *Affilia* 19, no. 4 (2004): 389–403. For a discussion of the different ways rape is employed as a weapon, see Paul Kirby, “How Is Rape a Weapon of War? Feminist International Relations, Modes of Critical Explanation and

ethnic population of the occupied nation.¹⁵ A third theory posits that it is in part a soldier's response to finding themselves powerless within the harsh military system—in effect, they exert power or control over the bodies of the powerless.¹⁶ A fourth suggests that it serves to unite members of the military either through a system of willing “perpetratorhood” or through what Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Lausten call a “brotherhood of guilt.”¹⁷ There are also many different forms of wartime rape, ranging from highly organized sexual slavery systems, such as Japan's “comfort women” stations, to the strategic revenge kidnapping or rape of women, to rape committed in the midst of battle. Each form suggests different levels of agency and complicity on the part of the military power and the individual soldier.¹⁸ Moreover, it is significant that some armies commit rape, while others do not. According to Susan Brownmiller, it is typically the conquering nations that rape both because of their control over the regions they have invaded and because of the symbolism of the conqueror “penetrating” the conquered nation.¹⁹ Meanwhile, Tanaka ventures that nationalist movements fighting for liberation/independence—being aware of the relationship between colonialism and sexual violence—may be less likely to rape the women of the occupying force.²⁰

the Study of Wartime Sexual Violence,” *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 4 (2012), <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066111427614>.

15. The employment of “genocidal rape,” or rape used in war to eradicate the ethnicity of the dominated group, suggests that the female body is a blank receptacle that can be used to “replace” the population; the woman's own national identity is ignored. Beverly Allen, *Rape Warfare: The Hidden Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). See also Christoph Schiessl, “An Element of Genocide: Rape, Total War, and International Law in the Twentieth Century,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 4, no. 2 (2002): 197–210, and Cindy S. Snyder, Wesley J. Gabbard, J. Dean May, and Nihada Zulcic, “On the Battleground of Women's Bodies: Mass Rape in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” *Affilia* 21, no. 2 (2006): 184–195.
16. Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women*, 180 and 205. Fears about fitting an ideal of masculinity can serve to normalize sexual violence against women. Baaz and Stern argue that wartime rapes are directly affected by notions of masculinity such as the “(hetero) sexually potent male fighter” whose masculinity is imagined as fragile and threatened by a “weak, subordinate, and treacherous” femininity. Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern, “Why Do Soldiers Rape? Masculinity, Violence, and Sexuality in the Armed Forces in the Congo (DRC),” *International Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (2009): 495–518.
17. Dara Kay Cohen, “Explaining Sexual Violence during Civil War: Evidence from the Sierra Leone War (1991–2002)” (paper presented at the annual convention of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, Illinois, August 16, 2007), and Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen, “Becoming Abject: Rape as a Weapon of War,” *Body and Society* 11, no. 1 (2005): 111–128.
18. For instance, a Japanese soldier who visited a “comfort station” was not ordered to do so by his commanders. See Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women*, 4.
19. Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975).
20. Tanaka, *Japan's Comfort Women*, 179.

6

Conclusion

Don't forget the stench of blood that covered the earth!
Don't forget the smell of burnt flesh!
We must not forget . . . for this is what war is.¹

As a technology of remembrance, Chinese and Japanese war films construct prosthetic memory or “history as identification,” identification that is importantly placed within the framework of national memory.² Through the analysis of these contemporary films on the Tokyo and Yokohama trials, combat, wartime atrocities, and Sino-Japanese normalization, this book has revealed how these war films construct prosthetic memories of the national past for new audiences. As largely domestically produced narratives of national heroes, victims, and perpetrators, war films promote a sense of national identity through stories that often appeal to gender and race. Yet, at the same time, they are part of a transnational memory loop, one that connects Chinese, Japanese, and American memory discourses. National narratives travel, meet, converge, and diverge. Debates continue to circle over generations around the remembrance of the same event. I have argued that the prosthetic memory produced by these films—particularly

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1. Kōji Wakamatsu, “Director’s Statement,” press materials for *Caterpillar*, accessed November 4, 2014, <http://www.kinolorber.com/press-detail.php?id=1195>.
 2. As mentioned in the introduction, films as a site of memory are different from other sites of memory due to their manipulation of time/space and affect. Through their three-dimensional diegetic world of immersive sound, image, and movement, they create a universe of the past *in the present*. Further, through the moving consciousness of the screen, there is a feeling of “being there” and of accessing a world that is not dead, a process called “prosthetic memory.” By following the psychological interiority of a nationally situated character, these films enforce the notion of national identity and create a sympathetic view of that character’s experience of the war. Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004). For more on “history as identification,” see Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Past within Us: Media, Memory, History* (London: Verso, 2005), 22–23.

films made after 1989—mark a major change in postwar memory and national identity. This is a shift that has been intensifying in recent years in response to changing memory dynamics in East Asia, such as the end of the Cold War, the death of Hirohito, a shift in the American role in the Pacific region, the death of the war generation, and the emergence of new modes of production and distribution. In addition, since new films have been produced in an era wherein national narratives have come under increasing global scrutiny, as well as amid a growing trend in transnational film production and consumption, they demonstrate increasing dialogue with opposing or supporting national narratives.

Perhaps most strikingly, the forms of prosthetic memory constructed by Chinese and Japanese films are fundamentally different not only in terms of narrative content, but also in terms of the temporal and emotional proximity they delineate for their audiences. Mainstream Chinese films depict Han heroes who combat Japanese revisionism and American power by avenging the nation's emasculated past; mainstream Japanese films center on the feminine or masculine Yamato hero-victim who is persecuted by a murky enemy or "victor's history" in an ambiguous conflict. In addition, these films are broadcast and remediated in ways that render the war more or less "visible" and thus temporally/emotionally close or distant in each country. As a result, the forms of prosthetic memory experienced by the two national audiences diverge, with a strong tendency toward clarity/immediacy in China and ambiguity/distance in Japan. These differences, emerging in large part from the different historical and political positioning of the two countries, are one of the main reasons Chinese and Japanese public opinion on war remembrance diverges increasingly as time goes on. In this final chapter I will explore some of my conclusions concerning memory in Chinese and Japanese war films, finishing with some thoughts on the future of the transnational memory loop in the Pacific.

"Tears of Rage"

Chinese films after the 1990s reproduce the political narrative of "national humiliation" through the figure of the masculine Han hero avenging a feminized Chinese past. The saturation, clarity, and continuity of these narratives compress the sense of time for Chinese audiences, fomenting an urgent desire for a strong response to perceived attacks on the nation. In other words, the increasing visibility of such texts, the mixture of such texts with contemporary discourse, and the unity of these narratives produce a communal sense of humiliation and anger for Chinese audiences and the feeling that the past is still alive.

In terms of visibility, Chinese war films and television shows have high broadcast rates on television and in theaters and, as mentioned in the case of *Little Soldier Zhang Ga* (Xiaobing zhangga, 1963) in Chapter 3, are occasionally taught in schools. Many of these films are also uploaded freely to the internet, thereby

exposing a large portion of the country to narratives of the war. Broadcasting of such narratives has accelerated in post-Tiananmen China due to post-1980s economic development (which has allowed Chinese audiences access to more media through TV, cinema, and the internet), the post-1990s humiliation campaign (which has encouraged producers to film “safe” topics like the war), and the increasing marketization of Chinese television (which aims to capitalize on the popularity of the war genre). As a result, on television, computer, and film screens across the nation, Japanese soldiers continue to charge into Chinese villages. Furthermore, like Hollywood World War II films, the vast amount of television programs and films produced on the war have developed into a genre and industry. In addition to disseminating easily recognizable archetypal characters such as the comedic Japanese soldier and the indefatigable Chinese hero, the Chinese war film has evolved into numerous subgenres, including Red Classic remakes, “marketized” narratives, comedic war films, and *wuxia* war films, among others. Chinese audiences are thus exposed to images of the war across multiple platforms yet in a somewhat standardized and regulated genre format. This has created an oversaturation of anti-Japanese hero narratives. As author Yu Hua sardonically notes, “There’s a joke that more Japanese have been ‘killed’ at Hengdian (a film studio in Zhejiang that specialized in war dramas) than at all the actual battlefields put together. More, even, than the total population of Japan.”³

Second, the ways that these films interact with the contemporary discourse outside the narrative have also heightened the sense of immediacy in China. Narrative television shows emphasize stories of past Japanese invasions while concurrently broadcasting news reports that focus on Japanese revisionism or Japanese claims to the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands. Such broadcasting creates a sense of continuity by mixing remembrance of the past with issues of the present. Many Chinese films also blend the past and present within their narratives, citing crimes of the past alongside contemporary debates. For instance, the World War II comedy *Hands Up! 2* (*Juqi shoulai 2* 2010) ends with an ahistorical scene of a Chinese farmer proudly protecting the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands from a Japanese soldier. In the worst case, this diegetic world’s sense of immediacy—and its overlap with news and other stories from “real life”—creates a sense of national peril. The impression of a continuous historical stream of Japanese wrongs is thus a dominant trope in Chinese films and a defining feature of Chinese nationalism.

Third, Chinese war films demonstrate a clear narrative of the past that underlines the unity of the discourse. Chinese films, as opposed to mainstream Japanese films, appeal to historical truth. Films like *Tokyo Trial* (Dongjing shenpan,

3. Hua Yu, “China Waits for an Apology,” *New York Times*, April 9, 2014, accessed April 15, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/10/opinion/yu-hua-cultural-revolution-nostalgia.html?_r=0.

2006), *Massacre in Nanjing* (Tucheng xuezheng, 1987), and *City of Life and Death* (Nanjing! Nanjing! 2009) often emphasize evidence or testimony and are advertised as reenactments of the true historical past; director Lu Chuan also repeatedly cited the “historical truth” of his film as he made the rounds promoting *City*.⁴ In part, this is due to the subject positioning of the nation. Many Chinese people, as citizens of the invaded/colonized nation and descendants of the war’s victims, rightly regard historical remembrance of victimization as an issue of paramount collective importance. This is also partly due to censorship. Television series that deviate from collectively approved narratives have been censored by the government for being seen as making light of a serious topic.⁵ Moreover, when Chinese war narratives veer too far away from being what audiences and critics regard as “truthful,” they are criticized for their lack of historical authenticity or the directors are lambasted as “traitor directors.”⁶ Since such censorship and policing silences or limits the distribution of many narratives, there is a far more unified expression of the war being disseminated in China than in Japan.

Chinese films also extend this unified narrative across the “three Chinas.” Many World War II films employ stars from Taiwan, Mainland China, and Hong Kong, uniting contested areas of China under the umbrella of one memory. In one way, this is an unintentional side effect of transnational filmmaking, as Hong Kong and Taiwanese producers aim for mainland funding and markets. In another, it demonstrates a shift in the CCP narrative, which previously avoided war narratives showing the Kuomintang (KMT) in a positive light. Especially after 2000, such films have served to smooth over the Taiwanese–Mainland China conflict through narratives that emphasize CCP and KMT collaboration in the fight against Japanese aggression. Like Marianne Hirsch’s process of post-memory, which transmits traumatic memory from the older generation to the younger via the family photo, the transnational movie or television screen is a window into remembering a unified Chinese past.⁷ The humiliation/“never forget” narrative has become a way to unite pan-Asian Chinese diasporas, and in particular the three Chinas, through a solidarity of remembrance.

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4. “Lu chuan tan nanjing: Xifang zhuliu meiti guanzhu dechu hu yiliao,” *Zhongguo Xinwenwang*, October 30, 2009, accessed November 4, 2014, <http://media.people.com.cn/GB/40606/10289472.html>.
 5. “China Embarks on Regulating Far-Fetched Anti-Japanese TV Dramas,” *Asahi Shimbun*, accessed October 9, 2013, <http://ajw.asahi.com/article/asia/AJ201307090012>, and Philip J. Cunningham, “China’s TV War Machine,” *New York Times*, September 11, 2014, accessed November 4, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/12/opinion/chinas-tv-war-on-japan.html?_r=0.
 6. “China Embarks on Regulating Far-Fetched Anti-Japanese TV Dramas.”
 7. Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

Daqing Yang writes that the Chinese have a saying: “Luohou jiu yao ai da” (If you are backward, you will be beaten).⁸ In the rise of popular nationalism from the 1980s to 1990s, this has emerged as a saying to mark the “lesson” of Japanese imperialism—the “lack of resolution provides justification enough to strengthen China economically and militarily.”⁹ To be certain, the pervasive image of the unapologetic Japanese perpetrator committing continued wrongs inspires anger in many Chinese and prompts responses in real life. Although China’s humiliation campaign was originally intended to fill the void left by the decline in dogmatic Maoist socialism and focus the collective focus on 20th century Chinese trauma that emerged in the 1980s away from the government, the media produced in its aftermath has also resulted in unintended consequences. A group often derogatorily referred to as *fenqing*, or “angry youths,” express their Chinese nationalism virulently on the internet.¹⁰ Chinese boats rush en masse toward the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, sudden mass migration that is not entirely welcome in a country that micromanaged population movement just twenty years ago.¹¹ A Chinese man was brutally assaulted for owning a Toyota during the 2012 anti-Japanese riots.¹² Many Chinese citizens feel visceral anger even seventy years after the war: “We hate Japan. We’ve always hated Japan. Japan invaded China and killed a lot of Chinese. We will never forget.”¹³

Thus, produced after the rise in “national humiliation” narratives after Tiananmen—a rise due to both encouragement from the top and civilian redress movements from below—Chinese films show a turn toward increasingly bombastic heroic narratives that demonstrate a profound sense of urgency and continuity. The narrative is as follows: China as a nation was abused by numerous foreign powers for over a hundred years; this abuse of national sovereignty is crystallized by the emasculation of the Nanjing Massacre and current Japanese

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8. Daqing Yang, “Reconciliation between Japan and China: Problems and Prospects,” in *Reconciliation in the Asia-Pacific*, ed. Yōichi Funabashi (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2003), 66.
 9. Yang, “Reconciliation between Japan and China,” 66.
 10. Xu Wu, *Chinese Cyber Nationalism: Evolution, Characteristics, and Implications* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007).
 11. The *hukou* or household registration system has been explored as a policy that regulated Chinese movement. Kam Wing Chan and Li Zhang, “The Hukou System and Rural-Urban Migration in China: Processes and Changes,” *China Quarterly* 160 (1999): 818–855.
 12. Amy Qin and Edward Wong, “Smashed Skull Serves as Grim Symbol of Seething Patriotism,” *New York Times*, October 10, 2012, accessed April 13, 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/11/world/asia/xian-beating-becomes-symbol-of-nationalism-gone-awry.html>.
 13. Sui-Wei Lee and Maxim Duncan, “Anti-Japan Protests Erupt in China Over Islands Row,” Reuters, September 15, 2012, accessed November 4, 2014, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/09/15/us-china-japan-idUSBRE88E01I20120915>.

revisionism; now, China will heroically challenge American hegemony and Japanese power to avoid being humiliated again. Like Li Yunlong, who sacrifices his wife for the Chinese nation in *Drawing Sword* (Liang jian, 2005), or Mei Ru'ao, who avenges the Chinese nation on the global stage in *Tokyo Trial* (Dongjing shenpan, 2006), victimization of the past is often the justification for a strong expression of Chinese nationalism in the present. Chinese war films thus compress the sense of time and space for Chinese audiences and produce a sense of immediacy and danger—the threat of victimization, or victimization gone unpunished—which can serve as the foundation for aggressive and angry nationalism. These narratives, in effect, produce “tears of rage,” which are magnified and extended through their visibility, continuity, and clarity.¹⁴

“I Am Me, He Is Him”

While Chinese war films demonstrate a clear narrative of the war, Japanese films tend toward solipsism, ambiguity, and divisiveness, as seen in the disparate depictions of the feminized victim-soldier and idealized *Yamato* hero. The sense of time delineated by Japanese films is also more distant from the past. These narratives suggest temporal distance, a lack of clarity, and a lack of unity, which allows for a range of audience interpretations across the political spectrum. This also has the consequence, intended or not, of eliding wartime responsibility and of potentially paving the way toward military normalization.

As opposed to the nonstop visibility of Chinese films, recent Japanese war films are almost exclusively broadcast around major anniversaries, such as the anniversaries of Sino-Japanese normalization and the end of the war. Both of these trends increased through the 1990s as a framing device to link younger viewers to the past, though such broadcasting trends mark remembrance of the war as a special occasion and not an ever-present reality, as it is represented in China. Many Japanese narratives produced after 1990 also contain a flashback or past/present framing device that isolates contemporary audiences from the past. Movies like *Yamato* (Otokotachi no yamato, 2005), the film *Winds of God* (Za uinzu obu goddo, 1995), and the blockbuster *The Eternal Zero* (Eien no zero, 2014) begin and end with a framing story in the present or, in the case of *Winds*, time travel. Although such structuring appears to create a linkage between the younger generation and the older generation in the film, in another sense the flashback in fact separates Japanese audiences from the past. It creates a border between the two worlds by creating a filmic “present tense” and “past tense.” Even in dramas like *The Pioneers* (Kaitakushatachi, 2012), the audience is reminded that they are contemporary viewers witnessing the past through the framing devices showing the main actress,

14. I take this title from an article by Peter Gries: “Tears of Rage: Chinese Nationalist Reactions to the Belgrade Embassy Bombing,” *China Journal* 46 (2001): 25–43.

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