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HEALING THE WOUNDS OF HISTORY: Japanese and Chinese Cultures Facing the Legacy of the Nanjing Massacre

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Introduction

I stood gazing at the banks of Yangtze River in October 2009 watching an old, wrinkled Chinese man casting a line into the quickly moving muddy water. Clearly a witness to the time of the Nanjing Massacre, I fantasized that the old man might be fishing for historical memory from the wide span of the majestic waterway, hoping to retrieve another missing piece of the story of Chinese victimization during the Sino-Japanese War.

Seventy-two years earlier in 1937, tens of thousands of civilians were reported slaughtered by the invading Japanese army on this very spot. They say the river ran red with blood during those days of carnage. Bound together with rope in large groups by the river for easy disposal, the victims were machine gunned en masse.

The corpses then floated through the heart of the city of Nanjing further terrorizing the already traumatized populace. Thousands of Chinese men, women and children were murdered and up to 20,000 women and girls brutally raped and kept in sexual bondage in an event that has come to be known as "The Rape of Nanjing".

As I surveyed the landscape, I also noticed that a local had planted a vegetable garden of pumpkin and eggplant in the soil fertilized by the blood of the dead—a utilitarian use of land by a country struggling to feed its 1.2 billion people. The irony of this garden being planted at the epicenter of a collective trauma deeply moved me. It gave me a renewed respect for the capacity of the earth to transform horror into life and beauty. A forest fire destroys an ecosystem but blades of grass shoot up out of the ashes after the first rain.

A group of teenagers played cards at a picnic table nearby. There had been no school on this day. The People's Public of China was celebrating 60 years of existence and the climax of the revolution that brought Mao Tse Dong and communism to power in 1949. A huge rusty tanker filled with material goods chugged by and blew its deep, loud baritone horn, an impressive sight embodying to me the emerging economic power of China. These were the symbols of life continuing in the aftermath of a war where a giant, proud and dignified country was humiliated by a small yet powerful island state drunk with a sense of entitlement and believing in its right to conquer its neighbor.

Juxtaposed against this tranquil scene I could hear the weeping and sobs of people in deep grief. Mixed in with the tears were the gentle musical staccato tones of the Japanese language and the delicate, lilting and breathy sound of Mandarin. A group of 25 students and teachers from Ritsumaikan University in Kyoto, Japan and their counterparts at Normal University in Nanjing, China had made a pilgrimage together to this memorial site by the Yangtze to perform a simple ritual. Silently, two by two and side by side, a Japanese student and a Chinese student had walked up

the steps to a Nanjing Massacre memorial stone on a small hill, placed a flower at its base and then bowed in honor of the people who had perished there. The Japanese students had gone a step further. They knelt down on the ground prostrating themselves in a humbling "kowtow" gesture of profound apology. Later, both cultures sharing a silent contemplative moment together as a group, took turns standing around the memorial stone separately moving deeply into their grief——the Chinese feeling into the trauma of victimization and the Japanese expressing the heavy burden of a legacy of perpetration. The loud, anguished cries of pain and remorse of a few of the Japanese participants pierced the silence of the somber ceremony. In the aftermath of the ritual I watched the Japanese and Chinese students embracing and comforting each other as they looked out from rock formations of the memorial grounds onto the Yangtze River.

Moving Deeply into Grief

This ritual had occurred on the last day of a 4-day workshop exploring the legacy of the Nanjing Massacre I had been invited to co-facilitate. The participants were immersed in two important phases of the Healing the Wounds of History process, an approach I have developed to work with intercultural conflict and collective trauma. I call these phases *moving deeply into grief and creating integration, performances and rituals of remembrance.*

Descendants of victims and perpetrators grieving together, and giving each other permission to grieve, is an essential part of healing historical wounds. People carry their parents', grandparents' and ancestors' pain,and until that pain is grieved fully, the legacy continues to be passed on to the next generation. At the Nanjing Massacre memorial it was primarily the third generation after the historical trauma who were expressing the grief that had been handed to them by their ancestors. Sometimes it takes a few generations for a culture to begin to integrate a painful collective experience.

In an uncomplicated grieving process, waves of strong emotion, often triggered irregularly and unpredictably, wash up on the shores of consciousness and are worked through in various ways. In individualistic cultures, the emotional attachment to the deceased is experienced as a personal loss. In collectivist cultures, such as Japan and China, the emotional attachment also includes the family, community and society. Mourning processes guide the group towards a repair of the social fabric that has been torn by the loss of the individual.

In the context of my work as a psychotherapist, drama therapist and group facilitator, I deal with grief caused by traumatic events, especially a collective trauma such as war or genocide. In such events, large groups of people are impacted and the traumatic event becomes part of their collective narrative and identity.

During a time of collective trauma those who survive are focused on staying alive; they cannot take the time to fully grieve their losses. Once the trauma is over, the focus becomes survival and building a new life. The trauma is forced into hiding because its impact is so overwhelming and painful. The result can be that entire cultures reconstruct their societies on the unresolved rubble of the trauma. I believe that this is the case for both China and Japan.

At the end of a Healing the Wounds of History workshop there is a need for closure, integration and assimilation of the feelings and insights that were explored during the group encounter. The participants review what they have experienced, acknowledge what they have learned and decide what they will take with them back out into the world. This is accomplished through creative means and often contains ritual elements such as the one described here.

Historical Frame

Following is a brief summary of the some of the historical forces that, I believe, might affect the psychological mindset of Japanese and Chinese students coming to

a gathering about their collective trauma. They are presented here to give the reader, who might not be familiar with Sino-Japanese history a little context to understand what emotional tensions might exist when a Chinese person encounters a Japanese national. China and Japan have differing historical narratives and many of the details around the Nanjing Massacre are points of controversy between the two countries. I want to make very clear that the following historical sketches are based on my personal understanding of the Japanese and Chinese dynamic formulated from my study of the conflict and from working with Japanese and Chinese participants around the legacy of World War II for the last 15 years. They are not presented here as absolute historical fact, as I am not a historian, but as a historical frame through which to view the gathering in Nanjing.

I believe that what is important in working with intercultural conflict is not just historical accuracy, as groups in conflict may never agree on the details of their difficult history. The Healing the Wounds of History process is organized around how people ***feel*** about their culture and its history and how these things affect their identity, self-esteem and psychological well-being. What do the descendants of perpetrators and victims feel about their collective trauma, how do they carry it in their psyches, and what do they need from themselves and from each other to resolve this trauma? These are central questions of the Healing the Wounds of History method and I believe that they are too often overlooked when searching for diplomatic and political solutions to conflict.

WWII in the Pacific ended with the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the surrender of Japan in August of 1945. Japan had occupied and committed atrocities in China and other Asian countries and subjugated the populations to brutal forced labor, medical experiments and sexual servitude. Because of the emergence of the perceived communist threat of the Soviet Union, and later China, the United States wanted Japan as an ally in the fight against communism during the Cold War. Although the United States and its allies formed a tri-

bunal in which many major military and political figures were prosecuted, they were reluctant to bring shame on the Emperor and the post-war Japanese government by making them fully accountable for their “crimes against peace and humanity.”

The Japanese “economic miracle,” the historical phenomenon of Japan’s record period of financial growth, propelled it onto the world stage as an economic superpower. The country focused on the future. School history textbooks avoided lingering on the Japanese militarism of the 1920’s through 1940’s. Because of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan also struggled with its role as victim as well as perpetrator. Some Japanese government administrations took steps towards apologizing to China for past actions, while others awkwardly moved towards retractions of the apology. These behaviors reflected the national ambivalence about accepting responsibility for war crimes. It was too humiliating and brought shame upon the collective. The cultural values around “saving face” prevented Japanese society from direct reflections of its legacy.

China’s historical wounds are deep and they have not forgotten the past. The war launched by Japan’s militarist leaders killed an estimated 20 million Chinese—an enormous collective trauma that still reverberates within the culture. The memory of the Japanese wartime atrocities are kept alive by the Chinese government and the educational system and hatred of Japan still sometimes functions as a unifying factor in Chinese society. Memorials and museums recount the “evil deeds” of Japan during World War II. The images of Japanese atrocities are shown and the history taught in school and, by report, often become the stuff of children’s nightmares. At the same time both Japan and China are attempting to forge a new economic alliance, but the ghosts of history continue to haunt the relationship between these two powerful cultures.

With this history as a backdrop, Psychology Professor Kuniko Muramoto, Ph.D. from Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto, Japan organized an encounter in Nan-

jing in 2009 between Japanese and Chinese students from the fields of psychology, history, education, and peace studies. They came together in the city of Nanjing, China to begin a process of psychological and emotional reconciliation and healing and invited me to facilitate.

Healing the Wounds of History

In my journey to reconcile my own past as the son of Jewish WWII resistance fighters and survivors of Auschwitz concentration camp, I have sought to understand how nations and cultures integrate a heritage of perpetration, victimization and collective trauma. I have endeavored to comprehend how collective trauma is passed from generation to generation. I have also committed myself as a psychotherapist to developing an arts oriented approach to working with intercultural conflict resolution in which collective trauma plays a primary role. Considering the number of seemingly intractable intercultural conflicts that plague the world, it is critical that we find innovative ways to address the impact that this trauma has on the personal and collective psyche. The techniques of drama and expressive arts therapy, with all of their transformative potential, are powerful tools in moving towards ending the cycle of re-traumatization and perpetration.

Healing the Wounds of History (originally called Acts of Reconciliation) began as a drama therapy process in which I used theatre techniques to work with a group of participants from two cultures with a common legacy of conflict and historical trauma (Volkas, 2009). I first used this process in 1989 with sons and daughters of Jewish Holocaust survivors and Nazis. I subsequently used it with many other cultures in conflict, most recently with Israelis and Palestinians, Armenians and Turks on the legacy of genocide, and Tamil and Singhalese in the aftermath of the civil war in Sri Lanka.

Theory and Principles

Healing the Wounds of History (hereafter HWH) is based on several premises:

Collective trauma is a psychological state shared by any group of people and can affect even an entire society (Kellermann, 2007). The impact of collective trauma is carried in our psyches in the form of images, stories, sense memories, spoken and unspoken messages transmitted by parents, teachers and the media. Ultimately, this process evolves into a collective narrative. This narrative is absorbed unconsciously through a process akin to osmosis and has an impact on the cultural and national identity of the individual and the group.

The transgenerational transmission of trauma is a real phenomenon where the continuing destructive impact of slavery, rape or genocide is visible centuries after the original atrocities took place (Danieli, 1998). Historical trauma is also transmitted inter-generationally from parent to child where a father's alcoholism or depression, for example, may be directly due to the unresolved PTSD of his experience in a war, but the historical and collective aspect of the trauma is never fully addressed. The inheritor of such a legacy receives the parent's trauma as a burden of unexpressed grief, often out of their conscious awareness.

Historical trauma can also have negative effects on ***cultural and national identity and self-esteem.*** Human beings are tribal in nature and have a need to feel good about the tribe to which they belong. When this pride of association is disrupted through a history of war trauma, humiliation, defeat, or subjugation, it negatively affects the collective self-regard in the form of internalized oppression. This can influence the way individuals view or value their own culture. (Grier & Cobbs, 1968; Klein, 1980)

Healing the Wounds of History also takes the view that **there is a potential perpetrator in all of us** and that under certain circumstances every human being has the capacity for dehumanization and cruelty.

I believe that there can be no permanent political solutions to intercultural

conflict until we understand and take into consideration the needs, emotions and unconscious drives of the human being. By working with the specific participants who are representatives of their cultures I seek to make a therapeutic intervention in the collective or societal trauma. In this way my work is related philosophically to Psychodrama's founder Jacob Moreno's idea that, "A truly therapeutic procedure cannot have less an objective than the whole of mankind." (Moreno, 1953).HWH, which takes a psychological approach to conflict, provides a map to help polarized groups traverse the emotional terrain to reconciliation. In this sense the approach is a form of social activism.

Drama Therapy in Intercultural Conflict Resolution

In working with polarized groups over the last 20 years I have identified six phases that can develop in a multi-day workshop. These phases do not necessarily emerge in a progressive way but depend on the given circumstances of the group process including a feeling of safety, cultural influences and the amount of emotional and aesthetic distance from the collective trauma.

Phases of the Process

The first phase in bringing cultures in conflict together is ***breaking the taboo against speaking to each other.*** Often there is an invisible barrier preventing contact. Speaking to the "enemy" is often perceived as a betrayal. But when two polarized groups break the taboo and engage in honest dialogue, they can begin to work through the layers of unresolved feelings they carry about each other. I work first with the emotional pioneers who pave the way for others to follow.

The second phase involves ***humanizing each other through telling our stories.*** When members of cultures in conflict listen deeply to each other's stories and hear each other's pain, they begin to care about one another. Their feelings of empathy and friendship become more powerful than the historical imperative to hate one another.

When there is enough trust, I move into the third phase of ***exploring and owning the potential perpetrator in all of us.*** In order to reconcile, people need to acknowledge that under extreme circumstances, we all have the capacity for cruelty. Accepting this truth is the great equalizer. It levels the playing field.

The fourth phase is ***moving deeply into grief.*** Grieving together and giving each other permission to grieve is essential. People carry their parents', grandparents' and ancestors' pain,and until that pain is grieved fully, the legacy continues to be passed on to the next generation.

The fifth phase moves towards ***creating integration, performances and rituals of remembrance.*** When groups in conflict create commemorative rituals and performances, privately and publicly, to acknowledge the complex, difficult history they share, they provide a way for people to channel their feelings in an aesthetic form. Public presentations serve to extend the healing effects of the reconciliation into society by touching the lives and consciousness of others who did not participate in the workshops.

The final phase of this process extends the learning achieved in the workshop out into the world, ***making commitments to acts of creation or acts of service.*** HWH is founded on the premise that historical trauma needs to be worked through in a personal way in order to be truly understood and re-integrated into a life-affirming sense of self. This process provides a bridge between personal and collective experience. First, we need to face history and uncover our unconscious emotional reactions and beliefs. We can then give ourselves the opportunity to transform the trauma through acts of creation or acts of service. The principle behind encouraging HWH participants to use the traumatic images, memories and messages they have inherited to create art or take social action is that this is the most powerful way to ultimately master the trauma. Through the acceptance that the trauma will never disappear and that one has a permanent relationship to it, the inheritor can be liber-

ated from a tortured denial or rejection of its existence. Embracing the legacy allows the constrained and unexpressed emotional energy to begin to untangle.

Creation can mean sharing stories, creating poetry, art, theatre and somehow transforming the pain of their past into an aesthetic form. Another mode is to channel the participants' energy into service: working with political refugees, helping survivors of rape, or doing other work that helps to end injustice or make reparation.

The Gathering in Nanjing

When Professor Kuniko Muramoto asked me to facilitate the encounter between Chinese students from Nanjing Normal University and Japanese students from Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto I was deeply honored. As an American, an outsider to both Japanese and Chinese cultures, the trust endowed to me by workshop participants was humbling. I was no stranger to the legacy of World War II in Asia. I had conducted 10 Healing the Wounds of History workshops and public presentations with Japanese, Chinese, Koreans and other Asian countries on this theme since 1994 in the United States and Japan. However, conducting my approach to working with historical trauma on Chinese soil located at the heart of the tragedy of Nanjing was a new experience.

The first day of the meeting had a formal beginning. Dr. Zhang Lianhong, professor of History at Nanjing Normal University, and host to our symposium, Dr. Kuniko Muramoto, professor Yang Xiaming and I all made introductory comments and welcomed everyone to the gathering in Nanjing. Two Chinese graduate students and two Japanese who had participated in a previous encounter between Japanese and Chinese students in 2007, shared their past experience and all 25 participants briefly introduced themselves.

In the afternoon of the first day all of the Japanese and Chinese participants were taken by bus to the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Museum. The Japanese and

Chinese participants wandered around the Memorial Hall alone and in small groups. The hall was built around the execution grounds and mass burial places that were excavated after the war. Built in 1985 in memory of the victims of the Nanjing Massacre, the buildings in the complex were fashioned out of black and white granite blocks that gave the museum a feeling of solemnity and reverence. The exhibition was filled with historical records, sculptures and video and film projections that told the story of a tragic and deeply disturbing chapter of history. The horrific images of the museum were seared into our brains—the anguished eyes of a woman who had been gang raped, the fear on the face of a man who was about to be buried alive, the giant metal sculpture of a dead infant being held by his mother looking up at the sky in anguish.

Deeply impacted and filled up with this kind of imagery, the participants gathered around benches outside the museum. Paper and oil pastels were provided to the participants by Japanese expressive arts therapist, frequent HWH collaborator and co-facilitator, Aya Kasai. In groups of 5, Japanese and Chinese together, the participants set out to give shape to their complex feelings that resulted from bearing witness to a painful history. They put their images on paper in solitude. Other visitors to the museum, children and adults alike, were curious about what the artists were up to. They peered curiously at the artmaking that was taking place in the open public space.

After the completion of the art project the participants gathered met in their groups to share the artistic images they had created and their emotional responses to them. This process provided a container for the feelings that were brought up as a result of the museum visit. Themes and images that emerged from the artmaking were drawings of eyes awakening to a part of history they had not known and a longing to hold on to hope in the face of such a disturbing experience of human behavior.

The next day I began facilitating my Healing the Wounds of History process

with the entire assembly. I guided the group through a progression of playful drama therapy techniques. I was struck by how much energy was expressed in these exercises and how palpable the need was for play among the Chinese and Japanese students. My strategy as a drama therapist entering into a potentially explosive environment is to first develop the spontaneity and imagination of the group as a warm-up to the dramatic processes that will soon follow. The play has many functions in the context of intercultural conflict. It allows participants to connect as human beings and brings out their child ego state. They find commonalities in the state of play and communicate in non-threatening ways. This starts to develop the bonds I will build upon later in the process.

Beginning to play can sometimes feel awkward for the facilitator to initiate in this context, as we are working with serious themes such as war trauma. However, generating playfulness in groups in conflict is an obligatory first step in establishing a beachhead in territory occupied by fear and mistrust. For many, permission to play is the perfect antidote to the burden of the imagery of collective trauma they have inherited. The parentified children within them are partially liberated by the process of reclaiming their lost innocence.

Slowly I began to introduce scenework that reflected the theme of our gathering. Many intercultural conflicts involve a spoken demand or unspoken longing for apology. This tension is very present in the Japanese and Chinese dynamic. Line repetitions in which participants in dyads repeated lines and explored the emotions behind them such as "You hurt me/I'm sorry" took on a special meaning in the workshop.

Gradually, the serious theme of our gathering was introduced and the process deepened even more through an exercise called step-in sociometry. The participants stood in a circle and I made statements such as, "Step forward if your grandfather was a soldier in WWII." "Step forward if your parents and grandparents shared with

you what happened to your family In the war." "Step forward if you feel shame about what happened to your family or what your family did." If the statement was true for them then each group member stepped forward, silently making eye contact with everyone, and then stepped back into the larger circle. Once the group understood the nature of the exercise they began to add their own statements. "Step forward if you were taught to hate Japanese people by your families or in school." "Step forward if you feel grief about what happened." This technique served to warm participants up to the emotional themes that were present in the room and to begin to focus on the reasons for our coming together.

This process evolved into a more in-depth examination of Japanese and Chinese identity and the way it is constructed and its history held in the psyches of both cultures. One exercise that I used to mark the transition from warm-up to personal storytelling is "My name is___I am a___". Each participant stands alone in front of the group and I ask the person to speak his or her full name, either in English or in the person's language of origin. This is followed by a statement of nationality or ethnicity. A moment of silence ensues after each statement. Then the participant is asked by the facilitator to reflect upon and share the feelings or images that come up for them as they make this public statement. This is a purposefully provocative exercise that helps participants access the memories that shape their cultural identity.

In the workshop a Chinese woman named Shan (name and story changed to protect confidentiality), who had studied in Japan and had recently come back to China after her graduation, stood up in front of the group to explore her cultural identity. "My name is Shan Liu and I am Chinese," she said out loud. Tears welled up in Shan's eyes in the silence that followed her statement. She covered her face with her hands. It turned out that Shan's grandfather, who had fought against the Japanese during World War II, had died right before she had come to the Nanjing gathering. Expressing her love and deep respect for the man who had been such a kind and warm presence during her childhood, Shan stated that the encounter in

Nanjing with Japanese people took on special meaning for her.

Shan admitted that while she was living in Japan as a student she had felt ambivalence and shame about being Chinese. Her pain as a Chinese person had sometimes felt invisible. Japanese students and professors seemed largely unaware of the psychic wounds their country had inflicted on China during the War. This experience had felt humiliating and hurtful to her. But, standing before this group she said she felt proud of being Chinese for the first time in her life and had great respect for the resilience of her family to survive and prevail after such a devastating time. Shan felt like her grandfather would be proud to see her in this moment.

In an exercise that followed, participants further explored their Japanese and Chinese identities, first on paper by diagramming them, and then through the technique of "human sculpting". I call this technique *diagram of roles and messages.* This form is essentially a psychodramatic sculpture of the internalized spoken and unspoken messages, both positive and negative, that a workshop participant received from parents, ancestors, society, educational institutions, authority figures, governments or even God, which affect that person's beliefs, identity, and self-esteem. Group members are placed in significant poses by the "protagonist" and given lines to say to reflect his or her internal experience.

A Japanese man, I will call Hideo and change the details of his story to protect his confidentiality, created a human sculpture that became a physical representation of the burdens on him as Japanese person. Hideo placed other participants in various physical poses and gave them lines to say out loud. In the sculpture a member of the group played the role of Hideo reaching out to the Chinese participants in an extended hand of friendship, but his fear of rejection was sculpted in the form of a Chinese person pushing him away with a shaming gesture. This image represented the fear that Hideo had that the Chinese participants might really feel so enraged about the Nanjing Massacre that they would want nothing to do with him. In the sculpture, Hideo chose someone to play his father who lectured him, warning him

not to deviate from the proud image of his people. In another sculpture image his mother pleaded with him to not get too involved with the Chinese/Japanese dialogue as it was dangerous. Hideo instructed the Chinese student playing the role of his mother to say, "You could become a target of right wing radicals in Japan! Be careful!" Hideo then chose several people from the group to represent right wing radicals in Japan. They delivered a nationalistic message to the Hideo. "Nanjing is a lie, an exaggeration," they said menacingly. In the sculpture the Japanese man also chose someone to play the role of his loss of innocence. Hideo's innocent "self" expressed the shock he felt after learning about the cruelty of Japanese soldiers during WWII. In a final sculptural image Hideo's friends were sculpted to say, "That's the past. Forget about it. Let's focus on the future!"

In this sculpture Hideo was expressing the HWH phase of **breaking the taboo against speaking with each other.** In this case Hideo was breaking the taboo against confronting the legacy of the Nanjing Massacre, a controversial subject in Japan. Not only was he doing this, but he was doing it with Chinese students of his generation and on the soil where the crimes took place.

In intercultural conflict resolution taking the step of meeting face to face with your current or former adversary is frequently seen as an act of defiance against the status quo. This stance requires courage on the part of participants. I describe these people who are willing to be the first to come to an encounter with the "other" as *emotional pioneers paving the way for others to follow.* When members of groups in conflict come together it can, in fact, involve real danger. Facilitators must recognize the courage and danger sometimes involved in bringing together polarized groups and proceed ethically to protect participants from harm or at least ensure their informed consent to the risks involved.

The kind of sculpting exercise that Hideo did serves to deconstruct cultural and national identity and make participants aware of the unconscious collective forces

which shape their behaviors, opinions and feelings. I use this technique as a stimulus to move into more intensive emotional work. Often an emotional leader emerges from the group who can carry the issue or theme of the workshop to another level. When the emotional intensity reveals itself, I shape it in various ways: as a psychodrama (Blatner, 2009), as a playback theatre piece (Salas, 1993), as a sociodrama (Sternberg & Garcia, 2000), an improvisation or as a creative ritual.

In the workshop a young Chinese man, I will call Kang, shared a personal story in front of the group. Kang is currently a history student and was concerned that I not share the specifics of his story with the reader as he has not yet verified the truth of what happened. This was important to him and I want to honor his request. What is significant in this context was that 10 year old Kang was traumatized when the elders in his rural community told him in gruesome detail about horrific atrocities that the Japanese invaders had committed to the villagers in a nearby field. The images that the villagers described terrorized him. He couldn't imagine how human beings could behave in this way and began to think of Japanese people as "monsters". Afterwards, he developed a deep hatred for the Japanese.

Now confronted with the empathetic Japanese students who had come to China, many at their own expense, to learn about and understand his pain, Kang now was challenged to hold two disparate images of Japanese people. With his permission I then shaped his experience into a Playback Theatre enactment. I invited the Japanese and Chinese participants to step inside Kang's role and to "play back" his experience in the form of improvised inner monologues and other enactments as a way to deeply empathize with Kang in an embodied way.

Kang's story was about a grown man coming to grips with a traumatic childhood image, but it also expressed the heart of the conflict between Japanese and Chinese. Here was the image of the demonized Japanese soldier, the "human devil" that the Nanjing Massacre Museum memorialized. This character or archetype was the frightening ghost in the room that was not being spoken about. I saw an opportunity

to explore this complex image that had so traumatized Chinese and Japanese alike. I also saw an opportunity to move into an important phase of my work that involves *owning the potential perpetrator within all of us.*

I wanted to develop this theme but was frustrated in my attempts by the limits of time and my restricted capacity to facilitate such a delicate process through interpreters. I also recognized, that as much as I thought it was a good idea to delve into the more provocative and conflictual elements of the Japanese and Chinese relationship, the group as whole was really at a much earlier developmental stage in the HWH model. The participants were still immersed in the process of self-revelation and personal storytelling that humanizes the "other" and forms the deep bond that develops when you enter a process of deep mutual empathy. They were not ready and could not yet tolerate the kind of potential rift that might happen if the more complex emotions of anger, rage or hatred were fully expressed and explored. The exploration of the potential perpetrator in all of us would need to be addressed in a future encounter. I accepted this and moved forward in the workshop. I also considered the possibility that such a direct approach to addressing conflict might work in Western, individualistic cultures but might require a more indirect approach when dealing with such potentially volatile material with Japanese and Chinese cultures.

In the proceeding exercise I asked the Japanese and Chinese participants to turn to a neighbor and share a formative or transformative moment in their lives connected with a difficult aspect of their identity and their history. A psychodrama, a technique that explores our inner and outer worlds with action, emerged out of this invitation to self-reveal (Blatner, 1988)

A Chinese participant, I will call Hua, shared her story about her relationship with an old woman who lived in her village. The woman's name was Mrs. Lau and was a survivor of the Nanjing Massacre. It was known that Mrs. Lau had been brutally gang raped by Japanese soldiers during the Japanese occupation. The old woman

had been shunned by her village and carried deep shame about her victimization. In spite of her trauma Mrs. Lau had managed to raise a family and live a full life.

Hua a student of sociology in her early 20's, had great respect for Mrs. Lau and wanted to know her story. Hua approached Mrs. Lau with gestures of support, but the old woman couldn't open up her heart to Hua. Mrs. Lau had two sons who had somehow gotten in trouble with the government. One had been accused of having ties with Taiwan and the other had some problems with the Communist Party. The woman became extremely anxious about the welfare of her sons. This created a PTSD response in Mrs. Lau and she was found dead with an expression of terror frozen on her face. Hua worried that somehow it had really been the trauma of the "Rape of Nanjing" which had been the real cause of her death.

Hua had wanted to express her feelings of love and respect to Mrs. Lau, but now it was now too late. In describing her relationship with the old woman survivor Hua said, "I felt like there was a huge wall between us." As we entered into the psychodramatic enactment I asked Hua to choose three people to embody the wall. The three participants chose colorful scarves and physically and symbolically became the barrier that stood between her and Mrs. Lau. It was clear that the wall symbolized the war and the woman's shame and trauma. Hua chose someone else from the group to embody the role of Mrs. Lau who then stood on one side of the wall with Hua speaking to her from the other side.

A simple and moving dialogue ensued in which Hua was able to express her love, her grief as well as her enormous respect for Mrs. Lau. Hua wanted find a way to honor this remarkable woman, but never found a way through to her in life. But, psychodrama affords people the possibility of completing actions in surplus reality that they are not able to resolve emotionally with the real person.

Hua asked if she could embrace the actor who was fully immersed in portray-

ing Mrs. Lau. I encouraged Hua to hug Mrs. Lau if she wanted and express all of the feelings that she was never able to share. They both held each other as they cried and Hua voiced all of the love and respect she had in her heart to Mrs. Lau. In the group sharing that followed, Japanese and Chinese participants reported how moved they were to have witnessed such a healing moment. They too felt healed by it.

On the third day Mr. Chung, an 83 year-old survivor who was nine years old when a Japanese soldier killed his mother and infant brother with a bayonette in front of his eyes, came to bear witness to the Nanjing Massacre with us. His story is immortalized in a metal sculpture at The Nanjing Massacre Memorial Museum. It is the haunting image of his dying mother nursing his infant brother who is bleeding to death in her arms. Mr. Chung lost most of his family during the massacre. Left to take care of his paralyzed surviving sister, they both hid under a bed as Japanese soldiers raped women on top in the home where they were concealed.

Mr. Chung was originally allotted thirty minutes to one-hour to share his story of horror and survival with us, but in the end it took three hours. He delivered his story with all of the intensity of a trauma survivor—partly dissociated and partly re-living his traumatic experience as if it were happening now. The terrified 9 year-old boy within him was clearly present on Mr. Chung's face as he bore witness. It became clear that the drama therapy process we had planned for that day would need to be set aside so that we could take the time to honor one of the last living survivors of the Massacre.

After Mr. Chung finished sharing his story, co-facilitator, Aya Kasai artfully guided the group through a necessary process where each Japanese and Chinese participant got to thank Mr. Chung for the gift he had given them and to say some words about how they were impacted by him. Mr. Chung, who regularly shares his story of survival with the public, seemed genuinely moved by the kind, compassion-ate and honoring words that he received from the group. Imparting his story seemed

to give him the sense that, by bearing witness, both he and the group could begin to make meaning out of the meaningless horror he had experienced.

This encounter between the Mr. Chung and the group had a transpersonal and spiritual feeling. His story now belonged to all of us. The gentle, kind and humble survivor, said his farewells to the group as the participants shook hands with him and gently touched his shoulder and bowed as he left the room. They all wished him good health as he went out the door and returned to the busy metropolis of Nanjing outside.

By this time the group had spent nearly five hours taking in Mr. Chung's story that, although moving, was very challenging to emotionally metabolize. Some Japanese and Chinese participants had wept openly, others had clenched their stomachs and felt nauseous, many averted their eyes as if to avoid looking at Mr. Chung while he was speaking and hoping that the flood of traumatic images coming from him would not lodge too deeply into their psyches. These were all of the symptoms of secondary trauma. My thought as the facilitator was that the participants were filled with feeling and needed to move the trauma through their bodies to process their experience.

I proposed that we again divide into groups of 5 and take some time to create five separate human sculptures. Each participant would have the opportunity to move the other four members of their group into a frozen tableau. The sculpture would be a scene from Mr. Chung's story or an abstract expression of the emotional impact he had had on them. The five groups quickly got to work on shaping their sculptures, giving titles to their image and describing, in a few words, what feelings and meaning the sculpture represented to them. Each tableau was then presented in front of the group in the form of a ritual with each sculpture being presented one after the other until all 25 were witnessed. This exercise seemed to have a cathartic affect on the group. They had been able to metabolize and make meaning out of their

painful experience.

Making meaning out of traumatic experience is an important value in my work with collective trauma. In a HWH process, several workshop participants can experience this kind of important release of feeling as we cycle through the various phases of the work. Like the natural ebb and flow of the ocean, when a large wave of emotion appears, the facilitator needs to step back and allow it to engulf the group. As the wave recedes, there is a cleansing and integrative effect. As participants share their personal responses the group is able to sculpt meaning out of their suffering.

On the last morning of the gathering we performed the ritual at the Nanjing Memorial Stone described at the beginning of this article. In the afternoon it was necessary to begin to move towards closure of our time together. Expressive Arts Therapist, Aya Kasai gave each person a piece of clay and asked them to fashion it into a representation of their feelings in the aftermath of the ritual as well as their experience of the four-day exploration of their historical legacies.

Each Japanese and Chinese participant took time to create a clay sculpture. Aya then asked them to find a place in the room to display their clay figure. The room was transformed into an impromptu art museum with works of art displayed on chairs, tables and on the floor. Participants went from exhibit to exhibit gathering around the clay figurines where each participant explained the meaning of their artwork and received emotional feedback. The primary theme that emerged from the artwork was the instillation of hope that the gathering in Nanjing had given them—hope that true reconciliation between Japanese and Chinese people was possible.

In closing we asked each member of the group to make brief a statement about the learning they were taking with them from our time together. Some participants, particularly the students of history, admitted that they had been skeptical in the beginning about the value of using the arts and therapeutic processes to address historical issues, but were now converted to seeing the transformative power of the arts and their potential for healing. Most expressed a feeling of gratitude and privilege that they had been able to participate in such a deeply meaningful experience.

The intimacy of friendship that had been formed between the Japanese and Chinese students over the previous four days was palpable in the room.

In our final moments together in the workshop I decided that we needed to return to the playfulness with which we had begun our process on the first day. I also felt that it was time to move into an integrative process. Through a series of theatre techniques I warmed the group up to the skills of improvised storytelling. My hope was that the participants could channel their feelings, insights and express their creativity metaphorically through the act of storytelling.

I asked participants to find a partner to work with and then gave them very specific instructions, "The two of you are going to improvise an allegory together. An allegory is a story in which the characters and actions are used to understand and express concepts relating to human existence. In this case you are going to use the improvised story, the allegory, to explore your experience of the last four days. There are a few images and elements that I would like you to incorporate into your story. They are as follows: A Japanese and Chinese person go on a journey together in search of healing from the legacy of World War II. On their journey they encounter three things: a fire-breathing dragon, a bridge over a magical river and a 100 year-old man and woman who live at the top of a mountain. From each of these encounters they learn something. It is up to each dyad to discover what the lessons are of their journey in the course of the improvisation. This is a collaborative story. One person will begin enacting the story and when I say "switch" your partner will continue improvising the story right from where you left off. You will go back and forth in sharing and shaping of the story in this way until you hear me say stop. Please begin."

The entire room burst into a spontaneous storytelling festival with enormous energy. The room was filled with participants narrating, actively moving about and embodying the stories. Following is a composite story of some of the symbols,

themes and narratives that emerged out of this exercise:

Aki and Chen were Japanese and Chinese students who went on a journey together in search for healing. They both felt very wounded by the legacy of World War II. On their journey they entered a dark forest and came to a cave where they encountered a fire-breathing dragon. As Aki and Chen approached the cave the dragon spewed flames from his mouth as he spoke, "Why do you come here? There are secrets in this cave and no one must ever enter!" Aki and Chen could see the dragon's sadness behind his eyes and offered him some tea. Stunned by their kindness and warmth in the face of his ferocity, the dragon accepted their offer and all three of them sat down and drank tea together. The tea and their kindness put out the dragon's fire and transformed him into a shy little boy. They realized that empathy and compassion could dissolve the rage of even a dragon. The boy ran into the cave as Aki and Chen followed inside.

Inside the cave they found a group of Japanese and Chinese orphans who were crying. Aki and Chen decided to adopt them and care for them. Together with their adopted children they continued on their way. But the children could not stop crying. They were so filled with grief that their tears created a river as deep and wide as the Yangtze. Aki and Chen knew that they needed to get to the other side of this river to continue on their journey towards healing. A fisherman just happened to be fishing at the bank of this river and pulled a fish out of the water. It was a talking fish and it spoke to Aki and Chen. "Listen to the pain of the orphaned children, hold them and sooth them and their crying will stop," said the fish. Aki and Chen said that they would do just that. They thanked the talking fish for his wisdom and then threw him back into the water. Aki and Chen then began to listen to the sad stories of the orphans who had lost their parents. As they listened to their pain their crying stopped and a magical rainbow bridge appeared over the span of the river of tears. Aki, Chen and the children skipped across river to the other side.

When Chen and Aki and their family crossed the bridge they continued on their journey. After many days of travel they came to a giant mountain. Although hungry and tired they were able to find the energy to climb to the top. At the top they discovered a hut in which lived a very old man and woman. Aki, Chen and their family were starving so they knocked on the door of the hut. The couple opened the door and welcomed them inside. Seeing how hungry they were the old couple fed them soup. As they ate the soup Chen and Aki realized that these old couple were survivors of the Nanjing Massacre and that somehow the soup they were eating was not soup at all but a bowl full of history. They realized that they were digesting history and, although some of it was difficult to digest, it was strangely and movingly nourishing.

The storytelling exercise ended and I asked everyone in the group to stand in a circle and place their right thumb into the middle of the space between them. I then told them to keep grasping the thumb of the person next to them until a circular shape was formed with our hands. This created a metaphorical well in which we had put all of our personal stories and experiences over the last 4 days. In a final ritual I asked everyone in the group to say their name and when the last person spoke it marked the end of our time together.

Conclusion

In this article I have attempted to give the reader a basic understanding of the Healing the Wounds of History approach to intercultural conflict resolution and collective trauma. I have also illustrated the approach by giving examples of what occurred in the encounter between Japanese and Chinese students in October of 2009. Names, identities and some details were changed to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

In the gathering in Nanjing I supported workshop participants in reflecting on their cultural identity or identities with the goal of working through obstacles

to their self-esteem. Within each person's constructed identity lie cracks that hold the fragments of their collective story. Feelings, associations, formative sense and affective memories emerge from its deconstruction. In the end, my goal was to help Japanese and Chinese participants uncover the collective story of perpetration or victimization they may be carrying and help them integrate their legacies in a more generative way.

In the Nanjing workshop I was also indirectly teaching intercultural communication. Often there is a taboo against speaking to "the other". People from polarized cultures so stereotype, dehumanize or demonize each other that the simple act of talking can be an important step towards healing. There can also exist a lack of authentic understanding of the other culture or empathy for their emotional or political stances. Through the self-revealing, story-telling and playful aspects of the Healing the Wounds of History process the tension between the opposing groups is momentarily eased. Enemies are humanized.

As I guided participants in Nanjing through the HWH process there was a well of grief that I knew I would eventually tap into. Even if it was not displayed or acknowledged at the beginning of the workshop, I was always aware of its presence. Each traumatized group has a need to experience their inherited pain as unique. Participants in Nanjing, as representatives of their cultures, were given the opportunity to give shape and expression to their collective grief, the principle being that, until that pain of the Massacre of Nanjing is grieved fully, the legacy trauma will continue to be passed on to the next generation.

At its core, HWH is about teaching empathy. Workshop participants developed the capacity for feeling compassion for the pain of the other group and transcend the impulse to view one's their own suffering as superior. This helped to create the double binds that participants had to resolve. How can I hate this person and have empathy for him or her at the same time?

A healthy human being needs to create purpose and meaning out of his or her life (Frankl, 1984.) Suffering is a great teacher. When there is a legacy of trauma, shame, guilt and humiliation, the task is to transform it into meaning. This is a spiritual task which I believe that the gathering in Nanjing in October of 2009 took some small yet significant steps towards achieving.

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