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Introduction: Prisoners of the Asia-Pacific War – Forgotten Locales, Transimperial Links, and Selective Memorialisation

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ABSTRACT
This introduction explores the major contributions of the special issue in broadening understanding of captivity in the Asian and Pacific theatres during the Second World War. First, it decentralises national narratives, highlighting the transnational and diasporic identities of both military and civilian prisoners and the colonial and decolonialising contexts that shaped their experiences. Second, it foregrounds specific memories of wartime captivity that have been marginalised by dominant war narratives and post-war decolonial struggles. Lastly, it underscores the diverse experiences, institutions, and memory practices of captivity, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of wartime captivity and its memorialization.

Until recent decades accounts of captivity in the Second World War's Pacific and Asian Theatres have focused overwhelmingly on Prisoners of War (POWs) and national memory of the war for specific belligerent nations – most notably Australia, Britain, and America – or on the internment of specific ethnic groups, such as Japanese civilians in the USA. The extreme hardships and dehumanising treatment of prisoners in varied climatic conditions ranging from the tropical jungles of Malaya, Burma, and Indonesia to the freezing winters of Siberia feature prominently both in scholarship and popular

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literature based on diaries and memoir.[1] The focus on major combatants in anglophone and colonial histories has sidelined the stories of other POWs and civilian internees, and of the memory of internment for peripheral nations, communities, and individuals. Their experiences are documented in Japanese or the other languages of non-anglophone captives and are often archived in the host environments in which the camps were located. Their absence from the dominant narratives is explained in part because the Asia Pacific War is often framed dualistically, as a clash between the two nations of Japan and America, or for Commonwealth nations such as Australia, as triadic, as a war alongside Britain and America against Japan. Such conceptualisations of the war have relegated the areas of the Asia Pacific, along with the nations and peoples occupied or controlled by the Japanese, British, French, and other imperial powers, to 'battlefields for the clashes of the great powers.'[2] Such national framing risks overlooking not only marginalised nations and people but also the global processes of imperialism and colonialism that entangled them in this war. The 'clash of great powers' narrative veils the fact that most of the region was under the control of European, American, or Japanese empires, that the belligerents of the war were imperialist powers, and that captives overwhelmingly belonged to imperial armies or were residents of colonial settlements. Focusing on the war as an international conflict that ended with Japan's surrender also risks overlooking its afterlife; the war's end precipitated regional anti-colonial movements while cementing American military power in the region, leading to the Korean War and subsequent Cold War conflicts in Asia.

This special issue builds upon recent research into wartime captivity and its memorialisation that seek to challenge and transcend unified national histories. These studies explore, as Takashi Fujitani, Geoffrey White, and Lisa Yoneyama stated in their seminal analysis of memory of the Asia Pacific War, how 'national modes of representation succeed in systematically marginalising or silencing dissonant memories'.[3] The second half of Kevin Blackburn and Karl Hack's *Forgotten Captives in Japanese Occupied Asia* (2008) pioneered an approach to captivity in Japan-occupied Asia through papers that drew on interviews, biographies, and popular media representations to examine the experiences of women, civilian internees, and others

[1]For example, see Sherzod Muminov, *Eleven Winters of Discontent: The Siberian Internment and the Making of a New Japan,* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2022); Remco Raben, 'Dutch memories of captivity in the Pacific War' in Kevin Blackburn and Karl Hack (eds.), *Forgotten Captives in Japanese Occupied Asia,* (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 94-110.

[2]T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama, 'Introduction' in T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White, and Lisa Yoneyama (eds.), *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s),* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 6.

[3]Fujitani, White, and Yoneyama, 'Introduction', p. 7.

'marginalized in the national memory'.[4] In recent years, site-focused research of the architecture, history, and post-war life of wartime prisons in Asia has become another significant method to transcend nationalistic frameworks.[5] Many of these new studies examine wartime captivity and prisons through the movement of people, ideas, and institutions within empires and across imperial, colonial, regional, and national boundaries. They include, for instance, research on Koreans who worked as guards at POW camps throughout the Japanese empire, or on Indians captured as part of the British Indian Army, some of whom joined the collaborationist Indian National Army, to free India of British rule.[6] Such studies challenge concepts of unified national experiences and memories of captivity, clarifying that there was 'no generic experience of captivity' by exploring local, racial, ethnic, cultural, gendered, and individual difference.[7] Many of these studies rely on Japanese Studies scholars able to access Japanese archives and conduct ethnographic work in East Asia. Through them we have gained critical insights into the East Asian theatre of the war through critiques of Japanese imperialism informed by research rather than reactive politics. Two recent publications reviewed in this special issue, Kovner's *Prisoners of the Empire* and Cribb, Twomey and Wilson's *Detention Camps in Asia*, and another explained in a research note, *Prisoner of War and Civilian Internment Camp Encyclopaedia*, exemplify such research.[8]

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[4]Karl Hack and Kevin Blackburn, 'Japanese-occupied Asia from 1941 to 1945: one occupier, many captivities and memories', in Blackburn and Hack (eds.), *Forgotten Captives in Japanese Occupied Asia*, p. 2. For another example, here of Filipino POWs, see Arnel Joven 'Remembering Camp O'Donnell: from shared memories to public history in the Philippines', in *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 20, 11 (3), (June, 2022). https://apjjf.org/2022/11/Joven. Accessed 25 July 2024.

[5]For one such study on Asia, see Shu-Mei Huang and Hyun-Kyung Lee, *Heritage, Memory, and Punishment: Remembering Colonial Prisons in East Asia,* (London: Routledge, 2020).

[6]Aiko Utsumi, 'Korean "Imperial Soldiers": remembering colonialism and crimes against Allied POWs', in Fujitani, White, and Yoneyama (eds.), *Perilous Memories*, pp. 199-217; G. J. Douds, 'Indian POWs in the Pacific, 1941-45', in Blackburn and Hack (eds.), *Forgotten Captives*, pp. 73-93.

[7]Hack and Blackburn, 'Japanese-occupied Asia', p. 2.

[8] Sarah Kovner, *Prisoners of the Empire: Inside Japanese POW Camps*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020); Robert Cribb, Christina Twomey, and Sandra Wilson (eds), *Detention Camps in Asia: The Conditions of Confinement in Modern Asian History*, (Leiden: Brill, 2022); POWRNJ Editors Committee, *Horyō shūyōjo, minkanjin yōryūsho jiten: Nihon kokunai-hen*, provisional English title, *Prisoner of War and Civilian Internment Camp Encyclopaedia,* (Tokyo: Suirensha, 2023).

Much of this new work is interdisciplinary, informed by memory studies and critical heritage studies, fields in which ethnographic and site-based analyses of local conditions and experiences extend to the creation and continuation of key memorial sites. Shu-Mei Huang, Hyun Kyung Lee and Edward Vickers' *Frontiers of Memory in the Asia Pacific* approach these sites through theoretical framings of 'difficult heritage' and the 'transnational politics of postcolonial nationalism'.[9] Through such research, a new understanding of postcolonial politics emerges, focused on Japanese imperialism, British withdrawal and Indigenous, First Nations' identity, which offer us a different framing of both 'memory' and 'heritage' based on diverse experiences of modernity in the Asia Pacific.

Primary Themes

Decentring the previously national and imperial histories of the global conflict was an important intention of a conference that prompted this special issue. This intent also informs the selection of books for review, which are comparative in scope. Among them, *The Architecture of Confinement*, *Prisoners of the Empire*, and *Detention Camps in Asia*, make vital contributions to understanding wartime captivity in the Asia Pacific as a much broader phenomenon than that represented by the victorious allies.[10] Many of the articles of this collection also take this approach, especially those of Anoma Pieris, Rowena Ward, Benjamin Ireland, Ernestine Hoegen, and Daniel Milne and Taeko Sasamoto, who focus on specific POW and civilian internment camps. Pieris' paper seeks to understand the experiences of four civilians interned in India primarily through their Buddhist rather than national identification and examines their stories within the context of colonialism in India and its anti-colonial struggles. Tracing German and Italian *bhikkhus* (Buddhist monastics), a Thai artist, and a Thai scholar who lived in India, Pieris highlights the transnationalism and diversity of civilian internees of the war.

Transnational and diasporic identification emerges as an important second theme and approach to these histories. Ward likewise focuses on civilian internees of the war, in this case ethnic Japanese held in New Caledonia and India, allowing her to foreground the diverse communities of the Japanese diaspora, their varied experiences of captivity, and how their experiences were shaped in differing colonial contexts. Ireland's paper also examines the context and experiences of Japanese internees in New Caledonia, though this time by comparing their experiences to those of Jewish internees in

[9]Shu-Mei Huang, Hyun Kyung Lee and Edward Vickers, *Frontiers of Memory in the Asia Pacific: Difficult Heritage and the Transnational Politics of Postcolonial Nationalism,* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2022).

[10] Anoma Pieris and Lynne Horiuchi, *The Architecture of Confinement: Incarceration of the Pacific War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022); Kovner, *Prisoners of the Empire*; Cribb *et al*., *Detention Camps in Asia.*

Algeria. In so doing, Ireland reveals transcolonial links between far-flung French colonies and, in addition, illustrates the diversity among 'Japanese' civilian internees by tracing the denaturalization and displacement of Japanese New Caledonians and their Japanese-Indigenous children. Ward and Ireland's examinations of Japanese diasporas within Indigenous Pacific communities highlight the complexity of social relations in colonial spaces in ways as yet under-researched for this period. Milne and Sasamoto's study, meanwhile, reveals the international and transnational nature of POW memorialisation in post-war Japan, demonstrating that it typically emerged through cooperation between local Japanese and former POWs and their family members, and that this memorialisation occurred across a number of little-known subnational sites.

While colonial, transnational, local, and individual-level research illustrates that national frameworks need not be foremost in conceptualizing captivity in the Asia Pacific, they do not refute the importance of the nation-state. Soldiers fought not only for their empire but also for their country; civilian internees were categorised by nationality; and post-war discussions have typically been shaped by national media, government policy, and national commemorations. National collective memories, therefore, are far from irrelevant. However, while there has been a plethora of research on national memory and POWs in a handful of countries, such as Australia and Britain, and of civilian incarceration in America, there is little on the national narratives of captivity in the many nations in the Asia Pacific. The comparative dearth in this area of research brings us to the third important theme of this collection, namely, the role of local memory and experience in countries unwittingly caught up in the larger imperial conflict, and the reception and representation of these histories within larger narratives. Nipaporn Ratchatapattanakul's study demonstrates that the Thai-Burma railway and POW cemeteries in Kanchanaburi were used to shape official Thai narratives of the war as one in which the Thai nation covertly supported the Allies, displacing narratives about Thailand as a defeated collaborator of Japan. While these sites of memory have received considerable attention in English-language studies of the construction of Australian and transnational war memory, here Ratchatapattanakul offers important insight into their emergence as signifiers in Thai memory of the war. Together with papers by Pieris, Ward, and Ireland, Ratchatapattanakul's research contributes to widening our purview of the significance of captivity in the war by examining the memorialisation of war in India, New Caledonia, and Thailand, that is, in sites and nations that have remained marginal in the scholarship on war and memory in the Asia Pacific war. These studies also allude to the fact that, in many colonial or semi-colonial societies, captivity during the war was often just one of multiple traumatic events, often preceding the more momentous changes of decolonisation. In some cases, the memories of massacre and occupation by the Japanese military were overshadowed by the traumas of post-war anti-colonial

conflicts, civil war, and the tribulations of the search for independence.[11] In that sense, these memories may have become subsumed under wider narratives of nation building that span the decades before and after the war, and so end up featuring only marginally in the collective memory of some Asia Pacific nations.

Behind these vital national memories, however, the research presented in this special issue also highlight the process by which normative masculine figures of citizen-soldiers ends up obscuring intersectional stories and memories of wartime captivity. Since the 1990s, the emergence of extensive research on the experiences of victims of the Japanese wartime brothel system, often referred to by the problematic euphemism of 'comfort women', has suggested ways to expand categories of wartime incarceration beyond male POWs and civilian internees. The broadening of such research beyond its initial focus on the Korean victims of Japanese Imperial Forces' brothel systems to other national subjects such as Chinese, Filipina or Japanese minority Okinawan victims, has also prompted analysis of the post-war forgetting of captivity in countries in East and Southeast Asia.[12] Reviewed in this special issue, Kevin Blackburn's *The Comfort Women of Singapore in History and Memory* explains that national self-construction and patriarchal scripting of memories resulted in the silence of former comfort women in Singapore.[13] The cross-generational impact of POW trauma on the children of former POWs, which is the focus of Terry Smyth's *Captive Fathers, Captive Children* (2022), has often also been overlooked.[14] Examining the experiences of children of British Far East POWs, Smyth illustrates that the trauma of captivity was often inherited by the children of FEPOWs, motivating some to preserve and transmit their fathers' stories.

By paying attention to specific individuals, communities, and organisations, however, we can see that 'national memories' of captivity are far from uniform. Ward and Ireland's papers illustrate the diverse experiences of internment for the Japanese

[11]For foundational studies of this, see Patricia Pui Huen Lim & Diana Wong (eds.), *War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000); David G. Marr, *Vietnam 1945: The Quest for Power,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

[12]Chou Ching-Yuan, 'A Cave in Taiwan: Comfort Women's Memories and the local identity', in Logan and Reeves (eds.), *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with 'Difficult Heritage'*, (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 114-127; Chungmoo Choi, 'The Politics of War Memories towards Healing', in Fujitani, White, and Yoneyama (eds.), *Perilous Memories*, pp. 395-410.

[13]Kevin Blackburn, *The Comfort Women of Singapore in History and Memory*, (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2022).

[14]Terry Smyth, *Captive Fathers, Captive Children: Legacies of the War in the Far East*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2022)

diaspora. Milne and Sasamoto's study reveals the heterogeneity of opinions and memories of Allied POWs in post-war Japan, but also demonstrates that national pressures – specifically Japanese companies and people sympathetic to executed guards – can limit the memorialization of Allied POWs and Asian forced labourers in ways that likely will be different in the nations that Japan formerly occupied.

Research in English on captivity during the Pacific War has long tended to focus on Allied captives of the Japanese military, rather than on the many varied people of different origins that were held prisoner in areas under Japanese Occupation. It has also tended to homogenise both the experiences of Allied POWs and their treatment by Japan's guards. However, as three books reviewed here – *Prisoners of the Empire, Detention Camps in Asia*, and *The Architecture of Confinement* – remind us, while undoubtably horrendous, on the whole POW camps and the treatment of POWs varied significantly across Japan's vast empire. As explained in the *Prisoner of War and Civilian Internment Camp Encyclopaedia* (see research note), the experience of POWs and civil internees within Japan's home islands also varied. The encyclopaedia also describes, and itself embodies, the ways diverse activists and organisations from across Japan have memorialised Allied POWs in the post-war. Milne and Sasamoto explore the prevalence of such memorials in Japan and how they can be entangled with the memorialisation of executed guards, Korean and Chinese forced labour, and victims of the nuclear bombs. Hoegen's study analyses in detail one such site of memorialisation at a temple near the former Kamioka POW Camp and finds that Allied POWs were long memorialised here alongside Japanese war dead. Examining Japanese diaspora communities in the Pacific, papers by Ward and Ireland further remind us of the diversity of experiences and memorialisation practices among Japanese ethnic communities. Detailed analysis of the content of each research article and the one research note are offered in the following sections.

Part 1: Transnationalism, Diaspora, Colonialism

Three of the articles published here rely on their interdisciplinary training for transnational readings of the incarceration experiences. Anoma Pieris's contribution criticises military historians for emphasising national categories. She uses paintings and photographs interpreted with reference to internee memoirs to convey affective dimensions of the camp experience not legible in the archival records. Pieris focuses on four marginal individuals whose experience of internment in India uncovers a complex picture of a region agitating for political independence and embarking on cultural recovery. A postcolonial scholar sensitised to the political changes underway at the time, she traces the thread of decolonisation as it unravels in the internment storylines of two Thai scholars and a German and an Italian, both *bhikkhus*, the unifying factor being that they are, all four, Buddhists.

As a Sri Lankan-born academic trying to understand the regional impact of the war, Pieris approaches her topic from situated geopolitical and geocultural knowledge rather than memory studies. She is interested in the manner in which these intimate stories and their associated social histories are networked across physical places and camp environments. How did non-Japanese Buddhists from Ceylon, Myanmar and Thailand negotiate internment? India as a point of Buddhist cultural genesis and independence fervour remains central to the internees' experiences, even with the Europeans who become naturalised (to an extent) through ordainment. The Indian Congress leaders, Santiniketan, the Indian National Army, the Bengal Famine, all provide important actors, places and temporal landmarks in the history of the war. Shifting the centre of military history to a nexus in India both unveils the little-known complexity of the Indian incarceration camps and their populations but also provides a different regional reading of transnational memories.

While Pieris's article treats imperial history as a backdrop to decolonisation and cultural recovery in India, Benjamin Ireland has French imperialism's global reach clearly in his sight. He offers a method of using wartime internment to critique colonial pasts, combining his two disciplinary interests in France and Asia. Ireland's article builds on Michael Rothberg's concept of multidirectional memory to test what he defines as 'transcolonial carceralities' through the experience of Jewish internees in Algeria and Japanese internees in New Caledonia. Ireland notes that Nazi-supported Vichy projects, 'unfolded simultaneously with the opening of internment and death camps across Europe'. His focus in New Caledonia is on the penal colony of Nouville, where French officials detained political undesirables and Asian emigrants citing national security. They included all Japanese civilians residing on the archipelago, including Japanese men who were separated from their Melanesian partners and mixed-race children. Central to his argument is how denaturalisation was used as a political strategy for disciplining and victimising marginal subjects.

Ireland's article frames these explorations of juridical policies pertaining to citizenship, incarceration and dispossession in the much broader historical entanglements of Third Reich, Vichy, Free French, and Japanese regimes uncovering multiple micro histories of Indigenous resettlement policies; victimisation of Jews, Nippo-Kanaks, and New Caledonian Japanese. By doing so, his work responds quite explicitly to recent efforts at linking memory studies to decolonial scholarship that firstly seeks a co-relational understanding of a range of historical injustices, in this case imperial violence under the Vichy and Free French regimes. By examining the treatment of Indigenous and minority communities in localities peripheral to the European theatre of the Second World War, in North Africa and the 'French' Pacific, Ireland's approach expands the scope of military histories to encompass colonial places and subjects and come to terms with how colonial violence is compounded by wartime hostilities. Secondly, he

points out that both the Vichy and Free French were equally culpable in their violence towards their victims, because they were an extension of imperial processes, the injustices of which are yet to be fully acknowledged. Wartime internment thus occurs in a continuum of violence that predates the war and is anchored in the denial or limitation of citizenship to colonial subjects. Citizenship is further weaponised through the extraordinary powers afforded to these regimes by the war, and the resulting justification of dehumanisation and statelessness as disciplinary measures. Ireland convincingly demonstrates that the transcolonial lens is a useful tool for uncovering marginalised histories of interment and dispossession that might otherwise escape scholarly notice.

Rowena Ward's article focuses on organic processes of memory making related to the Purana Qila (Old Fort) camp in Delhi and the above mentioned Nouville camp. Whereas Ireland focuses on the French regime, Ward's work compares the French with the British through the lens of Japanese internment in India and New Caledonia. Among the points made at the start of her article is the importance of community presence in-place for sustaining camp history through memory. Purana Qila's history was largely unknown locally and circulated through a former-internee alumni association – the *Indowara-kai* – based in Japan. Nouville's similarly neglected internment history was recovered due to the interest and efforts of *Amicale Japonaise de Nouvelle Calédonie* (Friends of Japanese of New Caledonia) by connecting former-internee's descendants in New Caledonia and through them has entered the wider community's collective memory. Both are 'tangible and visible remnants' of these camps and have on-site museums. Ward's interest, however, is in differences in recollections by their respective internee communities and the processes and efforts of community organisations in sustaining group memories. Her focus, building on the work of Maurice Halbwachs, is on how group memories develop and thereby retain the history of a physical place. The *Amicale Japonaise de Nouvelle Calédonie,* established in 1979, is focused on fostering community awareness, while remembrance among the Purana Qila internees is fostered off-site in Japan by membership of the *Indowara-kai.* Despite the many activities, newsletter and recently published sketch book attracting attention from others dispersed elsewhere in Asia, Ward wonders if the *Indowara*-kai's efforts can be sustained from afar beyond this generation of descendants.

By focusing mainly on the transnational flows of people through internment and highlighting diasporic experiences all three of these articles have avoided national circumscription of their narratives. They capture a moment when these boundaries were yet indistinct or represented as imperial territories. Japanese internees are likewise approached not as national subjects but as part of the colonial circulation of diverse communities seeking new economic or cultural opportunities. They offer a multivalent and polyphonic interpretation of our theme.

Papers Part 2: Commemoration and Contestation

This collection contains three articles that focus precisely on the role, emergence and possible readings of objects of commemoration. All emphasize the contingent nature of the memories embedded in these objects and locales and demonstrate the fluidity of interpretations and the never-ending contests over their significance.

In an innovative analysis of the emergence of the Burma-Thai railway as an object of war tourism, Ratchatapattanakul demonstrates how the history of Thailand's collaboration (whether willing or forced) with Japan during the Asia-Pacific war was overshadowed in the post-war period by an emphasis on closeness with the wartime Allies. This closeness was mediated by new narratives, both fiction and non-fiction, that emphasised wartime support of Allied POWs; by the establishment of war cemeteries for Allied POW victims of the construction of the Burma-Thai railways; and by the role of the railway itself as, first, a vital economic infrastructure and second, an object of tourism both of itself and for the purpose of visiting the war cemeteries. Ratchatapattanakul then traces the development of Thailand's dominant narrative of the war through Thai writing about the railway, including its interaction with western writing and the biographies of the nation's wartime and post-war political leaders. Unlike the majority of previous research, Ratchatapattanakul's focus is not on western perceptions of the famed railroad, but in revealing how the railroad and POW cemeteries became a vital part of Thai narratives of the war and its shift from a collaborator of Japan to an undefeated nation. Ratchatapattanakul's analysis clearly demonstrates the role of places and objects in the establishment of narratives about the war, and their mediation through media and tourism, ahead of the Burma-Thai railways' emergence as a destination for international tourists, including veteran visitors.

Daniel Milne and Taeko Sasamoto's analysis of twelve POW camp memorials in Japan highlights the contribution of the POW Research Network Japan (POWRNJ) to the documentation of former Allied POW camp and work sites in Japan. Milne and Sasamoto provide a nuanced analysis of the many factors and actors at play in the establishment of memorials to Allied POWs in various sites in Japan. The examples they choose demonstrate how some memorials are established to protect reputations and deflect blame; how others create tension between those who want to commemorate Allied prisoners and those who remember that the POW camp led to local prison guards being executed in war crimes trials; and how some truly function as sites of reconciliation, in some of which both victims and perpetrators can be remembered. Many of these memorials were born of the collaboration between Japanese inhabitants of the villages where the POW camps were located, and the former POWs or their families. They are not only sites to memorialise POWs, but also places to affirm friendship and alliances between nations – such as those between the American and Japanese militaries – and between localities like Cowra and

Noetsu/Joetsu, and build transnational networks between Japanese activists and organisations and former POWs, family, and others from former Allied nations. At the same time, the stories of these memorials reflected histories of silence and suppression of certain histories, such as the abuse of Korean labour and of Allied POWs themselves. Milne and Sasamoto's analysis thus demonstrates the breadth of activities related to POW commemoration in Japan, and the role of the POWRNJ in providing new levels of understanding of the variety of these sites.

Another, more focused analysis of a POW camp in Japan is Ernestine Hoegen's article on the former POW camp at Kamioka, where American, British but also Dutch prisoners laboured in coal and tin mines. Drawn to Kamioka because of the experience of the subject of a biography, former Dutch POW Herman Adriaan Bouman (1909-1968), Hoegen provides both a short history of POW experiences at Kamioka, and a theoretically informed reflection on the processes of memory, and of the tensions between places, objects, and people in the ways that experiences were recounted and are remembered. Similar to Ward, Hoegen draws on foundational concepts of memory, here Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoires*, to understand the complex and evolving networks of remembering the Dutch POWs, though Hoegen's focus is not primarily on collective memory but on the relationship between individual and collective remembrance. Hoegen reads these memories through a diversity of materials, including diaries, a novel, a cenotaph and book dedicated to the dead, and contemporary memorial websites. Like Milne and Sasamoto earlier, Hoegen's work demonstrates the variety of actors and interests in the processes of commemoration, such as the Japanese man whose commemoration of POW victims at Kamioka was prompted by his grief on the loss of his brother in the war, and his conviction that all victims, regardless of their nationality and the circumstances of their death, deserved recognition and reflection. This study finds, however, that memorialisation changes with time, as POWs have not been memorialised in annual services there since the 1990s. In analysing how the ashes of deceased POWs were transported here and there in the wake of the war to find an appropriate site of repose, Hoegen also draws our attention to the complicated processes of repatriation of remains.

Research Note

Taeko Sasamoto's research note introduces the background, sources, and content of the POWRNJ's Japanese-language publication, the *Prisoner of War and Civilian Internment Camp Encyclopaedia* (2023). The encyclopaedia builds on over twenty years of research by members of the network and is the first detailed account of POW and civilian internment camps that were located in Japan's home islands during the war. Sasamoto, a POWRNJ cofounder, explains that many members became motivated to research about camps in their area due to a lack of understanding of them as part of local and national history. Many were surprised at the extent of trauma caused by wartime incarceration, especially on former POWs and family members but also on

the families of Japanese guards executed for mistreating POWs. Sasamoto explains that the encyclopaedia was written by over twenty volunteers who gathered information from archives in Japan and abroad and through interviews with former POWs and family. Among a wealth of information, the encyclopaedia has articles on Japan's imprisonment policies and treatment during the Asia Pacific War, and describes more than 150 camps for POWs and civilians located in Japan's home islands in detail, including wartime conditions, the treatment and fate of internees, and - for some - the camps' post-war transformations.

Background to the Special Issue

This special issue builds on a two-day online symposium and a workshop held in 2023 that collectively brought together over twenty scholars and activists from within and outside the academic world.[15] Like this special issue, the symposium was free and open to all in order to encourage the involvement of independent scholars and research associations and offer our research to the widest audience possible. Our primary goal has been to explore the reverberations of wartime internment on a diversity of people strewn across the Asia Pacific region, including Allied POWs, the bereaved, children and grandchildren, Thai, Japanese, German, and Italian civilians, Korean labourers, executed war criminals and their families, and activists, local historians, and research networks in Japan and across the region and globe. The POWRNJ, an excellent example of a research organisation that crosses national boundaries, has been a source of inspiration from the beginning. The POWRNJ has facilitated visits to Japan by former POWs and families and international scholars for over two decades, and, as described in Sasamoto's research note, has drawn on twenty years of research to publish the most detailed account of POW camps in Japan's home islands.

The authors and papers highlight the diversification of scholarship about the war and captivity in general as well as the evident fact that the effects of the war and wartime imprisonment went far beyond the (Caucasian) Allies. Their insights, based on lived experiences in the host countries for camps and their memorials are particularly important for non-Eurocentric representations of the global conflict that are especially sensitised to the tensions between imperial/colonial, national and minoritarian representations of conflict as well as the many intersections of race, class, culture and gender encountered across a range of themes. We hope that their efforts will encourage future endeavours at constructing inclusive and relational perspectives on the Second World War in the Asia Pacific region as well as other global conflicts. To this end, we thank the editors, reviewers, and board of the BJMH, especially Mahon Murphy, not only for their excellent review and editing but also for supporting our

[15]'Prisoners of the Asia-Pacific War: History, Memory, and Forgetting.' See the following link for more: https://sites.google.com/kyoto-u.ac.jp/papw?usp=sharing (Accessed 26 August 2024)

goals and making our research freely available. We would also like to thank all those who presented or otherwise participated in our two-day online symposium in 2023. The presentations, discussions, and feedback were invaluable for many of the authors of this volume and for the discussions presented here.