

6. The Case against Japan : Casualties of Japan's Foreign Policy Disaster

(1) Relevant Articles of ICERD

- Article 6 of ICERD

(2) Main Points

As members of Japanese-Canadian community we urge the Committee to address the following:

- (a) The Government of Japan has been negligent in providing the necessary information as protection to the children and their families of Japanese nationals and residents in Canada as well as those of Japanese ancestry who are the targets of vicious propaganda campaign, specifically the disinformation campaign called "Nanjing Massacre" in Canada.
- (b) The Government of Japan has consistently refused to recognize the fact that the propaganda campaign is political by definition. Rather than responding politically, they have deferred the matter to historians whose task is primarily academic - to research, study, analyze and publish their findings -not disseminate them to the general public or communicate with foreign agencies.
- (c) The Government of Japan has been complicit in the disinformation campaign against Japan and its people by withholding the facts about the battle of Nanjing that took place in December of 1937, by their refusal to officially recognize the results of the internal investigation undertaken by volunteer Diet members, published in 2008 in a book titled *The Truth of Nanjing*.(*1) The investigation which focused on primary sources concluded that "the Nanjing campaign was "neither above nor below the level of an ordinary war theatre" (*2) and the battle did not involve civilians majority of whom had already evacuated the city prior to the battle and the remaining population numbering approximately 200,000 had taken refuge in the international safety zone. The investigation also uncovered the process of how the event was distorted into propaganda which came to dominate the mainstream narrative over the years.

- (d) The Government of Japan has consistently failed in its duty to protect its own nationals living in Canada exposed to vicious and relentless false history campaign while the disinformation deeply penetrated every level of Canadian society -its government institutions, media and schools and so on.
- (e) The Government of Japan has aided and abetted the disinformation campaign by repeatedly and carelessly issuing false apologies to temporarily satisfy the extortionists' demands. Their refusal to deal with the facts of the matter has not only put Japanese living in Canada at social disadvantage and public shame but also caused Japanese Canadians to dissociate themselves further from their ancestors and their ancestral homeland.

(3) Background

Sadako in the following description is a fictional composite character whose narrative collectively embodies the plight of Japanese living abroad as well Japanese-Canadians. Actual individuals by name and events are also included:

*Several years ago an essay by the 7th grader Sadako Nishimura was published in a Japanese Saturday school (*3) newspaper in Toronto, Ontario. Her essay dealt with her first encounter with the "Nanjing Massacre". The topic had been brought up by a student attending the same local day school. The composition was a thoughtful albeit painful reflection in which a young writer grappled with a serious moral question about her ancestors.*

*Sadako graduated into high school. In Grade 10 History class the same topic came up in a chapter on the World War 2(WW2). Her history teacher took a special interest in the subject as she had previously gone on a group study tour to China and visited the WW 2 memorial museum there. Armed with a supplementary study guide provided free of charge by a local activist group, the teacher got her students to work on a special project titled "Forgotten Asian Holocaust." The supplementary documents included the survivors' testimonies, video taped confessions of old Japanese soldiers, online video clips about the Unit 731 medical experiments described to be just as cruel and barbaric as the ones conducted by Nazi scientists (*4) on Jewish children.*

Shocked that they had all heard about the Holocaust by the Nazis, yet knew nothing about the similar atrocity that took place in Asia, the students wondered that considering a large number of Chinese Canadians in their country, this event may be

*just as important to remember as the Jewish Holocaust. The teacher then mentioned the private members Bill 79 named "Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day Act"(*5) that was before the Ontario Legislature.*

The teacher hastens to remind her class that Asian Holocaust commemoration is not meant to blame the Japanese people. Japanese Canadians were also victims as they were forcibly removed from their homes and put into camps during the WW2 because of Japan's aggression. In 1988 Canadian government issued a formal apology and paid compensations to the surviving family members. Even people in Japan can be considered victims -the teacher mused- as Japan was under the military dictatorship then and had its people brainwashed with fanatical Emperor worship that drove them to fight to the last man, woman and child. They refused to surrender until atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki finally ending the war that started with Japan's invasion of China and the attack on Pearl Harbor.

*The students still remembered the story about a young girl with the same name as their Japanese classmate: "Sadako and one thousand paper cranes" in Grade 5 English class. Sadako in the story is a young aspiring athlete growing up in Hiroshima. Her life was tragically cut short due to the radiation illness that suddenly ravaged her body. The teacher recommended "The Rape of Nanking"(*6), a book by Iris Chan for further study.*

In the meantime at home, Sadako's parents were involved in signature collection campaign against the proposed "Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day Act". Her parents are afraid of the embarrassment that they might face at work and do not want to be reminded of the humiliation their parents-Sadako's grandparents - suffered during the WW2.

*Sadako felt that her parents were being paranoid about racial discrimination. Canada is so ethnically and racially diverse that it is highly unlikely that old racist policy will ever come back. Every country has a stain in its history. Even Canada had to undertake "Truth and Reconciliation" Commission (*7) to investigate the abuse that took place in the residential schools for Canada's First Nations children.*

*Sadako also heard her parents talking about a few apparently right wing Japanese nationalists who went around the Japanese Canadian Culture Centre (JCCC) (*8) claiming that "Nanjing Massacre" never happened. They were spreading their revisionist views with their DVD's and pamphlets. Complaints were made to the JCCC office and the materials were confiscated and returned to the lady in charge of the community room. Her parents bemoaned that this type of behaviour brought unwanted attention. They would rather have the matter go away quietly without provoking a backlash.*

*In the next class Sadako's classmates shared an article in Toronto Star(*9) by a Japanese Canadian author Joy Kogawa in support of the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day Act. The author urged Canadians-particularly in her community to remember their own struggle to obtain redress for Japanese Canadians. She seemed to be saying now it's our turn to stand in solidarity with the Chinese Canadians. All the reasons the author cited seemed reasonable and fair.*

Sadako decided to meet Joy Kogawa to be part of the support group. Her history teacher was encouraging and soon a group formed in her class and the group attended the Ontario Legislature when the Bill was presented, to show their support for the Bill.

Among a multitude of problems and historical distortions in the above description, the most egregious perhaps is that the young people, regardless of their nationalities, are used as tools to advance a foreign propaganda. This should alarm any responsible educators.

(4) Conclusion

The Government of Japan has seriously harmed the quality of lives of Japanese nationals living abroad as well as Japanese Canadians by their silence and inaction in the face of vicious disinformation campaign aimed at damaging Japan's reputation abroad.

The Government of Japan has failed in its responsibility specifically of protecting the school children by withholding the knowledge and information that they need in their school curriculum taught in Japanese schools operating in Canada.

The Government of Japan has been derelict in its duty to communicate with the Canadian government whenever Nanjing or other propaganda is pushed for debate in the federal or provincial parliament or the city councils. Their silence has allowed the Canadian officials at all levels to operate in ignorance when debating the subject.

The neglect by the Government of Japan over the years can result in tangible loss of opportunities in professional and social life while emotional and psychological harm done to all concerned parties is incalculable.

(5) Recommendations

We request the Committee to make the following recommendations:

The Japanese government must recognize that the truth is not self evident. Thus efforts must be made and proactive measures must be taken to inform, educate and communicate. A task force should be set up to undertake the following:

- (a) Resurrect and revise the 2008 report "The Truth of Nanjing" with additional information found since 2008. An abridged, reader-friendly version with references to all of the authentic primary source materials for further inquiry, should be printed for mass distribution.
- (b) Distribute the above publication to all foreign diplomatic offices as well as organizations and institutions that offer programmes and courses in history, or any programmes sponsored in part or whole by Japan. Oversea Japanese schools including elementary and high school should receive special care and attention.
- (c) Make official and public response in the local media, schools, academic circles, city halls, parliament, etc., whenever the subject is raised.
- (d) Expand "Kakehashi" or outreach projects for the purpose of bridging the information gap, language gap, and multi-generational experience gap while curtailing funding of the hostile forces.

Friendship diplomacy has its limits and is ineffective in the time of war as amply illustrated in the real story of Sakura trees in Victoria, British Columbia, where the first Japanese Canadian community was settled. (*10) It should be remembered that it took a direct intervention by Tojo Hideki to protect the lives of forty Japanese Canadians who were arrested on the night of December 7, 1941. (*11)

Reported by "Toronto Seiron"

Note :

(*1) "The Truth of Nanjing": Compiled under the supervision of the Diet Members Group for Japan's Future and History Education. In English and Japanese 2008 Nisshin Hodo

(*2) Ibid. page 21

(*3) Japanese Saturday schools or Hoshu Jugyo-ko are supplementary Japanese schools operating in foreign countries. They operate on weekends, after school, and other times outside the operating hours of the regular day schools. Hoshu Jugyo-ko normally take children of Japanese nationals stationed abroad typically diplomats and business men as they follow the core curriculum of the Japanese ministry of education. In recent years, they are open to also accepting local children with the Japanese language proficiency.

(*4) Nazi scientists conducted many medical experiments in pursuit of racial theory known as Eugenics. After the World War 2 thousands of them escaped to South America, Middle East, Australia, US, and the Soviet union and other host countries. Many of them were recruited by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) for their "Project Paperclip" and other covert operations.

(*5) Private Members Bill 79 "Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day Act". The Bill proclaims December 13 in each year as the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day.
<https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-41/session-2/bill-79>

(*6) "The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II" by Iris Chang (1997) Basic Books

(*7) Truth and Reconciliation Commission Canada (TRC): A multi-year study by the Canadian government (2009-2015) to come to terms with its residential schools for the native children that operated for over 150 years in Canada as part of Canada's aggressive assimilation policy. <http://www.trc.ca/> The critics charge that the Commission is just a whitewash of the true face of Canada's policy which they claim was genocidal in both theory and practice. <https://youtu.be/0brD50DIv5Q>

(*8) Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre: <http://www.jccc.on.ca/en/>

(*9) Toronto Star Sept. 15, 2017: Why I Support the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day Act: Joy Kogawa

<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2017/09/15/why-i-support-the-nanjing-massacre-commemorative-day-act-joy-kogawa.html>

(*10) Gateway to Promise: Canada's First Japanese Community by Ann-Lee and Gordon Switzer TI-Jean Press (2017) Chapter 14 Sakura of Victoria

(*11) "Ishi-wo mote owaruru-gotoku" by Mitsuru Shinpo Continental Times (1976) pg 213