

Ghost of War: The Sinking of the Awa Maru and Japanese-American Relations, 1945-1995



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admission, his knowledge of the thought of several of the other thinkers in the book is based on less than adequate reading of the sources. What is more, in several instances, introductions were geared in part to the specific texts that Jacinto Zavala chose for his anthology, which do not always coincide with the selection made for the present volume. A general bibliography included at the end badly needs to be expanded and updated.

This brings us to the translations themselves. Some of the work was newly done, some of it was based on Jacinto Zavala's previous Spanish translation, and some of it is new. My general impression is that the inconsistencies of style and terminology, as well as a frequent clumsiness of English expression, call for a rather thorough going over of the whole, but I am probably given to be more fastidious in these matters. In any case, there is not space in the context of a short review to carry these criticisms into detail.

The pricing of the book, it should be noted, is completely out of proportion to the quality of the production and clearly out of the reach of students who might otherwise be served by having such a book on their shelves. The typesetting is somewhat crude; Spanish words are not properly accented; macrons over long vowels are indicated with French circumflexes; there are no Sino-Japanese characters; and the lack of running headers forces the reader to flip back to the contents to know what one is reading. The only other book in this new series on "Resources in Asian Philosophy and Religion" published by Greenwood Press, Stuart Pickens's *Essentials of Shintō* (\$99.50), suffers far worse editorial neglect by comparison. That aside, a fuller sourcebook of Japanese philosophy, longer, carefully edited, properly annotated, and well indexed is still needed.

It has always seemed to me a pity that Princeton's sourcebooks on Indian and Chinese philosophy never spawned a Japanese companion. Word is that a new German anthology along these lines is soon to be published. Jacinto Zavala, joined now by Dilworth and Viglielmo, have given us a good foundation and a first floor. I am sure that they, like I, await future builders.

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Ghost of War: The Sinking of the Awa Maru and Japanese-American Relations, 1945-1995. By ROGER DINGMAN. Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1997. xv, 373 pp. \$35.00.

An American submarine sank the Japanese merchant ship *Awa maru* on April 1, 1945, while it was sailing under a U.S. guarantee of safe passage. Of the more than two thousand passengers on board, most noncombatants, only one survived. All indications are that the sinking was a tragic accident, the result of a series of oversights and errors of the sort that frequently occur in modern warfare. *Ghost of War* examines the causes and circumstances of this incident, its immediate aftermath, and its metamorphosis during the postwar period. The book's title appropriately serves as its guiding metaphor. Despite efforts on both sides of the Pacific to exorcise the incident from public memory, the *Awa maru*'s unappeased "ghost" made repeated appearances in Japan, where the ship's sinking became a poignant symbol of wartime victimization. Across the Pacific, a vast tide of images of heroism and glory swept the ship's ghost out to sea and out of American public war memory. "In 1995, no less

than 1945,” writes Dingman, “Americans and Japanese refused to see themselves as other than heroes and victims in that war” (p. 252). The ghost of war writ large continues to haunt U.S.–Japanese relations, and this book serves in part as a case study in the perception gap between the two countries. Although primarily a work of military and diplomatic history, *Ghost of War* will be read with profit by the broad range of historians and other scholars of Japan’s recent past or Japanese-American relations.

In the preface, Dingman points out that *Ghost of War* may be read in different ways: as a compelling human story, “as a chapter in the larger history of Japanese-American relations,” “as a study in the construction of public memory,” and as a tale of war in which analysis of the *Awa maru* incident “raises in microcosm larger questions about organized violence between nations” (p. xii). To his credit, Dingman succeeds in weaving each of these reading possibilities into a well-organized text. After analyzing the *Awa maru*’s sinking in detail, Dingman then examines immediate U.S. and Japanese reactions to the incident, including the court-martial of the commanding officer of the U.S. submarine and an American promise of compensatory payments to the ship’s owners and the victims’ families. Owing to a deal with the Yoshida administration in the immediate postwar years, however, the U.S. made no such payments. The Japanese public memory of the incident that developed during the 1960s and 1970s generally saw the *Awa maru*’s sinking as a deliberate act of American treachery and the failure significantly to indemnify victims’ families as a betrayal by both the U.S. and Japanese governments. On the American side of the Pacific, those closely connected with the incident regarded it as a terrible mistake, but one mitigated by the trying circumstances of war at the time. Even this minimal degree of recognition of U.S. error, however, never became part of public war memory. One reason, argues Dingman, was that movies and television became the predominant medium in shaping U.S. memory of the Pacific War. Accounts of U.S. submarine warfare, written soon after the war, acknowledged errors such as the *Awa maru* sinking by portraying submarine commanders and crews as both heroic and human. Translating these written accounts into a medium rich in sound and visual images designed to attract viewers washed out all traces of human error and ambiguity. What remained were images of heroism and glorious sacrifice.

Ghost of War is a straightforward work of narrative history. It reflects thorough research in U.S. and Japanese sources and thoughtful, judicious analysis of those sources. Although it contains the wealth of factual details common to works of military history, Dingman keeps these details subordinate to the larger points of his analysis. Only in the chapter describing the *Awa maru*’s salvage did I sometimes have doubts about the usefulness of the minutia. On the whole, the book is highly readable. It lacks any significant contact with theoretical literature on wartime commemoration, public memory, and related topics. Nevertheless, readers like myself whose interests incline toward cultural history will find much food for thought in *Ghost of War*, and those so inclined should have little difficulty transposing relevant aspects of Dingman’s analysis into one or more theoretical frameworks.

Dingman is correct to characterize the *Awa maru* incident as raising in microcosm a host of larger questions and issues. While the incident itself did not have a major impact on the course of Japanese history or American-Japanese relations, in Dingman’s hands it becomes a useful case study that sheds light on larger issues of diplomacy, politics, warfare, and public memory.

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