**Topics of Historical Memory in Japan**
*War Crimes*

**"War Crimes, Atrocities, and State Terrorism"**
Mark Selden
April 15, 2008
http://japanfocus.org/-Mark-Selden/2724

**"The Comfort Women Controversy: History and Testimony"**
Yoshiko Nozaki
N.D.
http://japanfocus.org/-Yoshiko-Nozaki/2063

**"The Japanese Apology on the 'Comfort Women' Cannot Be Considered Official: Interview with Congressman Michael Honda"**
Kinue Tokudome
May 31, 2007
http://www.japanfocus.org/-Michael-Honda/2438

**"Biohazard: Unit 731 in Postwar Japanese Politics of National 'Forgetfulness'"**
Frederick R. Dickinson
October 12, 2007
http://www.japanfocus.org/-Frederick_R_-Dickinson/2543

**"The Hundred Head Contest: Reassessing the Nanjing Massacre"**
Suzuki Chieko
December 12, 2003
http://www.japanfocus.org/-Suzuki-Chieko/1792

This section focuses on Japanese war crimes, beyond the act of war itself, that are at the center of discussions about whether Japanese have adequately reflected on their war responsibility. Mark Selden offers "a comparative framework for understanding war atrocities and the ways in which they are remembered, forgotten and memorialized," emphasizing the ubiquity and perseverance of these issues. He deals with the "politics of denial" in reference to both the Nanjing Massacre (1937-38) by Japan and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the firebombing of Tokyo by the United States of America. Selden emphasizes that nationalism often has "obfuscated, even eradicated, memories of the war crimes and atrocities committed by one's own nation." In this context, he contrasts Japan and the U.S.A. to Germany, with the two former countries both strongly resisting apology and compensations to the present day.

Yoshiko Nozaki and Kinue Tokudome delve further into this issue to discuss the "military comfort women"—forced labor in the form of sex slavery by the Japanese military—and the question of apology and compensation for the victims. Neonationalists (and conservative historians) have argued that the oral testimony by the now-aged women does not carry sufficient weight as authoritative historical sources and that written sources are the only reliable basis for historical writing. Nozaki introduces the arguments of

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progressive and feminist historians, who advocate for oral testimonies as a way to establish the history of the comfort women, or any other group of imprisoned people, and respect them as historical actors. Tokudome also interviews California Congressman Mike Honda, who has lobbied for a U.S. Congressional resolution demanding that Japan "formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner" for the comfort women. His move shows that the comfort women issue is receiving broad attention in the international arena. Moving to another issue the Japanese government has never formally addressed, Frederick Dickinson introduces the history of Unit 731, an Army unit that conducted experiments with chemical and biological weapons on prisoners of war (POWs). Lastly, Suzuki Chieko's article looks at the historiography and recent court rulings revolving around the Nanjing Massacre, an event that conservative Japanese politicians such as Ishihara Shintarô, the former longtime governor of Tokyo, and more recently, Kawamura Takashi, the mayor of Nagoya, have insisted never took place.

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