Postwar Japan and the Politics of Mourning: The Meaning and the Limits of War Experiences

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Abstract | After the 1990s, a series of intense debates developed in Japanese society regarding the memories of the Asia-Pacific War. At the center of this so-called "memory war" stands the fact that legitimate mourning of the large number of war victims has yet to take place. This study sheds light on the perspectives of the 'war-experience theorists,' who advocated most strongly for how to remember and commemorate the war dead who sacrificed their lives for the nation, and it explores their significance and limitations. For them, mourning should not be an accustomed ceremony that tries to 'make sense' of the soldiers' deaths through the composition of a 'story' (such as sacrifice for the nation) that enables the living to put an end to the tragedy. Rather, by taking an extreme stance of 'refusing to mourn,' they continuously criticized nationalistic mourning rituals that attempted to monumentalize the war. Essentially, this method was closer to true 'mourning,' in that their purpose was to create 'communion' between the dead and the living.

The war experience theorists were unable to make convincing arguments in postwar Japanese society and eventually disintegrated as a group because they were never able to overcome their excessive emotional anger and hatred toward the imperial military. Their sentimentalism was limited by their preoccupation with the sense of victimhood. However, as the Japanese society 'tilts' rightward and the experiences of war fade, it is still worthwhile to consider their efforts to 'mourn' in the way that the dead can accept their death, not how the living wish to make sense of it. Facing a resentment of the dead that cannot be subsumed into the national 'community of mourning,' it is necessary to share their anger and transform it into the foundation of socio-political culture, which can then become the starting point for the new politics of mourning.

Keywords | postwar Japan, war experience, memory, commemoration, mourning

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Introduction

In Japan, the month of August is inundated with commemorative events for the war of the last century. The Peace Memorial Ceremony on August 6 in Hiroshima and on the 9th in Nagasaki, as well as the National Memorial Service for the War Dead (*Zenkoku Senbotsusha Tsuitōshiki*) on August 15 in the Martial Arts Hall (*Nippon Budōkan*) hosted by the Japanese government are among the major events. In addition, countless diverse memorial ceremonies are organized by the local governments, families and individuals as well as diverse civic and religious organizations. Thus, the month of August in postwar Japanese society can indeed be called a national 'memorial month' or 'the month of the Holy Spirit (*seireizuki*),' as a folklorist Irokawa Daikichi (1990) has noted. Furthermore, this is an important period during which Japan faces the most important issues concerning the politics of mourning in postwar Japan—from the meaning of the state and the people, to the nature of the past war, to the meaning of antiwar pacifism. The mass media, as well as the academic circles, revisit the issue of the war, and civic groups host a variety of meetings related to the topic. As long as these events continue to commemorate and mourn the death of the war victims, the 'war' does not cease to exist as the resonating incident within postwar Japan.

The question of how these war dead[1] are commemorated and positioned within Japanese society constitutes what can be described as the 'politics of death' in postwar Japan. Memorial rituals begin as private traditions for remembering the dead, yet when they converge with official history, it can be the most effective device for the formation of collective memory as the 'memory apparatus of death' (Kim Kwang-ŏk 2000). Moreover, the terms that have been

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1. Here, the 'war dead' is a concept derived from theological scholar Nishimura Akira's (2006, 3-5) discussions on the study on the commemoration of the war dead in the Nagasaki atomic bomb commemorative services. The reason for the use of term 'war dead,' instead of commonly-used 'fallen soldiers,' is to make clear that the term 'fallen soldiers' has limited usage in postwar Japan, which designates combat soldiers, such as military officers and civilian military employees, etc. Nishimura's analysis extends to political arena of commemorations for Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, which represent deaths from war damages in general. The term 'war dead' includes all victims of war, such as noncombatants who died from air raids, civilian victims of the Battle of Okinawa, atomic bombing, etc., in addition to the so-called fallen soldiers (also including victims of diseases contracted in the battlefields). In fact, in postwar Japan, the issue of how to designate the victims of the past war was not simply a problem of communications, but it was a central issue among the so-called 'politics of names/naming' (Lee Yung-jin 2012). However, as analytical concepts in this paper, the term 'war dead' will be used to designate the overall victims of the past war; while 'fallen soldiers' indicate those victims who died in combat, such as soldiers, military civilian employees, etc.

used to honor the war dead, such as 'propitiating of spirits (*irei*),' 'mourning (*tsuitō*),' and 'glorifying (*kenshō*),' contested with one another in the construction of political discourse of the war experiences throughout postwar Japan. 'Why their deaths are so problematic' is not only an issue that needs to be addressed by all nation-states (Mosse 1990; Anderson 1991), but it also demands a rigorous understanding of the nature of Japan's war in modern history. In particular, the question of 'how' to commemorate the three million fallen soldiers of the so-called Fifteen Years War between 1931 and 1945—a number unprecedented in the history of Japan—was directly related to the nature of the war, as well as postwar Japan.

Katō Norihiro's *Theories on Post-Defeat* (*Haisengoron*) issued in 1995 (January 1995 issue of *Gunzō*) directly raised the question of how Japan as a nation state should face its three million fallen soldiers, in comparison to twenty million victims in Asia, evoking a considerable controversy among the intellectuals and mass media. He used the analogy of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in describing the realities of postwar Japan, in which apologies and improper remarks toward Asia are repeated: He gives a diagnosis that, "Even now, for example, the deaths of the three million Japanese people are, so to speak, hidden behind," and "the issues that surround the Yasukuni Shrine are precisely the negatives of this reality—Hyde's introversive attempt to mourn the dead as 'pure' spirits in order to fill the void" (Katō 1997, 61). His argument, which triggered the 'debate on the subjects of history (*rekishi shutai ronsō*)' in the late 1990s, presented a new 'prescription' that could bring an immediate end to Japan's 'postwar ennui,' an idea that attracted those who had grown weary of the responsibilities embedded in 'infinite postwar,' 'eternal redemption,' and 'endless regrets.' Moreover, it revealed an aspect of the emotional structure of Japanese society. Such discourse became more persuasive in assuaging the dissatisfaction felt by the Japanese people after Japan's financial contribution to UN Allied Forces during the Gulf War. The contribution was the largest amount among all participating nations but failed to bring the international acclaim it had hoped for.

With this problem in mind, this paper examines the discussions concerning the existing methods for mourning the war dead within Japanese society in the postwar period. This is not simply to criticize the method of commemoration of the deceased soldiers epitomized by the visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, which is often discussed as the embodiment of rightward tilt of the Japanese society. Rather, it is to study why the diverse discussions developed within Japanese society in the postwar period concerning the mourning of the war dead have been nullified and, why, as a consequence, it resulted in the ambiguous rhetoric of 'cornerstone of peace (*heiwa no ishiji*).' This paper sheds light on the revival

and the return of the war dead as a concept shared by postwar societies and pays particular attention to the possibility of 'mourning refusal' as one of the methods of connecting the dead and the living. This paper revalidates the possibility of the mourning process which has been overlooked throughout the 'postwar history' of Japan. It also raises a practical question as to how the living and the dead relate to one another.

The Return of the Dead

The theme of 'the return of the dead' has been commonly talked about in almost all societies that experienced a major war. For instance, Jay Winter's (1995) book, which deals with the socio-cultural aspects of mourning for the dead, as well as the bleak memory of the war pervasive within the European society after World War I, begins with the opening scene of the French film *J'accuse* (*I Accuse*; 1917-18) directed by Abel Gance's. It is an apocalyptic image of an army of the dead (fallen soldiers) rising from the grave and marching toward the city of the living. The reason why they rise from the dead is to see whether their sacrifice truly became a cornerstone of peace and prosperity for their motherland, or whether they have died in vain. They march toward the city of the living. However, they witness the trivial life of the petit-bourgeois, the huge profits enjoyed by large-scale war industries due to increased demands for war, and the widows who lost their husbands in the war fooling around with other men. They get furious. The dead who march into the society of the living rebuke them and ask: "What have you done?" They curse the capitalists who gained profit from the war, their wives who "enjoy pleasure," and the corrupt politicians who, with empty words, cry out for the honor of those who died for their country and the assistance for the bereaved families, while in reality they have completely forgotten about them. In other words, they curse the society oblivious to their sacrifice. This group phobia, which swept through European society, was also called the 'survivor syndrome'; it is an illusion created by the sense of remorse and shame felt by those who survived the war, and also a collective expression of dissent against the absurdity of postwar society.

The writer who was most absorbed in the theme of the symbolic return of the war dead in postwar Japan was Mishima Yukio. In "The Voices of the Spirits (*Eirei no koe*, 1966)," one of his later works, Mishima vehemently expresses the sense of betrayal and despair felt by the *kamikaze* (Special Attack Units) soldiers through the voice of a psychic medium. With the emperor's 'humanity *arahitogami* soon after the end of the war, their sacrifices in the name of

arahitogami, or living god, became meaningless. The voices of the dead spirits cry out, "Why would His Majesty become a human being?" and their resentments are addressed toward the living, who indulge themselves in the pleasures brought by the rapid economic recovery in postwar Japan. To Mishima, the attempt to portray "the voices of the spirits" is a type of memorial ritual for the war dead which tries to reincorporate the deceased back into the community of the living. Mishima excelled at internalizing the 'ghastly national imaginings' (Anderson 1991) created by the memorial rituals within a nation state, in that he establishes the evocation of the dead spirits through the erotic physical relationship of the living and the dead. To say the least, his perception of death lies on a higher level than the logic of the Yasukuni rituals, which simply and incessantly glorify the dead spirits.

However, it is difficult to see Mishima's attempt as a prescription for the cure of postwar social irrationalities, because Mishima's depiction of the mourning of the *kamikaze* pilots who chose their death in the belief that the emperor was god (*kami*) is a complete idealization and fabricated imagination. Moreover, while he succeeded in portraying the resentment/desire of the dead in his own fashion, he was unable to provide an answer to the question of how to place their deaths in the world; in the 'forlorn' ending of the novel, the young Shintō priest who becomes possessed and cursed by raging spirits eventually gets killed. Ironically, in 1970, four years after Mishima wrote *The Voices of the Spirits*, he occupied the building of the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Forces and committed suicide by disembowelment, after shouting for the awakening of the SDF. Was that act of suicide a kind of sacrifice made for a moral revolution? The dead, however, are always quiet. Even that intense spirit voice of Mishima is nothing but an expression of necrophilia, the voice of ghosts that has been summoned by the wish of the living.

Then, what does the voice of another ghost recited by the contemporaneous, postwar-generation (*sengoha*) poet Ayukawa Nobuo, tell us? As Tanabe Hajime's "Death and Life (*Shisei*)" and the works of Japanese Romanticists, including Yasuda Yojurō, have pointed out, the prewar poets have spread 'the aesthetics of death'—the idea that humans can ultimately become national subjects through death.[2] Sakai Naoki has pointed out that, in the poems written during the later

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2. Hashikawa Bunzō (1998, 49-50), who was under the influence of the Japanese Romantic School during his adolescence, discusses the concept of irony perverted within the Japanese Romantic School in *An Introduction to a Critique of the Japanese Romantic School* (*Nihon Rōmanha hihan josetsu*, [1960] 1998), which is the most influential work on the Japanese Romantic School today: "In fact, the people of our generation, when they were young, were immersed in Yasuda's words and passionately hoped to become the decaying corpses in the tropical jungle with a copy of the

war years, the depiction of natural beauty stood before the fear of death, and such a position was to conceal the fundamental gap between collectively-imagined beauty and individual death. Moreover, Sakai argues that, by integrating the individual into the system of collective representations, the fear of death is distorted and is transmuted into the desire to become the subject of such representations. In other words, death in Japanese Romanticism is represented as meaningful. Yet since its meaning can only be given within the system of collective representations, the death becomes meaningful only from the perspective of the nation and the people. Therefore, for the postwar poets who personally experienced the ruins of war and deaths, their reflections on the prewar period could not help but begin with the question of their enunciative position as poets (N. Sakai 2005, Ch. 6).

The opening line of Ayukawa's poem, "Comrade in Arms (*Senyū*, 1968)," reads, "Hey, comrade! Why do you keep silent? I thought you had forgotten for a while;" it expresses a unique point of view in which the dead initiates a conversation to the survivor, not vice versa, and talks about the past war while urging to remember it. In this poem, the dead comrade rebukes the indolence and the silence of the survivors of the war, including the poet, and tells the silent comrade, "Waiting is tedious, it is the end of the world," and bids farewell by saying, "Good-bye comrades. Though this is our first real parting, I don't want the kiss of Judas. Good-bye" (The poem's structure resembles Lu Xun's poem, "Shadow's Leave-Taking [*kokubetsu*]").[3] Meanwhile, through another poem, "The Dead Man (*Shinda otoko*)," the poet writes about what it is like to listen to the story of the dead:

> The day of the burial, there were no words at all,
> There were no witnesses.
> There was no indignation, no pathos, and no weak appearance of discontent.
> Lifting up your eyes to the sky,
> You just lay there quietly, your feet shoved into heavy boots.
> "Good-bye. Neither sun nor sea is to be trusted!"
> M! M, sleeping in the earth,
> Does the wound in your chest still hurt, even now?

Records of Ancient Matters (*Kojiki*) in their bosoms! It appears that the consequence of Yasuda's irony was taking such posture, at least for the pure-spirited young men. This is an extremely different case from the psychological structure of Nazism. Nazi nihilism appears as a restrictive, incantatory, and continual movement that convinces the young men that 'We must fight,' but the Japanese Romantic School indeed imposed upon us nothing but the idea that 'We must die.'"

3. I would like to thank Professor Kawamura Kunimitsu at Osaka University who led me to the works of the poet Ayukawa Nobuo.

The dead man is speechless. What he has left behind is only the image reflected in the retina of his recumbent self. The image reflected there could be the sun or the sea, or his comrade who was next to him in his moment of death. In this respect, the words, "Good-bye. Neither sun nor sea is to be trusted," are the inner feelings of the silent dead, and the only thing given to the poet is merely the duty as the 'executor of a will' who speaks the mind of the dead. The postwar poets express the strong desire to somehow find an alternate way to embody the experience of the dead that can never be represented within the given system, and also assert their contempt against the climate of postwar society in which the living speak their stories through the mouths of the dead.

In this manner, the return of the dead is not a beautiful thing at all, unlike the story of the firefly (*hotaru*) that took place in Chiran, Kagoshima.[4] Just as it is portrayed by an Okinawan novelist Medoruma Shun, the dead suddenly come to see a surviving comrade (with severe physical abnormalities), and make him remember the pain of the past war.[5] Moreover, such an act of remembrance is never a quiet act of introspection or retrospection; instead, it involves pain which puts together the 'dismembered' past by 're-membering' in order to give meaning to the trauma which is etched within the present (Bhabha 1994, 63). In that sense, another postwar poet, Tamura Ryūichi, writes poems filled with paradox ("Four Thousand Days and Nights [*4000 no hi to yoru*, 1966]," as quoted in N. Sakai 2005, 308):

> We must kill the things we long for;
> That is the only way of bringing the dead back to life.
> We must go on that road.

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4. Refer to Lee Yung-jin (2012) concerning the story of the firefly and the spirit of a *kamikaze* in Chiran, Kagoshima, where a *kamikaze* airbase was located during wartime.

5. Set in postwar Okinawa, Medoruma Shun's novel, *Droplets* (*Suiteki*, 1997), is a masterpiece that vividly draws the repressed memories of the past war that suddenly change the peaceful daily life, shedding light on the issue of healing. The novel starts when the main character, who is leading a normal life in his hometown of postwar Okinawa after surviving the Battle of Okinawa, suddenly develops an illness without knowing its cause. His right leg suddenly swells up and drops of water fall from in between his big toe. While spending several days lying down without much help from the doctor's treatment, one day, spirits clad in the past Japanese army uniform suddenly visit him at night. Without a word, they stand in line and take turns to place their mouth on the main character's big toe and eagerly drink the water and then leave. The everyday encounter with the spirits remind him of the Battle of Okinawa in which he took part as a student soldier, and also the memories come back when he abandoned wounded comrades. These spirits were those comrades who were on the same battlefield as him. Also, his right foot was the same foot he injured as he abandoned his comrade to escape. The main character makes sincere apology to the comrade for abandoning him. Then, the comrade accepts his apology ("Thank you. At last the thirst is gone") and they all leave, after which the swelling in his foot subsides and the main character recovers from his illness.

To the poet who returned from the battlefield, the ethics of the old order or Romanticism as the system of collective representations are objects of disgust and rejection. This is a slightly different phenomenon from that of European society after World War I. The survivors despised existing romantic praises for their sacrifices, yet at least until the interwar period, the poems that dealt with the war did not renounce the traditional language and style of Romanticism, and instead, they progressed in the direction of reforming them. However, this trend which Winter (1995) has called "a complex process that re-sacralization" was not observed in postwar Japan. For the postwar Japanese poets, Romanticism was the disillusionment of the prewar Japanese Romantic School and also the foremost object that had to be abolished. The paradox that "the only way to bring the dead back to life is to kill the things we long for" stems from this perspective. Moreover, it is also embedded in the strong realization that death itself cannot be captured through the given system of collective representations. However, even when we acknowledge the 'real' attribute of death, the living must talk about death through the language of the living. This is where we encounter the problem of "how to face the dead."

Mourning and Its Refusal

Hamlet: Rest, rest, perturbed spirit! So, gentlemen,
              With all my love I do commend me to you:
              And what so poor a man as Hamlet is
              May do, to express his love and friending to you,
              God willing, shall not lack. Let us go in together;
              And still your fingers on your lips, I pray.
              The time is out of joint. O cursed spite.
              That ever I was born to set it right!
(From W. Shakespeare, *Hamlet* Act 1, Scene 5.)

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* deals with a chain of curses/violence that arises from a deficiency in mourning. The plot of this well-known story is as follows: Hamlet's father, the King of Denmark, is poisoned by Claudius, his younger brother and Hamlet's uncle. However, nobody expressed adequate mourning for the dead king. Queen Gertrude hastily gets remarried to Claudius, her brother-in-law, and hurriedly casts away her sorrow; as Hamlet was abroad at that time, he also could not attend the funeral. Claudius, who succeeded the throne and become the new king, warns Hamlet, who is tormented by his father's death and has gone astray, to cast aside his futile grief. However, to Hamlet, the palace is "a

dilapidated (incestuous) garden," where his uncle who succeeded the throne and his mother who immediately married her ex-brother-in-law reside. One night, Hamlet, who has fallen into a state of melancholy, faces a ghost, his father's soul, armed and clad in armor. The above inscription is the revelation of Hamlet, who is grief-stricken after finding out the truth behind his father's death from the ghost. The days of anguish, or the time which is 'out of joint,' is also the time one can truly meet the ghost—or the dead (Derrida 2007).

As it is shown in Hamlet's story and the postwar literature, including the postwar poems discussed in the previous section, facing the dead is not about romanticizing or glorifying the achievements of the deceased, a trend which is often observed in recent commemoration ceremonies. To borrow the words of Tomiyama Ichirō, facing the dead begins with facing the tense gaze and silence of the deceased, and intervening that silence while meeting their gaze. In other words, "it is not about speaking *for* the dead, but one must ask how to converse with them in certain temporality," and "reestablish a practical framework that can deliver the voices of the dead, which cannot be fully recovered by national discourse" (Tomiyama 2006, 150).

This paper returns again to the fundamental problem of what 'mourning' is. Formerly, as Freud pointed out in his paper titled "Mourning and Melancholia (1917)," authentic mourning begins with acknowledging the lost object of the past as 'the other' and abandoning attachment to it. Melancholia, in the Freudian definition, means the severe mental depression that arrives from the regression to the level of narcissism, in which the libido that has forcefully been withdrawn from the object is not displaced with another but instead withdraws into the self. The melancholic subject absorbs the ego through extreme self-reproach and punishment because it identifies the ego with the lost object, and complains of symptoms such as 'a profoundly painful dejection,' 'cessation of interest in the outside world,' 'loss of capacity to love,' etc. It would be literally the life of 'living death.' In order to escape from this melancholic state, the ego needs to withdraw the libido from the lost object and find a new object for attachment. This process, of course, involves great pain; however, the core of Freud's theory of mourning is that through this process, the abandoned object is transformed as a part of the self, and it will be remembered constantly inside the existence of the ego. The act of calling out the names of the dead by participating in a commemorative service or erecting a memorial stone can be seen as the process of severing oneself from the dead, thus proceeding from melancholia to mourning. Here, we are made aware that the act of commemoration does not simply stem from memory, but also from oblivion.

The Freudian definition of 'mourning' is encouraging on the point that it

urges us to humbly accept that the past event is a force majeure. The living must continue living; and in order to do that, we need to accept the loss and detach oneself from the past with clear mind. However, despite this significance, several points have been raised that the concept of Freudian mourning does not sufficiently pay attention to the paradox of trauma or the return of the repressed (Jay 2003; Chŏn Chin-sŏng 2009). Especially, Jacques Lacan's point, which argues that Freud's theory of mourning has overlooked the evocation awakened by trauma, received much attention among the advocates who developed the theory of mourning after Freud. For Lacan, trauma is one method of meeting the disappeared ones, making us realize that we have not responded adequately to the other's appeal and also that we must respond constantly to their appeals—a medium that essentially evokes the fundamental ethical issue (Chŏn Chin-sŏng 2009, 34). The attempts to amend the grief of loss and also to sublimate it can be one treatment for a patient to overcome his illness on his own, yet impatience could lead to the burying of the very relationship upon which the trauma was built. In this sense, post-colonial psychoanalytical research, which pays attention to the temporality of amends and the return of the repressed, can be categorized as extension of Lacan's works (refer to the work of Homi Bhabha [1994], which reinterpreted the psychoanalytical work of Frantz Fanon [1967]).

Meanwhile, Walter Benjamin, who lived during the same interwar period (but of course, a generation later than Freud), developed a unique theory of mourning from a different dimension than psychoanalysis. Put simply, it can be called the 'refusal of mourning' (Jay 2003). Obviously, it does not mean the refusal of the act of mourning itself. Rather, it was a rejection of the social atmosphere at the time, namely the international 'culture of commemoration' of making hasty amends and mythicizing the loss, which was prevalent in the European society at the time. In other words, it is refusing the 'culture of commemoration' as a system that "desperately draws on all the things, namely tradition and the sacred that could provide meaning and consolation to the survivors" (Mosse 1990), and "serves to justify the sacrifices made in the name of the nation/the people." What Benjamin tried to resist intransigently was the act of constructing a spatial place for commemoration (materialized '*lieux de mémoires* [sites of memories]' such as memorial buildings) that functions to repair the national identity in the present, and justify the sacrifices made in its name (Jay 2003, 11-20). Moreover, he tried to construct his own theory of mourning through the adherence to the 'traumatic memory' by simply complying with the past, rather than conforming to it through 'narrative memory'—or the "intelligible stories about the deaths" ('noble sacrifice for the nation') (Jay 2003, 24).

Of course, the problem remains as to what degree Benjamin's negative dialectic of the refusal of mourning could realistically be put into practice.[6] Above all, we must ask the question: "Could Benjamin's desperate attempt for melancholic intransigence and resistance against commemorative healing ultimately guarantee the genuine redemption he fervently yearned for?" However, as Jay points out, for Benjamin, redemption was not about harmonized closure or recovering of the ordinary reality in the first place. Instead, the redemptive path denies a positive place as a locus of fulfillment, and it is also temporally disjunctive, which can be attained only by focusing on the experience of time-lags produced by trauma (Jay 2003, 28-29). In short, the core of Benjamin's theory of mourning can be summarized as the rejection of the international culture of cenotaphs that staged fake closures during the interwar period in Europe, as well as of the Nazi style of symbolic mourning that seeks a senseless continuity between the revered war dead and their own martyrs; it is a 'melancholic allegory' which bears "traces of the vital inner-rage that must be released into the world in order to debacle and destroy these harmonious structures" (Benjamin 2010, 274).

In postwar Japan, those who shared the similar perspective with Benjamin were called the 'war-veterans group,' including Yasuda Takeshi and Hashikawa Bunzō. This war-veterans group, known as (or called themselves) 'wartime generation (*senchūha*),' consistently criticized the climate of war experience as well as the culture of commemoration for the war dead as the embodiment of this climate. In other words, what they incessantly criticized was the summoning of the war dead back into this world without deliberate considerations of the meaning of their deaths, instead arriving at the prompt conclusion that the dead brought the prosperity and peace of the nation. The method of mourning—namely the retrieving of the dead to the present—was the means to justify the present but concealed the meanings behind the loss of the people's lives.

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6. Jay summarizes the critical annotators' arguments on Benjamin's theory of mourning into three positions. First is a Hegelian vantage point (Rose 1993); this position defines Benjamin's thinking as the status of devastation, 'distraught mourning,' the yearning for invisible, and divine violence, stressing the importance of 'inaugurated mourning.' The second is a counterargument, which says there could be no guarantee that Benjamin's desperate wager on melancholic intransigence and resistance to commemorative healing would ultimately bring about the genuine redemption that he fervently yearned for. Especially, when he yoked his negative theology to the Marxist dream of a classless society, the potential to produce fraud rather than salvation is further increased. The third position is the counterargument that by holding on to such fantasies, Benjamin drew inadvertently near to the very fascist 'aestheticization of politics' he was ostensibly trying to resist. For example, anti-Hegelians like Leo Bersani (1990) see a desire for any form of mourning as holistic and harmonistic mourning which includes many problems in itself, and these are based on nostalgia for the non-existing state of bliss (for the above, refer to Jay 2003, 24-27).

Why did they fixate on the war experience? Rather, "why did they not have another choice but to fixate on it?" We can find an answer to this question in an opening anecdote of the book *My War Experience* (*Sensō taiken* [1963] 1994) written by Yasuda Takeshi, who was a representative figure of the wartime generation. At dawn on August 15, 1945, right before the emperor issued the declaration of surrender, or so-called 'Imperial Rescript on the Termination of the War (*Shūsen no shōchoku*),' Yasuda was at the China-Chosŏn border as a Japanese soldier in confrontation with the Soviet army at that time. At dawn on that day, a Soviet sniper killed his comrade, only 10 steps away from him. What if the bullet had come flying at him; what if the 'rescript' had been issued on the previous day? Or what if it had been issued on the 16th; how differently would the situation have turned out? Yasuda's self-questioning, repeated over and over throughout his entire book, is the expression of shame by the survivor, an awakening from the reality of 'peace' in the postwar period, and at the same time, it is also an expression of a sense of solidarity with his dead comrades.[7]

This sentiment permeated throughout Yasuda's self-questioning resonates with the repulsion felt by his contemporary writer Hashikawa ([1960] 1985) toward the 'Commemorative Services in Memory of Fallen Student-Soldiers in the Greater East Asia War' (*Dai Tōa Sensō Senbotsu Gakutō Irei Kenshōkai*), which was hosted by the government in October, 1959. The repulsion originates from the strong aversion to this memorial service, which, instead of mourning the deaths of the student-soldiers, glorified their deaths as 'perfect deaths' and 'deaths that should be honored with *tamagushi* (jewel skewer; sacred evergreen tree branches) and *gagaku* (ancient imperial court music). The motivation behind the national leaders' emphasis on the deaths of the student soldiers as "meaningful for the eternity of the nation" was their attempt to dignify their survival. For Hashikawa, these commemorative services are 'cursed rituals' which 'completely displaced the fallen soldiers,' and 'by treating the deceased student soldiers as completely dead people, the services meant nothing but deserting their deaths.' In other words, the war veterans were critical toward the

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7. The expression of feelings of solidarity for dying comrades is the most important motive that appears in postwar literature all over the world, including Japan. For example, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, a novel by German writer Remarque, who survived the Western Front, tells about the countless young deaths during World War I, following the expression of feelings of solidarity. "This I know well: the things that (now), while we are still in the war, sink down in us like a stone and lurk around, after the war ends shall open their eyes again, and then shall begin the disentanglement of life and death. The days, the weeks, the years out at the Front shall come back again, and our dead comrades shall then stand up again and march with us. Our heads shall be clear, we shall have a purpose to resist, and so we shall march, holding the hands of our dead comrades, the years at the Front behind us: against whom?" (Remarque 1989, 101).

reality in which the soldiers' deaths were glorified in the name of the state. At the same time, they expressed strong antipathy toward the political use of the deaths of their families and comrades.

Wadatsumikai (Japan Memorial Society for the Student-Soldiers Killed in the War) was a political association inaugurated in April, 1950 and organized by the wartime generation in postwar Japan, who shared similar perspectives on the treatment of the dead soldiers. The list of its organizing members represents the wartime generation at the time: Odagiri Hideo, Hashikawa Bunzō, Yausda Takeshi, etc. In the following excerpt, Hashikawa recalled the meaning of this organization which stood for strong criticism against the past war and commitment to anti-war pacifism:

> For good or bad, '*Wadatsumikai*' was not dead at the time [in the battle field]. They remember, feel, and understand. They see the war in their lives after the war, and also recall the present in the memories. To them, no comrade died a 'perfect death.' … Both being unable to live a perfect life and having failed to die in the war hold the same meaning and significance. This is where they acquire the ability to see through Japanese history and Japan as a nation. In other words, from one side of their semi-existence, they grasp all the meanings of nation and history, power and war. The refusal to receive memorial rituals and the refusal of dying the perfect deaths—these are the possible foundations of resistance in Japan. There is no metaphysics in '*Wadatsumikai*.' Yet, they will stand the last resistance against power and death. It is because they hold on to a principle more adamant than their death itself—that they have *lost the opportunity to die*. (Hashikawa 1985, 320-21, emphasis added)

The wartime generation was motivated to make *Wadatsumikai* into a political association because they commonly aspired to defy the postwar spirit of Japan at the time, and also to find the strength for it through the communion with the dead. However, *Wadatsumikai*'s attempt to turn the war experience into a system of thought (*sensō taiken no shisōka*) exposed a number of problems. First, the biggest obstacle was the decline of the value of experience. This phenomenon began to surface since the end of World War I, in which the soldiers who returned from the battlefields kept their silence while all kinds of books on war were published, which, as Benjamin had predicted, caused the depreciation of the value of experience (Benjamin 2001).

Second, it is undeniable that the sentimentalism that appears repeatedly in the works of *Wadatsumikai*, which project the soldiers and veterans only as victims, makes it difficult to approach the question of their war responsibility toward others as a member of the Japanese state. In other words, the war-generation of *Wadatsumikai* members were neither able to extend their

sentimentalism beyond visible 'Japanese' victims, nor, within that process, search for the way to establish concrete anti-war politics based on the resistance against the contemporary politics that tried to impede such chain of thoughts. In that sense, Akazawa Shirō (2004) makes a persuasive point that there is room for some degree of sympathy toward the postwar generation: the veterans of the wartime generation were simply immersed in their self-centered egoism and completely blind to the harm they inflicted on the people of Asia.[8] Throughout the 60s, *Wadatsumikai* failed to lay the foundation for the public discourse on the *geistesgeschichte* of war experiences, and antagonism with student movements (who considered them relics of the old generation) and internal division led to the eventual dissolution of the organization before achieving their ultimate goal of 'turning war experiences into a system of thought.'

The significant role the war veterans group played within Japanese society in the postwar period should not be understated. This is because the strong antipathy and aversion toward war based on their war experiences became the foundation of the anti-war and peace movements in Japan. In fact, as one can observe from the 'nationalization of the Yasukuni Shrine (*Yasukuni Jinja kokka goji*)' movement developed during 1962 and 1975 (until the legislation was finally withdrawn) by the Japan Association of Bereaved Families of the War Dead and the Liberal Democratic Party, the war experiences were the cornerstone of resistance against the state-led monumental narrative of 'noble death.' 'Turning war experiences into a system of thought' could have been more than a mere tool for 'remembering' the past and become the medium through which 'democracy' and 'patriotism' (Oguma 2002), two concepts that have been disbanded in the postwar social void, could be linked together. Not only could the union of the two have filled the void of postwar democracy, but it was also the key to guide the wounded, yet strong nationalism in a 'positive' direction. However, such inosculation never took place in postwar Japan; the 'monumentalized' commemorative ceremonies that take place all across Japan

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8. Going one step further, despite its pure motivations, the war veterans group received criticism on the point that they did not pay any attention at all to the ideology as a movement. In this sense, while criticizing the limitations of the leftist and rightist movements of the time, recent publications on the progressive movements in the 60s (which remarkably increased after the 2000s) tend to characterize the 'war veterans group' as a 'precious' movement that has been lost today. But they generally lack the sense of reality or historicity in their analyses of the movement. It is because the consideration was not given to what was necessary for the war veterans to establish themselves as a meaningful political movement, after they detached themselves from ideology in the era of ideological confrontations. The division within *Wadatsumikai* and its disintegration were indeed a microcosm of the conflict experienced by the Japanese progressive politics in the 1960s.

today have failed to inherit the *geistesgeschichte* of war experiences.

Remorse, Anger, and the Politics of Resentment

Let us go back to the problem of the 'return of the dead.' This section contemplates the remorse of the living, the accumulated resentment of the dead who visit the world of the living and ask the meaning of their deaths, and how the living should resolve their resentment.

In the spring of 1945, in the final stages of the war, the *kamikaze* pilots received the order to defend the motherland with their deaths. Since the emperor, the highest commanding officer of the army at the time, could not order death to the soldiers, as a formality, they were transferred into the *kamikaze* units as 'volunteers.' In sending off the *kamikaze* pilots to the mission from which there was no return, the military leaders instructed that "your attacks are the last hope for our nation" and "your deaths will not be in vain," promising that they will soon follow their actions. Despite such desperate struggles, with the unconditional acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration on August 14, Japan finally faced defeat. That night, Admiral Ōnishi, who was called 'the father of the *kamikaze*,' came to a painful realization of his responsibility as the supreme commander and committed suicide by disembowelment. Also, on the same day, one commander flew his plane with some of his subordinates and committed a suicide bombing of a fleet of the Allied Forces. That was the end of the 'march of death.' Most of the commanders who had been involved with the *kamikaze* mission faced the new era with completely changed attitudes. It was also around this period when the emperor, who at one point reigned over the empire as the absolute god, declared himself a human: "The ties between me [the Emperor] and our people have always stood upon mutual trust and affection. They do not depend upon mere legends and myths. They are not predicated on the false conception that the Emperor is divine, and that the Japanese people are superior to other races and destined to rule the world." This so-called 'Humanity Declaration' (1946) was an act of betrayal to the deaths of the young soldiers who died in the *kamikaze* actions as they cried out, 'God save the Emperor.'

Perhaps the reason why the series of the compilation of the last wills of the young soldiers, including *Listen to the Voices of Wadatsumi* published in 1949, captured people's hearts to a great degree in postwar Japan was the shame shared by the 'survivors,' who avidly sent off those young soldiers to the battlefields while waving the branches of cherry blossoms. In their last wills, the young soldiers expressed their longing for family and loved ones, their agony for their

approaching deaths, and anger towards the authorities who were incapable of making the right decisions and leading the nation down the road of destruction. These 'humane' sides of their voices stood in contrast to the wartime news reports, which depicted these soldiers as *kami* who volunteered to sacrifice their lives for the nation. Moreover, they also expressed their 'regret/remorse' for failing to take any measurable actions until it became too late.

Those who survived the war also shared these sentiments. For the people who returned from the battlefield where they faced the corpses of their comrades as well as for the bereaved families who lost the loved ones in the senseless war, the remorse they felt was not mere self-regret but an intense emotion that could never be forgotten. As the 20th US President, James Garfield, said, the soldiers who fought in the American Civil War "were never quite the same after seeing the fields of corpses of men who were just like themselves" (Faust 2008, 60). Yasuda, the representative figure among the war veterans during the 60s, talks about 'the anger' that lies beneath the sense of emptiness and the feeling of void, caused by the 'definitive difference of destinies' between the dead and the survivors. He questions, "Why is he the one who is dead, and not I who am reading his records stored at the Department of Veterans Affairs (*Engokyoku*) now, after 10 years!" (Yasuda [1963] 1994, 35-36). This anger is also an intense emotion which, while everybody else rises from their seats, tempts him to remain seated when the sound of *kimigayo* (the national anthem of Japan) comes from the loud speakers at the sumo matches (Yasuda [1963] 1994, 82-83).

The powerful force aroused by the feeling of 'remorse' functioned as the catalyst for social revolution during the immediate postwar years in Japanese society. One example is the 'community of remorse,' suggested by 'progressive intellectuals' including Maruyama Masao. They argued that, along with the state, they as intellectuals must take the first step in transforming the 'rationed freedom' into a self-motivated value. Their remorse was synonymous with the strong sense of responsibility and guilt for failing to resist the power and appeasement of the prewar ultra-nationalism (Maruyama 1982, 114). Without a doubt, these feelings of remorse led to some undesirable situations for the progressives in the postwar period, such as their blind commitment to the Communist Party, but it is also undeniable that these forces became the center of resistance against Japan's conservative swings throughout the postwar period. However, as Maruyama pointed out, thirty years after the end of the war, 'the community of remorse' centered on the intellectuals was dismantled in 1982 with the abatement of the values of war experiences.[9]

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9. Maruyama elaborates on the limits of the 'community of remorse.' "This coincides with the

Meanwhile, while searching for the constructive power of the feelings of regret/remorse within Japanese society, Tomiyama turns to the memories of the battlefields in Okinawa. Fraught with the memories of the past war, Okinawa's remorse echoes those who survived the only ground battle fought on Japanese soil during the Asia-Pacific War, which killed one-third of the civilian population on the islands. It was also a process of self-questioning, asking why the very islands they lived on became the 'sacrifice stone' to avert the attacks on the main islands, and why their people were massacred by the Japanese soldiers, the very people they were committed to help in their military advancement. However, the 'politics of resentment' does not simply mean the intense hatred of the other (namely the Japan that 'abandoned' Okinawa or the Japanese soldiers who slaughtered them without hesitation in false belief that the Okinawans were 'spies'). It also differs from Nietzche's 'resentment,' which, according to one of his works *On the Genealogy of Morals*, refers to the retrogression of anger due to failing to implement revenge in any ways. Rather, their rage was directed toward the holistic system that molds such resentment, and at the same time it was the source of a power that tried to attenuate the difficulties that they faced.[10]

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historical process of the postwar, in which the issue of war responsibility came to nothing, the 'purged' 'war criminals' reappeared as national leaders, and the transformation of democracy was fixated as a legal system instead of becoming an ideology or movement. Since around 1960, with the acceleration of Japan's recovery, institutions in all areas of politics, economy, education, etc., which at one point had fallen into a state of paralysis, became rapidly organized, the organization became reoversized, and the entire national life progressed on top of the rail. Needless to say, specialization and bureaucratization tendencies were common international phenomena of advanced nations; however, what I want to repeatedly accentuate is that these tendencies were the so-called 'vocation' of modern Japan and were further accelerated since a Japanese prime minister stated, 'the postwar had ended.' Thus, the intellectuals ended up entering the trenches of each of their occupational areas, and also the so-called antiestablishment front became collectivized as a closed group of colleagues in its own way. I wonder if that is the present-day situation" (Maruyama 1982, 124-25).

10. On the difference between hate and anger, Sakai Takashi (2007, 57-61) pointed out that hate refers to "not the emotion that eradicates the basic cause of hate, but the emotion of gaining catharsis by rejecting or eliminating altogether the results (one human being or a group)." As can be seen from the Japanese military defining the US and Europe an Allies as 'savage Anglo-Americans (*Kichiku Ei-Bei*)' during World War II, and forcing the people to express hate toward them (like the 'hate time' in George Orwell's *1984*, or the '[National] Day of Hatred' made by the newly established Cambodian government after the Khmer Rouge was ousted to remember the genocide committed by the Khmer Rouge), if hate is the emotion easily swayed by the strategies of established institutions for maintaining system stability by projecting internal discontent to an unspecified other, then anger is the basis of power destroying/dissolving a system or the overall situation that incessantly reproduces hate. Moreover, in order to show explicitly the differences in the two emotions, Sakai presents as examples the theory on violence by Frantz Fanon, a Martinique-born intellectual who participated in the Algerian National Liberation Front and the position of Edward Said, a Palestinian intellectual and activist. In particular, one passage of an

However, such emotion was the subject of constant repression in postwar Japan. Modern Japan's 'ethical' worldview has always rendered anger as 'negative' and holding on to such emotion itself as 'unethical' (Yasuda [1963] 1994, 83). As a result, Japan became a society incapable of 'grudge' and resentment (Takizawa 1987, 49). This tendency still continues to this day. Even when they speak of the painful and miserable experiences of the war, the senses of resignation, lamentation, and nostalgia are predominant in the emotional expressions of the Japanese society. In other words, instead of expressing anger toward the system or the enemies who destroyed their peaceful life, they only talk about the 'hope' that the war would never take place ever again.[11]

The efforts made by *Wadatsumikai*, including Yasuda Takeshi himself, to turn their rage into a system of thought aimed at the holistic system which brought them to war are significant in that they tried to surpass mere emotional dimension. That is to say, "the experience of war was not only shared by the war veterans but also by all Japanese people," and "the people's experience of facing an extreme situation becomes the faith through which the fundamental nature of Japan and its people can be unraveled" (Yasuda [1963] 1994, 96). Yasuda continues:

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interview with an Israeli newspaper, for whom Said is also the 'oppressor,' is a good example to understand the difference in the emotions of both parties (Said 2001, as quoted in T. Sakai 2007, 224).

    Said: (Omitted) Putting up these enormous walls of denial that are part of the very fabric of Israeli life to this day. I suppose that as an Israeli, you have never waited in line at a checkpoint or at the Erez crossing. It's pretty bad. Pretty humiliating. Even for someone as privileged as I am. There is no excuse for that. The inhuman behavior toward the other is unforgivable. So my reaction is anger. Lots of anger.

    Reporter: Do you hate us?

    Said: No. Funny, hate is not one of the emotions I feel. Anger is much more productive.

11. It is worth mentioning the work of sociologist Mita Munesuke (1977) and his excellent research which analyzed this world of emotions of the modern Japanese public through the motif of popular songs at that time. According to Mita, except for the brief appearance and popularity in the early Meiji period, anger has never once appeared as an important motif for popular songs until the 70s. What appears instead is 'resentment (*urami*),' followed by 'despair (*yake*),' and furthermore, it changes to resignation and regret. Unlike hate or resistance, if the emotion of anger is said to be simply 'developed from the consciousness of violated justice' (Hashikawa, "*Wadatsumikai*"), for anger to be established as a community's emotion, there must be a community value system that supports it. From this perspective, the disappearance of anger as a motif in Japanese popular songs overlaps with the process of the subjects of an imperial Japan converting themselves into an oppressive people with the passing of the civil movements in the early period of Meiji and the Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese Wars. And it is Mita's interpretation that the spirit of criticism, the foundation of the emotion of anger, inflects into satire, and furthermore, into despair and self-mocking as time passes.

> The Japanese people are easily overpowered by explosive, temporary fury of the time, and feeble when it comes to holding on to tenacious emotions such as hate, resentment, and anger (we are entrusting the postwar reconstruction to the very people who are responsible for the war!). But is it a good thing? Does not anger accumulate, and does not indignity need to be resolved? In the society which does not take revenge, we can become eternally irresponsible. The people's indignity must become their anger, and revenge must take place (Yasuda [1963] 1994, 98-99).

Despite Yasuda's earnest hope, their political stance does not take root in Japanese society. This is because the (war) experience, which the war generation, such as Yasuda, wanted to utilize as their weapon, was still a problematic and ambiguous tool for communication with the general public. Put it simply, their anger, mixed with hate and resentment, was no more than a deluge of emotions which they themselves found hard to grasp. Moreover, the sentiment of remorse/resentment that stemmed from their regret was the product of their victimhood. Their movements eventually disintegrated because of the failure to overcome such emotional Romanticism, and also of their inadequate construction of a specific image and program for social revolution through the objective understanding of history, including the physical conditions of postwar Japanese society. Ultimately, the war generation was unable to escape from the 'excessive' spiritualism that had preoccupied their youth.

However, this cannot be generalized as the limits of the 'politics of resentment' or as its inevitable consequence. For example, in her delicate yet ardent writing, Ishimure Michiko (1969) depicts the issues surrounding Minamata Disease, one of the worst pollution diseases in the history of postwar Japan. In the lawsuit against a large conglomerate, Chisso Corporation (*Nihon Chisso Hiryō Kabushiki Kaisha* or Japan Nitrogen Corporation), the ordinary citizens and the patients of the disease demonstrated the capacity of latent resentments embedded in Japan's civil society as well as in the worst victims of capitalism, which stood upon the physical conditions of the postwar society.[12] In a similar manner, even though

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12. It was an extremely difficult process to receive the acknowledgement and compensation for an unknown disease as a pollution-derived disease, for which a number of fishermen and villagers (who were not exactly the primary beneficiaries of the hyper-capitalism) had fallen ill. It must be noted that the Minamata Disease patients suffered redundantly: they suffered not only from the pain of the disease, but also from the fact it was a rare disease; the social ignorance and prejudice that it could be a contagious disease; the local residents' feared that the local economy could collapse with the withdrawal of the company due to the Minamata Disease controversy; they could not talk openly about the disease even within the local community. However, through the persistent efforts of the victim fishermen and a few activists who supported their activities, by the 1960s, Minamata Disease was recognized as a social issue that the Japanese society must resolve, and the truth was gradually revealed by the medical staff and civil activists who visited Minamata.

the sense of victimization has often been pointed out as the limitation of the Japanese social movements in relations to the memory of the war, perhaps it is not always a negative trail. Because the intensified victim mentality could also generate sympathy toward other victims and lead to the criticism against authority that created such damage, it could also extend to self-recognition as victimizer. In other words, the Japanese people's consciousness as 'victimizer' was not deeply embedded within the society because the victim mentality was rather frail in postwar Japan , and the enhanced consciousness as 'victims' would lead to inquisition of the victimizers as well as of the wartime responsibility (Iwamatsu 1982, 50-52). This rather paradoxical approach provides insights for the intensification of 'politics of resentment.' Put another way, by re-evaluating the people's 'resentment,' an emotion that has been given negative connotation throughout the history of modern Japan, the Japanese people may understand the resentments of the former colonies as well as of the war victims, and perhaps such enhanced awareness could extend to a common perception toward those who try to resolve their inner resentments.[13]

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13. Takizawa Hideki who dealt with the issue of 'resentment (*en* in Japanese, *wŏn* in Korean)' and 'deep regret (*kon* in Japanese, *han* in Korean)' in the Japanese and Korean societies from the perspective of 'people's history' summarizes the concept of 'deep regret (in Korean, *han*)' as the following: "When one mentions the '*han*' of Korea, Chosŏn or of the Korean residents in Japan, it does not specifically mean the emotions of the oppressed (Chosŏn people) in an appearing form toward the oppressor (Japanese imperialism, the Japanese), or their mental situation because '*han*' is formed in the life history of a person who leads a social life. When the oppressor exists in a visible form and the oppressed fights asking for the freedom from oppression, since (subjectively) the first hope of the future and a bright future is visible there, such subjective mental formation of 'venting one's *han*' is unnecessary. When the structure of oppression penetrates into the inner world of the oppressed and arrives at the unclear situation of 'what is the enemy,' freedom from oppression, as a start, must first go through 'venting of one's *han*' in the dimension of the rediscovery and the establishment of the self (identity) in the life history. 'Venting one's *han*' becomes the question of one's whole personality. The entire process for finding of the oppressor, and 'the dissolution of the oppression structure = freedom from oppression' becomes the process of 'venting one's *han*' which must set the oppressor himself as the object of relief (Takizawa 1987, 39-40)." Takizawa points out that it is hard to find the corresponding Japanese word for '*han*,' saying "it may be difficult to find the opportunity of 'deep regret' in the mental lives of the Japanese." However, "Japanese modern history is one that has forgotten 'resentment and deep regret' but it is not a modern history in which all the people embrace 'the theology of happiness'" (Takizawa 1987, 49). In her series of writings, Ishimure Michiko deals with the struggles surrounding the Minamata Disease, the female miners, or the life world of *karayuki-san* (the young women who were sold off as prostitutes from Kyushu village because of the extreme poverty of the village).

Conclusion

The discussion thus far leads to the following questions: How, then, should we face the dead? Through what language can the living express a genuine emotion of mourning for the deaths, without falling into a senseless attempt for glorification? With what words can we articulate the reason why they had to die, and mediate their true departures from this world? This is also a problem of 'easing the grudge.'

In an attempt to search for a new logic of mourning, this paper shed light on the theory of war experience as an important method of mourning in postwar Japanese society, and examined the reason why such effort eventually disintegrated. This paper also evaluated the applicability of the theory of mourning through war experiences in today's Japanese society. The group of war veterans who were engaged in a rather extreme method of 'refusal of mourning' during the 1960s believed that the state-led commemorative culture could never provide solutions to the problem; they believed that it was more appropriate to become absorbed into the center of catastrophe and realize what had been truly lost. Most significantly, the war veterans provided a concrete ethical guideline in dealing with the dead, a method that stemmed from their experiences in the battlefields rather than from the state-led logic of commemoration. However, because the war-veterans group relied too much on their intense and 'real' experiences of survival, their logic was not properly transplanted into Japanese society in the end.

As the theory of war experiences failed to take roots in postwar Japan, the 'dispositif' of memorials/commemoration of the war dead was only able to rely on the hollow and empty rhetoric of the 'cornerstone of peace.' Also, interlocked with the victim-centered perspective of Japanese society, the 'cornerstone of peace' theory metamorphosed the deaths of the war victims into the foundation of Japan's peace in the postwar period, which had manipulated the discourse on the distorted commemorative culture for some time. However, with the end of the Cold War, the memories of Asia-Pacific War are gradually being reevaluated all over Asia, unhinging this once-balanced theory of mourning in Japan. Since the logic of 'war dead as the cornerstone of peace' was only applicable for the Japanese public, its innate contradiction stands in the way of responding to the diverse memories of the war. The problem is rooted in Japan's failure to establish an alternate logic of mourning that could replace the 'cornerstone of peace' rhetoric and put an end to the 'memory wars' swirling in Asia.

It is not difficult to find the limitations of the war veterans who were active

in the 1960s. The strong emphasis on their past experiences in the battlefields and the subsequent preoccupation with the self-centered egoism of the veterans blocked the chain of communication with others. It is also necessary to uncover the factors which link their victimhood to an inquisition of victimizers and, by extension, into their self-recognition of war responsibility. Nevertheless, reevaluation of the group of war veterans is essential in contemporary Japanese society because, above anything else, their argument apprehends the most radical part of mourning, namely the responsibility of the living to listen to the voices of resentment of the dead. Then, the remaining problem is how to transform the power of emotions into a concrete tool for revolution through the objective understanding of the social construction of postwar Japan. At the same time, this process, while paying attention to the powers of emotions such as 'remorse' and 'resentment' put forth by those who survived the war, must not be subsumed into the national 'community of mourning' embellished by emotional romanticism. This will also become the place to search for the possibility of a new politics of mourning.

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