I would like to respond as an eyewitness to Frank Conlon's question in the Editor's Note below:

Frank Conlon added an editorial note hoping for clarification about the appearance of the images with or without the explanatory text. This was in Andrew Field's post of May 14, 2006:

Field wrote:
"I wonder if this controversy would have even begun had the MIT website only included the images themselves and not the historical explanations by Dower et al. Or if they had been prefaced by a simple explanation stating that these were imaginative depictions by Japanese artists of the 1894-5 war with China over the fate of Korea. Seeing these images, one can't help but think of the Japanese manga that are so popular in Japan and other parts of Asia today."

"[** NOTE: Much of the initial reaction that led to individual e-mails that were characterized as 'abusive' -- I have seen one of those myself-- were apparently stimulated by some party reproducing the pictures WITHOUT any of the explanatory text. At least that is my impression, and I hope someone at MIT can clarify that point.]

I was present at the open forum on 4/26 when MIT Chinese students first met Professors Dower and Miyagawa for an open discussion. Approximately 100-120 students showed up. A sizable group of students printed out the entire units "Throwing off Asia" and "Old China New Japan" and brought them to the meeting. I understood later that they had the entire site (both images AND explanatory narratives) circulated via email. I later acquired an entire set for myself. During that meeting, many complained about the obscurity of the following passages (pointed out in the official CSSA letter to MIT's President)—

"Still, predictable patterns give order to this chaos. Discipline (the Japanese side) prevails over disarray (the Chinese)," and "In short, the Chinese are riotous in every way disgracefully so in their behavior, and delightfully so in their accoutrements."

Many students also complained that Dower "never made clear from whose point of view and with whose tone he is speaking."

Another example given was "When all was said and done, what they visualized was beautiful, heroic and modern war."
One female student raised her voice and appeared extremely agitated in her long-winded and emotionally charged presentation. But the majority of the Chinese students argued with Dower with great restraint. I, as a witness, could see that the message delivered by those engaged students was not understood. It was in my recollection, a professional delivery style even though the atmosphere was very intense because the stakes on both sides were huge.

**********

Jing Wang, Head, Foreign Languages & Literatures, MIT
Professor of Chinese Cultural Studies
S. C. Fang Professor of Chinese Language & Culture
Chair, MIT Critical Policy Studies of China
http://web.mit.edu/chinapolicy/www/
http://web.mit.edu/cms/bcc/people.htm