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James J. Orr. *The Victim as Hero.* Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001. viii + 271 pp. $22.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8248-2435-8; $47.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8248-2355-9.

Reviewed by Jing Zhao (US-Japan-China Comparative Policy Research Institute, San Jose)

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Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan 1945-1972

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There are many books, in Japanese as well as in English, which illustrate the struggling processes in the postwar Japanese society over the memories of loss and trauma of war.[1] In the book under review, James Orr provides the first systematic, historical inquiry into the emergence of the concept of victimhood in postwar Japan. This is a concise book, covering Japan in the first three decades since the end of World War II. Orr describes vividly how the notion of victimhood has been institutionalized through the use of elite political rhetoric, school texts, novels, films, and reparations battles, and he offers a compelling explanation for the peculiar, distorted form that moral argumentation surrounding war responsibility has taken.

Chapter 2, "Leaders and Victims: Personal War Responsibility during the Occupation", describes how in the early years after defeat, the Japanese people came to feel they had been duped by their wartime leaders. In contrast to the previous wars (the 1894 Sino-Japanese War and the 1904 Russo-Japanese War) in which Japan won, defeat in World War II brought the Japanese people a debacle they had never experienced. Although it was sometimes unclear whether it was the moral responsibility for waging a war of aggression or the strategic responsibility of losing it (p. 2), personal war responsibility was one central issue if Japan were to avoid another such destructive war.

This chapter arrives at balanced as well as dispassionate conclusions. However, some analytical parts are not so illuminating nor persuasive, especially from the eyes of Asian people, who view this subject passionately. One example concerns MacArthur's memory of his impression on first meeting with Hirohito. It seems that the author truly believes the apocryphal story that after the emperor offered to bear sole responsibility for the actions of his people during the war, MacArthor was moved by this assumption of responsibility (p. 19).

Even though the author points out that U.S. occupation policy shifted from reforming a vanquished enemy to nurturing a stable Cold War ally, he does not explore the logical consequence of the fact. The U.S. occupation policy prevented Japan from becoming a true

peace country; and, in this regard, the Japanese victimhood, including the A-bomb victim experience, sometimes becomes not only meaningless but also hypocritical, as viewed from passionate Asian eyes. The author also fails to point out that the Tokyo Trials served the U.S. Asia strategy/interest more than Asia's true peace. For some people outside of Asia, it would be difficult to understand why in December 2000, fifty-five years after the end of the war, there was a Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japans Military Sexual Slavery in Tokyo.[2] However, I think most Asian people would agree with Asai Motofumi that with the exception of their attitude and policy toward America, the Japanese ruling class changed nothing.[3]

Chapter 3, "Hiroshima and Yuiitsu no hibakukoku: Atomic Victimhood in the Antinuclear Movement", describes the political and cultural meanings that Hiroshima carried from 1945 to the early 1960s. This chapter shows how the antinuclear movement succeeded to some degree in Japan. At least, it prevented the United States from openly stationing nuclear weapons on Japanese soil (p. 69). The Japanese government also has been forced, in public, to follow the so-called three nonnuclear principles. The chapter also explains the movements limitations. First, the conservative forces and the U.S. feared the movement would develop into one against the Security Treaty; second, Japanese consciousness as victimizer played little role in antinuclear pacifism (p. 66). From my experience, except for a few responses from Europeans or Americans, Japan's yuiitsu (Japan-only) Atomic victimhood experience appealed little to the Asian people.

When I entered Qinghua University's Engineering (Nuclear) Physics Department after China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, we suddenly found that, except Nuclear Physics, China had no field to compete with the outside world. Nicknamed the cradle of China's bombs, and administered under the Seventh (Nuclear) Industry Ministry, we were proud of our department as one core factor contributing to China's strength in standing against the nuclear threats of the two superpowers. However, one classmate, Zhang Jingbo, declared that he would not study knowledge in order to kill the and requested to change to other peaceful majors. This surprised all of us, especially the school administration. That was not allowed under China's education system and he was dismissed from the school.[4] One of China's A-bomb founders, who gave up his American professorship and returned China, educated us: I dont want to kill either. However, I will never want to be a humiliated Chinese again. Marshal Chen Yi's statement was famous to us: As PRCs Foreign Minister, Id rather have an A-bomb than clothes.

Chapter 4, "Educating a Peace-Loving People: Narratives of War in Postwar Textbooks", focuses on how the war was presented in elementary and middle school social studies texts. Since the book covers only until the early 1970s and the issue becomes intensified in the 1980s, 1990s and in the new century, I feel the study in this chapter is neither comprehensive nor complete. I would like to signify 1972 as the year for Japan to have resolved the most important postwar issue when it normalized its relations with the PRC. This normalization provided Japanese people the way to communicate with the Chinese people directly. Issues on the textbooks, state reparations (especially with North Korea), and individual level war reparations including the Ianfu survivors, are far from resolved. Unless these issues are honestly addressed and properly resolved, Japan's Sengo (postwar) will never have an end.

Chapter 5, "Sentimental Humanism: The Victim in Novels and Film", analyzes three popular antiwar novels and films to demonstrate how basic themes of war victimhood are reflected and reinforced. The contents here are fine. I should admit that I have not read nor watched the three works discussed in this chapter: *Twenty-Four Eyes* (*Nijushi no hitomi*) by Tsuboi Sakae; *The Human Condition* (*Nigen no joken*) by Gomikawa Junpei; and *Black Rain* (*Kuroi ame*) by Ibuse Masuji. Among the potential candidates for the authors analysis, I only read and watched Takeyama Michios *Harp of Burma* (*Biruma no tategoto*) (note 6, p. 221).

This is another example of how a Japanese wartime literature is perceived differently from Asian eyes. When I finished my special Japanese training at Dalian [5], the Japanese teachers' delegation presented each Chinese student a copy of *Harp of Burma*. I tried to read it because our Chinese teachers, following the government's instruction, informed us not to read it because it falsely glorifies brutal Japanese aggressors. I could not understand why the author wrote on such a topic and how he could find any audience. Later, when I watched the video, in Japan, I realized that the Japanese people need this kind of story describing their soldiers as heroic victims, rather than cruel victimizers. It seems the Chinese government was right: this is not a good book; and people could easily extend this conclusion to other similar Japanese wartime literature. In fact, most Chinese only know the wartime Japanese victimhood through Japan's

Proletarian Literature, such as the Japanese communist writer Kobayashi Takiji who suffered death by torture.

Chapter 6, "Compensating Victims: The Politics of Victimhood", shows how in the 1960s the victim mythology had become political capital that special interests (landlords and repatriates, but not the A-bomb victims) could manipulate for their own benefit. I have difficulty to understanding why the author includes landlords in this chapter. The landlords are victims of the postwar land reform, but not victims of the war; their compensation campaigns had no relation with Japans peace ideologies or national identity.

Since the book only extends to the early 1970s, the author could not develop how the Japanese victimhood interacted with its Asian neighbors more recently. For example, one important fact is that the PRC leadership also utilized this the-Japanese-people-are-also-victims pretext [6] to explain to the Chinese people its policy regarding Japan. Thus any Japanese political figure violating this pretext would cause troubles to China, and eventually to Japan too.[7] I would suggest the author add the time span 1945-1972 to the book subtitle "Ideologies of Peace and National Identity in Postwar Japan".

Technically, there are some points that need improvement. For example, the Index should include more items used in the book, such as Marco Polo (Lugou) Bridge, Port Arthor (Nushun). The main difficulty in reading this book, though, is to match the right kanji of many Latinized Japanese words (the book has not a single kanji or kana). Since the book studies Japan on a rather specific topic utilizing mainly Japanese materials, readers without Japanese language knowledge will have difficulty in understanding many Latinized Japanese usages. For readers with Japanese language knowledge, however, we would very much like to read the kanji along with their Latinized spellings, especially for Japanese names. For example, note 76 on p. 235 prints the whole Latinized text of *Furusato no tuschi* (*The Soil of My Village Home*). I do not think anyone will read, nor understand them, without the original Japanese text. In this regard, I would suggest research and academic publications follow *The Journal of Asian Studies* and print out Chinese characters.

As a publication directly derived from a dissertation, the book displayed the authors ability to analyze delicate subjects. In fact, there are fifty-eight pages of notes for the 179-pages of text. This is another indication that the topics of the textbooks, the war responsibility, and the A-bomb experience, need more thorough study without the time limitation imposed by the book. In this regard, until the true victims, the Asian people become heroes, the theme of this book will continue on to the second or third generation. We look forward to seeing the author publish his new research on this subject from a wider perspective and a longer span.

Notes

[1]. For example, H-US-Japan on October 18, 2001 published Akiko Fukumotos review on Igarashi Yoshikunis *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970*. The book covers the same time span as this book under review. See `http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/reviews/showrev.cgi?path=267691003516498`

[2]. See, for example, Yayori Matsui's report on the tribunal posted to H-US-Japan on February 22, 2001.

[3]. Motofumi Asai, *Taikoku Nihon no Sentaku: Kokuren Anzenhosho Rijikai to Nihon* (*The Choice of the Giant Japan: The UN Security Council and Japan*), Tokyo: Rodojupo Press, 1995. See my review published in *Chinese Politics Journal*, 1997 Fall, posted at `http://cpri.tripod.com/cpr1998/asai.html`.

[4]. This was the first time I seriously thought about international politics. Five years later, upon graduation, instead of going to a nuclear research institute or a testing base, I began to study Japanese and then went to Japan as a Sociology student.

[5]. Dairen in Japanese, which also administers the navy port Nushun (Port Arthor). Nushun is not open to foreigners.

[6]. This is a complicated issue. Basically, under severe international pressure, mainly from the two superpowers, China had to compromise in its relations with Japan. There was no way for the PRC to request war reparations from Japan. The PRC only succeeded by forcing Japan to recognize that the PRC, not the collapsed ROC, had the right to give up reparations.

[7]. Koizumi Soichiro has not learned this lesson. Under international and domestic pressures asking him to forego paying homage at the Yasukuni Shrine, Koizumi replied that it was not he, but the Asian people who should change their attitude toward the Yasukuni Shrine.

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