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Nouville and Purana Qila Internment Camps and Collective Memory

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ABSTRACT
Nouville in New Caledonia and Purana Qila in India both housed interned Japanese civilians during the Second World War. While both camps involved the 'reuse' of existing sites, Purana Qila's use is largely forgotten while Nouville's is officially acknowledged. This article contrasts the 'forgetting' of Purana Qila and the 'remembering' of Nouville and argues that the presence of a local group advocating for Nouville has served to ensure that its use as an internment camp is part of the collective memory. The lack of a similar group in India has seen Purana Qila's use as an internment camp largely forgotten.

Introduction

Some locations enter a global collective memory, e.g. Hiroshima, while other locations are part of a local collective memory but are not necessarily remembered elsewhere.[1] For instance, Cowra in New South Wales, Australia, is part of a local collective memory as a prisoner of war (POW) camp due to an attempted breakout by Japanese POWs on the night of 5 August 1944.[2] Cowra is not, however, part of the collective memory of POW camps in other countries, including in Japan. Some locations are

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[1]In his explanation of how Hiroshima made a 'global memory culture', Zwigenberg argues that memory studies scholars tend to privilege the 'nation' in their discussions. Ran Zwigenberg, *Hiroshima: The Origins of Global Memory Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 3-4.
[2]For details of the Cowra Breakout see Teruhiko Asada, *Cowra: The Night of a Thousand Suicides* (translated from Japanese by Ray Cowan), (North Ryde, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1985). Alison Starr also discusses the breakout and the site of the POW camp as a site of reconciliation in Alison Starr, 'Forever Alongside: War Cemeteries as Sites of Enemy Reconciliation' *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus,* 20, 3 (2022). https://apjjf.org/2022/10/Starr . Accessed 26 August 2024.

remembered for a period but then the memory of them fades and they are forgotten. Some forgotten locations may re-enter the collective memory when a group comes together and remembers them. The two places discussed here – Purana Qila (Old Fort) in New Delhi, India and Nouville in New Caledonia – existed for many years before they became sites for the internment of Japanese civilians in the Asia-Pacific theatre of the Second World War. Since 1945, the memories of the camps have followed different trajectories.

This article focuses on the remembering and forgetting of Purana Qila and Nouville as internment camps for Japanese. In doing so, it discusses how Nouville's history as an internment camp is now locally known, while Purana Qila's history as a civilian internment camp is largely unknown locally but was for many years remembered by the former internees who had formed an alumni association – the *Indowara-kai* – based in Japan.[3] The article suggests that one of the differences in the local memorialisation of the camps is the presence of a community of descendants in New Caledonia whereas no such community exists in India since all the internees were repatriated. Interestingly, Nouville's history as a site of internment was also largely forgotten until the 1970s, when the descendants of those who were interned there began to look for information on what happened to their ancestors after they were arrested in December 1941 and taken to Nouville. As a consequence of the descendants' search for answers, Nouville's role as a camp became better known and entered the descendants' collective memory, if not New Caledonia's collective memory.

The difference in the memories of the camps developed despite substantial physical remainders of both former camps.[4] That is, to this day there are tangible and visible remnants of both camps. The Nouville internment camp is part of the *Site Historique De l'Il Nou,* a designated historical site, which includes the *Musée du bagne à Nouméa* (Prison Museum of Noumea).[5] Purana Qila, which houses the Museum of Archaeology displaying items unearthed during an excavation of the site by the Archaeological Survey of India, is open daily.

[3]Both sites housed civilian internees only. Japanese officials in New Caledonia were held under house arrest at home until they were transferred to Australia. The Japanese officials in British-India, together with those brought from other locations including Burma and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) were interned at Mussoorie.

[4]See Anoma Pieris' 'Carceral Archipelago' for an introduction to what remains of the internment camps in Australia, New Zealand and Singapore used in World War II. In Pieris, Anoma & Lynne Horiuchi, *The Architecture of Confinement: Incarceration Camps of the Pacific War, (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), pp. 38-40.

[5]The website for the museum (in French) is available at: https://ile-nou.com/ (Accessed 14 January 2024). The United States' military's use of Nouville is similarly not acknowledged.

Materials used in comparing the histories and memorialisation of the two camps includes archival materials held by the National Archives of India (NAI), the Archives de Nouvelle-Calédonie and the National Archives of Australia (NAA). Pieces published in Japanese in the *Indowara-kai*'s newsletter (*Indowara tsūshin)* are also used to show how the former internees in Purana Qila remembered the site. Lastly, the author conducted fieldwork in 2017 and 2018 in New Delhi and in 2019 and 2022 in New Caledonia as part of research into the internment of Japanese civilians in both locations.

Collective Memory and Internment Camps holding Japanese Civilians

Around 220,000 Japanese civilians resident overseas were arrested and interned around the world following the outbreak of the Pacific theatre of the Second World War.[6] This figure includes over eleven hundred Japanese arrested in New Caledonia and 131 arrested in British-India. The Japanese arrested in British-India were joined in internment in Purana Qila by over two thousand Japanese transported from Malaya, seventy-one from Ceylon and seventy-four from Burma.[7] According to Hisako Katō who was interned in Purana Qila as a child, at its peak two thousand nine hundred and forty four Japanese were interned there.[8] While the arrest and internment of Japanese-Americans, Japanese-Canadians, and Japanese-Australians, including in all cases some local citizens, has attracted substantial academic and popular research, less attention has been given to the arrest and internment of Japanese in other locations, including British-India and New Caledonia.[9] The relative invisibility of the Japanese internees

[6]More than half of the Japanese arrested and interned were Japanese-Americans (125,000) or Japanese-Canadians (22,000).

[7]Ward, Rowena, 'The Transnational in 'Japanese' Civilian Internment Camps in Australia and India', in Sharrad, Paul and D. N. Bandyopadhyay (eds) *Transnational Spaces of India and Australia*, (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022) pp. 35-52.

[8] Hisako Katō, 2017. *[Indo Yokuryū] to [rusonsentōhikō] e no michi,* RINDAS Working Paper no 27. Ryukoku University, available at: https://rindas.ryukoku.ac.jp/data/pub/wp_27.pdf (Accessed 18 October 2023).

[9]For a discussion of the experience of Japanese-Americans and the Japanese Canadians see Roger W. Lotchin *Japanese American Relocation in World War II,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Roger Daniels, Sandra L. Taylor and Harry H.L. Kitano (eds) *Japanese Americans from Relocation to Redress* (revised), (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 2013). For a discussion on the arrest of the Japanese-Australians see, Yuriko Nagata, *Unwanted Aliens* (UQP St Lucia, 1996); Tets Kimura 'Repatriated from Home as Enemy Aliens', *Journal of Australian Studies* 47, 3 (2023) pp. 497-514; Peter Monteath *Captured Lives* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2018). In terms of the Japanese in New Caledonia, see Tadao Kobayashi, *Nyū karedoniatō no nihonjin* (2nd ed) (Tokyo:1981); Mutsumi Tsuda (ed) *Feu Nos Peres*

from these locations and the camps where they were interned can be partly explained by the relatively fewer numbers but this alone does not fully account for their absence in historical documents.

First introduced by Maurice Halbwachs, in the early twentieth century, collective memory refers to the shared memories, information and knowledge held by a group.[10] According to Halbwachs only groups have memories. The concept of collective memory does not preclude individuals having memories of their experiences, sometimes referred to as 'biographical' memories, but individual's memories are only articulated or distributed within the context of a group.[11] Furthermore, different groups hold different memories and as individuals are members of more than one group, their memories are impacted by their interactions with group members. Importantly, members of a group share memories even though individual members may not have experienced the episode remembered. The development of memories of an episode can be spread in a number of different ways including through the viewing of a photo or an image. Even though a photograph or an image may 'not depict the historical truth', and what is visible is only a fragment, the photograph or image can encourage the development of memories or lead to the re-remembering of the episode.[12] Halbwachs' emphasis on group memory has been criticised for failing to recognise the impact of power relations and the fallibility of collective memory. Yet, as Barry Schwartz argues, these criticisms should not mean that the importance of

(Noumea: Comité de l'Exposition, 2006); Rowena Ward, 'The Internment and Repatriation of the Japanese-French Nationals in New Caledonia, 1941-1946' *Portal Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 2017, 14:, 2 pp. 55-67; Benjamin Hiramatsu Ireland, 'The Japanese in New Caledonia: Histories of Citizenship, Incarceration, and Nippo-Kanak Identity' *French Historical Studies* 43: 4 (2020) pp. 667-703. Research on the arrest of the Japanese in the Dutch East Indies is limited although Koike Miyakatsu's diary (*Four Years in a Red Coat* (translated by Hiroko Cockerill with an introduction by Peter Monteath and Yuriko Nagata), (Mile End, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 2022) sheds some light on what happened.

[10]For a discussion of Halbwachs' work see Dmitri Nikulin 'Maurice Halbwachs' in Sven Bernecker & Kourken Michaelian (eds) *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Memory* (Milton: Taylor and Francis, 2017) pp. 528-836; Jeffrey K. Olick 'From Collective Memory to the Sociology of Mnemonic Practices and Products' in Astrid Erll & Ansgar Nünning (eds) *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook,* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 151-162.

[11]Barry Schwartz. 'Rethinking the concept of collective memory', in Anna Lisa Tota & Trever Hagen (eds) *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 9-21.

[12]Till Hilmar 'Storyboards of Remembrance: Representations of the past in visitors' photography at Auschwitz', *Memory Studies* 9: 4 (2015) pp. 455-470.

collective memory be dismissed, especially as the ability to learn about the past is important for human survival.[13] From a different perspective, Diane Barthel-Bourchier argues that both tangible and intangible heritage items can be sources of collective memory. More specifically, she suggests that tangible items can 'provide physical evidence of the past' and 'built heritage is of particular importance because of its relative immobility'.[14] Yet, the existence of built heritage does not necessarily mean that the space or a location's previous use is remembered and enters the collective memory. Rather, in order for the collective memory of a site to develop, a group needs to remember or re-remember it.

In the context of internment camps when a group remembers them, they become part of the collective memory irrespective of whether there are physical remains or not. Camps which are not remembered by a group may still be remembered by individuals, but without the mutual recognition provided by members of a group, the camps are ignored and become invisible. Nevertheless, depending on the extent of the remains of an internment camp's buildings, and/or spaces, these tangible heritage items can provide the physical evidence of an internment camp which allows for the re-remembering and the possible emergence of a collective memory. The processes enabling the past uses to be remembered are site-specific. Rob David in his discussion of the invisibility of the Sefton internment camp vis-à-vis the Hutchinson camp on the Isle of Man, argues that although the buildings for both camps remain, an emphasis on the 'elite minority' of internees housed at the Hutchinson camp over the ordinary internees held at Sefton, meant that the history of the latter camp was ignored.[15] In other instances, other factors facilitate the remembering of a camp.

From a different perspective, Sarah Gensburger discusses the processes which allowed the history of the tangible, physical remains of Nazi labour camps, including the Austerlitz camp, in Paris to be re-remembered. In this case, local activists hoping to stop a development on the site of the Austerlitz camp sought to confirm the veracity of rumours that the building had been a former camp. To this end, they advertised for former internees to come forward and they received replies from a number of former internees who had worked at the site. It transpired that the former internees had been rendered 'mute' and spoke little about their experiences publicly or to their families

[13]Barry Schwartz. 'Rethinking the concept of collective memory', p. 9.
[14]Diane Barthel-Bouchier 'Cultural Heritage: Tangible and intangible markers of Collective Memory, in Anna Lisa Tota & Trever Hagen (eds) *Routledge international Handbook of Memory Studies*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2016) pp. 321-232.
[15]Rob David, 2023. 'Written out of history: The impact of Sefton Camp's post-war invisibility on memory and belonging', in Carr, Gilly and Rachel Pistol (eds) *British Internment and the Internment of Britons: Second World War Camps, History and Heritage*, (London: Bloomsbury Press. 2023), pp. 83-99.

due to a form of guilt complex at having survived the war and the lack of connections with other former internees.[16] Subsequently, an association was established to bring the former internees together and, in the process, the use of the site as a camp became part of the collective memory of camps in Paris. This process, including the role of an association, is not unlike the role played by *L'Amicale Japonaise de Nouvelle Calédonie,* The Association of Japanese Descendants in New Caledonia, as discussed below.

New Caledonia: Japanese Migration and the Pacific War

New Caledonia, a French territory in the South Pacific, is located east of Australia and north of New Zealand. Between 1892 and 1941, over 5,000 Japanese contract labourers moved to New Caledonia to work, primarily in the territory's nickel mines. Whilst the majority of the workers returned to Japan at the end of their contracts, some chose to stay on at least in the short to medium term. Some of those who remained continued to work in the mines but others took up other occupations including farming, running shops or hair salons. The November 1941 census of the Japanese population showed that 1,104 Japanese were resident in the colony, 94.8% of whom were male.[17] Almost one-third (336) lived in Noumea but there were small communities across the territory including 90 in Koumac and 49 in Thio. Both Koumac and Thio have strong connections to the mining industry. Thio is the site of the largest Japanese cemetery in the territory.

In September 1940, New Caledonia aligned with the Free French government-in-exile and this situation continued until the liberation of France in August 1944. Immediately after the Free French government-in-exile declared war on Japan on 8 December 1941, the New Caledonian authorities began arresting Japanese male residents over the age of 18.[18] The arrests were in line with plans for the possibility of the outbreak of war outlined by Australia's Military Mission to New Caledonia in March 1941.[19] Japanese men who lived in and around Noumea were immediately transferred to Nouville for internment. Japanese who lived in other locations, were often arrested and held locally in police cells or similar facilities until they could be transferred to

[16]Sarah Gensburger 'Memory and Space: (Re-reading Halbwachs', in Sarah De Nardi. Hilary Orange, Steven High & Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto (eds) T*he Routledge Handbook of Memory and Place,* (Milton: Taylor and Francis, 2019) pp. 69-75.

[17]Archives de Nouvelle Calédonie (hereinafter ANC) 107W 2852 Census of Japanese Residents dated 24 November 1941. According to the census there were 1,047 males and 57 females.

[18]Japan declared war on Vichy France on 22 September 1940 over Japan's incursion into Indo-China but peace followed soon after. Japan recognised the Vichy regime and did not declare war on France after the 1940 incident.

[19]NAA A2670, 282/1940 Supplement to No 2 to War Cabinet Agenda No 282/1940, dated 16 April 1941.

Nouville.[20] According to a doctor in Bourail, there were 385 Japanese in the local police station when he visited.[21] He also noted that twenty-seven were ill and conditions in the police station were cramped. A small number of the arrested Japanese men were released but most were subsequently re-arrested, and the majority remained in Nouville until they were transported to Australia for further internment. Yochitaro Katō for instance was initially interned on 27 December and then released on 9 February but was reinterned on 11 May 1942.[22] Between 19 December 1941 and 29 May 1942, the *SS Cap des Palmes* made three trips to Australia with Japanese on board and the *SS Cremer* made one trip. In total, over 1,100 Japanese were transferred to Australia on those four trips. The overwhelming majority were men, including an unknown number who left families – wives or partners and children – behind. Most of the family members had little contact with their husbands/fathers/grandfathers after their departure and assumed that they had been forgotten. This situation was partially the result of a lack of a common language: the Japanese men spoke only rudimentary French and most were unable to write it and their families in New Caledonia had limited, if any, knowledge of Japanese. Consequently, a silence emerged about the use of Nouville as an internment camp.[23] Some of these family members became the core of *Amicale Japonaise de Nouvelle Calédonie* (hereinafter '*Amicale*').

The transfer of the Japanese to Australia was in line with an Australian government commitment made in response to a request from the New Caledonian authorities to send 700 Japanese to Australia in the event of war with Japan.[24] After the departure of the internees to Australia, around twenty-five Japanese – most of whom were the fathers of soldiers in the French Army or those too ill to travel – remained in Nouville. Those internees remained in Nouville until after the end of the war. In effect, Nouville was only a large-scale internment camp for the Japanese from December 1941 to May 1942 but housed a small number of internees throughout the war years.

[20]Japanese women and children were not arrested and were permitted to continue living in their own homes until they were transferred to Australia. They were embarked either the night before the ship departed or on the day that it departed.
[21]ANC 107W 2852 telegram from Dr Drayton, Bourail, dated 16 December 1941.
[22]ANC 34W 21 Katō was not re-released until January 1947.
[23]According to Marie-José Michel, a former honorary Consul for Japan in New Caledonia, there are over 8,000 people of Japanese descent living in New Caledonia. (Personal Communication 6 October 2023).
[24]ANC 107W 2853 Letter No. 27 to Bertram Charles Ballard, Australia's Official Representative in New Caledonia from Henri Sautot, Governor of New Caledonia, dated 26 June 1941. In response, Australia agreed to accept 300 Japanese. (ANC 107W 2853 letter to Sautot, from Ballard, 4 August 1941.

L'Île Nou, renamed Nouville in 1928, is an island off Noumea, the capital of New Caledonia. However, the reclamation of land and the construction of a bridge in 1972 led to its connection to Grande Terre, the main island, and L'île Nou is no longer recognisable as an island. From 1864, a part of the island served as the site of a French penal prison holding, among others, convicts from metropolitan France. Many of the prison dormitories were demolished in 1939 but some remnants remained and these were hurriedly transformed into an internment camp for resident enemy internees during the Second World War. The majority of the internees were Japanese but a small number of residents from other enemy countries, mostly Italians, were also interned on the island, albeit in Camp Est on the east of the island.[25] A building designed as a church but primarily used as a provisions store was central to the site's use as an internment camp. The United States, which had its South Pacific military headquarters in New Caledonia, also used part of the island for military purposes during the war.[26]

In 1946 through to early 1947, the men who remained in Nouville were released and allowed to return to their families although their forced separation understandably caused issues in some cases. Benjamin Ireland outlines the tragic life of Kana Nakamura who after six years as an internee, when he suffered psychological abuse, struggled to readapt to life on the outside and murdered his wife.[27] A small number of the Japanese repatriated to Japan, subsequently returned to New Caledonia after the occupation of Japan had ended but for the most part, the Japanese presence in New Caledonia was effectively ended by the war.[28]

Almost one hundred of the Japanese internees transferred to Australia were subsequently repatriated to Japan, or to areas under Japanese control, via the Anglo-Japanese Civilian Exchange held at Lourenço Marques (present day Laputo) in the then Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) in September 1942. The Japanese internees in Australia – including those from New Caledonia – who were not repatriated in 1942 were repatriated to Japan in early 1946, sometimes against their wishes.

Despite making plans for the possibility of war, the New Caledonia authorities did not make any specific preparations for the internment of the Japanese in Nouville. As a result, the first Japanese internees to arrive had to sleep in the open air on the first night after their arrival. There was also no electricity, and the toilet facilities were

[25]Noumea Prison is now located on the site of Camp Est.
[26]The New Zealand 3 Division was based at Bourail, north-west of Noumea, from late 1942.
[27]Benjamin Hiramatsu Ireland, 'The Japanese in New Caledonia: Histories of Citizenship', pp. 693-698.
[28] Mutsumi Tsuda 'The Story of a Paradise Lost', in Mutsumi Tsuda (ed) *Feu Nos Peres,* (Noumea: Comité de l'Exposition, 2006) p. 90 (English translation p. 11).

'military camp earth type' (pit latrines).[29] While pan-style toilets were later installed and electricity was connected within a few days, the site had no running water with fresh water having to be brought over from the mainland. As a result, water was rationed. According to a Japanese government complaint, due to the unsanitary conditions eight Japanese men died before they were transferred to Australia.[30] The conditions in Nouville may not have been unusual in a penal colony but they attracted sustained complaints from the Japanese Government once it learnt about the treatment accorded the internees.[31]

Shortly after the first shipload of internees from New Caledonia arrived in Australia, Mr Kawai, the Consul-General for Japan in Australia, heard about the conditions the Japanese were subjected to in Nouville and wrote a letter of complaint to Hans Georg Hedinger, the Consul-General for Switzerland in Sydney and the protecting power for Japan. As this author has shown, over the next two years, the Japanese government raised the issue of the treatment of the internees on a number of occasions without success.[32] The lack of a conclusion to the situation was impacted by the lack of the presence of a representative of a local neutral intermediary in New Caledonia. The closest representatives of the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) were Léon Bossard in New Zealand (from September 1942) and Dr Georges Morel in Australia. Due to the ICRC's representatives' heavy workload in their respective countries, neither had the opportunity to travel to New Caledonia until Morel visited on 19 July 1945, just a month before the end of the war.[33]

Lynne Horiuchi claims trauma associated with internment camps holding Japanese-Americans could only be discussed decades later and consequently there is a 'generational break'.[34] While Horiuchi does not mention collective memory, her discussion of a 'generational break' is similar to the situation in New Caledonia where there was a silence about what happened in Nouville. However, unlike the case of the

[29]NAA A6445 37/1941 Telegram No 25 from Ballard to Department of External Affairs dated 14 April 1943.

[30]NAA A6445 37/1941 Telegram No 30 from Department of External Affairs, Canberra dated 7 April 1943.

[31]Rowena Ward, 'Japanese Civilian Internees in New Caledonia: A Gap between the Protecting Powers and the ICRC' in M. Berni and T. Cubito (eds) *Captivity in War during the Twentieth Century*, (Cham, Switzerland: Spring Nature, 2021) pp. 101-118.

[32]Ward, 'Japanese Civilian Internees in New Caledonia', p. 108-110.

[33]For a discussion of Morel's visit see Ward, 'Japanese Civilian Internees in New Caledonia', pp. 113-114.

[34]Lynne Horiuchi, 'Recovery, Redress and Commemoration' in Anoma Pieris & Lynne Horiuchi, *The Architecture of Confinement: Incarceration Camps of the Pacific War, (*Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022) pp. 267-289.

sansei, third generation, Japanese-Americans who were able later to talk about their experiences in the camps, the internees who were held in Nouville never had the opportunity to talk with their families about what happened in the internment camp because they were repatriated to Japan. The result was a structurally enforced silence about the trauma experienced by both the former internees and their families. The absence of the former internees did not however stop their descendants from wanting to learn about what happened to them and resulted in the establishment of *Amicale.*

Amicale & its Role in the Collective Memory of Nouville

After the war, some of the buildings in Nouville were given to different institutions, such as CREIPAC, a French-as-a-second-language school, and other cultural groups but much of the site fell into disrepair.[35] In the mid-1970s, the church building central to the internment camp began to be used as a theatre, the site of an occasional boxing match and other activities. However, by the 1980s, the use of the church for such activities had ended and the building once again fell into disrepair. In 1998, the Noumea City Hall bought the site from *Province Sud* (South Province) and began converting the church-cum-provisions store into a working theatre.[36] The renovated church was officially opened as a theatre (*Théâtre de L'île*) in September 2000 and was classified as a historical monument in 2005. Around the time that the theatre opened, a sign explaining the history of the theatre, including that it was built as a church, had been used as a provisions store for the penal colony, and had housed Japanese internees, was erected next to the theatre.[37] The erection of the sign therefore acknowledges the building's tangible heritage and facilitated its various uses as part of the collective memory of the site. This official recognition was in part facilitated by the members of *Amicale* an organisation largely consisting of the local descendants of the former internees. More recently, buildings within the *Site Historique De l'Ile de Nou* have been restored and redeveloped as a tourist attraction with an emphasis on celebrating New Caledonia's history as a penal colony. However, the *Musée du bagne à Nouméa* (Prison Museum of Noumea) which opened in 2021 does not refer to the use of the area as an internment camp.

Amicale Japonaise de Nouvelle Calédonie was established in 1979 to connect the descendants of the Japanese in New Caledonia together. While membership figures are not publicly available, there are presently around 70 members, many of whom are

[35]CREIPAC is an acronym of Centre de Rencontres et d'Echanges Internationaux de Pacifique.

[36]Théâtre de L'île (2023) *L'Historique du Théâtre*. Available online at: https://theatredelile.nc/le-theatre/l-histoire-des-murs Accessed 9 October 2023.

[37]The sign was erected by Province Sud.

quite elderly.[38] The association organises meetings, sporting events and other activities to foster an awareness of the history of their ancestors' Japanese migration to New Caledonia and what happened to them after their arrest in December 1941. The association supported activities, such as a photographic exhibition by Mutsumi Tsuda in 2006, and organised visits to Australia and Japan to learn more about what happened to their ancestors.[39] For instance, members of the association visited Adelaide, South Australia in 2004 to learn about activities at the Loveday internment camp where many of their ancestors were interned before their repatriation to Japan in either 1942 or 1946.[40] The association was also active in fostering an awareness of Nouville as an internment camp that had housed their ancestors, especially through their support for the sign outside *Théâtre de L'île.*

Japanese migration to British-India and Internment in Purana Qila

It is unclear when the first Japanese migrated to British-India but there were around 300 living across what is now India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in early 1941.[41] Most of the Japanese were businessmen but there were others including monks and government officials and their families. Most lived in and around New Delhi but there were also small communities in Bombay (Mumbai) and Calcutta (Kolkata), Karachi and smaller communities elsewhere. In the lead up to the outbreak of war, the governments of Japan and the United Kingdom agreed to allow ships chartered by the other to dock in their respective countries to evacuate their own citizens from the other's territory.[42] To facilitate the evacuation of the Japanese in India, the Japanese government chartered the *Hie-maru* which departed Bombay for Japan on 2 November 1941 with 195 (170 men and 25 women) Japanese from India on board.[43] According to the Governor General of India, 173 Japanese (132 men and 41 women) remained

[38]Marie-José Michel, a former honorary Consul for Japan in New Caledonia. (Personal Communication 26 November 2023).

[39]The *Feu Nos Peres* exhibition was held at the Tjibaou Cultural Centre in 2006. The exhibition later moved to Ritsumeikan University's Kyoto Museum for World Peace.

[40]NAA 'Circling the Pacific sixty years on …', *Memento* (Spring-Summer 2004): p. 14-15.

[41]National Archives of India (hereinafter NAI) File 35 (10) W-1941: War Branch. Record of Interview with Mr K. Okazaki, Japanese Consulate General in India, dated 22 August 1941.

[42]For a discussion of the evacuation of Indians from Japan see Rowena Ward 'The Evacuation and Repatriation of 'British-Indians' resident in Japan, 1940-1942', *South Asia: Journal of South Asia Studies*, 45: 1 (2022), pp. 53-66. https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2021.1988339 (Accessed 27 July2024).

[43]An additional seven Japanese (two from Kabul and five from Cairo) embarked on the *Hie-maru* in Bombay. 10 November 1941. The *Hie-maru* also docked in Mombasa and a port on the Persian Gulf.

in India after the *Hie-maru* had left.[44] With the outbreak of war, all Japanese men were arrested and interned and transferred to Purana Qila. However, despite a small volume of research on the Japanese internees, they, and Purana Qila, remain largely unknown.[45] In addition to the Japanese, seven Thais, including Karuna Kusalasaya, a number of Malays and other nationalities were also interned in Purana Qila.[46] The arrest of the Japanese was in line with instructions issued on 24 July 1941 in the event of war with Japan.[47] The small number of Japanese women who lived locally were also arrested and initially taken to parole centres but were later transferred to Purana Qila.

Purana Qila

The origins of Purana Qila in New Delhi are unclear but reportedly date back to at least the fourth century BC.[48] However, the fort complex was built as a citadel by the second Mughal Emperor Humayun (ruled 1530-1540; 1555-1556) who planned a new city on the site. His successor, Sher Shah Sur (ruled 1540-1545), continued construction on the site after he came to power. The fort's stone walls are up to 20 metres high, four metres thick and extend for nearly two kilometres around the complex. There are only three gates including the *Bara Darawaz* (West Gate) which now serves as the main entrance. The site includes an old mosque (Qila-i-Kuhna Masjid) and Humayan's personal library (Sher Mandal) among other buildings. It is not clear why Purana Qila became an internment camp for the Japanese, especially as the policy for internment anticipated that enemy subjects would be housed in 'a separate wing' in a permanent building in Dehradun to the North of New Delhi.[49] Irrespective

[44]NAI External Affairs War Branch File 35 (26) -W-1941 Telegram 6353 to Secretary of State for India, London from Governor General, New Delhi, dated 12 November 1941.

[45]The small body of work includes Ward, 'The Transnational in 'Japanese' Civilian Internment Camps in Australia and India', pp. 35-52; Christine de Matos and Rowena Ward, 'Forgotten Forced Migrants of War: Civilian Internment of Japanese in British-India, 1941-46', *Journal of Contemporary History* 56: 4 (2021): pp. 1102-1125; Anoma Pieris also refers to the presence of the Japanese in Purana Qila in 'The Colonial Prison', Pieris & Horiuchi (eds), *The Architecture of Confinement: Incarceration Camps of the Pacific War*, pp. 179-206.

[46]Karuma Kusalasaya, *Life Without a Choice,* (Bangkok: Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation, 1991).

[47]NAI 30 (24) W-1941 Telegram 6820 to Chief Secretaries, all Provincial Governments and Chief Commissioner from Home Department, Government of India, dated 2 December 1941.

[48]These details are from a sign inside Purana Qila.

[49]NAI 30 (24) – W 1941 telegram No. 6942 to Chief Secretaries and Chief Commissioners from Home Department, Government of India, dated 6 December

of the policy, from December 1941 Japanese civilian internees began moving in although it was only expected to be an interim site pending the transfer of German prisoners of war held at Deoli (Ajmer) in Rajasthan to Dehradun, enabling the Japanese to be transferred to Deoli. However, this plan did not eventuate despite the Japanese internees receiving notification in early March 1942 that they would begin moving to Deoli in mid-April. It was not until March-April 1943, that the last Japanese left Purana Qila. By this time, over 720 Japanese had been repatriated and an unknown number had died.[50] This continued use of the site arose because of a fire in Deoli while a delay in the construction of new buildings in Dehradun meant that the transfer of the Germans interned in Deoli was likewise delayed. In effect, while Purana Qila was used as an internment camp for the Japanese for around 17 months, this usage is largely invisible today. The relative briefness of this use can partly explain the lack of awareness of the site's function as an internment camp within India but it alone does not account for the forgetting of its use as an internment camp.

Accommodation in Purana Qila was basic and was segregated by sex. Describing the scene, Kichijirō Ōmori, a former internee, said that once the internees passed through the gate, they saw 'on a large patch of lawn, tents …. lined up in rows'.[51] These tents were for the men. In contrast, women and children lived in barracks located in more protected areas near the fort's walls.[52] The tents suited neither the Delhi summer nor winter and an unknown number of internees died due to the unsanitary conditions which were made worse by overcrowding. In his description of the accommodation, Kusalasaya wrote that we had 'to live in tents in open space – conditions were far from comfortable. I remember that our hand, feet and faces – especially our lips – were cracked and blistered from the cold'.[53]

In addition to problems with the accommodation were issues due to the different ethnic backgrounds of the internees. Under Japanese colonial policies, the people in its colonial territories in Korea and Formosa (Taiwan) were Japanese citizens so they were therefore arrested and interned as Japanese. Relations between the mainland Japanese, including Okinawans, and internees from other backgrounds were not always friendly, as one intelligence report noted '[r]elations in the camp between the Formosans and the Japanese proper are apparently not good. Formosans have been

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1941 includes copy of the Instructions regarding Potential Enemy Foreigners 1941, dated 24 July 1941.

[50]De Matos and Ward, 'Forgotten Forced Migrants of War', p. 1115.

[51]Henry Frei. *Guns of February: Ordinary Japanese Soldiers' Views of the Malayan Campaign & the Fall of Singapore 1941-42* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), p. 58.

[52]NAI 30 (2) – W 1942 Copy of Home Department File F 32/3/42 Poll (EW), Serial No 1 Conran-Smith's note dated 17 February 1942.

[53]Kusalasaya, *Life without a Choice*, p. 96.

often concerned in the various quarrels and fights which have occurred in the camp; they are called 'Chinese' by the Japanese internees, which is an offence in Formosa'.[54]

In August 1942, over 700 Japanese nominated by the Japanese government for inclusion in the Anglo-Japanese Civilian Exchange left Purana Qila for Bombay. There they boarded the *SS City of Paris* bound for Lourenco Marques.[55] The departure of the exchangees left around 2,000 Japanese in the fort and while the overcrowding was eased the tented accommodation remained.

In March and April 1943, the remaining Japanese were finally moved to Deoli and Purana Qila's role as a Japanese internment camp ended. More than three years later, all the Japanese internees held in Deoli were repatriated to Japan, and with their repatriation, the presence of a Japanese community in British-India ended. Moreover, this meant that there were never any local descendants of the pre-war Japanese community in India to remember Purana Qila (or indeed Deoli) as an internment camp. Toshiro Mine, a former teacher in the Japanese primary school in Delhi, wrote that he did not know anything about Purana Qila's history as an internment camp for Japanese despite living nearby and going there for picnics.[56] He first learnt about Purana Qila after the publication of a book he wrote about his experiences as a teacher. In response to the publication of his book, a number of the former internees contacted him and he subsequently researched the fort's history as an internment camp for Japanese. This indicates that while Purana Qila as an internment camp may not have been part of the collective memory in India, it was part of the collective memory of the Japanese who had been interned there. This remembering was partly fostered by their membership of the *Indowara-kai* (see below).

It is unclear what happened at Purana Qila after the departure of the Japanese internees but during the political turmoil, violence and social upheaval leading up to, and after, Pakistan's independence on 14 August 1947 and India's independence the following day, Purana Qila became a refuge for both Muslims fleeing violence across the city and people arriving from homes which were now in Pakistan.[57] The use of

[54]British Library IOR/L/PJ/12/510 Activities of Germans, Italians and Japanese in India May-Dec 1942. Survey No 21 of 1942 for the week ending 30th May 1942.

[55]In addition to the internees from Purana Qila, around 60 Japanese consular officials and their families from colonies including British-India, Ceylon and Burma were aboard the ship to Lourenco Marques.

[56]Toshiro Mine, *Indo kokunetsusabaku nihonjin shuyōjo ga atta*, (Tokyo: Asahi Sonorama: 1995).

[57]Collins and Lapierre suggest that at that time between 150,000 and 200,000 people took refuge in Purana Qila and the nearby Humayan's Tomb. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *Freedom at Midnight* (London: Book Club Associates, 1975), p.

Purana Qila at this time is part of the fort's collective memory and overshadows its use as an internment camp between 1942 and 1943.

***Indowara-kai* (Indowara Association)**

The *Indowara-kai* was established in Tokyo in the early 1960s and published a regular newsletter, entitled *Indowara tsūshin*, from 1966 to 1988 at which time the chief editor passed away.[58] In addition to the newspaper the association held get-togethers in Tokyo, Osaka and other locations in Japan.[59] The newsletter included members' reminiscences of the internees' life in the camp as well as pieces by members who had returned to India and/or the places where they lived before internment. For example, Sachio Ōtani who was repatriated as part of the civilian exchange describes his January 1973 visit to Purana Qila and notes that on this visit, he had been able to enter the site freely whereas on a previous visit his access had been restricted because the site was being used as a military camp.[60] Ōtani also notes that nobody he spoke to was aware that the fort had been used as internment camp for Japanese civilians. The lack of knowledge of the fort as an internment camp is also mentioned by Kichijirō Ōmori who had visited the site in January 1987.[61] While most of the entries are by repatriates living in Japan, a number were written by people living in other countries including Taiwan, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. As an example, Qiu Chun-Rong wrote from Taipei that their son (Yun-Lei) who was very young when the family was repatriated to Taiwan was a university lecturer in the United States.[62] These entries show that Purana Qila was not only part of the collective memory of repatriates living in Japan but also formed part of a broader international collective memory.

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416. For a discussion of the use of Purana Qila between 1947 and 1959, see Deborah Ruth Sutton, 'Masjids, monuments and refugees in the Partition city of Delhi, 1947-1959', *Urban History* 50: 3 (2022) pp. 468-485.

[58]According to Matsumoto (2005), the editor of *Indowara-kai*'s newsletter, Jirō Kimura, passed away on 13 June 1988 at which point publication of the newsletter stopped. Shūsaku Matsumoto, 'Indowarakai kankei shiryō no hozon ni tsuite: chūkan hōkoku (saishū' hōkoku)' available online at: https://tufs.repo.nii.ac.jp/record/2832/files/cdats-hub5-9.pdf . Accessed 28 August 2024.

[59]Matsumoto, '*Indowara kai kankei shiryō no hozon ni tsuite: chūkan hōkoku'*, p. 79.

[60]Sachio Ōtani, 'Puranakira o tazunete' *Indowara tsūshin* dai9gō (1974 April 25) p.1.

[61]Kichijirō Ōmori, 'Kōen ni natta purana kira (2)', *Indowara tsūshin* dai35gō (1987 July 15) p. 2.

[62]Qiu Chun-Rong, 'Yun-Lei-kun wa daigaku no sensei' *Indowara tsūshin,* dai7gō (1972 October 1) p. 1.

The association also published a book of sketches of life in the Purana Qila and Deoli camps (*Sukecchi ga kataru indoyokūki: 1941.12.8~1946.5.19*).[63] The sketches, drawn by the internees at the time of their internment, cover a range of themes including life before internment and life in the camps. All sketches are accompanied by a short explanation. For instance, an explanation accompanying two sketches of trucks leaving Purana Qila at the top and people walking at the bottom gives details of the time (2 pm) the internees left Purana Qila on 11 April and the time (10 am) they entered the Deoli camp the next day.[64] While not all of the sketches are of Purana Qila, the effect of the sketches on the readers' collective memory of life in internment cannot be overestimated. The illustrations not only serve as a reminder to the repatriates of what their lives were like in the camp, they also provide details for their collective memories of their time in Purana Qila. At the same time, the sketches provide people who were not interned with images and details of what life was like in the camps. For example, the Principal of the Japanese School in New Delhi, writes that he had been unaware that Purana Qila was the site of an internment camp for Japanese until he saw the book of sketches and he had been quite surprised. [65] He also notes that he had shown the sketches to other people, all of whom were similarly unaware of the fort's prior use but were impressed by the standard of the sketches. The sketches therefore act to broaden knowledge of Purana Qila as an internment camp for Japanese. They also form part of the readers' individual memories of the site which may feed into the collective memory.

Conclusion

To conclude, this article has compared the memories, or lack thereof, of two internment camps holding Japanese civilians during the Second World War: Nouville in New Caledonia and Purana Qila in India. Importantly both sites physically remain but Nouville's use as an internment camp for Japanese is part of the collective memory of the site while this is not the case for Purana Qila where its usage is forgotten and ignored. This discussion has highlighted a number of factors: including the presence or lack thereof of a local descendant community – which have impacted the changes in the memories of the camps over time; and the passage of them becoming, or moving out of, the collective memory of the sites. It was argued that the forgetting of Purana Qila as an internment camp in India itself was due to a combination of a lack of local descendants of the Japanese interned there, the site's long history, and its use as a refuge during partition in 1947. Nevertheless, this lack of a collective memory of Purana Qila as an internment camp for Japanese does not discount the possibility that

[63]Jirō Kimura, *Sukecchi ga kataru indoyokuryūki: 1941.12.8~1946.5.19*. (Yamato: Indowara-kai, 1982).
[64]Ibid., pp. 48-19.
[65]Excerpt from letter from Watanabe. Jirō Kimura (ed), 'Hajimete shitta: dōhō sanzen no yokuryū', *Indowara tsūshin* dai24gō (1982) p. 3.

Purana Qila is remembered by some individuals locally. However, without a group, these biographical memories remain outside a local collective memory. On the other hand, despite the lack of a local collective memory, the former internees ensured – through their membership of an alumni association, the *Indowara-ka* based in Japan, that their individual memories formed a collective memory of the site, albeit a memory not in India. *Indowara-kai*'s publication of a newsletter, a book of sketches and the organisation of get-togethers ensured that the former internees' collective memory of the site and their internment in Purana Qila, remained alive while these activities continued. However, the ensuing lack of ongoing communications due to the editor's death as well as the aging of the former internees themselves has seen the collective memory of the camp fade in Japan.

In contrast, in New Caledonia, despite a small number of former internees remaining there after August 1945 who presumably remembered their years in Nouville, the lack of a 'veterans' group meant that Nouville's history as an internment camp was largely ignored for many years. This situation was magnified due to the location of the site on an island, which meant that despite its physical existence, it was located out of sight. The 1972 construction of a bridge connecting the island to Grande Terre made access to the site easier and allowed the descendants to visit freely in a way which they had previously not been able. The emergence of a group of descendants wishing to learn about what happened to their ancestors around the same time, led to a re-remembering of the site's history of internment and the emergence of the collective memory of Nouville as an internment camp. The descendants' activities through their membership of *Amicale* was part of this process. Nowadays, Nouville's role as an internment camp is officially acknowledged by a sign erected near a church where the internees were held. This sign ensures that Nouville's use as an internment camp will be remembered even when the descendants are no longer alive to actively maintain the collective memory of the site. At the same time, the sign indicates to any reader that Nouville was not only a penal prison until the 1920s but New Caledonia as a whole was also a destination for Japanese migrants in the early part of the twentieth century. Importantly, these somewhat disparate historical events are intrinsically linked through Nouville's use as an internment camp for Japanese during World War II. More research is needed into the processes which saw Nouville's use as a penal colony be recognised as a site of historical significance without acknowledgement of the site's role as an internment camp.

Finally, it is important to recognise that while this article has compared the collective memory of the internment camps in India and New Caledonia which held Japanese internees, both locations are largely unrecognised as destinations where Japanese lived prior to the outbreak of the Second World War or where those Japanese were interned. It is also highly likely that those who have been active in remembering the internment camps are unaware of the other. That is, the remembering and forgetting

of the two sites is done in isolation from the other. More research into the collective memory of internment camps across the globe, especially those which held Japanese, is needed for a broader understanding of the processes which see some camps remembered and others forgotten.