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THE LUSHUN RUSSO- JAPANESE PRISON MUSEUM

Nationalist Narrative throughout Historical Memory
of the "Humiliating Past" in Modern China

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East Asian Studies Honors Thesis

Honors Thesis Advisor: Brigid E. Vance

I Hereby Reaffirm the Lawrence University Honor Code

June 3, 2021

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*To my motherland where I was born and raised, Northeastern China, and the
dolorous history behind it.*

Abstract

This paper explores the contemporary historical narrative (since the early 2000s) of the Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison Museum in Dalian, China, as a case study through the dual lens of a site visit and historical source analysis of the museum exhibitions. The Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison Museum vividly reflects a construction of historical memory of modern China's humiliating and traumatic past, specifically of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) against the historical backdrop of the so-called "century of national humiliation" (1840-1945). To present a particular historical memory, the Chinese municipal government politically utilizes a victim-centric nationalist narrative in order to inculcate and fortify a nationalistic and patriotic consciousness in museum visitors.

I. A Personal and Transnational "Encounter" in Manchuria

In July of 2019, I traveled to a prison museum in Dalian, Liaoning Province in Northeastern China.¹ I was en route from Guangzhou to visit my mother's relatives in Antu (安图), Jilin Province. I decided to make one stop along the way at a prison museum I had heard about from my relatives. There, in the summer heat, I stood in front of the museum and read the entry tablet with traditional Chinese characters: *Lushun Russo-Japan Prison Former Site (Lüshun ri'e jianyu jiuzhi 旅順日俄監獄舊址)*.² Here, there are at least three geopolitical entities involved: China, Japan, and Russia. The Chinese characters "Japan" (*ri* 日) and "Russo" (*e* 俄) reminded me of the concept of "hybridity" due to the abbreviated names. I define "hybridity" as "two or more distinct cultures which are involved in one another" because, at least according to this entry tablet, this prison evidently mixes foreign elements with domestic cultural relics.³ At this moment, I was also impressed and shocked by how the imperial states of Russia and Japan, had built and taken charge of a prison in the northeast of the Chinese territories, my homeland which I mentally and emotionally connect.

I was born in Antu, a small town in Manchuria, and I heard many stories from my aunts about this region and its so-called "humiliating" (*quru* 屈辱) past. As we sat around the table, eating sunflower seeds, I learned from my aunts that imperial Russia was jealous of our northeastern territories and had disputes with us during the late nineteenth century. Another auntie told me that Japan had occupied Manchuria and established a puppet state, Manchukuo (*manzhouguo* 滿洲國), since the 1930s. In their

¹ Northeastern China 中国东北地区: also known as Manchuria (滿洲) since 17 CE, it currently includes Heilongjiang Province (黑龍江省), Jilin Province (吉林省), and Liaoning Province (遼寧省) in China.

² See Figure 1: Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison Former Prison Site Museum. [Photo].

³ Burke, Peter. "Varieties of Terminology" in *Cultural Hybridity*, pp. 51. See also Figure 2: Entry Tablet of Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison Site. [Photo].

quavering voices, I could hear the regret and distress that haunted their shameful memories of this piece of national history—the complicated involvement of foreign countries in China's territories. I inherited their regret and distress surrounding this history in the place where I was born and raised. I perceived these humiliations as painful blights or bumps on our national historical memories over the past century. Based on my aunties' shared memories, I too embraced a constructed history full of sharp pain, shame, and curves. I, too, overemphasized the traumas of the national narrative of a collective dolorous past.

The Lushun Prison Museum bears a significant material witness to China's history of encounters, humiliations, and traumas in Manchuria with a unilaterally nationalistic narration. This nationalistic narrative embedded in the humiliating past is aimed to induce museum visitors to feel grief, grievance, and even xenophobia towards Western imperialists. The museum narrative accentuates sentiments of lament and regrets over the past. The museum does not attempt to heal the scars left from the so-called humiliating past, but instead it adopts a single vision: a nationalist discourse that reinforces the narrative of the humiliating past.

Thus, the Lushun Prison Museum offers a window for us to examine the process of the state's narration of the humiliating past from a nationalist perspective. I argue that, based on the Chinese "century of humiliation" under the historical context related to the establishment of the Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison, the signage of the Lushun Prison Museum reflects a formation of historical memory about China's humiliating and traumatic past through a victim-centric nationalist narrative. Utilizing national history, the Chinese municipal government of Dalian behind the Lushun Prison Museum constructed the narrative, which fortified national and patriotic consciousness for cultural, political, and diplomatic purposes to sustain the governing party's prestige,

power, and legitimacy.

In order to understand the context behind the museum, I will first give a brief introduction to the Lushun Prison Museum in Dalian, China, and present the historical background of the First Sino-Japanese War (1904-05). From here, we will discover Lushun Prison Museum's occupation history with three state actors: Russia, Japan, and China. Second, based on my visit, I will give a precise account of the organization and layout of exhibitions inside the Lushun Prison Museum. Third, by explicitly analyzing specific rooms and displays in this museum, I will demonstrate how the Lushun Prison Museum presents a humiliating and traumatic history to its visitors. Last, referring to the narrative of the century of humiliation in modern Chinese history, I will examine the dual roles of nationalism and patriotism in retelling the so-called shameful past and also in constructing national historical memories.

II. A Review of Previous Theoretical Scholarship on Nationalist Museums

Before analyzing the Lushun Prison Museum and its contemporary narrative, it is worthwhile to ground my research in previous scholarship. I briefly consider scholarship in three areas: museology, specifically of the functional study of a museum's role in negotiating memory and space; the Yasukuni Shrine, a nationalist museum in Tokyo, Japan; and another undergraduate thesis examining the Lushun Prison Museum. Even though there are extremely limited academic works on this museum itself, my goal for this research on the Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison (LRJP) Museum is to create a holistic framework to examine the Lushun Prison Museum as well as its contemporary narrative with the integration of museum studies, contextualized historical backdrops, and politics of nationalism from a multidimensional perspective of a common visitor and a researcher.

Previous scholars have noted the socio-cultural role of the museum in the

process of remembrance of national and cultural traumas. In 1997, James Clifford used the term "contact zone" to describe museums as a permeable place for transcultural encounters grounded in valuation, collection, and display of both cultures and histories.⁴ However, Robin Boast stressed that museums have increasingly been "promoting their postcolonial status through inclusionist programs in exhibitions," indicating that museums serve not as a simple cultural contact zone but rather as sites of educational engagement through the authorization of collections.⁵ The museum, or more accurately, the authority behind the museum, arbitrates the meaning of museum displays and the trajectory of the museum projects. This can lead to fundamental asymmetries between the museum objects on display, the meaning of those displays, and the interpretations of those displays.⁶

I note some parallels between the Lushun Prison Museum and Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine, first built in 1869 to honor the souls of those who died in the Meiji Rebellion. I see it as another case study of nationalist museums in the East Asian area. The narrative and approach of the Yasukuni Shrine has elicited pushback among East Asian countries, especially China and South Korea, because of its revivalist ideology intertwined with what many argue is a revisionist view of the imperialist past, particularly wartime history. As many argue, the shrine's signage obliterates the historical facts of Japanese defeat and crimes; indeed, the revisionist view throughout this war museum beautifies militaristic self-sacrifice, provokes chauvinistic nationalism in its description of war criminals, and promulgates a specific type of

⁴ Clifford, James. 1997. "Museum as Contact Zone." In *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, pp. 188-219. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

⁵ Boast, Robin. 2011. "Neocolonial Collaboration: Museum as Contact Zone Revisited." In *Museum Anthropology* 34 (1), pp. 56-70.

⁶ Boast, pp. 67.

patriotic public consciousness.⁷ Although I see parallels with the Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison Museum in terms of the one-sided nationalistic narrative, the Yasukuni Shrine has elicited international attention to a degree that the Lushun Prison Museum has not. That said, the intention behind the museum framing is strikingly similar.

There is limited English language scholarship on the Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison Museum. However, scholarly attention has begun to turn to this important historical site. For example, Madeline Michalk's undergraduate honors thesis from Portland State University explores this site with a specialization on pragmatic nationalism throughout the presentation of this museum, focusing more on the history behind the prison itself and the memory of wars generally.⁸

These approaches inform my own. In my study, I turn to a slightly different direction. In addition to delineating the prison's historical background, I will examine the Lushun Prison Museum in a broader context of the century of humiliation in modern Chinese history and analyze its nationalist narrative via the lenses of both modern Chinese politics and my own model of remembrance of traumas based on museological theories. Notably, from the review of previous scholarship, it is evident that individual and collective memory is at stake: how the prevailing nationalist narrative used by the museum authority is massaging and altering our memory of the past, particularly the humiliating past for a nation. This question revealed by this historical site matters a lot for historians, people in China, East Asia, or even the rest of the world to think about further.

⁷ Killmeier, Matthew A. and Naomi Chiba. 2010. "Neo-nationalism seeks strength from the gods: Yasukuni Shrine, collective memory and the Japanese press." In *Media, War & Conflict* 3(3), pp.335-337.

⁸ Michalk, Madeline C. 2019. Imprisoned Within the National Narrative: A Case Study of the Modern Chinese Move Toward Pragmatic Nationalism. *Portland State University Honors Theses*. Paper 703.

III. Historical Context of the Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison (LRJP)

The authoritative and nationalistic narrative of retelling modern Chinese history emerged from China's victory in the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1945 and was constructed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) after it eventually came to power in 1949. In this nationalistic narrative often shown in contemporary Chinese history textbooks, the accumulated backwardness of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912 CE) was the fuse that ushered in a so-called "century of humiliation." The Qing Dynasty is the last empire throughout a thousand-years of Chinese civilization, and the late Qing period of China was the "sunset of the Chinese empire" as it was the stepping stone towards a transition from backwardness and isolation to modernization and openness, even though Qing-era China was forced by imperialist powers to open and modernize according to Western standards. The Qing experienced a humiliating encroachment by Western imperialist invasions since the 1840s, which set the stage for the events which shaped the Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison.⁹ According to authoritative history accounts endorsed by the People's Republic of China, modern Chinese history suffered a "century of humiliation," which refers to one hundred years of national traumas and imperialist invasions since the nineteenth century.¹⁰ The official Chinese history narrative treated the first Opium War in 1840 as a historical turning point when China started to "degenerate from an independent feudal country into a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country."¹¹ Notably, the Qing Dynasty was equated with China as a nation-state in this narrative.

Remarkably, most Chinese official historical accounts from the twentieth

⁹ Wang, Zheng. *Never Forget National Humiliation*, pp. 47-65.

¹⁰ Wang, Zheng. *Never Forget National Humiliation*, pp. 3.

¹¹ People Education Press (PEP), *Putong Gaozhong Kecheng Biaozhun Shiyuan Jiaokeshu: Lishi Bixiu 1* [Normal High School History Textbook No.1] 普通高中课程标准实验教科书: 历史必修一, pp. 51. Quote in Chinese: "(中国) 由一个独立自主的封建国家开始沦为半殖民地半封建国家。"

century attribute the deepest sensation of disgrace to the period of a "century of humiliation" which stemmed from the Qing defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) when it was invaded by Imperial Japan, a former tributary and vassal state of previous Chinese dynasties.¹² Certainly, counter-narratives exist: the Qing's superior technological achievements and production of armaments in arsenals prompted most contemporary reporters to anticipate Qing triumph over Meiji Japan in the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95). Because of political in-fighting, the Qing navy was unable to present a united front against Meiji Japan.¹³ Ultimately, Japan won that conflict, and Port Arthur (present-day Lushun) became the center of imperialist invasions.

Both the Japanese and Russian states sought control of Lushun, the distinct ice-free and warm-water port at Liaodong Peninsula of Northeastern Asia, for the purpose of navy defense and maritime trade with European countries and other Western countries.¹⁴ Lushun, also called Port Arthur initially by Imperial Russia, is located in Dalian City, Liaoning Province at the present time. Significantly, Lushun has been an advantageous natural port city facing the Bohai Gulf in the Liaodong Peninsula, and it was one of the few vital seaports as the naval entrance to Northeastern China.

With the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), we see the complicated historical context with different geopolitical powers vying for control of this well-positioned port city. The Russo-Japanese War centered in Lushun, and Lushun's topographical resources were one of the essential factors that caused this conflict.¹⁵ Russian and

¹² Wang, Zheng. *Never Forget National Humiliation*, pp. 54.

¹³ Meng, Yue. "Hybrid Science versus Modernity: The Practice of the Jiangnan Arsenal, 1864-1897." *EASTM* 16 (January 1999): 13-52. See more details in this Meng's article about Jiangnan Arsenal. Here, Meng provides another contemporary historical counternarrative that China was expected to win against Imperial Japan in 1895 due to its impressive military capacity and production.

¹⁴ Quested, R.K.I. *Sino-Russian Relations: A Short History*. Sydney, Australia: George Allen & Unwin, 1984.

¹⁵ Cavendish, Richard. "Japan's Attack on Port Arthur: February 8th and 9th, 1904." *History Today* 54, no. 2 (February 2004): 48-49. See also Hudson, Roger. "A Game of Battleships." *History Today* 62, no. 11 (November 2012): 16-17.

Japanese accounts differ.

According to Russian accounts, the completion of the Trans-Siberian Railway connected Manchuria and Russia. Chinese Eastern Railways (CER) in the nineteenth century was a good example. More than that, Russia also sought a maritime short-cut between Vladivostok and Manchuria in order to divert Tsarist attention to the Far East and assist the Qing Court in the transportation construction work in Manchuria.¹⁶

In contrast, according to one Japanese account, Japan considered the "unconditional and permanent occupation of Manchuria by Russia" as prejudicial to Japan's security and interests, and intended to obtain its deserved advantages of treaty ports, especially Lushun, from the *Treaty of Shimonoseki*, which was the result of Japan's victory in the First Sino-Japanese War during 1894-95.¹⁷ The Japanese intention of taking over Lushun apparently precipitated the conflict between Tsarist Russia and Imperialist Japan at the beginning of the 20th century as both powers sought to take advantage of this geographically significant port in Manchuria.

Specifically, the geopolitical realities of the Russo-Japanese War were complicated and tricky: these combined and hybridized not only military but also political and societal encounters, from the west to the east, throughout China, Russia, and Japan. On the one hand, Qing China and Tsarist Russia were in decline, and both almost fell in the 1910s. Even though Qing China had made some technological and military progress, especially in terms of developing the navy since the 1860s, Qing troops were nonetheless defeated by Japan in the First Sino-Japanese War, and the Qing land was in severe danger of dismemberment by imperialist powers.¹⁸ At the same time, Tsarist Russia in the early 1900s experienced internal social crises both from peasants

¹⁶ Quested, R.K.I. *Sino-Russian Relations: A Short History*, pp. 81-82.

¹⁷ Hershey, Amos S., and Susanne W. Hershey. *Modern Japan: Social-Industrial-Political*. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1919.

¹⁸ Hsü, Immanuel C.Y. *The Rise of Modern China*. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.

who were overburdened with heavy taxation and workers who suffered from unmitigated exploitation.¹⁹ On the other hand, after winning the First Sino-Japanese War, Japan had considerable interests in Manchuria and aimed to spread its influence through acquiring territories and transportation construction, including ports and railways.²⁰ Thus, the Russo-Japanese prison, a product of this difficult time period, was created under this hybrid and complicated historical background. It is precisely because of the complex hybridity that the site and its history are worthy of study. In the prison, we see at least two foreign imperialist interventions. Moreover, the disparate but interconnected fields of knowledge from history, politics, archaeology, and museology intertwine in surprising ways. Below, I begin to unfold these intertwined histories.

IV. Brief Introduction to the Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison (LRJP)

The Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison (LRJP) was built in 1902 as cavalry barracks and a field hospital of the Russian Army during the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) under the Tsarist Russia colonial rule of Dalian. After Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War, the buildings were officially occupied by Japanese colonists from 1907 until the Second Sino-Japanese War ended in 1945.²¹ Notably, the site was constructed and used by outside powers, which initiated the Russo-Japanese War in Manchuria. This prison was built and used continuously by two other imperialist countries in a third country, which made Lushun Prison noteworthy in the world. Here, it reflects the considerable influence of imperialism and colonialism on China since the late Qing Dynasty and thus acts as a trauma site for several decades. In this way, the Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison, which was located in Chinese territories but controlled

¹⁹ Quested, R.K.I. *Sino-Russian Relations: A Short History*, pp. 85.

²⁰ Hershey, *Modern Japan*, pp. 277-278.

²¹"Brief History of Lushunkou." Dalian Lushunkou People's Government, Jan. 06, 2021. http://www.dllsk.gov.cn/lsk_ls.asp.

by either Russia or Japan for fifty years, represented the shadow of imperialism and colonialism in Northeastern China.

V. The State and the LRJP Former Site

Dalian was liberated at the end of World War II, and the Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison (LRJP) was disintegrated when Japan capitulated on August 15, 1945. After the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established in 1949, the LRJP was restored comprehensively by the Communist Chinese government in the 1950s and regarded as a "difficult heritage" (*Kunnan yichan* 困难遗产).²² Since then, Luda Garrison under the People's Liberation Army has operated this prison site. During the late years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the Russo-Japan prison site was supervised by the Revolutionary Committee of Luda City (*Lüda shi* 旅大市), which decided to restore this old historical site in 1970.²³ After nearly a year of restoration, the site exhibition hall of the LRJP was officially opened to the public in July 1971.

After the Reform and Opening Up (*Gaige kaifang* 改革开放) since 1978, the operation of the LRJP was normalized and regularized by the local government. What this means is that the Dalian government took charge of the exhibition of the LRJP Museum, including the organization of exhibition halls inside the site, the price of museum tickets, and funding affiliated historical institutions. In December 1983, operating the former Lushun Prison site was transferred from Luda Garrison to the

²² Huang, Shu-Mei, and Hyun-Kyung Lee. "Difficult Heritage Diplomacy? Re-Articulating Places of Pain and Shame as World Heritage in Northeast Asia." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 25, no. 2 (May 22, 2018): 143–59. For the "difficult heritage" (*Kunnan yichan* 困难遗产), its official governmental full title is "Major Historical and Cultural Site Protected at the National Level" (*Quanguo zhongdian wenwu baohu danwei* 全国重点文物保护单位), which refers to the highest level of cultural heritage with significant historical, artistic or scientific value at national level by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage in China. See also Figure 3: Sign Indicating the Lushun Prison Museum is a Major Historical and Cultural Site Protected at the National Level 全国重点文物保护单位—旅顺监狱旧址. [Photo].

²³ Luda City (*Lüda shi* 旅大市): previous formal name of current Dalian City (*Dalian shi* 大连市) from 1950 to 1981.

Dalian Municipal People's Government. More than that, by renaming the site as "Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison Site Museum," it was expanded from an exhibition hall to a historical museum in 2003. Additionally, because Dalian People's Government encouraged historical research, the Dalian Institute of Modern History (*Dalian jindaishi yanjiusuo* 大连市近代史研究所) was established as a joint research organization in the LRJP Museum with municipal governmental funding and support.²⁴

VI. LRJP Museum: A Place to Learn the Traumas

The Dalian Municipal Government altered the name of the site, which indicates the evolution of the museum's functions and status. In 1992, the LRJP former site's official name has changed from the "Lushun Imperialist Invasion Remains Depository" (*Lüshun diguozhuyi qinhua yiji baoguansuo* 旅顺帝国主义侵华遗迹保管所) to "Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison Site Exhibition Hall" (*Lüshun ri'e jianyu jiuzhi chenlieguan* 旅顺日俄监狱旧址陈列馆).²⁵ Besides, it formally renamed as its current and prevailing title of "Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison Former Site Museum" (*Lüshun Ri'e Jianyu Jiuzhi Bowuguan* 旅顺日俄监狱旧址博物馆) in 2003.²⁶ Notably, with the intervention and support of the municipal government, the Lushun Prison was transformed from a simple "remains depository" (*Yiji baoguansuo* 遗迹保管所) to a complicated "museum" (*Bowuguan* 博物馆). In other words, the Lushun Prison Museum not only takes the responsibility for collection, conservation, and classification of the historical remains but plays a more communicative role of a "public educator" to

²⁴ Overview of the History Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison Site Museum <http://www.lsprison.com/list-10.html#12>

²⁵ Overview of the History Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison Site Museum <http://www.lsprison.com/list-10.html#12>

²⁶ Overview of the History Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison Site Museum <http://www.lsprison.com/list-10.html#12>

lead its audience to acquire a remembrance of the past in an authoritative narrative.²⁷

The Lushun Prison Museum, interestingly, performs as an instrumental and strategic public educator presenting the traumatic and humiliating history of modern China in order to formulate citizens' constructed memory and underline the national identity. I argue that there are four essential conditions of this museum presentation in this instrumental process: 1) History; 2) Constructed Memory; 3) Collective Historical Consciousness; 4) National Identity.²⁸ In addition, three strategies are involved in the transitions from the previous conditions to the following ones: 1) Narrowed Perspectives; 2) Traumatic Emphasis; 3) Patriotic Education.

There is no denying that the Lushun Prison Museum provides an engaging narrative of the history behind the LRJP and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) with abundant historical primary evidence, but this narrative is singular and narrow; as such, it misses the centrality of discourse to national history. A museum, according to modern museological scholars, is a "site of the production of knowledge and cultural sensibilities," aiming at "collecting, ordering, representing and preserving" the information and stories from the past.²⁹ From a theoretical viewpoint, museums use a multitude of antiquities, historical texts, and pictures to help those who visit these sites have a further understanding of the past. However, the authority behind the LRJP Museum has a biased inclination to deal solely with the Chinese national history traumas at the expense of other perspectives. The museum signage marginalizes the Russian and Japanese accounts by omitting not only their perspective but even by erasing their language in the whole presentation of the Russo-Japanese War. By using this way of remembrance, the narration of the humiliating past is narrowed with an

²⁷ Simine, Silke Arnold-de. *Mediating Memory in the Museum: Trauma, Empathy, Nostalgia*, pp. 8.

²⁸ See Figure 4: *Model of Remembrance of the History behind the Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison (LRJP) Museum*. Created by Sheldon Xie.

²⁹ Simine, pp. 7. See also Crane, Susan A. *Museum and Memory*, pp. 2.

emphasis on victimization, which oversimplifies the complexities of the given historical event and approaches the historical interstate encounter "in simple terms of good and evil, victims and perpetrators."³⁰

Furthermore, with narrowed perspectives on this piece of national humiliating history, the LRJP Museum inculcates its visitors to generate a collective constructed memory through focus on trauma throughout the museum exhibitions. As neuroscientists maintain, memory is considered as a process of recreation in which people, societies, or other subjects can "act out their ever-changing relationship to the past."³¹ That means memory can be altered, retrieved, and reproduced in the space of the LRJP Museum, where visitors are immersed only in the difficult past they have not themselves experienced firsthand. At this moment, museum visitors are not just bystanders but "secondary witnesses" or "secondary victims" who are encompassed with authentic historical testimonies or representations of traumatic incidents displayed by the authority behind the LRJP Museum, including the manifold restored cells and torture rooms.³² In contrast to spectators, these witnesses or victims are more inclined to engage with this national humiliation in the modern history of China and particularly with distress on a personal and emotional level. Therein, through the emotional investment in this "vicarious suffering," the LRJP Museum by highlighting displays of national traumas is so evocative that visitors are imbued in a victim-centric remembrance of the complicated national history with strong empathy for the nation state in their consciousness.³³

Another aspect of the LRJP Museum is its public and educational role in

³⁰ Simine, pp. 18.

³¹ Loftus, Elisabeth. 1995. "The Reality of Illusory Memories", in Daniel L. Schacter (ed.), *Memory Distortions: How Minds, Brains and Societies Reconstruct the Past*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 47-68.

³² Simine, pp. 38.

³³ Simine, pp. 28. See also Crane, Susan A. Introduction in *Museum and Memory*, pp. 1-13.

promoting patriotism throughout its exhibitions. The instruction that the LRJP Museum transmits is concerned about the questions of "power, authority, and ideology."³⁴ Notably, the exhibitions of the state-sponsored LRJP Museum are expected to represent and reflect "a broad social or at least political consensus" of the ruling party of China, the CCP.³⁵ Additionally, the global popular trauma culture among the public commemorations since the 1990s provides a foundation for the authority's political investments and ideological implications in the narrativization of the LRJP Museum. By complementing the propaganda of revolutionary values and combining the glorious history of the CCP since the 1930s in this given context of national humiliation, the LRJP Museum not only strengthens the citizens' reorganization of the traumatic and shameful side of their nation's history but stimulates the sense of belonging towards their national identity as well as their recognition of the CCP's legitimacy.

VII. The Layout of Lushun Prison Museum

Now, I will take you on a tour of the whole Lushun Prison Museum from a visitor's perspective. It is essential to take into further consideration how the Lushun Prison Museum is constructed and how the exhibitions inside are displayed in a victim-centric and nationalist narrative. The design of the exhibition halls in the LRJP Museum bolsters a nationalist traumatic narrative by presenting these historical heritages from those brutal and unforgettable wars in Chinese national history. Both the construction and organizing principles maximize the authentic appearance of the LRJP in the early twentieth century by restoring the prison cells and preserving primary sources from textual materials to battlefield remains in the imperialist wars. These principles stress revolutionary historical events since the early 1900s and even after 1949 when the

³⁴ Simine, pp. 21.

³⁵ Simine, pp. 2.

People's Republic of China was established.

As a tourist attraction in Port Arthur, Liaoning Peninsula, the Lushun Russo-Japan Prison Museum integrates historical relics of various prisons and special exhibitions of antiquities left from the Russo-Japanese War, World War I, and World War II. This prison museum covers an area of 26,000 square meters with 275 various prison cells and 15 workshops where 2000 people were imprisoned at the same time. In addition, outside the original prison wall, there are kilns, forest farms, orchards, and vegetable plots, where detainees were forced to do hard labor.

As of my summer visit of 2019, the LRJP Museum consists of two main exhibition sections: one of that is the Old Prison Relics Exhibition, and the other one is the Special Thematic Exhibition. When tourists pass the Lushun Prison Site's front door, they are guided to view these historical sites in sequence in the first Old Prison Relics Exhibition section. The available sites in this section include: the panoramic sand table (*Quanjing shapan* 全景沙盘), the East Body Checking Room (*Dongbu jianshen shi* 东部检身室), the East Side Cells (*Dongce laofang* 东侧牢房), An Jung-Geun Cell (*An zhong'gen de laofang* 安重根的牢房), the Dark Chambers/Cells (*An lao* 暗牢), the Guard Lounge (*Kanshou xiuxishi* 看守休息室), the Guarding Department (*Jiehu xi* 戒护系), the Torture Room (*Xingxun shi* 刑讯室), the Watch Station (*Kanshou tai* 看守台), Relics Exhibition Room (*Yiwu zhan* 遗物展), the Education Room (*Jiaohui shi* 教诲室), the West Side Cells (*Xi'ce laofang* 西侧牢房), the West Body Checking Room (*Xibu jianshen shi* 西部检身室), the First Workshop (*Jianyu diyi gongchang* 监狱第一工厂), the Triangle (*Sanjiaodi* 三角地), the North Gate (*Beidamen* 北大门), the Medical Affairs Department (*Yihuxi* 医护系), the Gallows Room/Place (*Jiaoxing*

shi/chang 绞刑室/场), and the Prison Cemetery Restoration Site (*Mudi fuyuan qu* 墓地复原区).³⁶ This old relics exhibition vividly recreates the cruel historical scenes of Lushun Prison under the colonial Russo-Japanese rules. These scenes intentionally recur in front of visitors' eyes in live-action.

After crossing the prison cemetery restoration site, tourists might visit several old-style bungalows currently used for special thematic exhibitions. This second exhibition section contains *The Japanese-Russian Invasion and Occupation of Luda Material Evidence Exhibition* (*Ri'e qinzhan lüda wuzheng chenlie zhan* 日俄侵占旅大物证陈列展), which displays abundant primary materials, including roughly one hundred historical photos that underline the 40-years colonization of Dalian since the Russo-Japanese War.³⁷ In addition, *The Display of Hell Fire* (*Diyu liehuo zhan* 地狱烈火展) focuses on reflecting the personal anecdotes of those Chinese heroes who were imprisoned and, in many cases, later killed by Japanese or Russian authorities during the wars. This display utilizes pictures, relics, landscapes or dioramas, and sculptures to "recall and tell stories" of these traumatic histories at the individual level.³⁸

The last exhibition, *The International Soldiers in Lushun* (*Guoji zhanshi zai lüshun* 国际战士在旅顺), memorializes heroic revolutionary deeds of "universal anti-fascist warriors" from China, Korea, the Soviet Union, and other countries involved in maintaining justice and peace in World War II as victors.³⁹ This exhibition mixes

³⁶ From *Basic Display of Historical Exhibition of Lushun Japanese-Russian Prison* 旅顺日俄监狱史实展基本陈列. <http://www.lsprison.com/view-7-2d64f21987d740c1a56afe020eb8b50f.html>

³⁷ See Figure 5: Preface to *The Japanese-Russian Invasion and Occupation of Luda Material Evidence Exhibition* [Photo].

³⁸ From *The Display of Hell Fire* 地狱烈火展 in *Special Exhibition in the Lushun Prison Museum* 旅顺监狱博物馆专题陈列. <http://www.lsprison.com/view-8-1b7d0b47d98d4ed2894aa649a2bc6742.html>

³⁹ From *The International Soldiers in Lushun* 国际战士在旅顺 in *Special Exhibition in the Lushun Prison Museum* 旅顺监狱博物馆专题陈列. <http://www.lsprison.com/view-8-5d2697e6e2424a608b2311949945a776.html>

primary material sources and anecdotal experiences at the individual level to narrate the history of the Lushun Prison through a tragic and heroic storytelling perspective to provoke nationalism and patriotism domestically and universally to impacted victims as well.

At the last stop of the Lushun Prison Museum visit, there are temporary exhibitions at separate exhibition halls, addressing patriotism (*Aiguo zhuyi* 爱国主义) and revolutionary spirit (*Geming jingshen* 革命精神) education. These displays change seasonally, while the themes of the temporary exhibitions are permanent. At first glance, it may seem that this section seems to distract from the whole presentation of Lushun Prison and its history—they focus on other historical occurrences throughout modern China's history, even happening outside of Northeastern China. However, upon further reflection, I maintain that these displays are interconnected with Western imperialist invasions and interstate wars in China, and that these displays actually offer other layers through which to look back on the so-called traumatic past throughout the twentieth century.

For instance, the temporary exhibitions presented the oral history of veterans who participated in the Second Sino-Japanese War and the history of *September 18 Incident* (*Jiuyiba shibian* 九一八事变, also known as *Mukden Incident*), which is regarded as the starting point of the Anti-Japanese War.⁴⁰ Therein, these sections take

⁴⁰ From *Temporary Exhibition in the Lushun Prison Museum* 旅顺监狱博物馆临时展览. The displays in this section vary by seasons, and they update new exhibitions based on significant anniversaries or national holidays. One of the examples of the exhibition mentioned in the text is the *Exhibition of Oral History of Anti-Japanese War Veterans* 抗战老兵口述史展 presented during the fall of 2020, which commemorated the 75th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War in 1945. Other exhibition example is *Exhibition of History of September 18th Incident* 九一八事变史实展 presented during September and October of 2011 in memory of the 80th anniversary of the September 18th Incident which happened in 1931. <http://www.lsprison.com/list-6.html>

the visitors zooming out of the present context not only to inspect the humiliating national history from other layers but also to rebroadcast what was going on in the rest of China under the humiliating invasions in the 1900s. Notably, this temporary exhibition section integrates patriotic education with the national revolutionary deeds of the Eighth Route Army (*Balujun* 八路军) or the New Fourth Army (*Xinsijun* 新四军) as well as historical exploits contributed by Chinese Communist Party during the Anti-Japanese War and even after 1949.⁴¹

VIII. Black Placard: Traumatic Emphasis

Now, I will lead you through the exhibit with specific emphasis on imperialistic aggression and national traumas because it sets a foundational tone of the Lushun Prison Museum for visitors in terms of their first impression. The first placard of the prison museum is almost two meters by one meter in size and includes signage in Chinese, Korean, and English. With its dark black background, the preface of the Lushun Prison Museum creates a severe and oppressive perception of its history.

Furthermore, the emphasis of this narrative on imperialistic aggression is also shown not only in the museum's use of specific languages but also in its narrative tone. The tone of these words or phrases applied in the descriptions of the museum have an intense inclination to stand with the side of the Chinese and victims to accuse those imperialist countries' of crimes since this prison was first built. Here is the English translation of the foreword of the LRJP Museum:

It's a fascist prison. The primary purpose of this prison was to massacre and imprison the anti-Japanese compatriots. The prison is the

⁴¹ See contents from *Temporary Exhibition in the Lushun Prison Museum* 旅顺监狱博物馆临时展览. <http://www.lsprison.com/list-6.html>

microcosm of modern imperialistic aggression to China.⁴²

In this quote on the placard, the LRJP Museum employs the words "fascist" (*Faxisi* 法西斯), "massacre" (*Datasha* 大屠杀) as well as the phrase "the microcosm of modern imperialistic aggression to China" (*Jindai diguo zhuyi qinhuashi de suoying* 近代帝国主义侵华史的缩影) to accuse imperialist Japan and Russia of their encroachments on China and to stress the colonial and imperialistic oppression of these two actors from the perspective of the victims, as well as to bolster a sense of Chinese national identity. Thus, from the beginning of the tourists' visit to the museum, the signs prompt visitors to be immersed in a distressing and bitter environment in which they cannot help but understand twentieth-century China as a victim of foreign aggression and national traumas.

IX. Audience: Omission of Languages

Besides the tone, the omission of specific languages underscores the theme of national trauma in this museum. One of the characteristics of historical memory is engaging in "selective remembering" and "selective forgetting."⁴³ Highlighting a chosen trauma or simply erasing other perspectives creates a specific historical memory. Here, at this museum, all of the exhibition's written descriptions, such as the placard "Operating Schedule," are provided in Chinese, Korean, and English. Japanese and Russian languages are missing, and these were two primary actors in this encounter.⁴⁴ Due to the adverse history that LRJP represents with these two national actors, this language choice reflects the demography of the majority of visitors. Besides, it is also

⁴² See Figure 6: Preface to the Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison Museum [Placard]. Quote translation in Chinese by Lushun Prison Museum: “旅顺日俄监狱是...用以囚禁和屠杀我爱国同胞和抗日志士的法西斯监狱。它的历史是近代帝国主义侵华史的缩影。”

⁴³ Wang, Zheng. *Never Forget National Humiliation*, pp. 46.

⁴⁴ See Figure 7: Operating Schedule [Placard].

a deliberate decision by the Chinese municipal government in Dalian since the early-1980s as they began working on placards or markers at the museum exhibition for opening to visitors. In short, the LRJP Museum, operated by the Chinese municipal government, delivers an image of a noble past from a victim-centric angle rather than a tarnished past to narrate the history with the deliberate effort to choose certain languages over others and to exclude certain voices.

X. Torture Rooms: Traumatic Disclosure

In the museum's exhibition, there are more than 50 rooms that stress the torture of the prisoners' suffering, which highlights the cruel crimes committed by Russian and Japanese imperialists. The first room that the visitors enter is the "West Body Checking Room," where detainees had to be naked to get checked twice a day before they came and went from the workshop.⁴⁵ What is more, the "Gallows Room" and the "Torture Room" were two standard rooms that display a variety of torturing tools like twisted ropes, handcuffs, ankles, and iron cudgels, in order to deliver a strong sense of how the prisoners, primarily Chinese anti-imperialist activists, were tortured and suffered in these places.⁴⁶ Most terrifyingly, the "Dark Cell," located in the basement of the prison with absolute darkness except a small circular hole for wardens to check on prisoners, was used to punish the prisoners who fought and broke the prison rules.⁴⁷ Here, visitors learn how anti-imperialist activists in prison were humiliated by these atrocious torture rooms and tools. These exhibitions give the audience an uncomfortable and ghastly impression of the imperialist brutality and stimulate sentiments of pity towards these national victims.

⁴⁵ See Figure 8: The West Body Checking Room [Photo], and Figure 9: Description of the West Body Checking Room [Placard].

⁴⁶ See Figure 10: The Gallows Room [Photo], Figure 11: The Torture Room 1 [Photo], Figure 12: The Torture Room 2 [Photo].

⁴⁷ See Figure 13: The Dark Cell [Photo].

XI. Marginalized Angle: The Role of Religion

Another angle that reveals the biases of the LRJP Museum is the interpretation of the role of religion in the LRJP Museum. Throughout the whole exhibition of the LRJP Museum, the primary sources related to the religions were extremely limited to one statue of Buddha in the relics display with a concise description:

With A Statue of Buddha placed for worship and practice of reciting scripture in this Lecture Room, the prison authorities purpose to lull and sap prisoners' fighting will. ⁴⁸

In this description, the LRJP Museum condemned the role of Buddhism in the Lushun Prison politically used by the prison authorities (either Tsarist Russia or Imperial Japan) to undermine warriors' patriotic passion and fighting will. However, the role of Buddhism here made this authoritative narrative much more complex, since this instance of religion in the Lushun Prison is different based on what standpoints a given authority proposes. From the perspective of Russian and Japanese imperialists, the Buddhist statue in the prison might be considered as a humanitarian measure for those detainees to take care of their mental health. In contrast, from the viewpoint of victimhood that Chinese nationals or other warriors suffered the tortures in this prison, the utilization of Buddhism could be another "soft" coercion to make those anti-fascist activists surrender to imperialist aggressions. Thus, in this case, the role of religion throughout the presentation of the LRJP Museum is tricky to articulate.

Moreover, the other factors to explain the complication and marginalization of this angle on religion are the ideology behind the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

⁴⁸ See Figure 14: Statue of Buddha in Education Room [Photo]. Quote at the placard in Chinese: "狱方在教诲室拜佛念经，旨在麻痹和消磨被关押者的反抗斗志。"

Based on the Marxist and Leninist ethos which advocates atheism, the ideology of the CCP infiltrates the bureaucracy and the whole society.⁴⁹ Precisely, the teachings of religion, such as Buddhism, are contradictory to the party's ethos and values of atheist advocacy. As the description placard for the Buddhist statue reveals, worship and similar practices were deemed detrimental to the revolutionary spirits. For this reason, the role of religion may not be the mainstream angle to boost the remembrance of the national humiliation and invoke nationalist sentiments because of the CCP's ideological essence. Although the critical problem in this issue is about the utilization of religion, which is neutral rather than the religion itself, the authority behind the LRJP Museum tends to marginalize this angle on religion in the Lushun Prison due to the state-run museum's apparent adoption of the CCP's political ideology.

XII. Patriotism

Near the exit of the LRJP, there are some galleries featuring the CCP's history from the 1920s to late 1940s when China struggled with imperialistic invasions from Japan and other imperialist states under semi-colonial conditions, and several big political propaganda posters are placed outside these galleries, which attract visitors' attention.⁵⁰ These propaganda posters function as eager advocates for the audience, particularly the Chinese visitors, not to forget China's humiliating past. In fact, the LRJP Museum has been officially designated in 2005 to serve the function of expressing not only nationalism but patriotism to the public.

In general, the CCP takes history, especially history since the nineteenth century, as a significant tool of political management. For the governance of the CCP, the

⁴⁹ McGregor, Richard. 2010. *The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers*, pp. 30.

⁵⁰ Figure 15: Propaganda Poster [Photo]. Quote Translation of the Propaganda Poster: In-depth study and implementation of Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese characteristics for a New Era 深入学习贯彻习近平新时代中国特色社会主义思想.

narrative of history is a vital and expanding source of patriotism. With the "ceaseless harping" on the Chinese century of national humiliation at the hands of foreign imperialist powers, the party can facilitate a top-down patriotic education campaign among the masses via propaganda in the media, schools, and public sites such as historical museums, mobilizing them to comprehend the "historical inevitability of the CCP's establishment."⁵¹ By doing so, the CCP hopes to generate fervor for their nation as well as the party itself. Therefore, patriotism is deeply intertwined with the leadership of the party, preserving the CCP's prestige and legitimacy as they relate to the national history.

In 1988, this former prison site was recognized as national and cultural relic worthy of preservation by the Chinese government with a memorial and educational meaning—to remind the Chinese people of the painful history of the imperialist invasion of China. After the LRJP Museum was opened to the public in July 1971, it was enriched with a variety of introductions, descriptions, and annotations for the original cells, dark chambers, and other chambers in the former prison. The Lushun Prison Museum was not only regarded by China's National Cultural Heritage Administration (*Guojia wenwuju* 国家文物局) as one of the national critical cultural relics' protection units, but it was also awarded the title of "the Education Demonstration Base for National Patriotism" (*Quanguo aiguo zhuyi jiaoyu shifan jidi* 全国爱国主义教育示范基地) by the Central Committee Propaganda Department of CCP (*Zhonggong zhongyang xuanchuanbu* 中共中央宣传部) in 2005. For this reason, it effectively promoted school visits for students in Dalian: it is free for all school children accompanied by their teachers to visit LRJP Museum as voluntary extra-

⁵¹ McGregor, Richard. 2010. *The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers*, pp. 236.

curricular activities, to have a better understanding of the oppressive and painful past, particularly surrounding the Russo-Japanese War. Thereby, governmental influence shapes the tone and angle to narrate this historical site and even reaches the educational level of the school system for the purposes of intense nationalist propaganda and patriotic education.

XIII. Universal Nationalism in East Asia

Recently, the exhibitions of the LRJP Museum are more inclined to promote the value of nationalism and patriotism as a universal value among East Asian countries. With an emphasis on the expression of national identity, not only can people be informed about the severe imperialist oppression Chinese and Korean people, particularly the patriots, experienced nearly a hundred years ago, but this narrative of expression can also resonate with people from the East Asian area who had a similar oppressive history to the Chinese. Korea is one of them. A specific example of Korea's resonance with China is the gallery exhibiting An Jung-geun's (1879-1910) heroic stories in LRJP Museum.⁵² An Jung-geun was a Korean anti-Japanese and Korean-Independence activist in the early twentieth century who was arrested and killed by the Imperial Japanese military in Lushun Prison in 1910. In this gallery, there are plenty of photos of the jails where he was imprisoned, his calligraphies completed while in prison, and material artifacts, such as his clothes, alongside Korean descriptions.

At the end corner of the gallery, a small memorial hall is located for people who come to visit to pay respects to An and lay flowers. The narrative of presenting this prominent Korean victim aims to replace the "tarnished past" and restore both Chinese and Korean nations' honor with a noble and heroic history about compatriots' sacrifice.

⁵² See Figure 16: An Jung-geun Immolating Place [Photo], and Figure 17: An Jung-geun Memorial Hall [Photo].

This is arguably meant to raise empathy among viewers as they remember the oppressive past from a glorious national perspective and strengthen the diplomatic connections between Chinese and Korean governments through this joint cultural sentiment towards the past.

XIV. Conclusion

The exhibition of the history behind the LRJP Museum is incomprehensive since the narrative of presenting its history is both victim-centric and Sino-centric. In this case, from an explicit examination of the Russo-Japanese War and the historical backdrop of the "century of humiliation," the LRJP museum has witnessed national traumas, shames, and sufferings brought by various state powers. Therefore, the contemporary narrative of Lushun Prison Museum, as an emblem of the national and historical heritage of the humiliating past in China, has been formed and shaped resting on this remarkable historical encounter through the nationalistic and patriotic perspectives politically used by the Chinese government.

It seems impossible for a nation to recall its traumatic and humiliating history with objectivity. However, it is still worthwhile for the curators and authorities behind the museums to go in-depth to figure out an appropriate narrative for all countries involved in this historical encounter. How should we commemorate a given nation's past of humiliation and traumas in such a cultural place, the museum? Memorialize it, but do not be trapped in it; learn from it, but leave hatred behind.

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Appendix

Figure 1: Lushun Russo-Japanese Former Prison Site Museum [Photo].



Figure 2: Entry Tablet of Lushun Russo-Japanese Former Prison Site [Photo].



Figure 3: Sign Indicating the Lushun Prison Museum is a Major Historical and Cultural Site Protected at the National Level [Photo].

Figure 4: Model of Remembrance of the History Behind the Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison (LRJP) Museum [Image]. Created by Sheldon Xie.

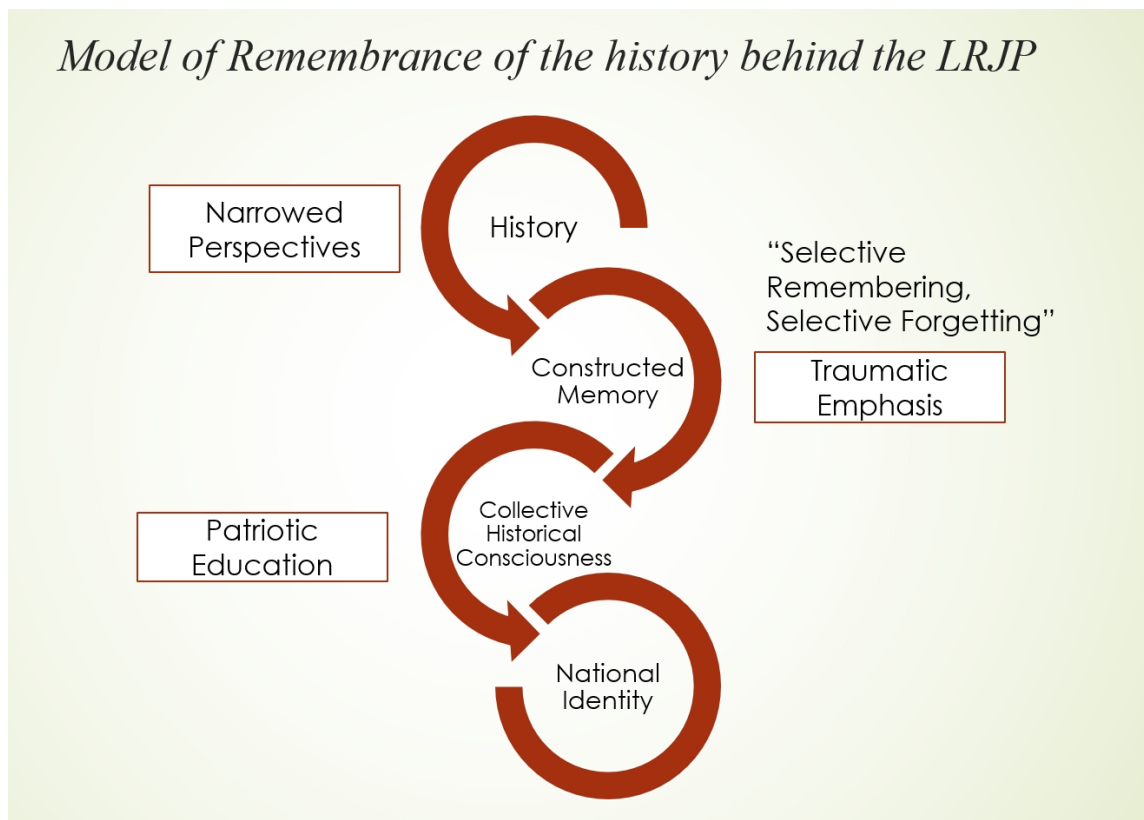


Figure 5: Preface to The Japanese-Russian Invasion and Occupation of Luda Material Evidence Exhibition [Photo].

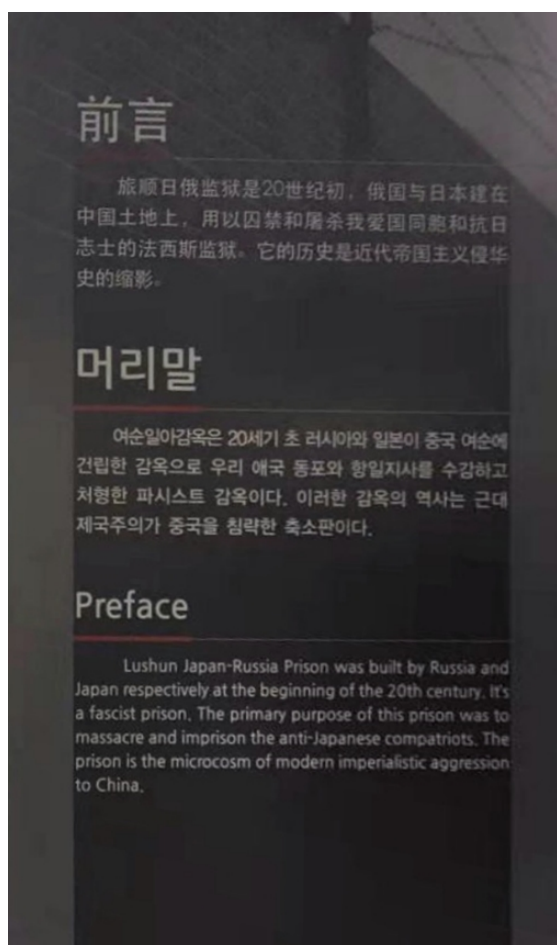


Figure 6: Preface to the Lushun Russo-Japanese Prison Museum [Placard].

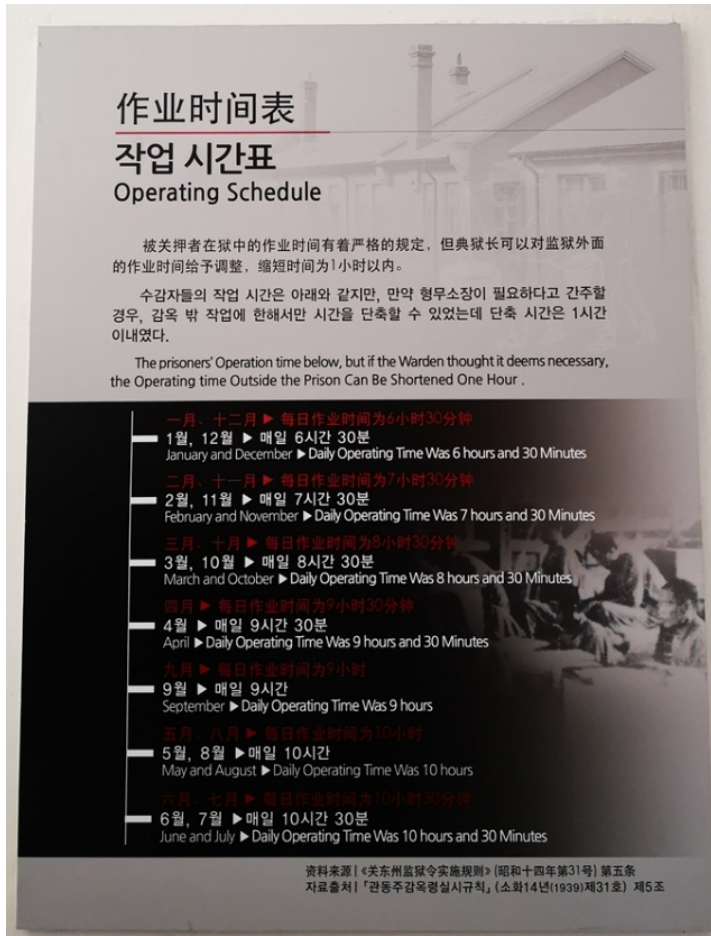


Figure 7: Operating Schedule [Placard].



Figure 8: The West Body Checking Room [Photo].



Figure 9: Description of the West Body Checking Room [Placard].



Figure 10: The Gallows Room [Photo].



Figure 11: The Torture Room 1 [Photo].



Figure 12: The Torture Room 2 [Photo].



Figure 13: The Dark Cell [Photo].



Figure 14: Statue of Buddha in Education Room [Photo].



Figure 15: Propaganda Poster [Photo].



Figure 16: An Jung-geun Immolating Place [Photo].



Figure 17: An Jung-geun Memorial Hall [Photo].