

SHADOWS OF WAR

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Ryoko Adachi:

Thank you all very much for coming to this seminar.

Since the signing of the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation 30 years ago, Australia and Japan have achieved very good relationships and celebrate the Year of Exchange this year. But during that period, I often felt that the Asia-Pacific War was still casting a shadow on the congratulated and applauded relationship, especially judging from anti-Japanese remarks made by the RSL.

I do not mean to blame the RSL. If you learn of the atrocities committed by the Japanese military on POWs and non-combatant Australians, such as slave labour on the Thai-Burma Railway, the Sandakan Death March, the massacre of nurses on Banka Island, sinking of the Hospital Ship *Centaur* and cannibalism in New Guinea, you couldn't help wondering whether this terrible past does not influence Australia-Japan relations. You couldn't help questioning whether Australians have truly forgiven Japan and the Japanese, whether the war is bygone, how Australians regard current Japan and the Japanese.

It can be said that unless one understands another person's feelings clearly and correctly, one cannot have warm relations with them. This applies equally to individuals and nations. Both the Japanese people and Australians should understand each other's honest feelings if they wish to have close and sincere relations. Let's listen to Australians' voices first, I thought.

So in the year 2000, Andrew McKay who had shared my view and I decided to send out questionnaires to the Australians who fought against Japan, who became POWs of Japan, those who later occupied Japan and their families and friends apart from interviewing them. As a result, we received 178 valid replies. They are the voices of Australians volunteered and therefore not lightly or thoughtlessly provided. Wartime experiences included in their replies might have been talked about or read about but their current feelings towards Japan and the Japanese had not been studied collectively before.

These 178 respondents were grouped according to their current feelings towards Japan and the Japanese. As a result, 93 are forgiving without ill feelings and 51 are unforgiving with ill feelings. The rest, that is 34, cannot be placed as either 'not anti' or 'anti'–Japanese and are placed in the middle ground between forgiving and unforgiving sentiments.

Most of **forgiving people** once did feel hatred, hostility or contempt towards the Japanese but now they say things like 'I do not hate them.' ... 'I have no problems with them.' ... 'I hold no animosity to present day Japanese.' ... 'They are just people like us.' ... 'I have good feelings about them.' ... 'I regard them as friendly neighbours.'

They support enthusiastically or at least approve of relations with Japan such as trade, the advance of Japanese business in Australia, the increase of Japanese tourists, restaurants and products and the spread of Japanese language teaching in Australia. They are supportive also of Japanese immigration to Australia. For these 93 respondents, the war does not cast shadows on current Japan and the Japanese. And most seem to believe that good relationships between Australia and Japan are beneficial to both countries. Some express that plainly, saying, 'We need one another to exist in this part of the world.'

Their voyages to forgiveness are moving especially in case of ex-POWs who suffered starvation, diseases, hard labour, atrocities and deaths of their friends. Many forgiving people have formed a friendship with Japanese after the war. These Australians should

be praised as the leading spirit of good relationship between Australia and Japan in this special year.

I could tell you many many stories to show how remarkable and inspirational these forgiving people are. But a grave concern and more important issue is that nearly half of the respondents have still unforgiving or ambivalent feelings to Japan or the Japanese. Especially **unforgiving people** still live with bitterness and most of them are opposed to or reluctant about economic ties, Japanese language teaching in Australia and Japanese immigration to Australia.

For instance, 26 of 51 unforgiving respondents resist Japanese tourists, restaurants and products in Australia, saying, ‘Definitely No.’ ... ‘Better without.’ ... ‘I detest the hordes of Jap tourists and avoid their restaurants and products if at all possible.’ One of them specifies why he is against Japanese tourists coming to Australia: ‘One should be reminded that the Japanese “tourists” who visited Australia before their attempted invasion, and toured the major cities with their cameras, ended up knowing as much or more about our cities and street names than most of us. This information would have been extremely valuable, had Japan succeeded in invading our country.’ Only 6 unforgiving respondents give their consent and 2 others make conditions like ‘As long as they spend money here, OK.’

Japanese immigration to Australia is accepted by only two unforgiving respondents, with conditions. They say, ‘OK, provided they accept they are Australian.’ ... ‘Japanese immigration should be kept to a minimum of essential business/technical people. Australia’s immigration programme is already full.’ Twenty-eight unforgiving respondents are flatly opposed to it: ‘No, no, no, no, no.’ ... ‘No thanks!’ ... ‘Should not be considered.’ ... ‘Definitely not wanted.’ Two others are reluctant, saying, ‘Accept but probably with negative feelings.’ ... ‘As least as possible.’

I’m still talking about the views of unforgiving respondents. Among voices opposed to Japanese business in Australia are ‘No Jap executives!’ ... ‘No, no, no – too much now.’ ... ‘Detrimental to Australia.’ ... ‘No, they are now taking – buy, stealth – what they

could not by force of arms.’ Regarding trade with Japan, you could hear them grinding their teeth from such remarks as, ‘An unpalatable fact of life.’ ... ‘I regret unfortunately that we have to trade with Japan.’ Regarding Japanese language teaching in Australia, eight approve of it, but reasons for their approval include, ‘Important for Australians to be able to beat them in trade.’ ... ‘We know what they are saying about us then.’ ... ‘If teaching and learning the Jap language can influence the realization of the Jap people of the enormity of the nation’s duplicity and treachery then well and good.’

Many of these unforgiving respondents do not want relations of any sort: ‘I would prefer no contact at all with the Japanese.’ ... ‘I am against any dealings with Japan in any shape or form although it is possibly not fair to blame the young.’ ... ‘Most POWs would not be in favour of any of these activities.’ ... ‘We won the war but are losing the country to Japan.’

In case of **respondents with ambivalent feelings**, it is clear that anti-Japanese immigration sentiment prevails. But they accept economic ties with Japan, not so enthusiastically as forgiving people but not so grudgingly as unforgiving people. Shadows of the war have not been dispersed but they seem to try to pragmatically deal with the present.

Those with ill feelings or ambivalent feelings towards Japan and the Japanese caused by the war account for 85 out of 178, nearly a half of the respondents. Of course it cannot be said this proportion applies to the whole society of Australia. The respondents are those who were affected by the war and now a small part of the whole population. But, they cannot be ignored. Because, even forgiving people say, ‘Yes’ to the question of ‘whether there is still anti-Japanese feeling in Australia’. Only 7 of the 93 forgiving respondents deny the presence of anti-Japanese feeling.

Why is there still anti-Japanese sentiment in Australia lasting since the Asia-Pacific War?

As anticipated, our contributors reveal that their attitudes have been formed mainly by Japanese military atrocities against soldiers, nurses and civilians in the Pacific and Southeast Asia during the War. When they experienced or witnessed atrocities or saw the scars of atrocities as repatriating forces or learned of atrocities when they became public after the war, they were inflamed with anti-Japanese sentiment. And this anti-Japanese sentiment has not been completely dispelled from Australian society. Among unforgiving respondents are many servicemen and women who did not fight Japanese face to face and some of the post-war generation.

They denounce the Japanese forces who committed needless torture, beheading, bayoneting and depriving of the necessities of life. They use such words as ‘subhuman animals, contemptuous bastards, vermin, sadistic, despicable, cruel, barbaric, savage, ruthless, callous and cowardly’. The terrible conditions at the hands of Japanese forces is shown by the following fact: Japan took 22,000 Australian POWs and more than one third died while Germany and Italy took about 8,000 Australian POWs and those who died accounted for a bit over 3% (265 POWs). 18 respondents without ill feelings, 18 with ill feelings and 11 with ambivalent feelings point out this difference, and this differentiates current feelings towards the Japanese from current feelings towards the Germans and Italians especially among unforgiving respondents.

Views on Japanese forces as inhuman animals were often extended to the Japanese population in general and even now are regarded by some as the intrinsic characteristics of the current Japanese.

An ex-serviceman who attests he saw cannibalism says, ‘I still think with the veneer peeled off, we still have the barbarian underneath.’

Another ex-serviceman says, ‘I regard them as a race duplicitous and arrogant. The polite bowing, etc. hides a devious mind and a character which is untrustworthy.’

A State Vice-President of the RSL says, ‘A leopard never changes its spots!’

Besides, questionnaire replies reveal that unforgiving or ambivalent feelings also come from respondents’ perception that most Japanese people do not admit or even know of these atrocities. For example, one ex-POW with ill feelings says, ‘Until Japan admits

the truth of its past, the distrust and hatred for the Japanese, of those who witnessed their arrogance, cruelty and brutality at war and as POWs, will continue to smoulder.’ An ex-serviceman says, ‘The fact that Japan has never acknowledged publicly at home its loss of the war and the facts of atrocity and oppression it committed contributes greatly to anti-Japanese feelings in Australian society.’ A post-war generation respondent says, ‘The fact that they do not acknowledge their past sins, to me, makes the Japanese a race not to be trusted.’

Respondents with ill feelings have an abiding mistrust of Japan, combined with their hatred and unforgiveness. Incidentally these three words; *hatred*, *unforgiveness* and *mistrust* are consistently used by them to express their feelings. This mistrust makes an ex-infantryman say, ‘If they, the Japanese, are not restricted, they will rise and fight again.’ An ex-Navy sailor thinks ‘there will continue to be a belief in Australia that at the first opportunity Japan will look to extending its empire.’ Or another ex-Navy man says, ‘There is a feeling that what could not be achieved by war has been done by business, particularly in Queensland.’

Then what should be done for true friendship between Australia and Japan?

Attitudes to **formal apologies and compensation** are complex. Thirty-one of 93 respondents without ill feelings, 19 of 51 respondents with ill feelings and 17 of 34 respondents with ambivalent feelings suggest that Japan make both apologies and compensation or either of them for good Australia-Japan relations. They are not necessarily ex-POWs. Some are those whose families were servicemen and women.

On the other hand, 36 respondents without ill feelings, 16 respondents with ill feelings and 8 respondents with ambivalent feelings are opposed to both apologies and compensation, or either of them. Many say, ‘too late.’ I’ll tell you a few other remarks, because they would make listeners think.

A forgiving ex-serviceman says, ‘I suspect that the raising of the issues of apologies and compensation would only create recrimination and bitter exchanges within the community and could be counter productive.’

Another forgiving ex-serviceman says, 'I don't understand why people should apologize for something they didn't do.'

An unforgiving ex-serviceman asks, 'Can apology bring back our loved ones?'

An unforgiving ex-nurse says, 'Compensation-money does not wipe away the inhumane treatment the POWs and the civilian internees suffered. Money does not buy respect!'

An unforgiving man whose uncle was a serviceman says, 'No formal apologies as saying sorry is only a word and means nothing. It does not correct what they did.'

For good Australia-Japan relations, **education** is a better-defined issue. Sixty-three respondents without ill feelings, 23 respondents with ill feelings and 20 respondents with ambivalent feelings favour education. But while the majority of those without ill feelings (43 of 63) mean education in general including exchange of students and education of understanding and tolerance (or make no special mention of contents of education), the majority of those with ill feelings (15 of 23) and ambivalent feelings (15 of 20) clearly refer to Asia-Pacific War history. They emphasize how important for the youth, especially Japanese youth, to learn the truth about the war.

An interesting thing is that 6 respondents without ill feelings and one with ambivalent feeling do not think that formal apologies, compensation and education are necessary for good Australia-Japan relations. 7 respondents with ill feelings do not think any means of them will work or that Japan will adopt any of these means.

An ex-serviceman without ill feelings says, 'Forget the past.'

A man without ill feelings who was young during the war says, 'Relations with Japan are very good now.'

An ex-serviceman with ambivalent feelings says, 'May take many more years, but time is best healer. Let's not be too pushy!'

An ex-serviceman with ill feelings says, 'Have nothing to do with them.'

An ex-servicewoman with ill feelings says, 'Would the Japanese do it? They can be very sly. Always remember, they altered their history books to present the Japanese as the "wronged".'

An ex-serviceman with ill feelings says, 'Unless the Japanese change their character, there is no point in attempting a better relationship.'

An ex-serviceman and BCOF member with ill feelings says, ‘This will not work until my generation is dead.’

There are a few hints in voices of forgiving people when mentioning how their ill feelings have changed. Of course their efforts and mentality were exercised. Like realising ‘Hate damages the people who hate.’ ... ‘Unless I forgive, I cannot lead a happy life.’ A few mention a teaching of Christianity. But many say they have changed their attitudes after meeting ordinary Japanese people. Like exchange students, business people and tourists coming to Australia or Japanese people they met when visiting Japan.

Regarding **association with Japan or Japanese people**, 62 respondents without ill feelings say they have had associations, and generally the associations have been amicable. Their children and grandchildren are not affected by the war in their views on Japan and the Japanese. But among respondents with ill feelings, only 11 say they have had associations. Moreover, for five of the 11 respondents, the association has been offensive, like ‘Yes, I have been pushed and shoved by rude Japanese in Asian airports.’ Or ‘Have seen or been in contact as tourists and find them very, very arrogant.’ At the same time, 22 of respondents with ill feelings say that they have not had any association and emphasize or imply that they have no desire to do so. Anti-Japanese feelings harboured by respondents with ill feelings are often shared by their children. Only 5 mention their children are unaffected by their feelings. Among 34 respondents with ambivalent feelings, 15 reply ‘Yes’ and 11 reply ‘No’ to the question of whether they have had association. None of them uses strong words like ‘No way. No. No.’ as used by the unforgiving. But few of them seem to have been impressed by their encounter as much as the forgiving, either. Feelings of their children and grandchildren, sometimes ambiguous, cannot be easily summarised.

We the authors have collected views on other matters such as the bombing of Pearl Harbour, the atom-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Emperor Hirohito and current Emperor.

I'll just merely touch upon their views on **the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki**, 48 respondents without ill feelings, 32 with ill feelings and 27 with ambivalent feelings justify it, because the bombing brought an end to the war and saved millions of lives. But I'd like to add that some of these justifying people of the three groups show their sympathies for Japanese victims or acknowledge the horrors of atomic bomb while they regard the bombing necessary. At the same time, voices wishing more bombing attacks are heard among respondents with ill feelings. For instance, an ex-serviceman says, 'Should have had bomb 2 years previously and should have dropped 20 instead of 2.' A man who was a boy during the war says, 'Best thing that happened in WW2.'

On the other hand, 18 respondents, including one ex-POW, without ill feelings are opposed to the bombing, often on reflection. A voice against the bombing is raised by only 2 respondents among those with ill feelings and one among those with ambivalent feelings.

All of these views mentioned so far and written in the book *Shadows of War* are not the perception of us the authors, but of Australians. Andrew McKay and I are just messengers and how to interpret their views and how to respond to them is left to readers.

But today I'd like to add some of **my own thoughts**.

Memory and history are not the same. But for everyone affected by the war, his or her memory is the truth. Japanese people should listen to such voices as raised in our book, sincerely if they wish to understand Australians. This is different from saying that the Japanese should accept all the Australian views. But personally I believe, as the respondents wish, Japanese people should learn the whole war history, and acknowledge how much the Japanese military hurt Australians as well as other peoples of Allied nations and nations Japan occupied and understand the sufferings of the victims.

Generally speaking, it is wonderful for each country to have its own character and nationality, making a rich and interesting world. But the concept of 'you and me' or 'them and us' can be a major obstacle to reconciliation after war, making it difficult to regard war as a common tragedy. How then to remove this boundary?

Former enemies do not recognize history in the same way, like the seriousness of atrocities by the Japanese military on the Australian side and the seriousness of the atom-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the Japanese side. So the answer must lie in understanding others' experiences and feelings. They must put themselves in the others' position and feel closely the others' sorrow and agony.

Among those respondents without ill feelings to Japan and the Japanese today is a clear voice saying, 'The Japanese were also the victims of the war.' These people have come to think so by understanding the agony suffered by the Japanese and by feeling as mournful as the Japanese. If the Japanese understand the anguish suffered by Australians and share their pain, wouldn't Australians allow them to stand side-by-side without boundary?

Then the war would be regarded as a tragedy for both peoples. Atrocities committed by the Japanese military would be condemned together with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a great catastrophe that should never be repeated.

I repeat that I myself believe that the Japanese should learn the whole aspect of war, and acknowledge Japan caused Australians and others terrible anguish and understand their feelings. But to start with a clean slate, recognizing history and thinking what to do should not be simply a response to Australians' demands. It should spring from Japanese conscience. Nor should the Japanese act purely for the sake of better Australia-Japan relations – but if the Japanese acknowledge the whole war history to cleanse their mind, relations would definitely deepen as a consequence.

Thank you.

Andrew McKay:

Winners and losers in war have one thing in common – their dead – and both winners and losers publicly honour those dead.

But the politics that caused their deaths is often not so publicly celebrated. Certainly by the losers. What honour is gained by admitting defeat and the mistakes made?

After WW2 Germany came to a slow then accelerating admission of its war crimes. But Germany was a quite recent invention. The previous century it had been not a nation but a neighbourhood of disparate people and races. They spoke different languages, had different customs and allegiances. Were often fighting each other

Japan on the other hand came from some two thousand and more years of coherent and shared identity. The deep sense of yamato and being a single and divinely-blessed island nation. Dishonour was a terrible thing.

Despite this Japan with great speed became virtually Americanised in surface popular culture, in technology, in business and economic aggression. But two millennia of traditional honor were not readily uprooted. Or is it now.

Powerful and traditional men had to find ways of denying the war. Whether or not they had read George Orwell they certainly understood the lessons of 1984. That is, recreate history – fashion it to your convenience.

Thus a not large but powerful cabal of politicians, tycoons and influence-makers have rewritten school texts to portray WW2 as they want it to be seen. They know well that children are more susceptible to influence and educating the young is educating the future.

This same approach to seizing the minds of the young has happened in the last few years in Australia. Through the commemoration of the Battle For Australia a day has

been created which specifically makes schoolchildren aware of a turning point in history. That point in 1942 when Japans' soldiers were on our very doorstep. They were bombing Darwin and killing nearly 250 people in one day – and then fighting the bloodiest of battles along Kokoda in New Guinea.

Subsequent Japanese crimes both on and off the battlefield later became known. Australian school children are now learning about the Thai-Burma Railway and the Tol Plantation massacre and the Sandakan Death March. Bitter lessons.

But in Japan the name Sandakan, for example, has virtually no recognition. Only the other day a senior Japanese living in Australia told us with genuine horror of his feelings when he recently discovered the truth. Only this week it was announced that the Sandakan track along which more than 1000 Australian and British prisoners of war died is to be opened as a war tourism site. The inevitable publicity of the opening will create more difficulties for Japanese deniers of history.

There appears to be some growing light being shed on Japan's dark war history. Prime Minister Koizumi soon faces election and there are indications his successor could be more enlightened and less willing to worship at Yasukuni. Even conservative Yomiuri Shimbun has come out with criticism of him and his visits to the shrine. A significant about face. But true redemption would appear to be a long haul,

Not so long ago, in this very place, my wife and I interviewed a leading Japanese official Yasushi Akashi who is the former Undersecretary-General of the United Nations and now Chairman of the Tokyo-based Japan Centre for Conflict Prevention - a vital role in creating harmony between Japan and other countries. Akashi is a widely experienced senior diplomat and old enough to remember the war, Japan's defeat and the American-Allied occupation. Throughout his visit to Australia his public statements had a constant theme: that Japan was ignoring its war history and that it badly needed to build stronger bridges with its wartime enemies.

It sounded most encouraging. But when we interviewed him, he revealed that the history that he was talking about was Japan's 'shared history with China and Korea'. The Battle for Australia when Japanese troops swarmed over the Kokoda Trail right on Australia's doorstep is not on his radar or that of his organization.

We believe Australia has a problem at two levels with Japan's attitude towards those grim years of 1942-45 when Imperial forces swept south through the Pacific towards Australia. At a primary level there are influential Japanese who have tried, and had some success, in re-writing those years of 'dark history'. They deny Japanese defeat and war crimes. At a secondary level there are Japanese like Akashi, his Prime Minister Koizumi, and many others who have made the big step in admitting guilt and making apologies – but not to Australia. They persist in denial of what happened during the Asia-Pacific War.

Beneath all this is a tertiary problem. Those few Japanese who do have the knowledge of the conflict with Australia regard Australia as only a minor enemy. They believe that actions against Australian troops and civilians were just a minor skirmish in the greater Asia-Pacific theatre of war where Japan clashed with America and its principal ally Britain. The United States and Britain are still seen as the only enemy that mattered.

In Australia the very opposite is happening. Australian veterans, who know they have not much time left, are passing on the blunt truth of what it was like fighting the Japanese. Until quite recently this truth was so painful they shared it only with each other. Now these veterans are being encouraged to speak to the new generation of young Australians. These youngsters are being involved in ever-increasing involvement in traditional remembrance ceremonies, awareness programs and now a national education campaign – The Battle for Australia Commemoration. It is strongly supported by Prime Minister John Howard whose distant relative, Sgt Len Siffleet, was beheaded by a Japanese executioner in New Guinea.

The Japanese deniers of history use the Big Brother strategy of re-writing or ignoring inconvenient history - or 'dark history' as they call it. The result is that almost all

Japanese youth have no knowledge of what the Imperial Forces did during the Asia-Pacific War in fighting Australians. No knowledge of humiliation and atrocities committed on Australians. No knowledge even that Australia and Japan were enemies.

Informed Japanese who have fought long campaigns for the recognition of 'dark history' and public contrition have gone unheard at any significant political level. People like our historian friend Yuki Tanaka wage lonely campaigns. They are regarded as negative, debasing national pride, harping on the past. They have a miniscule audience in a nation that above all others is forward-looking, almost obsessed with the future. Tanaka, who lived in Australia for years, has written and published in Japan his book *Unknown War Crimes – What The Japanese Forces Did To Australia* in which he described acts of cannibalism, the slaughter of nurses and other horrors committed by Imperial soldiers

Australia's present political leaders have recognised and recompensed those who suffered as POWs of the Japanese. But they have not carried that recognition to its logical conclusion of seeking apology or sincere acknowledgement from the Japanese and thus bestowing final dignity on the old Diggers who are passing away. Our questions to the Australian Foreign Affairs Minister Downer brought a wishy-washy response. His spokesman told us: 'There comes a point where pursuing further expressions of apology become counterproductive.' (A view not shared by China or Korea). The spokesman then told Ryoko Adachi and me that we should adopt the task of urging Japan to build for the future by teaching correct and accurate history of WW2 to its youth. We have declined the kind offer to become unpaid and unaccredited diplomatic go-betweens.

Before very long Australia will be fielding young diplomats, businessmen and politicians with an acute awareness of the Asia-Pacific War. They will be making contacts in Japan and discovering that their Japanese contemporaries have an appalling ignorance of a shared, grim and bloody past. This ignorance could deeply offend Australians, particularly if those horrors have been learned since Australian primary

school. Japanese could be offended and angered to find themselves being accused of something that, as far as they are concerned, just never happened.

Yet Japan can be made to recognise its war history, if pressed, and without a sense of calamitous dishonour. A mass of ordinary people in China and the Koreas over decades after the war increasingly raised their voices in protest about Japanese WW2 atrocities to the point where their governments had to take up the cause and protest to Tokyo in the strongest terms. No diplomatic breakdown occurred as a result. No retaliatory trade embargos. What did happen was that successive Japanese governments, despite reactionary dinosaurs in their ranks, first tentatively and then more openly expressed public regret about Imperial occupation, oppression and atrocities.

If there are still Australian politicians and bureaucrats who fear offending Australia's biggest trading partner, that is a lesson. The Japanese Governments' apologies to China and South Korea for oppression and atrocities was resented by some Japanese Right-Wingers but most people found the apologies cathartic. It was cleansing to learn the truth and start anew.

Young Australians, including those whose families arrived long after the peace of 1945, are learning more and more about Australia's Asia-Pacific War history through The Battle for Australia Commemoration. The Commemoration National Council is a coalition of the heads of the major Australian ex-Service Organizations, the Department of Veterans' Affairs, teachers and community leaders. It aims to enhance public knowledge and understanding of Australian and Allied actions in the war against Japan and encourage annual Battle for Australia Commemorations on the first Wednesday in September every year. It also has the specific aim of 'Educating Australian children to appreciate and learn from the heroism, sacrifice and service of all those who fought between 1941 and 1945 to defend Australia, its territories and national interests from attack and ultimately to expel the Japanese from Australian territory and waters.' It is certainly not a bridge-building exercise nor an occasion for reaching out to the old enemy.

The RSL nurtures and funds administration of The Battle For Australia Commemoration which it sees as having an unstoppable future. RSL National Secretary, Derek Robson, says: 'It's growing in strength all the time The RSL has the aim of educating our children in war history.'

Inevitably the Commemoration creates powerful awareness of what happened at Kokoda and Wau, at Milne Bay and Changi, at Sandakan and the Railway and other resonant places. It's an awareness that is gaining strength and will endure as organisers across the nation increasingly involve youngsters not just in The Battle For Australia Commemoration but also increasingly in Anzac Day and Remembrance Day which now remember all the war dead – including those of the Asia-Pacific War.

Recently the Victorian State Government launched an education program to give every child at least two visits to the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne during their schooling. Created by the Shrine and the Education Department it is aimed at keeping alive Anzac values. The program sets course work for students, including a module specifically on the Asia-Pacific War, which they will study before attending the Shrine. The program that is aimed at being copied in every State throughout Australia.

In Japan immediately after the war General Douglas MacArthur dictated that all Japanese school textbooks be vetted by the Education Ministry to prevent a resurgence of militarism and emperor worship. This continued after occupation ended. But in 1965 a leading historian, Saburo Ienaga, sued the ministry claiming its power was unconstitutional. He said the ministry had rejected his texts for over-emphasising the 'dark side' of war.

The ministerial vetting process blew up into an international issue some years later when China and Korea protested about the emasculation of Ienaga's work by replacing words like 'aggression' with 'advance'.

Ienaga battled through the courts for 30 years with the Supreme Court handing down a 1997 judgment that allowed the ministry to continue censoring textbooks but requesting

it use restraint. But at much the same time a Tokyo University professor, Nobukatsu Fujioka, mounted a counter attack demanding an end to 'dark history' and the mention of issues such as women forced into military prostitution – 'comfort women' - that might embarrass schoolchildren.

In 1997 a group of Japanese professors formed the reactionary Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform. They publicly supported Fujioka by saying that what was being currently taught to children was 'masochistic' and made them feel shame for the past. What was needed was affirmative action to create a powerful sense of the importance of being Japanese. Since the early 1960s the Left-wing Teachers' Union of Japan had emphasised Japan's WW2 militarism and demonised the Imperial regime and this culminated in publication of *The New Japanese History*, approved by the Education Ministry in 1996. It contained comments like, 'Over time, people ruled by the Japanese lost faith in Japan and anti-Japanese feeling grew in every region. These sought their freedom and in Vietnam, the Philippines, Burma, Indonesia and elsewhere, Japan encountered fierce resistance against its occupation.'

On the other hand, the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform produced *The New History Textbook* in 2001. This insisted that 'history stop being treated like a court where the figures and actions of the past are called to judgment'. It said that Japan had beaten Allied and Dutch forces and 'This victory was made possible by cooperation from the local people who were oppressed for hundreds of years by the colonising Caucasians. References to Japanese wartime atrocities were toned down and emphasis placed on reparations paid by Japan. Fujioka was particularly outspoken on the subject of 'Why Students Should Not Be Taught About Military Comfort Women'. He claimed, 'The truth is that they were prostitutes who were taken to the battle zones by businessmen.'

Widespread protests followed with many academics saying the textbook's claims of Japan's divine beginnings and its modern militarism to 'liberate' neighbouring countries were unsupportable. The Chinese and South Korean Governments were incensed. *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper and the National Broadcasting Company led a national charge that

the textbook was a 'threat to freedom and truth'. Ranged against them, Right-wing members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and the *Sankei Shimbun* media group lobbied for adoption of the textbook. They were joined by a number of powerful corporate leaders.

The New History Textbook became one of eight textbooks given Education Ministry approval for junior high school use in 2002-2005. It also became a best-seller - selling more than 700,000 copies in bookstores in just a few months.

Allied and angry issues were bubbling. In 1999 the Japanese Diet voted to give legal status to the Rising Sun flag and the *Kimigayo* national anthem that calls for 'the reign of the Emperor to continue for 1000 generations'. The Japanese Women's Caucus Against War protested that 'No-one can be proud of them as national symbols without true remorse and apology for wartime aggression'. In southern Japan a school principal hanged himself - a victim of conflict between the school board and teachers over singing *Kimigayo* at graduation ceremonies. In Hiroshima, both a headmaster and his deputy suicided in protest over raising the flag and singing the anthem.

Nearly a year ago with the 60th Anniversary of the war's end, you will remember that tens of thousands of Chinese youth erupted in violent anti-Japanese protests against revisionist Japanese history. It seemed to have a lot to do with Japan's desire to win a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Prime Minister Koizumi was compelled to make a very public admission of regret at a top Asian and African leaders' meeting. But a little research reveals that his key phrases were a word-for-word parroting of what former Prime Minister Murayama had said exactly 10 years earlier at the 50th Anniversary. Inevitably this gave a hollow ring to Koizumi's 'apologies'. A week later he even singled out the Netherlands for apologies to Dutch nationals who suffered in the Asia-Pacific. But of direct mention or apology to Australia and its Diggers - nothing. In the face of this the strongest words that Howard could summon were, 'I think It's necessary for all countries to be frank about past events. I can understand the feelings of Australians who suffered at the hands of enemies when they were in captivity during WW2...'

Meanwhile, *The New History Textbook* has again been approved by the Education Ministry for junior high school use in 2006-2009. Also seven other approved textbooks have toned down contentious contents and ‘comfort women’ are referred to by only one textbook. The tide of contrived misinformation and concealment of facts for the young rolls on.

There is danger in any war history presented in terms of them and us, all good or all bad. It is salutary to be told by New Guinean historian, John Dademo Waiko, about village looting by both Japanese and Allied soldiers. He says Papua New Guineans were shot by the Japanese and the Allies for disobedience, and towards the end of the war starving Japanese soldiers sometimes shot villagers and enemy prisoners for food. In many areas it was the policy of the Australian 1st Army to hang people who were believed to have collaborated with the Japanese. In 1942, for instance, Australians hanged twenty-eight local people near Popondetta.

Politically, Japan and Australia smile at each other and hold hands in a relationship that seems to grow warmer – despite Australian protests over the slaughter of whales. The Australian support for Japanese in Iraq is an outstanding example. Australia champions Japan as an international peacekeeper and our countries have worked together in war zones ranging from Cambodia to East Timor to Afghanistan. And this against a concurrent background of strong mutualism: Japan and Australia constantly and closely confer about regional defence and security. With other allies, Australia and Japan have conducted military exercises aimed at raising readiness for any regional threat, particularly from North Korea. And it should not be forgotten that Japan has made a significant gesture by sending Crown Prince Naruhito to lay a wreath at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the National War Memorial in Canberra.

The old saying is that strong bonds between two countries can be a ‘marriage’ of nations. But in many marriages there are dark episodes that are ignored for the sake of continuing harmony. Or ignored until the marriage comes under pressure, begins to buckle. Then the dark moments are remembered and brought out to be given sudden,

angry importance and justification. They become not just regrettable events but part of a rationale for what has gone wrong. And because they have never been examined they cannot be coolly assessed and given proper importance and balance when it is most needed; thus an unexamined past is a dangerous past. Further, nation marriages that begin with no obvious mutuality - but are arranged by the eternal matchmaker Trade - need more help than those where they have known each other through years of solid mutual support. In such marriages the dark moments are potentially more dangerous still.

Diplomat and peace-maker Yasushi Akashi told us, 'I have very strong hope for the younger generation of Japanese who are much more cosmopolitan and much less nationalistic. At the same time I have some apprehension that the new generation is not sufficiently conversant with their past history. Therefore I would like to see very strong emphasis on the teaching of history in Japanese schools.' Yet direct questioning as to whether this should involve the teaching of Australia-Japan war history saw him immediately shift into a reiteration of the importance of China; he could not or would not answer the question.

This double standard of true war history between Australia and Japan is not something that can be ignored. Nor will it just go away without awareness and action. It is not as if there were some unspoken but firm and blanket understanding between Australia and Japan that is totally shockproof and can live with the potential for what the double standard may bring. For the many points of Japan-Australia agreement and cooperation there are always the opposite. There's a lot of each-way betting, of contrary attitudes.

But there is also equivalence of common, shared humanity. Everyone should know the story told by distinguished Australian playwright, John Romeril, who has an abiding fascination with Japan and the Japanese, something that illuminates much of his work. He tells this with delight in its irony:

His father was with the 2/22nd which was wiped out by the Japanese at Rabaul. Six weeks before that disaster he was transferred to an entertainment unit because he could

play the saxophone. One day he was banished from camp by his fellow soldiers for the noise he made practising his scales. He wandered off into the New Guinea jungle. He was about to start the scales again, on the edge of a clearing, when from the other side came a Japanese soldier. Says Romeril: 'My old man's got his saxophone and the Japanese soldier, he notices, is carrying a butterfly net. They look at each other... And depart.'

What Australia and Japan need now is a greater exchange of knowledge and truth about the Asia-Pacific War. And more butterfly nets and saxophones.

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