

ISSN 1936-5349 (print)  
ISSN 1936-5357 (online)

# HARVARD

JOHN M. OLIN CENTER FOR LAW, ECONOMICS, AND BUSINESS

CONTRACTING FOR SEX IN THE PACIFIC WAR:  
A RESPONSE TO MY CRITICS

J. Mark Ramseyer

Discussion Paper No. 1075

01/2022

Harvard Law School  
Cambridge, MA 02138

This paper can be downloaded without charge from:

The Harvard John M. Olin Discussion Paper Series:  
[http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/olin\\_center](http://www.law.harvard.edu/programs/olin_center)

The Social Science Research Network Electronic Paper Collection:  
<http://ssrn.com/abstract=4000145>

## **Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War: A Response to My Critics**

**By J. Mark Ramseyer\***  
Harvard Law School

*Abstract:* In “Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War,” *International Review of Law & Economics* (IRLE) (2020), I explored the economic logic behind the contracts made by Japanese and Korean prostitutes with the brothels at which they worked. Among the terms of the contracts that I tried to explain were the way in which they coupled a large initial payment with a maximum period of service. I sought to interpret these and other contractual terms as addressing classic economic dilemmas.

My article provoked massive criticism. However, virtually none of the critics attacked my economic analysis of the contracts. Indeed, most of my critics did not even mention my analysis of the contractual terms -- even though that was the focus of my article and was the basis for its publication in the IRLE.

Instead, some critics complained that I did not examine actual prostitution contracts. Readers of my actual article will know that I never claimed to have a data set of actual contracts. To the best of my knowledge, very few actual contracts survived the war. What I did rely upon—as I make clear in my article—is information *about* the prostitution contracts from government documents, wartime memoirs, newspaper advertisements, a summary of a comfort station accountant's diary, and so forth.

Other critics compiled a long list of asserted mistakes concerning the accuracy, relevance, and interpretation of citations in my article. I respond to these claims below. Most of them are not mistakes at all. A small number of them are mistakes, but they do not affect my analysis of the contract terms.

Most critics emphasized the immorality of the comfort women system. In particular, some critics claim that I ignored the fact that some women were deceived into becoming comfort women and were cheated and otherwise mistreated by owners of the comfort station brothels. Readers of my actual article will recall that I mention these points in my article.

Most of the critics insist that large numbers of Korean women were forcibly conscripted (at gunpoint or hauled away against their will) by the Japanese army in Korea. My IRLE article does not address this issue, but I discuss it in this response. *The claim is false:* Korean women were *not* programmatically and forcibly conscripted by Japanese soldiers in Korea into comfort station work. There is no contemporaneous documentary evidence of forcible conscription. Neither is there any evidence for over 35 years after the war ended in 1945. Only in the late 1980s did some Korean women begin to claim that they had been forcibly conscripted.

Crucially, in 1983 a Japanese writer named Seiji Yoshida wrote a best-selling book claiming that he and a posse of soldiers had dragooned Korean women at bayonet point and raped them, before sending them off to serve as sexual slaves. A famous 1996 UN report on the conscription of Korean women relied on this book, and it is in the wake of the book that a small number of Korean women began claiming that they had been conscripted even though some of them had earlier given different accounts. Before he died, Yoshida admitted that he had fabricated the entire book. Yoshida's fabrication attracted substantial attention in Asia and abroad, including in the *New York Times*.

The comfort women dispute began with Yoshida's fraud. Yet this astonishing and crucial fabrication is not mentioned by any of my critics even though many of them are Japan or Korea experts and are surely aware of it.

JEL: J47, K12 K36, N15, N35, N45

Key words: Prostitution, Indentured Servitude, Japan, Korea

J. Mark Ramseyer  
Harvard Law School  
ramseyer@law.harvard.edu

*Draft of January 4, 2022*

**Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War:  
A Response to My Critics**

**By J. Mark Ramseyer\***  
Harvard Law School

Table of Contents

On Studying Wartime Prostitution (including  
a response to Gordon-Eckert and Suk-Gersen)

Appendix I: A Response to Stanley, et al.

Appendix II: A Response to Yoshimi

Appendix III: Information about Comfort Women  
Contracts

Bibliography

\* I received wonderfully kind and generous support, advice, criticism, and reassurance from many, many friends. You know who you are. Thank you, thank you.

*Draft of January 4, 2022*

## **On Studying Wartime Prostitution**

**By J. Mark Ramseyer**

In my eight-page article for the *International Review of Law & Economics* (IRLE, March 2021), [Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War](#), I explored the contractual structure under which Japanese and Korean women worked at the wartime "comfort stations" (Ramseyer 2021). These stations were brothels operated (typically by Japanese or Korean businessmen and women) near Japanese bases during the 1930s and the Second World War. My article generated a great deal of controversy. By long-established academic norms, people who disagree with an article write critical responses which they then subject to their own refereeing processes as independent articles. Instead of taking this route, my critics demanded that the journal retract the article. Reflecting the place that history continues to play in modern Japan-Korea relations, many of the attacks came from men and women within Korea and from Western scholars with ties to Korea.

All the critics ignore my actual topic: the economic rationale to the contractual structure that brothels and prostitutes employed. In my article, I had asked two main questions: (i) why brothels and recruiters paid women large amounts of money up front, and (ii) what contractual mechanisms determined the length of time the women worked. The critics largely ignore both questions.

Instead, the critics couple claims that I believe are empirically false, with points that are true but which I myself made. In a few cases, the critics identify limitations with documentary evidence or with source citations in the original article. I appreciate these corrections, but they are largely unrelated to my central topic -- questions (i) and (ii) above.

More specifically, my critics seem to focus on three broad issues. First, some critics imply that the comfort women did not work under contracts. According to the evidence before me, this is simply untrue. Japanese and Korean prostitutes worked under contracts before the war, and they continued to work under contracts during the war years. I presented substantial evidence about this in my original article; I present more in this response. Obviously, the fact that a worker has a contract says nothing about whether the contract is fair or just -- but (a point I shall repeat many times in this response) my article is not a normative essay.

Second, most of the critics also claim that the Japanese military dragooned Korean women at bayonet-point to force them into work as comfort women. Again, without in any way minimizing war crimes committed by the Japanese military, this claim too is flatly untrue. I find no contemporaneous evidence that this occurred in Korea. It may have occurred in the war zone, but I explicitly limit my article to women from Japan and Korea. A few Korean women do claim to have been dragooned. Their testimony is evidence to consider. But -- uncomfortable as it is to say this -- for reasons discussed at length below, I do not believe their statements are credible.

Third, all my critics assert that the comfort women were sometimes deceived by recruiters or mistreated by the brothel owners. This point is true -- and important to make. That is why I myself made it in my original article. Indeed, the risk that the brothel owner might cheat on their arrangement was one of the reasons that the women insisted on receiving a large fraction of their

pay up-front. This is an important point to make, but it is one that I expressly made, and more than in passing. This is basic to my argument.

The Japanese and Korean women (the plurality were Japanese) at the comfort stations worked under multi-year indenture contracts. Typically, brothels paid the women a large advance, specified a two-year maximum term, and gave the women the right to quit early if they generated sufficient revenue (IRLE, page 6). The economic logic for this arrangement (not contested by my critics) is straightforward. Realizing that brothel owners had an incentive to exaggerate their future earnings, the women demanded a large portion of their pay up front. Realizing that they might be headed to a war zone, they demanded a relatively short maximum term. And realizing that the women had an incentive to shirk once they arrived, the brothels demanded provisions that gave women incentives to work hard (IRLE, page 6). This economic analysis forms the gist of my article.

In this introductory essay, I address the issues raised most often by my critics: the claims that the Korean comfort women were forced into prostitution at gunpoint, and did not work under contracts. In the course of doing so, I focus principally on the claims by Harvard historians Andrew Gordon and Carter Eckert (2021). After a short set of caveats (Sec. A), I identify two economic misconceptions that I think implicitly characterize much of the criticism of my original article (Sec. B). I provide an example of the way one Korean woman explained the choices that she had made (Sec. C). I then turn to Gordon-Eckert, explain the nature of the evidence available, and discuss the absence of any serious evidence of gun-point dragooning (Sec. D). I add a short discussion of Suk-Gersen's criticisms (Sec. E). Finally, I close this response by discussing the notion, common to academics writing in English, that there is any scholarly "consensus" on this issue. In fact, the apparent consensus merely reflects the hostility that scholars face if they write anything else (Sec. F).

I have added to this response a series of Appendices: a response to Stanley, et al. (2021a) (Appendix I); a response to Yoshimi (2021a) (Appendix II), and a summary of some of the contractual evidence available (Appendix III).

#### A. Caveats:

I start with several preliminary caveats. First and foremost, this is an exclusively empirical project. I explore the economic logic to the contracts through which the men and women in the sexual services industry structured their relations with each other. I do not address the question of whether governments should legalize or license prostitution. Neither do I address how courts should respond to contracts like these. Critics like Yoshimi (2021a) and Suk-Gersen (on twitter) make long and elaborate moral pronouncements, but these sentiments do not contradict my thesis. Neither are they sentiments that I necessarily oppose. My article is exclusively -- exclusively -- descriptive. Making moral judgments is fine -- but we as scholars need to try to understand why real-world men and women entered into the contracts that they did. Evaluating the moral character of those contracts is decidedly beyond the scope of my inquiry.

Second, I explicitly limit my analysis to Japanese and Korean women. Much of the criticism in the popular press (like the petition by Michael Chwe for the "Concerned Economists" [2021]) and even several discussions by scholars (e.g., Gordon [2003], Stanley [2021a]) conflate the mistreatment of women from a wide variety of Asian nations. In the 1930s, Korea was part of Japan, and Koreans were Japanese citizens (even if they were in some ways second-class citizens). The hard evidence of gun-point dragooning involves enemy women in war zones and -- most notoriously -- a rogue POW camp in Indonesia. How soldiers treat enemy women in war zones

and POW camps is an entirely different question from how they treat their fellow citizens. Both questions are important, and I certainly do not excuse any mistreatment of prisoners of war. I simply stress the limited scope of the article: I focus on the comfort women from Japan and Korea.

Third, the IRLE article as published focuses narrowly on the contracts used in the comfort stations and domestic brothels. I originally submitted a different manuscript to the journal -- twice as long -- which detailed the historical context to the comfort stations and brothels, and surveyed the historiographical debate over them. This longer document is available on SSRN at:

[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3822439](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3822439)

Gordon-Eckert claim to have been "appalled" by my "elision of the larger political and economic contexts." I urge readers interested in that context and in the historiographical debate to read this longer, originally submitted manuscript.

Fourth, I make absolutely no attempt to compare the contracts of the Korean comfort women with those of the Japanese comfort women. Very oddly, Gordon-Eckert seem to imply that this comparison is basic to my article. It is not. It is not even a side-show. Nowhere do I make any such comparison, and I explain why in Sec. D.3 below.

Fifth, it should not be necessary to say this, but I will: if scholars disagree with my conclusions, they should be writing articles in response (as, to their credit, Lee, Saito & Todres 2021 did), and submitting them to peer-reviewed academic journals. Sadly, this seems to be controversial -- both here in the U.S., and in South Korea as well. To understand the reaction to my article, readers need to realize the extraordinary extent to which the South Korean government restricts discussion of the issue. Joseph Yi (Hangyang University) and Joe Phillips (of Yonsei University) write (2021):

In South Korea, the restriction of research and debate on ‘comfort women’ has fostered a groupthink in a society and polity that otherwise values vigorous public discussions. The few academics that openly dispute the ‘comfort women’ abduction narrative are too often harassed by activists, investigated by their universities, and prosecuted by the government.

The comfort women issue is, to quote Yi (2021), the “last taboo” in a country that otherwise encourages robust public debate.

When scholars try to challenge the taboo (e.g., Park 2014; Lee 2019, 2020; Yi 2018), the costs are astonishingly high. Joe Phillips, Wondong Lee & Joseph Yi (2019, 452-53) discuss those costs:

In 2013, Sejong University professor, Park Yu-ha, published a book revealing the diversity of comfort women experiences and challenging the veracity of some testimonies. Nine comfort women activists sued Park for civil and criminal defamation, and government prosecutors requested a three-year prison sentence. A Seoul civil court partially censored Park's Korean-language book and fined her 90 million won (\$74,000) for defamation. A Seoul criminal court acquitted Professor Park on defamation charges; but, on 27 October 2017, after Moon's election, a Seoul appeal court overturned Park's acquittal and fined her 10 million Won (\$8,848). Prosecutors have appealed, again seeking a three-year jail term. On 26 April 2017, a Sunchon National University professor ("Song") lectured to his class that some Koreans "probably" volunteered to be comfort women. The university terminated Song's employment, and a court sentenced him to six months in prison.

More recently, Yonsei University sociologist Lew Seok-choon found himself prosecuted (the case is on-going) for criminal defamation when he suggested in class that the comfort women

had not been forced into the work by the Japanese military. It was, he had said instead, "a form of prostitution" (Martin & Yoon, 2021).<sup>1</sup>

The result of this legal regime in South Korea is that most scholars simply do not speak out. Yi, Phillips & Lee (2019, 498) continue:

Because of the hostile social and legal environment, dissenting academics, reporters, and other publics communicate anonymously in social media and closed Facebook groups. Relevant to the hostility against my article in the U.S., Yi, Phillips & Lee (2019, 499) write:

In the relative absence of visible, counter-narratives, the anti-Japan campaign has persuaded most South Koreans, and ethnic Koreans overseas, that Japan and its elected leaders are not to be trusted.

Notwithstanding these attacks, however, courageous scholars in Korea are increasingly speaking out. As a result, there is now a vibrant intellectual debate on the comfort women issue in South Korea. I am preaching here, but the threat to academic freedom is obvious: if Michael Chwe or anyone else disagrees with me, the way to respond is not to circulate petitions for retraction or to harass journal editors. The proper scholarly response is to write a critique (as Lee, Saito & Todres 2021 did) and publish it in a peer-reviewed journal.

Criminal prosecutions for contesting the orthodox narrative about comfort women may be specific to Korea. But Japanese-studies faculty in western humanities departments seem (at least to me) only barely more tolerant.<sup>2</sup> In mid-November, prominent Korean economist Lee Wooyoun published an article in the Asia-focused magazine, the *Diplomat*, in which he contested the notion that the Korean comfort women had been dragooned. David Ambaras (co-author to the attack in Appendix I) posted a screenshot of the article on Twitter: "Comfort Women denialists are despicable," he declared. "Why is @Diplomat\_APAC publishing this garbage?" Amy Stanley (similarly, co-author) re-tweeted the article. Sayaka Chatani chimed in. Within hours, Mitch Shin, correspondent for the magazine, replied to Ambaras: "I am working on it. Sorry." And as if that were not enough: "It's down now. I am truly sorry that we made such a horrible and unacceptable mistake."<sup>3</sup> Just to be sure, Shin insisted on apologizing yet

---

<sup>1</sup> After the Martin & Yoon (2021) Wall Street Journal article appeared, Lew commented on Facebook (Uooru 2021): "The Wall Street Journal gave my problem big notice. With comments from both sides, it presents the appearance of being even-handed. Yet when I agreed to the interview, I explained at great length the way that the comfort women had changed their stories, the way that the U.N. Coomaraswamy report relied on Yoshida Seiji's book (My War Crimes) that was shown to be a fabrication, and the way that the Chong Dae Hyup and Yun Mee-Hyang are being tried for suspicions of embezzlement, etc. Unfortunately, the Journal left out all of this."

<sup>2</sup> The censorship on this topic by American scholars in the humanities seems (to me at least) interminable. H-Japan is the website within "H-Net Humanities & Social Sciences Online" devoted to Japan. It promises to "provide[] scholars, graduate students and professions a free daily forum to discuss Japanese history, culture, religion, and society ...." On November 20, 2021, Paula Curtis posted an attack on me on the website (Curtis 2021b). On November 23, Jason Morgan (2021a, 2021b, 2021c) asked to post his three-part interview of Waseda University historian Tetsuo Arima regarding the comfort women dispute. Website editor and historian Janet Goodwin replied that "I gather that this post is a response to the article by Paula Curtis ..." She then rejected the submission on the putative grounds that it did not devote enough space to "addressing any concrete issues or providing any evidence that the comfort women had contracts."

<sup>3</sup> <https://twitter.com/dambaras/status/1460099767279755269>. Lee (2021b) recounts the experience. As he put it: "The comfort women issue will not be resolved by running away from the facts and stifling debate because it is not what you want to hear."

again: "I sincerely apologize that we published this story on our website. It's down now."<sup>4</sup> An onlooker noted approval: "Good to hear! This is a better retraction than many." No trace of the article on the Diplomat website remains.<sup>5</sup>

Last, of the many attacks on my work, I focus on four: the claims by Andrew Gordon and Carter Eckert (2021); the popular account written by Jeannie Suk-Gersen (2021) for the New Yorker; a very long attack by Amy Stanley, Hannah Shepherd, Sayaka Chatani, David Ambaras and Chelsea Szendi (2021a); and the essay by Yoshiaki Yoshimi (2021). I choose these four for specific reasons. Gordon-Eckert started the "Ramseyer-has-no-contracts" line that seems to have driven most of the attacks in the popular press. Suk-Gersen coupled the hyper-nationalist history apparently popular in some segments of South Korea with quotations of personal attacks from humanities scholars in Japanese studies. Stanley, et al., created an appearance of scholarly gravitas with their 30+page length. And Yoshimi is simply the most prominent of all critics of the comfort-station regime. Still other attacks by scholars appear in a special issue of the Asia Pacific Journal: Japan Focus (<https://apjff.org/>). They have attracted less attention, and their claims heavily overlap with those of Gordon-Eckert and Stanley, et al.

The question of what happened on the Korean peninsula in the 1930s is a question of scholarship. For this reason, I largely ignore the many attacks on my article that have appeared in the popular press. The best known of these popular criticisms has probably been the one repeated in the petition of the "Concerned Economists:" a bizarre statement apparently written by Michael Chwe (2021) that describes possibly hundreds of thousands of women, forced into the comfort system through abduction at ages 11 to 20, and of whom 3/4 died because of the rape and torture and never returned. A virulently anti-Japanese history, this account has no scholarly basis. Nonetheless, on the basis of this entirely fictitious account, the petition calls on the journal to retract my article, and several thousand scholars have signed.

## B. Economic Misconceptions:

1. The determination of contractual structure. Hyun Byung-sook, whose account I reproduce in Section C below, explicitly negotiated the terms of her contract. She negotiated price. She negotiated the term length. And she negotiated the brothel's right to assign her contract. Most recruits probably did not negotiate specific terms -- and some of the misunderstandings among the critics over the comfort station arrangements seem to reflect misunderstandings about the role that explicit negotiations play in the determination of contractual structure.

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://twitter.com/dambaras/status/1460112141684559875>

<sup>5</sup> Even this was not enough for Ambaras: "The editors still owe it to the public to explain why they allowed it to appear in the first place and what steps they will take to avoid such mistakes moving forward." Shin replied: "The statement will be coming up in our official account, David. Again, there is no excuse I can make. As a Chief Correspondent on the two Koreas, I will do my best to work more closely with our editors to review the articles from contributors outside of the organization." Ambaras: "Thank you, Mitch. We all have our work cut out for us when it comes to dealing with denialism." Shin was not done apologizing, however: "Lastly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to those who brought up this issue and directly asked me and our organization to take action in a timely manner. Please keep checking our contents and deliver your perceptive thoughts whenever you are available. Thank you." <https://twitter.com/dambaras/status/1460266541434429455/photo/1>.

Readers interested in the article that Ambaras, Stanley and Chatani harassed the Diplomat into censoring will find it at Lee (2021b), and also at: <https://archive.ph/20211115071637/https://thediplomat.com/2021/11/anti-japan-tribalism-on-the-comfort-women-issue/>



Economically inclined readers will understand the point instinctively: market competition drives buyers and sellers toward relatively efficient contractual terms regardless of whether anyone explicitly negotiates anything. For example, posit a labor market with many employers, many workers, and free competition. Suppose that by custom, employers supply the contracts that the parties will use. In this world, employers will compete with each other to attract workers. Obviously, they will compete on the basis of wage. But if other aspects of the contractual structure matter to workers as well, they will also experiment with alternative contractual terms. The employers who succeed in the competition will be those who offer the combination of price and contractual terms that maximizes the joint returns to the employers and workers.

In economics, this is basic. Perhaps we consider it a variation on Coase. We also understand the myriad exceptions -- all of which matter enormously. In analyzing any given case, we understand that many of these exceptions might apply -- that goes without saying.

But this basic economics seems not to be "basic" to many of the critics. Members of early 20th century farming communities in Korea and Japan were extremely poor and those in Korea were only semi-literate or illiterate. Historians see their plight. They argue that people from such communities were in no condition to "negotiate" with recruiters and brothel owners for alternative contractual terms. And as a result, they instinctively reject (and indeed, find morally offensive) any suggestion that the resulting contractual terms might be ones that promoted the welfare of the farming families.

2. Marginal and infra-marginal workers. Many critics also miss the role that the "margin" plays in determining contractual terms. Posit again a labor market with many employers, many workers, and free competition. Suppose that the wage is all that is at issue. The equilibrium wage will be the wage that equalizes marginal revenue and marginal cost. Now posit that the employers cannot price-discriminate. Workers who would happily have worked at a lower wage will receive the higher wage necessary to coax the marginal worker to accept the employment contract. If workers care about other aspects of the employment contract besides their wage, this equilibrating process will cause employers to compete for the marginal worker on those other terms as well.

In economics, this too is basic. Here too, we understand the myriad exceptions. And here too, those exceptions can matter enormously. But this marginal analysis seems foreign to many of the critics.

Yet this marginal analysis is crucial to understanding the role that fraudulent recruiters and exploitative parents played in the labor market for prostitutes. As I stress repeatedly in my article, some of the comfort women were recruited through fraud. Some of them were sold by their parents (who may or may not have fully internalized the costs that their daughters incurred). And those who were, may have received lower advance payments -- after all, the recruiters set price individually (and hence could price-discriminate).

Although recruiters could price-discriminate, however, they seem to have used standard form contracts. They discriminated by price, but they generally did not discriminate by contractual terms. If this is true, then the contractual terms that emerged would have been those that most cost-effectively induced the marginal worker to take the job. On this dimension, the defrauded women and the women sold by their parents were "infra-marginal." Provided that the brothels needed to recruit a non-trivial number of women who actually knew what they were doing, the brothels would have used a form contract that promoted the combined welfare of the brothel and worker both.

None of this minimizes the plight of the women involved. I make these observations simply to explain why I focus on women who knew generally what they were doing. They were the workers "on the margin." By basic microeconomics, for purposes of determining contract structure they were the women who mattered.

C. A Preliminary Example:

Let me illustrate the way a Korean comfort woman named Hyun Byung-sook explained the contractual choices she had made. Originally published in 2003, the interview was recently reprinted by prominent economic historian Lee Wooyoun (2021a). For reading ease, I identify the speakers and add my own comments in brackets.

Q: "How much did you get from that place?"

Hyun: "500 won [Korean won and Japanese yen could be exchanged 1 for 1]. The term was for two years. I gave the 500 won to my father and mother. After the two years, I went home, but there was no point in just hanging around. I thought I'd go to another place, and make some more money to give to my father and mother. I didn't intend to stay in the village." ...

Hyun: "So I went to Pakch'on to meet a person named 'Park Ka.' I went to an inn, and asked, 'I heard [someone came] to buy women. Where is he around here?' 'At that inn over there,' was the answer. 'He came from China to buy women. Why don't you go over there?' So I went ..., and a man was sitting there. 'Did you come to buy women?' I asked. 'What's this about, young lady?' he replied. 'I'd like to go to China too and earn money,' I said."

Q: "Grandma. Did you know at the time what you were going to be doing in China?"

Hyun: "I knew."

Q: "Did you also know you'd be dealing with lots of Japanese soldiers?"

Hyun: "Of course." ...

Q: "Where did you hear that?"

Hyun: "I heard it through rumors. I heard lots of stories. I found [him] after wandering around. So I asked him if he'd buy me. He said sure, and asked how much I wanted. 'My father and mother would be bothered [if I were gone too long], so how much would you give me for a maximum 3 years?' I asked. 'I'll give you 2000 won,' he said. 'But 2000 won doesn't even come to 1000 won a year. I want 1000 won a year,' said I. 'Ok, I'll pay 3000 won. Go home and get your parents' consent.'"

[NB: Note that they expressly negotiated both price and term length.] ...

Q: "Did you get [your parents'] seal?"

Hyun: "Of course. If you brought along your father or mother, you got the money. But I was told to get the seal of my grandfather and grandmother too. They were strict at the time."

Q: "How old were you?"

Hyun: "I think I'd turned 16. ... I took my father down to the riverbank and talked with him. 'Dad, there's a man who came to buy women. He tells me how much he'll pay, so I want to go far away and make money.' I wanted to make a comfortable life for my father, and wanted him to be able to eat the food he liked. 'Dad, let me work.'"

[N.B.: In contemporaneous descriptions of the brothels, 16-year olds are rare. Most of the women are in their 20s.]

Lee: The advance was not payable unless a parent was there in person. The consents of the parents and grandparents were also required. It's hard to understand why the consents and seals of the mother and the grandparents were also necessary. Probably they were joint guarantors. ...

Hyun: "In that case, I'll let you go,' said my father, and wrote his and my mother's names and attached the seal. ... We went to Pakch'on. My father said [to the man,] 'I'm selling her to you, so don't sell her off to some other place.' .... 'My father demands this,' I said. 'Do as you like,' the man replied. 'Ok, let's go,' I said." ...

Lee: She said that she was not able to obtain many customers at her first place. She attributed this to her appearance. So, she decided to move to Fengtian in China.

Hyun: "I didn't have a choice. I couldn't get a single customer at the place. I was not attractive. The customers all chose the pretty girls. Who's going to pick an unattractive one? ... I said to the son of the man who had brought me there, 'If I stay here, I won't be able to pay off the principal, so let me go somewhere else.' 'But we wrote a contract promising your father that we wouldn't send you somewhere else,' he replied. 'You can do it if the person herself consents,' I said. 'OK, go to the Fengtian clearing office and if someone buys you, we'll take the money,' he answered. "What about the interest?" I asked. 'Skip the interest,' he said. 'Work hard and go home.'" ...

[NB: Note that she cared about paying off the principal and returning home early before the expiration of the three-year term.]

Lee: Unfortunately, she was not able to earn money in Fengtian either. This time she decided to follow the military and move [to a comfort station in another location in China]. The owner there was Korean as well. ...

Lee: The amount of the advance was decided through negotiation. The length of the contract term was clear. There was a term dealing with transfers. The consent and seal of the household head was necessary. The comfort woman and her parents understood what work was involved with the Japanese soldiers, and that the advance would transfer to the new [brothel owner] in the case of a transfer. What else is necessary to prove that this was contractual?

#### D. Gordon-Eckert:

1. The claim. The most prominent criticism of my article comes from Harvard historians Andrew Gordon and Carter Eckert. Although the pair do not discuss in their critique what they think did happen in Korea, Gordon (2003, 224-25) elsewhere writes:

"Another group of war victims received much less public attention at the time or immediately after the war. These were the many thousands of young girls or women who were forced to work in euphemistically named "comfort stations" near the front lines of battle. About 80 percent were Koreans, and the remainder included Chinese, Japanese, and a small number of European women. Recruiters told some women they were hired as waitresses or servants. They simply captured others at gunpoint. Once at the front, all the women were forced to serve as prostitutes for Japanese troops. The soldiers were typically required to pay for the services of these women. From their perspective, the comfort stations appeared little different from the licensed brothels throughout Japan proper. But many of the women received no pay. Others received "pay" in the form of military tickets whose only use was to purchase daily necessities such as soap or food. The women thus

worked in conditions closer to slavery than to prostitution. ... Estimates range from one hundred thousand to two hundred thousand. "

Notable for someone who professes to care so much about citation, for this entire paragraph Gordon supplies only one footnote, and then only to two English-language sources. One of them is by George Hicks, discussed at length below. Notable for someone who professes to care so much about full disclosure, Gordon fails to disclose the crucial fabrication that gave rise to the entire comfort-women imbroglio. This too I discuss below.

As I explain in this response (and in the IRLE article whose publication Gordon-Eckert tried so hard to block), virtually nothing in Gordon's (2003) account is true. The plurality of the women were Japanese, not Korean. Two hundred thousand is the number claimed by the North Korean government (Coomaraswamy 1996, 18); the probable number was substantially less than 100,000. Like the licensed prostitutes in Korea and Japan, the women received huge up-front payments for their services, and generous amounts throughout the course of their work. Some women may or may not have received additional pay as "tickets," but the earnings went to pay down their original hard-cash loan, and many women either sent money home or returned home with additional cash savings. "Waitress" (shakufu) was not misleading -- it was the standard euphemism at the time for prostitutes.<sup>6</sup> And none -- none -- of the women from either Japan or Korea were "captured ... at gunpoint."

Carter Eckert's (1996) statements about the comfort women are hardly any better. He writes (1996, n. 34):

"... the army also drafted thousands of young women in the empire and occupied areas, including girls as young as twelve, to serve the sexual needs of Japanese combat troops and officers. About 80 percent of these girls, euphemistically called "comfort women" at the time, came from Korea."

Like Gordon (2003), Eckert (1996), too, relies on Hicks (1994). And like Gordon (2003) again, virtually everything in this statement is false. The women were not 12 years old. Instead, most were in their 20s. Eighty percent did not come from Korea. The plurality were Japanese. And none -- none -- of the women from either Japan or Korea were "drafted" by the army.

Rather than advance evidence for their own assertions, Gordon-Eckert write that my article: "rests on a comparison of contracts concluded with the so-called 'comfort women,' mainly Korean women, between 1938 and 1945, with contracts for what we might call ordinary legalized prostitution in Japan and colonial Korea."

They then assert:

"Any reasonable standard of academic integrity would require that Ramseyer state in his article that he does not have access to actual contracts or sample contracts concluded with Korean women in Korea, acknowledge how few third-party statements he has seen about contracts, and note the limits to what one can learn from those references."

On this basis, they demand that the IRLE retract my article.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Gordon-Eckert suggest that the use of the term "shakufu" could have misled someone. Takeo Suzuki (Hosoya 2019, 33, 35), former Manchukuo police officer, reports that at the time the women were not called either "prostitutes" (baishunfu) or "comfort women" (ianfu) but instead were called "shakufu." Waseda University historian and specialist in government documents, Arima (2021c, 153) writes that in suggesting that "shakufu" could have been ambiguous Gordon-Eckert are "misreading" the documents out of a "lack of basic knowledge."

<sup>7</sup> Gordon-Eckert correctly note that I cite to the wrong source at the end of Section 3.2. The correct citation is to the U.S. Office of War Information, Interrogation Report No. 49, Oct. 1, 1944, compiled in Josei (1998, vol. 5, 203-09). I am embarrassed by this mistake, and grateful to them for pointing out the error.

I never claim that I have a cache of actual contracts; rather, I use historical evidence about the contracts. Nonetheless, Gordon & Eckert state that I should be "require[d] ... to state that I do not have access to actual contracts or sample contracts." In the article, I make excruciatingly clear the limit of the information I have. No one could actually read beyond the customary summary language in the "abstract" to the article and imagine that I had a dataset of signed contracts. Again, please note that I emphatically do not purport to compare the treatment of Korean comfort women with that of Japanese comfort women. That is not what the article is about.

Nevertheless, on the basis of these claims, Gordon & Eckert proceed to declare that my article should never appear in print.

2. The evidence available. In my article, I use data about the contractual arrangements (I detail the evidence in Appendix III -- the list runs to 5 pages). I describe -- as clearly as I know how -- the extent of that data, and use it to tease out the nature of the contracts. In private, Gordon actually admits that the comfort stations and comfort women used contracts: "Nowhere in our letter to the editors did we say no contracts existed or were concluded. Certainly they did (and perhaps do)" (private email from Gordon, Feb. 7, 2021).<sup>8</sup>

The reason I do not have the actual contracts is simple: they have not survived. The brothels (not the government) held the contracts. Only the brothels and the women (and, sometimes, their parents) were party, and only they would have kept copies. Tokyo burned to the ground twice: once after the earthquake in 1923, and again during the war-time carpet bombing. Seoul and the other major Korean cities burned to the ground in the Korean war. And as the comfort station owners straggled home to Korea and Japan during the last months of 1945, very few (if any) would have bothered to carry the contracts they had concluded with their prostitutes.

Instead, in my article I draw conclusions from the data I have available. This information, as I understand it, indicates that the Japanese government created the comfort women regime as an extension of the prostitution licensing regime in Japan and in Korea. Importantly, recall that for Japan, the War began in the 1930s with the invasion of China. Based on my interpretation of the data available, I describe the domestic licensed prostitution regime on which the government based its comfort women regime. About that Japanese licensing regime, a great deal of data survives.

In my article, I next describe the similar regime that the government maintained contemporaneously in Korea. There is less data here, but it is still plentiful enough to draw conclusions. Finally, I pull these threads together and use the more limited information about the comfort women regime to tease out the way that it worked contractually (see Section 4, below). Please let me repeat: I do not seek to justify the way these women were treated. I make no normative claims at all. Instead, I describe the contractual relationships as best I can reconstruct them, and analyze how they functioned.

Suk-Gersen reports in the New Yorker that Gordon and Eckert assured her that among my sources:

"[T]here were no contracts involving Korean women at wartime comfort stations cited, nor secondary sources detailing those contracts, nor even any third-party accounts that confirm the relevant terms."

---

<sup>8</sup> Gordon-Eckert now acknowledge this in their publicly posted statement. This caveat was not in the retraction demand they sent to the journal.

In fact, I have many sources for information about comfort women (both Japanese and Korean) contracts. I list the sources in Appendix III. The list runs to five pages.<sup>9</sup>

Within pre-war Japan and Korea, prostitution was a licensed industry. Pursuant both to its health and safety regulation and to its police work, the government collected extensive data about the parties in this industry. What is more, some of the women and brothels sued each other in court. When they did, the terms of the contracts used appear in the opinions. As a result, I have an enormous amount of data about the contractual structure and enforcement of licensed prostitution in Japan (especially Tokyo).

Given that Korea was part of Japan and that Koreans were Japanese citizens, the government also collected analogous data about licensed prostitution in Korea. Again, the data stem from the government's role in health and safety regulation, and from its policing responsibilities.

I try to be clear in my IRLE article about the data on which I base my analysis. My citations make clear that I build on information about the contractual arrangements collected by the Japanese government and by a wide variety of scholars. These data concern both the domestic Japanese and Korean markets for sexual services, and the comfort stations. Particularly about the contracts in the domestic market, these documents report the length of the maximum contractual term of the contract; the number of years actually served; the frequency with which women quit in breach of contract; the amount of money paid by the brothel at the outset of the contract; and the allocation of revenue between the brothel and the woman during the course of the contract. The information about the comfort station contracts is less complete, but still substantial. Again: the list of sources providing detail about the comfort station contracts runs to five pages (Appendix III). And again: I make no attempt to compare Japanese and Korean comfort women contracts.

In the following Table 1, I include a translation of a form contract reproduced in a 1938 government memorandum. The memorandum comes from Ibaraki prefecture governor's office and discusses the recruitment activities of a Kobe brothel owner. Please note the following: (a) the contract is for a maximum two-year term; (b) the advance payment would range between 500-1000 yen; (c) the recruits would serve at a Shanghai army comfort station; (b) the recruits would be between 16 and 30 years old.

Several observations: First, this contract does not specify the accounting by which a woman would pay down her advance -- typically brothels applied 40-60 percent of the earnings toward the advance (for an elaborate description of the accounting in English, see SCAP 1945, 151-53). Second, the contract also specifies that the brothel would pay for food and clothing, and for the woman's return trip. The form contracts did not necessarily include these provisions. Third, although the contract stated that comfort women might be as young as 16, most comfort women in practice seem to have been in their 20s.

Note that this contract specifically anticipated that a woman might even decide to quit -- i.e., she could quit -- before she had either completed the two-year term or repaid her advance. Should she choose to do so, the contract provided that she would owe the brothel the unpaid portion of the advance and a specified penalty. This is an unusual provision.

---

<sup>9</sup> Readers can draw their own conclusions from the bizarre timing involved. My article first attracted public attention on Monday, February 1. Gordon sent me the completed Gordon-Eckert retraction demand on Sunday, February 7. During this period, all Harvard libraries were closed because of Covid -- and the Harvard copies of the source material were piled on the floor of my Harvard office. The Gordon-Eckert attack posted publicly is a later, expanded version of the retraction demand they sent to the journal on February 7.

Noting the limits to the data available is a perfectly reasonable criticism. Those limits represent a constraint I openly acknowledge. Gordon & Eckert, or any other critic, are welcome to contest my article's claims by presenting actual first-hand contracts from this period that indicate that I have drawn the wrong conclusions. They are welcome to present any other documentation that show that I have erred. I would be delighted to review the evidence; new data would constructively advance the scholarly debate. To date, they have presented none.

**Table 1: Sample Form Contract**

Contract:

- Item: Working term [stated below to be 2 years; see below].
- Item: Contractual amount [stated below to be 500 - 1000 yen].
- Item: To work as a prostitute (shakufu) at the comfort station (ianjo) of the Fourth Army stationed in in Shanghai.
- Item: Bonus shall equal 10 percent of revenue (half to be saved).
- Item: Food, clothing, and supplies shall be the obligation of the [brothel] owner.
- Item: Should this contract be dissolved during the contractual period, the remaining principal, the penalty [defined below as 10 percent of the principal per year], and costs incurred at the time of hiring shall become due and payable.
- ...

Conditions:

- Item: Contractual term: Two full years.
- Item: Advance loan: 500 yen to 1000 yen; provided, however, that 20 percent of the advance shall be deducted and applied toward incidental and start-up expenses.
- Item: Age -- 16 to 30 years old.
- Item: [Consent of parent required.]
- Item: The advance and the repayment formula expire upon the completion of the term of years. In other words, should the contracting party be unable to work because of illness, the advance shall be considered paid in full upon the end of the term
- Item: Interest shall not be charged during the term of the contract. Should the contracting party quit during the term of the contract, interest shall be charged at the rate of 1 percent per month.
- Item: The penalty shall equal 10 percent of the contractual advance per year.
- Item: Should the contracting party quit during the term of the contract, calculations shall be made on a per-day basis.
- Item: Upon completion of the term of years, the cost of returning to the home country shall be borne by the [brothel] owner.
- Item: 10 percent of the calculated earnings [I assume net] shall be paid to the contracting party [i.e., the woman] as income on a monthly basis.
- Item: Upon completion of the term of years, a reasonable payment of gratitude shall be paid in proportion to the contracting party's earnings.
- ...

Source: Ibaraki ken chi ji. 1938. Shanhai haken gun nai rikugun ianjo ni okeru shakufu boshu ni kansuru ken [Case Regarding the Recruitment of Prostitutes for the Comfort Station Attached to the Army Stationed in Shanghai], Feb. 14, 1938, in Josei no tame no Ajia heiwa kokumin kikin, ed., Seifu chosa: "Jugun ianfu" kankei shiryō shusei [Government Investigation: Materials Relating to the "Comfort Women Accompanying the Military"], vol. 1, 47-52, at 50, 52 (Tokyo: 1997).



3. The dragooning claim. (a) Introduction. In their criticism, Gordon-Eckert seem to assume a proposition fundamental to the hyper-nationalist histories behind essays like Suk-Gersen's New Yorker article or Chwe's "Concerned Economists" petition. This proposition, in essence, is that the Japanese army dragooned Korean women at bayonet-point. Although Gordon-Eckert do not repeat the dragooning claim in their retraction demand, Gordon (2003) and Eckert (1996) straightforwardly assert exactly that claim -- that Japanese soldiers (as Gordon put it) "captured others at gunpoint." Without this claim, I struggle to understand how Gordon-Eckert could be doing anything other than complaining that "Ramseyer-does-not-tell-his-readers-that-he-has-no-contracts." For reasons discussed above, I cannot imagine that any reasonable reader who read beyond the summary language in the article's "abstract" would ever assume I had a cache of signed contracts. Because this dragooning claim seems so fundamental to Gordon-Eckert's attack, I consider its roots in this Section 3. I turn to its implications for understanding contractual structure in Section 4

Please let me repeat again: disputing the claim that Japanese soldiers dragooned Korean women at bayonet-point does not justify anything the Japanese army did in the War. Neither does it address whether the Japanese army dragooned women elsewhere. I am concerned here with a descriptive claim about whether or not a specific event occurred in two specific countries. I advance absolutely no normative thesis about the Japanese army or about anything else. Normative claims are far beyond the scope of my article and my research.

(b) Yoshida. The claims of gunpoint capture in Korea largely began with a 1983 book by a Japanese writer named Seiji Yoshida. In it, Yoshida recounted travelling with a group of soldiers to the Korean island of Jeju to round up young women at gunpoint, to rape them, and then to load them onto ships bound for the comfort stations. The leading Japanese newspaper (Asahi) played up his story at elaborate length ("Yoshida shogen" 2014; Hata 2018).

In fact, Yoshida had fabricated the entire account. He had written an immensely readable memoir, complete with long dialogues. Prominent historians questioned it from the start (Hata 1999, 2018). One went to Jeju to investigate. There, he found the village where Yoshida claimed to have conducted one of the larger hunts, but no one remembered anything about a raid. This is a small place, one elderly man told him. If the Japanese military had abducted women to serve as prostitutes, no one would forget it. Other historians and reporters -- both Japanese and Korean -- followed. None of them found any evidence that corroborated Yoshida's story. Yoshida initially insisted that the events had occurred, but eventually admitted to having fabricated the account.

Pivotal for the discussion here, George Hicks relied extensively and explicitly on Yoshida's fabricated account (see Hicks 1994, 1996), and Gordon (2003) and Eckert (1996) in turn relied on Hicks.<sup>10</sup> To make matters worse, Hicks himself did not even read Japanese, and worked instead with translators (Hata 1999, 266). For the discussion in which he claims that the Japanese army in Korea "captured others at gunpoint," Gordon (2003) cites Hicks (as does Eckert [1996]), and Hicks (1994, 1996) in turn cites Yoshida. Yet already by 1997 the Asahi newspaper had announced that it was unable to confirm the veracity of Yoshida's account (Hata 1999: 238). By 2003 when Gordon published his account, scholars actually in the field had long since come to

---

<sup>10</sup> Specifically, Gordon cites Hicks' 1996 chapter to an edited collection for the number of comfort women. The basic Hicks study is (1994).

agree that Yoshida had made up the entire story.<sup>11</sup> And in 2014, the Asahi newspaper finally pronounced its entire portfolio of comfort women articles based on the Yoshida report "false."<sup>12</sup>

(c) The testimonials. Crucially, it was during these years after Yoshida published his book but before the Asahi retracted its articles that several elderly Korean women began demanding compensation from Japan. It was also during this time that the U.N. issued its famous scathing report -- a report that explicitly relied on Yoshida's fictitious account (U.N. 1996). As Korean-American anthropologist C. Sarah Soh (2008: 154) put it, "Yoshida's work served as a crucial resource for international human rights activists and the United Nations as they constructed the paradigmatic comfort women story." Unfortunately -- but importantly -- after reviewing the evidence, I am sadly forced to conclude that the most prominent of these women are not telling consistent stories.

I do not relish this skeptical assertion, nor do I place any blame on anyone. But the hyper-nationalist version of what happened during this era on the Korean peninsula depends almost entirely on a small subset of autobiographies. It is important carefully to examine these claims. And it becomes even more important because most of the women making these claims have been attached to a particular nursing home connected to women and men accused of rampant financial fraud (stealing from the comfort women) and long dogged by rumors of North Korean ties (even of spying for the North; see Section (e), below).<sup>13</sup>

Many of these women have changed their stories. More than anyone else, Sarah Soh (2008) has tried to verify their accounts. A few examples stand out. I repeat these examples not to attack these women. I repeat them because, as a descriptive matter, these inconsistencies make it unreasonable to rely on these accounts without some contemporaneous collaboration.

Kim Hak-sun had originally blamed her stepfather for her career in prostitution. She did not like the man her mother had married. According to one of her accounts, her mother had responded by selling her. According to another (perhaps simply adding detail), her mother had sent her to "foster parents" who trained her to become the Korean equivalent of a geisha (kisaeng). This foster father had run a comfort station. One day he disappeared, and she became a comfort woman (Soh 2008: 127; Yi 2018). As the comfort-women movement ramped up its pressure on Japan, however, Kim adopted a very different story: Japanese soldiers had arrested her foster father during a trip to Beijing, and sent her to a comfort station (Howard 1995: 34; Soh 2008: 127).

Kim Sun-ok originally told those who asked that she had "had no childhood. I was sold four times from the age of seven" (Soh 2008: 11). Recruiters would come "showing up at my house, coaxing my parents," she recalled. "I declared to my parents that I was not going anywhere and begged them not to sell me again." Indeed, "I contemplated a variety of methods of killing myself." But her parents sold her anyway, and she eventually landed in a Manchurian comfort station. Nevertheless, when the U.N. Commission on Human Rights held hearings in 1996, she testified to "U.N. interrogator Radhika Coomaraswamy that she was abducted by the Japanese military"

---

<sup>11</sup> Soh (2008: 152-55) provides a careful chronology. In covering the Asahi retraction in 2014, the N.Y. Times (Fackler 2014), as hostile to my position in this response as any paper might be, wrote that "Mr. Yoshida was discredited two decades ago" -- which obviously would point to 1994.

<sup>12</sup> "Yoshida shogen" (2014); Jiyu (2014); Saishuto (2014); Asahi shimbun moto (2014). By far the best account of the Yoshida fiasco is Hata (1999: ch. 7). Hata spent time with Yoshida, and covers the disintegration of Yoshida's story in graphic detail.

<sup>13</sup> Convictions for spying were eventually overturned.

(Devine 2016, quoting Soh). Note that Coomaraswamy (1996) -- drafter of the U.N. report on which the "Concerned Economists" rely -- explicitly cites Yoshida's book as evidence.

Like Kim Hak-sun, Kim Kun-ja (Kim Koon Ja) initially blamed her foster father for her work as a comfort woman. He had "sold" her, she recalled. She "hated the father more than the Japanese military" (Soh 2008: 67, 101; KIH 2016a). Nevertheless, in 2007 she told the U.S. House of Representatives (Protecting 2007: 30) that the Japanese army had abducted her. She had lived in a house "in front of a train station," she now explained. At age 17, the family with whom she lived had "sent [her] outside for an errand." There, she was "captured" and "taken away" by railroad. "[T]here were lots of soldiers" on the train, "and there were lots of women who were forcibly taken away."

By the 2010s, more than anyone else the primary spokeswoman for the comfort-woman crusade became Yi Yong-su (Lee Yong-soo). Yi had originally said that she left home with a friend in the middle of the night. Her friend had urged her to "[c]ome out quickly," she told them, so she had "tiptoed out" and followed her friend. There she found a Japanese man who gave her a "a red dress and a pair of leather shoes in a packet." So excited was she that she followed him "readily," and "without any further thought" (Soh 2008: 12-13, 98-100; Howard 1995: 89; Yi 2018; Yi 2020).

By the next decade, Yi had joined the campaign to demand money from Japan, and told a radically different story. In 2002, she visited the Japanese Diet and declared that "she had been taken away at age 14 at bayonet-point." (Moto 2002). In 2007, she told the U.S. House of Representatives "that she had been kidnapped by Japanese soldiers at age 16." Shortly after that visit to the U.S., she added at a Tokyo news conference that "Japanese soldiers had dragged her from her home, covering her mouth so that she could not call to her mother" (Fackler 2007; see Soh 2008: 100-01; Protecting 2007: 17)).

Within the last two years, however, relations within the comfort-women campaign have broken down. And with that collapse in group cohesion has come (perhaps unanticipated) candor. In 2020, Yi publicly accused Yoon Mi-hyang, the principal organizer of the campaign and effective head of the comfort-women nursing home, of stealing from the comfort women. Yoon retaliated by stating what many observers (and most scholars in the field) had long-since concluded: that Yi has not been telling the truth about her life. Yoon posted on her Facebook her memory of her first encounter with Lee. Lee had telephoned her, said Yoon. And she had introduced herself by saying, "I'm not a victim myself, but my friend ..." Please let me stress the import: Yoon (head of the long-standing campaign to obtain money and apologies from Japan) publicly accused Yi (her own campaign's principal comfort-woman representative) of having fabricated her entire life history (Yamaoka 2021; Murotani 2021).

Human memory can change over time. These women clearly suffered. I do not wish to throw my skepticism in their faces, and I do not mean to insult them. On the contrary, I hope that they are able to find peace. The Second World War was a terrible struggle for many millions of people around the world. We are fortunate to live in different times today.

(d) Contemporaneous evidence. I am forced to analyze these oral testimonies, however, because, as far as I can tell, they constitute virtually the only evidence that the Japanese army dragooned Korean women. This strikes me as deeply surprising. Had the Japanese military kidnapped non-trivial numbers of young women at gunpoint, one would expect to find contemporaneous corroboration. One would expect to read stories in newspapers, police reports,

personal diaries. Instead, the accounts mostly appear only in the wake of Yoshida's (later proven to be fictitious) 1983 book.

Kimura: Contemporaneous sources do include many accounts of fraudulent recruiters enticing young women into brothel work. They report brothels that reneged on the contractual terms. But I am unaware of any contemporaneous accounts of the Japanese army dragooning Korean women. Significantly, I am also unaware of any accounts of dragooning published in the years immediately after the Japanese defeat. Professor Kan Kimura (2014, tab. 1-1) of Kobe University, for example, canvassed the Chosun Ilbo newspaper from 1945 to 1990. He reports that he found no mention of "comfort women" at all during that period.

Soh: C. Sarah Soh (2008: 159-69) discusses the issue of post-war media accounts at greater length. She too finds no mention of comfort women before 1964. For that year, she (2008, 159) locates an article in the Han'guk Ilbo newspaper about (quoting the newspaper) a comfort woman who "was forcibly taken, during the period of imperial Japan, to the Southeast Asia ...." The woman had died in 1963. Soh does not give more information about how she came to be a comfort woman.

Soh (2008, 160) continues:

"Almost all Korean publications concerning the comfort women issue surfaced after the 1965 bilateral agreement was signed between South Korea and Japan. Nearly all have presented postcolonial nationalist perspectives, denouncing Japan for the forced mobilization of 'virgins' as chongsindae, who, many Koreans have continued to assert, were abused as comfort women."

Soh attended college in Korea, but currently teaches anthropology at San Francisco State. She has stated publicly that she does not believe that a Korean publisher would be willing to handle a translation of her book.

Soh (2008: 160) identifies the beginning of "public discourse" in Korea on comfort women with a 1970 article. She does not say much about content of the article, but instead continues her account of the occasional publication on the subject (including the Korean translation of Senda [1973]). She (2008: 161) then writes:

"Nevertheless, it was not until 1981 that the first Korean-authored volume devoted to the topic of the Korean comfort women was released to the general public."

Soh (2008) does not say much about this volume either, but instead turns to an ensuing novella. She (2008: 166) notes that the comfort woman in the book earned 2000 won, and then observes:

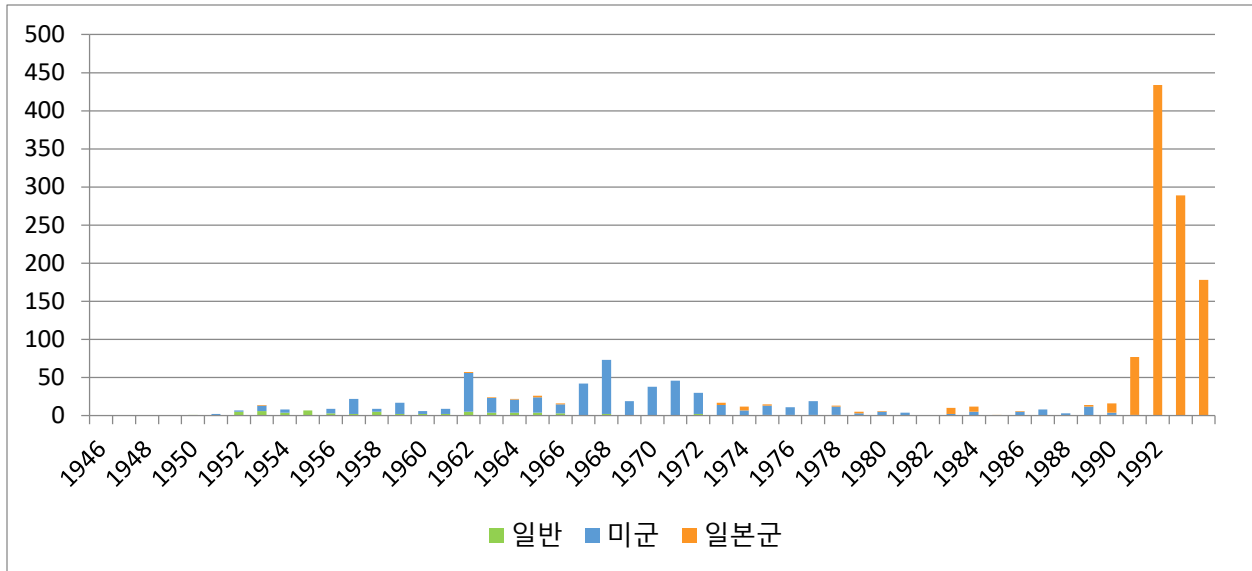
"It is also remarkable that the author gives the amount of money saved by Sun-i as 2,000 won because, after the redress movement began, it has become socially unacceptable and politically embarrassing to state that the women had been paid for their sexual service ...."

Finally, Soh (2008, 166-67) turns to the lavish attention given in the Korean media to a Korean comfort woman who had been living in Thailand. This woman reported:

"I was forcibly recruited by Japanese policemen in 1942 and sent to Singapore, where I labored as a comfort woman for three years."

This is the first reference after the 1963 article in Soh's chronology where the woman clearly asserts that that she was recruited "forcibly." Recall that Yoshida published his book in 1983, and that the Asahi newspaper promoted it aggressively. The Korean media reported this woman's story in 1984. The Japanese newspaper that published the story was the Asahi shimbun.

Joo: At my request, Dr. Ikjong Joo, economic historian with the Syngman Rhee Institute and one-time visiting scholar at Harvard University, very generously agreed to search two other newspapers. In the figure below, he gives the number of times the phrase "comfort woman" appeared in the pages of the Kyunghyang newspaper or the Dong-a Ilbo newspaper. The green numbers give the number of general references to "comfort woman," the blue to "comfort women" working for the U.S. bases, and orange for those who had worked for the Japanese bases. The newspapers include virtually no references to comfort women working for the Japanese military before 1991.



In 1982, 1984, and 1989, the papers did include at least 10 references to the so-called "teishintai" (chongsindae). These were the work corps by which the Japanese government mobilized Koreans for industrial jobs under the emergency mobilization program of late 1944 and 1945 (it also mobilized Japanese for this work). For a brief period, these corps were confused with the comfort women (see Hata [1999: 366-76]). Note that term teishintai also appears several times (albeit never more than six per year) during the 1970s, but most of these articles apparently discuss two movies. One was a Japanese documentary about prostitutes (not coerced) in Okinawa. The other was a pornographic movie by the name Joshi teishintai (see Soh 2008: 162, 165).

I am extremely grateful to Dr. Joo for providing this material.

Conclusion: The point is simple: the post war Korean newspapers did not discuss bayonet-point dragooning under the Japanese occupation. They hardly discuss World War II-era prostitution at all. To the extent they do discuss the sex industry, they discuss the prostitutes and brothels that catered to the American military personnel.

Three Korean prisoners of war indirectly made the same point about the inevitability of contemporaneous corroboration of any dragooning when they talked to U.S. interrogators in April of 1945 (Military Intelligence 1945). "All Korean prostitutes" that they had seen, they reported to their interrogators, "were volunteers or had been sold by their parents into prostitution. ... [D]irect conscription of women by the Japanese would be an outrage that the old and young alike would

not tolerate. Men would rise up in a rage, killing Japanese no matter what consequence they might suffer."

Return to the Gordon-Eckert (2021) attack, and to the Gordon (2003) and Eckert (1996) passages quoted above. Note that in all of these accounts, they (both of whom rely on Hicks who relies on Yoshida) fail to disclose that the comfort women began making their claims only after Yoshida published his account. They fail to disclose that in telling these stories, several of the women contradicted accounts that they had earlier given. They fail to tell their readers that some of the most prominent of the women lived in a nursing home tied to a flagrantly corrupt operator long rumored to have North Korean connections. They fail to disclose that the Korean press included virtually no discussion of any dragooning before Yoshida published that book. Most crucially -- they fail to disclose that Yoshida had fabricated the entire account. And indeed, they fail to say anything about Yoshida at all.<sup>14</sup>

(e) The Korean Council. -- One organization lies at the heart of the current dispute with Japan; unfortunately, it is an organization that manipulates the dispute in relentless opposition to reconciliation with Japan. The organization was long known as the Chong Dae Hyup (CDH), the "Korean Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery" (KIH 2016d); more recently, it goes by the name "Korean Council for Justice and Remembrance for the Issues of Military Sexual Slavery by Japan." The CDH organizes the weekly protests in front of the Japanese embassy in Seoul. It began the installation of the comfort women statutes around the world. It pressured the former comfort women to reject the compensation offered by Japan (KIH 2016b). It brutally attacks scholars who would question the "sex-slave" narrative so passionately embraced by scholars in the West (Ji 2005; Gunji 2013). And it has long been headed by Yoon Mi-hyang.

CDH controls most of the public testimony by the comfort women. It maintains its ability to do this by collaborating in the operation of a nursing home -- the House of Nanumu -- for the women who recount the stories it wants told (Soh 2008: 96). As political scientist Joseph Yi (2018) put it, the "prevailing narrative of abductions is based on the oral testimonies of a small number of women (16 of 238 registered survivors in 1990s), associated with activist organizations (e.g., House of Sharing [i.e., the nursing home]; Korean Council [i.e., CDH])" (Yi 2018). By helping to control Nanumu, the CDH controls who scholars and reporters will see and what the women will say.

Many of the comfort women deeply resent Yoon and the CDH. Back in 2004, several comfort women sued CDH to try to retake control over their movement (Moto 2018). The CDH maintained control, however, and has successfully intimidated most of the women who remain. Harsh critic of the CDH, Korean historian Park Yu-Ha confesses herself puzzled that the group ever let her interview the women (KIH 2016b):

I regained my interest in [the comfort women] issue in the early 2000s when I heard that Chong Dae Hyup was confining surviving women in a nursing home called House of Nanumu. The only time these women were allowed to talk to outsiders was when Chong Dae Hyup needed them to testify for the UN Special Rapporteur or the U.S. politicians. But for some reason I was allowed to talk to them one day in 2003.

---

<sup>14</sup> Unfortunately, this seems to be standard practice in the field of Japanese history. Even the senior scholar in this comfort-woman field and preeminent intellectual historian of Japan, Columbia's Carol Gluck (2021), managed to write a survey of the literature that never mentioned the origin of the comfort-women campaign in Yoshida's fraud, or the role that the fraudulent nursing home operator played in pushing it. Instead, she attributes the "denial" to the work of the "right-wing nationalists" in Japan.

Park found the Nanumu women deeply unhappy with the CDH. Park continues (KIH 2016b):

I could sense that women were not happy being confined in this place. One of the women (Bae Chun-hee) told me she reminisced the romance she had with a Japanese soldier. She said she hated her father who sold her. She also told me that women there didn't appreciate being coached by Chong Dae Hyup to give false testimonies but had to obey Chong Dae Hyup's order.

CDH made its threats against the women credible when Japan first offered compensation in 1995. Determined to sabotage the coming rapprochement, it ordered the women to refuse the payments. Some took the money anyway. According to Park (KIH 2016b):

When Japan offered compensation through Asian Women's Fund in 1995, 61 former Korean comfort women defied Chong Dae Hyup's order and accepted compensation. Those 61 women were vilified as traitors. Their names and addresses were published in newspapers as prostitutes, and they had to live the rest of their lives in disgrace. Sarah Soh (2008: 101) confirms the women's fears. Although some comfort women invented dramatic new stories to keep themselves in the news, "other South Korean survivors have firmly refused to be further interviewed after the initial investigation for the government certification process." They have, Soh explains, "kept their silence out of fear of making 'speech errors' that might lead to the cancellation of their registration and hence the cessation of their welfare support money."

By sabotaging any reconciliation between South Korea and Japan, the CDH directly promotes a key North Korean political goal -- and that seems to be the point. As Park (KIH 2016b) explains it, CDH "has used the comfort women issue for its political purpose, which is to drive a wedge into U.S.-Japan-South Korea security partnership." Apparently organized by Korean communists, the group was at one time designated by the South Korean government as a North Korean affiliate (KIH 2016b). Its long-time senior representative -- Yun Mi-hyang -- was herself investigated for North Korean ties in 2013. She is currently under investigation for financial fraud (stealing from the comfort women). Other members of her family have for years been embroiled in controversy and litigation over whether they did or did not spy for the north (with a court eventually concluding in 2018 that they did not). This is the group, however, that controls the public statements by the comfort women.

4. My approach. -- (a) Introduction. I explicitly reconstruct the logic to the comfort station contracts by studying the way that the Japanese government used the domestic licensing regime as the template. Korean-American anthropologist Sarah Soh (2008: 117) writes that Japan "endorsed the military comfort system as an extension of licensed prostitution for its armed forces engaged in prolonged warfare." Emeritus professor of economic history at Seoul National University, Lee Younghoon (2019: 233, 258-59) similarly explains that "the Japanese military comfort woman system was based on the licensed prostitution regime that Japan implemented in the 1870s."

I start by summarizing that domestic Japanese regime. I examine the domestic Korean variant. And I then take whatever information I can find about the comfort women system, and use what we know about the way the system worked in Japan and Korea to gauge what happened in the comfort stations.

I wish here to make two observations. First, I am completely transparent about this approach. Second, nothing that I have found in contemporaneous primary sources suggests that the contractual structure of the comfort women regime differed qualitatively from the domestic licensed prostitution regime. Many Western scholars do argue that the regimes were different.

That is one plausible response to my paper. But I think, respectfully, that these scholars rely too heavily on the statements from a small group of comfort women who demanded compensation from Japan, whose late-in-life testimonies sometimes contradict their earlier accounts.

Licensed prostitutes in Japan (minimum age 18; minimum age 17 in Korea) worked under classic indentured servitude contracts. The brothels paid them (or their family) a large up-front payment. In exchange, they agreed to work a maximum number of years (in Japan, typically 6), and the brothel agreed to let them quit early if they generated sufficient revenue. Most women did generate that revenue, and those in Japan generally quit after about 3 years (IRLE, at pages 2-3, sec. 2.2 for Japan; pages 4-5, sec. 2.3 for Korea).

Work overseas -- especially work on the front -- was more dangerous in a wide variety of ways. Reflecting those risks, comfort women apparently worked under contracts with much shorter terms and higher (adjusted for length) up-front payments. Until the later months of the war when travel became hard, they apparently served their contractual terms or paid off their debts early, and moved on (IRLE, at pages 5-7, sec. 3). These are the observations I make in the article. I make them on the basis of data whose limits I explicitly acknowledge. And I detail the nature of that data in Appendix III. In the recent article in the Diplomat that Ambaras, Stanley, and Chatani harassed the journal into blocking, prominent Korean economist Lee Wooyoun (2021b) cogently summarizes the job:

“Comfort women” were engaged in a “high-risk, high-return” occupation. Some occasionally earned enormous sums, and a great many returned to Korea or re-entered the workforce after their contracted term of employment ended. Restrictions on daily freedoms applied equally to military personnel, civilian employees, nurses, and anyone else in the battlefield environment. In conclusion, comfort women were not sex slaves, but sex workers who were fundamentally no different from today’s sex industry workers.

Again, please let me stress: all of my observations are descriptive; I do not seek to justify any of these arrangements.

(b) Gordon-Eckert. Gordon-Eckert object to my using the Japanese and Korean licensing regimes to understand the comfort women regime. They do so for a simple reason: if the women worked in the comfort stations only under coercion, I should not be able legitimately to reason about comfort station contracts from the contracts in Japan and Korea. And given that my data about the comfort women contracts are incomplete, Gordon-Eckert continue, I should not draw any conclusions at all.

As I read their criticism, Gordon-Eckert are taking the claims of Yoshida and the most vocal comfort women at face value. It is precisely because Yoshida's claims have been proven to be fabricated, and because I find the claims by the most vocal comfort women to be less than fully credible, that I begin instead with an analysis of the domestic employment arrangements within Japan and Korea. As Seoul National University emeritus economic historian Lee Younghoon (1999, 233) explicitly observes, the Japanese government modelled its comfort station regulatory regime on that of its domestic licensed brothels. He explained (quoted at Phillips, Lee & Yi, 2019, 453):

The Comfort women system was a licensed prostitution system under the control of the military ... The comfort women were not sex slaves ... Korean comfort women were recruited by pimps by means of advance payments and outright fraud ... There is no evidence that there were 200,000 Korean comfort women. The number is somewhere around 5,000.



The Japanese government believed that its soldiers would frequent brothels whatever it did, but wanted to avoid an epidemic of venereal disease. Accordingly, it instituted a licensed brothel system (with mandatory condom use and regular health inspections) near its bases. As I read the evidence, the government imported its domestic licensing regime in largely unmodified form. The best description of this process (and of the comfort-women regime more generally) in English appears in Hata (2018).

Gordon-Eckert put the onus on me to justify my claim that the comfort-station contractual structure mirrored the Japanese and Korean licensing regime. I think that puts the burden exactly backwards. Remember that Gordon (2003) and Eckert (1996) merely repeat Yoshida's fabricated account (explicitly citing Hicks, who in turn relies crucially and extensively on Yoshida).<sup>15</sup> Unless they have stronger evidence that the claims about bayonet-point dragooning in Korea are true, Gordon-Eckert bear the burden of showing that comfort-station regime did not follow the domestic regime.

Gordon-Eckert also seem to imply that I have the burden of showing that the Korean comfort women were treated as well as the Japanese comfort women. As I note at the outset, I do not address the issue at all -- nowhere in my article do I make any claim about this. One would not expect Korean and Japanese women to have negotiated identical contracts. Most obviously, Korea was poorer than Japan, so the shadow wages of the recruits would have been lower. But the dragooning claim is flatly false, and what evidence I have (see Appendix III) suggests that the Korean and Japanese contracts were qualitatively very similar. In any event, please note that I make absolutely no assertion about this claim in the IRLE article; this comparison is emphatically one that I do not make. If Gordon-Eckert wish to introduce evidence on this point and to begin the comparison of the two groups of employment contracts, I welcome it. That is how scholarship advances.

At the risk of being tiresome, let me make the point yet again: this academic dispute is entirely descriptive. I make no argument in support of Japan's licensed prostitution system; indeed, I make no normative claims at all. I try to understand the contractual arrangements that the parties to these employment relations actually used.

5. Yoshimi. Several historians criticize me for not citing Yoshiaki Yoshimi. Yoshimi is the best known of the comfort-station historians who are critical of the Japanese government (and I directly address his objections in Appendix II). In 2015, the Japanese government complained about the coverage of comfort women in a McGraw-Hill high school textbook (Dudden 2015). Gordon and others responded with a savage attack on the Japanese government, and singled out Yoshimi to laud his "careful research" on the subject. In fact, perhaps these Western historians do not actually follow Yoshimi's work. Yoshimi explicitly acknowledges that the Japanese army did not forcibly dragoon Korean women. In a recent interview for the Mainichi newspaper (Yoshii 2019), he said:

"So, how were the comfort women gathered? There were three general methods. First, an industry member [recruiter] selected by the military lent money to a woman's family (the advance loan), and she in exchange worked at a comfort station (the purchase of a human). Second, a member of the industry [recruiter] fooled a woman into thinking that she would be working in a job like bar hostess or nurse (kidnapping). Third,

---

<sup>15</sup> To be precise: Gordon (2003) cites Hicks (1996) and one other source for the estimate of the number of comfort women. He cites no one at all for the rest of the claims in his paragraph.

government officials or a member of the industry used threats or violence forcibly to impress the woman (capture).

"On the Korean peninsula, which was a colony, the first and second were common.

There is testimony and court material indicating that forcible impressment by government officials occurred in occupied territories like China and Southeast Asia."

The military may have forcibly dragooned women in China and Southeast Asia. It did not, Yoshimi explicitly states, dragoon women in Korea. In late 2021 one could still locate the interview on the internet. Curiously, either the newspaper or Yoshimi himself (it is not clear which) has apparently chosen to try to make it disappear. The interview no longer appears in the official Mainichi internet repository.

6. Soh -- on markets and slavery. -- Soh (2008, 114) describes my work on Japanese prostitution (Ramseyer 1991) at some length:

"[Ramseyer] has cautioned scholars 'not to let the brutality of prostitution blind them to the effective ways peasant women and men make the most of bad situations.' Ramseyer notes that the women who became licensed prostitutes were 'not women with many attractive alternatives' and that 'prostitution did pay well.' His study concludes that women in prewar Japan became licensed prostitutes by signing six-year indenture contracts, and 'most prostitutes did not become slaves' (emphasis in original). Instead, most of them quit when their contracts expired, and some were able to quit earlier by repaying their debts in three or four years."

She (2008, 114) concludes:

"The lived experience of some Korean comfort women has corroborated Ramseyer's research findings, but their personal histories have remained a part of strategically 'subjugated knowledge' in contemporary politics."

The two halves to her sentence (lived experience corroborates Ramseyer's findings, but personal histories remain strategically subjugated), in turn, reflect what Soh (2008: 114) describes as a fundamental divide over our understanding of the sex industry:

"[The] fundamentally clashing views of prostitution as commercial sex versus sexual slavery ... constitute a crucial axis in the competing public discourses and conflicting memories over the comfort women in Japanese society."

I find it hard not to think that the same debate may be driving some of the hostility toward my article.

E. Suk-Gersen:

Among my critics, Suk-Gersen has probably reached the largest audience, and she probably owes that audience to the aura of impartiality with which she suffuses her attack. Writing in the New Yorker, Suk-Gersen (2021) begins by assuring her readers that the "postcolonial nationalist" history (Soh's words) so popular in some segments of South Korea -- the history recounted by Chwe -- represents "the historical consensus on comfort women":

"[The] 'comfort women' [were] women and girls who were transported to war-front 'comfort stations' to provide sexual services to soldiers in the Imperial Japanese Army. The women were taken by force or entrapped in many countries in and beyond Asia, but a large number came from Korea .... Estimates of the number of victims have ranged widely, from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands .... [Since that time, these] crimes against

humanity ... have been mired in waves of conflict and denial about the truth of what happened."

Suk-Gersen knows much more than she writes. She knows -- if only because I discussed it in the material I provided her on February 3 -- that the Korean comfort women only began to claim that they had been dragooned by the Japanese military after Yoshida published his 1983 book (discussed at length above) in which he recounted leading a military squad on "comfort women hunts" in Korea. She knows that the Asahi shimbun newspaper -- the closest thing to a newspaper of record in Japan -- famously played up the story to enormous fanfare. And she knows that Yoshida had fabricated the entire account.

Suk-Gersen knows that the U.N. based its scathing 1996 report on Yoshida's fraudulent account. Perhaps carefully, she does not cite the report. She knows that in 2014, the Asahi finally announced -- after an elaborate investigation -- that it had no choice but to conclude that Yoshida had lied, and retracted its entire portfolio of articles. She knows that several of the most prominent of the Korean comfort women changed their stories after they decided to demand compensation from Japan.

Suk-Gersen knows all this, but somehow manages to write a long essay on the subject in which none of it appears. Instead, she recounts the virulently anti-Japanese popular account as "historical consensus." And she then interviews (primarily) Japanese studies scholars in the humanities. She assures her readers that they are assiduously non-partisan:

"My conversations with scholars who spent the past three weeks investigating Ramseyer's claims have been remarkable to me because of the strength of their commitment to upholding professional standards and procedures. While his claims are provocative and distressing to many, the scholars' concern was not that, but only the claims' truth."

Suk-Gersen contacted Gordon and Eckert and learned from them that I discuss contracts I have not seen. From them, she learned that:

"Reviewing Ramseyer's footnotes, they found that there were no contracts involving Korean women at wartime comfort stations cited, nor secondary sources detailing those contracts, nor even any third-party accounts that confirm the relevant terms."

Recall that this is the Gordon who published an earlier account that my article flatly disputes and that cited only two English-language sources in support. Recall that one of those sources is Hicks, who did not himself read Japanese and depended heavily on a translator's account of Yoshida's fabricated story (see Hicks [1994]). And recall, as noted earlier, that my list of sources in Appendix III giving detail about comfort women contracts runs to five pages.

Suk-Gersen contacted the five youngish scholars who together drafted a 30+ page list of what they claim are errors in my 8-page article. I explore their list in Appendix I. In fact, they locate only three substantive mistakes, and none of any importance. But Suk-Gersen claims to find their conclusions compelling. One of the five is David Ambaras (who led the attack on the Diplomat to censor the Korean economist's article). She contacts him and learns that he is working on several other pieces of mine:

"scholars have found that [Ramseyer] misused historical sources in several recent articles on minority groups that have been subject to severe discrimination in Japan: the Burakumin, a formerly hereditary outcast group; Okinawans; and Koreans."

Instead of just telling readers how "remarkable" she found his non-partisan "commitment to upholding professional standards," she might have mentioned his Twitter handle at the time: "David Ambaras is anti-fascist." Some of these five scholars so committed "to upholding

professional standards" spend their time on Twitter calling me a "white supremacist."<sup>16</sup> Obviously, these men and women can call themselves anything they want, and disparage me with whatever terms they please. But at the least, that a person describes himself as Antifa in 2021 might suggest an interpretation other than scholarly commitment for why he says what he does about an article by an old-school-Chicago law-&-economics professor.

Suk-Gersen closes her article with an account of Yi Yong-su (Lee Yong-soo). Suk-Gersen fondly calls the woman "Grandma Lee," and explains that she had been "conscripted as a comfort woman at fifteen." She writes that Lee had recently spoken at Harvard Law School. Shortly before the meeting, continues Suk-Gersen, she received an email defending me and describing Lee as a "fake comfort woman." She assures her readers that the sender was "a small far-right fringe group in Korea."

Suk-Gersen could not have chosen a more appropriate way to end her story about the comfort women. Several of the most vocal of the comfort women changed their stories once they decided to demand money from Japan, and (as noted earlier) Lee is among the most notorious. Lee had originally told historians that she left home with a friend in the middle of the night. Her friend had urged her to "[c]ome out quickly," she told them, so she had "tiptoed out" and followed her friend. There she found a Japanese man who gave her a "a red dress and a pair of leather shoes in a packet." So excited was she that she followed him "readily," and "without any further thought" (Soh 2008: 12-13, 98-100; Howard 1995: 89; Yi 2018, 2020).

By the next decade, Lee had joined the campaign to demand money from Japan, and told a radically different story. In 2002, she visited the Japanese Diet and declared that "she had been taken away at age 14 at bayonet-point" (Moto 2002). In 2007, she told the U.S. House of Representatives "that she had been kidnapped by Japanese soldiers." Shortly after that visit to the U.S., she added at a Tokyo news conference that "Japanese soldiers had dragged her from her home, covering her mouth so that she could not call to her mother" (Fackler 2007).

Suk-Gersen knew this. Like so much else, it was in the material I shared with her.<sup>17</sup>

#### F. The Apparent "Consensus":

Unfortunately, this is not the first time that questioning the orthodox account of the comfort-women issue within the English-speaking world has triggered a massive outpouring of professional outrage. As discussed above, in 2015 the Japanese government complained about a McGraw-Hill high school textbook. The book described the comfort-station regime in terms as fictitious and as bizarre as anything by Chwe: 200,000 women, as young as 14, "presented ... to the troops as a gift from the Emperor," but many of whom never returned -- in part because "soldiers massacred large numbers of comfort women to cover up the operation." When the Japanese government raised concerns about the truth of these claims to the textbook's publisher, Gordon and some 19 other historians savaged the government in the newsletter of the American

---

<sup>16</sup> E.g., <https://twitter.com/SzendiChelsea/status/1379969613631393794>

<sup>17</sup> As noted earlier, as the accusations against CDH head (Yoon Mi-hyang) mounted, the relations between her and Lee Yong-soo broke down. In mid-2020, Yoon (the head of the CDH) retaliated against Lee (the CDH's principal comfort woman representative) by publicly accusing her of having invented her entire life history. Yoon posted on her Facebook her memory of her first encounter with Lee. Lee had called her, said Yoon, and introduced herself by saying, "I'm not a victim myself, but my friend ..." See Yamaoka (2021); Murotani (2021).

In describing the way that the group affiliated with the nursing home publicized Lee's account, Joseph Yi (2020, 10), professor of Hanyang University, writes that it was an account "that it likely knew to be problematic." He then describes the way that Lee's testimonies changed over the years.

Historical Association (Dudden et al. 2015; an attack celebrated in Suk-Gersen [2021]). The Japanese government's actions were censorship, apparently, and censorship they would fight relentlessly. The comfort-women regime, they declared, had been nothing other than "state-sponsored sexual slavery." The Japanese government was "questioning the established history of the comfort women."

They wish. Suk-Gersen reports that no Anglophone historian contests the Japanese-army-draagooned-Korean-women-at-bayonet-point claim. I wonder why. When Japanese scholar Naoko Kumagai (2015; see also Multiple Authors 2015b) wrote in the AHA newsletter to complain that the McGraw-Hill textbook was simply inaccurate, Gordon and his fellow historians (Multiple Authors 2015a) pronounced her a "denialist." Jason Morgan (2015) was a Ph.D. student in the Wisconsin Japanese history program at the time. He was studying in Japan, and he complained to the newsletter too. American scholars were far more intolerant than anyone in Japan, he wrote. Morgan's advisor e-mailed others in her department to express dismay that Morgan was speaking out on the comfort women issue. She then worked with the Fulbright coordinator in Madison to ensure that the Fulbright director in Tokyo upbraided Morgan for sharing his views on the comfort women.

Understand: this flaming intolerance is exclusively a creature of Western (and primarily U.S.) universities. Only in the West do Japan specialists enforce a "consensus" that the Japanese army draagooned Korean comfort women. The bayonet-point-draagooning legend began among the Japanese left with Yoshida's fabricated "memoir." The Korean left imported it and elaborated the account at elaborate length. Yet within Japan, fraud is fraud and everyone knows that the Yoshida memoir was fraud and the Asahi articles based on it false. Only a dwindling band of activists and fringe-left historians still cling to the draagooning legend. Cling to it they do, but still -- no one claims journals should retract their articles.

Debate is harder in South Korea, but it increases by the month. Scholars who question the coerced-at-gunpoint legend can still find themselves disciplined by their universities. They can find themselves fired. They can find themselves prosecuted for criminal defamation. At least one has gone to prison. Even so, however, an increasing number of courageous scholars speak out anyway. They lecture, they write articles, and they publish books calling the legend what it is.

Only in Western universities does the fraud perpetrated by Yoshida and perpetuated by the comfort-women nursing home pass for truth -- much less consensus.

Appendix I:

Response to Amy Stanley, Hannah Shepherd, Sayaka Chatani, David Ambaras & Chelsea Szendi Schieder, "Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War": The Case for Retraction on Grounds of Academic Misconduct.

A. Introduction:

I focus on this attack because of the sense of gravitas that its 30+page length gives it. But let me put the attack in context.

My IRLE article came out in late 2020. The Marginal Revolution website gave it a nice notice. Otherwise, it attracted no real attention.

In late January, however, a Japanese daily newspaper published a summary of the piece. The article appeared on the newspaper's website on Thursday, January 28. It appeared in the paper's Sunday hard copy.

I woke up on Monday, February 1, and checked my email account. The hate mail had started. The Korean media had picked up the story about my article from the Japanese newspaper. By the end of Monday, I had received 77 pieces of hate email, most of them obscene and virulently anti-Japanese. Every day for the next two months, I would receive still more, often dozens more.

Noticing this hate email, I checked the article on the IRLE website. I found that Elsevier posts the number of "tweets," and found that my article had been tweeted 1200 times. No one tweets articles by Ramseyer. No one. I did not even know how to find a tweet.

My son helped me open a Twitter account, and showed me how to search it. I quickly discovered that a group of American or American-based scholars had read about the article on the Korean media, and were livid. Yale assistant professor of Japanese history, Hannah Shephard, seems to have been one of the first. Early Monday morning, she tweeted that "I don't really know where to start with this. A Mitsubishi endowed Professor of Law at Harvard is arguing that comfort women were all prostitutes." An hour later, she added: "We might want to ignore the article above, but given the front page reporting on it in Korea, which includes his institution in every report, I'm not sure we can, or should." Amy Stanley, David Ambaras, and Chelsea Szendi Schieder joined this early group. They tweeted back and forth all day. One writer "wonder[ed] if [I] denie[d] the Holocaust, too." Another described me as a "[r]ight-wing English language fascist[]." Ambaras assured them that I "was like this even before the onset of white male privilege anxiety." A post-doc (now at UCLA) named Paula Curtis swapped tweets with them about my "heinous publication."<sup>18</sup>

By Tuesday, the tweeting scholars had convinced each other to organize a retraction campaign. In fact, Stanley and Shepherd had already sent their own individual retraction demands by the end of the day on Monday. Shephard proudly posted her letter to Twitter so that others could use it as a model. In time she would join the other four co-authors in this cite-check project, but already on the very day she noticed my article she immediately wrote the editors to demand retraction: "All Ramseyer's article achieves," she declared to the editors, "is the reiteration in an academic journal of talking points from the echo chambers of Japan's far right denialists ...."

---

<sup>18</sup> They were among the more polite. But you can always count on the ivies for class: Columbia University assistant professor of Japanese history, Paul Kreitman, described my article as a "batshit misogynistic commie-bashing screed[]."

The tweeting scholars seemed to be running a carnival. "Hey now that I've seen at least 5 women stating that they have already sent letters to the editor about that terrible JMR piece (and most of them shared them publicly)," announced Curtis, "how many of the male scholars have written?" The IRLE editors wrote to me: "Boy, Mark -- These people really hate you. I think we've gotten about 50 emails today." A couple of weeks later, the quintet had sent in their collective retraction demand.

Unfortunately for the academy, this is a crowd that works deliberately to ensure that other perspectives never appear in print. As noted earlier, in mid-November 2021, prominent Korean economist Lee Wooyoun published an article in the Diplomat magazine. Like me, he contested the sex-slave interpretation that the Gordon and Stanley crowd declare to be the only acceptable view in the Anglophone world. David Ambaras posted a screenshot of the article on Twitter: "Comfort Women denialists are despicable," he declared. "Why is @Diplomat\_APAC publishing this garbage?" Amy Stanley re-tweeted the article. Others re-tweeted it. Sayaka Chatani wrote in. Within hours, Mitch Shin, correspondent for the magazine, replied on Twitter: "I am working on it. Sorry." And as if that were not enough: "It's down now. I am truly sorry that we made such a horrible and unacceptable mistake."<sup>19</sup> In case that were not penitent enough, he posted yet another apology: "I sincerely apologize that we published this story on our website. It's down now."<sup>20</sup> A bystander noted approval: "Good to hear! This is a better retraction than many.

In fact, Ambaras was not done: "The editors still owe it to the public to explain why they allowed it to appear in the first place and what steps they will take to avoid such mistakes moving forward." Shin replied: "The statement will be coming up in our official account, David. Again, there is no excuse I can make. As a Chief Correspondent on the two Koreas, I will do my best to work more closely with our editors to review the articles from contributors outside of the organization." Ambaras: "Thank you, Mitch. We all have our work cut out for us when it comes to dealing with denialism." Shin was not done apologizing, however: "Lastly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to those who brought up this issue and directly asked me and our organization to take action in a timely manner. Please keep checking our contents and deliver your perceptive thoughts whenever you are available. Thank you."<sup>21</sup>

Paula Curtis (2021a) gives a sense of how some historians seem to view the law & economics community. I am able to publish my articles because I work within an "ecosystem that shelters these views," she explains, "a closed circuit." "Privilege, institutions, and networks of enablers allow certain groups of people," she ominously warns, "most often senior, white men at elite institutions, to abuse their positions." And it is from these "senior, white men" that scholars like her have been struggling to "reform and decolonize" the university.

Three of the authors (Stanley, et al. 2021b) write that I "inspired a wave of condemnation" because of the way I reached conclusions that were "[c]ontrary to decades of historical research." Dream on. Obviously, I contradicted Woke articles of faith about prostitution, Japanese imperialism, and God-knows what else. But as I note in Section F of the essay above, I contradict

---

<sup>19</sup> <https://twitter.com/dambaras/status/1460099767279755269>.

<sup>20</sup> <https://twitter.com/dambaras/status/1460112141684559875>

<sup>21</sup> <https://twitter.com/dambaras/status/1460266541434429455/photo/1>. Readers interested in the article that Ambaras, Stanley and Chatani harassed the Diplomat into censoring will find it at Lee (2021b) and also here: <https://archive.ph/20211115071637/https://thediplomat.com/2021/11/anti-japan-tribalism-on-the-comfort-women-issue/>

a consensus based on "decades of historical research" only in the Anglophone world. In turn, that Anglophone "consensus" exists only because of the viciousness with which these decolonizers attack anyone who suggests anything else. Among scholars in Japan and even among many scholars in South Korea (as economist Lee Wooyoun illustrates), I contradict no consensus at all.

B. The Dispute:

1. Introduction. -- In the discussion that follows, I respond to the objections raised by Stanley, et al. (2021a) (or "Stanley critics"). They characterize the heart of their objection as:

There are two factual claims that are fundamental to [Ramseyer's] argument. One is that there were contractual agreements between women and brothel keepers that paid women large cash advances. The other is that the women in brothels could leave early if they earned out by paying off their loans and debts. Neither is supported by the evidence Ramseyer uses; in fact, in some cases the evidence he cites directly contradicts these claims.

This statement is flatly untrue.

I hesitate to continue in what seems to me such an unseemly line, but given the Stanley critics' self-serving claims about fighting "academic misconduct," I think I have no choice. First, all of the problems that arise with Gordon (2003) and Eckert (1996) apply in spades to this account by the Stanley critics. They are obviously obsessed with what they call "denialism." Yet for all their claims about full disclosure, they do not tell the reader that the comfort women only claimed to have been dragooned after Yoshida published his book. They do not tell the reader that Yoshida fabricated the entire account. They do not tell the reader about the Yoshida scandal at all. They do not tell the reader that several of the women claiming to have been dragooned live in a nursing home connected to a woman long suspected of North Korean ties (and by the time they published their attack, already accused of embezzling the comfort women's funds). They do not tell the reader that the Korean press published virtually nothing about the comfort women until after Yoshida's book appeared. They do not tell the reader that many of the comfort women claiming to have been dragooned had earlier told dramatically different stories.

Second, this statement by these critics -- "a model of academic integrity," Curtis (2021b) assures us -- flagrantly misstates some sources. The critics made hay of the fact that I missed the prostitute (not comfort woman) Osaki's complaints when first told to have sex. I missed this, and for that am very embarrassed. They stress her complaints -- but then, as I detail below, fail to tell the reader that a few pages before this passage Osaki (whose own sister, half-sister, and cousin had all gone abroad to work as prostitutes) herself assures the reader that she took the job knowing the rough contours of what it entailed.

Similarly, the Stanley critics complain at length about my discussion of the comfort woman Mun Ok-ju. In fact, I misstate nothing concerning Mun Ok-ju. All the while stressing that Mun claimed to have been forced into the job, the Stanley critics fail to tell the reader the crucial end of the story. After Mun had fulfilled the terms of her contract and obtained the right to return to Korea, she went to the harbor -- and turned around. On her own volition, entirely without pressure, she decided to return to the brothel to make more money. I detail this further below.

And in a May post to her website, Stanley (2021) describes at length (in what she styles an attack on my article) an infamous rogue Japanese POW camp in Indonesia. The guards in this camp had built for themselves a "brothel" in which they routinely raped young female prisoners. Never mind that I explicitly limited my article to comfort women from Japan and Korea (which was part of Japan). Never mind as well that I limited my article to "comfort stations," and the Indonesian camp obviously violated army fundamental rules about both comfort stations and POW



camps. The Japanese army command insisted on strict discipline. When it learned about the rogue "brothel," it shut it down immediately.

Yet when serious historians point out that the Japanese army command ordered the "brothel" closed for its egregious violations, Stanley savages them as "denialist." As she and her colleagues did with Osaki and Mun, Stanley once again fails to disclose to the reader crucial information. Contrary to the Woke narrative that she and her colleagues apparently want to tell, the Japanese army command did not turn a blind eye to violence against women. Instead, it shut down the POW camp "brothel" as soon as it learned about it. More troubling still, Stanley fails to tell her readers that when one guard tried to continue the earlier practice of raping young women prisoners, the new commanding officer assembled the camp, and called the guard to the front of the group. He handed him a pistol, and stood there until the guard dutifully blew his brains out (Ruff-O'Herne 2008).

On the other misstatements, please read on.

1. Advances. The Stanley critics first contest my claim that "there were contractual agreements ... that paid women large cash advances."

Unfortunately, I am not sure quite what the critics mean. First, do they deny that a substantial fraction of the women were paid large advances? Do they assert instead -- like Chwe's "Concerned Economists" -- that all Korean women were forcibly dragooned into the work? Alternatively, do they assert that the Korean women agreed to work for daily or weekly wages but did not receive an advance? If so, that would be an assertion that I have not seen anywhere in the literature. Last, do they assert that the women received the advances, but did not sign contracts? I find it implausible that a recruiter or brothel would advance a large sum of money without documentation.

For evidence that the comfort women did indeed work under contracts that paid large advances, please see Appendix III. The list of contractual sources runs to five pages. Please do let me reiterate: my claims are purely descriptive. Just because large advances were paid does not imply that I think the institution was morally acceptable; my study is not normative.

2. Quitting. The Stanley critics contest my statement that "women in brothels could leave early if they earned out by paying off their loans and debts." Again, I am not sure what they mean by this. Are they denying that the contracts prescribed duration limits? Or are they denying that the women could quit if they repaid their debt? Either way, they are flatly wrong. As Korean economist Lee Wooyoun (2021b) wrote in the Diplomat article that Ambaras, Stanley and Chatani intimidated the editors into censoring:

"'Comfort women' were engaged in a 'high-risk, high-return' occupation. Some occasionally earned enormous sums, and a great many returned to Korea or re-entered the workforce after their contractual term of employment ended. ... [C]omfort women were not sex slaves, but sex workers who were fundamentally no different from today's sex industry workers."

The Stanley critics attack my discussion of the three prostitutes who left their Singapore brothel to seek work in a Borneo brothel. In Section 2.2.4 of my article, I had discussed three prostitutes (not comfort women) who were dissatisfied with their brothel in Singapore. They went to the harbor, and boarded a ship for Borneo, where they found a new brothel. Two of them convinced the new brothel owner to pay off their debts at the former brothel, and stayed at the new brothel. The third was unable to convince the new brothel owner to repay her debts, so she returned

to the first brothel. My point in the article was simple: the women could quit, but if they had not repaid their debt they would owe the unpaid balance on their loan. Arrangements like this are called contracts.

The Stanley critics seem to stress the practical difficulties that women faced in returning to Japan or Korea during the war. Those practical problems were indeed real; that is why I explicitly discussed them in my IRLE article. Note, however, that the problems concerned the war. They did not concern performance of or compliance with contractual terms.

On the legal right of the women to quit, consider the following clause from a sample comfort-woman form contract (found in the sources the Stanley critics claim to have read):<sup>22</sup>

Should this contract be dissolved during the contractual period, the remaining principal, the penalty [elsewhere defined as 10 percent of the principal per year], and costs incurred at the time of hiring shall be due and payable.

By any of the contracts (at least according to the discussions I have seen), women could quit before the end of the contractual term if they repaid the advance. According to the terms of this sample comfort-woman contract, however, the women could quit before the end of the contractual term even if they had not repaid the advance. They would owe any amount still due on the advance, but they could legally quit.

Within Japan itself, the courts made it clear that a licensed prostitute could quit anytime she chose. Already in 1896, the Japanese Supreme Court had held that a brothel could not enforce a woman's agreement to work as a licensed prostitute. It was a point the courts would repeat time and again: the brothel could usually (not always) recover the unpaid portion of the initial advance, but the personal service contract was not specifically enforceable. Within Japan, a woman could quit even if she had not repaid her loan. See, e.g., *Musashino v. Kushi*, 2-3 Daihan minroku 50 (Sup. Ct. Mar. 11, 1896); *Sakai v. Yamada*, 6-2 Daihan minroku 81 (Sup. Ct. Feb. 23, 1900).

Note that economic historian Lee Younghoon (2019, 320) from Seoul National University makes exactly the point that I do: "The comfort station ... was an extremely fluid place. It was a place that many comfort women left -- they left when they had completed the contractual term, or when they had earned the money they hoped to make, or when they had paid off their advance."

Again, just to restate -- the fact that a provision is in a contract implies nothing about whether the contract is morally just. My article is a purely descriptive project.

### C. Detail:

Please let me go through -- one by one -- the remaining objections that the Stanley critics raise in support of their demand that the editors bury the article. Other than the following three objections, I believe that all of these allegations of error are unfounded. First, I mistakenly characterize the Osaki biography (Sec. 2(a) below). This error does not go to the substance of my article, but I find it extraordinarily embarrassing nonetheless. Second, the critics correctly note that I erroneously tabulated the advance amounts in one Home Ministry document (Sec. 5(a)). Third, the critics point out that in discussing another document I mentioned petitions made to the Japan-controlled government of Korea, when the document in fact referred to petitions granted by the Japanese army (Sec. 9).

---

<sup>22</sup> Reproduced in Josei, 1-50; dated 1938; from the Ibaraki prefecture governor's office; regarding recruiting women to a Shanghai comfort station as prostitutes.

These are the only non-typographical errors that the Stanley critics locate in my article. None of them goes to the substance of my analysis. Nonetheless, consider the following -- on May 11, Stanley excitedly posted on Twitter:

"Happy to announce that our roundtable "It Can Happen Here: Confronting Denialism Through Interdisciplinary Collaboration" will be happening at [the American Historical Association (AHA) 2022] in [New Orleans]! Join us to hear about our response to the Ramseyer debacle and what comes next!!!"

Apparently, to the Stanley critics, anyone who questions the claim that the Japanese military dragooned Korean women at gunpoint is a "Denialist" (the allusion to Holocaust denial is obvious). In turn, that specter of "Denialism" justifies a no-holds-barred assault on any editor who would try to publish such an article.

And seemingly, the AHA is on-board with this.

I respond to the balance of criticisms in the order the Stanley critics assert them.

1. Failure to acknowledge an absence of evidence.

a. No actual contracts. Gordon-Eckert acknowledge that the Korean as well as Japanese comfort women worked under contracts. I assume that the Stanley critics recognize that the contracts existed. They seem to claim that I do not acknowledge that I do not have any signed contracts for work at the comfort stations. This is grossly misleading for the same reason Gordon-Eckert's letter was misleading: I never claimed I had them. Private documents between the comfort stations and the comfort women, the contracts seem not to have survived the war -- as any scholar in the field would know. Instead, as is common practice in my field, I try to generalize from the best available historical evidence and reason from basic economic principles. The Stanley critics, like Gordon-Eckert, make no claim that the historical evidence I rely on is not the best available historical evidence or that it is any way inherently unreliable.

b. Representativeness. Stanley critics claim that "readers are asked to assume, with no justification, that the few cases Ramseyer cites are representative rather than outliers." Please glance at Sections 3.2 and 3.3 (page 6) of the article. I make no bones about having scattered observations. I never claim that what I have is representative. Rather, I describe what I have, and work from it. Please see the list of contractual cases I provide in Appendix III.

More generally, Korea was part of Japan, and Koreans were Japanese citizens. For decades, licensed prostitutes in Korea worked under contracts having the same structure as licensed prostitutes in Japan. That the contracts for comfort women had the same structure as that used for licensed prostitutes is no accident. The Japanese government deliberately modeled the comfort station regime on its domestic licensed prostitution regime. The only -- only -- evidence that the Japanese army recruited Korean comfort women differently than the way it recruited Japanese comfort women comes from the late-in-life testimony of a few of the former comfort women. For reasons discussed at length in the essay above, this testimony is not credible. Absent evidence to the contrary, the reasonable inference would be the one I adopted: that the comfort women (both Korean and Japanese) worked under contracts having the same structure as domestic licensed prostitutes -- and that is what the cases in Appendix III show.

If the critics would like to argue from evidence that the cases I detail are indeed outliers, they are certainly free to do so. That is the process by which scholarship advances. I will say this, however: I have no reason to think they were not representative.

2. Mischaracterization of Yamazaki.

a. Awareness of nature of work. The Stanley critics correctly observe that I mistakenly described the case of a girl named Osaki. Osaki had travelled abroad to work as a private prostitute (with no connection to any comfort station) early in the 20th century, and one Tomoko Yamazaki (1972) had interviewed her for an informal biography. In Section 2.2, I wrote that she had not been tricked and "knew what the job entailed." In response, the critics describe the way that she was shocked when she was first required to have sex.

This criticism is correct. Stanley and her co-authors are right to point out Osaki's complaint. Nonetheless, readers should understand what the Stanley critics are omitting. On page 87 of the biography I was paraphrasing, Osaki (whose sister, half-sister, and cousin had all gone abroad to work as prostitutes) states that although no one had told her what the job entailed, she did indeed have a "rough" sense (usuusu kento ga tsuitotte) of what her work as a prostitute would involve. On page 152, the author Yamazaki similarly writes that Osaki had come from the island that had "historically produced the most foreign-bound prostitutes," had indeed had a "rough" understanding (usuusuwa shochi no uede) of what was involved, and had deliberately accepted the job.

As embarrassing to me as it most assuredly is to have missed Osaki's complaint, it has no material effect on the central object of the paper. I included Osaki's story to provide a lived experience for an otherwise relatively colorless discussion. It has no relevance to the economic logic of either Japanese or Korean comfort women contracts. Osaki worked in unlicensed brothels. She was not a comfort women. And she went abroad several decades before World War II.

b. Brothel accounting. The critics point out that I could have said much more about the accounting procedures within the brothel. These critics quote 9 lines from Osaki's biography -- but the coverage of the disputes concerning finances extends over pages 92-97. What is more, the discussion about finances in the book is not so one-sidedly exploitative as the critics would have it. I wrote that Osaki could repay 100 yen a month -- and that is what Osaki said. I certainly do not ignore potential brothel accounting fraud: after all, I explicitly observe that Osaki found that her initial 300 yen loan had ballooned to 2000 yen. It is important to note as I do in the paper that fraud occurred, and that comfort station owners sometimes took advantage of the women. It is worthy as a normative matter to call it out. Nonetheless, please let me stress: my article is exclusively descriptive, and it specifically concerns the structure of the contracts made (knowingly) at the point of recruitment.

c. Quitting. The Stanley critics object to my statement that "even overseas, women who disliked their jobs at a brothel could -- and did -- simply disappear." Although I appreciate that this statement has been criticized, based on my sense of the evidence, I stand by it. As I discuss above, the critics observe that one of Osaki's friends returned to her original brothel when Osaki's new patron refused to buy out her indenture. In the process, the critics ignore the obvious point: these three women simply walked out of their Singapore brothel and disappeared onto a boat bound for Borneo. It is true that Osaki and one of her friends found a friendly brothel owner who agreed to buy out their debt (but not that of their third friend). But Borneo was large, anonymous city. They could disappear -- nothing about Borneo at the time would have required them to find someone who would buy them out. This is not about law; this is about common-sense.

These three young women walked to the harbor, caught a boat, and went to Borneo. Had they wanted, they could simply have disappeared.

3. Mischaracterization of testimony of Mun Ok-ju.

The Stanley critics assert that I mischaracterize the testimony of Mun Ok-ju. In no way do I mischaracterize anything about Mun Ok-ju. I find three aspects of this attack particularly troubling.

a. Dragooning. First, the Stanley critics attack me for not reporting that Mun claimed to have been abducted by military police. Several former comfort women do indeed now make this claim, as I discuss above in detail. Mun is one of them. I do not dispute that Mun made this claim -- but the claim was simply irrelevant to the point I was making in the article about the money Mun made at the brothel. One of the key points at issue is the extent to which abduction testimony like this is reliable, especially in light of the absence of documentary or other corroborative evidence.

b. Yoshimi. Second, Yoshiaki Yoshimi (1995, 98) -- celebrated doyen of Gordon and the many historians who signed the 2015 petition (see D.5., essay above; Appendix II, below) -- himself doubts Mun's account. The Stanley critics write that "two military police" abducted her. In fact, Yoshimi (1995, 98) himself writes:

It is not possible to determine whether the Japanese who abducted [Mun] were military personnel, police personnel, or civilians in khaki colored civilian clothing. The time, however, was dusk. There were no accompanying personnel. She is transferred to a civilian like person. This leads to a high probability that she was abducted by civilians.

c. Deliberate return to comfort station. Third, the Stanley critics omit a crucial detail about Mun Ok-ju's career -- the fact that she deliberately chose to return to the comfort station rather than go home to Korea. The Stanley critics claim that the comfort women could not quit their work. Yet some of the women who concluded their comfort women contracts deliberately chose to stay at the brothels even after fulfilling their contracts because they wanted the high incomes. Mun Ok-ju was one of them. By 1944, Mun had been in Burma for two years and had repaid her advance. She obtained permission to return home, and travelled to Saigon to catch the boat to Korea.

At the last minute, Mun deliberately decided not to board the ship, and returned instead to comfort station work in Rangoon (Lee 2019, 279-80; Mun 1996: 114-22). This fact appears in the very memoir that the Stanley critics cite. In that memoir, Mun makes it clear that she had permission to quit, yet deliberately -- on her own volition -- decided not to quit. Instead, she returned to her comfort station. Mun continues: "When I arrived at [the comfort station] Rangoon Hall, everyone was surprised. 'Why didn't you go home to Korea? How did you get back here?,' they asked. Since everyone was joyful, I was happy" (Mun 1996, 122).

d. Other criticisms. The critics object that I quote from a nicely done English translation on a publicly available website rather than using her Japanese or Korean memoir (see Mun 1996). They object; I suspect that some non-specialist readers will thank me for citing to a source they can read. In any event, the critics do not contest the accuracy of the material that I do quote. I respond to a few specific points below:

(i) Tips v. wages. The critics note that Mun Ok-ju recalled making money from tips rather than from wages. I note this myself -- I explicitly quote Mun's comments about earning the money from tips (see my IRLE article, page 6, Sec. 3.5). Second, this is a distinction without substance. As anyone who has worked as a waiter or waitress knows, tips are a crucial part of a worker's income throughout the hospitality industry. Although tipping is not customary in ordinary modern Japanese restaurants, it remains the norm in some traditional, ultra-high-end kaiseki restaurants. Where tipping is a custom, a worker's market wages will reflect (that is to say, will be discounted by) the tips that an employee can expect to make.

(ii) Going to town. The critics note that I did not quote Mun's statement that she was "not completely free" to go into town, but "could go out once a week or twice a month with permission from the Korean owner." It is true that I do not quote this statement, but the statement does not contradict anything I said in the original article. These comfort stations were located across the Japanese empire. Local rules governing a woman's ability to leave the brothel and travel through town would have depended on an enormous number of considerations -- most obviously, the distance from the frontlines and the militancy of the local anti-Japanese resistance.

Indeed, on page 6, Section 3.2, I explicitly note the point, writing:

"In Tokyo, [a woman] could walk out of the brothel and disappear into the anonymity of the Tokyo metropolis. On the front, she might be able to do this -- but it all depended on where more specifically the brothel might be."

More basically, as Korean economist Lee Wooyoun (2021b) explained in the Diplomat article that Ambaras, Stanley, and Chatani intimidated the editors into censoring, some of the comfort stations were in a war zone:

"Restrictions on daily freedoms applied equally to military personnel, civilian employees, nurses, and anyone else in the battlefield environment."

(iii) Abuse. Stanley critics write that Mun reported abusive treatment. This is correct, and on page 6, Section 3.2 of my IRLE article I discuss exactly this problem. To give the fuller version of the quotation in Subsection (b) immediately above:

"[A comfort woman] faced far more serious risks of brothel non-performance. Should a brothel owner in Tokyo try to cheat on the contract, a prostitute might complain to the police. On the front, she would find no police except those that worked for the army. In Tokyo she might sue the brothel owner in court for nonperformance. On the front, she had no such option. In Tokyo, she could walk out of the brothel and disappear into the anonymity of the Tokyo metropolis. On the front, she might be able to do this -- but it all depended on where more specifically the brothel might be."

(iv) Recover savings. The critics write that Mun Ok-ju was unable to obtain her savings after the end of the war: "[T]he Shimonoseki post office refused to give the money back to her on the grounds that she was no longer a Japanese citizen after the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty." This claim is interesting. If it is true -- and I have not yet investigated -- the restriction on her account would have applied to all Koreans with postal savings accounts in Japan that antedated the end of the war. It has nothing to do with someone's having worked as a comfort woman. I discuss this issue more fully in my response to Yoshimi (Appendix II).

#### 4. Selective use of evidence from military sources.

a. Recruiter fraud. The critics quote a 1944 U.S. interrogation report that details recruiter fraud. This is certainly true; recruiter fraud was indeed a problem in Korea. Mindful of this, I stress this point in my article (e.g., page 5, Sec. 2.4.2).

b. Return. The critics quote a 1945 report indicating that by 1943 the "war conditions" had made it hard for women to return home upon the completion of their contract. On page 7, Sec. 4, I include exactly that qualifier: "Until the last months of the war, the women served their terms or paid off their debts early, and returned home."

c. Miscitation. In their almost comic determination to scour my article for errors, on page 13 n. 28 Stanley critics write that I "miscited" the U.S. military Report 49. The heading of Report 49 refers to it "Japanese Prisoner of War Interrogation Report No. 49" -- the citation I give. Stanley, et al., write that this should instead be called the "Information Report." This alternative title comes from the title that the Japanese editors mistakenly gave the report when they compiled it into volume 5 of the Josei series. Respectfully, I continue to think that the title I use is more accurate.

5. Mischaracterization of Japanese Home Ministry documents.

a. Advances. The Stanley critics focus on my discussion of the size of the advances paid to comfort women in the IRLE article, Sec. 3.3, page 6, and in particular on the range of the amounts paid. This is a worthy point for argument -- and I make explicit the limitations from which I am estimating the size of the advances. I write that "Sample contracts for Japanese women recruited to the Shanghai comfort stations in 1937 provided advances of 500 to 1000 yen," and that "Home Ministry documents from 1938 report Japanese women travelling to the Shanghai comfort stations on 600-700 yen advances, with one woman receiving advance in the 700-800 range, and two in the 300-500 yen range."

I make clear that the 500-1000 yen number comes from "sample contracts." The critics complain that I do not use "actual contracts" -- and, as I have written, this is correct. I do not purport to use actual contracts. I draw my inferences about the structural and particular terms of the contracts from government and other compendia of data. The simple reason, which my specialist critics know well, is that actual contracts probably did not survive the war. But as such critics also know well, the actual contracts did at one point exist.

I write that "Ministry documents from 1938 report Japanese women travelling to the Shanghai comfort stations" on various advances. The critics complain that this is an "indirect report" that does not "include specific information about actual contractual conditions." This criticism is exactly right -- but I never claimed anything else.

One important point: Stanley, et al., observe that there is no report of a 700-800 yen advance in the 1938 report. After reexamining the original document, I think that this specific point is correct. This is an error on my part. I apologize for the error and retract this specific point. I do not think this correction, which is most welcome, undermines the primary claim (that the range was 500-1000 yen).

b. Page numbers. The critics complain that I cite to the document, but do not give page numbers internal to the report. As the report is 14 pages long, I agree that it would have been kinder for me to give the internal numbers (what law reviews call "pin cites"). However, Stanley, et al., claim that this prevents "confirmation" -- and that seems to me perhaps to be a bit of an overstatement. After all, the document is only fourteen pages.

c. Correct citation. The Stanley critics also declare that the "correct citation" for the 1938 Home Ministry document in question would be to the Japanese national archives. Perhaps this is true. If it is important to Stanley et. al., I am willing to concede that citation to the national archives might be more "correct." In my original article I directed readers to a readily accessible volume that conveniently reproduced the document, rather than to the National Archives. I do find it hard to believe that readers would prefer to be directed to the government archives in Tokyo rather than to a source available in any major university library.

6. Mischaracterization of Shina 1938 and Gun'ianjo 1938.

a. Translation. Stanley critics write that I selectively translate a government regulation.

On page 5 of my IRLE article, Sec. 2.4.1, I write:

"For women traveling for the purpose of prostitution, approval shall be granted only to those women heading to North and Central China who are currently working as licensed or effective prostitutes, who are 21 years old or older, and who are free of venereal and other infectious diseases ...."

The critics claim that the correct translation would be:

"For women traveling for the purposes of work in prostitution, *for the time being we will tacitly permit this* only in the case of women heading ... ."

In effect, the concern here seems to be that I dropped a qualifier without noting the absence with ellipses. In fact, however, in the Japanese original, the italicized qualifier appears at the end of the sentence -- and thus is fully within my ellipses.

In addition, as my discussion in Sec. 2.4.1 of my article makes clear, I quote this regulation to emphasize the way that the government was trying to limit comfort station recruits to women already in the sex industry. It was doing this, moreover, to head off domestic pressure from groups that had been trying for several decades to ban prostitution.

For the point I was trying to make, whether the policy was for "the time being" or more permanent did not matter. After all, governments repeal even nominally permanent regulations all the time. Neither was it relevant whether the approval was "tacit" or more forthright. My point was that the government was trying to limit comfort women to those already working as prostitutes.

b. International treaties. After this discussion, the critics provide a long explanation of the connection between stated age limits and international treaties. Even were this true, I am not sure why it would be relevant to any point I am trying to make about the contractual structure of these agreements.

In fact, it is not true. Waseda historian (and specialist in Japanese government documents) Tetsuo Arima (2021a; 2021c, 161-64) observes that Stanley, et al., miss the point of the document entirely.

c. Reformers. In their long discussion of "reformers" on pages 17-18, the critics seem to misunderstand the point I was trying to make in my original IRLE article. In Sec. 2.4.1, page 5, I drew on my work on licensed prostitution in Japan (Ramseyer 1991). During the pre-war decades, activists (what I call reformers) had worked hard to ban prostitution. Many of them were connected with the Christian church. Perhaps the Stanley critics are unaware of this. In this section, I was arguing that it was pressure from these groups that the government was trying to circumvent.



I have re-read my discussion on page 5. I do not think I was ambiguous. But I am happy to offer this clarification here, if that is helpful.

7. Mischaracterization of "Korean comfort station manager's diary."

I do not mischaracterize this diary. The source that I cite as Choe (2017) is Choe Kilsung, Chosen shusshin no choba nin ga mita ianfu no jijitsu [The Truth About Comfort Women, as Seen by a Korean Receptionist] (Tokyo: Haato shuppan, 2017). I write that the manager received confirmation telegrams when he wired money for the comfort women. The critics claim that he did not. In fact, he did receive the confirmations. Choe writes (2017, 207):

"Each individual woman received money, wired the money to Korea, and received confirmation telegrams. There were some people who were returned to work after getting married and leaving the comfort women work for a while. But there were those who simply joined households. On the whole, it was fairly free, and they did things like go to movie theaters."

More recently, Choe (2021a; see also 2021b) confirms my interpretation of the diary. He writes:

"Ramseyer's article is consistent with the diary and with my research in many places. If we look at them together, it is an objective conclusion that "the comfort women were prostitutes."

The critics write that it is "widely known that compulsory savings ... were used by Japanese employers of Korean wartime workers as a strategy to stop them from running away." That may or may not be true -- I do not know. But please review the lengthy quotation from comfort woman Mun Ok-ju at Sec. 3.5, page 6. She very deliberately -- on her own initiative -- opened her postal savings account, and was very proud of the amount she had saved.

The critics write that many comfort women never recovered their savings after the war. This may or may not have been true, but it had nothing to do with their being comfort women. I discuss this more fully in my response to Yoshimi (Appendix II).

7. Mischaracterization of primary sources from Takei 2012.

In Section 2.3.2 (pp. 4-5), I note that Korean women had been travelling abroad to work as prostitutes long before the first comfort station opened in 1932. I gather that the critics are not quarreling with this general proposition. I hope not, because in Section 2.3 and accompanying footnote 5, I cite multiple sources for variations on this proposition. To pick yet another source nearly at random, Lee Dong-Jin (2020, tab. 5) writes that in Manchukuo in 1940, 19,059 Chinese women worked as "shakufu" (a standard euphemism for prostitute), 2,264 Japanese worked as shakufu, and 3,586 Koreans worked in the role. Historian Ikuhito Hata (1999: 51) notes that in 1930 712 Japanese women worked as prostitutes in Shanghai; 1,173 Korean women worked there as prostitutes.

Instead, the critics seem to be quarreling with the specific numbers (12 Korean comfort women in Shanghai, and 527 unlicensed Korean prostitutes). The Takei (2012) that I listed as a source in footnote 5 was an internet source. The critics note that it is no longer available. They apparently found it in a cached webpage, but I was not able to find it even there. In any event, my point -- with which I trust Stanley, et al. will not quarrel -- was that Korean women had been travelling abroad in large numbers to work as prostitutes.

8. Misrepresentation of Kitashina, 1938.

Here, the Stanley critics continue their attacks on Section 2.3.2 (pages 4-5). Again, I find it hard to believe that they would contest the claim that Korean women went abroad in large numbers to work as prostitutes. It is easy to find other data showing exactly that point -- such as Lee (2020) and Hata (1999), cited immediately above.

In any event, I wrote in Section 2.3.2 that 90 Korean women petitioned for travel permits to go to Tianjin to work as prostitutes. The critics point out -- and they are correct -- that 90 is the number who were granted the permits. Apparently, the number who petitioned for the permits may have been even larger.

I am grateful for this observation, which is absolutely correct. I certainly accept this correction; my apologies for the error. A larger number of petitioners supports rather than detracts from the proposition that many Korean women went abroad to work as prostitutes.

Stanley, et al., also point out that the permits were issued by the Japanese army rather than the Japanese-controlled government in Korea. This is also correct, and I am also grateful for this correction as well.

However, I do not think that these two corrections—right though they are—undermine the point I was making: that a large number of Korean women traveled abroad to work as prostitutes before the first comfort women station opened. These corrections are worthy points; but I think they are orthogonal to the main point at issue.

If I am missing why Stanley, et. al., think that these corrections undermine my broader argument, I apologize. I certainly would welcome further discussion on this issue.

#### 9. Selective citations to Kim & Kim.

The critics write that the materials that I cite from Kim & Kim (2018) "are accurate." However, they then assert that I "ignore[] what the book argues, and disregard[] some of its factual claims ...."

I am not sure I understand this criticism. In this section of my IRLE article, I cite material from Kim & Kim -- a secondary source that is making an argument that is in some ways contrary to a point I am making. I do not understand why this might be a problem. I was not saying—or even implying—that Kim & Kim support the thesis of my IRLE article. I was citing some specific material in their book. If anything, I might have thought it good practice to read and cite the work of authors who disagree with one's thesis and conclusions.

The point that seems to be driving the attack by Stanley critics is -- yet again -- their claim that the Japanese army forcibly dragooned Korean women into comfort station work. As explained above, the IRLE article does not address this claim. But as I also discuss above, I believe the Stanley critics are wrong. The Japanese army did not dragoon Korean women, and (as I read their book) Kim & Kim do not claim that it did either. Korea had a preexisting problem with fraudulent labor recruiters. Rather than exploit the fraud, the Japanese army tried to stop it. Nothing in Kim & Kim is inconsistent with this.

#### 10. Mischaracterization and selective citation of Hata.

I do not mischaracterize anything in Hata. I write (IRLE article at p. 7, Sec. 3.2) that "brothels and high-end restaurants began to close." The critics assert that I "appear[] to conflate 'brothels' and 'comfort stations'" and explain why that would be a mistake to do.

I agree that this would be a mistake. That is why I did not do it. When I wrote "brothels," I meant brothels. I did not mean "comfort stations." I meant to write (and did write) that the brothels began to close. I am not sure why this appears to conflate brothels and comfort stations.



## Appendix II:

Response to Yoshimi Yoshiaki, Response to "Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War" by J. Mark Ramseyer.

A. Introduction:

Readers in the West need to understand the central role that Yoshiaki Yoshimi plays in this dispute. Recall that in the wake of Yoshida's fabricated account about dragooning Korean comfort women, several comfort women began to demand compensation from Japan. Recall that the Asahi shimbun newspaper played up Yoshida's account at great length. Yoshimi is the scholar who then announced that he had found a document that showed the responsibility of the Japanese government for this comfort station regime.

That Yoshimi claimed to show government responsibility transformed him into the academic celebrity in the comfort-women campaign. His was the Japanese scholarly book that Columbia University Press chose to publish in translation in 2002. When Gordon and others attacked the Japanese government for complaining about the comfort-women coverage in a McGraw-Hill textbook, they lauded Yoshimi's "careful research" (Dudden 2015). When one of the intellectual magazines in Japan chose to publish an attack on my IRLE article this spring, Yoshimi is the scholar they chose. Chatani (co-author on Stanley, et al. [2021a]) introduced the dispute (Chatani 2021). Yoshimi (2021b) wrote the article that followed.

This letter by Yoshimi to the IRLE is primarily a translation of that article (Yoshimi 2021b). Apparently, among the scholars supporting the claims by the Korean comfort women, this is the best they could do. Yet this attack is something of a puzzle. In my IRLE article, I try to understand the economic logic behind the contracts used in the sex industry. Much of the Yoshimi letter is simply irrelevant to this -- either normative statements about human rights, or the arguments about the Japanese government's responsibility for the comfort women regime that he has been making for decades. When Yoshimi does make legal or factual claims that matter, on several occasions I believe he is simply wrong.

B. Response to Yoshimi:

Introduction, pages 1-2.

First paragraph: In footnote 5, Yoshimi declares that the military "owned" the comfort stations. I am puzzled by this, and assume that Yoshimi means that the military sometimes owned the building and rented it to the "private entrepreneur." Choe (2021a) notes that according to the comfort station manager's diary (discussed earlier), the comfort stations themselves could be -- and sometimes were -- bought and sold. Yoshimi asserts that there were several different ownership models for the comfort stations (page 9). That sounds plausible -- near the front lines, the military would probably have found it hard to attract private entrepreneurs.

In my article, I deal exclusively with the comfort stations that employed Japanese and Korean comfort women. All discussions I have seen indicate that at these comfort stations, the entrepreneur was the residual claimant. He (or she or them -- some were husband-wife teams) may have paid a fixed rent to the military, but it was generally the entrepreneurs who paid the women the contractual advances, and they who bore the principal economic risk. Lee (2019, 275) confirms this point.

Second paragraph: Yoshimi makes three claims.

(i) Yoshimi writes that I do "not provide any samples of actual contracts." I addressed this at elaborate length in my essay above, and will not repeat the discussion here.

(ii) Yoshimi writes that I "presuppose[] the women's freely exercised agency." In fact, I expressly note that some women were pushed into the work by their parents (IRLE, page 2, sec. 2.1), but I do "presuppose" that a substantial fraction chose the work themselves. I will discuss this at length in Sec. 1-1 below.

(iii) Yoshimi writes that the contracts were "a form of human trafficking and not legitimate contracts in ordinary civil society" (page 2). In this article, I try to explain the economic logic behind the structure of the contracts used in this industry. As such, I undertake an descriptive inquiry -- I ask, why did the men and women involved in this industry negotiate the deals that they did?

I take absolutely no position on whether these contracts were "legitimate." Instead, I deliberately limit myself to understanding why the men and women did what they did. On that empirical question, the questions of whether the Japanese government should have permitted licensed prostitution, or whether the courts should have enforced these contracts are simply not relevant. Subject to a variety of qualifications (see, e.g., Sec. 1-1 below; I discuss the various qualifications in still more detail in Ramseyer 1991), the courts did enforce the debt contract.

Yoshimi interjects his normative claims repeatedly. All of these normative comments are irrelevant to my strictly descriptive project. By now, I suspect that readers are tired of my reminding them that I am not justifying anything that may have happened -- indeed, am not making normative claims at all. Rather than repeat this point each time Yoshimi makes a normative statement, please let me limit myself to this one reply.

#### 1-1 Contemporary legal issues, pages 2-3.

Yoshimi claims that the licensed prostitutes in Japan had been sold into the work by their relatives.

(a) Introduction. The prostitutes at the Tokyo licensed brothels worked under indentured servitude contracts. They received a large lump-sum payment at the outset. They agreed to work for a maximum number of years (typically six). And the brothel agreed that they could quit early if they repaid their advance through the revenue they generated at the brothel (I detail the some of the accounting involved at IRLE, page 3, section 2.2.1(c)).

In multiple places, Yoshimi flatly asserts (e.g., page 1) that the women never "exercised their freedom in contracting to become prostitutes." The notion that they did, he writes "is contrary to fact." I agree that some of the women were pushed into this work by abusive parents -- though most of the economic logic to the nature of the contracts would apply not just to decisions by the women but to decisions by parents as well. I explicitly discuss the parental involvement (IRLE, page 2, section 2.1): I write, "Yes indeed, parents did sometimes sell their daughters."

In fact, Yoshimi knows better than to make statements like the one he did. In his own 1995 book in Japanese, he writes that some women did indeed become comfort women by choice. He discusses one who had worked as a prostitute in Saipan and Palau, but returned to Japan in 1939. She thought to herself (Yoshimi's words) "If there's a good business, I think I'll make some money" (Yoshimi 1995, 89). She then went to China and worked as a comfort woman in a Nanking comfort station (given her older age, Yoshimi suggests she probably worked partly as a prostitute, and partly in other work).

For reasons given below in subsection (c), any claim that parental pressure accounts for all of the women is implausible on its face.

(b) Age. Licensed prostitutes in Japan were required to be at least 18. Most of them were in their 20s. Those who were minors (18, 19) would have needed their parents' consent to enter into this contract, but those already in their 20s would not. Adult women in Japan could freely contract on their own.

That said, I suspect that most brothels did require a woman's parents to consent to her contract even when she was over 20. The reason is simple: they were advancing an enormous sum of money, and would have wanted another guarantor on the debt.

(c) The right to quit. The licensed prostitutes in Japan could freely -- legally -- quit when they wanted. They would still owe any unpaid advance, but the brothel could not force them to work as prostitutes. If women had been sold into this work by abusive parents, I would expect that some of them would have quit -- and happily let the brothel sue their abusive parents for the money. Given that the women themselves had no assets, after all, the brothels would have sued those parents -- and levied against their home, their assets, or their land (if they owned any). Had her parents forced her into prostitution, a woman would not have cared. Even Confucianism does not go that far. In fact, this seldom happened -- and the very fact that women rarely quit before repaying their debt strongly suggests to me that very few of the women were sold into this work against their will.

On the legal right to quit, I believe Yoshimi's statement is badly misleading. In multiple places, he states that licensed prostitutes in Japan could not quit until they had repaid their advance. For example, at pages 3-4, he writes: "Freedom to leave must mean the freedom to stop engaging in prostitution at any time a woman wished to do so, but these women had no such freedom." This is simply untrue. The Supreme Court made clear as early as 1896 that prostitutes could indeed quit when they wished, whether they had repaid the advance or no. See, e.g., *Musashino v. Kushi*, 2-3 *Daihan minroku* 50 (Sup. Ct. Mar. 11, 1896); *Sakai v. Yamada*, 6-2 *Daihan minroku* 81 (Sup. Ct. Feb. 23, 1900). The Court's logic was straightforward. The employment contract coupled a debt contract and a personal service contract, and the two were severable. The debt contract was generally (even here, not always) enforceable. The personal service contract was not. Should a prostitute want to quit, she (and any guarantors) would (generally) still owe the unpaid advance. The brothel, however, could not force her to work.

What is more, Yoshimi knows that his statement is misleading. In his 1995 book in Japanese, Yoshimi (1995, 227) himself writes that after 1900, by law, licensed prostitutes in Japan could freely quit. Her promise to work as a prostitute was "unenforceable" (muko). The loan was still valid, and therefore -- adds Yoshimi (id.) -- quitting before the end of the term was "in practice difficult" (jijitsujo konnan). In this attack, he writes (correctly) that the "agreement for prostitution labor [was] illegal and void" (page 2), but nevertheless flatly asserts that the women were left "under the control of the brothels and unable to exit."

(d) The crucial importance of marginal analysis. In all this, Yoshimi obviously misses the point of marginal analysis. Provided that some non-trivial fraction of women chose to become prostitutes on their own, the fact that another non-trivial fraction might not have so chosen is irrelevant to my analysis. Recall that the point of my article is to explain the logic behind the contractual structure involved. As I explained in my essay at the outset, the brothels used standard

form contracts. They paid different advances to different women, but they generally did not use different contracts. In this market, the brothels and prostitutes would have used contracts that maximized the joint welfare of the brothel and the most hesitant recruits. Those were the women who chose prostitution voluntarily.

To restate the point differently, the women who were sold into prostitution by abusive parents were infra-marginal. Being infra-marginal, they would have had no effect on the standard form contracts at use in the industry. This logic is basic to modern economics, of course. Apparently, it is not basic to disciplinary training in history, and Yoshimi fairly clearly does not understand it.

(e) The family under the pre-war Civil Code. Yoshimi misstates pre-war Japanese family law. In Chapter 5 of Ramseyer (1996), I discuss at length the power that the pre-war Civil Code assigned to a household "head." Contrary to the usual claims, the Code did not give the head effective power over where a member would live. Neither did it give him effective power to tell a member what job to take. It merely gave him the power to exclude an uncooperative member from the legal "house" (a sanction with no real bite). In turn, primogeniture was simply the rule for people who died intestate. Those who wished to divide their assets among all members of their family could freely do so by writing a will (subject to other rules about descendants "taking against the will").

1-2 Conditions facing women in brothels, pages 3-5.

Yoshimi writes that my claim that women could "leave [domestic Japanese] brothels and disappear into the anonymous urban environment" is "incorrect."

I stand by my statement. First, I believe Yoshimi is wrong on the law, as I detail in Item 1(c). A woman could legally quit even if she had not repaid the loan, and the brothel could not force her to continue working. Second, by 1928 the population of Tokyo had already passed 5 million. That a man or woman could "disappear" into a city of 5 million strikes me as common sense.

Yoshimi writes that "prostitutes were unable to exit the trade unless they had completely repaid the debt or after they had served the required number of years as determined by each prefecture."

Yoshimi is wrong on the law, as I have pointed out multiple times above. Moreover, some prefectures may have set maximum term lengths (I have never heard of this claim), but generally the term was the one that the parties chose by contract.

2 Licensed prostitution in Korea, page 5.

(a) Could they quit? Yoshimi writes that "it was virtually impossible for prostitutes to exit the trade in Korea."

I believe Yoshimi is wrong on the facts. Licensed prostitutes in Korea could -- and did -- quit after about three years. Consider the statistics for two provinces in Korea in 1924 (Doke 1928):

Age Distribution of Licensed Prostitutes, 1924 (Doke 1928, 787, 800):

<u>Gyeonggi province</u>			<u>South Gyeongsang province</u>		
		<u>%.</u>			<u>%.</u>
18-19	104	9.45	18-19	176	19.22
20-24	680	61.76	20-24	415	45.30

25-29	273	24.80	25-29	230	25.11
30+	44	3.99	30+	95	10.37

Most commonly, licensed prostitutes were in their early 20s. If it had been "virtually impossible" (as Yoshimi put it) for them to quit, the brothels would have insisted that they continue to work into their late 20s. They did not.

Years' Experience of Licensed Prostitutes, 1924 (Doke 1928, 788, 801):

<u>Gyeonggi province</u>			<u>South Gyeongsang province</u>		
		<u>%.</u>			<u>%.</u>
0+	134	11.17	0+	328	35.81
1	154	13.99	1	198	21.61
2	186	16.89	2	158	17.25
3	222	21.16	3	99	10.81
4	294	26.70	4	65	7.10
5	65	5.90	5	44	4.80
6	17	1.55	6	20	2.18
7+	29	2.64	7+	4	0.44

Consistent with most prostitutes being in their early 20s, most worked only for a few years. In Gyeonggi, prostitutes seem to have worked four or five years, and then quit. In Gyeongsang, they worked two or three years and quit. If it had been "virtually impossible" (as Yoshimi put it) for them to quit, they would have been working for much longer than this. Instead, they worked a few years, and quit.

Similarly, Lee (2019, 284) notes that in the course of 1924, 3,494 women entered the prostitution industry in Korea and 3,388 quit. All told, there had been 7,527 prostitutes at the end of 1923. Each year, in other words, over a third of the prostitutes quit. Lee estimates that the average prostitute worked 2-1/2 years.

(b) Medical exams. Yoshimi writes (page 5) that the prostitutes in Korea "were subject to involuntary examinations for venereal disease." Obviously, this question is irrelevant to my paper, but I will note: (i) the examinations benefited the prostitutes, and (ii) the women agreed to these examinations when they decided to take the job.

(c) Recruiters. Yoshimi writes (page 5) that I "state[]" that the problem with Korea was the presence of a great many recruiters." I do not write that having many recruiters was a problem. I write that having many "deceptive" recruiters was a problem (IRLE, page 5, sec. 2.4.2). I am not aware of there being a similar level of complaints about recruiter fraud in Japan. Taiwan and Manchuria are irrelevant to this article.

3. "Karayuki-san," pages 6-7.

(a) What she knew. In my IRLE article, I discuss the plight of a young girl named Osaki who contracted to work as a prostitute. In the article (IRLE, at page 4, sec. 2.2.4), I write that she knew what she was doing when she signed up as a prostitute. Like Stanley, et al., Yoshimi notes that in fact Osaki did not understand what prostitution entailed.

As Yoshimi correctly notes (and as I discussed in my response to Stanley, et al. App. I, Sec. 2(a)), Osaki was surprised and distraught when first told to have sex. I made a mistake.



That said, Yoshimi (like the Stanley critics) is not being forthright. On page 87 of the biography (Yamazaki 1972), Osaki states that although no one had really told her what was involved, she did indeed have a "rough sense" (usuusu kento ga tsuitotte; even if very incomplete sense) of what prostitution entailed. On page 152, the author similarly writes that Osaki came from the area that had produced the largest number of foreign-bound prostitutes, and had a "rough" idea (usuusuwa shochi no uede) of what was involved and deliberately accepted the job.

(b) Does it matter? Note that the discussion of Osaki is not relevant to anything central to my article. She was not a comfort woman, and the events in question happened several decades before World War II. I included it merely because her story is a poignant one that illustrates the economic pressures out of which some poor Japanese women chose to travel abroad and work as prostitutes.

(c) Who signs. Yoshimi claims that Osaki's brother decided whether she would go abroad. This is not true. Osaki had an older sister and an older brother. After their father died, their mother had abandoned the children for a lover. The older sister left to work abroad as a prostitute, and Osaki and her brother survived in a shack by eating whatever scraps they could find. When a recruiter came by, Osaki discussed the question of taking the job with her brother. He asked her to take the job, and she agreed to work abroad in order that he would have the money to start a farm. By her own account, she took the job (whatever she thought it entailed) on her own volition. Her brother signed the papers because he received the money.

(d) What did prostitutes working abroad make? Yoshimi contests my claim that prostitutes working abroad earned more than they could earn at home (page 6). He notes that my citation to Park Yu-ha's (2014) book gives page 451, which does not exist. The correct page (my error) is page 41, and there Park does indeed state that prostitutes earned higher wages abroad than at home.

I report that Osaki found that she could repay about 100 yen per month. Yoshimi does not contest this quotation. He instead criticizes me (page 7) for not quoting her complaints about the accounting. In fact, I forthrightly report (IRLE, page 4, sec. 2.2.4) that Osaki found that her initial 300-yen advance had ballooned to 2000 yen by the time she began working as a prostitute.

(e) Contractual assignment. Yoshimi accuses me (page 7) of "obfuscating the important fact that she was sold and then resold." I do nothing of the sort. As I note (IRLE, page 4, sec. 2.2.4), Osaki was "transferred" -- which is simply another way of saying that the brothel where she worked assigned her debt to another brothel. Creditors assign business debts today, and they assigned the debts of prostitutes in early 20th century Japan. I never "obfuscate" this.

Recall the interview of comfort woman Hyun Byung-sook I included in Section A of my opening essay. In the course of the negotiations leading up to her employment, Hyun's father insisted on a clause that would prohibit the brothel from assigning her contract. The brothel agreed.

(f) Could the women disappear? I argued that prostitutes in large cities like Borneo and Singapore could "disappear." Yoshimi (page 7) describes this as a "fabrication." These were massive cities -- I stand by my claim. This is not a legal question; to me, this is common sense. If Yoshimi disagrees about the anonymity of Borneo and Singapore, he is welcome to introduce evidence showing that these cities were in fact well-ordered environments with the tight networks

of social capital necessary to prevent people from "disappearing." Again: this is how scholarship advances.

4-1. The 1938 Home Ministry directive, pages 7-8.

Yoshimi made his career arguing that this specific directive proved the moral responsibility of the Japanese government for the comfort stations. I do not think that the directive does this, but I understand Yoshimi's argument. At this point, I merely observe that the question is irrelevant to the issue at stake in my article: the economic logic to the contracts.

4-2. Kidnapping by Korean recruiters and the military/Governor-General, pages 8-11.

(a) Kidnapping. Yoshimi argues that many of the Korean comfort women were "kidnapped." More specifically, he writes that the "kidnapping of women as 'comfort women' was exceedingly common" (page 9). Korean recruiters did sometimes lie, as I note at IRLE, page 5, sec. 2.4.2. I am not aware of any accounts in the pre-war or war-time literature of kidnappings.

Let me quote again the 2019 interview by Yoshimi for the Mainichi newspaper that I introduced in the opening essay (Yoshii 2019):

"So, how were the comfort women gathered? There were three general methods. First, an industry member [recruiter] selected by the military lent money to a woman's family (the advance loan), and she in exchange worked at a comfort station (the purchase of a human). Second, a member of the industry [recruiter] fooled a woman into thinking that she would be working in a job like bar hostess or nurse (kidnapping). Third, government officials or a member of the industry used threats or violence forcibly to impress the woman (capture).

"On the Korean peninsula, which was a colony, the first and second were common. There is testimony and court material indicating that the forcible impressment by government officials occurred in occupied territories like China and Southeast Asia." Recruiters and government officials forcibly captured women in China and Southeast Asia, explained Yoshimi. In Korea, writes Yoshimi, the women either contracted to work in the comfort station in exchange for a loan, or were "fooled" into taking the job.

Apparently, this is a linguistic sleight-of-hand. Most of us would use "kidnapping" to refer to a forcible capture. If a recruiter fools a woman by lying to her, we call it "fraud." Yoshimi himself explicitly states in his interview that no one forcibly captured Korean women to send them to the comfort stations. Instead, sometimes recruiters lied to the women and fooled them into taking the job. This is exactly my point at IRLE, page 5, sec. 2.4.2.

(b) Quitting. The author of U.S. Office (1944) (Report No. 49) interviewed 20 Korean comfort women. Yoshimi observes that these women had arrived in Rangoon in August of 1942 and were still there when captured in August of 1944. Given that they had contracted for terms of six-months to a year, Yoshimi argues that their continued presence in 1944 disproves my claim that the women could quit.

This disproves nothing of the sort. First -- and most fundamentally -- Yoshimi is not being forthright: the document explicitly states (U.S. Office 1944, 205):

"In the latter part of 1943 the Army issued orders that certain girls who had paid their debt could return home. Some of the girls were thus allowed to return to Korea. "

Second, as I expressly note in my conclusion (at IRLE, page 7, sec. 4), the women could return home "[u]ntil the last months of the war." By those last months, war conditions sometimes made travel by anyone impossible.

Third, some of the women who concluded their contracts chose to stay at the brothels even after concluding their contracts because they wanted the high incomes. Indeed, this was the case of Mun Ok-ju, whom Yoshimi discusses at pages 14-16. By 1944, Mun had been in Burma for two years and had repaid her advance. She obtained permission to return home, and travelled to Saigon to catch the boat to Korea. At the last minute, she decided not to board the ship, and returned instead to comfort station work in Rangoon (Lee 2019, 279-80).

Yoshimi devotes much attention (again) to arguing that the Japanese government was responsible for the recruitment in Korea. As noted above, this question is irrelevant to my article.

4-3. The purposes for establishing comfort stations and the principal party behind their establishment, pages 11-12.

I argue that the Japanese military instituted the comfort station regime because of its concern for venereal disease. Yoshimi argues that this was a secondary concern. Yoshimi also (again) stresses what he considers to be the Japanese government's responsibility for the comfort station regime. These questions are not relevant to my paper.

4-4 Contract duration and income, pages 12-13.

(a) High incomes. Yoshimi contests my claim that comfort women earned higher incomes than domestic prostitutes.

Emeritus economic historian at Seoul National University, Lee Younghoon similarly observes that the comfort women earned high pay. "Compared to licensed domestic prostitution, the military comfort system was 'hard work, high income, and high risk,'" he writes (Lee 2019, 261). The comfort women saw more men per day, and faced all the risks of working on the front lines, but "from the perspective of the comfort women, the comfort station was a market where demand was guaranteed and income was high" (Lee 2019, 262). Hata (1999: 392) similarly estimates that comfort women made 5 times the income of domestic Japanese prostitutes, 10 times those in Pyongyang.

In an article in the Diplomat that Ambaras, Stanley and Chatani harassed the magazine into censoring, prominent Korean economist Lee Wooyoun (2021) writes:

"Comfort women" were engaged in a "high-risk, high-return" occupation. Some occasionally earned enormous sums, and a great many returned to Korea or re-entered the workforce after their contracted term of employment ended. Restrictions on daily freedoms applied equally to military personnel, civilian employees, nurses, and anyone else in the battlefield environment. In conclusion, comfort women were not sex slaves, but sex workers who were fundamentally no different from today's sex industry workers.

Yoshimi notes that I do not list the source for my statement at IRLE page 6, sec. 3.2 about 6-12 month terms. The correct citation is to the Interrogation Report 49 discussed earlier (U.S. Office 1944, 203). In fact, Yoshimi correctly identifies this source later in the paragraph, but complains (page 12) that "this is but one specific comfort station."

Yoshimi (page 13) also discusses the 1938 Home Ministry document noted at Sec. 4-1 above. He does not contest my description of the document, but writes that it "cannot be generalized to all Japanese 'comfort women.'"

(b) Comparing across decades. Yoshimi questions whether I can properly compare Tokyo contracts in the 1920s with comfort station contracts in the 1930s.

Note first that general price levels are stable until the late 1930s but then explode in the 1940s. The wholesale price index was 1.296 in 1921, 1.157 in 1926, 0.748 in 1931, and 1.036 in 1936. It hits 1.466 in 1939, 1.758 in 1941, and 2.046 in 1943 (Ando 1987, 2-3).

Second, prices in the 1940s are complicated by the government's attempt to enforce stringent wage and price controls. Steadily over the course of the late 1930s and early 1940s, the government tried to impose ever-more-stringent controls. The effect was exactly what an economist would expect: the government successfully kept some nominal prices steady, caused massive shortages in some sectors, caused still other prices to turn stratospheric, and massively disrupted the allocation of resources. In a world like this, I question whether I should rely on the wholesale price index.

Third, if anything the shadow wages for the comfort women fell from the 1920s to the 1930s. These were women who would otherwise have worked in factories or on the farms. Factory wages for women were lower in the 1930s than they had been in the 1920s. A standard reference volume in economic history (Ando 1987, 12) gives the daily female wage in manufacturing (in sen = 1/100 yen) as: 1920 - 96, 1925 - 103, 1930 - 92, 1935 - 67, 1939 - 82 (the table ends with 1939). Female wages in agriculture fluctuated more broadly (Ando 1987, 12): 1920 - 94, 1925 - 131, 1930 - 86, 1935 - 70, 1939 - 131.

#### 4-5 Conditions for exiting the trade, pages 13-14.

I observed that prostitutes could return home when they completed their contract. Similarly, economic historian Lee Younghoon (2019, 320) writes: "The comfort station ... was an extremely fluid place. It was a place that many comfort women left -- they left when they had completed the contractual term, or when they had earned the money they hoped to make, or when they had paid off their advance."

Yoshimi claims that the comfort women needed the permission of the brothel owner to quit. The only grounds for the owner to object would have been that they had neither completed the full contractual term nor repaid the advance.

Yoshimi notes that wartime conditions sometimes prevented women from returning home. I explicitly note this point at IRLE, page 7, sec. 4: "Until the last months of the war, the women served their terms or paid off their debts early, and returned home" (ital. added).

Yoshimi raises examples from China, the Philippines, and Java. I deliberately limit my discussion to Japanese and Korean comfort women. Yoshimi distinguishes the comfort women from these areas from those from Japan and Korea in his Mainichi interview as well.

Yoshimi notes that the recruiter quoted in the Senda (1973) book was self-interested. I make exactly that observation, IRLE, page 6, sec. 3.4.

#### 4-6 High-earning "comfort women," pages 14-16.

(a) Mun Ok-ju's earnings. Yoshimi claims that the officers tipped Mun Ok-ju lavishly because they were tipping her in worthless scrip. Comfort women did not receive high pay, he writes. The pay only appears high because of the hyper-inflation.

This is badly misleading. Mun herself had a savings account, and it was an account denominated in yen. The transactions within the brothel may or may not have been in scrip. The tips may or may not have involved scrip. But if so, Mun seems to have had no trouble converting that scrip into yen -- because yen is what she deposited in her savings account.

Here is the way that Mun describes her earnings. Purely for the convenience of my readers, I quote from the website that neither Stanley, et al., nor Yoshimi likes (Yoshimi calls it "right-wing," page 15), but whose accuracy neither disputes:<sup>23</sup>

"I saved a considerable amount of money from tips. So I asked a clerical staff whether or not I could have a saving account and put the money in the account. His reply was positive. I knew that all the soldiers put their earnings in the saving accounts in the field post office, so I decided to put my money in the saving account. I asked a soldier to make a personal seal and put 500 yen in the account. I got my savings passbook and found 500 yen written on the passbook. I became the owner of the savings passbook for the first time in my life. I worked in Daegu as a nanny and a street seller from the childhood but I remained poor no matter how hard I worked. I could not believe that I could have so much money in my saving account. A house in Daegu cost 1,000 yen at the time. I could let my mother have an easy life. I felt very happy and proud. The savings passbook became my treasure."

The same website includes a photograph of the post office's records of Mun's account. It is clearly denominated in Japanese yen.<sup>24</sup>

Note that Mun also had enough hard cash to purchase valuable items in Rangoon. She reports travelling into Rangoon to buy a diamond (quotation from same source):

"I was able to have more freedom in Rangoon than before. Of course, not completely free but I could go out once a week or twice a month with permission from the Korean owner. It was fun to go shopping by rickshaw. I can't forget the experience of shopping in a market in Rangoon. There were lots of jewelry shops because many jewels were produced in Burma, and ruby and jade were not expensive. One of my friends collected many jewels. I thought I should have a jewel myself, so I went and bought a diamond".

Yoshimi is working hard (again) to hold the Japanese government responsible for the comfort women regime. As noted above, this issue is not relevant to my article.

(b) Tips and wages.. As I discussed in my response to Stanley, et al. (Appendix I, Sec. 3(a)), the distinction between wages and tips in the service industry is a distinction without a difference.

(c) Cost of living adjustments. Yoshimi tries to argue that Mun's savings were worthless because of the different cost of living across the Japanese empire during the last years of the war.

Yoshimi's discussion makes no sense. Mun's postal savings account was denominated in yen. It was not denominated in military scrip, or in currency specific to Burma or Seoul or Tokyo or anywhere else. It was simply denominated in yen. If she had 25,142 yen on deposit, that was worth exactly 25,142 yen in Tokyo and 25,142 yen in Seoul -- not 124.8 yen, or 21.8 yen, or any of the other figures that Yoshimi advances.

Any losses Mun suffered from the hyper-inflation had nothing to do with her being a comfort woman. All men and women with yen-denominated savings suffered the same loss.

---

<sup>23</sup> As quoted in <http://scholarsinenglish.blogspot.com/2014/10/former-korean-comfort-woman-mun-oku.html>.

<sup>24</sup> <http://scholarsinenglish.blogspot.com/2014/10/former-korean-comfort-woman-mun-oku.html>

(d) Limits on withdrawals. Yoshimi tries to argue that Mun's savings were worthless because she could not have withdrawn them.

In fact, economist Lee Younghoon (2020, 67-71) concludes that the comfort women would have been able freely to send money back to Korea and Japan at least through early 1944. In any case, any losses Mun suffered from an inability to withdraw the amounts would have had nothing to do with her being a comfort woman.

### **Appendix III: Information About Comfort Women Contracts**

NB: Given the focus that the critics place on the number of sources, I have continued since the time of the criticisms to search for additional documentary evidence of comfort women contracts. Sections G through M are sources that were not cited in the IRLE article. Note that they are fully consistent with the material in Sections A through F, and with the contractual analysis in the IRLE article.

**A. Naimu sho keiho kyoku, Shina toko fujo no toriatsukai ni kansuru ken [Case Regarding the Treatment of the Passage of Women to China], Feb. 18, 1938, in Yuko Suzuki, et al., eds., Nihongun "ianfu" kankei shiryō shusei [Collection of Materials Relating to the Japanese Military "Comfort Women"] (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 2006), vol. 1, pages 124-138.**

\* Kobe brothel owner tries to recruit 500 women from Yamagata prefecture for north China comfort stations (part of a 2500 women recruitment effort), ages 16-30, advances of 500-1000 yen, maximum 2-year terms (page 127).

\* Kobe brothel owner tries to recruit 500 women from Gunma prefecture (part of a 3000-women recruitment effort). First sample contract does not specify advance size or maximum term. Second sample contract specifies ages 16-30, advances of 500-1000 yen, maximum 2-year terms (pages 127-29).

\* Miyagi governor reports Fukushima entrepreneur who recruited approximately 30 women to work at Shanghai comfort station, ages 20-35, advances of 600 yen, unspecified terms (page 130).

\* Ibaraki governor reports Kobe brothel owner who recruited two women (already working as prostitutes) for Shanghai comfort station, one for an advance of 642 yen, and one for 691 yen. Sample contract (p. 131) included, but with maximum term and advance amount unspecified. A second sample contract (p. 132) also included, specifying specifies ages 16-30, advances of 500-1000 yen, and maximum 2-year terms (pages 131-32).

\* Wakayama governor reports recruitment effort involving 70 women for a Shanghai comfort station (part of a 3000-women recruitment effort). Solicitation specified maximum advance of 800 yen. Additionally, the report discusses a 26 year-old who received 470 yen, and a 28-year-old who received 362 yen (pages 134-35).

\* With respect to all contracts for women from Japan, note the police order quoted at IRLE, page 5, sec. 2.4: All women traveling from Japan to north or central China to serve as prostitutes must bring their contract with them and apply in person at the police office for a permit. They must be told to return to Japan "upon the conclusion of their provisional contract" (page 125). Historian and specialist in government documents, Tetsuo Arima (2021c, ch. 11) explains that

Ambaras misunderstands government practice at the time, and notes that this directive would have applied to women traveling from Korea as well.

**B. SCAP, Research Report: Amenities in the Japanese Armed Forces, Nov. 15, 1945, in Josei no tameno Ajia heiwa kokumin kikin, ed., Seifu chosa: "Jugun ianfu" kankei shiryoshusei [Government Investigation: Documents Relating to the "Military Comfort Women"] (Tokyo: Ryukei shosha, 1998), vol. 5, 137-66.**

\* Report discusses comfort station operator who "purchased 22 Korean girls, paying their families from 300 to 1000 yen ...." The women were 19-31 years old, and arrived in 1942 (page 151).

\* Report further notes: "Every 'comfort girl' was employed on the following contract conditions. She received fifty percent of her own gross takings and was provided with free passage, free food and free medical treatment" (page 152).

**C. U.S. Office of War Information, Interrogation Report No. 49, Oct. 1, 1944, in Josei no tameno Ajia heiwa kokumin kikin, ed., Seifu chosa: "Jugun ianfu" kankei shiryoshusei [Government Investigation: Documents Relating to the "Military Comfort Women"] (Tokyo: Ryukei shosha, 1998), vol. 5, 203-09.**

\* This is an interrogation of 20 Korean comfort women found in Burma in 1944. The women had been recruited in 1942 through fraud, had received "an advance of a few hundred yen," and served maximum contractual terms of 6 to 12 months (page 203). Yoshimi (page 95) states that they received advances of 300-1000 yen.

\* Report notes that about 800 women had been recruited through this effort (page 204).

\* Report notes that the Army permitted "certain girls who had paid their debt" to return home (page 205).

\* Reports comfort-woman: comfort-station revenue split of 50:50 or 60:40, but also reports that comfort stations charged the women high prices for various goods (p. 205).

**D. Fukuoka ken chiji, Shina tokosha ni taisuru mibun shomeisho hakkyu ni kansuru ken [Case Regarding the Issuance of Identification Documents for People Travelling to China], Dec. 15, 1937, in Josei no tameno Ajia heiwa kokumin kikin, ed., Seifu chosa: "Jugun ianfu" kankei shiryoshusei [Government Investigation: Documents Relating to the "Military Comfort Women"] (Tokyo: Ryukei shosha, 1997), vol. 1, 113-115.**

\* Document shows two prostitutes applying to travel in 1937 to a Shanghai comfort station -- one for a 1-year term, and one for a 1-year-9-month term (page 115).

**E. Park, Yu-ha, Teikoku no ianfu [Comfort Women of the Empire] (Asahi shimbun shuppan, 2014).**



\* Park quotes a 1937 Korean newspaper article (page 29):

"Choi Jae-hyun (37) and his wife Lee Seong-Nyeo (24), from [address] conspired several days ago to entice Kim In-Sop's [address] second daughter Yohngoon (12) and sell her as a prostitute to a Chinese restaurant owner Chang Wookyeong at [address] for a 50-yen ransom [i.e., price]. He was caught by the police as he was drafting the contract, and is currently being stringently investigated. "

\* Park reproduces two 1944 Korean newspaper advertisements for comfort women (page 33): One specifies women aged 18-30, with contractual details to be determined upon interview. The other specifies women aged 17-23, monthly income of at least 300 yen, and advances of up to 3000 yen.

**F. Senda, Kako, Jugun ianfu [Military Comfort Women] (Tokyo: Futaba sha, 1973).**

\* Reports being involved in the recruitment of over 100 women, both Korean and Japanese, for comfort women service from northern Kyushu (pages 24-28). The advance was generally about 1000 yen, and the women were free to leave when they had repaid the amount.

\* Reports a recruiter from northern Kyushu who brought 20 women to serve as comfort women in Shanghai brothels in 1938 (pp. 60-62). The recruiter states (I find the claim implausible) that the women provided sexual services to the Japanese military personnel at the stations along the way, and by the time the train reached Shanghai they had repaid their 1000 yen advance and were free.

**G. Lee, Younghoon, Hannichi shuzoku shugi [Anti-Japanese Tribalism] (Tokyo: Bungei shunju, 2019).**

\* Reports a 22-year-old Korean daughter sold by her father in 1937 to Manchurian brothel for a 1300-yen advance. She objected, and complained to the police (page 251).

\* The comfort women at a comfort station operated by a Korean in Burma in 1942 repaid their advances in six months (pages 273-74).

\* Reports a Rangoon comfort station from which in 1944 15 of the 20 comfort women completed their contractual obligations and went home to Korea. One of the comfort women had sent home 11,000 yen that year (pages 275, 283, 320).

**H. Yoshimi, Yoshiaki, Jugun ianfu [Military Comfort Women] (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1995).**

\* Reports one Japanese woman who went to a Shanghai comfort station in early 1938 on an advance of 1000 yen (pages 88-89).

\* Reports one Japanese woman who returned from prostitution in Saipan and Palau in 1939. She had repaid her advance, but then volunteered with several other women to go work in a Nanking comfort station (page 89).

\* Reports that a Japanese geisha went to work at a navy-operated comfort station in the Truk islands in 1942 because it agreed to take on the nearly 4000 yen she owed to her placement agency (okiya), on a 1-1/2 year term (page 89).

**I. Lee Woo-yeon, Chosenjin gyosha to keiyaku shi ianjo wo tenten to shita ianfu no shogen [The Testimony of a Comfort Woman Who Contracted with a Korean Member of the Industry and Moved from Comfort Station to Comfort Station], Yahoo News Japan, Mar. 7, 2021 (originally JB Press).**

\* Sixteen-year-old Korean signs up for a three-year term as a prostitute for an advance of 3000 yen. Eventually, she consents to having her contract assigned to a comfort station. Date uncertain.

**J. Yamada, Seikichi, Bukan heitan [Wuhan Logistics] (Tokyo: Tosho shuppan, 1978).**

\* Reports that Wuhan area comfort women (130 Japanese, 150 Koreans) in 1943-44 (by which time inflation was serious) had average advances of 6000-7000 yen, could repay 400-500 yen per month, and could repay their advances and return home after about 1-1/2 years (page 77, 84).

\* Revenue split for Wuhan area comfort stations was 60:40 comfort-station:comfort-women for women with debt; it was 50:50 for those without debt.

\* Reports one comfort woman from Osaka, age 20, with a 10,000 yen advance (page 87).

\* Reports a woman whose mother died at age 2 and whose father abandoned her; who then applied for work as a comfort woman and came to Wuhan (narrative notes that Korean recruiters often used other terms for the work), repaid the advance in two years, returned to Korea, and then signed up for another term in Wuhan (pages 102-03).

**K. Nishino, Rumiko, et al., "Ianfu" basshingu wo koete [Beyond "Comfort Women" Bashing] (Tokyo: Otsuki shoten, 2013).**

\* Reports accounts of Japanese prostitutes volunteering for comfort women service and repaying their advance in one or two years and returning home (p. 37).

\* Reports Japanese 18 year-old who left to serve as comfort woman in 1942; she returned in 1943 having repaid her 4000 yen advance and saved an additional 10,000 yen (pp. 37, 53-54). Probably the same woman reported by Yoshimi, supra.

\* Reports Japanese geisha who received an advance of 2,300 yen to serve as a comfort woman on a 1-year contract (p. 37).

\* Reports Japanese prostitute who enlisted as comfort woman for Shanghai on a 1,500 yen advance. She returned to Japan two-years later and opened a restaurant (pp. 37-38). She reports that the comfort women in Shanghai repaid their advances in 1 to 3 months.

**L. Soh, C. Sarah. *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008)**

\* Confirms that the "lived experience of some Korean comfort women" mirrors the contractual structure under which licensed Japanese prostitutes worked, including large upfront advances, maximum terms, and the ability to quit earlier by repaying the debt (page 114).

**M. Hata, Ikuhito, *Ianfu to senjo no sei [Comfort Women and Sex on the Battlefield]* (Tokyo: Shincho sensho, 1999).**

\* Reports woman who volunteered to work as comfort woman on Trak islands repaid her 4,000 yen advance in two years (p. 224). Possibly same woman reported by Yoshimi, supra.

\* Reports Korean owner of comfort station in China noted that the women tended to repay their advances of 300-500 yen in 1 or 2 years; after they had saved additional money, they tended to marry or return home; hiring their replacements was one of his biggest problems (pp. 382-83).

**N. Hosoya, Kiyoshi, *Nihon gunjin ga shogen susu senjo no hana: Chosenjin ianfu [The Flowers of the Front, Reported by Japanese Soldiers]* (Tokyo: Haato shuppan, 2019).**

\* Former Manchukuo police officer reports the comfort woman: comfort station revenue split as 40:60; reports claims that debt grew, and describes role of police as stopping such schemes; reports that all Korean comfort women had formerly worked as prostitutes within Korea (account concerns mostly Korean comfort women with some Japanese (pp. 42-43).

\* Former naval officer reports (1940s) reports that women were recruited on advances of 4,000-5,000 yen for a one-year contractual term; most of the women were able to repay their advances in 6 months, but some within 3 months; further reports that women were able to save 5,000 to 10,000 yen (p. 140).

\* Reports 50:50 split in Philippine comfort stations (p. 145).

\* Reports 40:60, 30:70 comfort woman: comfort station split (location unclear; p. 172).

**O. Hasegawa, Shin, *Ikiteiru shosetsu [A Living Novel]* (Tokyo: Chuo koro, 1990 reprint) (orig. pub. 1958) (NB: notwithstanding the title, this is a memoir rather than a novel).**

\* Account of comfort station of island off south China: reports one woman who caused so much trouble within the comfort station that the owner paid her additional money and sent her home to Taiwan (pp. 103-4); reports shipowner stating that the women who had arrived had been tricked (p. 106).

\* Reports advances at the island comfort station (in 1938) ranging from 500-600 yen to 1200-1300 yen (women from Taiwan). Reports that women preferred dealing with non-officers at 2 yen rather than with officers at 5 yen because the greater volume enabled them to earn more money.

\* Reports case where physician discovered that a new recruit was a virgin; officers pooled their savings, repaid her advance, and negotiated her immediate return (pp. 107-09).

## Bibliography

- Ando, Yoshio. 1987. *Kindai Nihon keizai shi yoran* [Overview of Early Modern Japanese Economic History], 2d ed. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press.
- Arima, Tetsuo. 2021a. Ramseyer kyoju "ianfu ronbun" wo hihan suru Harvard daigaku kyoju ha bunken wo yomete inainodeha naika [The Harvard Professors Criticizing Prof. Ramseyer's "Comfort Women Article" Seem Unable to Read the Documents]. *Daily Shincho*, Apr. 5, 2021 (part 1) and Apr. 6, 2021 (part 2).
- Arima, Tetsuo. 2021b. Harvard dai "ianfu" ronbun wo hihan suru Kankokukei kyoju no rojikkuha goin dewa naika [The Logic of the Korean Professor Criticizing the Harvard "Comfort Women" Article Is Forced]. *Daily Shincho*, Apr. 13, 2021 (Parts I & II).
- Arima, Tetsuo. 2021c. "ianfu" ha mina goi keiyakuwo shiteita [The "Comfort Women" Had All Agreed to Contracts]. Tokyo: WAC, K.K.
- "Asahi shimbun moto kisha [Former Reporter for Asahi Shimbun]," *Zakzak*, Aug. 5, 2014.
- Chatani, Sayaka. 2021. Ramseyer ronbun wa naze "jiken" to natta no ka [Why Did the Ramseyer Article Become an "Incident"?], *Sekai*, May 2021.
- Choe, Kilsung, 2017. *Chosen shusshin no choba nin ga mita ianfu no jijitsu* [The Truth About Comfort Women, as Seen by a Korean Receptionist]. Tokyo: Haato shuppan.
- Choe, Kilsung. 2021a. "ianfu nikki" kenkyusha ga akasu "kyosei renko" to wa kakehanareta jittai [Research of "Comfort Women Diary" Shows Reality Far Different from "Forced Conception"], *Daily shincho*, June 14, 2021.
- Choe, Kilsung. 2021b. Genshiryo wa watashino "ianjo nikki" kenkyu [The Original Source Was My Research on the "Comfort Station Diary"]. *Shukan shincho*, June 10, 2021, at 46.
- Chwe, Michael. 2021. Letter by Concerned Economists Regarding "Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War" in the *International Review of Law and Economics*. Available at: <http://chwe.net/irle/letter/>.
- Coomaraswamy, Radhika. 1996. U.N. Commission on Human Rights: Report on the Mission to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea and Japan on the Issue of Military Sexual Slavery in Wartime. E/CN.4/1996/53/Add.I.
- Curtis, Paula R. 2021a. Ramseyer and the Right-Wing Ecosystem Suffocating Japan. *Tokyo Review*, May 30, 2021.
- Curtis, Paula R. 2021b. Taking the Fight for Japan's History Online: The Ramseyer Controversy and Social Media. *Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*, 22: No. 3, December 1, 2021.
- Devine, Maija Rhee. 2016. Are Comfort Women Lying? *Korea Times*, June 8, 2016. Available at: [http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2016/06/162\\_206538.html](http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2016/06/162_206538.html).
- Doke, Saiichiro. 1928. *Baishunfu ronko* [A Study in Prostitution] (Shishi shuppan, 1928), reproduced in Yuko Suzuki, et al., *Nihon gun "ianfu" kankei shiryō shusei* [Collection of Materials Relation to the "Comfort Women" of the Japanese Military] (Tokyo: Akashi shoten, 2006), vol. 1, pp. 786-820.

- Dudden, Alexis, et al. 2015. Standing with Historians of Japan, *Perspectives on History*, Mar. 1, 2015.
- Eckert, Carter J. 1996. Total War, Industrialization, and Social Change in Late Colonial Korea. In Peter Duus, Ramon H. Myers, and Mark R. Peattie, eds., *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931-1945*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. pp. 3-39.
- Fackler, Martin. 2007. No Apology for Sex Slavery, Japan's Prime Minister Says. *N.Y. Times*, March 6, 2007.
- Fackler, Martin. 2014. Rewriting the War, Japanese Right Attacks a Newspaper. *N.Y. Times*, Dec. 2, 2014.
- Gluck, Carol. 2021. What the World Owes the Comfort Women. In J.H. Lim & E. Rosenhaft, eds., *Mnemonic Solidarity, Entangled Memories in the Global South*.
- Gordon, Andrew. 2003. *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gordon, Andrew & Carter Eckert. 2021. Statement. Feb. 17, 2021. Available at: <https://perma.cc/8ZHY-RD5C>. N.B.: This is a later expanded version of their attack, and not the version they sent to the journal.
- Gunji hyoronka no Chi Man-won [The Military Commentator Chi Man-won], Sept. 29, 2013, available at: [https://s.webry.info/sp/92971510.at.webry.info/201309/article\\_88.html](https://s.webry.info/sp/92971510.at.webry.info/201309/article_88.html).
- Hasegawa, Shin. 1990. *Ikiteiru shosetsu [A Living Novel]* (Tokyo: Chuo koro, 1990 reprint) (orig. pub. 1958).
- Hata, Ikuhiko. 2018. *Comfort Women and Sex in the Battle Zone*. Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books. Jason Michael Morgan, transl.
- Hata, Ikuhito. 1999. *Ianfu to senjo no sei [Comfort Women and Sex on the Battlefield]*. Tokyo: Shincho sensho.
- Hicks, George. 1994. *The Comfort Women: Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Hicks, George. 1996. The "Comfort Women." In Peter Duus, Ramono H. Myers & Mark R. Peattie, eds., *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931-1945*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Hosoya, Kiyoshi. 2019. *Nihon gunjin ga shogen susu senjo no hana: Chosenjin ianfu [The Flowers of War, Reported by Japanese Soldiers]*. Tokyo: Haato shuppan (English translation at Mera & Hosoya [2020]).
- Howard, Keith, ed. 1995. *True Stories of the Korean Comfort Women*. London: Cassell.
- Ji Man-Won shi "gi no ianfu" [Ji Man-Won "Fraudulent Comfort Women"], *Chuo Nippo*, Apr. 14, 2005, available at: [https://japanese.joins.com/article/j\\_article.php?aid=62513&sectcode=400&servcode=400](https://japanese.joins.com/article/j_article.php?aid=62513&sectcode=400&servcode=400).
- Jiyu wa ubawareta kyoseisei atta [There was Coercion in the Sense that They Lost Their Freedom]..., *Asahi shimbun*, Aug. 5, 2014.

- Josei no tame no Ajia heiwa kokumin kikin, ed. 1997, 1998. Seifu chosa: "Jugun ianfu" kankei shiryō shusei [Government Investigation: Materials Relating to the "Comfort Women Accompanying the Military"]. Tokyo. 5 volumes.
- KIH 2016a. Korea Institute of History. 2016. "The Comfort Women" by Professor C. Sarah Soh, Apr. 29, available at <http://scholarsinenglish.blogspot.com/2014/10/the-comfort-women-by-chunghee-sarah-soh.html>.
- KIH 2016b. Korea Institute of History. 2016. "Comfort Women of the Empire" by Professor Park Yuha, Apr. 30, 2016, available at <http://scholarsinenglish.blogspot.com/2014/10/summary-of-professor-park-yuhas-book.html>.
- Kim, Pu-ja & Yon Kim. 2018. Shokuminchi yukaku [Colonial Pleasure Quarters]. Tokyo: Yoshikawa kobunkan.
- Kimura, Kan. 2014. Nikkan rekishi ninshiki mondai toha nanika [What is the Japan-Korea History Recognition Problem. Tokyo: Mineruba shobo.
- Kumagai, Naoko. 2015. On "Standing with Historians of Japan," Perspectives on History, Sept. 1, 2015.
- Lee, Dong-Jin. 2020. Minzoku, chiiki, sekushuaritii: Manshukoku no chosenjin "seibaibai jujisha" wo chushin to shite [Nationalism, Localism and Sexuality: The Case of Korean "Prostitution" in Manchuguo], Quadrante, 22: 39-62 (2020).
- Lee, Wooyoun. 2021a. Chosenjin gyosha to keiyaku shi ianjo wo tenten to shita ianfu no shogen [The Testimony of a Comfort Woman Who Contracted with a Korean Member of the Industry and Moved from Comfort Station to Comfort Station], Yahoo News Japan, Mar. 7, 2021 (originally JB Press). Alternative translation available at Lee Wooyoun, Controversy over Harvard Article Can't Erase the Facts of Comfort Women Contracts, Japan Forward, Apr. 3, 2021.
- Lee, Wooyoun. 2021b. Anti-Japan Tribalism on the Comfort Women Issue. The Diplomat, Nov. 14, 2021. Censored under pressure from Ambaras, Stanley and Chatani, available at alternative site: <https://archive.ph/20211115071637/https://thediplomat.com/2021/11/anti-japan-tribalism-on-the-comfort-women-issue/#selection-1231.547-1231.1052>
- Lee, Wooyoun. 2021b. No Debate? The Diplomat's Cancellation of My Comfort Women Article. Japan Forward, Dec. 4, 2021.
- Lee, Yong-Shik, Natsu Taylor Saito & Jonathan Todres. 2021. The Fallacy of Contract in Sexual Slavery: A Response to Ramseyer's "Contracting Sex in the Pacific War." Mich. J. Int'l L. 42: 291.
- Lee, Younghoon, ed. 2019. Hannichi shuzoku shugi [Anti-Japanese Tribalism]. Tokyo: Bungei shunju.
- Lee, Younghoon, ed. 2020. Hannichi shuzoku shugi to no toso [The Battle Against Anti-Japanese Tribalism]. Tokyo: Bungei shunju.
- Martin, Timothy W. & Dasl Yoon. 2021. Professor's 'Comfort-Women' Lecture Gets Him Indicted -- And Sparks Debate on Academic Freedom. Wall. St. J., Aug. 21, 2021.

- Mera, Koichi & Kiyoshi Hosoya. 2020. American Soldiers Witnessed Korean Korean Comfort Women-"Flowers of the War." Privately published (translation of Hosoya [2019]).
- Military Intelligence Service Captured Personnel & Material Branch. 1945. Composite Report on Three Korean Navy Civilians, April 24, 1945, reproduced in Mainichi shimbun, June 10, 2016.
- Morgan, Jason. 2021a. Waseda Professor Offers Evidence of Comfort Women Working Under Contract. Japan Forward, Oct. 15, 2021. Available at: <https://japan-forward.com/waseda-professor-offers-evidence-of-comfort-women-working-under-contract-now-come-the-attacks/>
- Morgan, Jason. 2021b. The Comfort Women Issue: Bashing the Factfinders and Policing the Party Line. Japan Forward, Oct. 18, 2021. Available at: <https://japan-forward.com/the-comfort-women-issue-bashing-the-factfinders-and-policing-the-party-line/>
- Morgan, Jason. 2021c. Conform or Get Attacked: Bigots Use Comfort Women Issue to Assault Free Speech in Japan. Japan Forward, Oct. 20, 2021. Available at: <https://japan-forward.com/conform-or-get-attacked-bigots-use-comfort-women-issue-to-assault-free-speech-in-japan/>
- Morgan, Jason. 2015. On "Standing with Historians of Japan," Perspectives on History, July 1, 2015.
- Moto "ianfu" e hosho wo [Compensation for Former "Comfort Women"], Akahata, June 26, 2002.
- Multiple Authors. 2015a. Response to Naoko Kumagai, Perspectives on History, Dec. 1, 2015.
- Multiple Authors. 2015b. On "Standing with Historians of Japan," Perspectives on History, Dec. 1, 2015. (50 Japanese academics).
- Mun, Ok-ju. 1996. Biruma sensen: Tateshidan no "ianfu" datta watashi [The Burmese Front: I Who Had Been a "Comfort Woman for the Tate Division]. Tokyo: Nashi no kisha (Machiko Morikawa, transl.).
- Murotani, Katsumi. 2021. Kihonteki na daigimon [A Basic, Major Doubt ...], Zakzak (Yukan Fuji), June 11, 2020.
- Nishino, Rumiko, et al. 2013. "ianfu" basshingu wo koeta [Beyond "Comfort Women" Bashing]. Tokyo: Otsuki shoten.
- Park, Yuha. 2014. Teikoku no ianfu [Comfort Women of the Empire]. Tokyo: Asahi shimbun shuppan.
- Phillips, Joe, Wondong Lee & Joseph Yi. 2019. Future of South Korea-Japan Relations: Decoupling or Liberal Discourse. Political Quarterly, 91: 448.
- Protecting the Human Rights of Comfort Women. 2007. Hearing before Subcom. on Asia, the Pacific, and the Global Environment, of Com. Foreign Affairs, House of Rep. Feb. 15, 2007.
- Ramseyer, J. Mark. 1991. Indentured Prostitution in Imperial Japan: Credible Commitments in the Commercial Sex Industry, J. Law, Econ. & Org. 7: 89 (1991).
- Ramseyer, J. Mark. 1996. Odd Markets in Japanese History: Law and Economic Growth. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press.



- Ramseyer, J. Mark. 2021. Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War. *Int'l Rev. L. & Econ.*, 65.
- Ruff-O'Herne, Jan. 2008. *Fifty Years of Silence*. North Sydney: William Heinemann.
- SCAP. 1945. Amenities in the Japanese Armed Forces, Nov. 15, 1945. In Josei (1988, vol. 5, 139-66).
- "Saishuto de renko" shogen ["Forced to Accompany in Jeju" Testimony], *Asahi shimbun*, Aug. 5, 2014.
- Senda, Kako. 1973. *Jugun ianfu [Military Comfort Women]*. Tokyo: Futaba sha.
- Soh, C. Sarah. 2008. *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Stanley, Amy. 2021. On Contract, March 18, 2021. Available at: <https://www.amy-stanley.com/blog-1/on-contract>.
- Stanley, Amy, Hannah Shepherd, Sayaka Chatani, David Ambaras & Chelsea Szendi Schieder. 2021a. "Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War": The Case for Retraction on Grounds of Academic Misconduct. *Asia-Pacific J.*, 19: no. 13. Available at: <https://apjif.org/2021/5/ConcernedScholars.html>.
- Stanley, Amy, David Ambaras, Hannah Shepherd. 2021b. Confronting Denialism on the "Comfort Woman" Issue, *Global Lunchbox Podcast*, Apr. 16, 2021. Available at: <https://soundcloud.com/wccias/confronting-denialism>.
- Suk-Gersen, Jeannie. 2021. Seeking the True Story of the Comfort Women. *New Yorker*, Feb. 26, 2021.
- Suzuki, Yuko. 2006. *Nihon gun "Ianfu" kankei shiryō shusei [Collection of Material Related to the Japanese Military "Comfort Women"]*. Tokyo: Akashi shoten. Two volumes.
- U.S. Office of War Information. 1944. Japanese Prisoners of War Interrogation Report No. 49, in Josei (1998: v. 5, 203)
- Uooru sutoriito jaaneru ni kansuru Lew kyoju to media uocchi no hanno [The Reactions of Professor Lew and Media Watch to the Wall Street Journal], *Rekishu ninshiki mondai kenkyu kai*, Aug. 23, 2021. Available at: [harc.tokyo/?p=2275](http://harc.tokyo/?p=2275)
- Yamada, Seikichi. 1978. *Bukan heitan [Wuhan Logistics]*. Tokyo: Tosho shuppan.
- Yamaoka, Tetsuhide. 2021. *Ianfu harumoni ... [The Comfort Women Grandmothers ...]*, *Gekkan Hanada purasu*, May 26, 2020.
- Yamazaki, Tomoko. 1972. *Sandakan hachiban shokan [Sandakan Number 8 Brothel]*. Tokyo: Chikuma shobo.
- Yi, Joseph & Joe Phillips. 2021. On "Comfort Women" and Academic Freedom. *The Diplomat*, Feb. 18, 2021.
- Yi, Joseph, Joe Phillips & Wondong Lee. 2019. Manufacturing Contempt: State-Linked Populism in South Korea. *Society*, 56: 494-501.
- Yi, Joseph. 2018. Confronting Korea's Censored Discourse on Comfort Women. *The Diplomat*, Jan. 31, 2018.

- Yi, Joseph. 2020. Illiberal Means for Liberal Ends: Low-Road Challenge to Public Discourse and International Relations. Available at: <https://preprints.apsanet.org/engage/apsa/article-details/5f52aa1a9277460012015626>.
- Yi, Joseph. 2021. Debating Korea's Last Taboo: "Comfort Women." Asia Times, March 3, 2021.
- Yoshida, Seiji. 1983. *Watashi no senso hanzai* [My War Crimes]. Tokyo: San'ichi shobo.
- "Yoshida shogen" yoyaku torikeshi ... [At Last, the "Yoshida Testimony" Withdrawn ...], Yomiuri shimbun, Aug. 6, 2014.
- Yoshii, Riki. 2019. "Hyogen no fujiyu" ko: "Jugun ianfu ha dema" to iu dema, rekishigakusha, Yoshimi Yoshiaki shi ni kiku [Thoughts on the "Lack of Freedom of Expression": Asking Historian Mr. Yoshiaki Yoshimi about the False Rumor that "Military Comfort Women Were a False Rumor"], Mainichi shimbun, Aug. 15, 2019.
- Yoshimi, Yoshiaki. 1995. *Jugun ianfu* [Military Comfort Women]. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten.
- Yoshimi, Yoshiaki. 2021a. Response to "Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War" by J. Mark Ramseyer. Emi Koyama, Norma Field, & Tomomi Yamaguchi, transl., 2021.
- Yoshimi, Yoshiaki, 2021b. Ramseyer ronbun no nani ga mondai ka [What's the Problem with the Ramseyer Article?], Sekai, May 2021.