

[An Urgently Assembled Symposium]
International Historical Controversy over Professor Ramseyer's Essay

Program

Part I: Reports

Yamamoto Yumiko, deputy chairman, iRICH: Introduction of Professor Ramseyer's essay

Nishioka Tsutomu, Professor, Reitaku University: Rebuttals of criticisms of Professor Ramseyer's essay

Takahashi Yoichi, Professor, Kaetsu University: Ramseyer's essay read by an economist

Arima Tetsuo, Professor, Waseda University: Problems with the media over the criticism against Professor Ramseyer's essay

Fujioka Nobukatsu, Former Professor, Tokyo University: Professor Ramseyer's essay and history textbooks

Video messages by Lee Woo-yeon (South Korea) and Mark Ramseyer (United States)

Part II: Discussion

Participants: Hata Ikuhiko, Former Professor at Nihon University, Takahashi Shiro, Professor at Reitaku University, Takahashi Yoichi, Arima Tetsuo, and Fujioka Nobukatsu (moderator).

April 24, 2021: Seiryō Kaikan Hall

**Our purpose in holding this urgent symposium,
“International Historical Controversy over Professor Ramseyer's Essay”**

In December of last year, law and economics Professor Mark Ramseyer, Harvard Law School, posted a scholarly essay, “Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War,” on the *International Review of Law and Economics*' website. His aim was to analyze the relationship between comfort women and entrepreneurs in terms of “game theory,” based on the fact that comfort women were licensed prostitutes, which has been thoroughly demonstrated by academics in Japan.

Once the details of Professor Ramseyer's essay were published in the *Sankei Newspaper*, January 31,

2021, fierce rebuttals erupted in South Korea from scholars and activists, who claimed that the comfort women were “sex slaves”. Following suit, in the United States, Korean scholars and students raised a chorus of condemnation against Professor Ramseyer.

Criticism is healthy. However, we cannot ignore the campaign that demanded the withdrawal of Professor Ramseyer’s essay--militants have boasted that they have collected signatures of more than 3,500 scholars worldwide. Even with 10,000 signatures, the facts will not change.

In any event, these actions represent a growing totalitarian trend that favors suppressing the freedom of inquiry and poses a serious problem that we absolutely should not ignore in a free society. Disagreement should be performed within the confines of academic debate and inquiry. There is really no room for pressure, through force of numbers, and coercion of anyone’s carefully considered thoughts.

To counter the totalitarians, we have planned this symposium from the standpoint that, here in Japan, the country that has the highest concern regarding the comfort women issue, freedom of inquiry of controversial topics must continue. Reading Professor Ramseyer’s essay will help us establish our own respective views.

In Japan, the current hot topic is that junior high school history textbooks that will be used for fiscal 2021 have descriptions of the “military comfort women.” In this sense, the comfort women issue is a topic that Japan will never evade.

Some time in the near future, we hope to have the opportunity to hold an earnest and serious discussion with scholars of the “sexual slavery” school.

Until then, this symposium will explore the main issues and problems the current international view of the “comfort women” and demonstrate the critical analysis that has developed within Japan. We truly hope that many will be interested in our efforts.

March 3, 2021

International Research Institute of Controversial Histories (iRICH)