

Hiroyoshi Segawa, *The Forgotten Armenian Genocide: A Case Study of the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes of Genocide* (in Japanese), Sankeisha Press Nagoya, Japan, 2004.

This book is the first Japanese publication on the Armenian Genocide. The book is insightful and sheds light on human behavior, full of frailty and immorality. It also provides us, the Japanese, for the first time with facts and useful information surrounding the Armenian massacres.

The importance of the events that took place in the Ottoman Empire in 1915-1916, as the author of the book explains, is not how many people were tortured and slaughtered because of racial and religious conflicts, but how the incident was kept under the carpet for more than fifty years because of political and ideological conflicts resulting from the parties involved contending its own case. The international recognition of the Armenian Genocide was finally obtained only some fifty years of the event.

The facts surrounding the Armenian Genocide, tragic in terms of the number of the people murdered, was distorted with explicit intent to misinform the public and the event itself was even denied - repeated attempts by the parties involved have been made even to erase the murder from history.

The author of the book became interested in the Genocide issue even though many Japanese scholars and researchers had not given it high priority. The author was convinced, however, that Genocide or incidents similar to it result from conflicts between ethnic leaders who are unsatisfied with the prevailing order of their societies. Thus, these leaders, guided by justifiable or unjustifiable ideologies, involve innocent people in the process of establishing a society of their choosing. The result is a massive slaughter of many people since the process usually involves the use of force.

The Armenian Genocide has been compared to the Holocaust. These are certainly two of the most sorrowful and dreadful incidents in the 20th century or even in the whole of human history. In contrast to the Armenian Genocide, the Holocaust, which took place some twenty years after the occurrence of the Armenian tragedy, is far better known. The author contends that had the serious and grave nature of the Armenian slaughter been brought to the world's attention sooner, the Holocaust might have been avoided or the extent of the Jewish tragedy might have been held to a much smaller scale.

The Japanese people, and particularly Japanese scholars doing research on Armenia, will owe a large debt to Professor Segawa for writing about the facts surrounding the Armenian Genocide. Many Japanese, I believe, do not know where Armenia is, and for them Armenia is certainly a foreign country. Thus, many Japanese who are eager to learn more about Armenia and the surrounding areas will keenly appreciate Segawa's work.

Another reason why Japanese should read Segawa's book is that any Japanese who reads it will recall the Nankin massacre that took place in China during World War II, a wartime tragedy committed by the Japanese military.

The Nankin Incident is a tragedy not only because many innocent Chinese were killed, but also because the incident was long hidden from the Japanese public. Thus, the reader will find a stark similarity between the Nankin massacre and the Armenian Genocide. It is true that the Nankin incident has not yet been recognized as Genocide. But Professor Segawa correctly raises a question about the meaning of Genocide by pointing out that even decimating a part of an ethnic group could be considered to be Genocide. Certainly the Japanese reader will reflect on this point when he reads this book. Having read this book, thoughtful Japanese readers will also reflect upon the victims of the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The value of Segawa's study is great, to say the least, since anyone aware of the Armenian Genocide will make a firm determination that another tragedy of this nature should never happen again on the earth.

The book is structured as follows: Chapter 1 gives the definition of Genocide in general; Chapter 2 explains the prelude to the Armenian Genocide; in Chapter 3 the Armenian Genocide is described; in Chapter 4 the Armenian Genocide is compared with the Holocaust. The author's conclusions are found in the final chapter. At the end of the book an extensive list of literature, in Japanese as well as other languages, is presented, together with three valuable maps of the areas relevant to the Genocide. These were provided to the author, courtesy of Dr. Professor Nikolay Hovhannisyan, Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies in the Armenian National Academy of Sciences.

Genocide is a crime against humanity and civilization. And the Armenian Genocide is no exception. But the genocidal massacre in Armenia deserves special attention because it took place in 1915 but did not come to light until more than 50 years after its occurrence. Thus the incident is a serious tragedy for Armenia, which, throughout its history, has been a tapestry of divisions, being divided geographically between East and West, religiously between Christians and Muslims, and ideologically between communists and non-communists.

The massive slaughter did take place in the Ottoman Empire in 1915, but the Turkish government until recently argued that nothing out of the ordinary happened to the Armenians during that period. The fact remained, however, that there was little doubt that the Young Turks government decimated the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire. The political confusion among Western nations after World War I and conflicting interests between Western powers and Soviet-controlled nations hindered serious attempts to reveal what had happened to the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in 1915.

It was only after Turkey became more integrated into the world economy and

the Western alliance system that it could no longer cover up the tragedy of the Armenians. Also the world became more concerned with human rights after World War II. The atrocities committed by the Nazis against the Jews during World War II brought the subject of Genocide into focus. The hope of preventing gross abuse of human rights and global conflict moved the United Nations to set up committees to investigate various abuses of human rights such as the Holocaust and the Armenocide. Finally it was confirmed by a UN committee that the mass murder of Armenians in 1915 was a case of Genocide.

The Japanese readers of the book will find it interesting to know how international recognition of the Armenian tragedy came to light. The book points out in detail the long silence and indifference of the World concerning the matter. That will be a good reminder how weak humans are.

The author of the book is a native Japanese, a graduate of Kansai University in Japan and currently teaches in Aichi Sangyo University in the Nagoya area. The author has received various medals and other prestigious awards including an honorary doctorate from the International Academy of Sciences of Nature and Society (Armenian Branch) for his work on Armenia. He acknowledges his debt to Professor R. G. Melik-Ohanjanyan, for making his research on Armenia enjoyable and rewarding.

Professor Segawa is adviser of the Japan-Armenia Friendship Association and currently a liaison officer between Armenia and Tukude, a village in the Aichi Prefecture of Japan, establishing "the one country and one village or town relationship" a unique feature of the International Expo to be held in Aichi Prefecture in 2005.

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