

NATIONAL SHAME

On China's Defeat in the War of 1894¹

Liu Yazhou

Liu Yazhou: President Xi Jinping said: “History is the source of the current affairs and every country's today comes from its yesterday.” The War of Jiawu is a war that profoundly changed the destinies of two countries: China and Japan. It also influenced, to some extent, the history of the world. Of course, China is the country that was affected most profoundly. To China, the historic gravity of this war lies in two areas: (1) China was defeated, but the reason for its defeat is still being explored and (2) Although the war ended long time ago the wound it left still has not healed but remains uneasily balanced between history and the present. Resolving these nagging doubts left over from the War of Jiawu² would constitute a step upward in our people's advancement. This war in this sense is already a symbol.

I. Social System

Liu Yazhou: The defeat by Japan in the War of Jiawu was not merely a naval defeat or defeat of the army but a defeat of the nation.

Reference News: Why are you saying so?

Liu Yazhou: Japan's victory was a victory of one system over another. The booming of the guns of the Opium War stirred both the Qing Dynasty and Japan; both embarked on the road of “reform and opening to the world.” However, in studying the culture of Western civilization, one changed from the inside and the other simply stopped at externals; one digested the foreign elements like food and the other treated them like clothing. The former became strong and the latter merely made certain superficial changes. Fukuzawa³ once said that it is essential to make three changes for a nation to rise: a change of minds, a change of political

¹EN: The Chinese version of this article (甲午國殤) was published by *Can Kao Xiao Xi* (*Reference News*), April 12, 2014.

²TN: The First Sino-Japanese War (1 August 1894 – 17 April 1895) was fought between Qing dynasty China and Meiji Japan, primarily over control of Korea. After more than six months of unbroken successes by the Japanese land and naval forces and the loss of the Chinese port of Weihai, the Qing leadership sued for peace in February 1895. The war is commonly known in China as the War of Jiawu 甲午戰爭; referring to the year (1894) as named under the traditional sexagenary system of years. (From *Wikipedia*).

³TN: Fukuzawa Yukichi 福澤諭吉, 1835 – 1901, was a well-known Japanese author, writer, teacher, translator, entrepreneur and journalist.

system and a change of instruments, exactly in that order. Otherwise, one may seem to have found a shortcut but one would quickly find the road impassable. While Japan did as Fukuzawa prescribed, China simply proceeded in reverse. It turned out that, while Japan succeeded, China failed. Bismarck, Germany's Iron Chancellor met with the delegations from China and Japan. When asked about his impression of China and Japan, he said, "In a contest between these two countries, Japan must win and China must lose." He also said, "The Japanese who visited Europe were interested in all manner of ideas and political principles, for the purpose of making fundamental changes back home. However, the Chinese here were interested only in how ships and cannons were made, and how much they cost; just buying them and taking them home sufficed."

Reference News: The slogan of the Qing Dynasty is "The Western learning should only be studied for practical purposes while the Chinese learning should remain the foundation."⁴

Liu Yazhou: The Chinese ancient civilization is so sophisticated that it has become our baggage. For its lack of cultural originality Japan has never been a world player in leading the world civilization, which actually made it easier for them to be westernized. Japan was a nation good at learning; it learned from whomever was stronger and Japan did it effectively. After its defeat by China, during the Tang Dynasty, Japan dispatched many emissaries to China. In Japan, at that time, the Tang culture was very much in vogue. After World War II, before the debris of war ravages was cleaned up on the street of Tokyo, Emperor Hirohito⁵ issued an imperial order to send students to the United States. Therefore, it was not surprising that Japan became a modern country within thirty years during the Meiji Reform. The face-off between Japan and the Qing China is one between a modern country and a pre-modern country. How could the Qing China win?

Reference News: What prompts you to say that Japan had become a modern country then?

Liu Yazhou: The main indicator is the awakening of its people. Inheriting China's cultural tradition of thousands of years, Japan's social structure took after its mother country's: The state did not know its own people and the people did not know their own state; people were only aware of their own filial clans, but not the state. The Western missionaries who visited

⁴TN: "中學為體，西學為用。"

⁵TN: Emperor Shōwa 昭和天皇 (1901 – 1989) was the 124th Emperor of Japan.

China and Japan noticed that the people of both countries were, though extraordinarily patient and tenacious, indifferent and submissive under oppression, without any initiative and creativeness. In a Japanese book titled *On China*, Chinese people were said to be “like a lower animal such as earthworm, which continued to live even if a part of its body was cut while other parts felt nothing at all.” Such comments also fit the description of the Japanese people before the Meiji Reform. However, when the Western culture was spread to the East, Japan resolutely cut off its cultural umbilical cord which had been with it for thousands of years. It shed its Asian characteristics and took on European ones. It joined the ranks with the West. As a result, its people became nationals of the state. There are two important criteria to judge whether a country’s people are nationals: (1) whether they have rights, and (2) whether they have wealth. During the Meiji Reform, a “civil liberty” movement, with its focus on “taxpayers’ participating right,” was launched. In Okubo Toshimichi’s words, “A country’s strength is built on the wealth of its people.” Japan followed a path opposite to China’s “Learning from the West” Movement; it encouraged private capital. In contrast, the “Learning from the West” Movement made the government-controlled enterprises grow big and powerful. The Qing government placed the interest of the ruling class above that of the people, which is one of the reasons why Japan dared to invade China. A corrupt social system not only hinders a nation’s development, but also makes a country more susceptible to foreign invasion and compromises the national interest at the critical moment. While so much war indemnity was paid after the defeat in the War of Jiawu, not a cent was allotted to purchase ships for the navy before the war. A modern country is built based on its nationals. Many Japanese scholars believed, in their discussion of the War of Jiawu, that national consciousness was the key to its winning the war. Nation-state is the basic model of modern Japan. While Japan did whatever it could to promote its nation’s creativity, the Qing Dynasty did whatever it could to nip new ideas in the bud. Generally a war has very little to do with the ordinary people and even its soldiers. After the fall of Weihai Port,⁶ the Southern Fleet demanded that the Japanese navy return the two captured battleships under its command, insisting that they had been in North China for exercising with the Northern Fleet, rather than for fighting. The incident became a laughing stock in the history of naval battles.

Reference News: In all matters, people are always the most important.

Liu Yazhou: Liang Qichao⁷ states: “The contest of the present day world is one between nationals, not between countries.” Short on natural

⁶TN: *Weihai port* is located in north of yellow sea, east end of Shandong Peninsula.

⁷TN: Liang Qichao (1873-1929) was an intellectual leader of the early twentieth century.

resources, Japan tried hard to develop its human resources, which is true of Japan during the Meiji Reform and also of Japan today. Japan focuses on the education of its people. The education here is not the outdated Tang style education, but the updated European style education. Ten years after the War of Jiawu, Japan won again in the Russo-Japanese War. The Japanese Emperor said he was most grateful to Japan's elementary school teachers for winning the war, because the majority of Japanese soldiers went to elementary school whereas Russian soldiers were basically illiterates. To this day, the best houses in Japan's rural areas are the schools built during the times of Meiji Reform. The revolution of education leads to revolution of ideas. An army needs ideology more than anything. Good ideas are the best weapon. China's Red Army was an army with good ideas and therefore was invincible.

Reference News: In comparison, the Qing's army is far inferior.

Liu Yazhou: Education in the Qing Dynasty is the worst in the Chinese history. In a meeting, one of our top leaders showed us two lists of names of the Qing Dynasty, as kept in the National Library. The first list includes Fu Yijian, Wang Shidan, Bi Yuan, Lin Zhaotang, Liu Zizhuan, Chen Yuan ...

Reference News: Never heard of those names.

Liu Yazhou: The second list includes Li Yu⁸, Hong Sheng⁹, Gu Yanwu¹⁰, Jin Shentan¹¹, Huang Zongxi¹², Wu Jingzi¹³, Pu Songling¹⁴, and Yuan

⁸TN: Li Yu (1610–1680) was a Chinese playwright, novelist and publisher, best known as the author of *Rouputuan* (*The Carnal Prayer Mat* 肉蒲團).

⁹TN: Hong Sheng (1645-1704) was one of the most famous Chinese playwrights and poets, best known as the author of his famous play *Changshengdian* (*The Palace of Eternal Life* 長生殿).

¹⁰TN: Gu Yanwu (1613 – 1682) was a Chinese philologist and geographer. He spent his youth during the Manchu conquest of China in anti-Manchu activities after the Ming Dynasty had been overthrown. He never served the Qing Dynasty. Instead, he traveled throughout the country and devoted himself to studies

¹¹TN: Jin Shengtian (1610? –1661) was a Chinese editor, writer and critic, who has been called the champion of Vernacular Chinese literature.

¹²TN: Huang Zongxi (1610 – 1695) was a Chinese naturalist, political theorist, philosopher, and soldier during the latter part of the Ming dynasty into the early part the Qing.

¹³TN: Wu Jingzi (1701–1754) was a Chinese scholar and writer, best known as the author of his famous novel *Rulin Waishi* (*Unofficial History of Officialdom* 《儒林外史》).

¹⁴TN: Pu Songling (1640 – 1715) was a Qing Dynasty Chinese writer, best known as the author of *Liaozhaizhiyi* (*Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* 《聊齋誌異》).

Shikai¹⁵. The people on the first list are Qing Dynasty's Number One Scholars or valedictorians in its annual imperial examination, while the people on the second list are those who failed the tests at the entry level. The comparison of those two lists is very much indicative of the problems in education.

Reference News: The contrast is quite compelling.

Liu Yazhou: You cannot overestimate the importance of ideas. People's spirit is their ideas and people's ideas are their spirit. Ideas are things both mental and physical. The thinking organ is the sexiest organ. Having watched several videos showing the Japanese army in World War II, I always find something on the faces of those Japanese soldiers very peculiar, hard to imitate. War veterans often complained that our actors did a poor job playing the Japanese soldiers. Why was it so? What was missing? One day in Japan, I watched a marathon covered by all the seven major news media. It seemed everyone in Japan was watching. One runner, who twisted his ankle, got to the finish line in almost five hours. Still the reporters of the news media followed him and the streets were filled with people cheering for him. It was only then when I suddenly realized what that peculiar something was. Shortly before the War of Jiawu, Li Hongzhang visited England and was invited to watch a tennis match by the British royal family. When asked about his view, Li said: "Very good, very good, but too much hard work. Why not hire someone to do it?"

Reference News: People like Li Hongzhang are considered the cream of the "Learning from the West" Movement.

Liu Yazhou: Liang Qichao regarded Li Hongzhang¹⁶ as a hero made by the situation but not a hero making the situation happen. In his opinion, Japan's Ito Hirobumi¹⁷ was the latter. He said there were many people as

¹⁵TN: Yuan Shikai (1859 – 1916) was a Chinese general, politician and "emperor," famous for his influence during the late Qing Dynasty, his role in the events leading up to the abdication of the last Qing Emperor, his autocratic rule as the first President of the Republic of China, and his short-lived attempt to restore monarchy in China, with himself as the Hongxian Emperor 洪憲皇帝.

¹⁶TN: Li Hongzhang (1823 – 1901) was a politician, general and diplomat of the late Qing Empire. He quelled several major rebellions and served in important positions of the Imperial Court, including the premier vicerealty of Zhili.

¹⁷TN: Prince Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (1841 – 1909) was a samurai of Chōshū Domain, Japanese statesman, four time Prime Minister of Japan (the 1st, 5th, 7th and 10th), genrō and Resident-General of Korea. Itō was assassinated by Korean nationalist An Jung-geun. The politician, intellectual, and author Suematsu Kenchō was Itō's son-in-law, having married his second daughter, Ikuko.

great as Ito Hirobumi in Japan. However, “In China Mr. Li was a loner in his generation.” It is the people who make or break a reform and it is the people who make or break any cause. Li Hongzhang competed, alone, against a whole elite group. How could he possibly win?

II. Strategy

Liu Yazhou: The War of Jiawu is also the collision of the developmental strategies between China and Japan. In the mid nineteenth century, the Western powers invaded the eastern hemisphere, and Asian countries fell one after another except for China and Japan, when both countries strived to rise up. China initiated a “Learning from the West” Movement, while Japan launched the Meiji Reform. The leaders and participants of the “Learning from the West” Movement should be paid the same level of respect as those in the Meiji Reform for their efforts in building a modern country. The problem is that East Asia is too crowded for two countries, especially one as vast as China, to rise at the same time. This situation would ultimately lead to a war between China and Japan; however, while the Japanese were soberly aware of this inevitability, the Qing Dynasty was not. In the meantime both countries made strategic maneuvers at the gunpoint of the Western countries’ battleships. In this process Japan made a complete transition from the traditional strategy to a modern one. In contrast, the Qing Dynasty stopped short of making a modern national strategy. It failed to do so until its demise.

Reference News: This tells us, at any time, the most important thing is to have a strategy with clear objectives.

Liu Yazhou: First we should have a strategic will. We have to learn from Japan in this regard. Japan, an island country, always has its eyes set on the continent. In order to plant its feet on the continent to its west, it made preparations for more than a thousand years. That is to say, it had enforced its strategy toward China for more than a thousand years. There were two patterns present in Japan’s past: (1) whenever its power was centralized, it would attack Korea; and (2) every time, after a national disaster, the calls for a war against foreign countries intensified. The most recent instance is the Japanese rightists’ pitches on the Diaoyu¹⁸ or Senkaku Islands after the Fukushima Earthquake, which is merely a reflection of its strategy toward the continent. The Japanese history is permeated with a continent complex. Though not without great thinkers or strategists, China, in its history, did not have mega-strategies across generations, as well as the will to enforce such strategies. In waging the War of Jiawu, Japan openly preached to

¹⁸TN: Diaoyu Islands are located in the East China Sea between China and Japan. The archipelago contains five uninhabited islands and three barren rocks.

“gamble with its nation’s destiny.” The Qing government did not have such a will. It was Japan’s intention to occupy China permanently after the War of Jiawu, because it tried to destroy the will and spirit of the Chinese people as they learned from how the Qing Dynasty overtook the Ming Dynasty, which is the reason why the Japanese army was so cruel as to use massacres as means of the war. The Rape of Nanking¹⁹ was just a copy of “Ten days of Yangzhou.”²⁰ The massacres had to happen somewhere and Nanking was merely a place more suitable to Japan— it was the capital city where the shock effect of the massacre would be felt far and wide. This is Japan’s planned strategy.

Reference News: From this perspective, the thread of Japanese’s thinking could be more clearly seen.

Liu Yazhou: The strategic perspective is next to follow, complete with its breath and depth. The Chinese history is, first and foremost, a part of the world historical process before it becomes its own history. You have to understand the world process in order to understand China’s. The Sino-Japanese war is both a bilateral conflict and a product of the war games by the world powers. In 1853, Britain defeated Russia in the Crimean War,²¹ blocking Russia’s way to the South; not long after, Zuo Zongtan²² took back Xin Jiang, which greatly limited Russia’s influence in Mid Asia. As a result, Russia turned to the East and collided with Japan. Engels

¹⁹TN: The Nanking Massacre or Nanjing Massacre, also known as the Rape of Nanking or Rape of Nanjing, was an episode during the Second Sino-Japanese War of mass murder and mass rape by Japanese troops against the residents of Nanjing (then spelled *Nanking*), then capital of the Republic of China. The massacre occurred over six weeks starting December 13, 1937, the day that the Japanese captured Nanjing. During this period, soldiers of the Imperial Japanese Army murdered an estimated over 300,000 Chinese civilians and disarmed combatants, and perpetrated widespread rape and looting. Several key perpetrators were tried and found guilty at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East and the Nanjing War Crimes Tribunal, and were executed. A key perpetrator, Prince Asaka of the Imperial Family, escaped prosecution by having earlier been granted immunity by the Allies. (From *Wikipedia*).

²⁰TN: The Yangzhou massacre took place in 1645 in Yangzhou, China, during the Qing dynasty. Mass killings of residents in Yangzhou were conducted by Qing troops under the command of Prince Dodo after they conquered the city from forces loyal to the Southern Ming regime of the Hongguang Emperor. The massacre lasted ten days after the city fell on May 20, 1645. Traditionally, the number of victims was reported as close to 800,000, although some modern scholars consider it an exaggeration. The defending commander, Shi Kefa, was also executed by Qing forces after he refused to submit to their authority. (From *Wikipedia*).

²¹TN: The Crimean War (October 1853 – February 1856) was a conflict in which Russia lost to an alliance of France, the United Kingdom, the Ottoman Empire, and Sardinia. The immediate cause involved the rights of Christian minorities in the Holy Land, which was controlled by the Ottoman Empire. (From *Wikipedia*).

²²TN: Zuo Zongtang, 1812 – 1885, was a Chinese statesman and military leader in the late Qing Dynasty.

believed that the War of Jiawu was started by Russia by sowing discord between China and Japan. The conflict between Japan and Russia became imminent after the War of Jiawu which occurred merely ten years later, referred to as “World War 0” by the Western countries. This war where the new powers defeating the old gave birth to Russia’s “October Revolution,” which had far reaching repercussions.

Reference News: Can you talk about the military strategy of the Qing Dynasty?

Liu Yazhou: An American named Lippman²³ once said that a military boundary between two hostile countries is bound to be a political boundary between them. Reversely, a political boundary between two hostile countries could become their military boundary. The military strategy is a part of a state’s strategy; the former is subordinate to the latter. However, if the military strategy goes astray and the war is lost, the state’s strategy is certainly doomed. If the state’s strategy is problematic, the right military strategy can still make room for rebuilding the state’s strategy; otherwise, even if the state’s strategy is perfectly designed, it will not be enforced without the aid of a right military strategy. It can be clearly seen by looking at the state’s strategies of China and those of Japan at that time. The Qing government, after thirty years of “Learning from the West” Movement, encountered a strategic opportunity that did not exist in the past thousand years. It was so close to becoming a world power, though not quite yet, much like the present day China. While the Qing government was preoccupied with not losing this strategic opportunity, Japan believed in “building a strong military as the foundation of a wealthy country, not the opposite,” by expanding its armaments eightfold in preparation for “mobilizing the whole nation and gambling with the nation’s destiny.” Needless to say whose state’s strategy was superior. The right decision makers win and the wrong decision makers lose. The different outcome of a war lies in the difference in military strategies.

Reference News: But didn’t the Qing government have a new navy and army too?

Liu Yazhou: After thirty years of military reform, the Qing government appeared to have a new type of navy and army. However, it failed to

²³TN: Walter Lippmann (1889 – 1974) was an American writer, reporter, and political commentator famous for being among the first to introduce the concept of Cold War, coining the term “stereotype” in the modern psychological meaning, and critiquing media and democracy in his newspaper column and several books, most notably his 1922 book *Public Opinion*. (From Wikipedia)

reform its military because it stuck to outdated ideas. A victorious army fights today's war with tomorrow's ideas, while a losing army fights today's war with yesterday's ideas. As Chernyshevsky²⁴ said of Peter the Great, "Mustache was shaved and German uniform was put on, but the ideas associated with the mustache and the old uniforms were still very much there." The military reform on the part of the Qing Dynasty failed to remove the influence of an agricultural civilization. The issues in an agricultural production mode were peace and food. As long as those two issues were resolved everything was just fine. An agricultural culture tends to look inward, rather than outward, which underscores the fierce infighting within the Qing Dynasty. The Northern Fleet, though equipped with the strongest battleships at the time, followed a defensive strategy. It is a peasant's navy and, hence, a navy for defending the inland, rather than a navy making forays into the oceans. In appearance, the War of Jiawu is a war between "returned students" – the battleships were imported from Europe and the generals were trained in the same academy and the orders were issued in English. In reality, it was a contest between peasants and modern soldiers and a collision between rocks and eggs. I was once shocked to find that the Northern Fleet did not even sink a single Japanese battleship. Upon reflection, I was no longer puzzled, because even if you pile all the eggs in the world in a heap, they will not be a match to a single rock! Now, even if we only talk about defense, the first line of defense should have been placed in Tsushima Strait. Instead, the Northern Fleet was merely making some maneuvers along coastlines. As a classic example for failure, the Northern Fleet is way too "successful."

Reference News: Are there any other problems in Qing's military reform?

Liu Yazhou: There are two additional problems. First, it didn't have modern military thinkers. Military thinkers are indispensable for a war design at its highest level and the failure of such a design was of the gravest consequence. Traditionally Chinese looked down upon military thinkers. Military books were never highly regarded and good scholars stayed away from them. On the other hand, Germany, under the watch by world powers after its defeat in World War I, established a modern mechanized army from scratch and swept the whole Europe in merely twenty years. How did German army achieve that? The reason is it regarded military thinkers highly. Guderian²⁵ was promoted to general and appointed to be the field commander of Germany's first armored corps

²⁴TN: Nikolay Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky (1828–1889) was a Russian revolutionary democrat, materialist philosopher, critic, and socialist.

²⁵TN: Heinz Wilhelm Guderian (1888–1954) was a German general during World War II, noted for his success as a leader of *Panzer* units in Poland and France and for partial success in Russia.

because of his military theory. Rarely were China's military thinkers taken so seriously. Interestingly, by the way, Japan's thinkers and policy promoters of the war against China were ordinary scholars, not government officials. Second, it was entangled in the contention among various interests. Qing's new military evolved from the Hunan Army and the Anhui Army, complete with different factions and their internal strife. Within the imperial court the old guards and the reform party were at each other's throat, and outside the revolutionary forces had every intention to wipe out its conservative counterpart. Huang Zunxian²⁶ exclaimed sadly during the War of Jiawu: "Oh! Navy and Army! They are united but we are disorganized. Like inchworms we can only hunker down without any hope to stand on our feet, and like a gamecock we can never work as a team! "At that time the military industry was under the control of different fractions of the pro-West group, which in turn became part of their private assets. Seizing tons of military equipment during the war, the Japanese army was amazed to see so many different models were used. Every group tried to maximize its own interests. There were eighty-four models of cannons positioned in the fortress belonging to the Northern Fleet alone.

Reference News: How could such an army prevail in a war?

Liu Yazhou: In the War of Jiawu, some outstanding soldiers, especially some Northern Fleet generals, did their best. Among a total of eleven captains of the Northern Fleet, seven died in the battle. Close to three thousand officers and men perished. But it did very little to change the outcome of the war. Actually the more courageous they were, the more incompetent the government seemed to be and the more clearly one can see how costly a wrong strategy could be. This war could be regarded as one in which the Chinese military stood closest to its foreign counterpart in armaments but also as one in which it suffered a defeat most miserably, in China's history. So that window of opportunity was lost swiftly. While Japan prospered, China was falling behind, day by day. Take the navy as an example: When World War II broke out, the Japanese navy's battleship tonnage was nine hundred thousand, including ten carriers. In contrast, the Chinese navy had the tonnage of merely fifty-nine thousand, less than that of one single Japanese battleship named Yamato whose tonnage was sixty-five thousand.

III. Faith

Liu Yazhou: The defeat in the War of Jiawu is also the defeat of culture.

²⁶TN: Huang Zunxian (1848 – 1905) was a Chinese official, scholar, and writer, active during the late Qing Dynasty.

Reference News: There is a chapter specifically on this issue in the series of “Defeat in the War of Jiawu.”

Liu Yazhou: To know a nation, you have to know its culture. The core of the culture is spirit and the core of spirit is faith, which, as the gene of a nation, dictates its characters and development, as well as its mutation. To know where a nation is headed, one must know where it came from through genetic analysis. In analyzing the War of Jiawu, one has to analyze the genes of both nations. In so doing, one should look beyond the surface and find the root of a thousand years old and the trend for the next millennium. It was said prior to the War of Jiawu, Japan dispatched quite a number of spies to China. One spy came to an entertainment center somewhere in Southern China and heard someone playing *erhu* in an extremely slow, long-drawn-out and sad melody. After listening for a while, he sighed: “It is gone. This huge country is finished.” He detected the spirit of the Chinese people in late Qing through such a melody.

Reference News: Researchers of the War of Jiawu noticed a huge spiritual difference between the two armies.

Liu Yazhou: The Qing military failed to defend one single city that could be defended and failed to take over one single city that could be taken. The Japanese military was not certain at all about the final outcomes of the Sea Battles of Pungdo, of Pyong Yang and of Donggou when they started. However, the Qing military managed to lose each and every single one of them. In the Sea Battle of Pungdo, Captain Fang Boqian fled. In the Battle of Chenghuan and Yashan, Captain Ye Zhichao fled; in the Sea Battle of Yellow Sea, Wu Jingyong, captain of Battleship “Guangjia,” fled; in the defense of the city of Lushun, generals Wei Rucheng, Jun Zhaoma and Zhao Huaiye all fled from their posts. Japan’s “Journal of Japanese-Qing War” wrote: “Chinese generals were tall and looked strong. However, once the battle started, they turned into cowards, fleeing before they heard any gun shots and some even disguised themselves as women by putting on their clothing.” This sentiment was even reflected in Japanese children’s games after the war, in which the loser was called “China.” There was also a sharp contrast between the spirit of the civilians of the two countries. The Chinese civilians often shed tears when they sent their loved ones to the frontlines. In contrast, Japanese, as Liang Qichao remarked, “considered it a high honor to send their soldiers to, or welcome them back from, the barracks. Such an honor was higher than one accorded to the Chinese scholars who passed academic tests, including even the imperial examination.” He went on to say that the Japanese families usually give three Japanese words as gift to those enlisted, which means “Dying while fighting” and the poems sent to the

enlisted, as published in the newspapers then, were replete with the words like “No return alive.” Even prostitutes, supposedly the most despised in the society, made contributions to the government for its war effort. During the Lushun Massacre²⁷, the Chinese people made no effort to fight back; most of them seemed numb just like lambs ready to be slaughtered. Luo Fenglu²⁸, advisor to Li Hongzhang, described the situation by saying: “Japanese used to say that Chinese were like dead pigs on the ground ready to be butchered at will, which is what actually happened.” Fukuzawa once said: “The cowardice expressed by the Chinese was beyond description.” In China during that period two assassinations targeted at high-ranking Japanese officers occurred: Ahn Joong-keun²⁹ shot and killed Ito Hirobumi and Yoon Bong-gil³⁰ killed Baichuangyize, a Japanese general, with a bomb. However both heroes were of Korean descent in exile. Those two Koreans were able to do something so earthshaking in China, sending shudders to the spines of Japanese. How I wish those heroic acts had been performed by us Chinese nationals! Now I would like to bring your attention to an interesting fact: Both Taiwan and Korea were occupied by Japanese for fifty years. However, their attitude toward Japan is totally different. Many Taiwanese admired or even worshipped Japan; some, such as Lee Teng-hui and Lu Annette former president and vice president of Taiwan, even wished they were actually Japanese. In contrast, Koreans resented and hated Japan so much so that they tore down almost all the architectural structures built during the Japanese occupation. In my view if one fish is sick, it is the problem of the fish but if the fishes in a river are all sick, it is the problem of the water in the river.

Reference News: The “water” here means Chinese culture?

Liu Yazhou: Yes. In ancient times we Chinese boasted of great characters. In the Spring and Autumn Period, the Chinese people were brave and courageous, with great minds, initiatives and creativity. People

²⁷TN: The Battle of Lüshunkou was a land battle of the First Sino-Japanese War. It took place on 21 November 1894 in Lüshunkou, Manchuria (later called Port Arthur, in present day Liaoning Province, China) between the forces of the Empire of Japan and the Empire of China. (From *Wikipedia*).

²⁸TN: Luo Fenglu (1850–1901) was one of the Earliest Professional Diplomats in Modern China.

²⁹Ahn Jung-Geun 安重根 (1879 – 1910) was a Korean independence activist, nationalist, and pan-Asianist. On October 26, 1909, he assassinated Itō Hirobumi, a four-time Prime Minister of Japan and former Resident-General of Korea, following the signing of the Eulsa Treaty, with Korea on the verge of annexation by Japan. (From *Wikipedia*).

³⁰Yun Bong-gil (1908 -1932) was a Korean independence activist who set off a bomb that killed several Japanese dignitaries in the Shanghai International Settlement in 1932. (From *Wikipedia*.)

with admirable characters were seen everywhere, which we may get a glimpse of from reading great works by hundreds of leading scholars who held us in awe even today. The Chinese people then were faithful. They had faith in the best part of the Chinese tradition such as credibility, righteousness and benevolence. Dictatorship started after the first Emperor of Qin Dynasty and people were trained to be slaves, one generation after another. The ruling classes altered Confucianism to be a training tool to make people only respect their filial clans but not their country; and, as a result, too many people were loyal only to their clans but not to their country. People were not allowed by the political elite to have or choose their own faith and moral standards and thus they were rendered as mindless objects, much like loose grains of sand on the beach. Especially after the Yuan and Qing Dynasties, represented by two horse-riding ethnic groups, the Han Chinese lost all of its bearings. If one looks at the drawings created in the Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty, one will feel deep sadness in those black and white drawings of mountains and rivers. Dai Jitao³¹ once said, even in Japan's Ukiyo-e drawing, considered the most pessimistic, one may still detect certain aggressiveness. Englishman Macartney³² visited China two hundred years ago. Upon return, he said pointedly: "Chinese did not have a religion. If there is one, it is the belief to become a government official." Yanzong Kotaro, a Japanese spy, considered China "a country corrupt to the core." He stated, to the effect that, a country is a collection of its people. A person is a molecule of the country. If its molecules are corrupt, how can the country be whole? The corruption of the molecules costs a country's vitality. It is more harmful than policy mistakes.

Reference News: Japan doesn't seem to have a religion either.

Liu Yazhou: That's true. Japan exports everything but is not able to export a religion. However, Japan does have its own beliefs. For instance the spirit of Bushido or the Samurai Morality which is said to have originated from China's warrior personality during the Spring and Autumn period. Kanji Ishiwara believed that China used to have a warrior class which became extinct after the Song Dynasty. The warrior tradition took root in Japan and flourished there. In addition Japan's Shinto emphasizes loyalty, and indeed loyalty should be regarded as Japan's religion, for it enjoys higher status than any other beliefs. The reason for all of this is that as an island country Japan has never suffered foreign invasion, nor has it ever experienced any regime changes. It is a country

³¹Dai Jitao or Tai Chi-tao (1891 – 1949) was a Chinese journalist, an early Kuomintang member, and the first head of the Examination Yuan of the Republic of China.

³²TN: George Macartney (1737 – 1806) was a British statesman, colonial administrator and diplomat.

which has been ruled by only one royal family. As a result the Samurai or Warrior Spirit, coupled with the loyalty to the Emperor of Heaven, gave rise to a somewhat strange belief in Japan

Reference News: Japanese soldiers acted like mad men in battlefields.

Liu Yazhou: In Japanese Shinto belief death is regarded as a release and the dead should be free of any condemnation. The essence of the Samurai Spirit lies in seeing through death. Patience, risk-taking and suicide are the fundamental elements of the Samurai Spirit. “A samurai understands death thoroughly. Between life and death, he will decide quickly and take death as his first choice.” He has to die promptly and resolutely. If a samurai betrays his master, he has to commit hara-kiri to pay for his mistake. Now we know why, in Japanese culture, the admission of guilt is a serious matter and as a result a difficult decision. Suicide by committing hara-kiri, the most painful way of dying, is held in highest esteem in Japan. In addition the suicidal samurai’s body has to be straight, with his weapon laid out properly, and the cross cut on his stomach in perfect precision. In the eyes of a samurai, the most beautiful flowers are dead cherry blossoms. People trained by such belief will not have any sense of morality or show any mercy during aggression or massacres. Whenever I look at the pictures of the soldiers from these two countries I cannot help but feel that regardless of what weapons they are holding in hand that the Qing soldiers looked like ordinary peasants and the Japanese soldiers looked like warriors. Listen to their army song: “Charge to the mountain top, let the valley be filled with our bodies. March to the vast oceans, let the water be covered with our bodies.” Of all the army songs in the world, have you ever heard any one like this, full of death and blood?

Reference News: Just like what terrorists would sing!

Liu Yazhou: Japanese militarists were terrorists. In invading China, Japan always resorted to massacre as the means of war. Researchers believed that, in the War of Jiawu, while the Northern Fleet used the cannons of large caliber, the Japanese ships used the cannons of smaller caliber which fired at much higher speed. Japanese were more interested in killing men rather than ships. The cannonballs fell on Qing’s battleships, four to five times faster than the Qing Navy could return fire, inflicting immeasurable damage, physical and psychological, on the Northern Fleet. The Japanese military did not have a hard time in taking the city of Lushun as they did in the Russo-Japanese War ten years later. They still resorted to a massacre, sparing merely thirty-six people in the whole city. How could the Chinese people living in a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society fight against such a ferocious enemy?

Reference News: It is hard to imagine.

Liu Yazhou: However, something very different happened. Forty years after the War of Jiawu, a group of Chinese people accomplished something marvelous that no one in this nation had ever done in the last thousand years, which amazed the whole world including themselves. I am talking about the Long March by the Red Army in 1934. What the Chinese Red Army achieved displays something in sharp contrast with cowardice, numbness and fear of death that characterized Chinese people during the Jiawu Year. They displayed totally a different spirit and outlook. These were a group of brave souls who held death and hardship in contempt. American writer Salisbury³³ compared Long March to Exodus, Hannibal's journey across the Alps and America's conquest of the West. For him, there is no other event in this century that is more amazing and more consequential to the future of the world than the Long March. According to Zbigniew Brzezinski³⁴, for the emerging new China, the Long March is more than an epic of almost unmatched heroism. It is the reminder of the spirit of national unity essential to overcome the legacy of backwardness.³⁵ This army, numbered eighty thousand when it departed from south China, had only six thousand of them left when they reached the Shanxi province. They were dressed in miserable rags and tatters and they were only skin and bones. However this army became the base from which a powerful country was built. All this happened within forty years after the War of Jiawu; these people should be regarded as the same generation as those involved in the War of Jiawu. How did they do it? How could they be so very different?

Reference News: Why was that?

Liu Yazhou: Let me tell you a story during the Long March. It was a day when a Red Army unit crossed a snow-capped mountain named Dang Ling, the highest one on the March. Many soldiers died of hypoxia and exhaustion and were buried under snowdrift. When the next unit was passing this area, they found one hand, fist clenched, sticking out of the snow mount. After opening the hand, they found a Communist Party membership card and one silver dollar. The card showed these words: Liu

³³TN: Harrison Evans Salisbury, 1908 – 1993, was an American journalist and the first regular *New York Times* correspondent in Moscow after World War II. (From *Wikipedia*.)

³⁴TN: Zbigniew Brzezinski, 1929-, is an American political scientist, geostrategist, and statesman. (From *Wikipedia*.)

³⁵TN: See <http://forum.prisonplanet.com/index.php?topic=179385.0>

Zhihai, formal member of the Chinese Communist Party since 1933. This story may tell where the Red Army found its strength.

Reference News: From a faith.

IV. Nation's Destiny

Liu Yazhou: The War of Jiawu left a big loss and wound to our nation. However, it is also its fortune because a magic moment emerged because of this war, and history opened a window of opportunity to this ancient civilization.

Reference News: Why did you say so?

Liu Yazhou: The defeat in the War of Jiawu roused the collective consciousness of Chinese people. Liang Qichao described, pertinently, the impact of the war upon China as a nation: "This nation was awakened from its four-thousand-years-long dream at the moment when Taiwan was ceded and an indemnity of two hundred trillion was imposed." China started to look beyond its border after it was defeated in the War of Jiawu, rather than after the Opium War. In fact the War of Jiawu was directly responsible for starting the Xin Hai Revolution³⁶. In June of the Jiawu Year, Sun Yat-sen, then a twenty-eight-year-old young man, submitted a letter to Li Hongzhang, warning that a reform limited to technology and tools would not give China an upper hand over the West. Such advice fell on deaf ears. Only three months later, China was defeated on the Yellow Sea. In November of the same year, the "China Revival Society" was founded at Honolulu. In February of the year following, Hong Kong's "China Revival Society" was founded. The "China Revival Society" was the predecessor of the Chinese Alliance. A few years later, the Qing Dynasty was overthrown. In 1919, the May 4th Movement swept Beijing as an angry response to the so-called "Twenty-one Demands,"³⁷ imposed on China by Japan. This movement provided a base for the birth of the Chinese Communist Party, which marks a turning point in the Chinese history. Mao Zedong was born one year before the War of Jiawu and Deng Xiaoping was born ten years after the War of Jiawu, but right when the Russo-Japanese War broke out. They spent their youth at the time

³⁶TN: The revolution happened in 1911, Year of Xinhai in the Chinese calendar. It is also translated as Revolution of 1911.

³⁷TN: The Twenty-One Demands were a set of demands made during the First World War by the Empire of Japan under Prime Minister Ōkuma Shigenobu sent to the weak government of the Republic of China on January 8, 1915. The demands would greatly extend Japanese control of Manchuria and of the Chinese economy, and were opposed by Britain and the United States. In the final settlement Japan gained a little but lost a great deal of prestige and trust in Britain and the US. (From *Wikipedia*.)

when China was pounded most heavily by the storms gathered in the Jiawu Year. Enlightenment, self-reliance and national salvation were main themes of the day. What happened in that year left indelible impressions on their minds. They would never forget that year. In a 1960s conversation regarding the territorial dispute with India, Mao Zedong said, “We will not be another Li Hongzhang.” In 1982, when British Prime Minister Thatcher seemed reluctant to transfer the sovereignty of Hong Kong over to China, Deng Xiaoping retorted, “If we don’t bring Hong Kong back, the Chinese government will be like the government during the late Qing Dynasty and the Chinese leaders would be like Li Hongzhang!” It is under the leadership of these two great men that China, as a nation, began its journey to revival.

Reference News: It seems no one looked at the Jiawu Year from this perspective.

Liu Yazhou: In some sense, we have to thank Japan. Mao Zedong said of something to this effect. In a 1956 meeting with Endo Saburo, former lieutenant general of the Japanese Army, Mao Zedong said: “You are also our teacher. It is the war with you that educated us, and all Chinese, described before as a pile of loose sand, became united. Therefore, we should thank you.” Japan is an opponent which has strength and character. China is Japan’s earliest teacher and Japan is China’s newest teacher. Without Japan no one would know how many years would have passed before China woke up from its slumber of complacency. Lu Xun was a fearless critic, ready to chide anyone. However, he never chided Japanese. I don’t believe he was afraid of doing so. There must be other reasons. Lu Xun and Mao Zedong were likeminded. They were great soulmates.

Reference News: That certainly made sense.

Liu Yazhou: Machiavelli was frequently quoted as saying, to the effect that, the ability to make guns does not make the most powerful country. What makes a great country is its ability to make its nationals have strong faith. One of the greatest historical achievements the Chinese Communist Party has made is rebuilding the spirit and faith of China as a nation. It is the faithful communists who led the Chinese people out of the shadow left by the defeat in the War of Jiawu. We defeated Japanese, thoroughly, in the War of Resistance against Japan. We also prevailed in the Korean War which happened in the year before another Jiawu Year³⁸. It seems all fate. The War of Jiawu broke out because of Korea. The Korean War brought us right back to the original point of the cycle of sixty years. This war not only exonerated our Chinese soldiers, who had suffered defeat in one war

³⁸TN: “another Jiawu Year” means Year 1954, 60 years after Year 1894.

after another since 1840, but also provided an essential psychological boost for the nation's revival. It is a masterpiece by Mao Zedong. While battling in Liudong Island, S'ak D'heing Bing, a captain of the Northern Fleet, learned that his wife was coming for a visit. Enraged he shouted, "What place is this? What day is today? Tell her that I am dead and tell her to get the hell out of here!" His wife went home in tears and passed away shortly after. S'ak D'heing Bing was later put in charge of reorganizing the navy of Republic of China and became a member of the Central Military Commission after 1949. He never got married again. Ecstatic at hearing the news of our victory in the Korean War, he wrote a poem which goes: "I've lived to see this day with pride!" He sent another poem to Mao Zedong before dying, which reads: "A new navy is still my dream." Since the War of Jiawu, it was only after the Korean War that Japanese started to take China seriously and began to tentatively explore establishing diplomatic relations with China.

Reference News: Please tell us about the situation in Japan after the War of Jiawu.

Liu Yazhou: The situation in Japan was just the opposite. China lost the War of Jiawu, but, like Phoenix Nirvana, it embarked on a path of ascendance step by step. Japan won the war, but it started its fall step by step. In the War of Jiawu, Japan achieved its first bag of gold³⁹ for modernization and enjoyed the fruit of "gambling with the nation's destiny" and "fighting the big with the small," which got the country way too far on the militarist road. In the end they got so carried away as to exclaim that they would "raise their national flag on top of Himalayas!" Many American researchers believe that Japan contracted a kind of "Victory Disease." It was not afraid to fight any wars and invade any countries. The journey of Japan after the War of Jiawu is, in my opinion, a quick trip to grave. The trip, however, was made at the expense of the lives of more than ten million military men and civilians and untold sufferings caused by the two atomic bombs. Japan lost everything – it had to give up Korea, Northeastern China and Mongolia, as well as Taiwan. It had to spit out everything it ate, except Okinawa. Japan as a nation is still there but as a state it does not exist. It is not a normal state even now. It's all due to the War of Jiawu. Sure there are good elements in Japanese characters. But they may quickly turn to the opposite side if displayed to the extreme. Island people were good at adventures and at making surprise attacks, which are their strength. By adventure and surprise attack, Japan prevailed in the War of Jiawu and the Russo-Japanese War. However, the abuse of its strength cost Japan dearly in the final war. Li Yuning, a South

³⁹TN: A modern parlance, meaning a substantial profit earning for the first time in a business.

Korean scholar, put it well: “The idea of attacking Pearl Harbor by surprise came from moves in Kendo and Sumo, in which one strike would seal the deal. However, the site is just too big. Every time Japanese attempted to move bonsai to the vast plains in big nature, they were doomed to failure.”

The present Japanese are repeating history.

Translated by Guodi Sun. Mr. Guodi Sun was a soldier, a business executive, a college teacher and a lawyer in China. He came to the United States in 1990 and was trained as an Economist at an Illinois University. Later he worked as a CFO in an Illinois company. Currently he is a California lawyer, with specialties in civil litigation and immigration.