

THE BURMA CAMPAIGN SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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ENEMY AND FRIEND. BRITAIN AND JAPAN AT WAR AND PEACE

A **Symposium** to mark the 60th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War, attended by a large and distinguished audience was held in The Cabinet War Rooms, The Imperial War Museum, on Wednesday, 7th September, 2005. Nothing on this scale had ever previously been attempted by BCS and it constituted the highlight of the Society's year.

The initial idea for an International Symposium was due to **Phillida Purvis**, Honorary Secretary of BCS, and was accepted with a mixture of acclamation and trepidation by the Committee. It was she who arranged the venue, selected and organized speakers, with the help of Nobuko Kosuge, and raised substantial funds in the form of a **Japan Foundation Grant** and a **Big Lottery Home Front Recall Programme Grant**.

An impressive result of the **Symposium** was the remarkable consensus achieved by the British and Japanese speakers, all of whom had prepared their papers independently. The Society has often emphasised that discussion to establish the true facts of a conflict in a non-recriminatory way is a major contribution to understanding and reconciliation.

The main body was divided into **Three Sessions** entitled **The War in the Far East**, **The Aftermath**, and **Today and Tomorrow**, followed by a **Question and Answer Session** and an **Epilogue** entitled **The Meaning of Reconciliation: the Veterans' Perspective**.

An **Opening Address** was given by **Phil Reed**, Director of the Cabinet War Rooms, and **The Right Honourable the Lord Weatherill DL**, Former Speaker of the House of Commons, gave an **Introductory Speech** in which he stressed the fact that India's contribution to the Allied cause was the largest voluntary army in the world.

As **Special Guest Speaker**, **Professor Sir Michael Howard CH CBE MC FKC**, former Regius Professor of Modern History, Oxford University, pointed out that British celebrations, such as those relating to the Dardanelles and the Somme, were often, not for famous victories, but for great defeats, among which Singapore was among the most ignominious. The subsequent campaign in Burma was fought under appalling conditions by the Fourteenth Army, commanded by General Slim, who was one of the finest generals in British military history.

The underlying causes of the initial defeat in Burma were twofold. The first was Churchill's decision to concentrate resources on Egypt and take the risk of neglecting the Far East. The second was a racist contempt for the Japanese, which led the British to ignore the defeat of Russia and the establishment of Japan as a great nation.

The suicidal bravery of the Japanese troops was seen as teaching the world how to die, with a loss of respect for the British, who did not know how to. In the end, however, the Burma Campaign restored British honour, and the sacrifices of those who fought in it paid for Britain's place at the peace table and led to a post-war world in which it is fully recognised that the Japanese are a nation to be treated with respect on equal terms.

John White

SESSION 1: THE WAR IN THE FAR EAST.

Dr. Philip Towle, Centre of International Studies, Cambridge University, was in the **Chair**, and **Colonel C.G.H. Dunlop OBE MSc**, Centre for Second World War Studies, University of Edinburgh, Royal Marines, Ret. acted as **Commentator**.

1. COULD THE WAR HAVE BEEN AVOIDED?

Dr. Keichiro Komatsu, Author of '*The Origins of the Pacific War*'.

Mutual misconceptions had grown between the two sides in the Pacific War over a long period and their cumulative effect contributed to the outbreak of the conflict. Serious mistranslations and misinterpretation in *Magic* the decoded intercepts of Japanese diplomatic messages, were significant factors in the failure to reach an agreement in the talks leading up to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, and thus contributed to the outbreak of war.

One fundamental difference in perception concerns the attitudes towards the Russians. The Japanese had a fear and suspicion of Russia, fuelled by centuries-old territorial disputes, which culminated, at the start of the century, in the Russo-Japanese War. This was not understood at all by the United States, a continental, isolationist power with no real threat to its own security, which rather thought of Russia as being Moscow. Japan faced the threat of Russia without allies after Britain terminated the Anglo-Japanese Alliance under pressure from the US. In June 1934, the Soviet Far Eastern troops alone matched in number the whole of the Japanese Army, including those troops stationed in mainland Japan. Throughout the Second World War there were many clashes between the Soviet Union and Japan, resulting in considerable loss of life, although the Soviet Union only declared war in August 1945, sending 1.6 million soldiers to invade Manchuria.

Preoccupied with the frontier regions of China, Korea, Manchuria and Mongolia, Japan had blundered, in 1937, into a war with China. With no clear purpose or driving force to guide and limit the conflict, it had developed into the full-scale Pacific War, which lasted until 1945. Japan's various factions could not agree on how to extricate it from the conflict. Also, as long as it was not deemed a war, there was no danger that the flow of American supplies, vital for the survival of the Japanese economy, would be halted. On the Chinese side, neither Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists nor the Communists had sufficient control to dictate their terms.

The Japanese Army decided, in July 1941, to deploy 1.2 million of its total troop strength in the North. By comparison, during the major battles of the Second World War in the Pacific between the Japanese and the Allied forces, mainly Americans, the Japanese Army sent around 31,000 troops to Guadalcanal, 26,000 to Saipan, 23,000 to Iwo Jima, and around 231,000 to Burma. The Japanese Army continued to confront the Soviet forces on the northern front, joining the Tripartite Pact with Germany and Italy in 1940, even though there were considerable differences between Japan and Germany as regards their policies.

The US and Japan engaged in informal peace talks, conducted by President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull with three Foreign Ministers and two Prime Ministers, between November 1940 and April 1941, and in semi-formal peace talks with Foreign Ministers Matsuoka and Toyoda and Prime Minister Konoe, from April to December 1941. Just hours before the attack on Pearl Harbour, the talks were still technically under way and it was at this time, in November 1941, that the mistranslations in *Magic* came to have disastrous significance.

In Washington, Ambassador Nomura was sent two Proposals, one as a back-up in case the first was not accepted. The *Magic* interception ensured, tragically, that the first proposal was not taken seriously. Among the series of serious mistranslations by *Magic*, one example is that the term 'saigo' was consistently translated as 'final' in Proposal A, rather than as 'latest'. The Proposals, as a result, were considered ultimatums, whilst Foreign minister Togo and Prime Minister Tojo had agreed at the time that 'Japan should compromise further, if the American authorities indicated any interest in either Proposal A or B.' On 26th November, against this background, the tough, Hull Ten Point Note was presented, the decision having been made not to attach to it the more acceptable 'modus vivendi' proposal for a three months truce, as had originally been intended. It was the Hull Note which eventually triggered the Japanese decision to launch the attack on Pearl Harbour. They recognized that, if they waited, they had little hope of military success against the US, with its twenty times greater military capacity. At 14.05, Tokyo time, the decision to begin hostilities was taken, with the proviso that the attack would be aborted if the diplomatic negotiations were successful.

There are many serious mistranslations of the *Magic* intercepts which cannot here be listed. A detailed examination of them, and of other misconceptions perpetrated by *Magic*, and of 40 serious mistranslations in the telegrams from Tokyo, from early November up until Pearl Harbour, shown against the original sources, together with the reasons for them, are contained in Dr. Komatsu's book entitled *Origins of the Pacific War and the Importance of Magic*, Chapter 10 (ISBN 1-873410-66-2, Japan Library, 1999). It concludes that the efforts made by the participants on both sides to avert the conflict, or at least delay the outbreak of war until the following March, might have been much closer to achieving success than is generally believed up to now but for the problems created by *Magic*.

Phillida Purvis

2. WHY DID THE JAPANESE IMPERIAL ARMY ABUSE ALLIED PRISONERS OF WAR?

Professor Fumitaka Kurosawa, Department of Cross-Cultural Studies, Tokyo Woman's Christian University.

The treatment of Allied Prisoners of War by the Japanese armed forces during the Second World War was extremely brutal and inhuman, and the International Committee of the Red Cross cited it as one of three areas in which the organization failed abysmally in its mission during the war. According to the records of the Military Tribunal for the Far East, pertaining to Japan's war responsibility and war crimes, there were 132,134 Allied POWs captured by the Japanese. Of these, 35,756, or 27.1% of the total, died in captivity. Compared with the approximately 4% mortality rate reported in German and Italian POW camps, the figure is disproportionately high. In terms of British POWs, 5.1% of those captured by the Germans and Italians died, whereas 24.8% in Japanese custody did not live to see the end of the war.

The abuse by the Japanese military left an indelible scar on former POWs and their families long after the war ended, making it extremely difficult for Japan to achieve post-war reconciliation with former POWs and their governments. It also created an image in the West of Japan as a nation even more barbaric than Nazi Germany.

Were the Japanese military, a principal arm of the modern Japanese state, really a band of barbarians with no regard for, or understanding of, wartime international law? A perusal of the history of international warfare waged by Japan since the Meiji restoration of 1868, reveals a portrait of a 'civilized' military, standing in sharp contrast to the organization that earned such notoriety for its brutish practices during the Second World War.

One of the general contributing factors was the vast difference between the cultures and customs of the Western world and of Japan at the time. The everyday practices of the two differed hugely even at the level of personal conduct and manner of interaction, such as how to bow or sit. In considering the deprivation suffered by Allied POWs, it is also important to remember that the Japanese population at large was enduring highly impoverished material conditions. Since the First World War, when Japan had eagerly sought to emulate the West, there had been a great change in the attitude of the Japanese military which, in the Taisho period, began to assert Japanese identity and the autonomy of its indigenous values. The declaration of World War II made no reference to international law. There was no formal government and military policy requiring the humane treatment of POWs according to the accepted Western norms, so that the military frequently failed to implement the terms of the Geneva Convention in actual battlefield settings. For the Japanese government touting the war as a war of liberation being fought on behalf of the Asian peoples against White colonialism, Allied POWs were a useful propaganda tool, and might also impress on other Asians the superiority of the Japanese people.

In the nineteen-thirties, the Japanese military transformed itself into an institution driven by manic emphasis on, and commitment to, the cult of the Emperor and to Japanese Exceptionalism and Bushido-esque martial values. A concept which also prevailed was 'the system of trickle-down oppression', which provided an impetus for abusing Western POWs at the bottom of the tree, who supposedly had lowly and degenerate Western values and world views. In a way, this sense of superiority was the mirror image of the inferiority complex that the Japanese had historically felt towards the West. There was also a preponderance of military priorities over all aspects of society in Japan's political life in the 1930s, culminating with Army Minister Hideki Tojo assuming the Premiership and launching the nation into an all-out war in 1941.

Another reason for the abuse of POWs related to the prevailing view that capture by the enemy was the ultimate form of disgrace, and that an honourable and self-respecting soldier must choose death over surrender and captivity.

This shift in Japanese attitudes towards POWs led to widespread practices incompatible with International Law -- there is no question about it. But I would argue that it also derived from pressing military imperatives perceived by the Japanese military seeking desperately -- and perhaps hopelessly -- to build and maintain a powerful fighting force in the face of the nation's profound resource and material deficiencies. In a perverse sense, this ideological shift was propelled by hard-nosed calculations on the part of the Japanese military.

These are the four structural factors that I would like to suggest as reasons, both direct and indirect, for the abuse of Allied POWs. In short, a misguided ideology, disparaging military captivity, combined with sanctimonious nationalism, against the backdrop of the tyranny of military priorities, to create attitudes condoning the abuse of POWs. A tragic result of this institutional and moral bankruptcy was the complete disregard for universal humanitarian imperatives and the immense human sufferings endured by those who fell victim to it.

Phillida Purvis

SESSION 2 : THE AFTERMATH.

Professor Nobuo Shimotomai, Faculty of Law, Hosei University, Former President of the Japanese Association of International Relations, was in the Chair, and **Dr. John Swenson-Wright**, Fuji Bank University Lecturer in Modern Japanese Studies and Fellow of Darwin College, Cambridge University, acted as **Commentator**.

1. BRITISH-JAPANESE DILEMMAS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AFTER 1945.

Ian Nish, Professor Emeritus of International History at the London School of Economics.

Professor Nish observed that there is a common misapprehension that wars end with the ceasefire, Armistice or Peace Treaty. On the contrary, the coming of peace generates new and unforeseen problems. Historians would do well to devote more time and effort to the aftermath of wars, on a par with the time devoted to their origin. Often in history, war-time fighting is succeeded by fighting of a different kind.

The war with Japan ended suddenly in 1945 and the allied forces had to assume military, administrative and political responsibilities with little or no preparation; in effect to restore the status quo ante, and thus, with the tacit approval of the United States, to re-establish European empires. The chaos created by the atom bomb and the suddenness of the Japanese surrender left the occupying armies with the unenviable task of establishing and maintaining law and order without adequate resources of troops, shipping and intelligence to undertake it.

It would have helped if the post-war occupation of South East Asia had been systematically planned during World War Two, as the United States planned the occupation of Japan. American administrative and military officers, due to be involved in post-war occupation, were sent on training courses at America's most prestigious universities. Without preparation, the British had to switch from fighting to taking over from the Japanese on behalf of the French and Dutch.

Professor Nish emphasised that the transition from foe to friend is often slow and full of discord, and it would be foolish to pretend otherwise. There was a measure of pragmatic co-operation between Britain and Japan from 1945 to 1947, but not the subsequent partnership. This took some time to establish.

Philip Malins

2. POST-WAR ECONOMIC AND MILITARY RELATIONS.

Dr. John Weste, Department of East Asian Studies, Leeds University.

Dr. Weste emphasised that, following the Japanese surrender in 1945, Japan still remained important to Britain, despite its temporary removal as a great power, the pre-eminence of the United States, and the fact that Britain was increasingly looking to Western Europe and the USA for military security and economic prosperity, rather than to its former Empire. The promotion of Japanese economic activity, for example, in South East Asia, met Britain's long term interests in helping to tie Japan to the capitalist bloc and to keep British territories free from communism and open to British trade.

Britain, however, had no intention of surrendering a global role for itself. Churchill spoke of three interlocking circles -- Empire, the English-speaking Dominions and the United States, and Europe, with only Britain having a place in each circle -- as the model demonstrating a long-term, global British role. While it was not the equal of the Superpowers, each circle would reinforce Britain's position in the other to guarantee a role as mediator between the United States and the Soviet Union. Ultimately, this vision was not sustainable. Nevertheless, as long as the UK attempted to maintain a position in each of these circles, it was similarly required to consider the economic and military impact of Japan in all of them.

As early as 1946, The British textile industry called for import restrictions on Japanese textiles. Britain's Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, refused to impose such restrictions, warning against Japan's ninety million people 'sinking into a cesspool of poverty'. By 1956, the British ship-building industry was overtaken by Japan, the United Kingdom Chamber of Shipping complaining of Japan's aggressive trade policies.

American domination of the Western relationship with Japan was not absolute, and did not cancel out any British interest in East Asia and specifically in Japan. In the later nineteen-fifties, the importance to Britain of its former South East Asian empire gradually faded as former colonies became independent.

Japan's defeat and occupation appeared to guarantee demilitarisation. The army and navy were abolished, war criminals were tried, and Article 9 of the new 1946 Constitution said that land, sea and air forces and other war potential 'will

never be maintained'. But the 1949 communist victory in China and 1950 outbreak of the Korean War resulted in the formation of the 75,000 strong National Police Force, followed, in 1952, by that of the National Safety Force. This was replaced, in 1954, with the current Self Defence Forces. Britain joined the United States and others in supporting Japanese rearmament as a core global concern.

Dr. Weste observed that, in hindsight, the relative post-war British decline, and the consequent reduction of interest and influence in East Asia, was as clear as post-war American preponderance.

Philip Malins

3. POST-WAR JAPANESE INTELLECTUALS' PERSPECTIVE ON RECONCILIATION BETWEEN BRITISH AND JAPANESE SOLDIERS OVER THE WAR IN BURMA: The case of Michio Takeyama (1903-1984) and *Harp of Burma*.

Kimihiko Baba, Chief Editor, Iwanami Publishers and Author of *The Burmese Harp and Post-War History*.

Mr. Baba explained that the novel *Harp of Burma*, written by the outstanding essayist and critic, Michio Takeyama, was first published as Japan lay in the ashes of destruction and disarmament at the end of World War Two and enveloped in the conviction that it would never again be embroiled in war. The novel, acclaimed by many Japanese as a masterpiece of anti-war and peace literature after World War Two, was subsequently regarded as an appropriate example by which to examine post-war reconciliation. Takeyama, while criticising Nazism during the war, was racked with guilt at not having condemned Japanese militarism.

He was immensely interested in the International Military Tribunal for the Far East and called for public debate on the victors' refusal to discuss questions of their own criminal responsibility, while judging the loser in a one-sided manner in the name of civilisation. By emphasising the distinctness of German Fascism from Japanese Militarism, he tried to highlight that in Japan a case based on crimes against humanity and a joint conspiracy would not stand.

Reconciliation between Japanese and British soldiers on the Burma front is one of the main subjects in *Harp of Burma*, suggesting that the basis for reconciliation between them lies in a common culture. Migushima, the central character of the novel, as a result of becoming a Buddhist monk, devoted his life to collecting the bones of the war dead and giving them a proper burial. The Burmese people are portrayed as common victims of the Japanese and British. *Harp of Burma* tended to imbue the British and Japanese with the feeling that they shared a common, modern, civilisation.

Takeyama, a leading advocate of the right, called for a revision of the war-renouncing Article 9 of the Constitution, repeatedly objecting to post-war democracy as synonymous with communism. He believed alliance with Anglo-Saxon nations would assure a stable foundation for international relations, particularly avoiding a perceived failure of foreign policy after Japan set aside the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1921 and invaded China.

His original intention was to write a story of reconciliation between Japanese and Chinese soldiers, but the reality and content of the story were divergent in the extreme, and he modified it from a Chinese to a Burmese setting. The Japan-China Joint Communiqué of 1972 declared that 'Japan and China are neighbouring countries, separated only by a strip of water, with a long history of traditional friendship'. Despite a mutual history of exchange, far surpassing the Japanese-British historical ties, the road to reconciliation with China seems more remote than that with the United Kingdom.

Philip Malins

SESSION 3: TODAY AND TOMORROW.

Professor Arthur Stockwin, Fellow of St. Anthony's College, formerly Professor of Japanese Studies and Director of the Nissan Institute of Japanese studies, Oxford University, was in the **Chair** and **Dr Hugo Dobson**, Department of East Asian Studies, Sheffield University, acted as **Commentator**.

1. BRITISH-JAPANESE RELATIONS GOING FORWARD.

H.E. Yoshii Nogami, the Japanese Ambassador.

These underground rooms never fail to make visitors reflect upon the war, which brought tremendous damage to people all over the world, and I, for one, would like to take this opportunity to renew my own commitment to peace, reconciliation and friendship between our peoples.

As Prime Minister Koizumi said on 15th August, Japan's post-war history has involved six decades of showing its remorse about the war through its actions. Japan is determined not to allow the lessons of the war to fade and to contribute to the peace and prosperity of the world without ever waging war again. Sixty years ago, few would have imagined that Japan and the UK would, as strategic partners, once again rebuild mutual trust, strengthen friendship and work together as they do today. When I am asked about the bilateral relationship between our two governments, the good news is that we do not have a single problem.

On the economic front, Europe aside, Japan is second only to the United States as a trade partner for the UK. For Japan, Britain is its second largest trade partner in the EU. For Japanese companies, Britain is the largest investment destination in Europe, with more than a thousand of them, including two hundred and fifty manufacturers, operating in the UK and creating about ninety thousand jobs.

On the domestic front, the Japanese economy is recovering and creating an outward-looking mindset which is enabling us to pursue a more active foreign policy in the political arena. For example, in Iraq, Japan's policy is to support the reconstruction of the country, both by means of ODA totalling up to \$5 billion and by the humanitarian and reconstruction activities of the Self Defence Forces.

We are also becoming very engaged in the Middle East Peace Process at this very critical phase of Israeli disengagement from the Gaza strip, and are committed to the steady implementation of \$100 million of assistance to the Palestinians. In Africa, Japan will double ODA to the continent over the next three years and has committed to debt cancellation on the largest scale among all creditor countries.

UN reform, which is indispensable, is probably our top foreign policy agenda item for the year. In particular, the Security Council should be given more legitimacy and effectiveness. We very much appreciate that the UK fully understands Japan's readiness to become a permanent member of the Security Council and supports our position at the highest level.

Let me now turn to East Asia. I would like to make it clear that Japan does welcome the economic rise of China. Last year, China became, for the first time, Japan's largest trading partner. I would be naive, however, if I did not see anything to worry about in Japan's relations with China and the Republic of Korea. Beijing and Seoul attribute the cause of the present situation to Prime Minister Koizumi's visits to the Yasukuni shrine or to Japan's history textbooks. A plausible alternative explanation is that Beijing is using the history problem to deflect public discontent vis-à-vis the Communist party's authority. Another more important driving force is a shift of geopolitical tectonic plates. During the 1980s and 1990s Japan was economically powerful but politically reticent and introverted, whilst China was politically assertive but economically weak. Now, East Asia has two countries both wanting to take on a leadership role, both having strong political will and considerable economics power. I think that China is acutely aware of this shift, and feeling very uncomfortable about the 'rise of Japan'.

Some people might ask: 'Will there be a revival of the old militarism in Japan?' The record of Japan's behaviour in the past sixty years shows that this will not happen. An important safeguard is, of course, our democracy. The government is accountable for how our defence capability and budget are formulated. This ensures transparency.

Finally, the issue of Anglo-Japanese relations. We are cooperating and coordinating our policy on a day to day basis, both bilaterally and through multilateral frameworks such as the UN. For Japan, the UK is a country of great importance, and for the Japanese people as a whole the UK evokes extremely positive feelings. There are about fifty-one thousand Japanese living in Britain, settled and raising their families here, and each year more than three hundred thousand Japanese people visit the UK.

From the efforts of one person approaching someone who was once an enemy, more and more people have become involved in reconciliation, and I would like once again to praise all those who have been devoting themselves to this cause at an individual level.

John White

2. BRITISH-JAPANESE RELATIONS IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT.

Reinhard Drifte, Emeritus Professor, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Visiting Research Fellow, Asia Research Centre, LSE; Visiting Professor at the Institut d'Études Politiques, Université de Toulouse.

The UK's bilateral relationship with Japan is increasingly being shaped by its membership of the European Union and also by its involvement in multilateral organisations and fora. The EU started to focus on Asia within the framework set out in its Asia paper of 1994. The policy paper dealing with EU-Japan relations first came out in the following year. The Asia paper stated that the 'Union needs as a matter of urgency to strengthen its economic presence in Asia in order to maintain its leading role in the world economy'.

The Asia-Europe Summit Meeting is the highest level meeting between the two, and the agenda every two years also include security issues. The most important divergence between the UK and Japan, which is mainly played out in ASEM, is the representation of Myanmar, which is now a new member of ASEAN. This issue is interesting in our context today in view of the war experience of both countries in what was then known as Burma. Whereas Britain has joined the EU position of putting sanctions in place because of its human rights and governance problems, a silent coalition of nostalgic individuals and hard-nosed realists in Japan does not want to isolate Burma. The intention is not to force the Burmese rulers even more into the arms of their major, if not sole, Asian friends, the Chinese government.

It is of particular poignancy in our context here, that as a result of multilateral cooperation and coordination, the UK and Japan are currently fielding military forces in the same areas, i.e. Iraq. There are therefore frequent consultations between them. Incidentally, in order to pick up fuel for Western naval units in the Indian Ocean looking for terrorists, Japanese warships are now regularly visiting India, another former war theatre where the UK confronted Japan. Both countries have also been working together on the reconstruction of Iraq, and on how to involve the UN in this effort.

A new stage in British-Japanese security cooperation in a global context was reached in September 1999, when both countries agreed on an action agenda for Cooperation in Diplomacy, National Security, Conflict Prevention and Peace-Keeping. The first case materialised in May 2002, when both sides decided to contribute to the Community Reintegration Programme in Sierra Leone to help the country overcome the devastation of its civil war. Another interesting illustration of UK-Japan interactions in international issues is that of debt forgiveness for the world's poorest countries. Britain was very committed from early on, while Japan, a much larger creditor, had until recently adhered to the strict principle that debts must be repaid. Only in 2002 did Japan make a policy change for which Britain can take much credit, although it was the USA policy switch which was the direct cause. One should also mention the ODA cooperation between both countries, thanks to their complementarities in this area. Whereas the UK has the greater experience and manpower, Japan has the greater financial means.

Finally, the outcome of Japan's quest for a permanent UN Security Council seat, about which I have been very pessimistic for reasons related to Japan's perceived qualifications, as well as to dissensions among the P5 and the UN member states. Britain, after some initial hesitation, has been supporting Japan since March 1994, and the outcome will very much determine the future direction and modus of Japan's multilateralism. It may therefore be useful to give some consideration to the kind of support Britain and other Western allies could give to Japan after its failure to join the Council becomes evident, in order to avoid any knee-jerk nationalistic reactions. A frustration of Japan's ambitions will certainly lead to a greater focus on bilateral ODA to the detriment of multilateral aid, and to greater involvement in 'elite multilateralism'.

Reflections on the UK-Japan relationship in a global context further deepen the recognition of the path that both countries have taken from enemy to friend. Britain has played a certain role in enhancing the general recognition of how much Japan has changed since 1945 and in assisting it in assuming an international status commensurate with its political and economic stature. It has certainly been helped by the recognition that its own national interests are well served by responding favourably to Japan's change and its willingness to share the international burden. China will loom increasingly larger on the horizon of Japan and the UK, and Japan will not gain more attention in Europe if it only addresses the global impact of China in terms of threat, nor will the UK, and the EU in general, improve their cooperation with Japan in the global context if they conceive of China merely as a golden business opportunity.

John White

3. BRITISH-JAPANESE RECONCILIATION: A SUCCESSFUL STORY?

Nobuko Kosuge, Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Yamanashi Gakuin University.

The holding of international 'tribunals' by the victors to judge the war crimes of the defeated was one of the things which most prominently marked the new type of post-war peace structure that was brought into being as a result of the Second World War. A precondition was that 'peace is not tantamount to forgetting'. Traditionally in pre-modern Europe, Christianity

exercised an overwhelming influence over the ways of making peace after an armed conflict, and 'reconciliation' and 'forgiveness' were concepts that tended to mean that, by the grace of God, 'total amnesty' could and should be quickly and equally granted to former enemies. Customarily, efforts were made to have the evil deeds taking place in wartime cast into oblivion at the time peace was made, with the philosophy that 'to forgive is to forget'.

As the secularisation and democratisation of society progressed, nationalism grew apace and what came to be called 'the law of nations', today more often referred to as 'international law', also developed alongside new views of post-war peacemaking. Since the Second World War, in order never again to repeat the calamities that had come with it, a political and cultural system was completed that aimed at strengthening peace by keeping within people's memory the aggression and atrocities of the war, and that would be watched over, so to speak, by the workings of journalism and public opinion. In this way, in contemporary society, people tend to believe firmly that it is harmful for the cause of peace to 'forget' the devastations and cruel deeds of past wars, and it has come to be seen as important to 'forgive but not forget'.

On the other hand, the process of trying to build and maintain a post-war peace that engages the complex factors and components of historical analysis mentioned above, can lead to an almost limitless dissection and condemnation of this or that aspect of the past, with the result that history can become highly 'politicised', while certain events that occurred during past wars are perhaps over-emphasised.

Germany's policies aimed at post-war reconciliation have clearly won a high regard internationally. Germany's 'drawing the line' and providing a sense of 'balance' are quite clear. Whether we speak about an 'aggressive war' to control Europe, or about the 'Holocaust' with its gruesome crimes symbolising the Nazi period, the Nazis were the perpetrators of crime, the Jews and others were victims; the countries that won the war were liberators; the aggression and the Holocaust were wrong, and the judgements put forth by the countries on the winning side were just.

On the other hand, the Tokyo Tribunal showed a very considerable 'imbalance' in that it judged Japan's war as an 'aggressive one' while failing to question sufficiently the very premises of colonialism and control over colonies. As regards the question of Japan's 'colonial aggression in Asia', there was not seen to be such an easy correlation, when compared with the case of Germany's aggressions, between 'justice' and the assertions of the countries which had won the war.

The issue of how Japanese army units treated British prisoners during World War Two has been a sharp thorn in the side of post-war British-Japanese relations. It has given rise to discord between the two countries and has, in the UK, been a cause of mistrust and prejudice toward Japan. On the other hand, in Japan, while one may say that the interest in Japanese-British reconciliation has not always been as high as it should be, this issue has nevertheless in fact become a core theme in the way Japanese view the war. It has often been observed that even among those Japanese who claim to wish to look squarely at the history of their country's bringing harm to others during the war, there is a tendency to admit the need for atonement toward Asia while ignoring Europe and America in this context.

The characteristics of the British-Japanese reconciliation activities can be said to be (1) that they are centred around individual citizens; (2) their continuity and (3) the diversity of the ways in which they are carried out.

In China, the memory of the 'anti-Japan war' and the atrocities committed by the Japanese army are indeed still at the core of the nationalism surrounding the war memories. At present, it may be difficult to expect too much in the way of developing the sorts of grass-roots, people-to-people reconciliation activities in the sorts of diverse and continuing patterns seen in UK-Japan relations. Yet by re-forming the problems and issues, so far as possible, into fresh, simple and easy-to-explain formats, it should be possible to look forward to new developments in China-Japan reconciliation.

John White

4. RECONCILIATION -- THE BROADER CONTEXT.

Dr. Caroline Rose, Department of East Asian Studies, Leeds University.

Anglo-Japanese reconciliation has been ongoing for many years and much progress has been made in recent times thanks to the numerous activities of individuals and groups, who have worked tirelessly to ensure that the past is addressed, remembered and commemorated in appropriate ways. The end of the Cold War witnessed a number of seemingly worldwide trends which have brought to the fore debates about history, national identity, memory and so on. Coining terms used by other academics, these can be identified as the 'memory boom', the 'rush for restitution' and 'the age of apology'.

Since the late 1980s, states and sub-groups began to review their histories as part of a re-affirmation of their local or national identities. Nowhere was this more apparent than in Germany. Similarly, there was a marked trend towards commemoration and memorialisation. The 1990s also saw a notable increase in calls for compensation or justice for human rights violations of World War Two, which had not been addressed previously. Restitution is a process where victims and perpetrators come face to face to create a future, which both sides can subscribe to, and which can encompass compensation to victims, an admission of guilt, recognition of suffering, and forgiveness by the victims.

Another global pastime of the 1990s, in addition to remembering one's past, was to apologise for it. As part of the reconciliation process, apologies are sometimes more important to the injured parties than material compensation. Indeed, offers of compensation are often rejected by injured parties if an apology is not considered sufficiently sincere, or if no apology is forthcoming. For an apology to be effective it must be accepted and acknowledged by the injured party. 'No reconciliation is achieved without forgiveness, not only because the hurts of the past cannot be undone, but also because any harm cannot be truly compensated'.

The literature on reconciliation agrees that the whole process is a future-oriented, joint endeavour between victims and perpetrators, but one which is lengthy, complex and prone to failure. Without reconciliation, conflicting parties may come to some sort of accommodation, perhaps an uneasy truce, but seldom an enduring peace. There is, of course, no single, ideal model for reconciliation, and in some cases it is impossible to achieve. Rather than it being left to states to deal with issues such as compensation or trials, it is increasingly recognised that other actors, in particular those who suffered directly (or their representatives -- family members, civil groups etc) should play an active role if the process is to be successful.

But even if citizens, non-governmental organizations, companies and the like, do become involved in the process, it does not guarantee full reconciliation, since that may not be universal among all members of the opposing sides. Once peace has been secured between the two parties, one pressing task is to *uncover the truth*. There are various means by which this can be achieved, for example through trials or truth commissions. It is then necessary to *seek justice* for the victims by various means. Eventually, it should be possible to *settle the past*. or put it 'in its proper place' through an apology to the victims or through some form of memorial to honour the memory of the war dead. In addition, assurances that past actions will not be repeated are important in order to reduce the fears of the injured party. Finally, an essential condition for reconciliation is time, and plenty of it. Moving beyond the divisions of the past is a multidimensional process that can take generations, and the different constitutive elements in the journey toward reconciliation can rarely be pursued all at the same time.

The success noted by Dr.Kosuge and the other speakers today with regard to Anglo-Japanese reconciliation, does perhaps provide a template for others to refer to and draw from, and it is certainly the private, or at least non-state, spheres that hold the key to greater success in future. These activities should not diminish (and indeed show no signs of doing so) as the generation of those who experienced the Second World War gives way to those whose memories of the period are formed very differently, but no less potently, through oral history, education, commemorative ceremonies, and events like today's workshop. Remembrance forms a central part of the process of reconciliation, and helps to keep the past firmly where it belongs -- in the present.

John White

5. THE MEANING OF RECONCILIATION: THE VETERANS' PERSPECTIVE.

Masao Hirakubo OBE, Chairman of The Burma Campaign Society.

I believe that reconciliation means that both parties with a common dispute settle it by mutual compromise. Its prerequisite is that both sides have the intention of settling the dispute and that the dispute is real. If one party does not have the sincere intention to reconcile with the ex-enemy, there will be no reconciliation. Most Japanese army veterans bore no hatred towards enemy personnel; they simply followed their commanders' orders. When their countries signed the Peace Treaty, their hostility automatically disappeared.

To tell the truth, my own plans for reconciliation originated in Burma in June 1946, when we embarked on a steamer to be repatriated. In the four years of war both our own and the British armies destroyed the Burmese economy. I resolved

that it was our responsibility to appeal to both countries to rebuild Burma. To make this possible, I determined to make the utmost effort to 'make it up' between Japan and the UK.

For the process of reconciliation, continuing dialogue between the parties is the most important requisite. Between Britain and Japan there is a particular, and large, barrier in the difference in languages. When I invited British veterans to Japan from 1989 to 1995, I asked them to give me drafts of speeches they might like to give in Japan so that I might translate them into Japanese. Each veteran was thus able to read out his own war experiences, with a Japanese translation, over dinner each day. I made the same thing possible when Japanese veterans visited the UK in 1992 and 1994. In addition, some Japanese ladies living in London gave voluntary help as interpreters.

Burma veterans on both sides witnessed the deaths of their comrades in the most miserable of circumstances on the battlefields. It is a matter of great regret that they should have died for their countries when so young. Day in day out we experienced this tragedy. I asked myself repeatedly why I remained alive, although I suffered from various tropical diseases, such as malaria, amoebic dysentery, beriberi and eczema.

When I had the opportunity to talk about these thoughts with British veterans, I found that their experiences were similar. Now the surviving veterans of both nations stand together remembering the war dead on both sides. This is the origin of our joint memorials, and it is also the proof that reconciliation has been established. The late Captain Shosaku used to talk about 'the joy of being alive as a result of the wishes of those who died in the war.'

Since Prime Minister John Major refused to allow Japan to participate in reconciliation events as we headed toward the twenty-first century, the Burma Campaign Fellowship Group began British-Japanese Joint Memorials each year at the Three Wheels Buddhist Temple in London and at the Anglican Cathedrals of Westminster, Canterbury and Coventry, during the weekend on or after the 15th of August. In addition, The Burma Campaign Society regularly holds Discussion Meetings to listen to and debate accounts and analyses of the war, and veterans give lectures to succeeding generations. It is important to pass on such first hand experiences.

John White

Philip Malins MBE MC, Deputy Chairman of the Burma Campaign Society.

I fought throughout the Second World War and never hated the enemy, German or Japanese, regarding them as young men like me, in no way responsible for causing the conflict. I gave the order to open fire when we killed twenty-two Japanese in an ambush in Burma and went to bed thinking of the terrible sorrow their deaths would cause their families. Never could I have envisaged that so long after the war I would make wonderful friends among the Japanese we had fought in a savage war. It has greatly enriched my life.

There was no reconciliation after the First World War, leading, twenty one years later, to the Second World War in which some fifty-five million people died. Victory without reconciliation is never complete. Reconciliation with the enemy is the ultimate victory for both sides. Germany greatly helped the process by readily admitting the Holocaust in which some six million innocent people were killed, and made it a crime to deny that it had happened. In general, our prisoners were properly treated. Then the Cold War brought Germany and Britain closer together and reconciliation was early achieved. Two weeks ago, at Coventry Cathedral, the German Ambassador thanked the British people for helping to liberate Germany from an evil regime.

Reconciliation with Japan has been more difficult because of the treatment of our prisoners of war, and it took fifty years before Mr. Murayama became the first Japanese Prime Minister courageously to apologise on behalf of his country for what had happened before and during the Second World War. In it, 25% of our prisoners of the Japanese died in captivity, compared with 5% in German captivity, or 5% of our people killed across all the many battle fronts. It is impossible, short of acute amnesia, for any of our prisoners of the Japanese to forget what happened, and only each one can decide for himself whether he can forgive. But to avoid the same things happening again we must seek reconciliation.

In 1991, with Masao Hirakubo as our Councillor, we formed the Burma Campaign Fellowship Group, followed by the Burma Campaign Society, comprising Burma Campaign veterans and prisoners of the Japanese seeking reconciliation

with our former enemies. We had an immediate and heart-warming response from the All Burma Veterans Association of Japan. Visits of British veterans to Japan and Japanese veterans to Britain took place. We visited Burma and walked over some of the old battlefields together in peace. I think all of us, deep within ourselves, gave thanks that we had totally removed all bitterness between us arising from the war. We found our former foes were the same sort of people as us, and were astonished to learn that they had sung 'Home sweet Home' and 'Auld Lang Syne' in Burma, and that we could sing them together. Since 1995, we have helped to organize Acts of Reconciliation and Services in many British Cathedrals, enabling successive Japanese Ambassadors to speak publicly on reconciliation. In 2004, we arranged the first ever visit of a Japanese Ambassador to our Royal Military Academy in Sandhurst, where there is an exchange of cadets with the Japanese National Defence Academy. But our prisoners of war have not been ignored, and in 1998 I initiated the Royal British Legion campaign which, with the help of many people, resulted in our Government making ex gratia payments of £10,000 each to our prisoners of the Japanese, to widows, merchant seamen and civilian internees, totalling £300,000 000 to date. It should not be left to individuals who have been terribly treated in the service of their country to seek compensation in the courts of their former enemies.

Visits of prisoners of war and their widows, children and grandchildren have been paid for by the Japanese Government, and this has had a profound effect in removing their bitterness against the Japanese. But many prisoners are still loath to talk about their visits to others, who have not been to Japan, for fear of being ostracised and accused of betraying their comrades who died in captivity. The majority of those who fought in Burma and were prisoners of war will die unreconciled. But soon they will all have passed away and the great and lasting reconciliation we have sought will be completed by younger generations.

It would be another small step in reconciliation if we renamed VE and VJ Day as PE (Peace in Europe Day) and PJ Day (Peace with Japan Day). It would help Germany and Japan to join us in remembering these days as deliverance for all of us, and not as anniversaries of defeat.

John White



**Phillida Purvis and Col. Jimmy Evans
at the Discussion Meeting.**



**Masao Hirakubo and Philip Malins
at the end of the Symposium.**

YOUNG MEN AT WAR.

At a **Discussion Meeting** on the Gurkhas in World War Two, held on 10th November at The Nippon Club, Colonel Jimmy Evans MC chose this title to his talk to emphasise the extreme youth of most of those taking part as infantrymen in the savage battles of the Burma Campaign. Youths from Nepal, who had never left their mountain villages before, came down to train and serve in Gurkha Regiments with young British Officers who had not long left school.

After commissioning at Bangalore Officer Training School and learning to speak Gurkhali, he joined the 1st Battalion of the 4th Gurkha Rifles, serving with 17 Indian Division (the Black Cats) near Imphal, during a lull in the fighting. His battalion moved forward and dug in near Kennedy Peak, towering some eight thousand feet above the jungle beside the Chindwin River. In November 1943, they were ordered to make a probing attack on a hill; his first action. His Company Commander was wounded and he took over command, and briefly commanded two companies. The operation was judged a success. A visit by the Supreme Commander, Mountbatten, boosted morale.

He returned from a short leave in Calcutta to join his battalion, which was sent to reinforce 32 Indian Infantry Brigade in three months of fierce fighting round Bishenpur against Japanese attempts to encircle the Imphal plain. For their valour, three Victoria Crosses were awarded to Gurkhas.

His battalion was ordered to guard part of the vital Silchar Track leading to India. He was sent with about twenty men and a Jemadar to clear a hillock seized by the enemy covering the road. He was wounded in the action, the bullet passing through his body. The hill was captured and named after him as Evans Knob. In some ways he felt lucky to be wounded and evacuated. Out of an establishment of fifteen British Officers, fifteen, counting newly arrived reinforcements, were killed in four months, and many more wounded. After World War Two, he stayed on in the British Army.

I commanded a detachment of twenty-five 3/1st Gurkhas in a desperate action in French Indo China in 1945, in which five were killed in acts of great bravery. The worldwide reputation for valour, which the Gurkhas have gained, has been richly earned, and we are fortunate indeed that they continue as invaluable members of the British Army.

Philip Malins

COMING EVENTS.

Thursday, 8th June: 11.00 am - 2.00 pm: Fourth Annual General Meeting of BCS at the Mitsukoshi Restaurant, Lower Regent Street.

We regard this as our annual get together, and we very much hope that members, together with their guests, will at least come to the lunch at 12.30, which follows the business meeting, to foregather with other members and with the Japanese Ambassador and Minister and their wives.

Saturday, 19th August: 2.00 pm: Annual Reconciliation Ceremony at Three Wheels.

Sunday, 20th August: Annual Services of Reconciliation at Canterbury and Coventry Cathedrals are under discussion. Full details will follow.

Editor's Note.

For comments, criticisms, and questions concerning the Newsletter, please contact John White, 25 Cadogan Place, London, SW1X 9SA, Tel/Fax 020 7235 4034. Material for inclusion in the September 2006 Issue should reach me at the above address by 31st August at the latest.

Edited and Produced by John White and Lucien Chocron

**THE BURMA CAMPAIGN SOCIETY
19 NORLAND SQUARE
LONDON W11 4PU
TEL: 0207 221 6985
FAX: 0207 792 1757**

**Email: info@burmacampaignsociety.org
Website: www.burmacampaignsociety.org**

*Full texts of the Talks presented at the 60th Anniversary Symposium can be obtained
from the above Address*