

# Hiroshima and Manila: Experiences and Memories of Loss in World War II

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Hiroshima and Manila were both severely damaged during World War II. While Hiroshima is known around the world as a city destroyed by an atomic bomb, the damage done to Manila is less well-known internationally and also in Japan, despite the deaths of one hundred thousand civilians. The atrocities perpetrated on civilians by Japanese soldiers during the Battle of Manila cast a dark shadow over postwar views of Japan in the Philippines. But why has the battle been forgotten in today's Japan? This article traces the history of the battle and examines Japanese perceptions of it. It also analyzes how the Japanese atrocities escalated and additionally discusses Filipino views on the atomic bombings. The article considers how to deal with memories of "negative history" through a case study.

**Keywords** Battle of Manila, atomic bombs, atrocities, war memories, historical perception gap

## Introduction

Both the Japanese city of Hiroshima and Manila, the capital of the Philippines, suffered severe damage during World War II. Hiroshima is known globally as one of the two cities that were targets of atomic bombs, but today there is little worldwide recognition of Manila's status as one of the cities most devastated by urban warfare. Few people in Japan know much about the Battle of Manila itself, which began in February 1945. However, the battle did receive extensive media attention in Japan soon after the end of the war, and a substantial amount of information about it reached the Japanese public. Nonetheless, it is obvious that now, after seventy-seven years, the battle has largely faded from memory in Japan. Why has this happened? And what effect has this historical amnesia had on relations between Japan and the Philippines? Seeking answers to these questions, this article examines the issue from three perspectives.

First, recent historical studies will be reviewed to discover how the battle

developed in Manila and its impact on civilians, including the factors that caused the escalation of violence against civilians by the Japanese troops. Second, consideration will be given to the questions of how information about the Battle of Manila entered Japan, and how it was then disseminated. And third, Filipinos' accounts of their experiences during the battle and the Japanese occupation will be carefully analyzed to explore their views on the A-bomb attack on Hiroshima and the background to those views.

This article presents an overview of the Battle of Manila and analyzes the strategy of the Japanese forces while also considering the impact on postwar Japan-Philippines relations. Furthermore, by examining Filipino perspectives on the atomic bomb, the article reconsiders the image of Hiroshima as seen from another country. Through this process of examination, the article explores the significance of linking the war experiences of people in other countries to those within one's own country and sharing those experiences with each other.

## Experiences of Loss during World War II

### *A-bomb Attack on Hiroshima*

It is difficult to accurately describe the kind of catastrophe that the dropping of an atomic bomb by the United States inflicted on central Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. The event was an instantaneous tragedy, with no respect for individual human dignity. Defenseless people were suddenly struck by heat rays estimated to be at temperatures of 3,000-4,000 degrees Celsius, a huge bomb blast of 440 meters per second, fires spreading immediately after the bombing, and a massive dose of radiation. The powerful heat rays instantly turned people who happened to be near ground zero into bone and ash, and disfigured those in nearby areas in a flash. Shima Hospital, located at the hypocenter, was completely destroyed, killing about eighty people, including doctors and nurses (Hibaku 70-nenshi Henshu Kenkyukai 2018, 188-90).

The victims of the bombing also included foreign nationals, such as those from the Korean peninsula and Taiwan, both of which were then under Japanese colonial rule, as well as Chinese, Germans, and American POWs (Hiroshima-shi, Nagasaki-shi Genbaku Saigaishi Henshuiinkai 1979, 346-64). All who were in Hiroshima at the time suffered the effects of the atomic bombing regardless of their job, status, age, gender, or nationality. Immediately after the bombing, schools, parks, and other places in the city began to be used as temporary morgues. Dead bodies were burned and buried in various places in the city; some were never recovered, and others were buried in mass graves without identification. Even today, the official estimated death toll of one hundred and forty thousand remains uncertain (*Chugoku Shimbun* 2019). After the war was over, A-bomb survivors continued to suffer from keloids, hair loss, solid cancers,

and leukemia. In the post-war era, they experienced both physical pain and anxiety, and faced discrimination and prejudice, as well as feelings of guilt at having survived while family members and acquaintances had died (Lifton 1968; Nakazawa 2007).

### *The Battle of Manila*

On December 8, 1941, the Imperial Japanese Army bombed Baguio, Davao, and other areas of the Philippines under US colonial rule. Commander Douglas MacArthur of the US Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE), who was responsible for the defense of the Philippines, declared Manila an open city on December 26 in an effort to avoid the city and its residents being thrown into the turmoil of war. He then withdrew American troops to Corregidor and Bataan. As a result of this withdrawal, Japanese forces were able to enter Manila unopposed by the Americans on January 2, 1942. The Japanese troops then invaded other islands in the Philippines, and by May they had compelled the US forces to surrender.

On September 21, 1944, however, the US forces counterattacked by bombing Manila from the air. After the US Navy defeated the Japanese Navy at the Battle of Leyte Gulf in October the same year, the Americans landed in the Lingayen Gulf on Luzon Island on January 9, 1945, and headed toward Manila. Meanwhile, the Japanese 14th Area Army under the command of General Tomoyuki Yamashita attempted to defend Luzon mainly from their base in Baguio in the northern part of the island, Clark in the center, and the mountains to the east of Manila in the island's south. In the process of planning the operation, there was disagreement within the Japanese forces about how to handle Manila between those who proposed abandoning the city and those who insisted on defending it to the last (Maehara 1982, 48-54, 69-77). The Japanese Navy, in particular, which had many ports and bases under its control, doggedly insisted that Manila be defended till the end. Although the Japanese forces did themselves consider the possibility of declaring Manila an open city, they eventually concluded that it should be defended at all cost (*ibid.*, 91-92).

It was the Manira Kaigun Boei Butai (Manila Naval Defense Force, hereinafter MNDF) that was responsible for defending the city. Organized on December 22, 1944, the MNDF had been under the command of the Shimbu Group, an army unit, since January 6, 1945. Directly commanded by Rear Admiral Sanji Iwabuchi, the MNDF comprised under-equipped and insufficiently trained troops, including sailors who had survived the sinking of a battleship and Japanese civilians who had been drafted locally amid the worsening war situation. In contrast, their American opponents were an elite force. Placing the highest priority on rescuing their compatriots, the US troops stormed into the University of Santo Tomas, which was used as an internment camp for Allied civilians, on February 3, 1945, and into Bilibid Prison, where American POWs were held, on February 4, succeeding in liberating internees from both facilities (Connaughton, Pimlott, and Anderson

1995, 89-100). In the Battle of Manila, the US forces so completely overwhelmed the MNDF with their offensive power that MNDF members had “no way to attack the enemy” and felt as if they themselves were “mere targets for the enemy doing shooting training” (Maehara 1982, 189). On February 9, Rear Admiral Iwabuchi withdrew the MNDF to Fort McKinley and waited for orders from his superior (the commander of the Shimbu Group). However, without any order for the MNDF’s withdrawal being issued, Iwabuchi returned to Manila on the morning of February 11 (*ibid.*, 173-75, 186-94). On February 12, US troops surrounded the MNDF and cornered the Japanese troops through bombardment and tank attacks.

According to a telegram sent by the MNDF, “the activity of ‘guerrillas’ suddenly heightened” immediately after the US troops stormed into Manila. The Japanese troops determined that most Filipinos were “pro-American and equivalent to the enemy” and that “local citizens who had become guerrillas” should be “treated as the enemy without mercy.”<sup>1</sup> Surrounded by US forces, the Japanese troops began to attack and kill local citizens indiscriminately, partly out of the distrust and hostility they felt toward Filipinos. On February 9, 1945, the Japanese forces gathered nearby residents on the campus of St. Paul’s College in Malate and massacred about four hundred people, including women and children, with dynamite, machine guns, and bayonets (Nagai 2011, 320-22). On the same day, Japanese troops shot to death the wife and children of Senator and future President Elpidio Quirino, who had taken refuge from the battle in the house of her parents near their residence in Ermita (Nagai 2013, 167-72). On February 10, Japanese troops again massacred about four hundred residents who had been evacuated to the German Club in Ermita, including both Germans and Filipinos. On February 12, forty-one people, including German monks, Spaniards, and Filipinos, were killed at De La Salle College in Malate.

It was not easy for Japanese soldiers to distinguish between guerrillas and civilians. The case of the Casino Español, the Spain Club, is a good example. Hanichi Nishioka, a former Navy first-class sailor of the 31st Special Ground Corps (a key corps of the MNDF), wrote about the incident in his memoir. According to Nishioka, during the battle (around February 20), his superior considered the situation of Filipino guerrillas hiding in the Spain Club and issued an order to his soldiers that “guerrillas should not be missed and they should be completely annihilated” (Nishioka 1963, 168). Based on this order, Nishioka and his group planted depth charges at the entrance and exit of the building, then detonated them. Immediately after the explosion, “the people who had been evacuated to the building rushed to get out of it and the Japanese soldiers fired at them with machine guns.” Those who escaped from the building were “mainly women, children, and monks” and “there were few Filipino spies.” The Japanese troops mercilessly sniped at those “who raised their hands without resistance” (*ibid.*, 167-69). Doubts and fears, partly fueled by the military’s orders to “treat

everyone approaching you as your enemy and shoot them,” and “kill all guerrillas you see,” finally drove Japanese troops to commit indiscriminate massacres (Kobayashi 1953, 215; Kanamoto 2009, 42-43).

Meanwhile, meeting with fierce resistance from their Japanese opponents, on February 12, the US forces launched a bombardment of the city of Manila which also killed many local citizens (Maehara 1982, 202; Connaughton, Pimlott, and Anderson 1995, 121). In response, from February 15 to 17 the Shimbu Group ordered the already surrounded MNDF to withdraw, which elicited Iwabuchi's desperate telegrams in reply, which declared, “It's impossible to escape,” and “It's hard to break through the enemy line, and it's completely obvious that we will suffer a crushing defeat” (Kayashima 1968, 74, 80). Around February 26, Iwabuchi committed suicide at the MNDF Headquarters (the Department of Agriculture building). The US troops' mopping-up operations resulted in the collapse of the Japanese forces' organized resistance by March 3. With gunfights between Japanese and US troops, bombardment by the US forces, and Japanese atrocities, the Battle of Manila claimed one hundred thousand civilian lives. The smell of death pervaded the city and many unidentified bodies were given mass burials in parks and other places. The battle totally devastated Manila, once known as the “Pearl of the Orient,” and caused serious physical and psychological damage to survivors (Montinola 1996, 4, 9, 61).

## The Source of Incoming Information

### *“Manila Massacre”*

Information about the Japanese atrocities during the Battle of Manila soon reached the US military authorities. General MacArthur, commander of the Allied Forces in the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA), immediately ordered the collection of information about the massacre.<sup>2</sup> Based on this order, the SWPA compiled the “Report of Destruction of Manila and Japanese Atrocities” and sent it to the US Department of the Army in March 1945.<sup>3</sup> After the US Army Forces in the Pacific (AFPAC) was established in April 1945, a war crimes branch took the lead in investigating the atrocities (Nagai 2013, 22-28).

On August 30, 1945, General MacArthur arrived in Japan as the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), which marked the beginning of the Allied occupation of Japan. On September 3, Colonel Sidney F. Mashbir, an aide to MacArthur, met a Japanese high official, Katsuo Okazaki. When Mashbir realized that Okazaki was unaware of the Japanese atrocities, he showed him the reports on Japanese behavior during the Battle of Manila. Okazaki turned pale and looked shocked (Mashbir 1953, 332-34). The General Headquarters (GHQ), SCAP, inferred that the Japanese “knew nothing about the acts of brutality the Japanese forces had committed abroad.” And then on September 12, GHQ

delivered the US forces' report, entitled *Typical Japanese Atrocities during the Liberation of the Philippines*, to the Information Bureau of Japan and instructed the Japanese side to "share information about it nationwide."<sup>4</sup> Under external pressure, on September 15-16, newspapers in Japan simultaneously reported the Japanese atrocities in the Philippines, including the case of the Battle of Manila. This was the moment when a light was shone on the dark side of the Japanese forces, which had been hidden from the Japanese public by wartime censorship (Tokugawa 1952, 24).

Subsequently, information about the Battle of Manila, focusing on atrocities committed by the Japanese forces, was continuously shared with the people of Japan. On December 14, 1945, all major newspapers (such as *Yomiuri Hochi*) carried an article on the Japanese atrocities during the Battle of Manila in *Taiheiyo-senso-shi* (History of the Pacific War), based on materials provided by the US forces. Then in January 1946, the first issue of the magazine *Sekai Gaho* featured photos of victims of the battle and the Japanese forces' written operation orders, while the first issue of another magazine, *Shinso*, published in March the same year, carried an article entitled "Manira no Ryakudatsu" (Plunder of Manila) (Uchida 1946, 12-13, 16). Both magazines used material provided by the US as their sources. In January 1949, about two months after the verdicts in the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, the publishing house Hibiya Shuppansha issued a book by Takashi Nagai, a doctor in Nagasaki, entitled *Nagasaki no Kane* (Bells of Nagasaki). The GHQ permitted the publication on condition that the book include the "Manira no Higeiki" (Tragedy of Manila). "Manira no Higeiki" is a Japanese translation of the US forces' investigation report on the Japanese atrocities during the Battle of Manila, entitled "The Sack of Manila." Nagai's *Nagasaki no Kane* became an instant bestseller and ninety-five thousand copies had been sold by July 1949 (Braw 1986, 99-104). As is clear from the above, information about the Battle of Manila became available in Japan soon after the war. However, most of this information was shared at the US military authorities' request or based on materials provided by those authorities and intended to emphasize Japanese responsibility for the acts of brutality and to condemn the Japanese for carrying out those acts.

### *Reaction in Japan*

The Battle of Manila was contemporaneously covered by the Japanese media from the initial stages of urban warfare, so many Japanese citizens had probably already read or heard about it. Newspapers, such as the February 8, 1945, issue of *Asahi Shimbun*, carried articles on it and emphasized the fierceness of the battle and the bravery of Japanese troops. However, the newspapers did not provide any information about Japanese atrocities. Therefore, Japanese readers were shocked by the articles about the atrocities that came out soon after Japan was defeated.

When urged to publish such articles by the GHQ, Japanese officials working

in the Information Bureau felt “thoroughly bewildered by the articles’ cruel content and scandalous characteristics.” Such feelings of reluctance made the newspaper authorities select styles that would help them avoid appearing responsible for such articles, including adding, “Published on the orders of the Allied Powers.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, on September 15, 1945, major Japanese newspapers all carried articles about the Battle of Manila, including one published in the *Mainichi Shimbun* headlined “Acts of Violence Committed by Japanese Troops in Battle in the Philippines.” These articles reported such atrocities as the massacres of civilians at De La Salle College and Fort Santiago, the headquarters of the Japanese Kempeitai (military police). However, the articles did not reveal the names and ages of victims or perpetrators, describing the incidents briefly and in a somewhat abstract way.

The *Asahi Shimbun* of September 17, 1945, shared readers’ responses to the articles published on the two previous days. The responses reflected Japanese people’s complex reactions to the reported incidents: they felt confused about “such incredible brutality” and doubtful about the US forces’ intentions in issuing such information. Some people apologized and expressed their regret for the incidents (*Asahi Shimbun* 1945), but it cannot be said that the majority of people shared this attitude.

For example, an elementary school teacher in Hyogo Prefecture wrote in his diary on September 16, “The GHQ announced the Japanese forces’ acts of brutality in the Philippines. It’s totally surprising, and I regret this as a Japanese citizen. But, what about the indiscriminate massacres caused by the A-bombs? ‘Might is right’ seems to be the case here” (Inoue 1974, 122). After reading the reports about atrocities, the novelist Jun Takami also wrote in his diary on September 16, referencing the A-bomb attacks and indiscriminate bombing, “While victorious nations are never accused of brutality, only defeated nations are accused of brutality” (Takami 1959, 327). On the same day, Sankichi Toge, a poet in Hiroshima who was an A-bomb survivor, heard about the Japanese troops’ atrocities in the Philippines on the radio news and was angered that “the winners were disseminating such information with merely selfish intentions.” However, he continued to have ambiguous feelings, asking himself whether he really could insist that “there was nothing wrong with the acts of his fellow Japanese” during the war (Toge 1945). As shown above, the Japanese viewed themselves as victims of the A-bomb attacks, air raids, and other individual experiences during the war, so news coverage that seemed to single them out for their atrocities aroused their opposition (Awaya 1980, 208-10). Additionally, at that time, there were some incidents of violence toward Japanese committed by members of the US occupation forces in Japan. Therefore, some Japanese felt a growing distrust of the United States, viewing reports of the brutality in Manila as propaganda intended to deflect criticism of US violence in Japan and to justify it. A member of a municipal assembly in Tottori Prefecture said, “I think the reports on the brutalities in Manila

may be MacArthur's ploy to camouflage violence by the US occupation army" (ibid., 208). A municipal government employee in the same prefecture also expressed the view that "the reports may be trickery by MacArthur to excuse American troops' violence" (ibid., 207-8). Furthermore, some maintained that violent incidents like those that had been reported were "inherent in war" (ibid., 208-9). Since private diaries and records of citizens' opinions reported to the police were not intended to be disclosed to the public, such materials may be considered to be a true reflection of the authors' opposition to and distrust of information provided by the US forces. It is obvious that they viewed the brutality in Manila in the context of their own relationship with the US, rather than from the perspective of the Filipino victims.

As mentioned above, soon after the Japanese defeat, the dissemination of information about the Battle of Manila across Japan marked a turning point in the Japanese people's awareness of the battle. However, when a member of the Japanese delegation at the reparation negotiations visited the Philippines in the early 1950s, he was shocked to hear about the Japanese atrocities from citizens of Manila themselves, because he was unfamiliar with these facts (Sakai 1952, 121). This seems to show that there was no widespread awareness among Japanese of the atrocities committed by their forces in Manila. There was, however, opposition among many Japanese to being forced by the victor (the US) to disseminate information about the Battle of Manila. Therefore, Japanese people could neither take the facts seriously (Tsuji 1952, 114) nor vividly imagine what had gone on from a Filipino perspective. Furthermore, Japanese people's awareness of themselves as victims also prevented them from internalizing other people's war experiences.

## "When We Say 'Hiroshima'"

### *Filipino Viewpoints*

On November 5, 1981, Filipino novelist F. Sionil Jose attended an international conference held in Kawasaki City. When an Indian author expressed his sympathy for Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Filipino novelist rejected the sympathy and expressed his view that the A-bomb attacks were the natural consequence of Japanese actions. He said, "The Filipinos, thirty-five years ago, wished that not only Hiroshima and Nagasaki but also Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, and all other areas would have been attacked. They believed that would have been the natural consequence of the Japanese launching the war" (Nihon Ajia-Amerika Sakka Kaigi 1982, 119). There were concrete reasons for his statement. When the Japanese forces occupied Manila in January 1942, Jose was aged eighteen. The Japanese troops established checkpoints around the city and forced the Filipinos to bow to Japanese soldiers. When Jose encountered Japanese soldiers near Far Eastern



University, he tried to avoid them, but they called on him to stop, shouting, “Hey, wait!” and slapped him on the cheek. Around November 1943, on his way home from visiting one of his relatives, a farmer in Tarlac Province, to obtain rice, he was arrested and seriously assaulted by a Japanese soldier, causing him to fall unconscious. After US forces landed on Luzon Island in January 1945, Jose joined them because he wished to go to Japan to kill as many Japanese as possible in revenge. Due to his experience of repeated violence by Japanese troops, Jose did not feel any sympathy for the inhabitants of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.<sup>6</sup>

Miguel A. Perez-Rubio’s parents, elder brother, and younger sister were killed by Japanese soldiers during the Battle of Manila. On February 12, 1945, Japanese troops attacked his home on Vito Cruz Street (Singalong) and slaughtered his family. When Perez-Rubio was sixteen in 1942, he had bowed to a Japanese soldier while riding his bicycle near De La Salle College. However, the soldier became angry at his way of bowing, knocked him down, and bayoneted him. Although he later joined the anti-Japanese guerrillas, he was arrested by the Kempeitai in January 1945 and tortured. Perez-Rubio was delighted when he heard about the A-bomb attack on Hiroshima, and he said he wished that many more A-bombs would be dropped on Japan and that the country would disappear completely.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, Juan Jose P. Rocha, twelve of whose relatives were killed by Japanese soldiers in the Battle of Manila, felt frustrated by Hiroshima’s privileged status as a world-famous city, which was far above that of Manila. He hoped that people around the world would also understand the fear and physical and psychological suffering that citizens of Manila endured when they were killed with bayonets or other weapons at the hands of Japanese troops.<sup>8</sup>

As we can see from these examples, the attitude of Filipinos with experience of the war toward the atomic bombing of Japan can seem harsh, but their opinions were underpinned by their own intense experiences. Meanwhile, Filipinos who were born after World War II (and especially the younger generations) have some knowledge of the bombing of Hiroshima but they appear to have no special feelings about it nor do they appear very interested in it. For example, history textbooks used by local students contain a brief mention of the bombings as part of the process of ending the war, but students have little opportunity to learn about Hiroshima and the Hibakusha, or A-bomb survivors.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, although memories of World War II are fading among Filipinos, various efforts have been made to hand these memories down from generation to generation, including survivors telling their younger relatives about their war experiences, the holding of memorial ceremonies for victims, the erecting of war memorials, and media coverage of the history of the war (Hayase 2011, 25-32). Concerning the Battle of Manila, a grassroots group called Memorare-Manila 1945, formed in October 1993, erected a memorial in Intramuros in February 1995, the fiftieth anniversary of the battle. In collaboration with survivors, their families, and historians, the group collects oral histories of the battle and holds memorial events and lectures

(*Manila Bulletin* 1995; Araneta 2005; *Manila Shimbun* 2011). Filipinos today generally seem to have a friendly attitude toward the Japanese (Pew Research Center 2013), but as Professor Ricardo T. Jose of the University of the Philippines has said, it is thought that Filipinos are still sensitive about Japan in the inner depths of their hearts (Sakai 2015).

### *Responses from the Japanese*

Turning to the Japanese in the post-war era, many of them knew little about Filipinos' wartime experiences. There was a large gap between Filipinos and Japanese concerning their memories of the war, and that is why many Japanese were shocked to hear about the Filipino experience. One example is Kiyoko Takeda, who stayed in Manila for about a week in September 1951 due to an aircraft malfunction on her way home from attending an international conference in Europe. As a Christian with excellent proficiency in English, she was invited into the homes of locals almost every day. Every family she visited told her about their "experiences of being attacked or injured by Japanese troops" and asked her, "Why are the Japanese so brutal?" All she could do was listen attentively to them. After returning to Japan, she published an account of her experience in Manila (Takeda 1952, 134-36). Meanwhile, Kazuko Kay, who had been living in Hiroshima when the bomb was dropped, lived in Manila for more than ten years throughout the 1960s. When she was teaching graduate school at Philippine Women's University, Kay noticed that one of her students had her left arm missing from the elbow. The student confided that a Japanese soldier had cut off her forearm with a sword. Kay was profoundly shocked by this revelation. She listened as the student detailed her terrible experiences and she apologized to her for what the Japanese soldier had done, weeping together with the student. She became keenly aware that justifying the violence on the grounds that such occurrences are inevitable in war would make no sense to victims. Kay wrote a memoir about this "lifetime unforgettable" experience (Kay 2005, 298-301).

Another example is the poet Sadako Kurihara, an A-bomb survivor herself, who introduced the Battle of Manila into one of her poems, "Hiroshima to iu Toki" (When we say "Hiroshima"), written in May 1972. She wrote, "Say 'Hiroshima', and hear of women and children in Manila thrown into trenches, doused with gasoline, and burned alive" (Kurihara 1976, 102-3; 1999, 20). Kurihara warned that the experience of Hiroshima should not be discussed only from the perspective of the Japanese. These examples show the efforts of Japanese people from the 1950s through the 1970s to remember, reflect upon, and honor the wartime experiences of Filipinos.

From the 1980s to the 2000s, there were signs that scholars and journalists were paying more attention to the Battle of Manila. The 1984 book, *Shinseikokka Nihon to Ajia: Senryo-ka no Hannichi no Genzo* (Japan as a "divine" nation and Asia: Realities of anti-Japanese resistance under Japanese occupation),

edited by Shizuo Suzuki and Michiyoshi Yokoyama and published by Keiso Shobo, is a collection of articles by *Mainichi Shimbun* journalists who gleaned their information during visits to various Asian countries. One article, entitled “Nokotteita ‘Manira Daigyakusatsu’ no Genba” (Remaining scene of the “Manila massacre”), is a pioneering work that sheds light on the massacre at De La Salle College and describes the Battle of Manila from the perspective of Filipinos. Additionally, beginning in FY2007, Professor Satoshi Nakano of Hitotsubashi University received a national research grant for a project entitled “The Truths and Memories of the Battle for Manila 1945: Area Studies for Peace.” In collaboration with researchers from Japan and the Philippines, he introduced readers in Japan to the Battle of Manila (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science 2012). It is important not to overlook documentaries on the Battle of Manila screened by the Japanese public broadcaster NHK. These include *Shogen Kiroku Manira Shigaisen: Shisha 12-man Shodo eno Ikkagetsu* (An oral history of the Battle of Manila: A month-long battle resulting in scorched earth and 120,000 deaths), directed by Mariko Kanamoto and based on information collected in both Japan and the Philippines, which was first screened on August 5, 2007. Seven years later, on August 29, 2014, another program directed by Kanamoto, *Nikushimi to Yurushi: Manira Shigaisen Sonogo* (Hatred and forgiveness: Aftermath of the Battle of Manila) was screened. Both of these programs have been aired multiple times, achieving wide recognition.

In the 2000s, several Japanese officials verbally admitted to the devastation caused to the Philippines during the Battle of Manila and Japan’s responsibility for it. Factors behind this move include Japan’s need for security and economic collaboration with the Philippines, the increased academic attention that has been given to the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, and a lack of diplomatic conflict concerning mutual recognition of this period of history. On February 18, 2006, Ambassador Ryuichiro Yamazaki attended a memorial meeting held by Memorare-Manila 1945, a first for a Japanese ambassador to the Philippines. Yamazaki expressed his apologies thus: “I would like to extend my heartfelt apology and deep remorse for the tragic fate of Manila” (Nakano 2006, 312-15). The remarks of Emperor Akihito (currently Emperor Emeritus) on the sixtieth anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Philippines are also deserving of particular attention. On January 26, 2016, before departing on an official visit to the Philippines, the emperor said, “During World War II, countless Filipino, American, and Japanese lives were lost in the Philippines. A great many innocent Filipino civilians became casualties of the fierce battles fought in the city of Manila. This history will always be in our hearts as we make this visit to the Philippines” (Imperial Household Agency 2016). The emperor had seldom mentioned particular battles in his previous public remarks, so his words this time revealed an interest in the Battle of Manila and consideration for Filipinos. As described above, there are a few recent examples

of Japanese individuals expressing their awareness that the wartime experiences of the Filipinos, including those during the Battle of Manila, are part of Japanese history. However, such views are still not widely shared in Japanese society.

## Conclusion

As a preliminary battle conducted in the midst of a civilian population, and one that foreshadowed the Battle of Okinawa, the Battle of Manila can be seen as part of the historical background leading up to the A-bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The month-long battle for the capital of the Philippines claimed a large number of lives. Soon after the Japanese defeat, the Japanese public learned of the Battle of Manila through newspaper reports. However, because those reports were mainly focused on the Japanese atrocities and delivered by order of the “victor” (the US forces), they aroused a sense of embarrassment and skepticism among the Japanese public and had no long-term impact. In contrast, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima was discussed in Japan in the wake of the *Daigo Fukuryu Maru* incident of March 1954,<sup>10</sup> and the consequent mobilization of movements against nuclear weapons. Although the Battle of Manila is still seldom mentioned in Japan, the situation has changed since the beginning of the twenty-first century. In particular, Emperor Akihito’s mention of the battle in 2016 played a significant role in modelling an attitude toward the past war based on dialogue and the diverse perspectives of other nations.

Historically, the A-bomb devastation of Hiroshima is linked to the Battle of Manila. There is certainly a difference between the two cities in that Hiroshima was the site of the world’s first nuclear attack and it was significantly impacted by radiation. However, Hiroshima and Manila share many common characteristics in terms of the scale of devastation wreaked on the civilian population, including the broad range of victims and the massive damage. As part of the same war, what kind of situation did each society face, what did each lose, and what kind of memories were left behind? By linking and sharing the war experiences of Hiroshima and Manila, rather than treating them as independent and unrelated events, we can develop diverse perspectives to better guide us toward an understanding of each other’s “war memories” which will help us to position each country’s war within a broader context of world history, facilitating dialogue between nations and peoples. The war experiences of these two cities still call out to us, urging us to pass down the realities and consequences of devastating and uncontrollable war to the next generation and draw lessons that can help us avoid war between nations in the future. The key to making the best use of “memories of war” is more than an accurate understanding of historical facts; it involves respecting others and facing up to the past from diverse perspectives.

## Acknowledgement

This article is a revised and updated English version of the author's article in Japanese, "Hiroshima to Manira: Dainiji Sekaitaisen ni okeru Soushitsu-taiken to Kioku" [Hiroshima and Manila: Experiences and memories of loss in World War II], in, *Hiroshima Hatsu no Heiwagaku: Senso to Heiwa wo Kangaeru 13-ko* [A Hiroshima approach to peace studies: Thirteen lectures on war and peace], ed. Hiroshima Peace Institute of Hiroshima City University (Kyoto: Horitsu Bunkasha, 2021).

## Notes

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7. Author's interview with Miguel A. Perez-Rubio, former chief of presidential protocol, Makati, June 13, 2015. See also, Perez-Rubio (2017).
8. Author's interview with Juan Jose P. Rocha, president of Memorare-Manila 1945, Manila, March 3, 2011.
9. Author's telephone interview with Mikael Kai Geronimo (Nomura), student at Hiroshima University, June 28, 2020. Also see, Soriano et al. (2016).
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Submitted: August 17, 2021; Revised: February 02, 2022; Accepted: February 22, 2022