

# ON SPIRIT

## The 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Victory of the War of Resistance against Japan<sup>1</sup>

Liu Yazhou

### I

The spirit of a nation finds its manifestation in the essence and quality of its culture, which fundamentally impacts the nation's existence and development. In this sense the victory over the Japanese aggression is not only a military victory, but also a spiritual victory, a cultural victory. The core of the culture is spirit.

President Xi Jinping<sup>2</sup>, China's new leader, pointed out: "In this new historical condition, the whole party and whole nation should display the spirit of fighting against the Japanese aggressors, enhance our spiritual ties of unity and perseverance to achieve the Chinese Dream<sup>3</sup> of its great revitalization and to comfort the souls of our predecessors and revolutionary martyrs with new feats achieved in building the socialism with the Chinese characteristics."

### II

The Chinese civilization used to stand tall among all civilizations, with its peak in the pre Qin era<sup>4</sup> (before 221 B.C.E.). It was a time when everyone enjoyed life – men were proud of their masculinity and women of their graceful beauty. It was a time when different schools of thoughts competed against each other in a healthy environment. All of a sudden, however, a villain by the name of Ying Zheng<sup>5</sup> cut the umbilical cord of this civilization and deprived the Chinese men of their masculinity. The heritage from the Qin Dynasty, the worst of its kind, is that the powers that be become the ultimate judge for thinking. Emperor Wu Di<sup>6</sup> of the Han

---

<sup>1</sup>Editors's note (EN): The Chinese version of this article (精神：紀念抗日戰爭勝利 70 周年) was published by *Can Kao Xiao Xi (Reference News)*, July 1, 2015.

<sup>2</sup>Translator's note (TN): Xi Jinping is the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, the President of the People's Republic of China, and the Chairman of the Central Military Commission.

<sup>3</sup>TN: The phrase is closely associated with China's new leader Xi Jinping that describes a set of personal and national ideals.

<sup>4</sup>TN: The Pre Qin era refers to the long period before Emperor Qin Shihuang's unification of China.

<sup>5</sup>TN: Ying Zheng was the name of the first emperor of China, Qin Shihuang (260-210 B.C.E.)

<sup>6</sup>TN: Born Liu Che, he was the seventh emperor of the Han Dynasty (156 -87 B.C.E.)

Dynasty went even further. It was he who castrated one of the best Chinese thinkers.<sup>7</sup> This act of shame was a symbol of monumental proportions in Chinese history. Since then no great thinkers were ever born in China. The situations deteriorated even further during the Ming and Qing dynasties, when Scholar Gong Zizhe<sup>8</sup> remarked: It's so stiffening – nobody dares to speak out, just like thousands of horses in the field, all dead quiet. He went on to say that in present day China there were no talented officials in the court, no talented pickpockets on the street and not even talented bandits around.

Chinese lost their original spirit. For thousands of years they maintained but one posture spiritually and physically before power, be it royal or foreign, on their knees. During the War of Jiawu<sup>9</sup> or the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 when the Japanese troops first attacked the front east of Liao River 50,000 Chinese troops were stationed there, more than the attacking Japanese. However, in 10 days the Chinese front disintegrated. The fortress in Port Arthur was nicknamed the Iron Fortress. It fell in one day, while during the Russo-Japanese War Russians held the fortress for a whole year. According to a Japanese coroner's report, most Chinese casualties were hit by bullets from the back. Few received wounds from the front – a clear indication that most were killed while fleeing the battlefield. During the Rape of Nanking<sup>10</sup> a dozen or so Japanese troops escorted over 10,000 Chinese captives to be executed. If one of the captives had revolted and others had followed they could have crushed those few captors by simply walking on them. However that person never emerged. After the war of 1894 even Korea, a former subject state to China, started to dream up a plan to divide up China. In 1896 the Korean leading journal, *Independent News*, wrote: "It is our hope that Korea can also defeat China and occupy the Northeastern part of China and Manchuria. China should pay retribution of 800 million silver dollars to Korea. Koreans should keep this goal of taking over the Northeast of China and Manchuria within a few decades."

### III

Whenever the Chinese nation was attacked and bullied by a foreign power a process of resurrection was triggered, which is another remarkable characteristic of the Chinese civilization. The rebirth process almost

---

<sup>7</sup>TN: The man referred is Sima Qian (135-86 B.C.E.) who wrote *Shi Ji* or *Scribe's Record*, regarded as the most truthful record of history until then.

<sup>8</sup>TN: A Chinese poet, calligrapher and intellectual active in the 19th century whose works both foreshadowed and influenced the modernization movements of the late Qing dynasty.

<sup>9</sup>TN: The Sino-Japanese War of 1894 when China suffered a total loss. 1894 in Chinese calendar is the Jiawu Year.

<sup>10</sup>TN: Also known as The Nanjing Massacre which started on December 13, 1937, and is said to have killed more than 300,000 Chinese civilians and POWs.

always started when the nation reached the bottom of complete devastation. The War of 1894 pushed China to the edge of a cliff. A man only learns what strength means when he is pushed to the limit. Likewise a nation's way out becomes possible only when all the other venues are blocked. A magnificent rise starts after a most tragic fall. After the defeat by Japan a strange phenomenon occurred – scholars flocked to Japan in great numbers and began the journey of learning from Japan. Over two thousand years it had been Japan that studied China in almost every aspect. This process used to be referred to as “learning from the Tang Dynasty China” or the complete Sinolization, to use a modern parlance.

The architecture in Kyoto and Nara looks rich and solemn with grey as its main hue, characteristic of the Tang architectural style. Japanese studied China so much so that they thought they were part of China. It was said that in 1870, during a Sino-Japanese talk, a Chinese delegate asked the Japanese delegation to refer to Chinese as “Zhong Hua 中華” or “the Chinese people” – a request that the Japanese delegation flatly refused. If the Japanese went along, the logic goes, then they would be naturally relegated to the status of barbarians, because in the Chinese phrase if one is the opposite of *Hua* as in *Hua Yi* (the Chinese and barbarians) then the other party naturally becomes a barbarian! As a result the talk almost ended right on that note.

Fukuzawa Yukichi<sup>11</sup>, a war proponent against China, who wrote *The War between Japan and China was One between Civilization and Barbarism*, and Uemura Masahisa<sup>12</sup> of the same time period, stated that “The war between Japan and China was one involving spirit. It's a conflict between the new spirit and the old.” After the war of 1894 Japan began to view China differently. China was Japan's teacher for two thousand years, but in the last hundred years or so their role was reversed. Even the modern Chinese language was heavily influenced by the Japanese. For instance common words or phrases such as 幹部 (cadre)、路線 (guideline)、社會 (society)、民主 (democracy) are all borrowings from Japan. In fact 70 percent of such conceptual words or phrases in modern Chinese are from the Japanese. If we remove those words from modern Chinese we can hardly compose a modern Chinese text. However, in my view such a role change is much like the back feeding phenomenon from an offspring to its parents.

More importantly these Chinese students in Japan came into contact with Mr. Democracy and Mr. Science<sup>13</sup> and became energized spiritually.

---

<sup>11</sup>TN: Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901) Japanese author, writer, translator, entrepreneur and journalist who founded Keio University.

<sup>12</sup>TN: Uemura Masahisa (1858-1925) Japanese Christian pastor, theologian and critic of Meiji and Taishō periods.

<sup>13</sup>TN: Mr. Democracy and Mr. Science were terms created during the Student Movement of 1919, which called for a national shift to democracy and science.

The most noted representatives among them were Qiu Jin,<sup>14</sup> Chen Tianhua<sup>15</sup>, Zhou Enlai<sup>16</sup> and Lu Xun.<sup>17</sup> It was said that the most significant transformation in modern Chinese history was made by the hands of two Chinese women. One was Qiu Jin and the other Ci Xi<sup>18</sup>, the Empress Dowager. On July 1907, before she was executed in Xuan Ting Pavilion, in the city of Shao Xing, Qiu Jin exclaimed: “There doesn’t seem to be a single brave man that I can see and there doesn’t seem to be anyone who cares about this beautiful country!” A year later the ruler of the country, Empress Dowager, also died. Chen Tianhua, another returned student from Japan, who wrote *Radical Reflections*, an article meant to bring his fellow countrymen back to a spiritual revival, drowned himself in the ocean so that, in his words, “...my fellow countryman won’t remain numb. I’m drowning myself in the Eastern China sea so that they will wake up.” Chen killed himself in the hope that his country didn’t die and in the hope that his country would prosper. The traces of Japanese samurai warriors can certainly be detected from such representatives of the Revolution of 1911.<sup>19</sup>

Another individual worth noting is Lu Xun. Lu went to Japan to become a physician. He, however, chose a career as a writer without any hesitation in order to save his fellow countrymen’s souls rather than just their bodies. In my view he remained a physician, who wanted to find a cure for the ills in his home country. In this world there are people who leave footprints and there are others who study them. Lu Xun belonged to the latter category.

I believed all his writings can be summarized in a statement he made: “In present day China where can I find a fighter who has spiritual pursuits?” Lu Xun often raised three questions: 1) What is the ideal human nature? 2) What is the worst trait for the Chinese people? And 3) Why do such bad traits exist? All of them were spiritual questions. In Lu Xun’s view the biggest problem with the Chinese people was that their belief was not believing in anything! Mao Zedong<sup>20</sup> admired Lu Xun, dubbing him “our Commander-in-Chief Lu.” Mao went on to say that we had two armies, one “gun carrying” and the other “pen carrying.” Zhu De was the

---

<sup>14</sup>TN: Chinese revolutionary, feminist and writer. She was executed after a failed uprising against the Qing Dynasty. She is considered a national heroine in China.

<sup>15</sup>TN: Chinese revolutionary born in Xinhua, Hunan province to a poor peasant family during the Qing dynasty. He committed suicide by drowning himself in the ocean to wake up his fellow countrymen.

<sup>16</sup>TN: Premier of PR China from 1949-1976.

<sup>17</sup>TN: One of the most influential modern Chinese writers and thinkers.

<sup>18</sup>TN: Ci Xi or The Empress Dowager (1835-1908) effectively controlled the Chinese government for 47 years, from 1861 until her death in 1908.

<sup>19</sup>TN: Also known as the Xin Hai Revolution, led by Sun Yat-sun, which overthrew the Qing Dynasty and founded the Republic of China (ROC).

<sup>20</sup>TN: Founder and ruler of PR China from 1949-1976.

Commander-in-Chief of the gun carrying army and Lu Xun was the Commander-in-Chief of the pen carrying army. Mao and Lu Xun were soulmates.

#### IV

The May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement broke out in Beijing in 1919.<sup>21</sup> Again the Japanese were the main cause. The movement was a critical reexamination of as well as a further research on Japan. The criticism was targeted at Japan's ambition to take over China and the research was focused on the reflections on the Chinese nation by the Japanese so that a spiritual resurrection could happen in China. The reflective soul searching on the part of China to understand the devastation brought upon by Japan reached its peak. No other country in Asia went to such great length in its reflections on Japan, though Japan invaded so many countries there.

Roh Moo Hyun,<sup>22</sup> the former Korean President stated: "For Korea it is a shame to have Japan as its neighbor." Unfortunately Koreans simply stopped right there, because though Korea was much closer to Japan than was China there never occurred a flow of students in substantial numbers to study in Japan. The May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement remains the most influential and the largest war of ideology, almost like the renaissance. What we learned from this movement is that a nation could not hope to rise until its people were able to stand on their own feet, because people are the essence between heaven and earth. It needs to be pointed out that this movement not only constituted a spiritual enlightenment but also produced a contingent of future national leaders. Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping were leading the pack. The most significant outcome of this movement was the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. What we have learned from the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement is that only when a great nation is capable of reflecting upon itself and only when a nation comes to realize its own responsibility can it become a great nation. One Japanese also shared this view when he stated: "If China disappeared all the hopes would be lost for the countries in the East. However, if China prospers other countries can hope to get help. So China's problem is the big problem for the entire East."<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup>TN: The May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement was an anti-imperialist, cultural, and political movement growing out of student demonstrations in Beijing on May 4, 1919, protesting the Chinese government's weak response to the Treaty of Versailles, especially allowing Japan to receive territories in Shandong which had been surrendered by Germany after the Siege of Tsingtao. These demonstrations sparked national protests and marked the upsurge of Chinese nationalism, a shift toward political mobilization and away from cultural activities, and a move towards a populist base rather than intellectual elites.

<sup>22</sup>TN: Roh Moo-hyun was the ninth President of the Republic of Korea.

<sup>23</sup>Tōten Miyazaki, *My Thirty Three Year's Dream: An Autobiography of Miyazaki Toten*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982.

## V

The War of 1894 occurred before the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement and the War of Resistance against Japan occurred after the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement. These two wars shared the same battlefield and the same opponents, but with totally different outcomes. Of all the wars against foreign aggressors the War of Resistance against Japan was one of the most devastating, and of all battles against the fascists in World War II China's victory was won with the most sacrifices. The reason was that there was a fundamental change in the spirit of Chinese nationals. In the view of Ryōtarō Shiba<sup>24</sup>, a Japanese writer, only the Japanese during the Meiji Period shared that same spirit, full of vitality and go.

No Japanese were like that before or after the Meiji Period. Till this day the glory of Meiji Period was still the talk of the day among the Japanese. In China, however, the Chinese who experienced the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement became the most vibrant, most lively and most beautiful people since the Qin Dynasty (221 – 207 B.C.E).<sup>25</sup> The May 4<sup>th</sup> Chinese and the Meiji Japanese, two groups of elites, came into contact in a big clash, which was the passion of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Toward the end of the War of 1894 the Japanese lost that passion. However, it was not like that during World War II. One month before its surrender, in 1945, that passion was still burning. The Japanese troops took 18 towns in one single sweep in Jiangxi Province, because they were facing a great opponent.

In *The Tanaka Jōsōbun* or *the Tanaka Memorial*<sup>26</sup> there were these words: "If we want to conquer the world we first need to conquer China. If we want to conquer China, we first need to conquer Manchuria and Mongolia." These words showed how very ambitious this Tanaka was. Only someone belonging to the Meiji generation was capable of such expressions. No Chinese in the last thousand years or so came even close to making a similar statement, until the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement generation. If one read articles by Mao Zedong during that period one would find that every single one was full of passion and enthusiasm. His calligraphy stood out even more in that it reminded viewers of towering waves of oceans and seas jumping off the paper.

For thousands of years the Chinese society was dominated by a small scale farmer's economy, which determined that defense was its main military mode, symbolized to its fullest by building the Great Wall. Most

---

<sup>24</sup>TN: A Japanese author (1923-1996) best known for his novels about historical events in Japan and on the Northeast Asian sub-continent, as well as his historical and cultural essays pertaining to Japan and its relationship to the rest of the world.

<sup>25</sup>TN: First imperial dynasty of China, lasting from 221 to 206 B.C.E.

<sup>26</sup>TN: An alleged Japanese strategic planning document, from 1927, in which Prime Minister Baron Tanaka Giichi laid out for the Emperor Hirohito a strategy to take over the world. Today it is generally considered by scholars to be a forgery.

Chinese heroes were defenders of the country. In the ancient China wars were seldom themes of artistic manifestation. Even during the Tang Dynasty, the peak of the Chinese civilization, wars or battles were depicted as very sad and depressing occasions, though glorious. But if one reads warring poetry written by Mao one can hardly find any hint of gloominess. For instance in his poem *Long March* he wrote: “Three army groups march on, each soldier’s face glowing,” though actually the Red Army at the time was undergoing the most difficult period of time in history.

## VI

The invading Japanese army into China during World War II was one of the most powerful and most ambitious since the Meiji Reform. Senior Japanese commanders in the Chinese theater such as Yasuji Okamura<sup>27</sup>, Seishirō Itagaki<sup>28</sup> and Yoshijirō Umezu<sup>29</sup>, all in their fifties, were in the prime of their lives and they all participated in the Russo-Japanese War which helped establish Japan as a world power. In comparison Mao Zedong and his commanders belonged to a younger generation. For instance, when Peng Dehuai<sup>30</sup> led the Ping Jiang Uprising he was only 30. Lin Biao<sup>31</sup> was 24 when he was appointed Commander of an army group. During the Nan Chang Uprising,<sup>32</sup> Liu Bocheng<sup>33</sup> was only 35. In 1946 when Su Yu<sup>34</sup> won seven victories in a row during his legendary Inner area of Jiang Su battle he was only 39.

However, it’s precisely these people who made history by throwing

---

<sup>27</sup>TN: A general of the Imperial Japanese Army, war criminal, and commander-in-chief of the China Expeditionary Army from November 1944 to the end of World War II.

<sup>28</sup>TN: A general in the Imperial Japanese Army in World War II and a War Minister. Convicted of war crimes, he was executed in 1948.

<sup>29</sup>TN: A general in the Imperial Japanese Army in World War II. He was convicted of war crimes and sentenced to life imprisonment.

<sup>30</sup>TN: A prominent Chinese Communist military leader, and served as China's Defense Minister from 1954 to 1959. In 1959 he was removed from his post after he expressed doubts and criticism of the Big Leap Forward Movement.

<sup>31</sup>TN: A Marshal of PR China who was pivotal in the communist victory in the Chinese Civil War from 1946-1949. He died in a plane crash in 1971 in what was believed to be a desperate attempt to flee the country.

<sup>32</sup> TN: The first major Kuomintang–Communist engagement of the Chinese Civil War, begun by the Communists to counter the anti-communist purges by the Nationalist Party of China. It happened in the City of Nan Chang, Jiang Xi Province in 1927.

<sup>33</sup>TN: A Chinese Communist military commander and Marshal of the People's Liberation Army.

<sup>34</sup>TN: A Chinese Communist military leader. He was considered by Chinese Communist Leader Mao Zedong to be among the best commanders of the PLA only next to Lin Biao and Liu Bocheng. Su Yu fought in the Second Sino-Japanese War and in the Chinese Civil War. He commanded the East China Field Army (renamed 3rd Field Army in 1949) during the Chinese Civil War.

their young selves into the War of Resistance against Japan. Youth was very powerful and full of imagination. It was said that Lin Biao was invited to give a lecture at the Anti-Japanese Aggression University on Marxist theory. He said but one sentence: “In a capitalist society only very few people get rich. In a communist society everyone gets rich,” leaving audience in shock, pen and pencils in hand ready to take copious notes. Guang Hanqing, a playwright in the Yuan Dynasty, once wrote: “I’m a pea made of copper. No matter how much you cook me by frying, boiling or steaming, I remain hard.” Lin Biao must have known Guan’s writing, for he liked to chew on hard fried peas as if tasting how tough a particular battle was like. The victory over the Japanese troops in Pingxingguan Pass,<sup>35</sup> led by Lin Biao, rewrote the history to repudiate the legend that the Japanese army was invincible.

The Offensive by a Hundred Regiments, personally led by Peng Dehuai, is of special significance to the spiritual revival of the Chinese nation. The actual naming of this offensive is emblematic of heroism and idealistic aspirations. It’s indeed a very poetic occasion still vivid in people’s mind though it happened a long time ago. Having heard that about 105 regiments would participate in this offensive, General Zuo Quan, Chief of Staff for the Eighth Route Army,<sup>36</sup> burst out to his staff: “Wow, an offensive by a hundred regiments! Please check the number and make sure it’s right.” When General Peng Dehuai, Commander-in-Chief of the offensive, overheard this conversation, he got excited: “What a great name! Let’s call it the Offensive by a Hundred Regiments, regardless of whether we throw in more forces or not.” On December 1, 1950, after the Second Phase campaign<sup>37</sup> in Korea in the order of commendation to the victorious Chinese 38<sup>th</sup> Army General Peng wrote: “Long Live the 38<sup>th</sup> Army.” Probably, in the Chinese or the world military history, this was the only time when an army was referred to by its commander in such a way. In doing so, General Peng’s courage and ambition were expressed to the fullest. Since then the Chinese People’s Liberation Army fought against the forces from 21 countries and never lost a battle. The victory over Japan in World War II is but a prelude.

---

<sup>35</sup>TN: An engagement fought between the Eighth Route Army of the Communist Party of China and the Imperial Japanese Army on September 25, 1937, which was a major morale boost for the Eighth Route Army.

<sup>36</sup>TN: Also known as the 18th Army Group of the National Revolutionary Army of the Republic of China, was group army under the command of the Chinese Communist Party, nominally within the structure of the Chinese military headed by the Chinese Nationalist Party during the Second Sino-Japanese War.

<sup>37</sup>TN: An extended military offensive by the Chinese People’s Volunteer Army during the last week of November, 1950, and the first two weeks of December. The two major engagements were battles near the Ch’ongch’on River in the Chinese-designated Western Sector and Chosin Reservoir in their Eastern Sector. The Chinese opposed United Nations-authorized forces composed of American military and various allied forces.



## VII

There is a Japanese saying which goes: “Among the flowers *sankura* or cherry blossoms are the queen and among men the soldiers are most respected.” When cherry blossoms are in full bloom they are also dying. By the same token when a soldier lays down his life in a battlefield he achieves his ultimate glory. In the eyes of Japanese these two extreme opposites are both beautiful. One winter I was in Japan and saw elementary school students running around in shorts, with their legs exposed to the severe elements. People in Osaka are reputed as the most fast walking in the world, covering 1.6 meters every second. “It is a virtue to be fast eating and fast excreting!” Says a Japanese proverb. In China the belief is just the opposite, with the advice always being “walk slowly” or “eat slowly.” With such spirit Japanese are brought up to make light of life. German soldiers were well known for being tough in the West. However, Marshal Paulus<sup>38</sup> ordered his 90,000 troops to lay down the arms in surrender during the Battle of Stalingrad. In contrast the Japanese troops seldom, if ever, capitulated. They generally would fight to the very end, till the last standing man.

During the War of 1894, “Chinese,” in the words of Luo Fenglu, advisor to the then Prime Minister Li Hongzhang<sup>39</sup> of China, “were like piglets lying on the ground, ready to be slaughtered.” In World War II Japanese killings of Chinese were more wide spread and more cruel. They were certainly learning from how soldiers of China’s Qing Dynasty killed people from the Ming Dynasty. Elder relatives from my parents’ generation told me that in our hometown, at the check-point, the Japanese guards would feel the chest of passing Chinese to see if anyone’s heart was beating very fast. The guilty ones would be beheaded right there.

The Rape of Nanking is a case in point. The massacre reached a point where the sky seemed to have changed its color. Before Nanking when Japanese and Chinese were engaged in a war, they either won or lost. After Nanking, however, their battles became those of life and death. Only 40 years later the Japanese warlords found, to their surprise, that they didn’t quite recognize this group of people from the continent. During the War of 1894 there were only two conditions for the Chinese people – one was sad and the other was sadder. In the War of Resistance against Japan, however, those two conditions changed for the Chinese – one was fighting back, and the other was fighting back harder, especially the communists

---

<sup>38</sup> TN: A general in the German military from 1910 to 1945. He attained the rank of *Generalfeldmarschall* (field marshal) during World War II, and is best known for commanding the Sixth Army in the Battle of Stalingrad (August 1942 to February 1943).

<sup>39</sup> TN: 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 viceroyalty of Zhili.

who demonstrated very strong mental will. At first Japanese invaders didn't quite notice, but after a while they did. According to some historical records, through much research by the Japanese military, some special characteristics of the communist party members or officers of the communist led Eighth Route Army and New Fourth Army<sup>40</sup> included rising to their feet when hearing others talk and responding to a date of birth request by the Gregorian Calendar instead of the Chinese Nationalist Calendar.<sup>41</sup> And these people received a good education.

Respecting worthy opponents is a tradition for the Japanese samurai. For instance, when the Japanese troops reached the summit of Mount Langya<sup>42</sup> they saw with their own eyes that five Chinese soldiers jumped over a cliff instead of surrender. They were impressed immensely and bowed three times to those heroes following the order of their commander.

General Yang Jingyu<sup>43</sup> was admired by his Japanese opponents when he was alive and even more after his death. When he was surrounded by the enemy, the Japanese sent a Chinese collaborator to persuade him to surrender. He told the messenger: "My fellow countryman if we all surrender will there be a China anymore?" Even now those thunderous words ring with the power of belief. After General Yang's death an autopsy was performed on him by the Japanese troops, but all they saw in his stomach were pieces of grass or cotton. There was no food at all. The Japanese present were all shaken by the scene. Kishitani Ryuichiro, their commander, even shed tears and remained quiet for a long time. He "aged tremendously in one day," it was said. Later in years, Kishitani Ryuichiro devoted himself to the research on the psychology of the Chinese resistance fighters. However the deeper he got into it the more tormented he became. In the end he killed himself, his wife and children by taking poison. In his will Kishitani Ryuichiro wrote: "The war lunched by his Majesty is probably not a good idea. When China has brave soldiers like General Yang Jingyu, it will never be conquered."

---

<sup>40</sup>TN: The New Fourth Army and the Eighth Route Army were the two main communist forces from 1938. The New Fourth Army was active south of the Yangtze River (Chang Jiang), while the Eighth Route Army was based in Yanan in the northwest.

<sup>41</sup>TN: The Chinese Nationalist calendar started with 1912 when the Republic of China was founded.

<sup>42</sup>TN: Mount Langya is in Yi Xian County, He Bei Province where a fight between the Eighth Route Army troops and Japanese troops happened. Five Eighth Route Army soldiers jumped off a cliff instead of surrender.

<sup>43</sup>TN: Chinese Communist, commander-in-chief and political commissar of the First Route Army of the Northeast Anti-Japanese United Army, in the guerrilla war in Manchuria against the Japanese campaign to pacify Manchukuo during the Second Sino-Japanese War.

## VIII

When spirit changes horizons expand. Once it is on the right track the Chinese civilization will rise up like waves of the ocean, its vastness displayed to the fullest. In comparison Japan is quite limited. Even Shintaro Ishihara,<sup>44</sup> the famous ultra-rightest, had to recognize that China is Japan's mother country. When opening a book of Tang or Song Poetry, he went on to note that his heart was filled with longing thoughts about the hometown, about the culture.

Chinese and Japanese can't converse. They, however, are able to communicate by writing. Even many other ethnic groups within China can't communicate this way with the Han Chinese. Culturally Japan learns from China. The War of Resistance against Japan is not only a spiritual confrontation, but also a paradigm confrontation. After the war China became Japan's teacher again. As an island country Japan's perspectives needed to expand. In the view of Mao Zedong, who thought about the world often, in the War of 1894 Japan hit China with a clenched fist while China reciprocated with an open palm, with fingers sticking out, easily to be broken. There were two reasons why different forces in China could not come together. The first one was that China was a self-sufficient agricultural civilization, which stressed the role of individuals not collectives. The second one was that they had a closed spiritual world, in which they didn't seem to trust anyone else. The way out for this nation was national unity.

*The Marching Song of the Volunteer Army*, the crescendo part of the *Yellow River Chorus*, which is still the Chinese National Anthem, called for national unity. Mao buried the hatchet with the Nationalist government and started collaboration with it by forming a united front. The unity in China marked the beginning of Japan's decline. The warlords in Japan felt that they couldn't afford to wait any longer and so Japan launched an all-out war against China. When the war first started the weaponry held by the Communist led Eighth Route Army was worse than that in the hands of the Chinese army during the Qing Dynasty. However, this army had very advanced military thought, which even intrigued the American military to send special envoys to study it in Yanan. Mao was not only a master in warfare but also a master in strategy. When Japan was powerful, Mao refused to negotiate with it, not even recognizing Japan as a country. After Japan surrendered and lost its state of normalcy Mao took the initiative to resume the contact.

During the most difficult time of the war Mao pointed out, in his *Study on the Occupied Areas* and again in his *Current Situation and Our Tasks*, that Japan intended to "annihilate the national spirit of China." He told

---

<sup>44</sup>TN: A Japanese politician, supreme advisor of Party for Future Generations and author who was Governor of Tokyo from 1999 to 2012.

students in the Anti-Japanese Aggression University that “every one of us in this university wants to fight them to the very end and every one of us in this university is opposed to capitulation!” Mao also wrote *On Protracted War*, which established a spiritual long march and a grand strategy. Mao viewed the war from the perspective of a thinker and could grasp the essence of a problem from a global and strategic position, whereas his generals such as Peng Dehuai and Liu Bocheng treated the war from a different angle. Both Peng and Liu rose from the ranks, and they handled the details well, like a company or a platoon leader. Mao treated a war as a skirmish and they treated a war as a war. They understood what was on the mind of a soldier, a platoon leader or a company leader. They could also win great wars.

I studied the Imperial Japanese Army Academy and the Imperial Japanese Navy Academy, and both were established during the Meiji Reform period. In my view these two academies emphasize the tactic research, but not strategy. Actual battles or campaigns in the War of 1894 or the Russo-Japanese War are still very much the talk of the day in these Japanese military schools. Strategy needs philosophy. Mao pointed out Japan didn’t have philosophy. Strategy needs a global view but Japan only emphasizes locality. The direct outcome of this outlook on the part of Japan was that it lost the whole war despite the fact it had won almost every single battle or campaign in World War II. Japan simply couldn’t achieve an overall victory because it paid too much attention to winning or losing. Mao, on the other hand, never cared too much about winning or losing. He, acting as a great master, tackled a problem at its source, always giving measured attention. Five years after the War of Resistance against Japan, Mao ordered the Chinese troops into Korea against the strongest military power in the world. This act has to be viewed as a major strategic move. Even Peng Dehuai, Commander of the troops, rationalized famously that “we simply pretend that our final victory over the Nationalists got delayed for another few years,” which reflected the spirit of Mao. Mao was also heard as saying that we would build the Chinese military into the second most powerful one in the world. He really had a broad vision with a strong sense of humor to go along with it. If you take a look at Japan, it would not have someone like Mao, not even commanders such as Liu Bocheng, Peng Dehuai and Deng Xiaoping.

Yamamoto Isoroku<sup>45</sup> was an exception, whose masterpieces include the

---

<sup>45</sup>TN: Yamamoto Isoroku 山本五十六, 1884 – 1943, was a Japanese Marshal Admiral and the commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet during World War II. Yamamoto held several important posts in the Imperial Japanese Navy, and undertook many of its changes and reorganizations, especially its development of naval aviation. He was the commander-in-chief during the decisive early years of the Pacific War and so was responsible for major battles such as Pearl Harbor and Midway. He died when American codebreakers identified his flight plans and his plane was shot down. His death was a major blow to Japanese military morale during World War II.

surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. It seemed that 70 some years ago he already knew the theory of Sky Supremacy, which is the essence of the modern warfare. Now it looks as though what he did was something impulsive, without knowing its full significance as a creative tactic, because as soon as the attack was initiated he shifted his attention to big cannons and heavy gunboats. Soon Japan produced battleship *Yamato*, weighing 70 thousand tons, which was the largest in the world. The tonnage of this single battleship surpassed the entire tonnage of the Chinese navy fleet. In contrast, the United States, which suffered an almost total loss in the attack, learned a good lesson. It shifted its attention to the sky and from then on Americans put wings on the war.

## IX

World War II left China in shambles. For China “The statehood stays intact, though the country is destroyed.”<sup>46</sup> But China saw a spiritual resurrection. This ancient civilization started a new life journey. For Japan, however, the war meant “the country is destroyed and only mountains and rivers remain.” In this sense what got destroyed was more than just the country but also the spirit of the nation. The spirit of the Japanese nation received a near complete devastation, which cannot be fully restored even to this day. The conquest of Japan by the United States was also more than just a military occupation it is more a spiritual conquest. Before General MacArthur flew to Japan, he was asked if he would carry arms. He answers, it was said “I’ll go unarmed. This way Japanese would be more impressed.”

Indeed MacArthur was revered in Japan as a demi-god. The day before Mamoru Shigemitsu,<sup>47</sup> Japan’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, left to sign the *Instrument of Surrender* on USS Missouri, Hirohito or Emperor Showa instructed: “Tomorrow you should go with your head held high, because tomorrow is the first day of Japan’s new birth!” Hirohito, however, totally underestimated Americans, whose main purpose was to crush the spirit of this nation by imposing its own value system on this nation of the Orient. As it turned out the westernization of an Eastern nation can hardly be regarded as a healthy process. Americans took advantage of the world order or system established by the Yalta Conference in attempt to force Japan to return to its pre-Meiji state. Did they also intend to force the

---

<sup>46</sup>TN: A well-known Chinese saying goes: “國破山河在”, meaning even though a country is ravaged by a war, its natural heritage, like mountains and rivers is still there. General Liu changed the meaning here to make the point that Japan had a different situation after World War II.

<sup>47</sup>TN: A Japanese diplomat and politician in the Empire of Japan, who served as the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs at the end of World War II and later, as the Deputy Prime Minister of Japan.

Japanese nation back to where it started, I wonder?

Japanese ultra-right politicians have been visiting the Yasukuni Shrine<sup>48</sup> for the last 70 years. By doing so, at heart, they are actually challenging Americans, because those Class A war criminals were all executed by Americans. Americans, however, didn't make too much fuss about this, since it has military bases in most strategic areas in Japan. As the fallout dust from the two atomic explosions 70 years ago hardly settled, Americans didn't mind that some Japanese were making waves, because it was America that won, and Japan that lost, with total resignation.

In most occupied areas, be it Afghanistan or Iraq, Americans suffered attacks almost on a daily basis. In Japan, however, U.S. soldiers were never attacked. True, Japan, as Emperor Hirohito put it, was "reborn," but this rebirth seemed somehow imposed by Americans. In reality Japan became a pawn in American's pacific chessboard, and it was no longer a player.

Now in Japan the spirit of Meiji Period has completely vanished. During the big earthquake of 2011 Japanese citizens were seen pouring out of skyscrapers in Tokyo. A Chinese writer wrote: "People were everywhere on the street. They were moving slowly in silence. It's an eerie feeling indeed. To use an inappropriate analogy, those people looked as if they were in a funeral procession, though without funeral music. They almost walked in lockstep, in millions, going home."

Some people admired such sense of order and discipline. I beg to differ. Can you see depression or stifle here? Do you refer to this scene as when millions of people are of one mind? I'd like to say it looked more like millions of people have one face. In the Chinese cities of Yang Zhou and Jia Ding<sup>49</sup> during the Ming Dynasty, when the Manchurian soldiers were looting and killing, didn't one see a similar scene? When people are turned into machines can they be called people again? This nation, which started World War II, is referred as the "machine nation." Is it difficult to understand? I often studied Japanese proper names and could find some answers from the changes in Japanese proper names.

During the Meiji Period most Japanese names were reminiscent of

---

<sup>48</sup>TN: A Shinto shrine in Chiyoda, Tokyo, Japan. It was founded by Emperor Meiji and commemorates anyone who had died in service of the Empire of Japan, which existed from the Meiji Restoration of 1868 until the nation was renamed during the Allied occupation in 1947. The shrine's purpose has been expanded over the years to include those who died in the wars involving Japan, spanning from the entire Meiji and Taishō period, and lesser part of the Shōwa period. The shrine now lists the names, origins, birthdates, and places of death of 2,466,532 men, women and children, including 1,068 war criminals; 14 of whom are considered Class A, leading to controversies. Visits to the shrine by Japanese leaders evoke protests from China, Korea and other Asian countries, especially in recent years.

<sup>49</sup>TN: The City of Yang Zhou and the City of Jia Zhou were the last strongholds on the part of the Ming Dynasty against the invading nomads of Manchuria. After the fall of the two cities, massacres, raping and looting ensued.

vitality. For instance, Itō Hirobumi<sup>50</sup> meant this gentleman was quite a scholar; Yamagata Aritomo<sup>51</sup> meant welcoming friends coming from afar; Natsume Sōseki<sup>52</sup> meant a gentleman lived a principled life as a hermit; Ōkuma Shigenobu<sup>53</sup> meant one needed credit to become established; and, of course, Tōten Miyazaki,<sup>54</sup> which, in Kanji, meant the huge waves from the ocean. Early last century when Mao Zedong, a high school student at the time, wrote to Tōten Miyazaki, he started by saying: “Mr. Huge Waves.” In my view, Mao would not have called him “huge waves,” without noticing such unique features in Japanese names. These beautiful names, however, are a thing of the past.

Seventy years have passed since the War of Resistance against Japan. Now there are still Japanese who harbor hostility toward the Chinese people. This is an important symbol of how the spirit of the Japanese nation became dwarfed, because how could a country which completely lost the war harbor such hatred like an old spinster against the country which won the war after 70 years, especially when the winning country has forgiven all the war indemnity and has not claimed an inch of its territory?

Chinese, the communists in particular, are magnanimous toward Japanese. During the war, through the spiritual transformation, the Chinese nation became a powerful spiritual giant, and therefore is now capable of kindness and generosity. Forgive but not to forget – this is the right approach toward history.

Mu Qing, a reporter in Xinhua News Agency, used to be an officer in the 120<sup>th</sup> Division of the Eighth Route Army. Once he followed the troops which took over a watch tower. In the corner of the tower he saw two big wood suitcases. When opened, he found them filled with hands cut from humans, old and young, big and small. The leader of the company which took the tower was from the Red Army era, and who had gone through

---

<sup>50</sup>TN: 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.

<sup>51</sup>TN: A field marshal in the Imperial Japanese Army and twice Prime Minister of Japan. He is considered one of the architects of the military and political foundations of early modern Japan. Yamagata Aritomo can be seen as the father of Japanese militarism.

<sup>52</sup>TN: A Japanese novelist of the Meiji period (1868–1912). He is best known for his novels *Kokoro*, *Botchan*, *I Am a Cat* and his unfinished work *Light and Darkness*. He was also a scholar of British literature and composer of haiku, *kanshi*, and fairy tales. From 1984 until 2004, his portrait appeared on the front of the Japanese 1000 yen note.

<sup>53</sup>TN: A Japanese politician in the Empire of Japan and the 8th (June 30, 1898 – November 8, 1898) and 17th (April 16, 1914 – October 9, 1916) Prime Minister of Japan. Ōkuma was also an early advocate of Western science and culture in Japan, and founder of Waseda University

<sup>54</sup>TN: A Japanese philosopher who aided and supported Sun Yat-sen during the Xinhai Revolution. While Sun was in Japan, he assisted Sun in his travels as he was wanted by authorities.

many battles, had to cover his mouth and went down. Many soldiers were shocked to tears.

The Nationalist Expeditionary Army led by General Sun Liren<sup>55</sup> fought in Burma. When asked about how to deal with the Japanese POWs, Sun ordered: “Asked if any of them had been to China. Those who did should be executed. Follow this order in the future!”

The nationalist forces waged many battles against Japanese troops, and lost most of those. Lost battles were still battles, which were fought anyway. However, with regard to Japanese POWs, the communists did much better. There were many members of the Anti-War Alliance among the Eighth Route Army troops, and many of them were former Japanese POWs. Later they followed the communist troops from the northeast to the south most Hainan Island. Such stories were unheard of in the nationalist troops. George Washington once said that “The Nation, which indulges towards another a habitual hatred, or a habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave.”<sup>56</sup> If Japan does not apologize for its war crimes to the Chinese people and continues to harbor ill feelings toward the Chinese people it will remain a spiritual dwarf and a psychological weakling. In 1973 Mao Zedong, already in his 80s, once mused: “Japan is a paranoid country.” He said it all!

*Translated by Ray Wang. Dr. Ray Wang is a professor and Dean of the University Libraries at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. He is co-founder and a member of the Advisory Board of Journal of East-West Thought, and Editor-in-Chief of the online edition of Today Literary Journal. He has written books and articles on various subjects and topics and has been a columnist for Hong Kong and Chinese newspapers and journals. Dr. Wang has directed and produced documentary and feature films. He worked and taught at Northwestern University, Binghamton University and Humboldt State University. Before coming to the United States he taught translation and English at Beijing Foreign Studies University and Xi'an International Studies University. He also worked at the United Nations as a translator.*

---

<sup>55</sup>TN: A Chinese Nationalist (KMT) General, a graduate of Virginia Military Institute, best known for his leadership in the Second Sino-Japanese War and the Chinese Civil War. His achievements earned him the laudatory nickname "Rommel of the East". His New First Army was known as the "1st [Best] Army under heaven" and credited with effectively confronting Japanese troops in the 1937 Battle of Shanghai and in the Burma Campaign, 1943-1944.

<sup>56</sup> Washington's farewell address.

[http://future.state.gov/when/timeline/1784\\_timeline/washingtons\\_farewelladdress.html](http://future.state.gov/when/timeline/1784_timeline/washingtons_farewelladdress.html).

Retrieved July 30, 2015.