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# UNIT 6: 1900-PRES.

## Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity: Japanese Occupation

GENOCIDE: DEFINITION BACKGROUND TO JAPANESE MILITARISM: 1905-1933 RACE AND ETHNICITY IN IMPERIAL JAPAN WAR CRIMES IN CHINA THE RAPE OF NANJING THE MILITARY COMFORT SYSTEM BIOLOGICAL WARFARE HOW DID THIS HAPPEN? BIBLIOGRAPHY

Warfare in the twentieth century was characterized by increases in the technologies of destruction (automatic weapons, tanks, airplanes, and heavier explosives—both incendiaries and nuclear), as well as an explicit focus on destroying means of production, especially those related to the capacity to make war. This strategy included attacks on civilian populations via destruction of factories and cities by aerial assault, mass executions, internment in slave-labor camps, rape, torture, and biological warfare, as well as the destruction and confiscation of food stores by conquering armies. The general understanding of *war crimes* encompasses practices that are considered more heinous than others. These include the wanton killing of civilians, the singling out of specific ethnic and racial groups for extermination (i.e., genocide), execution of prisoners of war (POWs), rape and sexual slavery, and unnecessary destruction of property. By these metrics, all the powers involved in World War II (1939–1945) could have been accused of war crimes, as evidenced by, for example, the US firebombing of Dresden and Tokyo and the mass rape by Allied soldiers of Japanese women after their surrender (Tanaka 1996), as well as Britain's nighttime bombing campaigns against German cities. However, the record suggests that some powers were guiltier than others on this account. Certainly Germany and Japan exceeded all other powers in the maliciousness of their assaults on civilians during World War II. This entry discusses in detail the war crimes carried out by the empire of Japan and relates them to definitions of genocide, with the support of theories of racial supremacy—that is, the master race of Asia theory or pure-blood race ideology (*minzoku junketsu*).

### GENOCIDE: DEFINITION

Articles II and III of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide provides the legal definition for genocide, which includes two elements: (1) the *mental element*, meaning the “intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such”; and (2) the *physical element*, which includes five acts that may qualify as genocide. A crime must include *both elements* to be called “genocide.” The five acts listed in Article II are:

1. Killing members of the group;
2. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
3. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
4. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- and 5. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Article III describes five punishable forms of the crime: genocide, conspiracy, incitement, attempt, and complicity.

If the requirements of this definition are applied to Japan's conduct in the Asia-Pacific War (1931–1945), then the argument that Japan committed or intended to commit genocide against any specific national, ethnic, or racial group is not supported. However, others have claimed that Japan's actions do amount to genocide (Chang 1997). Kim Il-Myon (1976), for example, argues that the Japanese attempted to wipe out all Korean identity as part of their assimilation program (see also Weiner 1995). At the start of this conflict, Japan was a multiethnic empire with control over Korea, Taiwan, southern Sakhalin, several South Pacific islands, and parts of northeastern China (Otsubo and Bartholomew 1998).

Even if one accepts the notion that Imperial Japan did not commit genocide in the Asia-Pacific War, the Japanese are in no way absolved of their war crimes, which were carried out against virtually all of the populations of the Pacific, including civilian Chinese, Koreans, Filipinos, Pacific Islanders, Indonesians, and Malaysians, as well as Allied POWs. Estimates of the number of people killed by the Japanese during the war against China alone range from ten million to thirty million (Kristoff 1998). Werner Gruhl (2007) estimates that the Japanese killed at least 23,877,000 people (most of them civilians) during their war against Asia, and another 99,600,000 people were maimed, lost loved ones, faced starvation, were psychologically traumatized (e.g., the “comfort” women), or suffered from drug addiction as a result of Japan's opium sales. Many of these individuals died early as a direct result of their war experiences, but they are not counted in historical estimates of war-time deaths.

Approximately 87 percent of all Asia-Pacific War dead were Asian victims of Japanese aggression (Gruhl 2007). Considering that the estimate of the total number of people killed by all causes in World War II is sixty-three million, the high estimate of Japan's killings would make the Japanese responsible for at least half of all those killed during the war. Indeed, Imperial Japan's actions do not fit the definition of genocide only because Japan practiced equal opportunity mass murder during the

war. One aspect of the Japanese atrocities that was different from those of Nazi Germany was that Japan's killings were not buttressed by a campaign of racial supremacy of similar magnitude. Although the Japanese did consider themselves the "master race" of Asia, their racial ideology was not developed under the same ideological tenets as those of the Western world. For example, prior to the Asia-Pacific War, the eugenics movement within Japan was weak and was primarily directed toward improving the Japanese race to allow the Japanese greater capacity to compete with the West (Otsubo and Bartholomew 1998; Robertson 2001).

The International Military Tribunal for the Far East, convened in 1946 in Tokyo by the Allies, accused the Japanese military of committing war crimes in at least thirty incidents, including the 1937 Nanjing (Nanking) massacre (40,000 to 300,000 killed); Black Christmas in Hong Kong on December 25, 1941 (10,000 killed); the 1942 Bataan death march (7,500 American and Filipino soldiers massacred); Operation Sanko, a May 1942 scorched-earth campaign in northern China (2.7 million killed); the 1942 Sook Ching massacre in Singapore (25,000 to 50,000 killed); biological warfare associated with Unit 731 in Harbin, China, and elsewhere (an estimated 200,000 were killed in experiments that included vivisection, intentional infection of civilians, and the intentional release of bubonic plague); the February 1945 Manila massacre (100,000 civilians killed); and the forced sexual slavery of Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and other "comfort" women, at least 200,000 of whom died (most were non-Japanese colonial subjects). These are only a sampling of the brutality of the Japanese forces; all the massacres included rape, looting, and torture of civilians (Felton 2009). Japan's use of slave labor and the execution of POWs were consistent throughout the Asia-Pacific War. The construction of the Burma-Thai Railway, for example, led to the deaths of at least 150,000 POW and civilian laborers.

### BACKGROUND TO JAPANESE MILITARISM: 1905–1933

Japan's first contact with persons of European descent was martial. Shipwrecked sailors who were stranded on Japanese islands were often executed because the native people considered these individuals of different physical appearance to be "monsters" or "diseased." Eventually, European and American power in the eastern Pacific became strong enough to end these practices. Commodore Matthew Perry's first voyage to Japan (1852–1853) was unwelcomed, and he used his force to confront the Japanese emperor in a show of American military and cultural superiority (Prange, Goldstein, and Dillon 1982). Eventually, the emperor recognized that Japan had to modernize to meet the threat represented by the Western powers, and the regime implemented an aggressive plan to both end Japanese feudalism and industrialize the country.

In 1894 and 1895, Japan won a quick conflict with China over which country would dominate Korea, and it gained control over Korea, Taiwan, and the Pescadores, as well as commercial privileges in China. Japan also won a 1905 war against Russia, gaining control of South Manchuria and Korea as protectorates, as well as the southern portion of Sakhalin Island. This victory made Japan the first East Asian country to defeat a European power, striking a blow against European supremacy and ushering in the "master race of Asia" ideology.

As one of the victors of World War I (1914–1918), Japan also gained concessions in China's Shandong (Shantung) Peninsula and was awarded the League of Nation's mandate to the Marshall, Mariana, and Caroline Islands in the Pacific. Thus Japan emerged from World War I suffering few casualties and gaining all of Germany's possessions in China and the Pacific (Beasley 1987). These victories help to broaden the popularity of militarism among Japan's ruling classes.

Japan's rapid industrialization also created unforeseen problems. One of these resulted from the fact that Japan was an island nation without significant oil deposits. This was particularly problematic for the Japanese navy, because oceangoing warships became oil-fired after World War I. Japan's lack of oil was doubly challenging in that a resource-poor island nation needed a navy to facilitate trade or, if necessary, to wrest supplies from the Western colonial powers (Britain, France, the Netherlands, and the United States). Indeed, even as late as 1937, 55.4 percent of Japan's imported war materials came from the United States, including high-grade steel, machinery, and lubricating oils, which it could not get elsewhere (Gruhl 2007). The disparity between Japan's resource needs and its relations with the Western powers meant that, by the early to mid-twentieth century, the emperor's role in Japanese politics had been weakened and the power of the military, particularly the army officer core, had increased.

It has been argued that Japan's imperialist aims predate its resource concerns, beginning several decades earlier with its expansionist initiatives in Korea and China (Beasley 1987). A logical extension of the political domination of the army was the army's need to justify its existence via warfare. A final ingredient in this perfect storm of Japanese militarism was the failure of Chinese democracy, which led Japan's leaders to see China as ripe for the picking. China's early twentieth-century weakness, as well as its potential to become a power in Asia, was also a threat to Japanese designs in the region, providing yet another reason for Japan to strike in China (Beasley 1987). Japan's military elite knew that to expand its influence over Asia, it would

have to take on China, the Soviet Union, the United States, the British Empire, the Netherlands, and France, and they were prepared, with 4 percent of the world's population, to take on countries accounting for 50 percent. These countries were also the most powerful nations of the world, at a time when Japan's industrial capacity was only 10 percent that of the United States (Gruhl 2007).

## RACE AND ETHNICITY IN IMPERIAL JAPAN

Consistent with general human behavior, the Japanese developed categories of inclusion and exclusion. During Japan's Tokugawa or Edo period (1603–1868), these boundaries were defined in Confucian terms of “civilized” and “barbarian,” categories that resembled those of ancient Greece (Weiner 1995). The subordinate barbarian outsider roles were assigned to Europeans, the Ainu, and the *eta* outcastes. These *eta* outcastes were occupational taboos informed by Tokugawa law. In the Meiji period (1868–1912), new economic and political structures emancipated the Ainu and *eta* population by reassigning them to the new category of *heimin* (commoners).

This new political and economic system required the creation of new symbolic boundaries to separate the Japanese as a modern and homogeneous grouping from “others.” In the early Meiji years, new terms arose for members of the nation, particularly *jinshu*, which is usually translated as “race” (Weiner 1995), defined via such criteria as skin color, hair type, and cranial form (Yasuda 1992), consistent with the nineteenth-century anthropological conception of race used in the Western world (Graves 2004). In contrast to *jinshu* is the term *minzoku*, which is best translated as “ethnicity” and which includes common religious values, language, economic way of life, psychology, and culture (Hayashida 1976).

Consistent with events in Europe, as Japanese militarism grew in popularity, justifications for the Japanese belief in their superior racial and ethnic characteristics developed. In 1938, for example, the Japanese scholar Junjiro Takakusu published a tome extolling the superior features of the dominant stem race of Japan (*Yamato*) and describing the culture of Japanese blood as maintained by the virtuous rule of succeeding emperors (Hayashida 1976). In addition, an English-language history of Japan published in 1939 suggested that there was a consanguineous national unity, with the imperial blood running in the veins of all Japanese (Dower 1986). Historian Tetsuji Kada's *Jinshu, minzoku, senso* (Race, Ethnicity, War), published in 1940, was inspired by the work of Alfred Rosenberg and other Nazi race theorists. *Jinshu, minzoku, senso* was, of course, applied to the Japanese in Asia, but it did contain references to the Jewish problem in both regions (Weiner 1995). Kada introduced the notion of a Monroe Doctrine for Asia, and he assigned the dominant role in this process to the Japanese, whom he considered the master of all the yellow races. Another writer, Setsuzo Ihei, argued that the unique qualities of the Japanese nation resulted from the “blood family” (Hayasida 1976).

The popularity of these ideas among the dominant classes in Japan is indicated by the fact that discussions of the master race of Asia idea were already appearing in Japanese schoolbooks by 1910 (Tanaka 1993). Thus there is abundant evidence that, by the beginning of the Asia-Pacific War, the Japanese viewed themselves as the master race of Asia, with other Asians (as well as Europeans) subordinate to them. Such a feeling of innate superiority over others is a prerequisite for genocide and war crimes, although it does not in and of itself explain why such crimes occur.

## WAR CRIMES IN CHINA

In some senses, the development of Japanese military power can be seen as a logical response to the presence of European colonial powers in Asia. Japan justified its Asia-Pacific aggression with such ideas as “eight corners of the world under one roof.” This view could be reduced to the slogan “Asia for the Asians,” which was similar to the thinking of Marcus Garvey's followers, who advocated “Africa for the Africans.” Yet Japan's plan was to “redeem” the Asian Pacific by replacing European supremacy with that of the Japanese Empire. Japan's militarism was bolstered by its sense of divine protection, *Yamato damashii*, which led the Japanese to believe that they could overcome anything and that they had the right to occupy and dominate Asia. In response to the worldwide economic crisis of 1929, Japan's military launched its scheme for the domination of Asia with the 1931 invasion of Manchuria in northeastern China (Gruhl 2007). This scheme included the assassination of government and industry officials within Japan who opposed these plans.

The Japanese Kwantung Army was composed of a small force whose mission was supposedly to protect Japanese interests, such as rail lines. The Kwantung Army initiated hostilities in September 1931 by staging an explosion on a railway near Mukden as an excuse to spread the army across all of Manchuria, an episode known as the Mukden Incident. By 1932, the Japanese had landed 70,000 troops in Shanghai to deal with stiff Chinese resistance. By 1933, there were 300,000 Japanese troops in China, and Japan had begun invading provinces to the west of Manchuria (Gruhl 2007). By 1936, Japan controlled an area of northern China larger than the size of Western Europe. In July 1937, Japan began all-out war in response to the Marco

Polo Bridge Incident, which resulted from Nationalist and Communist Chinese collaboration to prevent the further encroachment of Japan on Chinese territory. By 1939 to early 1940, the Japanese had more than 1.2 million troops in China, and despite stiff resistance from the Chinese, who were underfed and had limited arms, the Japanese gained control of one-quarter of China's territory, home to one-third of the Chinese population. Japan occupied most of China's cities and industries and controlled its major road, river, and rail arteries (Gruhl 2007). In response to an effective Communist counteroffensive in northern China in 1941 and 1942, the Japanese launched Operation Sanko with the "three alls" agenda (kill all, loot all, burn all), which became the basis for war-crimes charges after the war.

The Japanese army engaged in these sorts of atrocities for the duration of the Asia-Pacific War. This behavior was a logical consequence of the army's overall strategy for its expeditionary forces. The Japanese high command began the war knowing it did not have the resources to support its armies in the field. Therefore, Japan required its forces to become self-sustaining (Prange, Goldstein, and Dillon 1982; Bradley 2003), which meant that they would have to pacify the civilian population and use its labor to support the Japanese war effort. This also meant that when the Japanese won a battle in China, they could not afford to feed large numbers of POWs. Japanese policy, therefore, was to eliminate enemy prisoners, either immediately via execution, as in Nanjing, or through starvation and slave labor, as on the Burma-India Railway. In addition to these atrocities, prisoners were subjected to biological-warfare experimentation at Unit 731 and its associated units (Williams and Wallace 1989; Felton 2009), women prisoners were reduced to sexual slavery in military "comfort" stations (Yoshiaki 2000), and some POWs are reported to have been eaten by Japanese soldiers (Tanaka 1996; Bradley 2003).

In addition to the simple fact that the Japanese did not have the resources to care for prisoners, the corrupted form of the Bushido code followed by the Japanese military at this time did not recognize surrender as an honorable option. The Japanese Field Service Code (*Senjinkun*) required soldiers to fight to the death and, if they were not killed by the enemy, to kill themselves in shame. Thus Japan did not wish to waste troops and resources taking care of POWs, and because those who surrendered were considered dishonorable cowards, massacres of Chinese POWs began shortly after the defeat of the Chinese Republican Army. This pattern would be repeated on Allied prisoners throughout the war, as seen with US prisoners after their defeat in the Philippines.

## THE RAPE OF NANJING

In *The Rape of Nanking* (1997), American author Iris Chang detailed the horrors of the Japanese occupation of Nanjing, which began in December 1937. Chang's book generated angry protests in Japan but accolades in China and the West (Yang 1999). While her account is considered too "emotional" by some, Chang matches in essential details other scholarly treatments of the events surrounding the massacre (Kasahara 1997; Sun 1997) as she describes the unadulterated horror of the first six weeks of the occupation. During this period, Japanese troops engaged in the wanton execution of POWs, as well as the execution, rape, and torture of civilians, including children. During the drive on Nanjing, two Japanese officers were reported to have waged a "beheading contest" that became so popular that a Tokyo newspaper kept score of the number executed—one officer claimed 106, and the other 105 (Chang 1997; Honda and Gibney 1999). Although the two officers involved were executed for war crimes after the war, some Japanese claimed after the publication of Chang's book that the contest never took place and was simply a fabrication designed to build war fever in Japan. Despite this counterclaim, there is evidence that these two officers did indiscriminately murder civilians, even if not at the rate they claimed for the newspapers (Yang 1999).

Once the city fell, further indiscriminate killings of civilians began. One survivor, Tang Shunsan, described a contest in which Japanese soldiers competed to see who could decapitate civilians (men, women, and children) the fastest. During this incident, the soldiers disemboweled and ripped out the fetus from a pregnant woman, the only person who dared to fight back as the soldiers tried to rape her. Tang, who was twenty-five years old at the time, survived only because he was accidentally knocked into the pit of bodies during the decapitation of the man in front of him, and no one noticed (Chang 1997, pp. 84–87). Chang also described incidents of live burials, mutilation, rapes, and mass incineration of crowds of people. According to Chang, the Japanese marched people into frozen ponds to die from hypothermia and allowed hungry dogs to rip people apart. One newspaper reported that, during the first six weeks of the occupation, rape occurred "every day, twenty-four hours a day." At least 20,000 women are estimated to have been raped in Nanjing (Yang 1999). Women of no age group were safe, and even young girls and old women were targeted. Some witnesses described the rape of girls under ten years of age, after which they were slashed in half by sword (Chang 1997, p. 91). Many women of reproductive age were taken into the "comfort station" system of organized sexual slavery. Estimates of the number killed in the Japanese reign of terror in Nanjing range from a low of 26,100 to as high as 260,000 to 300,000 (Tanaka 1996; Chang 1997; Yang 1999; Gruhl 2007).

If there is one bright spot in the Nanjing tragedy, it is the action of the International Committee for the Nanjing Safety Zone. In November 1937, a French priest, Father Jacquinot de Bessage, established a neutral area in Shanghai to shelter 450,000

Chinese refugees. A Presbyterian minister, W. Plummer Mills, learned of Bessage's project and suggested that a similar zone be created in Nanjing. In many ways, the safety zone was an impossible project, especially since the Japanese were not in the habit of recognizing anyone's authority to interfere with their actions. For example, on December 12, 1937, the Japanese machine-gunned and bombed the *USS Panay* in Nanjing. In addition to the intransigence of the Japanese, the committee needed to work out how to house, feed, and provide medical care to the thousands of refugees who would be fleeing Japanese persecution.

Among the most fascinating members of the Nanjing committee was German businessman John Rabe, a member of the Nazi Party who is described by Chang as the Oscar Schindler of China. Rabe's supporters claim that he embraced Nazism as a "worker's movement" and did not buy into the racial and ethnic prejudice that characterized the movement in Germany. In fact, the leaders of the Nazi movement originally used socialist rhetoric to gain the support of dispossessed German workers. As head of the safety-zone committee, Rabe stayed behind when other German nationals were evacuated to preserve the lives of Chinese workers who had been his employees with Siemens (Rabe 1998). During the attack on Nanjing, Rabe wrote a telegram to Adolf Hitler and his friend General Counsel Kriebel, asking them to intervene to allow the establishment of a neutral zone for those not fighting for Nanjing (Chang 1997, p. 111; Rabe 1998). Hitler never replied, but there are claims that after the telegrams were sent, the Japanese ceased bombing the city indiscriminately and limited their bombing attacks to military targets. Rabe also approached the Japanese embassy and army directly to stop the executions and rape; he reported his activities to Hitler in an attempt to bring pressure on the Japanese government; and he sheltered hundreds of Chinese women on his own property. At the request of frightened Chinese residents, and with only his Nazi armband as protection, Rabe also patrolled the streets to stop murders and rapes in progress. Chang reports that Rabe and other members of the International Committee saved countless lives during the rape of Nanjing.

#### THE MILITARY COMFORT SYSTEM

After Japan's surrender in 1945, Allied soldiers raped thousands of Japanese women. Although few of these criminals were punished, it was never the official policy of the Allies to condone rape or sexual slavery. In contrast, this is precisely what the Japanese military did during the Asia-Pacific War with the establishment of military "comfort" stations. This system began as early as 1932 and continued until the end of the war. Japan's response to allegations of sexual slavery was to deny that such a system existed, and to maintain that the comfort women were prostitutes and that comfort stations were conceived of and run by private procurers (Yoshimi 1995). The documentary evidence proves otherwise. Indeed, the comfort-station system was systematic and violated existing international law and human rights. The system was built on the basis of gender, ethnic, colonial, and class oppression, and the crime continued after the war due to Japan's unwillingness to accept responsibility and make reparations to the survivors and their families. This crime is shared not just by the military and the government, but by all of Japanese Imperial society for its support of the war of aggression against the Asian-Pacific world (Il-Myon 1976; Yoshimi 1995; Tanaka 1996; Henson 1999; Soh 2008).

The Japanese established their first confirmed comfort station in 1932 in Pingquan, China, with the goal of preventing rapes of the civilian population and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases among Japanese troops. The comfort stations were also meant to prevent prostitution as a means of espionage. The idea of preventing rape was recognized as necessary for keeping the civilian population from resisting the Japanese military. The architects of the plan realized that the crime of rape was a great insult in both China and Indochina, areas that Japan knew it had to conquer to realize its imperial ambitions. The comfort-station system, of course, did not prevent Japanese men from raping women—the system was already in place by the time of the fall of Nanjing—indeed, it may have helped to legitimize rape (Il-Myon 1976; Yoshimi 1995; Tanaka 1996; Chang 1997; Henson 1999; Soh 2008). Furthermore, the system failed to halt the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and probably accelerated their spread throughout the Japanese military and civilian population (Yoshimi 1995).

There were three types of comfort stations: those directly managed by the military for the exclusive use of the military and civilian military employees; those formally managed by civilian operators but supervised and regulated by military personnel or civilian military employees; and those open to the general public at which military personnel were given priority. Stations in large cities were used not only by units stationed there, but also by units passing through. The comfort station in Hankou (Hankow), China, was comprised of thirty buildings. Some stations were assigned to specific units and often traveled with the unit, including to the front. The mix of women enslaved in this system mirrored the ethnic and class relations of the Japanese Empire. In the officer's clubs, the women were almost exclusively Japanese; only if there were not enough Japanese women, would women of other ethnic groups (Korean, Taiwanese, or women from other occupied territories) be used. In the enlisted men's facilities, there was a mix of women from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands.

The command and management of comfort stations occurred at the highest level of Japan's Ministry of War, although the day-to-day functions were relegated to the rear staffs, management sections, communication officers in charge of comfort operations, paymasters or adjutants, and the military police. The planning of these operations included details concerning how women would be rounded up, the rate at which they would wear out, how many minutes both officers and enlisted men would be allowed to spend with them, and the prices for services by rank. Nobutaka Shikanai, an army accounting officer who ran a major newspaper and television company after the war, described these details as part of *The General Plan for the Establishment of Pii Facilities* (*pii* is a derogatory term for the vagina) (Yoshimi 1995). The high command was particularly concerned about how many Japanese women would be needed in the enlisted men's facilities because they realized that such women would most likely be the sisters, neighbors, and friends of their soldiers. Thus they planned to outfit these units primarily with women from their conquests. Comfort stations were set up throughout Japan and its conquests in the Asia-Pacific War, including China, Hong Kong, Indochina, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, British Borneo, the Dutch East Indies, Burma, Thailand, New Guinea, the Kurile Islands, Sakhalin, Truk, Koror Island, Taiwan, Saipan, Guam, and the Indian Nicobar Islands.

It is hard to estimate exactly how many women were victimized by this system. Il-Myon (1976) estimated that there were at least 170,000 to 200,000 Korean comfort women alone. Official documents state that Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, Chinese, Filipina, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Burmese, and Dutch women were rounded up for use as comfort women. Australian nurse POWs, along with Indian, Singaporean Chinese, and Malaysians were used as well. Some comfort women were recruited by deception—in Korea, they were told they would be working as laundry women for the Japanese army. Some were sold by their parents for 200 to 300 yen. Others were kidnapped or taken by violent means, sometimes with the help of the government or, as in Korea, the army. In some cases, village leaders were ordered to gather women for use in comfort stations, as commonly occurred in China. Some women were captured during subjugation operations, as in China and Philippines.

These women were forced to endure nightmarish conditions, and it is amazing that any survived to give evidence of the horror. In officer stations, women would be forced to have intercourse with at least seven or eight men a day; in facilities for enlisted men the numbers were upward of twenty to thirty per day (Il-Myon 1976; Yoshimi 1995, Tanaka 1996; Henson 1999; Soh 2008). Survivors of comfort stations in Burma reported having to service up to sixty men each day, with three days of rest per week (Yoshimi 1995). Women were forced to have intercourse even if their genitals were severely swollen; those who refused were beaten. More than one-third of the women became infected with sexually transmitted diseases. Soldiers had little incentive to use condoms, as prescribed by military regulation, since many knew they were likely to die soon. The lack of condom use by Japanese soldiers was also consistent with their overall contempt for the women in comfort stations. Many of the women became addicted to drugs, particularly morphine, which they used to help them deal with the pain. Death from disease, suicide, drug abuse, and Allied bombing raids was common among comfort women. In some cases, soldiers forced comfort women to commit suicide along with them.

Japan's comfort-station system involved women in sexual slavery, not prostitution. Officially, the women were paid six yen for working in enlisted facilities, nine yen in stations for noncommissioned officers, and eleven yen in those for officers, but the money went to the station management, not to the women. In addition, comfort women were forced to pay for their own upkeep, so that 40 to 60 percent of their pay went to their debts. The women also had to pay 50 percent of any required medical treatment for pregnancy, and 100 percent for any other medical services. Thus the vast majority of these women received no money for their work. Even those who did manage to save money found that it was worthless at the end of the war, when Japan lost. Those who survived carried emotional scars that never healed. Many were left destitute with no way home, and those who made it home carried the stigma of being a former comfort woman for the rest of their lives.

In December 2000, a people's court known as the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal sat in Tokyo (Chinkin 2001). Prosecution teams from ten countries—North and South Korea, China, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Taiwan, Malaysia, East Timor, and the Netherlands—presented indictments. Prosecutors argued that the trials at the end of the Second World War with respect to Japan's conduct were incomplete in that they had inadequately considered rape and sexual enslavement and had failed to bring charges arising out of the detention of women for sexual services. The Japanese government was notified of the tribunal on November 9, 2000, but refused to participate. Pursuant to Article 53 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice on non-appearance, the tribunal engaged the arguments of Japan for its denial of responsibility. It received briefs and evidence from a Japanese law firm appointed as *amicus curiae*, and considered other available sources, such as the decision of the Tokyo District Court in denying responsibility for the Philippine comfort women (Hijino 2000). After considering all available evidence, the tribunal concluded that Emperor Hirohito was guilty of all charges on the basis of command responsibility, and that Japan was responsible under international law applicable at the time for violation of its treaty obligations and principles of customary international law relating to slavery, trafficking, forced labor, and rape, amounting to crimes against humanity. Finally, the judges recommended a range of reparations and other actions. However,

the Japanese government continues to refuse to take responsibility for the crimes committed under its comfort-station system. The Asian Women's Fund, founded in 1995 and primarily funded by private donations, was designed to address the financial needs of former comfort women. Survivors criticized the fund, however, for failing to engage the issue of the Japanese government's legal responsibility for sexual slavery (Matsui 1999).

## BIOLOGICAL WARFARE

In 1984, documents authored by Japanese army officer Naeo Ikeda were accidentally discovered describing the intentional infection with tetanus of human subjects, who were then observed until they died (Williams and Wallace 1989). Ikeda had been an officer in Unit 731, a biological warfare facility in northeastern China. The unit was commanded by General Shiro Ishii, whose kill record surpassed that of Nazi physician Josef Mengele, the "angel of death." Mengele may have killed thousands, but Ishii's murder rate was in the hundreds of thousands. Ishii's work allowed Japan to stockpile, by the end of the war, enough anthrax bacteria to kill the population of the entire world six times over. Despite his many crimes, Ishii escaped prosecution.

Ishii was born in 1892 into a rich landowning family. He was a fierce nationalist who joined the military in 1922 after graduating from Kyoto University in medicine. Ishii made a name for himself when he devised a way to combat the "Japanese B" variety of encephalitis using a water-filtration system. In 1927, he earned a Ph.D. in bacteriology, after which he began advancing the cause of biological warfare with Japan's Ministry of War. Both Japan and the United States refused to sign the 1925 Geneva protocol prohibiting the use of poisonous gas and bacteriological methods in warfare. Ishii insisted to his superiors that the Western powers were hard at work developing such weapons. By 1930, after returning from conferences in Europe, Ishii was promoted to the rank of major and began working in the ministry's Department of Epidemic Prevention during the day, while doing biological-warfare research at night. By 1933, he had convinced the army to construct a new "epidemiological research" laboratory and was appointed to a position in the army's main weapons arsenal.

Shortly after the Mukden Incident, Ishii relocated to the northern Manchurian city of Harbin and founded a biological-warfare laboratory there. In about two years, Ishii's unit grew to three hundred members, of whom fifty were doctors. The purpose of this unit was to research offensive biological-warfare, a project too dangerous for the Japanese to pursue in Japan. From autumn of 1935, Chinese Christians, professors, and doctors at the Manchurian Medical College at Mukden were arrested and tortured on the suspicion that they opposed Manchukuo, the puppet Manchurian state headed by the former Chinese emperor. Many mission-trained Chinese doctors were forced to flee the country.

By 1936, Ishii's unit was a 1,000-man operation, and was officially formed as Unit 731 by proclamation of Emperor Hirohito. As the war in China intensified, Unit 731's research was ratcheted up, with units devoted to the warfare possibilities of plague, anthrax, dysentery, typhoid, paratyphoid, cholera, and other exotic diseases. Ishii's researchers also studied the prevention of these diseases, as well as disease vectors, mainly insects, along with chemical toxins, the effects of frostbite (for use in Russia), and new drugs. Unit 731 was well supplied with food and heat at a time when other inhabitants of the city were starving and freezing. There was also a comfort station nearby in Pingfan.

Ishii's work was so dangerous because he solved one of the most serious problems in the development of a bacteriological warfare: how to disperse disease agents. Ishii created methods that could be delivered from altitude by aircraft, thus causing massive epidemics. His unit succeeded in developing a flea delivery method for flea-borne bacteria, such as bubonic plague. This method employed bombs made of clay, porcelain, or paper that could be filled with infected fleas. This delivery method allowed the fleas to survive at altitude, and the vessels left no trace on the ground after explosion. In addition, Ishii developed effective techniques for the mass production of both plague bacteria and the fleas to spread them. When operating at maximum conditions, his unit produced about 300 kilograms of plague germs per week. Ishii's unit also mass-produced bacteria for typhoid, paratyphoid, cholera, and dysentery, which could be spread via contaminated food and water.

Ishii knew that these diseases would be effective weapons because of Unit 731's experiments on humans, which had began on Chinese "bandits" by 1933 to 1934. Some of these experiments were filmed and shown to Japan's military high command by 1935. Unit 731 was also experimenting on Chinese POWs, along with civilian men, women, and children, by 1937. It is estimated that Unit 731 killed at least five thousand people in experiments during this period. The subjects were called *marutas*, which means "logs of wood" in Japanese. Bacteria and other infectious agents were forcibly injected, sometimes using stick-shaped assassination guns developed for espionage, into their bodies. Some subjects were sprayed or given infected food or drink, such as chocolates, jam buns, melons, and crackers. The unit even conducted experiments on pregnant women. One project involved vivisection on pregnant women and their fetuses after they were intentionally infected with syphilis.

Ishii's biological weapons were first used against the Soviets in 1935. There is evidence that the plague weapon was used in the Ningbo (Ningpo) region south of Shanghai in 1940 and in Changde (Changteh) in 1941, where twenty-four people died of plague. The Japanese planned to release plague fleas on American troops in the Philippines, but the battle ended before they could be dispersed (Tanaka 1996). During the Zhejiang (Chekiang) campaign, waged in response to the Doolittle raid on Tokyo, Unit 731's infected jelly-rolls, which contained typhoid and paratyphoid bacteria, were given to three thousand Chinese POWs. By September 1941, Unit 731 had developed glanders, anthrax, and red-rust weapons to be used against livestock.

After Japan went to war with the Western Allies, Ishii wished to study the impact of these infectious agents on different "races," and experiments of this type were carried out at the prisoner-of-war camp in Mukden. Japan also planned to use biological weapons during the 1944 Battle for Saipan, but Japanese forces were defeated before this operation could materialize, and the unit responsible for the planned attack was lost when its ship was sunk by a US submarine on its way to Truk (Tanaka 1996).

The US Navy's 1944 defeat of the Japanese at Midway and the 1944 Marshall Islands campaign led to the rapid demise of Imperial Japan. In October 1944, the United States began B29 raids on Tokyo. Ishii expected the decisive battle to begin between June and September 1945, when the United States started landing troops on Japan proper. Ishii put Unit 731 into overdrive, with a plan of producing sufficient biological weaponry to defeat the invading Americans. On August 6, 1945, Hiroshima was devastated by an American atomic bomb, and a Soviet army of 1.5 million men swept across the border of Korea and Manchuria. General Otuzo Yamada, Ishii's superior officer, ordered Unit 731 and its sister Unit 100 destroyed, along with all evidence of their activities, including all remaining experimental subjects. The bodies were burned, all the buildings were destroyed with explosives, and the unit was evacuated to Seoul, Korea.

On May 3, 1946, the International Military Tribunal for the Far East opened in Tokyo with twenty-eight defendants, including one field marshal, nine full generals, four lieutenant generals, one colonel, one fleet admiral, one admiral, and one vice admiral. Although many of the army defendants had knowledge of and had helped to make possible Ishii's activities, the tribunal largely ignored evidence of these crimes, even though both US and Soviet intelligence knew of Japan's project to develop biological weapons (Williams and Wallace 1989). Part of the problem facing the prosecution was that the Japanese government had ample time, at least two weeks, to destroy documents before American forces landed in Japan. There is also evidence that Cold War politics conspired to conceal evidence of crimes related to biological warfare because both the Americans and the Soviets wanted the data that the Japanese had gathered from their research. Whatever the reason, the tribunal did not charge Ishii, nor was anyone associated with Unit 731 ever held responsible by the Western allies for their crimes. Members of the unit who were captured by the Soviets were imprisoned after the war, but some eventually returned to Japan. In fact, Unit 731's civilian scientists returned to prosperous positions in Japanese society after the war, even though they had participated fully in the research and implementation of biological warfare. Ishii eventually converted to Christianity and died at age sixty-seven, escaping any prosecution.

## HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

By its very nature war is capable of producing atrocities against the innocent. Merciless killing was carried out by all participants in the Asia-Pacific War. However, the verdict of history is quite clear that Imperial Japan was responsible for this war and that its level of killings far exceeded all other participants (Gruhl 2007). Indeed, its plan to take control of all of Asia meant that its methods could only have been brutal.

Social psychology has demonstrated that the vast majority of humans have a deep aversion to killing other humans (Grossman 2009; Keltner, Marsh, and Smith 2010; Sapolsky 2010). Sociopathic individuals who engage in violent behavior and have no moral brakes against killing are rare, and certainly no major army has been populated by enough sociopaths to account for its war atrocities. The vast majority of species in nature, while capable of intraspecific aggression, rarely engage in combat that results in the death of one of its own members (Sapolsky 2010). A notable counterexample is infanticide, in which dominant male or female animals increase their own evolutionary fitness by killing the offspring of unrelated competitors (Hausfater 1984; Clutton-Brock et al. 1998), a strategy that is generally not seen in humans.

Given the inherent resistance in humans to killing members of our own species, it is difficult to explain why we engage in warfare. Modern military and law-enforcement trainers use extreme psychological techniques, such as Pavlovian and operant conditioning, to train soldiers and police officers to use deadly force (Grossman 2009; Williams 1999). Yet warfare and the abuses associated with it have been a persistent theme of human history, which has led social psychologists to investigate how we are capable of carrying out such behaviors. Clues are provided by American psychologist Stanley Milgram's classic experiments on obedience, conducted in the 1960s (Milgram 1963; 1974). Milgram's experiment required college students to



deliver electric shocks to subjects at the instruction of an investigator in a bogus memory test. The subjects were actors and the shocks were not real, but all the students were willing to administer intense shocks (300 volts), and 65 percent of them were willing to administer shocks in excess of 450 volts, labeled on the dial as "Danger, Severe Shock." Milgram concluded from this experiment that even seemingly "normal" human beings can engage in incredibly cruel acts, especially when confronted by strong leaders.

Similar results were recorded in the Stanford prison experiment, conducted in 1971 by psychologist Philip Zimbardo and others, in which some students were given the role of prisoners, while others acted as guards. This experiment was halted after six days due to the dangerous cruelty that was being imposed on the inmates by some of the prison guards (Haney, Banks, and Zimbardo 1973). The researchers' paper concluded that the students did not necessarily need strong leadership authority to suspend their judgment and commit cruel acts. The prison experiment also demonstrated that some students' personalities were more predisposed to cruelty than others. This conclusion is supported by Christopher Browning's study of German Police Unit 101, which in 1942 participated in activities related to the Final Solution for Jews in Poland. Some members of the unit were deeply committed to Nazi ideology and "relished" the opportunity to carry it out, while most of the men in this unit attempted to avoid this duty (Browning 1992; Haslam and Reicher 2007).

Finally, more recent research in social psychology has demonstrated that individuals differ in their tendency to prefer disparity between groups and the degree to which they believe the world is a competitive environment where they have to compete for resources. This tendency, called *social-dominance orientation*, can be measured by psychological tests (Sidanius and Pratto 1999). Persons with high social-dominance orientation tend to act in ways that enhance social hierarchy, even if they themselves are not necessarily members of the socially dominant group. This research helps explain a great deal about the nature of atrocity in war.

The scope and severity of the war crimes carried out by Imperial Japanese soldiers indicate that these acts were encouraged by their command. Japanese militarists had begun preparing generations of Japanese children in both the theories of racial superiority and the glorification of war for decades before the invasion of China (Ienaga 1993–1994). From 1920 to 1931, Japanese schoolbooks included stories that glorified war, and Japanese children were taught that it was glorious to die for the emperor. Indoctrination plays a major role in conditioning, and humans as a species are quite vulnerable to these methods (Bowles and Gintis 1998). After they were inducted into the army, Imperial Japan's soldiers, most of whom were poor rural peasants, encountered the same pro-war and pro-empire rhetoric that they had experienced during childhood, and they were trained by the most brutal methods. Brutality was a consistent feature of Japanese army training, which became more brutal by the degree removed from command. Officers beat and slapped soldiers in front of other men, and this occurred at all ranks. During the Japanese occupation of China, beheading and bayoneting of Chinese prisoners became training exercises (Gruhl 2007). All soldiers were taught that they must fight to the death and take as many of the enemy with them as possible. This brutality is explained, in part, by modern Japan's overnight emergence from a feudal nation that had no concept of individual rights. One's worth in Imperial Japan was related to one's proximity to the emperor. The military leadership used the concept of emperor loyalty to justify all of its policies. Prime Minister Tojo Hideki, at his war-crimes trial, claimed he was only the senior servant of the emperor (Tanaka 1996). In this system, one sees how indoctrination (as in Milgram's experiments), social-dominance orientation, and mythical beliefs about the superiority of Japanese "blood" and culture worked to produce soldiers who were capable of any level of atrocity. Finally, the high number of rapes associated with Japan's war crimes was a testament to the deep patriarchy that characterized, and to a high degree continues to characterize, Japanese culture.

Finally, due to Japan's actions in the Asia-Pacific War, there is still deep resentment against Japan throughout the Asian Pacific rim. Even at the turn of the new millennium, foreigners learning Chinese were sometimes taught that the character *hen*, meaning "hatred," represented the feeling that Chinese have for Japanese. South Korea banned the importation of Japanese books, magazines, and movies in violation of trade regulations. This ban was finally lifted in 1998. Elderly Koreans schooled in Japanese during the occupation have refused to speak the language (Kristoff 1998). This resentment has lingered, in part because of the Japanese government's continuing refusal to take full responsibility for the crimes of Imperial Japan during the Asia-Pacific War, despite the scholarship of many Japanese intellectuals, including Tokushi Kasahara, Yuki Tanaka, and Yoshimi Yoshiaki, who took great risks to help bring the full scope of these crimes to light.

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