

Overlap between Victims and Perpetrators in Hotta Yoshie's Novel *Jikan*

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Introduction

Many works of postwar Japanese literature took as their subject matter the military or scenes of war, reflecting the fact that the postwar period's starting point was the reality of war. The harsh experience of the Asia-Pacific war was the subject matter not only for postwar literary works but also the many memoirs and written records published during the period. Here I am using the term "postwar literature" to refer to a period that spans from the publication of Noma Hiroshi's 野間宏 (1915–91) *Dark Pictures* (*Kurai e* 暗い絵) in 1946 to roughly the year 1970, including works by authors such as Umezaki Haruo 梅崎春生 (1915–65), Takeda Taijun 武田泰淳 (1912–76), Haniya Yutaka 埴谷雄高 (1909–97), Shiina Rinzō 椎名麟三 (1911–73), Ōoka Shōhei 大岡昇平 (1909–88), Nakamura Shin'ichirō 中村真一郎 (1918–97), Fukunaga Takehiko 福永武彦 (1918–79), Shimao Toshio 島尾敏雄 (1917–86), and Hotta Yoshie 堀田善衛 (1918–98).

The short stories and novels by these and other authors differed somewhat from the numerous written accounts that were published in the postwar years with regard to how the question of victims and perpetrators was addressed. That is, instead of simply viewing themselves as victims of war, there is the recognition in postwar literary works of *the other* in war on the "enemy" side, and an understanding that this aspect of oneself as perpetrator cannot be neglected. This can include a variety of scenarios, whether it is an act perpetrated as a non-combatant or one committed against one's fellow soldiers. The fact of depicting oneself in this way as a perpetrator is one important characteristic of postwar literature.

It may prove insightful to contrast that approach with another book from the postwar period. I am referring to *Listen to the Voices of the Sea* (*Kike wadatsumi no koe* きけわたつみのこえ), a collection of letters written by university graduates who perished in the war, described as "one of the spiritual sources of the postwar peace movement, creating a great stir among readers upon its publication in 1949,"¹ and still published as part of the Iwanami Bunko series of classic works.²

1 From the Preface to its Iwanami Bunko edition.

2 The first printing was in 1995 and the most recent printing (the 24th) was in 2010.

Another postwar work that has remained in print is *Leaving These Children Behind* (*Kono ko o nokoshite* この子を残して, 1948) by Nagai Takashi 永井隆 (1908–51).³ The blurb for the book’s Aruba Bunko edition, first issued in 1995, describes it as a “tale of love and peace.” There are many other authors who related painful wartime experiences in the form of memoirs or journals, including the record of wartime suffering in Fujiwara Tei’s 藤原てい (1918–) *The Shooting Stars Are Alive* (*Nagareru hoshi wa ikiteiru* 流れる星は生きている, 1949), the remembrances of war widows who struggled to raise their children after their husbands were killed in the books *Bearing Hardship with Beloved Children* (*Itoshi go to taete yukamu* いとし子と耐えてゆかむ, 1952) and *In the Southern Sea Depths You Are Sleeping* (*Kono hate ni kimi aru gotoku* この果てに君ある如く, 1950). Such works are written from the perspective of seeking to convey to the reader the extreme cruelty of war and the terrible suffering of people during it. These are undeniably valuable works, based on the anti-war/pacifist stance of preventing future wars, drawing on their terrible first-hand experiences of the Asia-Pacific war. These are works that *had to be written*.

Yet even though these are works in which the authors repeatedly emphasize the harm caused by war, there is not always much said about the inflicting of that harm. Indeed, it seems difficult for these authors to touch on this subject, for to raise the question would be to torment themselves with feelings of guilt. The view of oneself as an innocent victim brings a surprisingly carefree feeling (although the term “carefree” is probably not appropriate to describe those who have had such cruel experiences). But one gets the impression that the authors made the utmost effort to avoid placing themselves in the position of the perpetrator. Most of the accounts in the books on the war are stories of victims—stories told by the perpetrators are rare.⁴ Why is it that the perpetrators are

3 The first printing of the Aruba Bunko edition (published by Sanpauro) was in 1955; the most recent printing (the 16th) was in 2008.

4 One of the earliest works to depict perpetrators is the 1957 book *Sankō* 三光 [Three Exterminations] edited by Kanki Haruo 神吉晴夫, which is subtitled: *Nihonjin no Chūgoku ni okeru sensō hanzai no kokuhaku* 日本人の中国における戦争犯罪の告白 (Japanese Confessions of War Crimes Committed in China). The book is a record of confessions made by former Japanese soldiers held at the War Criminals Management Centre in Fushun and in Taiyuan regarding their acts of wartime brutality. There are also the 2005 books *The Two Battlegrounds of a Japanese Soldier: Kondō Hajime’s Unending War* (*Aru Nihon hei no futatsu no senjō: Kondō Hajime no owaranai sensō* ある日本兵の二つの戦場: 近藤一の終わらない戦争), edited by Utsumi Aiko 内海愛子 et al; and Inoue Toshio’s 井上俊夫 book *I Killed a Man for the First Time* (*Hajimete hito o korosu* 初めて人を殺す). These texts include testimonies made by former Japanese soldiers who in recent years have become aware of themselves as perpetrators.

nowhere to be seen? They must be somewhere, because the existence of victims presumes their own existence. So it is simply impossible for there to be only victims and no perpetrators. Particularly in the case of war there are, even among non-combatants, those who provide support to soldiers, such as the fervent Japanese women comprising the *Jūgo no mamori* 銃後の守り [Protection of the Home Front] organization, whose own responsibilities for harm inflicted has been elucidated by past research.⁵ In considering pacifism and opposition to war one must of course clarify the harm caused by war, but it may be even more vital to analyze the mindset of those who inflicted the harm and elucidate issues pertaining to the social structure underlying the injury inflicted.

To avoid any misunderstanding, I should add that my comments are not meant to suggest that such works are at all deficient with regard to clarifying reality from the victim's perspective. Rather, as noted already, these are valuable works that simply had to be written. Based on this understanding, I would like to consider the characteristics of postwar literature that sets them apart from those works of non-fiction by examining the novel *Jikan* 時間 [Time] by Hotta Yoshie, published in 1955 by Shinchōsha. By examining the layered structure of victims and perpetrators in this book, I intend to look at the problems raised by postwar literature and clarify their significance.

1. Viewing Oneself as the Perpetrator

Prior to examining Hotta's novel, let me touch briefly on two other works of fiction: *Shinpan* 審判 [Judge] by Takeda Taijun and *Kao no naka no akai tsuki* 顔の中の赤い月 [A Red Moon in Her Face] by Noma Hiroshi. Both are well-known postwar literary works that address the theme of the perpetration of harm on others.

Takeda's novel *Shinpan* is set in Shanghai, just after Japan's defeat in the war. The focus of the book is a letter written to the first-person narrator by a man named Jirō, who had been a soldier stationed in China. In his letter he confesses to having killed a civilian Chinese farmer who had not been resisting the occupation. Because of this act he decides to stay in China rather than return to Japan, a decision that stems from an awareness of his own guilt and the harsh view he has of himself for having callously killed a civilian of the enemy nation. The "judge" refers to his own self-punishment, that is, his decision to live while carrying the burden of guilt.

5 See Kanō Mikiyo's 加納実紀代 book *Women Protecting the Homefront (Onna tachi no "jūgo" 女たちの〈銃後〉)*, 1987).

Similarly, Noma's novel *Kao no naka no akai tsuki* tells the tale of a man named Kitayama Toshio, who has returned from the war, and of a war widow named Horikawa Kurako. After witnessing the horrors of war in the South Pacific, Kitayama is trapped in the mindset whereby he rejects human beings and life itself. His affection for Kurako grows, and she feels affection for him in return, but when he remembers how he abandoned his suffering comrades-in-arms, he realizes his own inability to make her happy and does not seek to deepen their relationship. Kitayama sees the reflection of a tropical red moon on Kurako's white face and is overwhelmed by his sense of guilt toward his old army companions. This red moon that manifests the trauma of the war zone is featured in the work's title.

These novels depict "survivor's guilt," a term referring to the trauma experienced by those who lived through the Holocaust or atomic bombings or other such catastrophic events; the same feeling was experienced by survivors of the Asia-Pacific war. For example, underlying the writing of Katō Shūichi 加藤周一 and Ayukawa Nobuo 鮎川信夫 is a profound sense of how they had lived through a war that had claimed the lives of close friends.⁶ This phenomenon of survivor's guilt is an important contributing factor in the formation of postwar literary discourse.

Another characteristic of postwar literary works is how they depict the reality of the "human being" laid bare by the experience of war and the army. One such character, to be discussed later, appears in Hotta's novel *Jikan*: the commissioned officer Kirino Taii, a highly-cultured former university professor who, despite this background, directs those under him to inflict torture. This is an example of how postwar literature depicts

6 In Katō Shūichi's book *Nijusseiki no jigazō* 二十世紀の自画像 [Self-Portrait in the 20th Century] (2005), he writes: "I had two close friends around the same age as me, one a doctor and the other a literary man; and these men who were like brothers to me were killed. I strongly questioned why it was that I had lived, while they had been killed, and I become obsessed with the structure and character of the war that my country Japan had waged" (p. 31). Another example of the phenomenon of survivor's guilt can be seen in the poem "Shinda otoko" 死んだ男 [Dead Man] by Ayukawa Nobuo (published in the February 1947 issue of *Junsui shi* 純粋詩), a work written in memory of his friend Morikawa Yoshinobu 森川義信. There is also the following passage from Takeda Taijun's work "Ikinokori no kangai" 生き残りの感慨 [Deep Emotion of Survival] (published in the August 13 and 14 issues of *Tōkyō shinbun* 東京新聞): "Even though everyone who had died had an equally valid right or reason to survive, they did in fact die, whereas we survived. No matter how insensitive or irresponsible it might be, thinking of this gives me a feeling of suffocation" (*Takeda Taijun zenshū*, p. 262).

the reality of the human condition not as a problem of others but rather as one's own problem—in this case showing the way in which a man who had led an ordinary life in peacetime can be transformed by the upheaval of war into a brutal person. The desire to somehow understand this human reality that cannot be grasped by reason is certainly one reason why the French existentialist thought of Sartre and Camus was the subject of considerable interest in postwar Japan. The experience of war forced people to bear witness for the first time a harsh reality.

We can see, then, that postwar Japanese literature is characterized in part by its treatment of the issues of survivor's guilt and the reality of human behavior. Yet this is not a characteristic limited to postwar Japanese literature. For instance, there are novels, films, and reportage depicting traumatized US soldiers who returned home from the wars in Vietnam or Iraq. The same clear sense of guilt at one's own actions committed against civilians of the enemy country, or against one's own friends and comrades, is depicted in Japanese novels such as *Shinpan* or *Kao no naka no akai tsuki*. In such works, a major factor underlying the various characters' anguished thoughts resulting from the war is not so much their experience as victims as the acts they perpetrated themselves.

At issue is not whether the experiences written about in the novels of Takeda Taijun and Noma Hiroshi actually took place or not. What is worth bearing in mind, rather, is that their works deal with the aspects of both victim and perpetrator in war, and scrupulously depict the figure of the perpetrator.

2. Hotta Yoshie's *Jikan*—Viewed from Four Perspectives

Hotta Yoshie's *Jikan* was first published in full book form in April 1955 by the publishing company Shinchōsha. The parts comprising the book were previously published separately, as follows: “Jikan” [Time] (November 1953 issue of *Sekai* 世界), “Shihen” 詩篇 [Poetry Selection] (February 1954 issue of *Bungakukai* 文学界), “Sansen Sōmoku” 山川草木 [Mountains, Rivers, Grasses, Trees] (July 1954 issue of *Kaizō* 改造), “Junanraku” 受難楽 [The Pleasure of Suffering] (August 1954 issue of *Bungakukai*), “Sonzai to kōi” 存在と行為 [Existence and Action] (October 1954 issue of *Sekai*), and “Kikan” 帰還 [Repatriation] (January 1955 issue of *Sekai*). As is clear from these separate parts, Hotta's work portrays wartime perpetrators in a manner that is even more multifaceted than the depictions in *Shinpan* or *Kao no naka no akai tsuki*.

Hotta's *Jikan* is a novel in diary form that deals with the Nanjing Massacre. The diarist is a 37-year-old man named Chen Ying Di, a highly capable Chinese government official assigned to work for a naval unit in the Kuomintang government. His diary depicts his life with his five-year-old son Ying Wu and his pregnant wife from 30 November 1937 to 3 October 1938, the period of the fall of Nanjing. In sharp contrast to the top government officials who fled to the city of Hankou, Chen remains at his post in Nanjing, using a wireless to communicate the situation within the city to those on the outside. His older brother abandons Chen and his family for the safety of Hankou, telling Chen to safeguard the family wealth—a remark that seems quite selfish coming from someone who has escaped to a safe zone. Moreover, Chen's uncle, upon whom he had hoped to rely, commits the traitorous act of working for the Health Department of Japan's puppet Nanjing government, which traffics opium and heroin. This uncle even stands by in silence, after the Japanese army enters the city, when Chen's wife and son are dragged away by Health Department personnel from the neutral zone set up by the International Committee on the campus of Jinling University to be killed in a group execution. This person is quick to transform himself and acts only with his own safety in mind. Unable to turn to his elder brother or uncle for help, Chen and his pregnant wife and son do whatever they can to protect themselves after the Japanese army enters the city, but he also clandestinely continues his work.

Here I want to examine the character of Chen Ying Di from four perspectives. Chen's diary does not cover the half year beginning from 11 December 1937: the last entry is recorded at 11 a.m., in which he writes that the city of Nanjing has fallen, and the next entry is not until 10 May 1938. The subsequent entries include passages where he remembers what has occurred during the six months not covered by the diary. One assumes that he has not had the opportunity to write in the diary during the half year after the city fell. In the new diary entries we see that the Japanese army has commandeered his large compound and that he is now a subordinate of the Japanese officer Captain Kirino who is stationed there. His wife and child have already been killed. There is no longer anything left for him to protect. He has the following thoughts on the invasion of the Japanese army, which is responsible for so many deaths:

Those who have already died, and those who are about to die, are not a mass of tens of thousands, but the deaths of individuals. All of those individual deaths have add-

ed up to those tens of thousands. This way of counting—tens of thousands together or individual upon individual—here is the difference between war and peace, the difference between a newspaper article and literature. (p. 55)⁷

Here is a way of thinking that does not fit in neatly with a sort of numerically based ethics, but rather esteems the individual. The difference between journalism and literature is the degree to which the individual is taken into consideration. Literature emphasizes the individual. The first point to bear in mind regarding *Jikan* is this perspective of viewing each individual person as precious and irreplaceable.

Captain Kirino recognizes Chen as a fellow intellectual and thinks it a waste for him to be content with just being an errand boy. The captain invites Chen to utilize his talents by cooperating with the Japanese army, an offer that Chen cannot accept, as he explains: “I loved my wife and child, and now I have no desire to do anything.” For him the central fact of his life is that he has lost the irreplaceable people in his life; the question of honor or self-preservation means nothing to him at this point. Clearly he has no intention whatsoever of becoming a collaborator with the enemy like his uncle had done. The memory of his murdered wife and child continually comes to mind. This is a wound too deep to ever heal. Additionally, however, Chen, before becoming a subordinate to Captain Kirino, had been forced to dispose of corpses. The bodies of still breathing Chinese had been thrown into a creek. He writes repeatedly in his diary of how the people he had killed in treating them like corpses were just like his own wife and child.

Chen, a capable and highly knowledgeable government official who had worked in several foreign countries, is both a victim who has lost his wife and child and a perpetrator toward the still-living individuals whose bodies he got rid of. Chen is fully aware of this fact. This double awareness—as victim and perpetrator—is an important point to bear in mind. Of course, what underpins the novel is the depiction of the misery arising from the Japanese army's siege of Nanjing and the three weeks of murder, pillage, and rape that followed. The real perpetrators, without question, are the Japanese soldiers, and Chen is undeniably a victim. Yet the war as depicted by Hotta Yoshie is broken down into further categories. Within the victims of the Japanese invasion we also find types like Chen's elder brother and uncle. And the author also depicts the crime committed by

7 All quotations from this novel and page numbers are from Hotta 1955.

Chen himself. This overlapping of victim and perpetrator is the second key point to keep in mind.

This brings us to the question of why the novel is titled *Jikan*: Chen, having lost his wife and child, longs for an impersonal, inorganic world. We find the following entries in his diary:

The ideal place for me would have no trees and not a single blade of grass. It would be a desolate and hard landscape, made up of rock and metal. Everything is transformed over time, but now I cannot endure this. Even though I am the one who suffers most if these circumstances of mine were to be transformed utterly by time...In fact, if time—the time of human beings and of history—were to become stronger and flow even faster, the different time of other countries would intrude and increase the separation of death. (p. 88)

He repeatedly writes about how in this time of human beings and of history his wife Bakushū “is now walking in the netherworld of rock and metal with the child” (p. 90); he says, “I want to go to that world of only rocks and minerals and no time” (p. 108), and “They are wandering around the boundary between the inhuman and the human world—between that time-less world of rock and metal and the lush June world of mountains, rivers, and trees” (p. 112).

Certain that his wife is wandering around this rocky, metallic netherworld with their child, he wants to join them there. On the one hand, he cannot bear the fact that time transforms everything; but time is also needed if his hopeless present is to be changed. For him, time is what brings misery, and is also what transforms the unhappiness of the present.

Time is something that seems connected to the activities of human beings, both good and bad. In this sense, it encompasses two meanings. This double meaning is the third point that merits attention. Upon reflection, we can see that Chen himself has a double-sided existence as both victim and perpetrator. He is wandering along the boundary between the *inhuman world* that is beyond time and the *human world* that is full of life, unable to find refuge in either one. Losing his connection to wife and child turned Chen into a torn man, with this sort of wandering mind.

From the description above, some may imagine that Chen’s feelings about his wife and son are those of a naïve man. But that is not necessarily the case. It is certainly

true that his feeling of love for his wife and son was very strong, but in fact he is a tough-minded man who is the antithesis of a naïve figure. Indeed, it is very much for that reason that he became involved with military espionage. And this leads us to the fourth important point, that is, that several characters involved with espionage appear in the novel.⁸ For instance, one associate of Chen is a painter who works as a spy for the Kuomintang government under the initial “K” as his codename. But Chen suspects he may in fact be a double agent. Another character, called “Blade” because he works as a knife-sharpener, is a spy for the Communist Party. Above all there is Chen himself, who while working under Captain Kirino carries on the intelligence work of transmitting information regarding Nanjing by wireless to Hankou. In grilling “K” to find out whether he is a double agent, Chen says that he is not appealing to the man’s patriotism: “I don’t believe in any ideologies. Doctrines and policies are just tools used in work—not something to be believed in...Undercover agents like us are all Judases” (pp. 183–84).

Whatever the goal of espionage may be, everyone involved in such work is like Judas Iscariot in the eyes of Chen. Even while labeling himself Judas-like, Chen also thinks that a “state of bondage” has been imposed on him and writes that “no matter how much I am turned into a slave, the question is how to live with a spirit far removed from slavery” (p. 37). He can never forgive the double agent “K” or his traitorous uncle who assists the Japanese army’s trafficking of opium. Yet he still has an awareness of himself as a Judas figure. He lives in a convoluted world where pure principles cannot exist.

3. Foundation of Hotta Yoshie’s Thought: His Depiction of China

We have taken a quick look at Hotta’s novel *Jikan* from the four key perspectives of (1) respect for the individual, (2) the overlapping of victim and perpetrator, (3) the double meaning of time, and (4) the Judas-like nature of espionage work. Now we can touch on the fact that most of the stories recounted by Chen do not depict himself as a noble-minded warrior or hero animated by a sense of justice. Certainly he is a narrator we can trust, though. The occupied city of Nanjing, where the story is set, is characterized by the discord between three separate powers: the Japanese army, the Communist Party, and

8 In the article “Hotta Yoshie—Shanghai kara hisenryōka no Nihon e” 堀田善衛：上海から被占領下の日本へ [Hotta Yoshie: From Shanghai to Occupied Japan] (September and October 2003 issues of *Bungaku* 文学), which details the espionage work depicted in Hotta Yoshie’s works, the author Yazaki Akira 矢崎彰 discusses the ruthless espionage of the female spy 陳秋瑾 in the work *Haguruma* 齒車 [Gears].

the Kuomintang government. As noted at the outset, the “perpetrator” theme of postwar literature takes on even more complex aspects in *Jikan*, a novel that depicts the tragedy of Chen’s family, who were victims of the massacre committed by the Japanese army during the three weeks of murder, pillage, and rape; and the despair, sense of emptiness, and anger of Chen as the survivor. The novel unfolds within this world without innocence, with its array of different layers. No one here is crying the tears of the innocent.

The key characteristic of the novel is that the Japanese writer Hotta Yoshie shaped a character like Chen, choosing to take his protagonist from the side of the occupied Chinese. As for why Hotta adopted this approach, we can bear in mind the following comment he made during a trip he took with Takeda Taijun to Nanjing in May 1945, which can be found in the “Author’s Afterword” to the second volume of Hotta’s completed works:

The evening light striking Zijin Mountain reflected off the minerals to give off a purple and gold hue. The unique beauty of the sight was intensely beautiful.

I thought of how in this city of Nanjing, with this beautiful mountain scenery at dusk, was attacked and captured by the Japanese army in December of 1937 and of the massacre that followed. The victims were not just the surrendering Chinese soldiers but civilian residents, including women and children—the attacks, arsons, pillaging, rapes, and other brutal acts continued for weeks. Considering that the deaths among Chinese soldiers numbered in the tens of thousands, some believe as many as 430,000 people perished. Within Japan this massacre was kept hidden from the people.

The massacre stands in complete contrast to the scenic beauty of the Kōnan region (Ch. Jiangnan) and ranks among the most disgraceful acts in the long course of Japan’s history. I remember now how, when I was lying on my bedding atop the ramparts of Nanjing, I had the sense that eventually I would have to write this story. It was eight years later, in 1953, that I began writing the tale and it was in 1955 that it was published as a novel under the title *Jikan*. (p. 649)

We can see then that there were three important episodes, each separated by a period of eight years: the Nanjing massacre committed by the Japanese army in 1937; Hotta’s trip to Nanjing in 1945; and the beginning of his writing of *Jikan* in 1953. Eight years after his

May 1945 trip to Nanjing, when he had looked back on the massacre of eight years earlier, Hotta's work began to crystallize. At the time he realized that a Japanese person must write about the Nanjing massacre, Hotta thought that choosing a Chinese protagonist might be a way of better appreciating the pain experienced by those on the other side of the conflict. Yet Hotta did not turn his protagonist into a simple victim; rather, from the four perspectives already discussed, he created a complexly nuanced character, based on his own harsh view of human understanding.

Here it is worth touching on the novel Hotta wrote immediately prior to *Jikan*: his 1953 novel *Rekishī* 歴史 [History]. The two novels together should in fact be seen as comprising a longer work. The earlier novel *Rekishī*, set in Shanghai after Japan's defeat, centers on a Japanese character named Tatsuta who was forced to serve in the Kuomintang government, a character that calls to mind Hotta's own life. In his "Afterword" to the second volume of his collected works, Hotta describes himself at the time as "a sort of captive who had been bound up in the straightjacket of the Japanese ideology centered on the Emperor system" (p. 648). The novel *Rekishī* is a work in which he describes the process whereby he escaped from that straightjacket, depicting the situation as China moved from a civil war between the Nationalists and Communists to a revolution, as well as the scene in Shanghai, which continued to be subject to the same colonial rule in the postwar period by the same capitalists and socio-economic forces as during the war period. A proper discussion of *Rekishī* would require analyzing the novel while referring to the recently published book *Hotta Yoshie Shanhai nikki* 堀田善衛上海日記 [Hotta Yoshie's Shanghai Diary], but there is not adequate space to do so here.⁹

As for the connection of *Rekishī* to the later work *Jikan*, both works depict China, with the former set in 1946 Shanghai and centering on the Japanese character Tatsuta, and the latter novel taking place in 1937 Nanjing and centering on the Chinese character Chen Ying Di. In this sense they are like two sides of the same work. Although one novel is told from the perspective of a Japanese and the other from the perspective of a Chinese (both of whom are among the vanquished), both of them offer a depiction of China.

This long novel in two parts, written in the early 1950s, stems from the awareness Hotta came to have in Shanghai, where he was at the moment of Japan's defeat in 1945, regarding the hidden aspects of organizations of stateless individuals and politics, and

9 See Kōno 2008.

his keen awareness of the fundamentally flawed Japanese policy of seeking to invade and occupy China.

Hotta's 1959 book *Shanghai nite* 上海にて [In Shanghai], published four years after *Jikan*, is based on the trip he took in the autumn of 1957 to China at the invitation of the Chinese Writer's Association, traveling with a group of other writers that included Nakano Shigeharu 中野重治, Inoue Yasushi 井上靖, Honda Shūgo 本多秋五, Yamamoto Kenkichi 山本健吉, Togaeri Hajime 十返肇, and Tada Yūkei 多田裕計. In the book, Hotta also draws on his memory of Shanghai in 1946, recalling how living in the city around that time, both prior to and after Japan's defeat, brought about "something decisive" in his life.¹⁰

According to Hotta, the war on the Chinese continent was "a three-way war waged between the imperial Japanese army, the army of the Kuomintang government (based in Chongqing), and the army of the Chinese Communist Party (based in Yan'an). Japan's defeat in August 1945 led to a steep escalation in the conflict between the Kuomintang and Communist armies, as Hotta recalls in the same "Afterword" quoted earlier:

It was some time in early 1946 that I saw the Chinese newspaper headline "Pitiful Victory," which probably meant to say that even though the Japanese army was defeated, the Chinese victory had a horrible aspect to it. This sort of self-awareness on the part of the state and its citizens shined brightly when compared to the insidious view in Japan where the term *haisen* [defeat in the war] was completely replaced by the use of the term *shūsen* [end of the war]. (p. 648)

Around the time that Hotta was forced to serve in the propaganda unit of the Kuomintang Party in Shanghai, following Japan's defeat, he had a strong desire to meet "those who had the fierce spirit to join the resistance movement based on a deep animosity against Japan," but he realized that in fact "there were no such one-dimensional people and Chinese youth in particular did not exist in an environment where they could be divided into such simple categories." Hotta noted this in his article "Kurai kurai chika kōsaku"

10 The same seems to have been the case with Takeda Taijun. After the restoration of diplomatic ties between Japan and China, however, Hotta made no comments about the issue of the Chinese state. Later the conversation between Hotta and Takeda was published under the title *Watashi wa mō Chūgoku o kataranai* 私はもう中国を語らない [I'll Speak No More of China], 1973.

暗い暗い地下工作 [Maneuverings in the Pitch Black Underground] in the journal *Zuihitsu Chūgoku* 隨筆中国 (September 1947), in which he also recalled: “Even among those active in the bloody underground resistance from beginning to end one could see, after China’s victory, a tainted quality, a noticeable eerie fatigue particular to the partisans that had no sense of consolation or emancipation.”¹¹

There is a conspicuous contrast between easy-going yet insidious Japan and the wretchedness of China with its noticeable eerie fatigue. The reason Hotta felt obliged to make the Chinese character Chen Ying Di the protagonist of his novel *Jikan*, after his work *Rekishī*, is likely based on this experience he had of the profundity and complexity of China. And one underlying factor of this was precisely the actions committed by Japan. The novels *Jikan* and *Rekishī* are both works that have their basis in the ideas that Hotta came to acquire in Shanghai.

Conclusion

Hotta Yoshie was dispatched to Shanghai along with the *Kokusai Bunka Shinkō Kai* 国際文化振興会 [International Culture Promotion Society] on 24 March 1945, two weeks after he experienced the 10 March firebombing of Tokyo. After Japan’s defeat, as mentioned already, Hotta wrote *Rekishī* and *Jikan* in the early 1950s, but he would later also write extensively about the period prior to arriving in Shanghai in his 1971 book *Hōjōki shiki* 方丈記私記 (Personal Account of My Hut). In this work, he recounts how at age 27 he had been speechless at the sight of residents in a completely bombed-out working-class district of Tokyo throwing themselves at the feet of the Emperor to apologize. These people suffering from the calamity of war had their heads bent in apology while those responsible for the war were sitting at their desks with maps spread out before them and being saluted by their subordinates. This is an upside-down situation if one considers who is actually to blame. The young Hotta found it impossible to understand the attitude of those rulers or of the common people.

However sad this spectacle seen in Japan might have been, it was also quite curious. In contrast, what Hotta saw in Shanghai, as mentioned already, was profound and complex in nature, having a “decisive” impact on his own way of living. His character Chen Ying Di expressed the following thought: “Peace is not so much the negative state

11 *Hotta Yoshie zenshū*, vol. 14, 1994, p. 448.

of there being no war, but rather the condition of not being bound to servile fatalism or to a catastrophic view of life” (p. 96). In his view peace is not something brought about by kowtowing to rulers but rather something one must win for oneself. Chen, even while serving the Japanese occupation under Captain Kirino, still resists that rule by using a wireless to convey military intelligence. In his diary he describes how “life is something that has to be discovered many different times.”

Most conspicuous of all in the three-way war fought in China was the image of *human beings*. If Hotta had not traveled to Shanghai as a young man it seems unlikely that he would have been able to depict the Nanjing of 1937 or Shanghai of 1946. Those who have never taken one step beyond their own country’s borders cannot grasp anything outside of that national framework. But Hotta was able to understand the perspective of the perpetrator, not only the victim, thus making possible a fuller depiction that included nuances in thought and behavior. Within Japan, to return to a point I made at the outset, the overriding postwar narrative theme was the enormous damage that the war had caused. Of course, the accounts of this damage are indeed precious testimonies, but if we also take into account the view from the other side we are likely to get a completely different story. As we have seen, this is what Hotta Yoshie accomplished in *Jikan* and *Rekishu*, two novels he felt compelled to write, which bring into view the perspective of “the other” (China).

Postwar literature is of this type had not existed previously in Japan. Literary works appeared that might be described as “philosophical novels.” The postwar literary works that start from a profound impression regarding the perpetrating of damage upon others are well-worth re-reading on several occasions when examining the postwar mentality in Japan as well as the effectiveness of antiwar and pacifist thought. These are works that are certain to benefit contemporary readers by offering us a different perspective.

(Translated by Michael Schauerte)

Notes: This paper is based on my presentation in the session “War Literature and War Memory in Shaping Japanese Culture” at the annual conference of the Association of Asian Studies in Honolulu on 3 April 2011. Recent research publications on Hotta Yoshie’s *Jikan*, such as Hikosaka Tai 彦坂謙, *Bungaku o tōshite sensō to ningen o kangaeru* 文学をとおして戦争と人間を考える (Renga Shobō Shinsha, 2014), and Henmi Yō 辺見庸, *1★9★3★7* (Kinyōbi, 2015) are not mentioned in this paper.

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