

**Book Review by Tanaka Hidemichi,
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**John W. Dower: *Ways of Forgetting, Ways of Remembering: Japan in the Modern World*
(Translated by Sotooka Hidetoshi, Iwanami Shoten, 2013)**

**Henry S. Stokes: *Falsehoods of the Allied Nations' Victorious Views of History, as Seen by a
British Journalist* (Shoden-sha New Books, 2013)**

Some may say that it is not appropriate for an academic magazine to mention these two books in the same review. The former is written by an author who is one of the leading scholars on modern Japanese history in the United States and historian who also wrote *Embracing Defeat*, and the latter is succinctly written by a journalist who has lived in Japan for fifty years.

However, I believe it is worthwhile, in a sense that in examining the relations not only between Japan and the United States but also between Japan and Britain and between Britain and the United States during the modern age, particularly at the time of World War II, these two books are remarkably contrasting, showing how the same historical fact is seen at the same time by a scholar and a journalist.

Focusing on how British and American intellectuals see the same historical fact, we learn which side has a more justifiable view of history, beyond the purpose of each of the books.

Mr. Dower is a Marxist scholar, which clearly indicates that he sees history in terms of socialistic ideology. The twentieth century was an age of socialistic ideology, as shown by the fact that there were countries with socialistic names such as the “Soviet Union” and “People’s Republic of China”. Mr. Dower was born in 1938, and though he is an American (it would be wrong to assume that all Americans are flexible in terms of thinking), it is very clear that he is dyed-in-the-wool socialist. It is a kind of joke that he continues to be socialist in the 21st century when socialism turned out to be ideologically bankrupt.

He doesn’t brazenly show such a petrified ideology in his book, but it is still clearly demonstrated in an editorial passage he wrote at the request of *the Asahi Newspaper*:

Regarding the Asian Pacific War, it is both appropriate and important to discuss it in wide contexts of imperialism and colonialism, world recession and anti-imperialistic nationalism which sprang up in Asia (China, in particular). It is quite understandable to mourn for millions of Japanese who died in the war.

However, in the 1930’s and early in the 1940’s, Japan, too, fell into militarism as an imperialistic colonial power, invaded, occupied other countries and committed utter atrocities.

To deny this fact is to fundamentally distort history. It terribly damages the respect and trust Japan earned internationally after the War.

Japanese leaders were mentally near-sighted and ruthless, who violently victimized their soldiers and citizens in the homeland in a war which they hardly expected to win.

(John Dower: *Is Tamogami's Essay "Always Support Our Country" Patriotic?* The morning edition of *The Asahi Newspaper* of February 22, 2008)

This passage criticizes Mr. Tamogami Toshio's essay, based on a view of history that definitely summarily concludes that Japan, a "villain", actually committed the "Nanking Massacre" and "Comfort Women" atrocities. In other words, Mr. Dower, as a scholar, stands on the basis of a Marxist view of history and always seeing things in terms of an "imperialist" state engaging in "aggression", suppressing its people and making them helpless. In his process of delivering his propaganda, he applies this paradigm to actual history. He merely develops his own view of history, dismissing other views of history as being "historical revisionism." In his book, this is also demonstrated in a passage in which he sympathetically describes Herbert Norman, who ended up killing himself in Egypt, as a Marxist historian caught up amid anti-communist McCarthyism, after the War. It is most critical that he does not understand that Japan can hardly be understood in the light of such a Marxist view of history.

In this book, while Mr. Dower does not himself assert, he advances assertions made by "Japanese liberalists and leftist writers" that "forcible recruitment of Asian women (comfort women) and other violent acts were revealed" and "after an abnormal interval during which an attempt was made to conceal the Japanese memory of invasion in China and violent war deeds," in the seventies, "the memory was reconstructed again." All of these were brought up in the seventies and thereafter, but Mr. Dower does not seem to have a hint of doubt as to whether these things might have been fabricated in later years, and he discusses the whole history based on the conviction that these are all actual facts.

His well-known book, *Embracing Defeat*, described the issue of racial discrimination, on the parts of both Japan and the United States, examined racial propaganda and "aggression" of both sides. Here also lies the image, the propaganda of imperialist Japan. Namely, to Marxists, the conclusion foregone, and that all they have to do is attempt to logically explain it. Diversity of history can hardly be understandable. Even less so, beyond their ridged image, Japan's history is far from comprehensible to him.

Now, let us look at Mr. Stokes' journalistic view.

At first, Mr. Stokes, too, was strongly influenced by the thinking "Japanese villains" who committed atrocious acts of war. However, he honestly confesses as a Brit that there lay a racial issue:

The British Empire collapsed due to the Japanese Army. None of the British people had ever imagined such a thing would come to as reality. When the British people were struck with the reality, their shock and humiliation were so easy to anticipate.

It was shocking that Hitler tried to establish a great German Empire after a series of battles with European nations. Hitler was still a White Christian. So we were able to compare him with us. It was, however, beyond the British frame of thinking that the British Empire, which enjoyed its prosperity within the White civilized world, fell into the hands of a colored race. It was an event that was simply incomprehensible.

There was a hit film entitled *The Planet of Apes*. What could be comparable to what happened then is that the fictional world in the film turned into reality. Nobody thinks that the *Planet of Apes* will turn into reality. It's fictional and it's only a world that exists in film. The event is just imaginary. The apes – colored people – which tried to imitate the humans – the westerners – suddenly rose above the humans. If this turned out to be reality, the shock would be immeasurable. And we can imagine the extent of the impact. The Japanese exerted such an impact on British nationals. A great impact was felt not only by the British but also by all of Western civilization.

This description indicates recognition that the “atrocious acts of war” committed by Japan originally lay in the issue of White racial discrimination. White people equated “apes” with “atrocious” and they were taken aback by unexpected resistance on the part of the Japanese and deduced that militarist “Japan” was as atrocious as apes. Mr. Stokes frankly points out this western thinking and further tries to uncover the truth behind Japanese acts of war. And he came to understand that the truth is not based on an imperialistic view, as westerns think. On the other hand, Mr. Dower lacks the willingness to dig for the truth. Thus, he continues to insist, on the thinking that “aggression” was committed by an “imperialist nation,” as before.

Mr. Stokes denies the Nanking Massacre, not from an ideological perspective, but through the flexible examination by a journalist. Up until then, he believed in the popular European and American view that the Japanese Army committed a massacre in Nanking. Then, he learned that this view derived from Chinese propaganda, through Mr. Kitamura Minoru's findings, and after studying the matter himself, he came to the conclusion: it can be clearly said that the so-called Nanking Massacre was a propaganda campaign contrived in the context of psychological warfare.

This “Nanking Massacre” was first reported worldwide by foreign correspondents in Nanking, Tilman Durdin of *The New York Times* and Archibald Steele of the *Chicago Daily News*. In their report of the fall of Nanking, “large-scale plunders, rapes of women and slaughters of non-combatants” were mentioned. But their report was actually based on the “statement” made by

Miner Bates, an advisor to the Chinese Nationalist Party, and George Fitch, who was also closely related to the Nationalist Party. These two men presented themselves in the courtroom of the Tokyo Trials. But they never asserted their reports as fact.

Zeng Xubai, Chief of the International Propaganda Bureau of the Nationalist Party had Harold J. Timperley, China correspondent for *The Manchester Guardian*, a British daily newspaper, write a book entitled *What War Means*. Miner Bates, professor at Nanking University and Pastor George Fitch, missionary in Nanking and members of the Nationalist Party's International Committee were deeply involved in the writing of the book and a body of leftist intellectuals, the British Communist Party and Comintern, were behind the scheme. Lewis Smythe, an American, who was in Nanking at that time, also cooperated in writing several propaganda publications, including *Record of Atrocities Committed by the Japanese Enemy* and *True Description of War Damages in Nanking*. Through this scheme, the Chinese never appeared out in front, but instead, they emphasized, "an international friend who understands the truth and methods of our war of resistance became a spokesman for us."¹ Thus, the Chinese succeeded in spreading lies as if they were the truth. Mr. Stokes, being a journalist himself, was probably able to perceive the wrongdoing of these European and American journalists.

China's International Propaganda Division held three hundred press conferences over eleven months starting from December, 1937, but a "massacre" was never once mentioned. One hundred fifty or so Japanese newspaper reporters were also in Nanking at that time, but they reported nothing of the sort. According to the *Documents of the Nanking Safety Zone* compiled in English in the summer of 1939, there were no cases of murder, one case of rape, two cases of looting on December 13; one murder, four rapes and three acts of looting on the 14th; four murders, five rapes and five acts of looting on the 15th. This is far from a "massacre". Whatever happened in the midst of the confusion of war, it was almost the same as nothing happened. Mr. Stokes pointed out, "This is not the report submitted by the Japanese side. Damages were filed by Nanking citizens and received by the International Committee and then sent to the Japanese Embassy....No incident of murder occurred for three days after the fall of Nanking." We now know how Bates and Fitch spread intentional falsehoods. Far from three hundred thousand victims as the Chinese insistently claim, even the forty thousand as some Japanese scholars assert, it was a sheer lie. We can duly confirm that General Matsui Iwane, Commander of the Nanking Capturing Army, thoroughly carried out rigid administrative reforms in Nanking after its fall.

Besides Mr. Dower, I wonder what famous American scholars like Ezra Vogel and Andrew Gordon think of this all. Those Harvard scholars still firmly believe that the Nanking Massacre did take place, and so do the Chinese, the Koreans and assorted politicians.

The same is true of South Korea's "Comfort Women" issue. Mr. Stokes points out that it was

¹ *The Politics of Nanking*, Kitamura Minoru, University Press of America, New York, 2007, p.28.

neither forced nor “sex slavery”, based on materials from the American side. “According to a report submitted by the Psychological Warfare Team of the U.S. War Intelligence Office, an investigative hearing was conducted in August, 1944, at Myitkyina, located far back in Burma and Korean (they were then of Japanese nationality) comfort girls were interviewed. They were merely ‘prostitutes’ or ‘camp followers’ with business purpose. These ‘prostitutes’ earned three hundred yen monthly, thirty times as much as Private First Class soldiers who earned ten yen a month. They were high-grade prostitutes,” wrote Mr. Stokes.

He then advises the following: “Though Cabinet Secretary Kohno Yohei expressed his regret, things have not yet been settled. Among the Japanese people themselves, there is a culture of lenience, where saying “I am sorry” settles it all. However, in international society, to apologize means to admit the fault and the fault once admitted has to be paid for...China and South Korea take advantage of Japan’s culture of not refuting back, and use it in their propaganda plot.” Mr. Stokes argues that Japan should disseminate facts to the world.

Scholars like Mr. Dower write that Japanese “imperialists” (must) have committed atrocities in cold blood, as did western “imperialists”, firmly believing their point of view. On the other hand, however, Mr. Stokes, a journalist, after closely examining facts, states that these presumed facts turn out to be lies. As Mr. Stokes was former Tokyo Bureau Chief of *The New York Times*, the most radically anti-Japanese paper, we expected him to hold the same anti-Japanese view. On the contrary, through his experience of living in Japan for half a century, he may well come to the conclusion that the Japanese soldiers could not have done such brutal acts. In either case, one can clearly see the contrast, that though the book is written in an academic manner, with a historian author still firmly imbued with strong Marxist ideology, it is no longer able to view history properly, compared with the other book written by a journalist.