Article

Jack Chalker's *Burma Railway*: 'From the Burma-Thailand Railway toward Historical Reconciliation'

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A Book of Drawings

'I don't want to remember what happened there. If I try to remember, I just can't keep back the feelings of anger and hatred. If you want to know about what took place at the Railway, it would be good for you to read this book.'

Speaking softly, the man who said this and put into my hands a large-format book of collected drawings was an elderly British gentleman who had been a Japanese prisoner during the Second World War.

As I opened this printed collection as if being urged to do so, I saw some of the dense Southeast Asian rainforest, quickly-constructed concentration camps, and compelling water colour drawings, executed in subdued colours, of figures of half-naked men who had been compelled to live there during the months and years they had been forced to undertake intensive labour constructing the Burma-Thailand Railway. Details of torture, emaciated bodies, arms and legs covered with scars, and other similar subject matter filled much of the album of drawings. I had formerly seen books with drawings on similar topics, but the brushwork in the book I was now viewing had a very characteristic precision and technique, and even a

certain ‘elegance.’

There may be ‘elegance’ in what was drawn by the artist’s brush, but the scenes he depicted are after all associated with human cruelty. There were drawings of men staggering listlessly forward, a drawing of a man clasping his stomach grotesquely swollen by oedema, and depictions, drawn as if for a medical textbook, of the devastation caused by ulcerations of the lower limbs. If drawings had voices, and if they could convey certain smells, one could even less be expected to view the drawings with any sense of equanimity.

The elderly former POW with whom I was speaking, as if having a certain awareness of my own reaction to the drawings, leafed through the pages of the album in silence. He soon came upon drawings of tropical flowers, also in precise technical detail. Here a bright hibiscus, and there a delicate purple passion flower. However much he might feel himself stranded in an unforgiving natural environment and however hopeless might be his circumstances, of cruel daily labour, the artist was also able to discover some beauty in his surrounding, which as an artist he could not totally be without. His pride, as an artist, and his compulsion to live, deeply permeate each stroke of his brush.

The man sitting next to me said: ‘The artist who made these drawings is Jack Chalker. He was also a prisoner of war of the Japanese Army. He was a good fellow. We were in the same concentration camp. And he was a truly courageous man. Even though he could have been put to death by Japanese soldiers if they had known what he was doing, he continued to draw at the risk of his life, and managed to bring his drawings back to England. I think Jack’s drawings are the closest to the truth of our experiences. So I give

you this book as a present.'

It was in this way that I first came to know about the POW artist Jack Chalker.

Jack Chalker, the POW Artist

Jack Bridger Chalker was born in London, Britain, on October 10, 1918, just one month before the ceasefire agreement that concluded the First World War. He had grown up in a family which had long maintained an interest in Japanese art. In the Second World War he took part in the Asian Front, where was taken prisoner by the Japanese Army and spent three and a half years in POW camps. This volume focuses on the drawings that Chalker produced in strict secrecy from the Japanese Army. After the war he wrote up a memoir based on notes that he had hastily dashed off during his captivity. Details of his experiences as a POW can be gleaned both from his drawings and his memoir. Let us now take a brief look at the course of his career.

In the autumn of 1939, shortly after the war had broken out in Europe, when he was 21 years old, Chalker was called up to be part of the 118th Field Regiment of Royal Artillery Bombardiers. In the autumn of 1941, prior to Japan's declaration of war against Britain and America, Chalker left his homeland as a member of the British 18th Division and on his journey he was informed of the Japanese invasion of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and Kotabal on the Malay Peninsula. The British 18th Division mainly comprised regiments from East Anglia in England, including the local regiment in Cambridgeshire, whose principal city is well known for its university. At first it had been intended that the 18th Division would take

part in the German war front, but its destination had suddenly been changed. Instead Chalker took part in the Battle of Singapore, as British forces were nearing defeat.

On February 15, 1942, the Japanese Army took Singapore and the British surrendered. Chalker and his comrades were taken prisoner. He was forced to labour at the Changi Camp for the first three and a half months and at the Havelock Road Camp for the following four months. It was early September in the same year when a 'rumour' spread among Chalker and his fellow POWs that the Japanese were constructing a 'railway' crossing the national border between Thailand and Burma. It was said that the prisoners would be utilized as a key part of the labour force. Preparations for moving to the construction sites began in the late September. On October 5, Chalker and his comrades began the journey, lasting five days and nights, under terrible conditions. The men had to walk from Bampong to an army-run Kanyu camp, near where railway construction was underway. It was the 'monsoon season,' and the move to this new location in the interior of Thailand was itself exhausting.

Chalker was thus one of the 30,000 British POWs mobilized to construct the railway. In this construction work, the British POWs were joined by 200, 000 or possibly even 300, 000 Asian forced labourers and other European and American POWs. Those associated with the Japanese Army called this undertaking 'the greatest railway construction of the century,' while these forced labourers were made to bear the brunt of the back-breaking work of building the so-called 'Burma-Thailand Railway.'

Later Chalker reflected on the camp life: 'Conditions were appalling. The staple diet was rice, often with little else, to support working days of

sixteen hours at a stretch during the 'speed' period Medical supplies in some areas were non-existent in working camps and the mortality rate rose rapidly.' In general, the Japanese Army either had no means of treating the prisoners' illnesses and wounds, or else showed little interest in doing so. On the other hand, those among the prisoners who were medical doctors managed to carry out some makeshift 'treatment' using a few instruments and improvising from other objects that could be found to serve their purpose. The Japanese Army personnel permitted these elementary medical procedures. This makeshift treatment by POW doctors was a valiant attempt to cope with various types of disease and bodily wounds.

Chalker meticulously documented in some of his sketches such activities carried out by those among the POWs who had some medical training. Making records of conditions was strictly forbidden and infringement of this rule could bring savage penalties. Thus Chalker had to hide his original records and to try to reproduce them on a smaller scale using both sides of scraps of paper available to him which could be hidden in sections of bamboo buried in the ground or in the attap roofs of jungle huts.

During the three and a half years between Japan's defeat of Singapore and the end of the war, a quarter of all British soldiers who were taken prisoner died. Among those soldiers mobilized to the Burma -Thailand railway, one in five died. Chalker survived, and after his liberation from captivity he wasappointed an official 'war artist' at the Australian Headquarters in Bangkok. His works came to berecognized as official documentation of medically-related matters.

The Value of Chalker's Work

After the war Chalker returned to his homeland and took up a scholarship at the School of Painting at the Royal College of Art, London. Graduating from the College, he was selected as a member of the Royal Society of British Artists. He was then appointed in turn Principal of the Falmouth College of Art and Design; Principal of the West of England College of Art and Design, Bristol and Principal of the Regional College of the West of England. Later, when the college was made a Faculty of the new Bristol Polytechnic, Chalker was appointed Dean of the Faculty. He retired in 1974. Recently he was also made a Fellow of the Society of Medical Art of Great Britain. He married, has three sons and a daughter, and now lives with his wife Hélène near Wells in Somerset. He is 90 years old and still lives an active life.

The drawings in this volume are from a revised edition of his major publication from Leo Cooper in 1994, *The Burma Railway Artist: The War Drawings of Jack Chalker*, appearing under the new title *The Burma Railway; Images of War*, from Mercer Books, in 2007. The Japanese volume, published in 2008, is based mainly on the Mercer Books edition. The drawings contained in this volume were all made in or near the POW camps in Thailand to which Chalker was assigned, the few exceptions are indicated. In this sense, Chalker's works published in this volume have great historical value.

Besides Chalker, other POWs made drawings which documented their experience on the Burma-Thailand Railway, notably Ronald Searle and Leo Rawlings. Another former POW named Fred Seiker began in more recent years to produce artistic works based on his experiences, and these have

also been published. Among the drawings by these POW artists, those by Chalker received special commendation by Sir Edward Dunlop, a former Australian POW. After the war his government designated him a 'national hero' for his improvising but effective medical work at labour camps along the route of the Burma-Thailand Railway. As 'Weary' Dunlop has pointed out, the outstanding historical and artistic value of Chalker's works derive from their accuracy and detail as well as their gentleness and calmness, so characteristic of Chalker.

Chalker's wartime drawings are well known not only in the United Kingdom but also in Australia, which next to Britain had the highest number of prisoners forced into labour by the Japanese on the Burma-Thailand Railway. Chalker's works have been highly valued by former POWs themselves, and within one of the organizations of former POWs there is a group which publicizes Chalker's works through the internet. At a museum in Kanchanburi, Thailand, as well as at the FEPOW (Far East Prisoners of War) Memorial within the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, in the UK, many of Chalker's works are on permanent display.

In such ways, Chalker's drawings possess not only superb artistic qualities and great value as historical material, but are also extremely important as authentic representation linked to the 'collective memories' of time and place in the context of the 'Burma-Thailand Railway.' It should be mentioned here that a large portion of his works depicting his experience as a prisoner of the Japanese Army are to be bequeathed by him to the National War Museum in Canberra.

What is the Burma-Thailand Railway?

The Burma–Thailand Railway, which Chalker would record at the risk of his life, was a military railway that the Japanese Imperial Army constructed between Nong Pladuk in Thailand and Thanbyuzayat in Burma. The total length of the railway was approximately 415 kilometres. The railway traversed an area of extremely dense jungle and steep mountains located where the climate is one of the world's most inhospitable, a hotbed of tropical diseases like malaria, Dengue fever, cholera, and tropical ulcers.

The very great number of human deaths attributable to the construction of the Burma–Thailand Railway gave it the international reputation as the 'Death Railway.' It was said to have been completed at the cost of 'a life for every sleeper' and 'a life for every rail.' It was a multinational construction project that involved some 300,000 or more labourers from 14 countries. Memories, as well as physical and psychological wounds, of the project spread across the globe, to Europe, Asia, Oceania, and America. To the peoples of these regions, it became a symbol of the cruelty of the wartime Japanese army and a symbol of how people were deceived by the slogan 'Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere,' touted grandiloquently by the Japanese.

Details on the Burma–Thailand Railway are contained in the list of reference material at the end of this volume. Especially important as Japanese-language research materials are Toshiharu Yoshikawa's Taimen-tetsudō, Aiko Utsumi's *Taimen-tetsudō to Nihon no sensō sekinin* and Clifford Kinvig's 'Rengō-gun horyo to Taimen-tetsudō' (in Yōichi Kibata, Nobuko Kosuge and Philip Towle, eds. *Sensō no kioku to horyo*

mondai.) Below is a brief overview of the railway project.

Thailand, which was one stage for the construction for the Burma–Thailand Railway, was, at the beginning of the Pacific War, an independent nation. The other end of the railway, Burma, was, at that time, a colony of Great Britain. With the beginning of the war, the Japanese Army advanced into Thailand. The following year it advanced into Burma and occupied its capital, Rangoon.

The Japanese Army then planned to occupy extensive parts of Burma, and since its intention was to advance further into India, it was important to secure supply routes into Burma. But with Japan's naval defeat at Midway Island in June 1942, supply routes into Burma by sea became exposed to attacks by Allied forces. Therefore the Japanese Army tried to secure overland supply routes into Burma.

The construction of the Burma–Thailand Railway was decided upon immediately after the Midway defeat. After the 'Outlines for the Construction of a Burma–Thailand Railway' were agreed by the Imperial Japanese Headquarters on June 20, 1942, construction began barely more than a week later, on June 28. Top responsibility for its construction lay with the Army Division of Imperial Japanese Headquarters. Under what was called the 'No. 2 Railway Supervision' of the Southern Army Headquarters, the 5th Railway Regiment, the 9th Railway Regiment, and other Special Railway Regiments and Railway Materials Workshops were established for their support. Approximately 12, 500 Japanese Army personnel were occupied in one way or another with the construction of the Burma–Thailand Railway. Labour forces for the project were Allied prisoners of war and Asian labourers. The total number of European and

American labourers is approximately 62,000. At an estimate, some 200,000 Asian construction workers were also mobilized.

The construction of the Burma–Thailand Railway faced a fundamental challenge: the extreme difficulty of the construction work itself. According to Clifford Kinvig, a British military historian who has researched the Burma–Thailand Railway, the British Army also had planned a similar project, well before the Japanese Army did. However, the plans were abandoned for technical reasons, including the extremely adverse terrain, as well as economic considerations. The plans which the British Army had concluded were untenable even in peacetime, were to be taken on in wartime by the Japanese Army, using its own construction technology, but dependent totally on foreign workers and prisoners of war.

The Huge Number of Victims

However, the Japanese Army did not provide the prisoners and other forced labourers with proper facilities, in support of the construction work, or their daily necessities, including supplies and utensils for cooking or medical supplies. The American and European POWs and the Asian labourers were constantly hit and kicked by Japanese Army personnel who considered this demeaning behavior to be 'educational', even 'paternalistic'. Infringement of rules could bring much more severe punishments.

The Japanese Army was determined to complete the railway as soon as they possibly could. Completion was originally planned for the end of 1943, but preparations for taking Imphal caused the completion date to be brought forward to August 1943, four months earlier than planned. This resulted in mounting pressure on the POWs and Asian labourers and the

hardships they had to face becoming almost unbearable, all the time accompanied by insistent shouts from the Japanese calling for greater 'Speedo!'. Because of malnutrition, overwork and daily physical violence, the numbers of sick and wounded continued to increase. Friction also mounted between representatives of the Japanese railway construction regiments and Japanese camp personnel who were put in direct charge of POWs.

In April 1943, the rainy season started one month earlier than usual. The situation thus naturally worsened. An epidemic of cholera that had begun in a POW camp on the Burmese side of the border, almost immediately spread into the Thailand side, and took a ferocious toll of lives until it was over, around the end of September. According to Aiko Utsumi's *Nihon-gun no horyo seisaku* and Kyōichi Tachikawa's 'Kyūgun ni okeru horyo no toriatsukai' (*Bōei Kenkyūjo Kiyō*), in response to an order by War Minister Hideki Tōjō, official inspections of the local construction areas were carried out. After the reports were examined by Tōjō, some army personnel were replaced as a result of the findings of a court martial of mistreatment of POWs. But this did not result in any substantial improvements in the overall situation.

On October 15, 1943, the railway was opened. It covered 415 kilometres and was constructed in such a short time, through totally virgin and inaccessible terrain, that it was considered 'record-setting', but it was only achieved at the cost of unspeakable pain and privations suffered by the POWs and the Asian labourers.

According to Kinvig, approximately 65,000 European and American POWs were mobilized by the Japanese Army to build the railway. They included 30,000 British POWs, 13,000 Australian POWs, 18,000 Dutch

POWs, and 700 Americans. There were also some POWs from New Zealand. Among the Allied POW construction labourers, approximately 12,000 died.

The number of Asian railway construction workers mobilized is unknown. Kinvig estimates there were approximately 270,000, of which he estimates 90,000 died.

Yūji Otabe et al., ed., *Kīwādo Nihon no Sensō Hanzai* estimates that 200,000 labourers were mobilized from Burma, Thailand, the Malay Peninsula, French Indochina and Java. They estimate that among the 200,000 Asians, at least 45, 000, and according to some other British materials, 74,000, died.

According to Ikuhiko Hata et al., ed. *Sekai Sensō Hanzai Jiten*, 106,000 Burmese were mobilized, 30, 000 Thai and Chinese-descent Thai were mobilized, as well as 85,000 Malaysians and Javanese. The Malaysians and Javanese, who were taken so far from their homes, had little real chance of escaping to their places of origin. In the completely alien environment in which they found themselves, between half and one-third of them died, according to Hata's estimate.

Jonathan Vance's *Encyclopedia of Prisoners of War and Internment* estimates that approximately 250,000 Asians were conscripted as railway construction workers and that among them, 120,000 died.

After the war, experiences on the Burma-Thailand Railway were investigated by the Tokyo Trial and by the Class B and Class C war crimes tribunals. In their judgements, the Burma-Thailand Railway was a 'military railroad,' and the use of prisoners of war for military-related operations was a 'war crime', violating international treaties which stated

that such actions were not to be condoned. According to Aiko Utsumi's *Nihon-gun no Horyo Seisaku*, of the 120 individuals brought to trial in connection with the Burma–Thailand Railway, 111 were found 'guilty,' and 32 were sentenced to death. Of those brought to trial, 66 or a little over half of the 111 had connections with POW camps in Thailand which supplied prisoners to construction sites.

In October 1946, the assets of the Thailand side of the Railway were sold by the British government to the Thai government for l.25 million pounds. The UK treated this, and money derived from the sale of other Japanese overseas assets, confiscated after the war, as part of the 'reparations' which Japan was obliged to pay according to Article 16 of the Peace Treaty. From these reparations approximately 50,000 former POWs were each paid 76.5 pounds.

The Japanese Treatment of POWs

A key reason why the Japanese Army was able to force through the construction of the Burma–Thailand Railway, even at such enormous cost of human dignity and life, was the Army's principle of *'shomei hissui no tokusei,'* meaning that an order from a superior must be carried out absolutely to the last letter. In addition to this, POWs were regarded with great contempt, in a way which demonstrated ignorance of international law, and racial and ethnic bias.

In regard to the principle of 'shomei hissui no tokusei,' it should first be explained that the Japanese Army, before and during the war, were taught that an order from a superior should be treated as an order from the Emperor. To ignore or disobey the order of a superior, however extreme it

might be, was virtually impossible. For this reason, up to 1,000 Japanese Army personnel met their deaths during the construction of the Burma-Thailand Railway.

Secondly, Japanese soldiers were taught that to be taken prisoner was the ultimate disgrace, deserving death. In the Russo-Japanese War and the First World War, enemy prisoners had been well treated by the Japanese Army, and this fact was acknowledged and praised internationally. However, especially after the time of the Manchurian Incident of 1931, prisoners of war came to be despised. In January 1941, the year the Pacific War began, Prime Minister, concurrently Army Minister, Hideki Tōjō promulgated the *Senjinkun* (The Field Marshal Code) with its instruction 'not to submit to living with the humiliation of being a prisoner.' In Europe and America, it was not considered dishonourable, if circumstance so dictated, to become a war prisoner. By contrast, once Japanese soldiers left home on a military mission, they faced two alternatives – either to return victorious from battle or to die an honourable death in battle. To return home in any other way was not acceptable according to the social norms of the time. During the period of the Burma-Thailand Railway construction, the position of the American and European Armies on the question of POWs was completely at odds with that of the Japanese army.

On the matter of ignorance of international law and deficiency in education, Yoshito Kita has undertaken detailed research. According to Kita, institutions such as the Army Academy, the Military Academy, the Naval College, and the Naval Academy, did in fact, thoughout the Second World War, conduct education in international law, including the treatment of prisoners of war. However, this cannot be said to have been sufficient in

terms of content or time allocation. Especially with regard to the rights of prisoners, stipulated in international law, it would be difficult to argue that either Army or Navy personnel received appropriate education on the subject. Kita's analysis is that Hideki Tōjō and other Army leaders feared that if Japanese soldiers knew too much about the legal rights of prisoners under international law, some Japanese soldiers might allow themselves to be taken captive. This was quite different from the time of the first Sino–Japanese and the Russo–Japanese wars, when extremely thorough measures were taken at all levels of the military establishment to ensure compliance with international law. It should be noted that the 1929 Geneva Treaty, enshrining respect for prisoners of war, was signed by Japan but it was not ratified.

Fourthly, racial and ethnic prejudices on the part of Japanese military personnel predisposed them to treat American and European POWs cruelly. As far as Japanese military personnel were concerned, European and American POWs were allowed to survive only thanks to 'the grace and compassion of the Emperor.' They should expect to find themselves humiliated and dishonored. Japanese soldiers considered European and American POWs to be basically 'soft,' 'decadent,' and 'materialistic.' If these POWs became ill, it was thought to be because of spiritual lassitude or spiritual 'softness.' As Philip Towle points out, the Japanese expected the POWs in their hands to 'appreciate their generosity.' During this period, from the Manchurian Incident right through the War with the Western Allies, with its pervasive and volatile atmosphere of xenophobia and militarism, the Japanese people held that their lack of fear, when faced with the prospect of dying in battle, justified their assertion that they

occupied a unique cultural and racial high ground, superior to 'Westerners.' The publication *Seishin kyōiku shiryō* (No. 9; Kyōiku Sōkanbu ed., 1940) made clear the confrontation between those Westerners who 'directly sympathize with the Christianity that developed out of professions of humanitarianism' but who 'cannot help but hesitate when it comes to abandoning their lives for the sake of other people, and conversely the Japanese who were known for being non-egocentric, self-effacing … and full of the spirit of sacrifice.' The dual task of promoting a self-image that would stand in contrast to 'the West' and maintaining the morale of a 'national army' was a performance designed to demonstrate cultural and racial superiority vis-à-vis the West. It neatly coincided with efforts to encourage honourable death in battle for the sake of the Emperor.

In the words of historian Fumitaka Kurosawa's, 'a misguided ideology disparaging capture by enemy forces combined with a sanctimonious nationalism against the backdrop of the tyranny of military priorities to create attitudes condoning the abuse of POWs.'

The FEPOWs and The British Collective Memory

During the Second World War, of European and American Allied armies, the greatest number of POWs of the Japanese were British, like Chalker. According to British government records such as Command Paper 6382, released in June 1946, altogether 4,683,443 military personnel from the United Kingdom took part in the Second World War. Of these, those who died because of the war were 266,443. Thus the military mortality was 5.7%. Mortality among British POWs captured by German and Italian forces was approximately 5%. On the other hand, as the shorthand

notations of the records of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East show, some 25% of those taken into captivity by Japanese forces died. This is a much higher figure than the mortality registered either in the cruel Battle of Burma or the landing by British forces at Normandy. Therefore in the UK, it was felt that the worst losses of life had happened in the Japanese Army's POW camps, and this image has persisted in their war memory of the Japanese.

The mistreatment of POWs by the Japanese Army has after the war continued to persist as 'bitter memories' between Japan and American and European countries, though most especially between Japan and Britain. After the war, in the conditions of almost complete ignorance of Japan on the part of ordinary British citizens, the mistreatment by the Japanese Army of POWs became the 'historical' basis for an a priori bias or prejudice which equated 'Japanese' with 'cruelty.' Over 30,000 British subjects were forced by Japanese to do 'slave labour' and among these 20% lost their lives in the construction of the Burma–Thailand Railway, which occupied a particular position in the British collective memories of the war with Japan.

After the 1970s, Japan's direct investments in Britain began to increase. Whilst Japan–UK economic and business relations strengthened, the 'bitter memory' of the mistreatment of prisoners of war persisted as an ill-omened undercurrent. (See Kosuge and Towle, eds., *Britain and Japan in the Twentieth Century.*) It was felt that now Japanese were just bringing electronic desk calculators in place of bayonets; its soldiers were now 'salarymen,' and especially among labour circles there was considerable discontent at what was perceived to be the exploitation of British labour for large profits by Japanese enterprises. It has been even pointed

out that among the railway technicians who mistreated POWs in Thailand and Burma 'were some who would later play a role in the successful development of the Shinkansen.' (See Jane Flower 2000, p. 163). Japanese army mistreatment of British prisoners during the war has provided the historical basis for media criticism of Japan in postwar British-Japanese relations, has been the foundation of discord between the two countries, and has in the UK been the cause of distrust and prejudice toward Japan.

Emperor Shōwa (Hirohito) paid a state visit to Britain in October 1971. He was criticized by *The Guardian* as 'the same Emperor who carried out the construction of the Burma-Thailand Railway using POWs as forced labour'. According to *The Daily Express*, Lord Mountbatten cancelled his scheduled meeting with the Emperor during this visit, which won him 'stupendous acclaim' and raised his standing among the general public. Somebody – never identified – uprooted a memorial tree that Emperor Hirohito had planted during the visit. In 1988, when the Emperor was bed-bound during his final illness, the British mass media was awash with criticism of the dying Emperor. The British tabloid newspapers especially focused on what had taken place during the war.

'Three types of British ex-POW'

At the individual level, among those British citizens whose wartime experiences had been similar to Chalker's, as well as among their families, there were not a few, during the postwar period, who, because of scars of hard-to-heal memories of POW experiences, refused to have any 're-encounter' with Japan or the Japanese. I explore this issue further in my book *Popī to Sakura*.

Kazuaki Saitō, the late professor of English literature who was deeply concerned with British–Japanese reconciliation based on wartime history, quoted a comment by a former POW that 'there is a hard core of POWs who hate everything Japanese, there are moderates who want compensation, and then there are those like me who have decided to try and forget the past and live for the future.' In brief, those former POWs who asked for postwar compensation and apologies from the Japanese government definitely criticized Japan and the Japanese government, yet by the same token they were maintaining certain contacts with Japan and the Japanese through the compensation claim movements. At the same time, they helped develop transnational citizens' exchanges with Japanese who supported their movements. In that sense, they were, rightly speaking, part of the 'moderate faction.' These former POWs of this 'moderate faction' after the 1990s appeared frequently in the British media and gave various kinds of 'testimony' about their experiences in POW camps along the Burma–Thailand Railway and elsewhere. However, among former POWs, there were some who did not take any part in movements demanding compensation or 'apology' from Japan, choosing to reject or abstain from all contacts with Japanese people, constituting what could thus be called 'a hard-core faction with a complete aversion to everything with the name Japan attached to it.'

The important thing, in any case, is that the criticism of Japan, fermented by the media, and forming part of the historical testimony at the root of their hard-to-heal suffering, did not necessarily equate with support or praise for the former POWs, nor did it elicit much interest in the history of the war with Japan. Therefore, no matter how often the issue of the

prisoners of war of the Japanese army might appear in the media, the sense that they were after all, members of the 'forgotten army' very definitely lingered in the minds of many former British FEPOWs. Members of the old Burmese Army nursed a similar grievance.

The 'fiftieth anniversary of the war with Japan,' in 1995 was an anniversary which reminded the British people of these 'forgotten men,' who had fought against Japan in the War. It was the opportunity to recognize what they had been through. The British government organized peace and reconciliation ceremonies, but chose to invite no representatives of Japan to attend.

The period between the present Emperor Akihito's state visit to Britain in 1998 through the first years of the next decade marked an important 'turning point' in attitudes towards British-Japanese reconciliation. One of the factors precipitating this change was the revelation of historical documents which showed that in 1954 the Japanese government had paid the equivalent of £2000 each to a number of Swiss citizens who had been detained in Japan or Japanese-occupied areas. This fact suggested that, according to the Article 26 of the 1951 Peace Treaty, the British government had the 'right' to reopen negotiations with the Japanese government with a view to receiving monetary compensation from Japan for British citizens. However it now became apparent that in 1954 certain political circumstances had persuaded the British government to relinquish this right, giving priority to their wider relationship with Japan. Therefore negotiations with Japan on the subject of monetary compensation were not in fact reopened. Armed with this new information, those POWs that had been lobbying for compensation from Japan changed their tactics, turning

their demands for monetary compensation from the Japanese to British governments. Eventually, in November 2000, the British government announced the payment of a 'special gratuity' of £10,000 to each surviving FEPOW, or the widows of FEPOWs. After these special gratuities were paid, criticism of Japan over the POW issue in the British media became considerably muted and public interest in postwar reconciliation between Japan and Asian countries was, by contrast, enhanced.

At around this time there was also emerging a fascination on the part of British youth in Japanese 'pop' culture, *manga* cartoons, music, and computer games which constituted a 'Japan boom' of sorts. At the same time, the FIFA World Cup in 2002, which was co-hosted by Japan, produced a wealth of reporting favourable to Japan, even in the British tabloid press. Looking at the history of British-Japanese relations in the period from the end of the war until today, the appearance of these sorts of positive 'takes' are a recent phenomenon. In spite of this trend, it should not be forgotten that there remain some FEPOWs, most of whom are in their 90s, who still demand apologies and compensation from the Japanese government or Japanese industry. Overall, ex-POWs like Chalker who have truly concentrated on reconciliation with Japan, who have actively spoken out in public about this issue, or who have even gone so far as to participate in public reconciliatory movements, are relatively few. There has, however, been scant interest among the British media in reflecting the voices of ex POWs who 'have decided to try and forget the past and live for the future' and of those who, like Chalker, have suggested compromises which involve overcoming ignorance of the history of the past as a condition for reconciliation with Japan.

What is 'historical reconciliation'?

At the same time Japanese media concern with the treatment by the Japanese Army of Western POWs has consistently been limited and historical research on POWs has not been widely conducted. As Aiko Utsumi has explained, after the postwar trials by the Allied countries on 'war crimes,' Japanese lost interest in this question, and little research materialized, because of a number of constraints.

One reason for this, according to a significant number of Japanese opinion-formers is the existence of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, renouncing the right of war. Prewar, Japanese were not interested in the issue of treatment of prisoners because their own soldiers had not been taken prisoner; however, in postwar Japan people's lack of interest derived from the fact that Japan does not engage in conflict, and therefore her soldiers will not become prisoners.

Furthermore, as Daizaburō Yui has pointed out, there has been a Japanese predisposition to think of the British military personnel and their families in Southeast Asia as the agents of colonial domination and thus to see them as distinct from the 'Asian' war victims. Behind this minimal interest in 'prisoners of war,' lie also the matters of Emperor Hirohito's war responsibility, the 'hidden war crimes' against 'comfort women', the practice of using poison gas and germ warfare, and the like. These areas of study have frequently became tied up with criticism of US Cold War policy in Asia. In addition to this, there is strong criticism of the fact that some other 'crimes' were untried – that is of colonialism and colonial rule, which were not touched on in the Tokyo Trial which only looked at the past of Japan and not that of Western imperialism or colonialism. In other words, if

the Japanese people were to examine critically their own behaviour as 'assailant,' there was also a case, it was felt, for questioning the past criminal acts conducted by the Western allies. As a result, for Japan, as for the Western allies, the general view was that Asian nations, upon whom such enormous suffering and pain had been inflicted, should be given prior consideration, and research on Western POWs at the hands of the Japanese Army should take second place.

The humiliation and suffering of the POWs arose out of the cruelty of individuals. Of various types of wartime atrocities, such cruelty in the context of interpersonal relations is, in a sense, extremely 'human' and relatively easy to understand. Therefore, in speaking about cruelties toward POWs and civilian internees in the context of 'war memories' of persons who were mistreated or injured by the war, such cases of mistreatment take a prominent place, on a par with rape or pillage.

It is a fact that there were those who directly gave Japanese Imperial Army orders and carried them out, torturing and abusing POWs, causing them to suffer hunger and disease, exposing them to attacks by Allied forces, or using them for propaganda purposes, which was prohibited by international law in connection with military operations. However, while that fact cannot be denied, and there were certainly individuals among the 'rank and file' who were perpetrators of harm, nevertheless wars are carried out in the context of 'state versus state,' and therefore it can be argued that it is not appropriate to ascribe 100% of the responsibility for, or the background to, cruelty as belonging to 'individual versus individual' relations among the military rank and file. There is a need for comprehensive historical research, based on meticulous 'field work'

drawing on careful perusal of documentary materials and consideration of the organization, structures and 'systems' of the Japanese Army that gave rise to the problematic behavior of rank-and-file individuals.

It is similarly inappropriate to overlook the importance of efforts toward collective reconciliation in spite of the fact that many POWs have found it extremely difficult to describe, in speech or in writing, their wartime hardships, and are wholly unable to forgive Japan, the Japanese government or individual Japanese. There is a need to promote activities that can heal the hearts of different groups, bringing about greater participation, at the people-to-people level, in reconciliation-focused exchanges. In other words it is necessary, actively and productively, to make suggestions to governments of ways to promote collective reconciliation of a long-term and lasting nature, involving both the states and individuals.

Bringing into play these kinds of issues, this volume aims to provide clues through which Japanese citizens themselves can come to terms in a concrete way with 'historical reconciliation' with regard to the Burma-Thailand Railway. 'Historical reconciliation' is a term proposed by Yōichi Funabashi in his book *Rekishi Wakai no Tabi* and is likewise a concept discussed by Shinichi Arai in *Rekishi Wakai wa Kanō ka*. I should like to define in this volume, which builds upon these earlier writings, 'historical reconciliation' as a process of overcoming historical problems and moving from a past of confrontation to a process of exploring a common future. Therefore, the first thing needed from all people in connection with this process are efforts to gain a historically accurate understanding of the past, to the extent possible, so as to know just what

took place. What can become the core of a process of reconciliation is to read widely oneself with a determination to bring about renewed encounters among persons who were once torn apart by the pain arising from a cruel past. In the process of 'historical reconciliation,' gaining historical knowledge is the crucial preparation for such a renewed encounter.

'Voiceless Voice'

Chalker writes as follows:

> Courage to recognize, accept and learn from unpalatable truths is a crucial part in understanding between peoples. Such courage has already proved to be a critical part of recent links of infectious warmth between a great many ex-Japanese prisoners of war and Japanese people. Deliberate ignorance of fact fosters uncertainty, misrepresentation, conjecture and continued bitterness.

Responding to this suggestion offered by Chalker, in order to tackle the themes of the Burma–Thailand Railway and historical reconciliation, we should first consider some of the conditions underlying historical events that make it possible to treat the building of the Burma–Thailand Railway as a historical problem requiring knowledge and 'understanding' of its background.

What Chalker shows to be the condition for Japanese–British reconciliation is the acquisition of that history. As far as my experience goes, when people in Britain talk positively about British–Japanese reconciliation, this constitutes a restraint against the possibility that 'bitter memories' will be

rekindled in the form of hatred and rancour. This is associated with a willingness to remember the war dead and a positive attitude toward promoting historical studies, and very often there is a tendency for the persons involved to distance themselves from movements demanding further apologies or postwar compensation from Japan. As one may gather from Chalker's 'Preface for Japanese Readers,' rancour and hatred are considered by him to be hurdles to be overcome, just as are ignorance or disinterest in history. He also does not consider repeated attempts to obtain further apologies from the Japanese to be in good form. He did not take part in movements or legal trials demanding postwar compensation, but he approves the practice, being promoted mainly by ex-POWs and their families, of adopting August 15 as an occasion for remembering and mourning British personnel taken prisoner by the Japanese Army.

As I have stated previously, this stance of 'reconciliation' towards Japan in Britain has been a so-called 'voiceless voice,' and similarly in Japan, although in a rather different sense, it has not attracted many people's attention. In the early 1990s, the Japanese people began to pay more attention to the task of 'facing up to the history of aggression,' and to question Japan's 'war responsibility' and how it should be addressed. However, even though some attention was given to former POWs who were especially critical of Japan and the Japanese government, very little notice was paid to those speaking out in favor of 'reconciliation' with Japan. Rather, Japanese commentators, like Yui Daizaburō, felt that British people who were making efforts in the cause of reconciliation with Japan, tended to be caught up in rhetoric that could make them seem to be especially *uncritical* of their own country's responsibilities for colonialism and

imperial domination.

This notwithstanding, overcoming the problem of the Japanese Army's wartime treatment of American and European POWs is rather different from inquiring into American and European responsibility for their own country's colonialism and imperialism. In Asia, there was a tendency to believe that the British soldiers who were taken prisoner by the Japanese Army bore some responsibility for several hundred years of British colonial domination. There was the feeling that British people who wanted to talk about reconciliation with Japan seemed not to have a sense of responsibility when it came to their own country's colonialism. However, there does not appear to be either a logical or a factual basis for labelling in this way those individual British who have talked about British–Japanese reconciliation. These British people may not have called for Japanese government apologies, and may have distanced themselves from movements seeking postwar compensation, and also from time to time have joined with sincerity with Japanese citizens in 'joint memorial services to succour the souls of the war dead.' But they had no reason deliberately to try to blur over the history of the past. Rather, a natural corollary to this sort of stance was that those who held it should not support movements demanding official apologies or governmental compensation from the Japanese but should remember all the war dead and seek to clarify truths about the past through a study of history, .

'Reconciliation' is always a task which places 'oneself' at the centre of deliberations. The issue of the treatment of onetime POWs is thus a matter which ought to further –– with Japanese at the centre of these particular deliberations – reconciliation. The element of responsibility for colonialism

which Japanese, as major actors in this phenomenon, must heed is the question of 'responsibility' for Japan's own colonial domination. In the arena of academic dialogue, relatively free and open discussions should of course be possible, commensurate with the depth of detailed historical knowledge. However, if we examine the furthering of 'historical reconciliation' and the overcoming of historical problems that are peculiarly at the political and diplomatic levels, it must be said that the only conscientious sort of approach is one that places 'oneself' at the core of deliberations.

Asian Laborers and Korean Guards

Chalker was one among over 60,000 POWs who were forced to perform manual labour in the construction of the Burma–Thailand Railway to a degree that was at the very margins of human endurance. In this context, his notes constitute very valuable 'testimony' left by a victim of the war, even if they do not present the whole picture of what construction of this railway entailed. A number of accounts by former POWs exist which give space to descriptions of local people or Asian labourers brought in from other parts of the Asian area. But because these notes reflect primarily the personal experiences of POWs, it is no surprise that they are rather 'uneven' in the descriptions given. In Chalker's notes and 'documentary drawings,' the local populace and workers from other Asian countries do indeed make their appearance; yet the notes and drawings do not focus on them as the core of their subject matter.

However, the memories and scars left by the construction of the Burma–Thailand Railway have spread into the consciousness of the entire world. Not only the POWs were pushed to the edges of human endurance,

but also even greater number of Asian labourers were inflicted with enormous suffering – in many cases exceeding even that of the POWs. The Asians who were forced to labour on the Burma–Thailand Railway included those from Thailand, Burma, Malaya (present-day Malaysia), Vietnam, and Java, as well as others such as 'overseas Chinese' and Indians. Many who were transported for this construction work, were unable to return to their homelands.

A great influence on the wider public's views of the Burma–Thailand Railway derived from the 'entertainment film' *The Bridge over the River Kwai*. (Whatever biases can be discerned in the way this film depicts European and American POWs, it is certain they are even stronger with regard to Asians.) From the 1970s throughout the 1990s, the number of tourists who visited Thailand because of their desire to visit the scenes shown in this film steadily increased. The Burma–Thailand Railway became a 'tourist spot,' and the many tourists from Japan included a large number of visitors who combined tourism with attending 'memorial services for the war dead.' In 1976, Mr. Takashi Nagase, who had once been an interpreter for the Japanese Army along the route of the Burma–Thailand Railway and who after the war exerted himself to promote reconciliation with former POWs, arranged for a 're-encounter,' at a site in Thailand along the railway, of some 70 people, including former POWs and Japanese who formerly had duties connected with the building and operation of the Burma–Thailand Railway. It was an event that deserves to be remembered. On that occasion Mr. Nagase learned from an American newspaper reporter that most of the over 250,000 workers from other countries of Southeast Asia who had been recruited by the Japanese

Army to undertake 'forced labour' on the railway's construction, had been unable to return to their countries of origin. He wrote, 'Hearing this was a great shock to me.'

In 1986, a Malaysian citizen named Song Rikai, who was one of those Asian labourers, delivered a letter to the Japanese Embassy in Malaysia, explaining how he had been deceived by the Japanese Army when taken away for this construction work, for which he had received no compensation, only distress and hardship. In the letter he demanded the unpaid wages for this labour. He listed 288 companions who never returned home from their work on the railway. However, the Japanese Embassy in Malaysia rejected his claim, stating that issues of compensation were settled by an agreement between Japan and Malaysia in 1967.

In November, 1990, excavation work in a sugar cane field near Kanchanaburi, Thailand, the site of a concentration camp of Asian labourers, unearthed the remains of over 700 bodies believed to have been former labourers on the railway. In more than one sense, this was a grim reminder of how Asian labourers on the railway had been subjected to untold suffering and death. Today, in Britain, the subject of the Burma-Thailand Railway is not prescribed in its schools' national curriculum. However, according to Minoru Koshida and Yoshitaka Murai, in the Netherlands and also in Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and Myanmar, one or more pages of school history textbooks discuss the tribulations of the labourers on the construction of the Burma-Thailand Railway, which is frequently called the 'Death Railway.'

We must also mention the fact that young people from the Korean Peninsula, colonized by Japan during the war, were among those guarding

the POWs in the concentration camps and at the construction sites. In trials at the end of the war, a number of these Korean guards were convicted of crimes of extreme cruelty against former POWs, and some were even executed as a result.

Thirty–five Korean camp–guards were among those indicted at the war crimes tribunals in connection with crimes related to the construction of the Burma–Thailand Railway. Aiko Utsumi has written *Chōsenjin BC-kyū Senpan no Kiroku* and published other excellent research on the 'Korean guards.'

In May 1942, immediately before construction of the Burma–Thailand Railway, the Army Ministry decided to utilize as 'army personnel' young people from the Japanese administered Korean Peninsula to supervise and guard Allied prisoners of war. During the same month, the Japanese Cabinet brought in the military 'draft' in Korea. Many Korean men preferred not to be drafted as ordinary soldiers, and, as a result, there were many applicants for positions as guards of the prisoners of war. It appears that some Koreans applied for such positions half 'under duress.'

The 'Korean guards' were, in organizational terms, at the lowest echelon of the Japanese army, and were in close daily contact with European and American prisoners, who found themselves in a still more inferior position. Consequently, these Koreans were frequently more hated by the prisoners even than the Japanese. According to Utsumi, in 1942, 800 Korean military personnel were recruited for the construction of the Burma–Thailand Railway. By the time of Japan's defeat, this number of Korean construction workers had grown to 1,033. Of these, 35 were later indicted for cruelty towards the prisoners. 33 of them were found guilty, and 9 were sentenced

to death.

In the 1990s, court cases were being held where Koreans, formerly convicted as Class B and C 'war criminals', demanded compensation from the Japanese government. After the promulgation of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, these former Class B and C 'war criminals' served out the remainder of their sentences, even though they no longer held Japanese nationality. After they had served their sentences they were branded by their countrymen as 'collaborators of the Japanese'. Finding it difficult to return to their native land they were obliged to lead difficult lives in a foreign land. The Japanese government considered the 'compensation' issue settled under the terms of the Japan-Republic of Korea Basic Treaty of 1965. In 1991, 6 of these former Korean 'war criminals' and one family member of a deceased Korean 'war criminal' began a court case demanding an apology and state compensation from the Japanese government.

To tackle the task of historical reconciliation with regard to the Burma-Thailand Railway, is to consider all of these issues. This book presents Mr. Chalker's drawings and notes, it also includes the transcript of a tripartite discussion, entitled 'The Burma-Thailand Railway and Asia,' between Professor Yuha Park, who is a specialist in Japanese-Korean postwar reconciliation, working at Sejong University, Professor Kei Nemoto, who specializes in Burmese history at Sophia University, and myself. In order to help Japanese approach the task of historical reconciliation with regard to the Burma-Thailand Railway from 'an Asian viewpoint', the discussion focuses in part on the sorts of perspectives and awareness of the various issues that ought to be taken into account. It tries

to highlight, from different viewpoints, appropriate approaches to understanding these issues.

In principle, it is 'easier' to deal with issues of collective reconciliation, nation to nation, with the hope of positive results. However, as I have argued, there are many 'multinational' aspects of the Burma–Thailand Railway problem, and thus a 'bilateral reconciliation,' approach, involving only two nations, cannot be said to be sufficient. Therefore, in our tripartite discussion, we have tried to introduce multiple viewpoints to shed further light on the many complex issues involved, on the different approaches to understanding its background, and on how each of us, as individuals, ought to act – and with what sorts of awareness – when we work toward 'reconciliation.'

The 'noise' in Chalker's memoir contemporary issues

Chalker's own experiences as a POW are the main subject of the narrative of his memoir, completed after the war on the basis of hastily written notes at the time of his imprisonment. In the process of completing his notes, like many former POWs who wrote memoirs about their own experiences, Chalker read histories of the war in Asia, and these included extensive discussions on the role of the Emperor and the Japanese Army. In this way, his notes cannot be said to be 'academic,' and he is not a professional historian. For example, on the subject of the 'Rape of Nanking,' Chalker used as resource material Japan's Imperial Conspiracy by David Bergamini (translated into Japanese by Momo Iida as *Tennō no Inbō.*) Many Japanese readers today feel some discomfiture about portions of this book, and some would no doubt wish to refute some its claims. However, in

the present volume, the translation is faithful to the English text as Chalker prepared it.

After the hard camp life, Chalker felt, as did the other POWs, that he and his comrades were saved by the dropping of the A-bombs. Reflecting back on those days, Chalker comments that 'Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with all the loss of innocent lives there, ended the War. Had it continued, all POWs would certainly have been exterminated, and countless thousands of civilians throughout South East Asia and, perhaps, well over a million Japanese troops also could well have lost their lives.' Chalker sensed deep and heartfelt grief and compassion for the victims of the A-bombings and fully supports the complete abolition of nuclear weapons in the future. As background to his view on the justification for the use of the atomic bombs, he refers to the alleged plan of the Japanese Army to exterminate all Allied prisoners of war if, as the war neared its end, they should openly resist the Japanese. This justification derives from copies of official diary notations, found in the headquarters of a POW camp in Taiwan, which were presented at the Tokyo Tribunal. According to these notations, orders were in place, should the war situation worsen, to further concentrate and restrict the movements of POWs, and, under the strictest of guard, to prepare for a 'final disposition' (*saigo no shodan*). This 'final disposition' would come in the form of orders from superior officers. If POWs resisted and resorted to 'group violence' and the use of arms seemed imminent, and if they if they appeared to be on the verge of escaping and joining forces with 'the enemy,' a summary 'final disposition' was thought to be in the offing. In Japan other opinions are held which contradict this interpretation. It is generally believed in Europe and America, however, that these

notations, found in Taiwan, represent an organized 'command' which the Japanese Army would put into effect, and this became the basis for justifying the dropping of the A-bombs.

A very interesting element of Chalker's published memoir is that some portions of it show the POWs' tormenters occasionally to have behaved kindly towards them. He describes episodes that show that not all the Japanese soldiers or Korean guards were cruel. These descriptions constitute a sort of 'noise' or interference with the standard image of 'Japanese = cruelty' that had grown up around the POW issue and were generally in circulation in Europe and America. Such episodes do also appear in the notes and memoirs of other British ex-POW writers.

Sincere repentance by perpetrators of war crimes is of course considered the salve needed for the wounds of their victims. Humane actions in situations of inhumanity do have the effect of promoting reconciliatory sentiments between those who have behaved cruelly and those who have suffered their cruelty. In her essays about former POWs, entitled *Kokoro no Iyashi to Wakai no Tabi* (Healing hearts and journeys of reconciliation), Mrs. Keiko Holmes – a 'conciliator' living in England, who is held in respect by Chalker, states that former POWs who understand that she has no 'political motive' or agenda often discard their grudges and hatred and open their hearts to talk about occasions when Japanese soldiers behaved decently, giving many examples.

Similarly, the Irish writer Liam Nolan, as early as the 1950s, when hatred of Japan was still strong in the British Isles, wrote about Kiyoshi Watanabe, who worked as an interpreter in POW camps in Hong Kong. Through Nolan's writing about Watanabe, he contributed in a modest way to work

toward reconciliation in the hearts of readers at that time. Watanabe managed to pass to prisoners, in ways undetected by his superiors, such things as food, medical supplies, and letters. He continued doing this, even when terrified, to the bottom of his psyche, of the punishment that he would face if he were found out. Similar deeds were in fact discovered and, as a result, a number of Japanese were tortured or executed by the Japanese Army. In December 1960, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) invited Watanabe to London and introduced him on the television programme 'This is a Life.' Many in the audience who had gathered in the studio shed tears as they listened to Watanabe's story. One audience member recognized Watanabe the following day in a café on a London street and said to him 'I used to hate all Japanese. My elder brother was tortured by Japanese and died in Hong Kong. But now that I've learned that there were Japanese like you, my feeling of hatred for the Japanese has disappeared.'

Their numbers were never very great but there were a few Japanese, like Watanabe, who risked their lives to lessen the sufferings of enemy prisoners. These acts of courage were a key contribution toward UK–Japan postwar reconciliation.

The story of Watanabe and the episodes related by Chalker about humane actions by Japanese soldiers and Korean guards do not of course exonerate the Japanese army or make them less deserve severe censure. Rather they once again highlight for us some crucial, but difficult to achieve, factors in the process of reconciliation. We need to try and think of the inhumane actions of the Japanese Army in the construction of the Burma–Thailand Railway in a more contemporary way, as something not

so remote from the present, and also to consider the many fruitful possibilities of future coexistence. Then we must ask ourselves, repeatedly, whether, in the same circumstances, we could faithfully uphold universally respected rules, behave according to our true consciences, and not falter from being true 'human beings.'

Towards historical reconciliation

The future of mutually beneficial cooperation and coexistence which historical reconciliation aims at is a world that respects the diversity of 'others'. If this can be achieved, then in our present–day world, it should be possible to move toward more diverse ways of thinking – perhaps with some 'trial and error' – in the direction of true reconciliation. In this sense, I should like to leave to the judgment of the readers of this book the questions of 'how to overcome' historical problems.

Mr. Takashi Nagase, whom I mentioned in connection with his reconciliation activities in Thailand, in 1986, built the Kwai Peace Temple near the site of the Burma Railway in Kanchanaburi. At the same time he established a 'peace fund' which provides scholarships to needy Thai youth. He also undertook activities of 'atonement and mourning' to enable former Burma–Thailand railway construction labourers to return to their countries of origin. On August 15, 1995, marking half a century since the end of the war, Nagase carried out a 'ceremony of mourning for those who died in the war' (*ireishiki*) at the Kwai Peace Temple he had constructed. Professor Nemoto points out in our 'tripartite discussion' that Nagase's actions for reconciliation have indeed had the effect of arousing greater understanding and a sympathetic response from former POWs and from

local people. However, a substantial number of former POWs are still unable to forgive Japan or the Japanese. Professor Kazuaki Saitō, who understands Nagase's intent very well, mentions in his essay that, although Nagase laid a wreath of flowers on a memorial stone in the Kanchanaburi War Cemetery, where some 7000 POWs are buried, 'this wreath of flowers was kicked away by a man who appeared to be British, in the presence of the Japanese group.'

Of course, conciliators like Nagase have not been daunted by such an episode. He is used to the fact that his efforts at reconciliation frequently take place along the margins between forgiveness and lingering hatred. Reconciliation can resort to no 'magic wand' or 'panacea.' Still today, to make the Burma–Thailand Railway, a symbol of a 'difficult-to-achieve reconciliation', into a symbol of true reconciliation, it is to be hoped that diverse approaches, 'aimed at both sides,' will be made on a continuing, long-term basis. If such a difficult task of sharing historical awareness or transnationality of war memories is possible, then the first step is to share historical materials and the original landscape of history. Such drawings make it possible for us to share at the same time the original landscape of the victimization that took place along the railway. Through these war drawings, we can relate more closely to the historical events seen by the victims.

The drawings made by Chalker along the route of the Burma–Thailand Railway include many whose subject matter is shocking and cruel. However, it is my hope that the reader's eyes will not be averted through horror at the nature of many of the works in this book, and at the same time I hope that the reader will not turn his or her back on the cruelty there

depicted. As Chalker himself explains in the preface he wrote especially for Japanese readers, these works of art are presented as a gift for people in Japan, with the purpose and hope of furthering reconciliation.

I should like to use this occasion marking the publication of the present volume to express my heartfelt gratitude for all the generosity and goodwill received from Mr. Jack Chalker. I also want to express my deep thanks for the goodwill and cooperation of Mr. Tim Mercer, Mercer Books which recently republished an edition in English of Burma Railway: Images of War. For special assistance with this project and for help with translating the manuscript, I wish to express, many times over, my gratitude Mrs. Phillida Purvis, Links Japan.

NOTE:

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