

effective war power than a "patriotism" produced by dictatorship and oppression. This fundamental misunderstanding of the strengths of a free society was more serious than miscalculating the output of southern California's airplane factories.

According to statistics released by the Ministry of Health and Welfare in the Diet in 1956, Japanese deaths from July 1937 to August 1945 from combat, combat-related injuries, and war-related fatal illnesses (military and civilians working for the military) amounted to about 2.3 million. The figure does not include tens of thousands missing and never accounted for.⁶⁶ This inglorious body count is the price the Japanese people paid for their leaders' folly.

8

The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere: Liberation or Exploitation?

At home and abroad, a potpourri of moral imperatives was used to justify the Pacific War. The thrust into Manchuria was explained as "the right of self-defense." The puppet regime of Manchukuo was described as "the formation of a virtuous state" and "the cooperation of the five races." The former was a claim that Manchukuo would be an ideal state following "the righteous way," a Chinese utopian notion of social harmony and justice; the latter asserted racial harmony of Chinese, Manchus, Koreans, Mongolians, and Japanese. Full-scale hostilities against China were for lofty goals: "To chastise the insolent Chinese"; "the construction of a regenerated China"; "the unity of Japan, Manchukuo, and China"; and "the construction of a new East Asian order." Fresh rationales were proffered to explain the start of hostilities against America and England. Negotiations were broken off with America in order to protect "the Empire's position as the stabilizing force of Asia." War was declared because "Our Empire for its existence and self-defense has no other recourse." Candid assertions of national interest were mixed with professions of Asian solidarity.

Japan's advance into Southeast Asia allegedly had the twin objectives of "building a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" and liberating Asians from "American and British imperialism." As if to give substance to these claims of a new pan-Asian solidarity, in 1943 Burma and the Philippines were

declared "independent" and an Indian Provisional government was established in Singapore. In November 1943 the leaders of Manchukuo, the Wang Ching-wei regime, Thailand, the Philippines, and Burma were assembled in Japan for a Greater East Asia Conference. The name Greater East Asian War was chosen to convey a sense of a new Asia throwing off the West. But were the areas of Asia that fell under Japanese control and military occupation really "liberated?" Did they enjoy "co-prosperity"? A careful examination of the realities of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere is crucial to an understanding of the war.

The term Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere did not mean an egalitarian solidarity encompassing the complete independence and equality of all Asian peoples. Japan's special interests were to take precedence in the region. Japan would be the political leader of the new Asia, "responsible for governance and guidance . . . of those peoples who lacked the capacity for independence." And Tokyo would "retain a preferential position in the development of those resources in the region essential for national security."¹ In March 1941 the Imperial Rule Assistance Association published "Basic Concepts of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere," which explicitly stated: "Although we use the expression 'Asian cooperation,' this by no means ignores the fact that Japan was created by the Gods or posits an automatic racial equality." In other words, some Asians were more equal than others. In fact, the assumption of Japanese superiority permeated relations with the rest of Asia. The Japanese Literature Patriotic Association organized a conference of writers and literary people from the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. Apparently taking pan-Asianism seriously, Kaneko Mitsuharu wondered if intellectuals from other countries could really accept Japan's spirit of *hakkō ichiu* (the eight corners of the world under one roof). This brought a sharp rebuke from Nakayama Shozaburō, a conference organizer: "They are not 'intellectuals from other countries.' They are members of the Co-Prosperity Sphere assembled under the august authority of the Emperor."²

In the highest government councils no time or sentiment was wasted on the rhetoric of solidarity. At an Imperial Conference on November 5, 1941, Finance Minister Kaya Okinori explained occupation policy for Southeast Asia: "We must ignore for the present the economic dislocation in that area and push vigorously ahead with our plans."³ Policy for the administration of the southeast Asian occupied areas approved by a Liaison Conference on November 20, 1941, contained the following: "The local economy will be strictly controlled in order to facilitate our acquisition of essential war materials and the self-support of the occupation forces. Requests for relaxation of controls must not be allowed to interfere with these objectives." The policy directive continued: "Independence movements by the local peoples must not be encouraged for the time being."^{4,5} At the Liaison Conference on March 14, 1942, Hoshino Naoki, chief cabinet secretary, said: "There are no restrictions on us. These were enemy possessions. We can take them, do anything we want to." Suzuki Teiichi, chief of the Planning Board, and Finance Minister Kaya insisted that "There should be a long period of military government. We must not promise independence to the local peoples or encourage any willful ambitions."⁶ The plans for the military administration of occupied areas drawn up the same month contain the following: "Industry: The southern region for the present will be a source of raw materials and a market for our manufactured products. Measures will be taken to prevent the development of industry in this area. Wages will be kept as low as possible."⁷ Even when independence was subsequently granted, as with Burma and the Philippines, it was more nominal than real. Japan insisted upon keeping complete control of the military affairs and foreign relations of both countries.⁸ The southeast Asian region was used as a colonial territory just like Korea and Manchukuo.

As prologue to a detailed analysis of the vast region where these policies were implemented during the Pacific War, it is appropriate to consider the prewar Japanese colonies. Yanaihara Tadao, writing in *Kashin* in March 1941, called the

colonies a litmus paper of Japan's larger pretensions. To ignore "how these non-Japanese peoples in the Empire are administered . . . and talk about unselfish and amicable policies toward Manchuria and China is pointless." The rough and exploitative rule of the colonies "contradicted the declarations of racial harmony toward Manchuria and China."⁸ Yanaihara realized that the treatment of the colonial populations of Korea and Taiwan foreshadowed conditions in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Korea

If Japan really intended to liberate the peoples of Asia from imperialism, independence for Korea should have been the first step. Anticolonialism should have begun at home. On the contrary, however, the planners of the Manchurian Incident testified that one motive for it was to ensure Japanese control over Korea.¹⁰ A decade later independence for the people in the southern area was a sensitive subject "because there is also Korea to consider."¹¹ National leaders feared that the "liberation" of Western colonies might set a precedent for the Japanese empire. Yet Korea would not have been granted independence even if Japan had won the war. In June 1945 Japanese leaders unofficially sounded out American intentions as part of an effort to end the war. Even at that late date, pounded by daily air raids and facing certain defeat, the government's position was that "Taiwan and Korea are absolutely vital sources of food. Because they are essential to Japan's existence, we desire to be allowed to retain them."¹² The annexation of Korea in 1910 started Japan on the road to empire and aggression; the attempt to hang on to Korea in 1945 prolonged the final agony of defeat.

Independence for Korea was out of the question, of course, as far as Japanese leaders were concerned. Local self-rule and the franchise were permitted only to a token degree. The first moves in the 1920s were a sop to nationalist unrest. In 1933

local self-government was slightly expanded, but it was still tokenism. One-third of provincial assemblymen were designated by the governors (themselves appointed by the governor general); the remainder were indirectly elected by the metropolitan district councils and by rural district council members.¹³ Important positions in the government were reserved for Japanese; salaries of Korean officials were lower than for the Japanese.¹⁴ When Korean cooperation became essential for the war effort after 1937, including the enforcement of military conscription because of manpower shortages, certain reforms were enacted. They included the abolition of salary differences for Japanese and Korean officials and the right to elect representatives to the Diet (although in a very circumscribed way compared to Japan proper). These "reforms" were simply wartime expedients.¹⁵

Discrimination against Koreans was all-pervasive. The results of discriminatory education and employment policies are seen most graphically in standards of living and life expectancy. Average per capita income in 1944, for example, was ¥558 in Japan and ¥156 in Korea; Koreans earned a little less than one-third the income of Japanese.¹⁶ The vast disparity in sanitary conditions is apparent from health statistics: of the Japanese who contracted contagious diseases in 1937, 13.1 percent died, compared to 30.5 percent of Koreans.¹⁷ Far from being eliminated during the war to "liberate Asia," contempt for and discrimination against Koreans actually intensified. Police surveillance and harassment on trains and on the boats from Pusan to Shimonoseki became very harsh; beating and kicking of suspects were commonplace.¹⁸ Even Korean draftees were verbally abused with racial slurs like "Don't get the idea that you are Japanese. Watch your step." Many a Korean was told, "Now you can get into the Imperial Army, so put up with a little shit along the way."¹⁹

Civilian life was no different as far as discrimination was concerned. Japanese employees in the Hungnam factory complex in northern Korea were provided with brick houses equipped with flush toilets, electric cooking utensils, and

steam heat. Company housing for Koreans was cramped. Common toilets, common water taps, and *ondol* heating were deemed adequate. The Japanese management saw nothing improper about these disparities.²⁰

While separate and unequal treatment was the rule, the government adopted and enforced a strict assimilation policy to turn Koreans into loyal if second-class citizens. The Korean language was banned from the schools.²¹ Koreans were required to recite the Oath of a Loyal Citizen: "We are subjects of the Great Japanese Empire. We are loyal to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor."²² After 1939, Koreans were "encouraged" to take Japanese surnames and stop using their Korean names.²³ All Koreans were required to attend Shintō services; Christians were singled out for special persecution through shrine attendance and in other ways.²⁴ Mandatory performance of Shintō rituals was especially repugnant, as shown by the fact that in an eight-day period after Japan surrendered in 1945, Koreans burned and destroyed 136 Shintō shrines and buildings where the imperial photograph was on display.²⁵

As manpower shortages developed in the late 1930s, plans were made to utilize Korean labor. A large-scale forced transfer of Korean laborers to Japan was carried out after 1941.²⁶ Kim Dae-sik had a not untypical experience. He tried to evade the labor mobilization but was caught in 1943 and taken off in handcuffs to work in a coal mine in Kyushu. A Japanese student called up for labor service to construct an airfield on Tanegashima later recalled that although "Koreans were the hardest workers . . . they were frequently beaten with wooden clubs."²⁷ Manpower requirements prompted special laws to permit Koreans to serve in the military. Koreans could "volunteer" for the Japanese army after 1938 and the navy by 1943.²⁸ Later conscription was extended to Korea. Approximately 187,000 soldiers and more than 22,000 sailors came from the colony. If forced laborers are included, a total of 370,000 Koreans were pressed into war duty.²⁹ Korean women were also mobilized by the thousands and shipped off to the battlefronts as "comfort girls" for Japanese troops.

Called *Chōsenpi* (*pi* was soldiers' slang for "comfort girl"), they were a sexual outlet for the soldiers. The women were brought right to the front lines for fornication between combat operations, and apparently many were killed in the fighting.³⁰

Within Korea, resistance was virtually impossible. Outside the country, groups led by Kim Il-song and others allied with Chinese guerrillas fought against Japanese forces in Manchuria.³¹

Taiwan

The colonial rule of Taiwan closely resembled the administration of Korea. Taiwanese were permitted fewer political rights than Koreans. Local self-government was expanded in 1935, yet half of the prefectural council members were appointed and the other half were indirectly elected by city council and town and village committee members.³²

The Japanese language was mandatory; Chinese-language columns were prohibited in Taiwanese newspapers. It was a callous and premature policy. Taiwanese were denied Chinese-language materials before they had really learned Japanese. Functional illiteracy and cultural deprivation were the results. Efforts to switch to Roman letters and to devise a new script failed because of official antagonism.³³ Nakazawa Hiroki caught the sense of angry frustration when he asked a Taiwanese friend if Japan had acted badly on the island. The Taiwanese promptly replied, "Our language has been stolen from us."³⁴

Kwantung

Discrimination and forced assimilation also characterized Japanese administration of the Kwantung Leased Territory. A few first-person accounts and anecdotal vignettes will give the flavor of Japanese rule there. A Japanese woman raised in Dairen recalled her early views of the Chinese: "It never

seemed strange or unnatural to me that everyone doing manual labor—coolies, horse drivers, jinricksha pullers—and the beggars, all the lowest dirtiest jobs were done by Chinese. To me as a young child, all Chinese were dirty, lazy, and tricky."³⁵ (A Japanese woman who had lived with her family in Taegu, Korea, until she returned to Japan to enter college grew up with a similar sense of a natural order with the Japanese on top. She described to a classmate how in Korea only Koreans hauled night soil and collected garbage and trash. She was shocked to see Japanese doing such menial work when she returned to Japan. It made her feel very uncomfortable.)³⁶ Discrimination was so total, so taken for granted, that no one thought about it. A Chinese student from Dairen recounted many tales of discrimination against Chinese. In Dairen rice was distributed to Japanese but not to Chinese. She came from a rich merchant family which could buy blackmarket rice and did not personally suffer. But the discrimination followed her to Japan because she had never been issued a rice allotment book and still did not have one! She also said that only when she came to Japan did she realize that not all Japanese were bad.³⁷ These episodes attest to how the Japanese treated the local populace.

Indoctrination reinforced Japanese superiority. Asō Fumiko, a teacher in Kwantung, described how Chinese children were taught that they were "Imperial subjects." When they asked what nationality a "Imperial subject" was, she told them a subject was precisely that, a subject, and although they were not Japanese, they must work for the emperor.³⁸

Manchukuo

The Japanese army's systematic violation of domestic and international law in Manchuria has been discussed earlier. The illegitimate offspring of that sustained criminality, Manchukuo, was not the moral entity advertised in slogans like "the virtuous state." Cabinet decisions in March 1932 showed

the region's real function: "Manchuria and Mongolia will be the first line of defense against the Soviet Union and China." In order to "attain and expand our national interests . . . a de facto relationship will be established" with the new state, and "we will endeavor to make [Manchukuo] a fait accompli."³⁹ The last point expressed the government's determination not to be swayed by criticism or other countries' refusal to recognize Manchukuo. From its inception, the new state was an instrument of Japanese military and economic power; the welfare of the inhabitants never entered into the strategic equation.

Basic policy guidelines for Manchukuo were approved by the cabinet in August 1933. The new state was to be "guided" by Japanese nationals employed by the Manchukuo government. Behind this civilian façade was the unchallengeable authority of the Kwantung Army Commander who also served as ambassador to Manchukuo. Neither political parties nor political organizations were permitted. Transportation, communication, national defense, and internal security were all placed under Japanese control.⁴⁰ The Kwantung Army commander's "Basic Concepts for Manchukuo," dated September 11, 1936, stated: "The Emperor of Manchukuo reigns by virtue of the divine will, the august will of the Emperor. He serves the Emperor and his sovereignty inheres from the splendid harmony he attains with the divine will. . . . The Kwantung Army Commander, as the Emperor's representative, is the guardian of the Emperor Pu-yi."⁴¹ The conclusion of the Japan-Manchukuo Protocol in September 1932 confirmed the administrative agreements: Manchukuo's national defense was entrusted to Japan; defense expenditures would be borne by Manchukuo; the management and construction of railroads, port facilities, etc., required by the Japanese military would be entrusted to Japan; and Japanese recommended by the Kwantung Army commander were to be appointed counselors.⁴²

This pattern of sustained manipulation and control suggests that Japan was no benign midwife who withdrew after a diffi-

cult delivery and allowed its progeny to develop as an autonomous state. The new "state" was less a creature of Tokyo, however, than of the Kwantung Army. Pu-yi, the "Emperor of Manchukuo," dreamed of restoring a Manchu dynasty. In the daytime world of bayonets and power politics, his prerogatives were far from royal. The Kwantung Army regulated every aspect of his public appearances. All his questions to subordinates about government affairs drew a standard reply, "The [Japanese] vice-chief handles that," or "You must also ask the vice-chief." Pu-yi visited Japan in 1940 and received replicas of the three sacred regalia from the emperor—a sword, a bronze mirror, and the curved necklace. Upon his return to Manchukuo, he was required to erect a national Shintō shrine and to worship Amaterasu Omikami. "Emperor" Pu-yi personally had no illusions about his status. Looking back years later, he felt he had been nothing more than a Japanese puppet.⁴³

Manchukuo's material base was as foreign dominated as the political superstructure. Only 2 percent of capital investment funds were by third country nationals and 1 percent was local private capital compared to 40 percent Manchukuo state capital and 57 percent Japanese capital. Moreover, Manchukuo state capital came from the government and the Manchurian Heavy Industry Company, both Japanese controlled and financed. Thus Japanese capital accounted for almost all investment. Japanese capital totally controlled transportation, communications, new heavy industry, and the exploitation of natural resources for that industry.⁴⁴ Manchukuo's economy was completely subordinated to Japanese capital.

How the Japanese behaved in Manchukuo showed what the new "state" really was: they acted as if they were in the colonies. One long-time resident later wrote: "There were Japanese who rode in horse cabs and then refused to pay. If the driver demanded payment, they beat him half to death. If the Chinaman protested to the police, the authorities always accepted the Japanese's version even if he was in the wrong. These things happened all the time."⁴⁵ The Japanese military

were the worst offenders. Novelist Takami Jun witnessed an incident in Harbin in November 1944 in which a first lieutenant in uniform was annoying a cabaret dancer. Unable to put up with it anymore, she finally slapped his face and ran away. The officer chased her into the dressing room and forced her to dance.⁴⁶

The local economy was systematically looted. First, the peasants' land was seized to provide land for settlers from Japan. Many of these peasants later joined guerrilla bands and fought against Japan.⁴⁷ Second, forced labor was dragooned in the most pitiful ways. Yoshimura Mitsuo described one of these roundups: "As the war situation grew worse, the labor mobilization degenerated into abduction. Men traveling on the road near Nankuan were forcibly stopped and loaded on waiting trucks. Some were taken by the hands and feet and thrown bodily up into the vehicles. These hapless victims included persons who had just come in from the country to buy something and men returning from a visit with friends. One young man was to be married the next day and had just stepped out to make a purchase."⁴⁸ The seizure of human beings was a logical step for the Kwantung Army, which was in the habit of requisitioning horses for its annual field maneuvers. To avoid the requisition, owners blinded their animals. A Japanese visitor noted that "every single horse fit for army duty had been blinded."⁴⁹

The slave laborers would have been better off maimed, according to an eyewitness account by Sugawara Tokio. In early 1945 a large number of Chinese were used to build fortifications at Hut'ou Shanlu on the Manchukuo-Russian border. "They were forced to work with their legs manacled. The labor was exhausting, the hours long, the treatment brutal. Many fled, some to Russia. The unlucky ones who were caught were tortured by burning and the water treatment and then strung up someplace. They were barely human after that. Other members of the escapee group received the same punishment. Chinese workers were beaten with heavy clubs in broad daylight at the work site and on the road. Because the

fortifications they were building were secret, no Chinese shipped there to work were allowed to return home." They were literally worked to death and their corpses were left to rot by the roadside.⁵⁰

The suppression of anti-Japanese "bandits" inevitably brought death and injury to ordinary peasants. The Kwantung Army acknowledged that "most casualties in the bombing raids were ordinary peasants" and that "In many cases the bandits fled and the local people were mistakenly slaughtered as bandits."⁵¹ Patently false reporting was commonplace. An army study stated that "killed and wounded Chinese peasants were always reported as bandits." And mistreatment of the peasantry, "breaking into houses and seizing provisions," was endemic.⁵² Incidents like the P'ingtingshan massacre in September 1933 were the vilest atrocities. The area was a base for the Red Spears, a secret society bandit group. Japanese troops gathered all the villagers under a cliff and mowed them down with machine guns.⁵³ The Kempeitai unit in Tunhwa, the area of greatest guerrilla activity, regularly brought in peasants suspected of aiding the insurgents. "The shrieks of pain and the sound of whipping continued for an hour or so" every night in the interrogation sessions.⁵⁴

The attacks on Japanese when the war ended in August 1945 were an explosion of pent-up grievances; "the Manchurian hatred of Japanese was palpable."⁵⁵ The signs had long been there. Okura Kinmochi visited Manchuria in 1934 and found widespread antipathy to Japanese rule. A Manchukuo state minister told him: "Under the present circumstances, if a war breaks out between Japan and Russia, all Manchurians will rise in revolt against the Japanese." A "reliable Japanese" told Okura that "If our troops were withdrawn now, I am sure that all Japanese would be slaughtered."⁵⁶ These were accurate predictions of what happened at the war's end. Of course, many Japanese who neither abused nor exploited the local people were caught in the backlash. Yet the retribution was often precise. Tanaka Sutekichi was murdered for having thrown a driver who asked for his fare down a flight

of stairs and crippling the man. One department store that favored Japanese customers and refused to sell rationed items to non-Japanese was set on fire, whereas another with a non-discriminatory salary policy went unscathed.⁵⁷ The Japanese reaped after August 15, 1945, what they had sown in Manchuria for several decades.

China Proper

The Imperial Army's occupation of the cities of northern and central China brought the region under Japanese economic control. Use of the puppet East Hopei Anti-Communist Autonomous Council for smuggling was an early indication of what was in store for China. The East Hopei region "began to look like a smuggling base for heroin and other items sent in from Manchuria and Kwantung." According to Yamauchi Saburō, president of the South Manchurian Pharmaceutical Company, the firm began producing a large quantity of heroin in 1933 and distributed it with "safepassage documents" provided by the Kempeitai. The major heroin dealers showed their appreciation for army protection by contributing funds to purchase military airplanes. When the war spread across China, Fujita Isamu imported heroin worth about \$10 million from Persia and sold it in Shanghai. He earned almost ¥50 million for the Japanese army, which badly needed the funds.⁵⁸ The opium trade carried out under Japanese army auspices wreaked havoc on the Chinese.

New companies like the North China Development Company and the Central China Promotion Company proliferated with the spread of hostilities. Carpetbaggers rushed into the occupied areas to seize Chinese property in a frenetic bid to "develop" China. The Chinese soon found that "Japan-China friendship means a kind of economic cooperation more dangerous than being shot at by the Japanese army."⁵⁹ In his 1941 work *Senji kokusaiho kōgi* (Lectures on International Law in Wartime), Shinobu Junpei states that "enemy property" ad-

ministered by the army in 1940 included a great variety of factories. There were twenty different kinds in 110 places in north China and twenty-seven categories of factories at 94 locations in central China. Shinobu defended the control of enemy property as a "temporary measure" to prevent its ruin while the owners were absent. However, the practice violated Article 46 of the Hague Convention, which required safeguards for private property.

Japanese forces openly plundered Chinese property. Troops marching into Paoting after its surrender "broke store windows, grabbed valuables, and draped the loot across their rifles."⁶⁰ In the rice-rich lower Yangtze River delta, Chinese peasants worked months in the paddy muck only to see the crop hauled away in Japanese trucks, often to already bulging army warehouses where it rotted.⁶¹ Japanese troops shot water buffaloes for food, although the beasts were the only means old peasant women had of farming their fields and avoiding starvation.⁶²

Rape was an accepted prerogative of the Imperial Army. Gomi Kōsuke, an enlisted man, saw a veteran soldier attack a Chinese woman during a short rest break. To save time, the soldier mounted the woman in full uniform with all his ammunition and gear. He pumped away while she screamed.⁶³ Tamura Taijirō's *Rajo no iru tairetsu* (Naked Women in the Ranks) has many provocative passages about sexual conduct. One soldier says to another, "I've been told that if our unit goes out on a combat mission, it's all right to rape the women we find. They say the raped women must always be killed." In another section, a soldier watching a regiment approaching from the distance could see "patches of white mixed in with the marching column." When the unit got closer, he saw "there were naked women" with the troops. An NCO was admonishing the men, "If you want to get your hands on these Chink broads, you better keep up with the march. Right? Keep your eyes on those Chink bitches and keep going." These descriptions were based on actual experiences.⁶⁴ A Chinese youth told of seeing Japanese soldiers force a man and

woman at swordpoint to perform the sexual act. Another young rape victim, in shock from the disgrace and pain, drowned herself.⁶⁵

Japanese forces committed atrocities against the Chinese everywhere in the combat zone.⁶⁶ A corporal back home from central China in 1942 bragged at a welcome home party about his exploits at Hsuchou: "While out foraging for supplies we got hold of a pregnant woman. We stuck our bayonets in her huge belly, skewered her like a piece of meat. . . . I wiped oil on my sword blade so the Chink's blood wouldn't stick and then I cut a coolie's head off with one stroke."⁶⁷ Kawashima Tadashi was a drafted student serving in North China when he saw soldiers "beat a Chinese with rocks until his skull split open and he fell in a pool of blood. Then they kicked him and threw more stones. Officers watched the killing and did nothing. A weeping woman, his wife I suppose, clung to the mangled body."⁶⁸

Villagers suspected of secretly aiding the Eighth Route Army were savagely tortured for information. Interrogators tied a suspect to a ladder and forced water down his throat with a hose. Or they stripped the victim to the waist, smeared benzine on his back, and set it on fire. Other methods included forcing peasants to walk 50 meters ahead of Japanese troops where land mines were suspected. The farmers were used as human mine detectors and were blown to bits if they "found" a mine. The violence was often as random as it was brutal. Once Japanese troops patrolling in a village saw a flitting shadow. They entered a nearby house and dragged out an old woman and a young woman with bound feet holding a baby. A soldier stabbed the old woman to death. The woman with the child was shot in the back as she hobbled away. A soldier looked down at the fallen bodies and yelled, "The baby's alive. What shall I do?" The squad leader gave a two-word reply: "Kill it!"⁶⁹ These few examples of atrocities condoned by the military should suffice to indicate the pattern of troop behavior in China; there are so many atrocities recorded that one cannot even begin to list them all.

Chinese laborers were forcibly mobilized by the same methods used in Manchukuo. In March 1944 police of the Wang government closed off a section in the middle of Hankow, and "any men who seemed physically fit were seized and put on waiting trucks." At first the Japanese army carried out the actual roundup, but the Wang regime complained it was losing face as a "sovereign" government and asked to take over that part of the operation too. The Japanese army granted the request. Isoda Isamu described the human tragedy of these forced musters: "Early one morning I heard young women and children crying loudly outside. I rushed to the window and saw a long line of men with their hands tied behind their backs moving through the street. Apparently they had all been seized for labor service." Isoda ran outside: "The line stretched very far. A young woman who looked like a wife of one of the prisoners was screaming hysterically at a policeman, 'Where are you taking them? Let him go! Oh, my husband!'"⁷⁰

Many Chinese were forced to perform labor service at the front, and a large number were shipped to Japan. A cabinet meeting on November 27, 1942, devised "delivery" measures to accelerate the supply of coolies. Chinese POWs and civilians were rounded up, packed into jammed freight cars, and moved to ports of embarkation for shipment to Japan. The Chinese laborers were assigned the worst jobs and were treated like animals. Instructions from the Kamaishi Police Station, Iwate Prefecture, in September 1944 to the Nittetsu Kamaishi Mine confirm their subhuman status. The instructions said: "The kinder the Chinese are treated, the more demanding and impudent they become. Therefore, neither generosity nor leniency are necessary. . . . Reduce the food ration of those who do not work effectively. . . . The sleeping area need only be two or three inches higher than a person in a sitting position. . . . Bathing facilities are unnecessary because according to Chinese tradition they are offered by the defeated to the victors." Approximately 41,000 Chinese were sent to Japan as slave laborers. About 1,000 died aboard ship

or shortly after arrival, and about 6,000 died at work sites in Japan. The major causes of death were malnutrition and illness due to overwork and exhaustion. A substantial number apparently were killed in escape attempts. On June 30, 1945, about 850 Chinese at the Hanaoka Copper Mine, Akita Prefecture, rioted against bad working conditions and treatment. In restoring order, the authorities killed over 400 workers.⁷¹

The use of POWs for forced labor was one aspect of the general violation of international law and the mistreatment of Chinese prisoners. Even Shinobu Junpei, who usually defended Japanese army conduct, expressed doubt about the lack of information on Chinese prisoners. The answer seems to be that because the army was not adhering to international law, it could not submit reports about prisoner treatment. There are many accounts of prisoners being killed to provide realistic training for Japanese recruits. Kosaka Toshikame was a new recruit when he was required to "learn the ropes" by bayoneting POWs in Ichang.⁷² Recruit Ogoshi Chihaya was ordered to bayonet a Communist guerrilla captured in Inner Mongolia. The young man was tied to a wooden post and ripped to pieces.⁷³ Many atrocities were committed against Chinese prisoners; most were probably summarily killed and never reached the training field to serve as live target practice.⁷⁴

Shinobu points out that Japanese authorities regarded occupied China as sovereign Japanese territory and tried to ignore the extraterritorial rights of third countries. This was a clear violation of international law. Shinobu recounted an anecdote that typified the cavalier attitude toward China. After the fighting ended in Shanghai in 1932, a certain Japanese (either a civilian official or a military man) pointed to Fudan University and asked Shinobu, "This university is crawling with anti-Japanese students. Why wasn't it burned down?" Shinobu replied that if the existence of anti-Japanese students was sufficient reason to destroy the campus, it would mean that every Chinese and foreigner who harbored views contrary to Japan's interests would have to be killed, a rather formidable

ble undertaking.⁷⁵ International law was completely forgotten during the war in China. The Middle Kingdom had become a kind of private hunting preserve for Japanese.

The Chinese masses in the war zone suffered terribly. Army doctor Okamura Toshihiko recalled one scene on a road in the battle area: "There were more than ten corpses. One was a tiny child in her mother's arms."⁷⁶ A regimental commander on the China front told Prince Mikasa Takahito, "Our policy has been to burn every enemy house along the way as we advance. You can tell at a glance where our forward units are." If the burn and destroy policy had been prohibited, "We would not have any idea where the front lines are!"⁷⁷ The army called it an "extermination strategy"; "every village and hamlet in the operations zone was burned to the ground. Not even a single puppy was left alive."⁷⁸ Their farms ruined, millions of homeless people were left to starve. The instinct for survival led to desperate actions that were often totally misrepresented by the media in Japan. For example, the *Asahi Gurafu* on June 28, 1939, ran a picture of Chinese women who had been sold into prostitution. The caption read "sold-off women." A more accurate description might have used Ito Keiichi's phrase, "women sent out as human sacrifices to earn a little money for starving families."⁷⁹

Attempting to create the appearance of legitimacy was a hallmark of Tokyo's military-political operations in China. The Chinese Provisional Government was set up in Peking in December 1937 and the Reformed Government of the Republic of China in Nanking in March 1938. Both were puppet regimes pure and simple. Regardless of Wang Ching-wei's intentions, the Reorganized Nationalist Government established in Nanking in 1940 was also a puppet regime. Japan endorsed the Wang administration as the legitimate government of China, concluded a treaty with it in November 1940, and observed the formalities of state to state relations. This public charade was belied by the behind-the-scenes dispute over the regime's flag.

The Wang government wanted to adopt a white sun in a

blue sky design as the national flag. Japanese authorities objected that it would be the same as the flag of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government and would lead to confusion, particularly in military operations. When Wang Ching-wei was adamant, Tokyo compromised with the demand that a yellow triangular pennant bearing any two of the three slogans Anticommunism, Peace, and National Construction be attached to the top of the flagpole. Wang made a counterproposal that the pennant be on a separate flagpole to stand next to the national flag. This was unacceptable to Japan. All the while the North China Army worked covertly to allow the continued use of the five-barred flag adopted by the Chinese Provisional Government in North China.⁸⁰ A regime that negotiates the color of its own flag and has to accept a foreign topknot is hardly sovereign.

Wang Shih-hui, a minister in the Chinese Provisional Government, once candidly told Tsukui Tatsuo, "Chiang Kai-shek and I are both Chinese, so we have the same regard for our country."⁸¹ Wang served as a puppet official; it was such a humiliating experience that it made him want real independence for China. To believe that Chinese who were defeated and ground down by the Imperial Army would enthusiastically cooperate with Japan was one of the stupidest assumptions underlying the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

The Philippines

The Japanese occupation damaged the Philippine economy and antagonized a population supposedly being liberated. Imports ceased immediately; many sugar fields were ordered converted to cotton production, a crop more vital to the war effort. As the standard of living plummeted, Filipino antagonism rose: "The Filipinos blamed Japan for the shortages and privation. Furthermore, the presence of Japanese security forces was a serious irritant. The military arrogantly ignored local customs. An overweening victor's mentality—strutting

and ordering the natives about—was a constant insult. The Filipinos watched with bitter resentment.”

Granting independence to the puppet administration in 1943 did not reduce anti-Japanese feeling. Many Filipinos joined the resistance; according to American figures, there were almost 270,000 Filipino guerrillas. After mid-1944, the guerrillas received strong support from the general populace. Many Filipino men joined organized guerrilla units, but the whole populace—old and young, men and women—cooperated with the resistance. Japan had “liberated” the islands from Yankee imperialism and given the Filipinos their “independence.” Nevertheless, “The whole island chain became hostile territory.” When the American counterattack started, the people cooperated by providing intelligence information. The Japanese forces were desperate, cut off from supplies and surrounded by an unfriendly population.

The Japanese military struck back hard with tighter controls and terror tactics, but this only deepened Filipino hostility.⁸² The Filipino prosecutor at the Far East Military Tribunal presented a long list of unspeakable atrocities allegedly committed by the Japanese army. The reaction of an *Asahi* reporter who listened to the sickening catalog was perhaps typical: “Even if the charges are somewhat exaggerated, we have to acknowledge that atrocities were committed.”⁸³

Many Filipinos were pro-American; they fought against Japan and welcomed MacArthur back. Not all, however. A part of the resistance, the leftist Hukbalahap (Huk) guerrillas, were not only anti-Japan but anti-U.S. as well. The U.S. Army slaughtered a large number of Huks on March 7, 1945.⁸⁴ Counterinsurgency operations continued against the Huks well after World War II ended.

Malaya

Singapore, with its large population of overseas Chinese, was a stronghold of anti-Japan sentiment. The Chinese community contributed funds to the Nationalist government and

harassed Japanese supply and communications lines in Malaya. After the capture of Singapore, Japanese forces arrested more than 70,000 overseas Chinese suspected of subversive activities.⁸⁵ In a short period of time, too short for their guilt to have been established, several thousand persons were slaughtered in a vengeful massacre. According to a Japanese account, “The executions were carried out in a heinous way. A large number of Chinese were tied together, loaded on a boat, taken out to sea, and pushed overboard.”⁸⁶

Terror was a constant feature of Japanese rule. Eight Malays who broke into a military warehouse were executed by beheading, and the heads were exposed in the busiest part of Singapore. Notices in several languages were put near the heads: “They killed a Japanese sentry.” Waitresses in a quayside coffee shop, bristling with anger, asked Yokota Yasuo, “Aren’t there any courts in Japan? Are people so quickly condemned to death under Japanese law? Do you stick decapitated heads up on the streets of Tokyo?”⁸⁷

The barbarous execution of resistance fighters and criminals was only part of the violent record. There were cases of rape where afterward the Japanese man took out a concealed pistol and shot the woman in the back when she tried to escape. Although it was said that “military discipline was generally satisfactory,” at least compared to the China front, a veteran recalled that “Once I saw a woman’s corpse with a bamboo pole stuck into her genitals.”⁸⁸

To the people of Singapore it was a strange kind of liberation. According to Yokota, “The pompous English were replaced by the rough, vulgar Japanese. Simply a change from bad to worse. The Raffles Hotel was renamed the Shōnan Ryōkan, the Adelphi Hotel became the Nanto Hotel, and Singapore residents were permitted to use neither. The Japanese military took the Katon Seaview Hotel and pool for their own use. All the best theaters, the Cathay and others, were reserved for Japanese only. Forms of racial discrimination never practiced even by the British were imposed.” Food became scarce and rice was rationed. Malnutrition spread as the

indigenous population received only about half the ration allotted to Japanese. Schools were closed and converted to Japanese army barracks. Girls' schools became restaurants and brothels for Japanese only. Privation forced many female students and widows to work in them.⁸⁹

Kuroda Hidetoshi was on one operation against Communist guerrillas in Ipoh in 1943. Suspected villagers were lined up to be identified by a prisoner. One young couple was picked out and loaded on a truck "as a forlorn little girl watched them taken off. Not a tear stained that young face as she turned away, still waving, and headed home." Over a dozen suspected guerrillas were brutally tortured to get the names of others. The Japanese soldiers were "covered with blood after a crazy orgy of beating and killing the prisoners." A Japanese civilian employee in the counterinsurgency unit said in disgust, "The way our army operates against these people just makes them hate us more and more."⁹⁰

Burma

The initial response to Japanese forces in Burma, the Dutch East Indies, and French Indochina differed from that in the areas described above. At first the Japanese were perceived as liberators. It was only later that disillusionment set in, followed by hatred and resistance.

According to Kuroda, the Burmese thought that "Japan is our great friend" and "the Japanese will accept us warmly." Many Burmese, "their hearts full of anticipation . . . rushed out to greet their ally, the Imperial Army." The Japanese military responded to this warm welcome and the gift bags of rice by "slapping the Burmese about, and putting them right to work hauling logs and water." Some Burmese came limping back, "The morning's exultation gone, their faces lined with pain and despair." Disappointment followed on the heels of expectation as quickly as one Japanese soldier marched after another through Rangoon's streets.

Japanese forces originally occupied only the southern area of Tenasserim, and Burma was promised its immediate independence. Instead, the Japanese army extended the occupation to the whole country, established a military government, and used the Burmese army as an instrument of control. These actions alone were enough to trigger a Burmese reaction, but insult was added to injury. In August 1943 Burma was allowed to declare its independence. Despite that formal change of status, Premier Ba Maw was still treated like a hireling. The Japanese army even stopped the vehicles of Burmese state ministers right in front of Burmese police headquarters, a humiliating affront to a supposedly "independent" government.

Although the successful occupation of Burma was partly due to the assistance of the Burma National Army under Aung San, he was subsequently given the cold shoulder. The Burmese Army was not made an autonomous national army. When Japanese forces started to withdraw in March 1945, Aung San's Burmese troops revolted and, together with the British Indian Army, launched a sharp offensive against the retreating Japanese.⁹¹

India

Japanese officers organized the Indian National Army (INA) in September 1942. There were fundamental differences from the outset. Indian leaders wanted an independent and autonomous national army; Japan insisted that it participate in Imperial Army campaigns. Proposals by Captain Mohan Singh, who originated the INA, to increase the Indian forces and to issue a proclamation on Gandhi's birthday were rejected. Indian troops were sent to the Rabaul and Timor campaigns, battles and places unrelated to Indian independence. Having no desire to be a Japanese puppet, Mohan Singh left the INA.⁹²

Some Indians like Subhas Chandra Bose hoped to use Japan

to gain India's independence; most Indians, however, remained loyal to England and supported the war effort. When Japan invaded China in 1937, Pandit Nehru of the Congress party formed a China Medical Committee, organized a China Day, and called for a boycott of Japanese products in support of China.⁹³

Indonesia

The Dutch East Indies were by far the most important strategic jewel in the South Pacific. Japan coveted the island's oil resources; possession had been deemed worth war with the United States, England, and Holland. An Imperial Conference in May 1943 decided that "Marai, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and the Celebes are Japanese territory and a priority effort will be made to develop them as supply areas for major natural resources."⁹⁴ Since this decision ran counter to the ostensible policy of "liberation" and co-prosperity, it was kept secret; no public announcement was made. Two years later, with defeat imminent, the policy was changed from exploitation to independence. On August 17, 1945, two days after Tokyo surrendered, Japanese navy officers assisted Sukarno, Hatta Mohammad, and others in declaring Indonesia's independence.⁹⁵ This change of heart postdated the collapse of Japan's southern front; it was not part of Tokyo's original plans to control the mineral-rich islands.

Indonesians initially welcomed Japan, but the honeymoon was short-lived. Political rights were curtailed more than under the Dutch. In March 1942, the Japanese army banned all groups and meetings and followed that in June with the prohibition of all speeches, writing, and activities related to politics. Nationalists like Sukarno and Hatta were ignored when a three-zone administration was implemented. Symbols of national unity and independence like the Merah Putih flag and the song *Indonesia Raja* (Greater Indonesia) were also prohibited. Indonesians were forced to study the Japanese lan-

guage and even to stand and sing the Japanese national anthem, *Kimi ga yo*, in movie theaters.⁹⁶

The "liberators'" behavior followed the usual insensitive pattern. It was common for "Japanese walking along the street to show their disdain for the 'natives' or to get drunk and beat up pedicab drivers . . . officers would screw around with women right on the *tatami* floor of Japanese-style restaurants, and junior officers and army civilians would get drunk in bars and clubs and sing at the top of their voices, drowning out everyone else."⁹⁷

The Japanese army undermined Dutch prestige and assiduously fanned resentment toward the former rulers. Yet Japanese control, infused with racial superiority, was discriminatory and oppressive. Antagonism and resistance by Indonesians was inevitable. An Indonesian volunteer corps was organized as an auxiliary to the Japanese administration and to help in the defense of the islands against an Allied attack. The Indonesian volunteers resented "the attitudes and training methods of Japanese officers and the better treatment given Japanese soldiers." In February 1945 this resentment exploded in a revolt by the volunteer corps unit in Blitar. There were also frequent attacks against Japanese in West Borneo by Dyak tribesmen because "the forest area they depended on for a living was ruthlessly cut down in lumbering operations."

An extremely harsh requisition of men and materials was carried out in central Java. Many farmers and workers were shipped to other areas as laborers, and nearly all died. The requisition was ostensibly a voluntary recruitment; in fact, however, "a variety of compulsory methods were used, from withholding the rations of those who did not register to randomly seizing peasants at work in paddy fields along the highway. Working conditions [of the forced laborers] were unspeakably vile." These unfortunate Indonesians, like the Korean, Chinese, and Manchurian slave laborers, learned who it was that prospered in the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Kempeitai security measures were intended to intimidate the population into submission: "The rumor was that if the Kempeitai took you away, that was the end. You would not come back alive. They wanted everyone quaking with fear." The Japanese army did its share. "Indonesian custom regards a person's head as very precious. It was taboo to even touch another person's head . . . Japanese soldiers for no reason at all would hit Indonesians on the head right out on the street. . . . Indonesians were frightened of their 'liberators.' They could not even walk down the street in broad daylight." Hera Wati-dia's younger sister was raped by a Japanese and suffered a nervous breakdown from which she never recovered.⁹⁸

War criminals were executed at Ambon after the war. "The hatred and contempt for the Japanese prisoners was written on the spectators' faces. . . . They shouted, 'Get those Japs who stole the food from our mouths! . . . They deserve to die! Kill them! Kill them!'"⁹⁹ The crowd's collective rage was the last hurrah for Japanese rule.

Sukarno, Hatta, and other prewar nationalists tried to cooperate with the Japanese military to gain independence for Indonesia. Younger Indonesians whose political consciousness was shaped during the Japanese occupation disdained such assistance in favor of winning independence with their own hands. On August 16, 1945, members of the Indonesian volunteer corps burned the Japanese flag, arrested collaborators, and created the first liberated zone in Indonesia.¹⁰⁰

French Indochina

Japan also plundered French Indochina. Many rice paddies were converted to jute, and part of the rice crop was shipped to Laos and stored for contingency use. A severe food shortage occurred; nearly 200,000 Vietnamese reportedly starved to death after the war.¹⁰¹

The Vietnamese resistance to French colonialism regarded

the Japanese as a new wave of oppressors. Illegal activity began with the formation of the Vietminh Front in May 1941 to "concentrate the revolutionary power of all classes and nationalities."¹⁰² The first Vietnam Liberation Army Propaganda Unit was organized in December 1944, and the armed struggle accelerated. A liberated zone of six counties was created in June 1945 and became the major revolutionary base. Vietnamese opposed rice requisitions and refused to pay taxes. Vietminh posters and handbills reportedly were spread even in Japanese army camps and in puppet government offices. The next stage was a general uprising ordered in August 1945. On August 14-15, the Vietminh occupied many Japanese army positions near the liberated zone. On August 16, Ho Chi Minh and other leaders decided to seize administrative control before the Allies landed, disarm the Japanese, and be ready to welcome the Allied forces. Large demonstrations were held in Hanoi on August 19 and in Saigon on August 25. Ho Chi Minh declared the independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on September 2 in Hanoi. Tominaga Toyofumi recalled his astonishment at seeing a Vietminh flag whipping in the breeze over a government office in Nyattoran (phonetic) only three days after the war ended.¹⁰³

These were the realities of the East Asian areas occupied by the Japanese military. Control was imposed by force. Tokyo attempted to legitimize that control with terms like "liberation" and "independence." But there was no "East Asian community" or "co-prosperity sphere." It was a war-wasted region where the peoples' independence and their very lives were devastated by brutal military oppression and economic exploitation.

Assertions that the independence of many Asian peoples "was largely due to the Pacific War and that therefore the conflict's positive side should be appreciated" underlie the "affirmation of the Greater East Asian War."¹⁰⁴ It is true that Japanese military occupation temporarily severed Western

control and weakened the former rulers. But this was merely an incidental consequence: Japan did not liberate Asia. The Asian struggle for independence unfolded through the rigors of the Japanese occupation. Asians won their freedom by fighting and dying in the resistance to Japanese imperialism. To call Japan's disgraceful and bloody rampage a crusade for liberation is to stand truth and history on their heads.

9

The Horrors of War

The crumpled corpses of Nanking and Auschwitz show how easily war provokes killing above and beyond the call of any duty. The new weapons of mass destruction are incomparably more lethal. Modern warfare, in which industrial production is an extension of the battlefield and the distinction between combatants and noncombatants is imprecise or gone altogether, leads to higher and higher death tolls. In ancient times the leaders of opposing armies often met in individual combat to decide the outcome. Now huge professional military forces clash, with their societies mobilized behind them.

The Destruction of Human Values

World War II brought atrocities on an unprecedented scale, and they were an infamous hallmark of the Japanese military. A few incidents that occurred in occupied areas have already been mentioned. Here I wish to elaborate on this theme and show by concrete examples that the Greater East Asian War, which has been glorified as a moral cause, was a dirty war of sadistic cruelty.

If men hesitate or refuse to commit brutal murder, war would be impossible. But war has the power to dehumanize man, to remove his scruples about taking life. In the heat of combat where it is kill or be killed, survival often depends on