

## **Reclaiming the wartime experience from the first person viewpoint-towards a history and peace education based on experiential psychology**

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### **The succession of never experienced wartime experience**

"Anyone who closes his eyes to the past is blind to the present. Whoever refuses to remember the inhumanity is prone to new risks of infection." This is one excerpt from the famous speech that German President Richard Karl Freiherr von Weizsäcker delivered at the ceremony for the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II. Even now, 25 years after this speech, these words by Weizsäcker still remain significant to us Japanese.

A Historical Sociologist, Yoshiaki Fukuma (2009) in his "Post-war History of Wartime experience" describes in detail a process of creating a conflict over wartime experience and a gap between the post war generation and the pre-war and wartime generation. He also points out that, "In the post war period, experiences of war were a kind of "culture" and functioned as a symbol of violence for the post war young generation who did not have direct experiences of war. Therefore, the "culture of wartime experiences" lost the support from the younger generation.

As Fukuma clarified, in the post war Japanese society, wartime experiences had not always been concordant with "anti-war" and "peace". For the generation who directly went through the war, experience of war could not be easily expressed with words, and therefore, it became a ground to criticize the political manipulation of "anti-war" by the postwar generation and created severe conflicts with them over the experience of war." Such criticism and conflict show complicated aspects of in-

heriting wartime experiences, but Fukuma regards this positively as "Through such aspects of conflict and inconsistency, a variety of possibilities of confronting the war experience has been created" and he asserts in the following:

The wartime experience repeatedly experienced degradation and discontinuity. However, it does not mean that passing down or succeeding them is impossible. Rather, mnemonic succession and regenerative opportunity may dwell in sincerely examining the history of discontinuity of wartime experiences in the post war period. Our future can be carved out by examining the mistakes and what-ifs of our past. (p.262)

In this period of time, 74 years after the Nanjing massacre and more than 65 years after the end of WWII, how can we approach the experiences that took place far before we were born and reflect them on our current way of life? How can we take responsibility for the war and succeed these wartime experiences? What is the purpose and meaning for us to offer an apology as "Japanese people"? To find out the answers to such questions, we need to sincerely examine "the history of discontinuity in war time experiences in the post war period," and once more explore how we approach "the wartime experience which repeatedly endured degradation and discontinuity."

The task given to us as individuals living in the 21st century is to figure out how we can carry on these wartime experiences without closing our eyes to certain details so we can build a resistance to such events repeating in the future.

### **First-person narrative Part 1: De-historizing body**

I was born in 1963, 18 years after the end of WWII. The first opportunity for me to face the issues of a history within myself came when I took a class on "The Social Body" while attending graduate school in the U.S.. It was taught by Professor Don Hanlon Johnson (1992), a leading scholar in the field of Somatics (a field to explore the body-mind from the first person perspective) and one of the pioneers in the psychological and sociological study of the body. Our assignment was to read "A Chorus of Stones" by Ms. Susan Griffin (1992) and to present an essay on it. In the very

first session, a German and a Jew born in the same generation as myself confessed the burden of the history they carried. When I witnessed their confession I was shocked by the fact that I myself had never felt history in the seriousness they did.

Before this, although I had knowledge about the incidents that took place at Marco Polo Bridge, Nanjing, Pearl Harbor, and Hiroshima-Nagasaki, I had never realized that they had some connection with my present self. The dates such as December 13, 1937, December 8, 1941 or August 6, 1945, were not so significant as the dates of Taika Reformation, AD 646, and Kamakura Shogunate formation, AD 1192. When I thought of wartime battles, I associated them with the Boshin War or Sekigahara War; popular scenes that appeared on television programs. Although I had been to an Atomic Bomb Museum had seen films on Pearl Harbor and seen photos of the Nanjing Massacre, these experiences had never changed my way of life. I had never connected the war of my grandparent's and parent's generations with the violence within myself and Japanese society or with the wars that were taking place all over the world at this present.

In the class by Prof. Johnson, I learned the concept of the "social body" that Foucault articulated, which indicated that social systems such as education and medical care inscribed a particular frame of feeling and thinking which was sedimented in the bottom of one's consciousness through the bodily disciplines. Through the concept, I first realized that the body, which did not realize the connection between the past war and my present, was my "social body" that was raised in Japanese society. At this point I came to call my social body, which was disconnected from the past and lived as if only in the present, the "De Historizing Body" parodying Kitaro Nishida's famous "Historical Body."

With this social body, if we simply accumulate knowledge about past events, without having sympathy with other's pain and imagination to the complicated social situation, we may just deepen the degree of de-historization of the body. That is, even if we increase the amount of description of WWII in textbooks, it will not be sufficient under this situation. If we carry a "De historizing body" such as my own, we may not sympathize with the direct voices of those people who went through

the agony of the huge historical wave of war. Such voices include the victims of the Japanese invasion, the Hibakusha that suffered under the atomic mushroom cloud, or the people running around to escape the Tokyo blitzkrieg.

In order for me to get rid of such a "de-historizing body" and realize the past that brought up myself as my own and connect with neighbors at the deeper level, I needed to develop a "historical body" for myself that would honestly face and accept the feelings of others and ourselves.

In order for us to remember and learn from the history, we should develop, through history education, this kind of "social body", which allows us to be aware of the complicated nature of history we have grown up with- which inevitably raises the issue of the violence within us-and to grasp it as an extension of this present moment connecting to our lives. That was my lesson from that class of Prof. Johnson's social body, and I decided to organize an Asian Worldwork in 1996 in San Francisco, with the purpose to explore how the various atrocities Japanese army conducted during the WWII in Asia influence us in the present day." (Murakawa 2001b)

### **Call for Experiential Psychology**

According to Eugene Taylor (2000), a lecturer of history of psychology at Harvard University, history of psychology can be divided into three currents: experimental, clinical, and experiential. These three have developed independently, though overlapping with one another. Among them, experiential psychology has a root in the American psychological and spiritual traditions of the 19th century, influenced by Depth psychology and Existential Philosophy from Europe, and has developed since the 1960s, as Humanistic Psychology, Somatics, Transpersonal Psychology, and Holistic Medicine and Integrative Medicine. Experiential psychology criticizes the Cartesian dualism of body/mind or subject/object experimental psychology and psychologism which reduces all the psychological phenomena into one's inner world, and instead takes a view of human beings as a whole consisting of mind/body/spirit. As a school of this experiential psychology, Arnold and Amy Mindell, Jungian Psychotherapists, started Worldwork, a group work, which "brings into psy-

chology a new vision of taking individual inner processes and group processes as a dynamic single process...In this Worldwork, with the issues of racial discrimination, gender, and ethnic conflicts, they do not try to seek for reconciliation, by dividing into the good and the evil or the oppressor and the victim. Rather they adopt the view of "the field" as a third viewpoint and try to "heal the field." (Murakawa 2001b)

In experiential psychology, they do not make an intellectual analysis or interpretation from the third-person objective stance, but rather explore the experiences from the first-person stance. Therefore, they encourage the participants to accept their own experiences as they are, before making intellectual judgment or reflection. Since each person's experience is different, they do not value from the absolute standpoint of "good or bad" or "right or wrong." However, it is needless to say that the "experiences" should not also be put into the absolute position, and should be explored of their meanings through a process of reflecting and analyzing them. In this sense, "experience" in the view of experiential psychology is "experiment" with actual feeling and is only an opportunity to explore how we can live our lives while communicating and cooperating with others. Therefore, experience and thinking/reflection form a reciprocal process.

In the Worldwork of the Mindells who take a position of experiential psychology, they emphasize "dynamics of field" as an opportunity to sublimate dualistic positions such as an individual and a group, the right and wrong, or a victim and a perpetrator. I believe that taking this kind of new approach where we deliberately deal with the complicated issues regarding the war, there might be a possibility to create "a new history education" which overcomes the above mentioned "de-historizing body."

### **First-person narrative Part 2: History as present accompanying the feeling**

The reason that I chose to organize "Worldwork" to explore the "De-historizing body" was that when I participated in the Worldwork of Mindells in 1994 I became aware that inside myself existed a "violence associated with the pleasure of life (sexuality) that rises up from deep within when I release myself in a group." As an in-

dividual person, I had been regarded as rather non-violent. However, the violent energy I felt after working with a group of Japanese people forced me to question myself, and the possibility for me to conduct the same atrocities as Japanese armies did during the war. This experience taught me that the atrocity that the "Wartime Japanese Army" conducted is not an issue of "Japanese" nor "some other" but rather that of myself who hid an impulse to oppress others and treat them violently; a very issue of how I face that impulse.

After organizing this Worldwork to deal with the issues of war in Asia, I started to work as a volunteer for a Chinese American civil movement which was just growing bigger at that time trying to let the American society recognize the history of the Sino-Japanese war. (2001a) Through this work, I became acquainted with Chinese American victims of war, American veterans who suffered from the damage of human body experiments of the 731 Unit, Mrs. Iris Chang and Mr. Shudo Higashinakano. Sometimes, I was invited to memorial services for the victims of the Sino-Japanese war in San Francisco, in which I was given an opportunity to offer flowers as a Japanese participant. These experiences inevitably made me realize that the war 70 years ago was not something in the past but "in the present" for many Asian people living now with intense feelings.

Some other people who participated in the Asian Worldwork of 1996 also continued to work for this issue with a strong will and passion. One of them was Mr. Kazuaki Tanahashi. He held a passionate intention to visit Nanjing, and asked Ms. Iris Chang for reference. He first visited Professor Zhang Lianhong of Nanjing Normal University in 2000, took years to build their trust and friendship, and finally held an international conference "Remembering Nanjing" in 2007, on the 70th anniversary of Nanjing Massacre. This event became a seed for the project in 2009 and 2011. (Tanahashi 2007) The invitation letter for this international conference is written as: "This conference is for people from China, Japan, and other parts of the world, who have had different war experiences and educations, to open their hearts and listen deeply to one another on the issues of the Sino-Japan War and the Nanjing (Nanking) Tragedy." (Tanahashi 2007) This conference was unique since it clearly

mentioned its non-judgmental position as follows: "in order to reflect the diversity of historical interpretations, this conference asked to put our fixed ideas aside and allow each person to be open to other viewpoints. We encourage people to listen to the feelings of others and express their own personal feelings."

Another figure who was a participant of the Asian Worldwork of 1996 and continued to get involved in this issue was Mr. Armand Volkas, a drama therapist. Mr. Volkas came to Japan in 2007 and held a workshop on playback theater based on his own Healing the Wounds of the History method to deal with the war experience for Japanese postwar generation, at the Ritsumeikan University Peace Museum. At the opening of the Playback Theater, an elderly Japanese expressed his intense feelings by saying, "You should deal with the fact that Japanese lost many lives by A-bomb, before calling us an assailant." His expression, though appearing aggressive, contained a slight sense of sorrow, which made me realize that many Japanese carry both feelings of damage and assault layered upon each other that remained unexpressed. Here I saw that Playback Theater can take such a strong aggression in a public space, without denying them and respect them as they are, which also created a base for this seminar in 2011.

### **Memory and feeling inscribed in the body**

Kleinman et al (1997), who initiated interdisciplinary study of social memory of traumatic incidents such as Holocaust, Vietnam War and other racial conflicts and ethnic cleansing, claim that the violence during the war continue to influence on both victims and perpetrators, appearing as mental diseases or psychosomatic disorders, even in the peace time. Such violence is not confined to the individuals who experienced them directly, but can be transmitted to the later generations at the three level of individual, cognitive, and performative (Connerton, 1989). However, in the history and peace education in East-Asian regions, the tragedy of war experiences has been dealt with only at the individual and cognitive levels, elucidating "objective facts of war." It has never focused on the social memory which has been transmitted at the performative level, such as domestic violence (張, 2010). In ad-

dition, the conventional trauma treatment has focused on the individual level and has had little perspective to connect the individual trauma to the social memory sedimented at the bodily performative level (Muramoto, 2008). On this account, the memory of war for the post war generation has been cut off from their own lives without associating it with lively feelings through history education partial to transmission of objective facts, while as Kleinman and others clarified, violence by war has been transmitted at the bodily performative level up to the present. This unrecognized trauma casts a shadow over the Japanese modern society, as violence acting out or as symptoms such as depression or self-mutilation.

As postmodern theory indicates, there is no such thing as an absolutely correct history. For example, "the Truth and Reconciliation Commission" (TRC) which was organized aiming at the reconciliation of allelism between races in South Africa, where the hatred and the anger long held an apartheid policy, points out that there are several ways of "truth." According to the TRC, there are four truths as 1) factual or legal, 2) individual or narrative, 3) social or for dialogue, 4) healing or for restoration. (Nagahara 2004) In the war history, "truth as facts" has been the main focus. However, "truth as narratives" or "truth for dialogue" contains the feelings and emotions of an individual and is necessary to open a way towards the truth for healing and restoring the relationship for postwar generations, by disentangling them one by one. Healing the Wounds of the History, which Volkas developed for many years, is a superior method to share stories of an individual with many others while carefully taking care of the feelings as an approach of experiential psychology.

### **First-person narrative Part 3: Reflection of "Remembering Nanjing 2011".**

Ms. Muramoto who took part in the Playback Theater by Mr. Volkas in 2007 also joined "Remembering Nanjing" in November. She visited Nanjing again in 2009 with her Japanese students to carry out the promise she made with her Chinese students. This seminar of Remembering Nanjing 2011 is the third of this continuous effort. During four days of this HWH seminar Mr. Volkas conducted, I had several opportunities to speak up actively.



On the first day, after a group of several Chinese and Japanese discussed the issue of identity as Japanese or a Chinese, Volkas put the two chairs, representing a Japanese and a Chinese, in the center of the circle of all the participants, and then anybody who would like to speak for that position is encouraged to speak. In this exercise, I sat on a chair representing Chinese and spoke to a Japanese chair, to criticize Japan, which was an expression of the voices of Chinese I had listened to over ten years. Then various participants spoke for each side, and expressed their feelings. At the end, I took a turn on the Japanese side, and expressed a voice of a Japanese "indifferent generation." This was an affirmation that there were various voices inside of me regardless of Chinese or Japanese.

Within a frame of experiential psychology, it is encouraged that we do not identify ourselves as a Japanese or a Chinese, but rather we embody our Japanese or Chinese history and speak up from that embodiment. I was present there as a human being, rather than as a Japanese. Speaking up at the seminar was an experiment for me to explore what kind of presence my voice come from and to find out how different the difference between a Chinese and a Japanese is from that of Aomori and Nara or Yamaguchi and Fukushima prefectures, or to find out whether that difference depended on the language or customs. By this method that Volkas conducts, we can express and share such various voices in a safe space, which provides an opportunity to listen to various voices within others or ourselves and to take them in. However, the experiences in this experimental space are not necessarily leading to the "healing" of the victims, and the experiences and the voices from them might not be connected to the "truth" in the political context. Such connections are unknown to us yet.

### **An orientation of history and peace education; from victim and perpetrator to finding a common ground.**

Taking an opportunity with the 50th anniversary of the end of WWII, an active argument came to be developed regarding how we can take responsibility for the war (Abiko and others 1999). Above all, the activities by "Jiyushugishikan Kenkyu-

kai (a liberalism view of history meeting)" and criticism of "Comfort Women" and "Nanjing Massacre" by Yoshinori Kobayashi, a member of "Atarashii Rekishikyokasho wo Tsukurukai, (a meeting making a new history textbook)" attracted many young generations. Against this situation, Manabu Sato (1998), a scholar of education, points out "Atarashii Rekishikyokasho wo Tsukurukai basically follows a fundamental frame of postwar history education, rather than completely denying it" and criticizes the history education under the postwar democracy in the following way:

Through the stunt that erased the war as the matter that passed, and to cross out voices of the dead, the postwar education realized a prompt shift to peace and democratic education. Although memory of vivid war accompanied with agony and lamentation hovered in each person's body, in the official history taught by school education, such memory of the body was erased and a bright and undaunted education towards rebuilding of the homeland was executed. (p.310)

Sato examined the way of postwar history education, and proposed a new way of history education "whose principle to transmit the history should be to respect as they are the varieties of memories and histories which were held by each person's body" and asserted that it is necessary to set an education which accepts histories lived by each person in this modern Japanese society as the facts of "history of Japanese people" rather than lumping them together with labels of "good" and "evil" or "right" and "wrong."

A scholar of education, Mai Takahashi (2009) in her "Education focusing on not inhibiting the human growth: an education necessary for common life" critically examined discourses which insists that recovering "Japanese nature" can solve contemporary problems as Yoshinori Kobayashi of "Atarashii Kyokasho wo Tsukurukai" and "Jiyushugi shikan Kenkyukai" insisted. Through her examination, Takahashi points out that it is necessary to find out a true cause and solution for a problem of "a crisis of relationship" as a fundamental problem which was brought by expansion of a social gap based on a meritocracy in Japanese society where their claims infiltrate. From Takahashi (2009),

"The reason that the paradigm shift from "self-education for a victim" to "self-education for a perpetrator" is necessary is that existing pedagogy promotes violence and colonization for others as well as for the self" (p .274). Based on this analysis, Takahashi points out "the modernity which disturbs a human encounter" as the fundamental problem and insists in the following:

The fundamental problem of modern education lies in neither the lack of "Japanese nature" nor the underdevelopment of modernity, but rather in the continuation of modernity or "colonialism" which disturbs "human encounter" with others. It is a result that even after the war, we merely shift the boundary of groups which enables effective colonization from Japanese citizens to Japanese elites, and still eliminating the "encounter" as we did during the war, and colonizing others and ourselves as ever. We feel lonely and experience the crisis of relationship because we do not encounter with anybody and nobody encounters with us. Unless we overcome this modernity as keeping a society, which we maintain by never "encountering", that is, a society, which forces us to be not an individual but "somebody," educational problem of the present age will remain unsolved and we will never truly be liberated. (p .276-277)

#### **First-person narrative Part 4: Reflection from "Remembering Nanjing 2011"**

On the morning of the last day of the seminar, we went to Yanziji with all of the seminar participants to offer flowers at the monument for the victims. When I came to Nanjing in 2007, I went to the same monument for the same purpose, but this time there was a big difference: a Chinese and a Japanese paired up to offer flowers. Watching Chinese and Japanese youth taking each other's hands and going up the stairs together inspired me and gave direction to a path that I had walked without a definite direction to since I heard heartbreaking voices of German and Jew classmates in a class by Don.

In the afternoon, we came back to Nanjing Normal University and did a closing for the seminar. At the end, Chinese and Japanese participants stood facing each other and truthfully and openly expressed what they asked for. Promoted by words

of Mr. Volkas to "take the words of each voice as an individual as well as a collective," Chinese participants expressed "I want you to change anything positively without using the right wing for an excuse"; "Watching a Japanese kneel and apologize makes my heart ache. We do not want to watch such a figure. I want you to take some action." We could hear these straightforward words that had never been spoken. In turn, a Japanese participant expressed that, "only a voice of the right wing seems to be outstanding in Japan, but there are many Japanese that have tried hard to educate the young generation for peace since the old days. However, recently more and more of those people are giving up and have developed a negative feeling towards China. I would like you to find a compromise somewhere, and to support us. Please." After uttering such straightforward voices and exchanging frank responses, Japanese and Chinese approached each other, shaking hands and embracing each other. I was sitting on a floor between the two groups, witnessing the process, to keep the scene firmly in mind. It seems that I witnessed an "encounter" which was made possible through spending time together where each one touched the unspeakable dark history and felt the pain of each other, and sincerely explored what we should do for the future.

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